

# THE NO BRAiNER GUIDE




TO THE **GOSPEL**  
FOR THE REST OF US

DISCOVER KEYS OF TRUTH  
WHICH WILL HELP YOU BLAST  
AWAY THOUSANDS OF YEARS  
OF RELIGIOUS CONFUSION

**TOM MAC GUINNESS**

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**nobrainerguide.info**

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Life is a journey and no one can get very far without the help and support of a lot of people.

This book is dedicated to those people in my life.

To my parents for showing and teaching me to be a decent person, to my family for loving me and keeping me honest, to my mentors who equipped me by sharing their experience and knowledge and to my friends and co-workers for their faithfulness and encouragement.



# ABOUT THE AUTHOR

My name is Tom Mac Guinness. I was born in Dundalk, a medium sized town on the east coast of Ireland about halfway between Dublin and Belfast in 1951.

I was raised in a fine Irish family, the eldest of 7 children. My father was a well-known and respected local businessman.

At the age of 20 I had a profound spiritual experience, which changed my life and I spent the next 8 years as a missionary mostly in South America.

Upon my return to Ireland in 1979 I took over the management of the family equestrian centre in Dundalk. The limitations of the business soon became obvious and in 1985 I set up Horseware Products to develop and manufacture horse blankets.

Today Horseware employs more than 150 people and its main brand Rambo is the market leader worldwide.

## **Update • 2/2/2022**

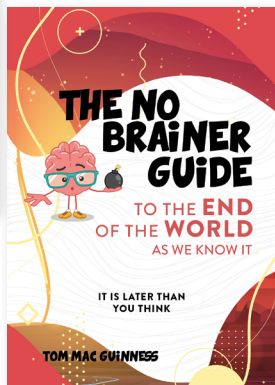
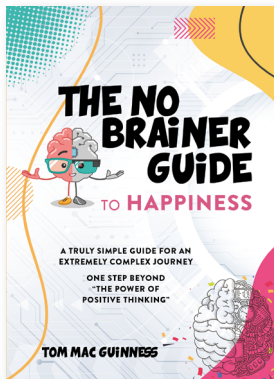
Since I wrote the first introduction to The No Brainer Guide, in 1995, Horseware has grown to be the undisputed world leader in its market segment with more than 700 employees worldwide and has production facilities in Ireland, Cambodia, China and USA, producing more than a million of blankets each year.

Over the years I and Horseware have won many awards for business, innovation and product excellence including 35 BETA Innovation Awards for new product development. In 2002 I was chosen as the Ernst and Young Irish Industrial Entrepreneur of the Year.

In 2021 I sold a controlling interest in Horseware. I have an involvement in many projects but my focus now is to share the many lessons I have learned through the promotion of my books.

I have also taken the time to write two other books and a third scheduled for 2023, which will be title The No Brainer Guide to Business.

# OTHER BOOKS







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# INTRODUCTION



**You've got to  
be a baby to go  
to the Heaven**

That is what Jesus said to his followers one day. He took a little child and sat her in the midst of them and told them that if they did not accept the Kingdom of God as a little child they could not enter it. Child like faith was required not a degree in theology.

Jesus was trying to show them that the secrets of the Kingdom of God were not accessible in the normal way. It required a different approach a childlike approach. He was giving them the key to unlocking the secrets of the universe.

By this action He was saying the Gospel is simple it's a no Brainer, approaching and accepting it in a simple

childlike way is the key to entering it, the door to understanding it.

That is why I have chosen this title for this book, it's not that you don't use your brain it's the way you use it that makes the difference.

## **The No Brainer Guide: A Gospel for Dummies**

I use computers extensively in my business and some time ago I bought a book called DOS for Dummies. I found the book to be very good, easy to read and it helped me to grasp the subject. Since then “for Dummies” books have been written on many aspects of computers and have been very successful.

They are written in such a way as to de-mystify the subject being discussed and actually make fun of the nerdy and pretentious types who often write books on these subjects.

Most Computer books at the time were written by these expert techno types or nerds as they are referred to. Geeks, who live in a computer world not the real world—like you and me.

Most experts have a vested interest in keeping their secrets, secret. They surround their knowledge with the mist of mystery and relish the power and status this infers.

This principle can be applied to most professionals and religious professionals are no exception.

The professional has a vested interest in telling his clients or followers only what he wants them to know, so that they will be dependent on him. The idea is to keep people off-balance, insecure and dependent.

However when it comes to the Bible and Christianity the opposite should be the case. Why do you think that Jesus came as a little baby in a manger, a friend of fishermen, tax collectors and harlots? He came down and reduced thousands of laws and regulations to two simple rules:

**1. LOVE GOD AND**

**2. LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR**

He even went so far as to say that if you didn't receive the kingdom of God as a little child that you would not be able to enter it or even see it, much less be a part of it.

**He stripped away thousands of years of tradition and mystery, a tortuous system of rules and regulations and reduced it to the ultimate short cut— believe in ME and you will be saved!**

If you are like most people, in this country you probably have been raised as a Christian, at least nominally. You



have probably been baptized and been to church, but it has not played a major role in your life. You have touched base with religion possibly at those important moments in your life, marriages, funerals and the like, but it is not that important to you. You know it's there but you don't feel you need to know how it works, if it's really true, if there really is a God and if Jesus is His Son.

It all seems a bit old fashioned in a way but at the same time comforting. There is something constant about it in an ever-changing world.

Every now and then when you stop to reflect, when you try and make sense out of life, you do wonder does it work, is it true?

Wouldn't it be nice if someone would sit down and explain the whole thing to you in the pub some night.

To try and figure it all out seems such a daunting task, such a mountain to climb. Where would you start? By the time you have begun to think about it you get distracted with another one of life's crises or amusements and the mood



is gone off you. The questions are gone until the next time you stop long enough to think about eternity.

Or you may be one of those who have just accepted the fact that life is a drag, something to be endured, something to be gotten on with. You dare not hope that there could be a purpose, a reason for it all. A happy ending is a preposterous idea. It doesn't even occur to some that there could be something better.

Don't you think it would be nice if someone would turn on the light and ignite the spark of hope? Wouldn't it be great if someone would sit down with you for a couple of hours and explain the whole thing to you.

In this day and age when men claim to have discovered the structure of the atom and the origin of the universe why can't someone explain what Jesus really said without all this extra mumbo jumbo thrown in?

### **That is what this book is about!**

It is not out to change you or convert you. It is simply written and written simply to explain in plain English what the Bible really says. What it means for you. For YOU not the person next to you. For you, yes the person holding this book, looking at this page!

You know the song “If you were the only girl in the world and I was the only boy” Well that is how you should approach this. The Gospel was written for you and you alone!

The Gospel is for you personally just as if Jesus was sitting with you in a quiet corner of your local explaining it to you in person.

You could read it for yourself, you should read it for yourself and hopefully you will read it for yourself.

### **Yes you... yourself!**

This book is just a prologue an introduction. I have tried to give a ballpark answer to a few of the main questions most people ask. The questions I used to ask.

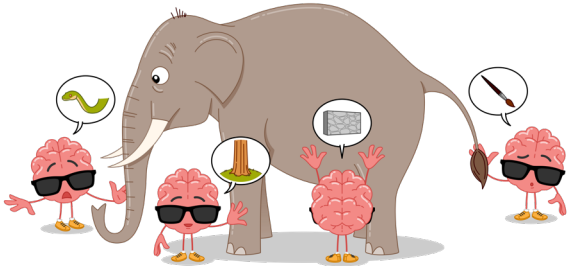
This is not a religious book! I am not a religious person! I am a businessman and have a factory in Ireland making horse blankets. I have to go to work each day and face the same problems you all have. Pay the bills, sort out problems, and get on with life in the real world. We're not talking pie in the sky here. We're not talking about the hereafter. We're talking what does all this mean to me and my life right here and now.

I don't have a degree in theology or in anything else for that matter. You won't find any complicated theories in this book.

I have broken up the book into parts. Each part takes a swing at a different part of the large question.

## **Do you know the story of the 4 blind men and the elephant?**

Well 4 blind men were asked to describe an elephant. Each one was given a different part to examine so obviously they could not agree on a description. The one who had the leg said an elephant was like a tree. The one who had the tail said an elephant was like a brush. The one who had the trunk said it was like a snake and the one who had the back said that an elephant was like a wall. Each insisted that his description was the right one.



You should remember we are looking at the big picture, the all over truth. You have got to constantly step back and not get buried in one corner of it.

People today are in a hurry; to get where? I'm not sure and by the look of it neither are they! People want quick solutions and shortcuts. The problem is that often what seems to be a shortcut turns out to be a detour.

This book is not some kind of a shortcut. It is more like a signpost to point you in the right direction. A signpost actually doesn't do anything for you, it simply shows the way.

**You still have to do the traveling!**



## CHAPTER 1

# WHAT IS ALL THIS BORN AGAIN STUFF?

### **Children of God?**

Many people believe in a vague kind of way that we are all the children of God, God's Children. But what they really mean is that we are God's creation. That is what it feels like to them. For if they really believed that they were God's children, that would beg the question. How come I don't really know Him?

They have a sense of being God's creation. They feel that He is up there somewhere, looking down and possibly guiding, protecting and punishing— unapproachable, someone to be respected and feared.

It's not the intimate comfortable and loving relationship of a father and child. The reason for this sense is the fact, that while we are all God's creation, His workmanship, we are not all automatically God's children.

## **Being Born Twice!**

One of the few times that Jesus got specific was when he was speaking to a chap called Nicodemus. Imagine yourself in the situation.

Jesus worked mainly among the poor and uneducated. He was shunned by the establishment.

Now there had come to him by night one of the leaders of the religious establishment, the equivalent of a present day Bishop. So you can imagine that Jesus felt that this guy could handle something a little stronger, more to the point than the stories and parables He had been using up to then. So let's see what he said to Nicodemus.

Nicodemus begins by saying that he believed that Jesus must be from God since he had done so many miraculous things. Jesus dives right in and goes straight to the heart of the matter and says in the most definite manner possible:

**That unless a man is born again he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.**

And people have been trying to figure out what He meant ever since.

Nicodemus obviously doesn't get it and mockingly says to Jesus. "I am an old man, can I crawl into my mother's womb and be born again?".

Jesus then realizes that it is not going to be as easy as He had hoped and goes on to explain more clearly. He says *“most definitely unless you are borne of water and the spirit you cannot enter into the kingdom of God”*.

He then goes on to explain in further detail what these two births are. He continues *“That which is borne of the flesh is flesh and that which is born of the spirit is spirit”*. Two distinct births: one of flesh and one of spirit: you must be born twice.

Nicodemus was obviously stunned by this and hadn't a clue what Jesus was talking about because Jesus tells him not to marvel that what he has said to him, that he, yes he had to be born again. Here Jesus was saying to a devout Jew that he! Not some other person, that he Nicodemus must be born again of the spirit. All Nicodemus could say was “how can these things be” and people are still saying that 2000 years later.

Jesus was obviously upset at Nicodemus' inability to grasp the concept and says. *“You are a teacher of Israel and do not know of these things, things that are obvious from the physical world around you. What would happen if I told you of some really spiritual things”*.

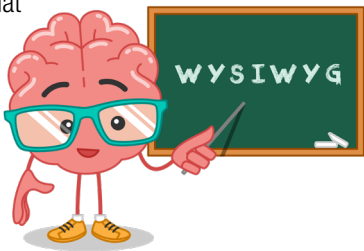
Jesus had used water or physical, flesh birth a concept familiar to Nicodemus to try to explain a spiritual mystery, but he could not make the connection.



Jesus was later to go on to say to his father *“I thank you father that you have hidden these things from the wise and learned and revealed them unto babes”*.

## The key to understanding the Gospel is simplicity!!

Jesus meant exactly what he said, You don't have to explain it; you don't have to write theological statements about it. It's a real case of **WYSIWYG** **W**hat **Y**ou **S**ee **I**s **W**hat **Y**ou **G**et. No deeper hidden meaning, no innuendo! No it means exactly what it says, that you, yes YOU!! YOURSELF!!! Must be born again spiritually if you want to enter and be part of the Kingdom of God. It's as simple as that.



## The Garden

Like any good computer game, the Bible is full of keys that you need to get to the next level in the game. The key to this level is found in the book of Genesis Chapter 3 and the story of Adam and Eve. It is not necessary to literally believe this story but in understanding the underlying concepts lies the key to this “Born Again” thing.

Adam and Eve were created in God's image and likeness and part of that image and likeness was the ability to choose, free will.

Man and God were friends, they walked and talked together in the garden in the cool of the evening and man had everything he needed. It was Paradise! All man had to do was to tend the garden and obey one rule. The problem was that Adam and Eve had to choose to obey that *one* rule because God by making man in His image and likeness had given him the intelligence and ability to reason and decide.

The choice before Adam and Eve was very simple. They could eat the fruit of every tree in the garden except one, the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. This was the only thing God asked them not to do. But like all children, curiosity got the better of them. They disobeyed and broke the trust between them and God. However it is the consequence of their actions we are interested in here.

When God was laying out the ground rules He warned them that in the day they ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil they would surely die. But the Bible says that they did not die and went on to live for 100's of years, so let's look at what *did* happen.

*Firstly* they saw that they were naked, they lost their innocence. They now knew good and evil, right and wrong.

No longer would the choices be so simple. From now on they would have to choose all day, every day.

*Secondly* they instantly developed a sense of guilt and a fear of God. Prior to this Adam obviously had a very close relationship with God and used to walk with him in the garden in the cool of the evening. This close and loving relationship was immediately destroyed and Adam hid himself from the presence of God when he came for his evening walk.

On top of that the Lord had put himself in a bit of a bind. He had obviously created Adam and Eve for companionship and now that was lost. On one hand he had to keep his promise that they would surely die and suffer the consequences of their disobedience. Yet on the other He had to make a way back to the garden and the loving relationship for which He had created man in the first place.

The ultimate consequence of Adams disobedience was that he was cast out of the garden and from the presence of God to live in a world full of toil and adversity.

All this for eating one lousy piece of fruit you say! But it was not so much the act as the motive. In a very cut and dried way it was a very black and white choice. A very simple choice and Adam and Eve made the wrong one. They didn't trust. They didn't have the faith. That God their father knew what was best. They made the choice for all

of us, because we would all have made the same choice. We have all chosen not to trust God at some time or other.

They chose to die. They chose destruction. They were not content with Paradise, a beautiful world, perfect health, endless supply and variety of food and complete dominion over all they surveyed. They still were not satisfied. They just could not leave it alone. They just had to find out the hard way and we are all the same, every last one of us, no exceptions. As Paul put it "*For **all** have sinned and come short of the glory of God*".

Adam and Eve did surely die that day and with them all their descendants. Adams soul died the moment he reached out and took that fruit, the moment he *decided* to disobey God his Father. As his teeth sank into the flesh of that fruit there was a sudden dawning on him, like a dark wet cloud descending on his soul and the course of history was changed.

And now here thousands of years later we find Jesus trying to explain to poor Nicodemus how he can get back to the garden.

Telling him that he must be born again into that relationship with the Father. He has to re-new the spirit of God within his heart. He had to be re-born to reverse the action of Adam.

## Why?

There is a very good reason for all of this. God wants us to use our power of choice! He doesn't want robots! He already has angels to serve and worship Him. He wanted children who would love him for himself, because they wanted to. Children with whom He could share His love and his life and who would love Him in return, who *would love him because they wanted to*, not because they had to or were programmed to but *because they choose to*. A volunteer not a conscript, a willing giver, a free spirit, not a slave.

The bottom line is this, that God wanted children, God wanted a family. A special people that he could share and communicate with. He obviously had a relationship with Adam but that relationship was limited because Adam had never known the dark side. He had been created and placed in the situation, he had not yet chosen.

He had to choose just like, Nicodemus had to choose, just like you have to choose.

HAVE YOU CHOSEN YET???

## **God's Child or God's Creation**

### ***The importance of the concept***

The reason why this concept of being born again is so important is because no other illustration fills all the gaps or covers all the bases.

### ***The completeness of the new creation***

It is difficult even for believers to grasp the completeness of this new birth. The fact that it is an actual birth is hard to comprehend. The concept that this is a totally new creation is difficult to accept. Yes it has part of the old but no more than the embryo has a single cell of the mother and father. Although it owes its existence to its parents and it is dependent on them initially, it is still an entirely separate being, a new creature.

Christians are inclined to be philosophical and vague about the whole thing but the process is as definite in the spiritual sense as conception is in the physical. The spirit of God like a sperm impregnates our soul and a new life is begun.

## **Eternal life**

Not any old kind of life this is eternal life, everlasting life. The physical body and life will at some stage wilt and die but this new life will go on forever.

So who or what is this new creation. Well firstly it has two parents you and God. It is a child of God, Just like Adam was before he blew it. But now with the awareness of the goodness of God and of the potential for evil in others and ourselves. We have been through the valley and can now appreciate the clear mountain air.

We have known the darkness and can now appreciate His light. We have had the knowledge of good and evil and although we have been scared and wounded by the experience we have made our choice. We have chosen good, we have chosen God and through that choice we re-entered the garden once again. We are finally back home.



## CHAPTER 2

# CHOICE

### **The power of choice**

Few people understand the power they have in the power of Choice. The decision is one of the most powerful forces in the universe.

Choice is the greatest privilege and the greatest responsibility we have. Jesus told his disciples in MAT 18:18-19 “Assuredly, I say to you, whatever you bind (decide) on earth will be bound also in heaven, and whatever you loose (choose) on earth will be loosed also in heaven. Again I say to you that if two of you agree (decide) on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven”.

The vast majority of people drift along in life talking whatever comes their way rarely swimming against the tide or challenging the status quo. They simply avoid deciding whenever possible or for as long as possible and by default allow others to decide for them.



It is this power to decide that separates us from other creatures and that includes the angels.

## It's like opening the door



The first step is always the decision, you must initiate the whole process by unlocking the situation, opening the door. As soon as you open the door things can progress. Things can happen because you by your decision has set the ball rolling, set the process in motion.

*A meeting has to take place* at the beginning of any relationship, which is why this picture of a door is so appropriate. There is only one handle and it is on the your

side Jesus has a key but he does not have the authority to use it.

To start with the door is closed, you do not really know who or what, if anything is on the other side. You hear a knock, You think you hear a voice. You're undecided, should I open it? Will I? won't I? You decide YES! I will, I want this, I want to know. You reach for the handle. The door opens and there He is. The lover of your soul coming to bring you a new life. He is everything you hoped for, you embrace Him, you love him, you become one with him, you are joined together forever in a new life. You are born again, the adventure has begun.

*Then there is the person.* If you are to meet, you have to meet someone. If you consider God to be some faceless force, a cloud of cosmic energy without a name or personality then you cannot very well meet him or become his friend. There is a world of a difference between knowing about someone and actually knowing them between reading about them in the newspaper and being a personal friend. Jesus said "From now on I will no longer call you servants but I will call you friends".

That is why Jesus is so important. Apart from the physical act of demonstrating God's unselfish love by carrying our disobedience and sins to the Cross. Jesus is someone we can relate to. We can imagine what he was like, we can visualize him.

Jesus is the personality of God, our interface with him. He is the way through. The bridge to carry us over. But most of all Jesus shows what God is like. You can imagine him. The Gospels are so personal, they are really only a few short pages but after reading them you know what kind of man Jesus was. His personality comes over so strong.

You don't have to study the Bible for years or know every word Jesus spoke to know what kind of person he was. He spoke in a simple loving way. Mostly in the form of little stories that required a minimum amount of explanation.

The writings of Paul are by contrast quite complicated but they were directed at the educated Jewish leadership of the early church. You cannot imagine Jesus saying some of the things Paul says He just would not have expressed himself that way.

Jesus always kept it simple and as close to the heart as possible. By-passing the mind and the strong human need we all have to analyze and understand everything.

Paul has always appealed to those who have wanted to analyze the scriptures word by word and that is fine but the danger there is that we get into the letter of the law and miss the spirit of what is being said. There is enough ambiguity there for them to discuss and argue, enough ammunition to fight a holy war.





## CHAPTER 3

# THE WHORES AND THE TAX-COLLECTORS

Jesus said to the religious people one day, *“The whores and the tax collectors will enter into the Kingdom of God before you”*.

Can you imagine how mad that would have made them. We all know what whores are and the tax collectors were a sleazy bunch who defrauded the local people on behalf of the Romans. So what did he mean by this?

Another time he said to his disciples, *“Unless your righteousness exceeds that of the Pharisee’s there is no way you are going to get into the kingdom of God”*. Can you imagine what the disciples thought! The Pharisees were the pillars of society respectable law-abiding, clean and sophisticated. What chance then for the dirty uneducated and ignorant poor.

Jesus never came down hard on anyone, he only showed mercy, he always forgave. He understood and

tolerated weaknesses because he knew that that was the human condition.

After all he came to save us from ourselves. He was the lamb, turning the other cheek, except when it came to the religious people. He blasted them in Matthew, Chapter 23 ~ the whole chapter is devoted to blasting the religious system of his day.

Time after time they plotted and schemed against him. Why did they hate him so much?

They hated him because he came to do them out of a job. They had imposed certain standards and accepted norms, established by tradition and ritual over centuries. Things added on, a little here and a little there until it came to the point that the original truth was obscured.

## **The simplicity was lost**

The simplicity was lost, the message was muddled. Religion was professionalized beyond the scope and understanding of the ordinary people. In doing so the people came to rely on the religious establishment and to some extent the Old Testament itself was structured in that way.

Jesus came to give back the message to the people.

He was about to make a whole sector of the society redundant.

He was saying — *“Come unto **me** all ye who labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest, Take **my** yoke upon you and learn of me for I am meek and lowly heart and you shall find rest unto your soles”*.

He was saying that “my yoke is easy and my burden is light”. He was saying cast off the baggage of religion, with it’s endless rules and nit-picking ways and take my yoke of love.

Jesus had not come to destroy the law and the prophets as the Pharisees had supposed but rather to stop the rot and take the whole thing on to the next level.

They were not having it ~ Society always resists change. The status quo always hangs on until the very end. Jesus said *“until that time the Kingdom of Heaven suffered violence and the violent take it by force”* (MAT 11:12).

These guys were not just going to roll over, they would have to be pushed. They weren’t the only problem. I don’t even believe that the Pharisees understood why Jesus made them so mad, because if they had understood they would have been converted to his way of thinking. That basic problem still exists today.

The religious system is too far removed from the man on the street or the man in the high rise. It’s an exclusive, professional organization. What they preach is too complicated and what they demand is too hard. For most people



its there in case of an emergency, like an insurance policy, just in case a last resort is needed. How many times have you heard the story of someone who when he finally comes to the end of himself, finds God.

As long as things are going fine you usually manage without him and his help, at least so we think! It's not until something happens that reveals our frailty, our powerlessness that we realize that we are not all powerful and we look for another source.

Jesus said to the Pharisees, *“Tax collectors and the harlots go into the Kingdom of God before you”* (MAT 21:31).

Tax collectors and harlots were sinners and they knew it. By no stretch of the imagination could they consider themselves to be saints.

They came in humility, asking forgiveness for their failings, their frailty and sins. It was painfully obvious to them that they were falling short of the line. They knew what every human being knows deep down in their hearts, that they're not perfect.

They needed a savior, their pride did not get in their way. They readily received Jesus, they connected with his loving and forgiving spirit and received his love. They accepted his gift like little children, to be totally forgiven. They knew they would never make it on their own. They needed a savior.

Meanwhile the Pharisee's were busy perfecting themselves, ~ they were keeping the law, feeling good, feeling holy, clean and respectable. They had it together, they had it all worked out.

They were blinded by their pride, buried in their conceit. So deceived by their complicated theories that when Jesus came along with the simple message of love and forgiveness, they did not heed him.

At first they ignored him. I'm sure they were curious and then they began to realize what he was saying. He was saying ~ *"There is a new order, a new deal, a new revelation. Anything new is always met with resistance"*.

He was saying that you don't have to keep all these rules and regulations to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. He was saying no-one has ever kept all the rules, no one has ever managed to live without sinning. Whether you break one or you break all is the same difference.

He said *"I have not come to destroy the old order but to fulfill it"*. He was saying we must move on, we must progress beyond this basic stuff to a higher level where love would be the guiding rule, ~ unselfish sacrificial love. He said *"A new commandment I give unto you to love one another as I have loved you"*.

The problem here is that, that rule although it is such a simple one it is the hardest rule of all to keep, or should I say to live. We are to love one another as Jesus loves us.

To enable you to do this he also says that he will help you. If we would receive him by believing in him, we would be born again by the spirit of God which would live in us. This spirit would be bonded with our spirit and he would love others through us to the extent that we would allow him.

The more we yield to his spirit within us the more his love would be evident.

This new way could either be very easy or very hard. Very easy if we yielded to Jesus and allowed him to love others through us and very hard if we struggled to do it without his help. His yoke would be easy and light but our cross would be heavy and hard.

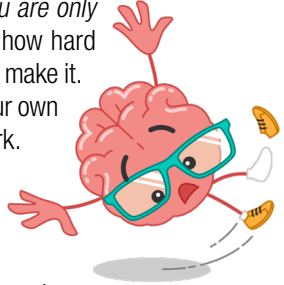
This new way precludes religion and its establishment. It went to the very heart of the establishment. They were saying “keep the rules, we monitor the game”. He was saying *“I am cutting out the middle man, you can come directly to me, directly to the throne of grace, the source”*.

## All religion is built on one simple principle

**“If you are good enough you will get to heaven”.**

Jesus was saying ~ *“No one is good enough and if you think you are good enough you are only deluding yourself”*. No matter how hard you try you will never be able to make it. It’s like lifting yourself up by your own boot straps, it just doesn’t work.

But he says, *“Look I have made a way, you don’t have to try and climb the wall into the Kingdom. I am the door you can just walk in, if you’ll accept my forgiveness”*. *“No-one is too good or too bad to enter in. All that is required is a childlike acceptance not a striving for perfection”*.



Now that is a pretty hard pill to swallow if you have so much invested in the Status Quo.

That is one of the reasons why the poor and the sinners followed Jesus so willingly. It was easier for them, it was right up their street. It was water down their mill. They knew that they could never make it the other way, the religious way. They understood that here was hope, God would forgive them, accept them and love them in spite of themselves, as long as they would allow Jesus to

cover for them, accepted him as their savior, allowed him to do it for them. To take their place, to absorb the result of their failure, to reverse the result of their disobedience.

## **The Pharisee and the publican**

The parable of the publican, that is the tax collector and the Pharisee illustrates this point very well.

The Pharisee stood up at the front of the temple and started congratulating himself on what a wonderful man he was.

How he fasted and gave to the poor, he was doing everything right. In fact he was so good, so right that he arrogantly compared his rightness, his goodness with the apparent unrighteousness, badness of the tax-collector at the back of the temple.

The tax-collector was feeling bad and sad. For some reason on that day he had come to the realization that he had been doing a lot of wrong in his life and that he was far from right. He was feeling condemned, he saw where he was wrong, the way he offended God's law, and offended people. He knew he was being unfair in his dealings.

He didn't try to make excuses or deny the feelings he had, he admitted his guilt and simply and unconditionally asked for forgiveness.

Jesus said that the tax-collector went down to his house justified and forgiven because he had sought and received God's mercy and forgiveness. But the Pharisee did not because he was so full of his own self righteousness, that he didn't see or feel the need for God's mercy or forgiveness. He was able to save himself, make it on his own. He was deceiving himself, blinded by pride in his own good works. The world is full of these kind of people and there is some of this in each one of us.

## **Heaven is full of sinners**

But the kingdom of God is full of people who like the publican, know that they are sinners who have come to the realization that they are inadequate and have made up the difference.

The Bible says, *"For all have sinned and come short of the Glory of God"*.

We just come short, some by an inch and some by a mile, some by a minute and some by an hour. But if you miss the boat, you miss the boat. It doesn't really matter if you are a minute late or an hour late it's the same difference.

The self-righteous like the Pharisee don't even bother with the boat. They will get there on their own steam. They are prepared to paddle their own canoe. The fact is that they will be rowing on forever without ever arriving

anywhere, because they are heading towards a destination that does not exist.

## **It's so easy it's hard**

If it was that easy everyone would have got it by now, but it is hard because it is so easy. It is so easy and so simple that people find it hard to believe and that's it.

Jesus made a big thing out of it and on one occasion he took a little child and used a child, with its simple and uncomplicated outlook on life to explain how we should approach our heavenly father and his kingdom.

Children actually trust and expect the best. It only when they grow up they become disillusioned. They lose their faith, their innocence and their ability to trust. Jesus put it this way.

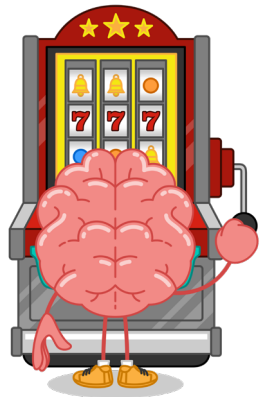
*“Which of you, if your child asked you for a fish would you give him a serpent or if he asked for bread would you give him a stone - so if we being evil know how to give good things to our children, how much more our heavenly father give good things to those who ask him” (LUKE 11:11-13).*

Childlike faith is required, that is easy. Yet it is hard for someone who is battle weary from the war of life, hurt, disappointed, disillusioned and confused to return to that simple state even momentarily.

It shouldn't be hard to be simple. Yet just you try and deny your intellectual capacity. Try and deny your requirement to understand and analyze and you will soon discover just how difficult it is. Our minds, which we have conditioned to function in a logical and rational way, simply refuse to be put on hold. This problem is particularly acute for those intellectual, well educated types who have built their minds into a rational and calculating machine.

We are taught to be strong, self-reliant and independent not trusting and interdependent. Interdependence is a condition beyond dependence where although we are individuals and responsible for our actions, we still realize that we are dependent upon others to produce the end result. That is why it is so easy and yet so hard, so simple and yet so difficult to comprehend.

Our pride demands that we strive and struggle, earn it, deserve it and not simply accept it as a freebie, a handout, unearned and undeserved "*a free gift*" as Paul called it. Eternal Life is the ultimate jackpot and you don't even have to buy a ticket, there is no luck involved, all you have to do is collect the prize.





It's a bit like social welfare you may be entitled to it but if you don't go and claim it you won't get it. You have to accept it, receive it, ask for it.

Jesus said — *“Unless you accept the Kingdom of God as a little child, you will in no way enter into it”*. Now it can't be much clearer than that!

## CHAPTER 4

# RELIGION THE HARD WAY

What do all religions have in common?

They are *hard*.

They all demand you to do really hard things — that salvation must be earned, the hard way.

You must in some way earn or deserve it by *perfecting yourself*.

Jesus put it like this — He described the kingdom of God as a sheep fold. And a sheep fold in those days was a strong enclosure with a high wall. A holding pen in which sheep were kept at night and for short periods, where they could not escape and where they were safe from predators. The walls were high and there was only one narrow door, only one way in and out.

Jesus says — *“I am the door, for me if any man enters in (into the Kingdom of God), he will come in and out on*

*find pasture but anyone who tries to climb up some other way is a thief and a robber”.*

## **Stealing God's sheep**

A lot of people over the centuries have tried to steal God's sheep, to deceive them, to persuade them. They have built religions and empires by bringing the souls of men into bondage through tradition and fear.

Only Jesus sets us free from bondage and fear. He gives us perpetual rest instead of continuous striving to climb the wall that seems to have no top.

Some people get really good at climbing the wall. They develop all kinds of equipment and techniques which they pass on from generation to generation. There are stories of great climbers and of ones who got tired, made the fatal mistake and fell. Never to be seen again, great climbers and great fallers, great saints and great sinners.

In the final analysis, they are all climbing the wall. A wall, which in the history of man has never been scaled, no one has ever seen the top of it. No man has ever managed to get over to the far side and yet all the time, the door, the gate is open.

Jesus opened the gate when he became a man and took our punishment upon himself, allowing God to forgive us. Justice had been satisfied and man and woman

could be reinstated to their original position as children and citizens of the Kingdom by simply accepting what Jesus did on their behalf.

## **Climbing the wall**

There are an amazing amount of these climbing techniques, its amazing the diversity and variety of ways which man has invented to try to perfect himself.

It would appear at first glance that the Bible is also full of these ladders, techniques, complicated rituals, laws especially in the Old Testament but it is made quite clear that these could not perfect you or save you.

It was only offering the sacrifice that could cover your sin. These were symbolic of the ultimate sacrifice. Now that the sacrifice has been made there's no longer any need to go through with symbolic sacrifice. We are now in a new arrangement, a new covenant, a new era. The problem is that the Church is by and large is still doing things in the Old Testament way, with its temples, priests and sacrifices. Looking to the ladders, reinforcing climbing skills instead of pointing to the open door.

This emphasis on climbing the wall rather than walking through the door is very subtle.

Most churches agree that Jesus died for our sins and that God has forgiven us because of his sacrifice. But they

cannot just leave it at that, they cannot accept that, that is it. It cannot be that simple they say. How about those hundreds of years of theology, those millions of books, all those saints? All of history cannot be wrong they say. We know what Jesus said, we have heard it and read it but surely it cannot mean exactly what it says. Jesus must have meant something else, after all he said that all you had to do is believe and you are saved. There has to be some deeper hidden meaning it cannot be that simple.

## **Rewards and punishments**

All man made religions are based on a system of rewards and punishments. When you are training an animal that is how you teach them. You re-affirm positive behavior with rewards and discourage negative behavior with punishments.

Now I suppose in the old testament there was a fair bit of that or so it would seem. God was trying to teach a whole nation how they should live and there was no law, no precedent, so it was all from scratch.

We take the law for granted, look at what has happened in country after country. We look at the Pol Pots, the Stalins and the Hitlers and wonder how could anyone be so bad so evil. We must remember that when the Ten Commandments were written it was a radical document. It set down for the first time what the rules were.

Man has always had a conscience which he has had to listen to. But here for the first time were rules which could be applied to all of society. Up till then Kings made rules and either kept them or broke them whenever it suited them in order to control their subjects. But now there was an overriding set of rules that made it clear for the first time what was right and what was wrong.

These rules were made for the good of man not for God. As Job said God is the creator what possible benefit can God derive from some good or some bad act that you or I might commit.

## **The law was necessary for two reasons**

First to help us survive and develop. Without the law there could be no society as we know it only anarchy. No longterm progress would be possible, development would be constantly disrupted by a cycle of violence and mayhem.

Secondly, without the law there would be no yardstick, sin would be a totally subjective thing. There could be no judgment.

This was a spiritually primitive system but was an improvement on what went before.

God's plan always was that He would write his law not on tablets of stone like He gave to Moses but on tablets

of flesh, in our hearts. His desire is that his children would instinctively know what was right or wrong because they would be lead by the law of love, their actions motivated and guided by the spirit of love within them.

Would you like to forget the rule book? Would you like to have God's living law written on your heart? Then why not let Jesus come in and inscribe it on your soul.

Would you prefer to be inspired by the force of love from within or be driven by the fear of making a mistake and suffering the consequences.

There is a world of difference between following willingly and being driven reluctantly. Would you prefer to be part of the of the New Testament with its simple law of love or do you want to stay in bondage to the old.

## CHAPTER 5

# THE KINGDOM

This is a concept that most people can readily comprehend. Even though these days kings and kingdoms have largely been replaced by democracies these are normally lead by a figure head such as a president who symbolically has replaced the king or queen figure.

Human nature seems to demand this symbol of authority. However we have learned to limit the power of these people as power tends to corrupt.

Now God is the ultimate King, Boss, Managing director, the chief authority. He is in control and he has given Jesus all power and authority in Heaven and Earth.

Let's be perfectly clear on this point. If God exists, as the Bible says and is the beginning and the end, the Creator, then He is in control and has the power to change the tiniest details.

But there is one area where He has ceded that control. Where He himself has limited his power, that is in the realm of human experience. Even though HE is Lord of Lords and



King of Kings, He will not exercise this authority over your life without an act of your will.

You have to give him permission, you have to invite him to be king in your life. You have authority over yourself, the way you feel, what you do. The Lord can influence you but ultimately you have control and authority to exercise choice.

How do we become part of the kingdom, enter into it or even see it.

It says in the first chapter of John *“He came unto him own and his own received him not. But to as many as received him to them gave he power to **become** the sons of God”*.

## Entering in

The *1st concept* you must grasp and accept is that you must join up, you are not born into it, you do not inherit it, you do not deserve it and you cannot earn it.

You have the right to enter into it but you must make an act of will to exercise that right.

Jesus put it very simply “except a man be born again he cannot enter into the kingdom of God”. As you enter into a house there is a definite moment of entry, a point of entry a door, a gate.

Jesus said *“I am the door by me if any man will come in he shall go in and out and find pasture”*. The kingdom like the sheepfold has only one door, one entrance, only one way in.

## 2 Levels

The fact is that the Kingdom of God works on *2 levels*.

*Firstly* on the personal level, it is in you in your heart. If you have made Jesus Lord of your life, then he reigns in the kingdom of your heart.

You have to enter in on that level first so you can have the fullness of the second level to be part of the greater kingdom the joining together of all the hearts where Christ reigns that make up the greater kingdom of God.

For now it's a spiritual kingdom unseen except by those who believe. Where he gently and lovingly rules in our hearts with our consent a servant king, a humble, loving, giving, caring king, the father king, the brother king, the Son king. The king who came secretly to a stable in Bethlehem.

Jesus said to Pilate *“my kingdom is not of this world else would my servants fight”*. But there is another side to this King and this Kingdom! Jesus said that *“this gospel of the **kingdom** would be preached in every nation and then will*

*the end come*". He prayed the Father saying "*Thy **kingdom** come thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven*".

This is the promise, the gospel of the kingdom. The kingdom of God on earth, the ultimate fulfillment of the gospel, a real kingdom with real people, with a real king ruling the nations with a rod of iron, no more messing about.

It is only with the direct and forceful intervention of the Lord Jesus that a world of peace, justice and righteousness can be established and "*we with patience do wait for it*". This will be the ultimate triumph of good over evil.

The reason this is such an important part of the Christian message is that it gives us hope and answers. Hope that right and goodness, love and justice will eventually win through and answer those who accuse God of not caring because he will not intervene.

So why does the church not speak more of these things. Could it be that they don't really believe it.

The concept of the establishment of the kingdom was so important to Jesus, so central to everything he did that it must be considered carefully.

Jesus referred to the Kingdom of God 99 times. Many times He spoke of it in farming terms as if it was something

that God was growing or developing. He called it a Field, a Vineyard, a Harvest, a Mustard seed, a Pearl of great price.

There is not a single direct reference to the Kingdom of God in the old testament, except in the book of Daniel where it is referred to in the prophetic sense. This kingdom thing was something new.

As Jesus said in LUKE 16:16 *“The law and the prophets were until John. Since that time the kingdom of God has been preached, and everyone is pressing into it”*.

“And the time came that the saints of the most high possessed the kingdom”.

“In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed but shall break in pieces all other kingdoms and shall stand forever”.

“The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of the Lord and he shall rule them with a rod of iron”.



## CHAPTER 6

# THE HOLY SPIRIT

### **Our relationship with Jesus is a private thing**

A relationship with Jesus is fundamentally a private affair. One to one you and Him, it is a personal relationship. The Holy Spirit on the other hand is a party animal. It's an extravagant and outgoing relationship.

Our relationship with Jesus should be deep and steady, relatively unemotional. It's not a feeling it's a knowing, it's a very solid thing.

### **The Holy Spirit is a party animal**

Our relationship with the Holy Spirit is more transient more coming and going more an on off thing.

It's more emotional our feelings are more involved, and this relationship is more manifest to the world around us.

### **God's amplification system**

Because the Holy Spirit is mainly geared towards how we interact with others it releases a lot more force or

power, God's power, spiritual power. Which actually acts directly on the world around us.

Just as Jesus is the manifestation of the personality of God, the Holy Spirit is the manifestation of the power of God, in you personally. This power is manifest in 2 ways Firstly in the amplification of the fruits of the spirit. It amplifies the love, the joy, the peace, the patience, the long suffering, that you receive from your relationship with Jesus.

This creates a desire within you to share this with others. Because you have love and concern for them, you want them to experience the same sweet Jesus you love so much. You are sure that if they would just call out to him and know him that he could help them and meet their needs.

## **Power to change things**

The 2nd way the Holy Spirit is manifest is in power. Power to change lives, power to change things, power to do things. Jesus did things, he just didn't talk about it, he did it. He turned water into wine, He healed the sick and fed the multitudes. He had the power and if you have Jesus within you, you have the power. It is through the gift of the Holy Spirit that we can access that power.

That is the problem with most of the churches today they have no power. It's all talk its non-interactive, it doesn't

work, it's dead, as Jesus warned it is like "salt without savor".

Jesus came and loved us. He didn't go around healing people just to entertain the crowd or prove that he was God. It says that when he saw the multitudes He was moved with compassion upon them, because they were wounded and scattered abroad as sheep having no shepherd.

He healed them because he cared for them, He had the power and he was disposed to use it. Jesus hasn't changed. He loves us just as much now as he did then. Jesus wants to save, heal and lift up just as much today as he did then. It's ridiculous to think otherwise. Through the Holy Spirit you can have the power at your disposal to transform your concern into action.





## CHAPTER 7

# SCIENCE IS A RELIGION

Over the past 100 years man has come to trust in science and to a large extent this has replaced superstition. Your average man on the street has the idea that we now understand how things work and that some scientist somewhere can explain just about anything.

We gradually have been conditioned to reject spiritual explanations and replace them with scientific explanations. So let's play the game.

### **The 5th dimension**

Einstein was a scientist and he did believe in God and the spiritual dimension.

If we look at what Einstein was trying to prove with his theory of relativity. He said that if you could travel at the speed of light you would disappear, you would enter a different dimension.

Let me illustrate what I mean. The world we live in is 4 dimensional. Everything has length, breadth, height and

time. So, if you can imagine a world that has only 3 dimensions, length, breadth, and time, let's call it flatland, a world where no one had ever experienced height. Its inhabitants would not be able to see anything high. Some of them had from time to time had senesced height, there were stories of people who had been into a high world. But they were considered to be a little mad after all how could height exist when there was no way of proving that it actually existed. There was no way to measure it, or explain it. Anyway, who needed height, weren't they getting along fine with length and breadth. Weren't they working on flat explanations for the paranormal, high things. There was a logical, a flat logical explanation for everything.

So you can see how anyone claiming to have had a height experience would be considered to be a little strange.

But this is what the theory of relativity sets out to prove, that if you could travel at the speed of light that you would pass into a different dimension. You would pass through a window into a 5th dimension! What has been referred to over the ages as the Spirit world, which we in our purely physical, our 4 dimensional state cannot appreciate.

However when we become born again spiritually this new part of us is able to see and enter into and is part of this new dimension and as it grows it can experience more and more of this new spiritual world.

## U.F.O'S

A good example of this trend towards the scientific explanation is peoples interpretation of the sightings of UFO's. There is little doubt that people have seen things. The Bible even reports such sightings in the book of Eze-kiel and the book of revelations. There are numerous ac-counts of beings of light coming and going. But what has changed is how these things are explained. In the past these were explained in spiritual terms now they must be explained from a scientific perspective.

Deja vu, telepathy, premonitions and certain forms of mental illness all easily fit into the spiritual model but this explanation is no longer fashionable and all kinds of theo-ries have been developed to accommodate and explain them.

The fact is that the deeper we go the more obvious it becomes that there is order in the universe, that there must be another dimension, that there is a plan. There is order and reason in everything. There is a master plan and a Master behind that Plan.

Man through science is desperately trying to explain the universe in rational terms so he will not have to ac-knowledge any other Master but himself. Because if we acknowledge that there is a master plan then we must acknowledge that there is a master and if there is a mas-

ter then we should give him the glory and we should try to find out where we fit into his plan.

## CHAPTER 8

# THE BATTLE GROUND

The mind is the battlefield where heaven and earth meet. It is the center of our spiritual universe where time is eternal. Some people are more sensitive than others to the spiritual power or signals that are around us but for all of us the mind is the receiving apparatus through which we interact with the spiritual world.

With this in mind it is essential that we have some understanding of how the mind works. Since it is in-between, it therefore works on two levels, the physical and the spiritual, the eternal and the temporal.

You might say that a discussion on the mind has no place in a book about the Bible but believe it or not the Bible talks a lot about the mind, how it works and how we should control and operate it.

Most of the modern pop psychology of positive thinking movement has come directly from the Bible and has helped millions of people to lead happier and more abundant lives. The Church however has failed to recognize the importance or significance of these principles especially the

temporal or physical aspects of how the mind works and have concentrated mainly on the spiritual.

The fact is that many of these principles, laws or rules are meta-physical in nature. Like the rain it falls on the good as well as on the bad. Or like gravity, they work for everyone whenever they are applied. For instance a positive thinking fraudster will be a better fraudster than a negative thinking fraudster.

Therefore a basic understanding of these principles will help us use our minds as they were intended rather than them running riot and ruling us in an unruly and undisciplined manner.

## **Despair and fear**

It is quite possible that someone reading this book is in despair. In fact the odds are pretty good that a lot of people reading this book will have tasted despair.

Jesus himself experienced it on the cross just before the end, when he cried out. “My God my God why have you forsaken me”.

It is often not until we reach the end of ourselves that God can help us. It is often not until we have tried everything else that we finally turn to God and ask Him.

It is not until we realize that the answer does not lie within ourselves that we look without for the answer.

Some people don't make it through the dark moment and destroy themselves rather than reach out their hands for help. Some hang in there and make it through only to return to the dark pit again and again.

Some call it a disease, a neurosis but at the end of the day it doesn't matter what you call it. It is a sense of hopelessness, a total lack of vision and purpose, which comes from looking inwards, dwelling on your own sorry state.

Paul by any standards was a good man even a saint. Yet he said "In my own flesh I find *no* good thing".

## **Introspection**

The Bible warns us against introspection. Looking inwards at ourselves. The Bible says forget about yourself. "Look up for your redeemer for your redemption draweth nigh". Look at Jesus, worry about someone else.

When you are in that negative state analyzing and dwelling on your problems, your mind will only amplify them. You know the old saying, "making a mountain out of a molehill".



## Fear is darkness, Love is light

Fear and Despair are first cousins. Fear is the equivalent of darkness and Love is the equivalent of light.

Roosevelt said during the war, *“The only thing we have to fear is fear itself”*, and he was right.



Fear is an enemy which we must learn to control and overcome.

Fear is the opposite of love and there are many different kinds of fear. We must be aware of this and be able to recognize and distinguish between them.

## Not all fear is bad

The Bible says “the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom”. This always puzzled me, but the fear referred to here is a respect not a dread, a healthy respect.

A bit like the police if you don't break the law you have nothing to fear from the police. You are not afraid of the law but you are afraid of the consequences of breaking the law, so you are indirectly afraid of the law.

In a sense the old testament is built around this fear or respect for God, except for a few individuals who walked closely with Him, God seemed to love them from afar. God blessed and protected those who feared and trusted him. But from the beginning it was clear that what God wanted was for man to love him. But fear and respect was the next best thing, a starting point.

This fearful respect was also necessary for man's survival since if man had no respect or fear of God man would not have a conscience and would have destroyed himself. Civilization and progress would not have been possible.

Children are controlled by fear they are being programmed and since their use of reason is limited they are learning by our reaction to their actions. A system no matter how subtle of rewards and punishments, encouraging or discouraging their actions. The fear we are talking about here is father fear.

## **Understanding fear**

There are basically two kinds of fear: One from within and one from without.

### ***Fear from within, fear of God?***

The fear from within us can be good and necessary in order for us humans to avoid the accesses to which we are so wonderfully prone.

As long as it is controlled and understood it can be a positive force. God has put this fear into us to control and motivate us since he knows that we find it hard to be motivated by love, which is his preference. The fear of God is God's fall back position.

### ***Fear from without***

The second type of fear comes from without and it is a totally different animal. This is the fear the Bible says gives torment! This fear needs to be overcome, not just controlled.

There are several sources of this fear but not as many as you would imagine. The source can be a person or it can be an experience. It can be visible, tangible or it can be invisible, intangible. It can affect you in different ways, physically, mentally or spiritually.

Everyone is familiar with physical fear, which generates mental fear. The fear of pain or deprivation. Often it is through some physical act like an accident or attack that a deeper mental or spiritual fear can take hold. This residual fear can be even more devastating than the original act that sparked it.

### **Spiritual fear**

Spiritual fear is a wide spread problem. It affects millions of people and science still has not come up with an

effective treatment. This is hardly surprising because it is not a scientific problem. It is a spiritual problem. Another difficulty with this type of phobia or anxiety is that the person usually does not know why you feel this way. They just can't seem to put your finger on it.

It is just a general feeling of apprehension, insecurity or anxiety. The Bible calls this fear, the scientist / psychologists would call it paranoia or phobia or some other name depending on how the fear is manifested, as if it was some sort of vegetable growing on a person's head.

Normally the spirit of fear just takes hold and then grows and grows.

There is no fear in love and the only way to conquer spiritual fear is by displacing it with something else. James says, "*There is no fear in love because fear has torment and perfect love **casts** out fear*".

It's like light and darkness, darkness is the default. If there is darkness, there is nothing but if light comes the darkness flees because it cannot resist the light. It has no power, unlike light which is pure power.

It's like filling a glass with water, the water displaces the emptiness as it cannot resist the water.

To be fearful is a human condition or tendency, the default mode as a computer buffs would say. In order to

deal with fear effectively we must let the light of God's love glow in our hearts.

Jesus said, *"I am the light of the world"*. John said *"Jesus was the light that lighted every man that came into the world"* and this deep-seated spiritual fear can only be displaced by allowing Jesus shine his light deep down in our souls.

Sometimes we don't want this because of what He might find down there. Things we have buried and tried to forget which emerge now and then to haunt us.

This is why people find it such a change when they let Jesus in. He is not like a psycho-analyst, who primarily helps us to understand and deal with these fears and feelings. He fills our souls with light so that there is no longer any room for the darkness. It is an effortless operation, though it does require our co-operation and consent. He can actually go in and clean up the mess, not just re-arrange it. It says in Isaiah:

***"Though your sins be red as scarlet I  
will make them white as snow"***

## **Physical and Mental Fear**

When it comes to mental / physical fear, a slightly different approach is required.

One night the disciples were crossing the sea of Galilee when a great storm arose out of nowhere and they were afraid. So in a panic they woke Jesus who was asleep at the back of the boat. When he had calmed the waves he said to them, “*Why are you **so fearful**, how is it that you have no **faith***”.

Whereas with subconscious spiritual fear, we can displace it with the light of love, the spirit of love, God’s Spirit. With mental, physical fear we can displace it by confronting and attacking it with the power of faith.

## **Faith is something you develop**

Fear is the opposite of faith. Since these types of fear have different sources and operate on different levels, they are dealt with in different ways. Jesus expressly forbid his disciples to worry.

He said, “*Take no thought for tomorrow, sufficient for today is the evil thereof*”. He said on another occasion that “*let not your heart be troubled, if you believe in God believe also in me*”.

We are expressly told not to worry, especially about things we have no control over. Jesus said “*which of you by taking thought (by worrying) can add one inch to his height*”, not one.

It's just as wrong to worry and fear as it is to steal. We are not told that we should not prepare, in other words, do what we can now, today but not to be pre-occupied or worried about the future, what it may or may not bring.

You have to work hard at that. Our minds have a natural tendency to focus on the negative and to lead us into worry. You have to learn to control this. Many of us instead of controlling this tendency, simply use amusements, entertainment's or even drugs to escape from it temporarily. The problem is that it is still there when you get back to reality. This mechanism is at its extreme in alcoholism and drug abuse. People have to escape from their minds because they don't want or do not know how to control the thought process. They just don't have the resources to do it.

The Bible says *"God has not given us the spirit of fear but he has given to us the spirit of power, spirit of love and a sound mind"*.

Jesus is called the Prince of Peace.

You can go a long way to improving your mind by simply disciplining your thought process. But when things go wrong and you lose your grip due to circumstances beyond your control, it's in these deep and dark moments that the weakness of the human condition is exposed.

Each one of us has been there. At these moments of decision do we try to struggle through one more time hoping for the best or do we ask the Prince of peace to come in and calm the waters of our hearts as he did that night on the Sea of Galilee.

Do we drop our guard and deny our pride and admit to ourselves that we really cannot make it on our own, that there is something missing in our lives and that it just might be Jesus. Or do we resolve to just struggle on, grin and bear it. Take the pain and do it our way instead of his way.





## CHAPTER 9

# **FORGIVENESS**

### **Each morning brings a new day**

Forgiveness is a wonderful thing. Imagine each day is a brand new one. What would it be like if we didn't sleep. If each day rolled on into the next if each day just went on and on.

I suppose if it was a good day and things were going well, it wouldn't be too bad. But if things were going badly, it would be hell. God has made it so that each morning brings a new day, we start afresh, renewed and rested. Our minds are clear, our bodies strengthened and our spirits renewed.

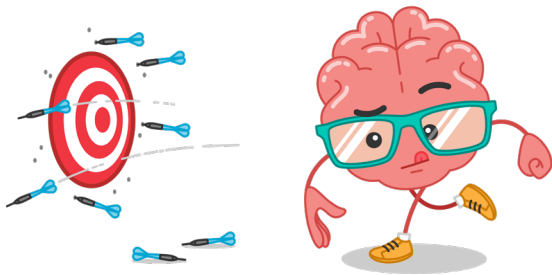
Now I know that we don't always wake up feeling that way but that is how the Lord intended it to be.

We should face each new day looking forward and wondering what exciting things will happen to us today. We are not looking back on our blunders and mistakes which we made yesterday.

## It is a sin to worry

Fear of the future and remorse over the past can destroy your life and the Bible expressly forbids both. It is a sin to worry about the future. It is just as sinful as stealing. Over and over the Bible commands us to “**fear not**”. We are to take no thought for tomorrow, sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof. Being fearful exposes a deep-seated lack of trust in God’s goodness and of his ability to take care of us.

Remorse and regret over the past is a deep-seated lack of confidence in God’s love and his willingness to forgive us.



Mistakes are inevitable, no man has lived who has not made mistakes. As Paul says, “*For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God*”. In the end it does not really matter whether you are one inch short or a mile short, if you haven’t made it you are wide of the mark,

which is where the word Sin originates from. When an archer missed the bullseye it was a sin. Sin is simply not hitting the bullseye, not getting it right every time, missing God's target.

God's commandments and God's will are like the Bullseye, when we miss it we sin. Some people take care to do their best to take aim but they don't hit the bullseye every time. Some people don't even know where the target is. In the end it is the same. We all miss the target from time to time and don't score 100%. No one gets a hole in one every time and many times we even miss the simplest of puts.

Everyone has sinned, but it is what we do with our sin that matters. The Bible says that if we confess our sin that God will forgive us our sin. But much more than that, God says that he will remove them from us. Jesus called the lamb that takes away the sins of the world. *He actually took them away!*

When He forgives and then takes them away, he removes them from us. I don't know where he puts them but it says in Isaiah *"As far as the East is from the West, so far I have removed your transgressions from you"*. He goes on to say, *"Though your sins be red as scarlet I'll make you white as driven snow"*. It says that they are cast into the sea of forgetfulness.

Confession and repentance of your sins is a very special process. It does not mean that you will not sin again but once you have repented and confessed them this will lighten your load, by letting your sins go.

As we have seen sin separates us from God and disrupts our communication with him. It also has the same effect on our relationship with the people around us. This is why Jesus said we should forgive others if we ourselves want to receive forgiveness. He knew that we are made that way.

Un-Forgiveness is one of the most destructive forces in the universe. It causes wars, destroys families, ruins health, and engenders endless misery. When we do not forgive we not only hurt others, we often hurt ourselves even more. So be smart and be quick to forgive and forget. Holding a grudge is one of most expensive luxuries and is one you cannot afford.

**Do yourself a favor, forgive someone today.**

## CHAPTER 10

# PRAYER

Prayer is simply communication with God. You tell him something and he tells you something. It's as simple as that.

In the human sphere the way you communicate with another person depends on your relationship with them. If you know them well you can communicate informally and easily. If you don't know them well or if they hold some official position your communication will be more reserved and formal. If your communication is for a specific purpose that also can affect the way you communicate. These same things apply to your communications with the God.

If you have him in your heart and you know him as a close friend, your communication would be easy but if He seems distant, someone far off and your relationship is impersonal then it will be difficult.

It all comes back to your perspective and that depends on your relationship.

If you know him like a brother, you will love him like a brother. If you only know him as a King you will fear and respect him as a King. If you only know him as some kind of stern ruler sitting in judgment, this is the kind of communication you will have with him. If your relationship is right then communication will follow.

Our relationship with God, like any other relationship requires time and if you love someone, you will like to spend time with them. It won't be an imposition, it will be a pleasure.

## **God will speak to you**

Most of all prayer is a two way communication with God and if we take time, God will speak to us. The more we grow in our relationship with him, the clearer we begin to hear his voice. We begin to recognize his voice.

His voice comes through in our thoughts. At first it seems like just another thought and we miss them. They get buried among all the other thoughts that are flying around in our minds. Gradually we begin to notice that some thoughts are different and then one day we realize that one of these thoughts was from God.

We realize that it is God telling us something. In other words we begin to recognize them and then over time we become more and more tuned in to God's voice and recognize these thoughts as the voice of God.

God has many ways of communicating with us. He has his word the Bible, the handbook, the baseline. Why should God have to repeat his overall plan and vision to each one personally when he has already told us most of it in his word in the Bible. Why should he have to repeat it all! However, sometimes part of his word, may be more relevant to us at a particular moment and he will make it come alive and speak to us in a very personal way, deep in our soul.

God often speaks to us through others and he can speak to us through circumstances he creates.

Prayer is your personal communication, you're one to one. This communication should be a two way communication. God wants to speak to us. It is part of his plan to speak to us. The Bible says we should have fellowship with the Father. Fellowship is a two way thing, most people are bad listeners. They love to be listened to, Jesus repeated time and time again the phrase, "*He who has ears to hear, let him hear*".

## **We have to tune in**

Listening to God requires even more attention since his voice is a still small voice and it can be easily drowned out or missed if you are not paying attention.

Prayer is like a lot of things in the spiritual realm. It is both difficult and easy, depending on how you look at it. It is extremely difficult to get the human mind into a



state where we can really pray because it requires faith and not logic. It requires us to stop all action and to get quiet, to back off from life.

Hearing from God or receiving something back from him is even more difficult because this requires even more Faith and initially at least requires you to practice getting really quiet.



Jesus himself used to get up very early in the morning and go up into the mountains by himself so he could get away from everyone and every distraction, and get his instructions for the day.

Before he started his ministry he spent 40 days in the desert hearing from God. There was nothing in the desert, no distractions so even though he was the Son of God he had to practice hearing from his Father. I wish my children would practice that as well.

He was tuned in, he was clear about his mission and was able to proceed confidently. He was not flying by the seat of his pants and was continually getting further instructions. He said over and over again, *“I do only things that the Father tells me to do”*.

God is like the team coach, before the game he issues his instructions, sets out the strategy. Once on the pitch each player acts independently, in other words the trainer does not dictate every move once the play is on, but he must be constantly referring back to the coach for further instructions.

In fact this is what Paul meant when he said “*Pray without ceasing*”.

Prayer is something you can and should be doing all the time. Okay! you should sit down with the coach before the game but once you are off on your day, once the match is started you should still be listening and sensitive to any further instructions.

Don't be surprised if you find it difficult to pray. Its a little bit like hang gliding you just have to launch out. You're either flying or you are not.

The disciples also found it hard to pray. In fact, they came to Jesus one day and asked him to teach them how to pray. He taught them the Our Father. Probably the best known prayer in the world. Let's take a look at what it says. I'm sure we could learn a lot about prayer from this one, since it was given to us by Jesus himself.

## **The Lord's Prayer**

It begins by stating to whom the prayer is addressed. This is important, there are many gods, idols, spirits to whom people pray or communicate with. Today we are so sophisticated we are inclined to sneer at this but in the Old Testament times and in Jesus day and indeed in many societies today many gods are recognized and worshipped. In fact Christian, Judaism and Islam are the only major religions that recognize only one true God.

## **Who are you praying to**

This is why the name of Jesus is so important and powerful because it directs our prayer and gives it authority.

You must be sure who you are praying to and you must address your prayer accordingly. Jesus, address this prayer to His Father in heaven. This is also why he told us to use his name He said *"if you shall ask anything in my name you shall have it"*.

At that time God did not dwell in the hearts of men because Jesus had not yet made the ultimate sacrifice. Man could not yet be returned to his former state as he was in the Garden of Eden. So this is a kind of Formal prayer to God the father, the King on the throne in heaven.

## **Praise and Thank Him**

The prayer then opens with praise and the recognition of the greatness of God. We should always begin a prayer with praise and thanksgiving. As David said, *“I will enter his gates with thanksgiving in my heart, I will enter his courts with praise”*. This is how our prayer should begin, counting our blessings and thanking God for them.

## **Give Him authority**

The prayer proceeds to give authority to God both over our lives and over the earth. By asking him to bring his kingdom and to perform his will, on earth just as he does in heaven.

As Jesus said to Pilate, *“My kingdom is not of this world”*. They’re will come a time when a kingdoms of this world will become the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ. After Jesus rose from the dead and ascended, all power and authority were given to him. He has delegated that to his followers. As yet he has not exercised that authority fully. He has not yet used force and relies on the authority given to him by us, but that is about to change.

## **Our physical needs**

The prayer then goes into a petition phase, *“Give us this day our daily bread”*. God does want us to ask for what we need, but that should not be the main reason for praying,

which is so often the case. Jesus says *“ask and it shall be given, Seek and you shall find, Knock and it shall be open to you”*. God wants to supply our needs and he will even bless you with more than you need so you can re-distribute it to others.

There is no shortage in God’s Kingdom. There is more than enough food on the earth to feed everyone. It is simply mans greed and destructive activity’s which cause famine and starvation. Yet God is always getting the blame for these things.

God has provided everything that we need on this planet to provide for up to treble the current population and more.

The faithless and the unbelieving, the small minded are always trying to get us to question and doubt God’s ability to provide. Trying to frighten people, saying we are going to run out of this and run out of that.

The stupidity of these people dawned on me one day when I was informed that there was enough energy in one medium sized solar flare to supply the total energy needed for the earth for 200,000 years.

We must look after what God has entrusted us with and not waste it, but we should not worry about running out of stuff.

## **Our spiritual needs**

The next request deals with our spiritual needs. Our main spiritual need is for forgiveness. The Bible says “For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God”. It doesn’t really matter whether you commit one sin or ten thousand sins you are a sinner. It only takes one sin to come short of the glory of God. Everyone needs forgiveness and when we pray we need to ask for that.

If we don’t confess our sins regularly, they gradually build up and begin to disrupt our communication with God. We are still God’s child and our relationship is still the same but our communication is disrupted. Our fellowship is ruined and it may take a crisis to restore it.

God wants to have a close relationship with us and in this situation he will often allow adverse circumstances to arise to bring us back into his fellowship. David even confessed sins he wasn’t sure he had committed. He said “Forgive me for my secret sins” and asked God to show him any sin he may have committed without realizing it.

The second part of this request covers a multitude. It qualifies the first part by making it conditional which forces us to forgive others if we expect to be forgiven. So it is in our own interest to forgive, God made us and he knows that if we don’t forgive others that we are just hurting ourselves.

This deals with the middle part of our being, the soul, the conscious part of us, the mind, and our psychological make-up. While forgiveness takes many forms, most of our personal problems and their effects have their roots in unforgiveness. Jealousy, Hatred, Envy, all have their roots in Unforgiveness in one way or another. If left unchecked and allowed to grow, they can come up and strangle the joy and freedom out of your life.

The soul is the interface with the spirit. The enemy of your soul has lost you from his kingdom, his next move is to neutralize you so that you may not be used to bring any of the others out with you into the kingdom of light.

If we understand how he operates and recognize his tactics, we make his job a lot more difficult, because at the end of the day he is not all that bright. If he was he would not have tried to fight against God in the first place. With Jesus within us we are more than a match for his wily ways. As long as we hide under the shadow of the almighty and dwell under his wings.

This brings us to the next part, “lead us not into temptation but delivers us from evil”. The Bible says “Greater is he who is in us than he who is in the world”. And prayer finishes by acknowledging that he is the Lord, that he has the power and authority to do his will.

## Examples of prayer

Some wonderful examples of prayer are found in the book of psalms. David was a good example of someone who through hardships and trials came to know and trust the Lord, and his prayers show this close and trusting relationship.

He was a man who knew the mercy of God first hand for the Lord had forgiven him of murder and adultery. He knew how to hang on to God's promises no matter how bad things looked. He spent many years living in the wilderness, fleeing from the jealous King Saul and he knew the value of trials. He would never have had the confidence to face Goliath if he had not already overcome a lion and a bear.

All of this comes through in his prayers, the psalms. Psalm 23 is one of the best known and is full of confidence and trust and that is how a prayer should be. We should not just come to the Lord when we are in need. If we walk constantly with him we will find that our needs are met even before we know them.

In psalm 23 David was not asking for anything, he was simply stating that he will not want. If we stay close to Jesus he will lead us beside still waters. He will move us on to green pastures and he will restore our souls.



If we stay close to Jesus, if we follow closely he will lead us in paths of righteousness for his names sake. The shepherd goes before the sheep and they follow him. He doesn't drive them, they follow because they know that he knows the best way and where the best pasture is. He has the overall view and he knows where the final destination is. Jesus said "Sufficient until the day this evil thereof". We only know where we are heading today but God knows the master plan.

That is where prayer comes in, you cannot follow where he is leading if you don't work at it, if you don't put in the time, if you don't practice listening with your spiritual ears, if you don't spend time getting to know Jesus.

God is a spirit and we must communicate in a spiritual way. God does not want repetitious chants. How ridiculous to think that he wants some of this mumbo jumbo that he has served up to him, how childish and immature. This is a distorted of perception of prayer.

Prayer can take many formats depending on the purpose and situation. I believe for the true picture, to get the correct perception of what prayer is and how we should perceive and understand it you have to go back to the very beginning of the Bible, to the Garden of Eden.

In the cool of the evening, the Lord God would come to the Garden and walk and talk with Adam. You can imagine

it, the beautiful garden, The Lord and Adam excitingly talking about the events of the day. The Lord God the maker and creator of the universe actually enjoyed this but one day Adam did not appear when the Lord called him. Sin had intervened, the relationship had been broken, there, was poison in paradise.

When we accept Jesus as our savior by asking his forgiveness and receiving him into our lives, we are renewing that relationship and we are spiritually restored to the Garden of Eden.

We can once again walk and talk with the Lord in his wonderful kingdom in the cool of the evening and that is the essence of prayer.



## CHAPTER 11

# THE LAW

### **Rewards and punishments**

When you are training an animal that's how you teach him. You reinforce positive behavior with a reward and you discourage negative behavior with punishment.

I suppose in the Old Testament there was a fair bit of that or so it would appear. God was trying to teach a whole nation how they should live and there was no precedent, no law, so it was all from scratch.

We take the law for granted, but look at what has happened in country after country where modern societies have been established without a sound base of law and order. We think of the Hitlers, the Stalins, the Pol Pots and wonder how anyone could be so bad, evil.

### **Ten Commandments**

We must remember that when the Ten Commandments were written, they were a radical document, setting down for the first time what the rules were. Man always had a

conscience which he had to listen to but here were rules which could be applied universally to all of society. Up to this kings ruled, made laws and broke laws as it suited them in order to control their subjects but now here was an overriding sets of rules that made sense and people instinctively knew that they were right, even though they were not always able to keep them.

These rules were for their own good, not God's. As Job said "God is the creator and what possible benefits can he derive with some good or some bad act that we commit".

## **The rules**

These rules were put there for two reasons. *Firstly* to help us survive and develop. Without the law there would be no society only anarchy, no progress only destruction.

*Secondly*, without the law there would be no sin, no yardstick. Sin would be totally a subjective thing, there could be no judgment.

This is a spiritually primitive system but was an improvement on what was there before. We still, even today, think that we are doing God a favor by being good but really what possible difference could it make to God whether we are good or bad. Especially since there is no one good enough anyway.

Man looks on the outward appearance but God looks on the heart. No, it is not what we do that God sees but why we do it, it is our motivation, it is why not what. Understanding this principal is central to understanding the New Testament, the new agreement, the new rules.



## CHAPTER 12

# THE NEW IMPROVED RULES

### **A new commandment**

Jesus said, “A new commandment I give unto you but you must love one another as I have loved you” (JOHN 13:34).

After Jesus came and died things changed radically. God no longer lived in an Arc, in a Temple. Now he would live in the hearts of men.

### **All things new**

Man can be forgiven and reborn right now, not some time in the future. He can be restored and reinstated back to the Garden of Eden and the Holy Spirit has been made freely available to all, not just to a chosen few, as in the past.

The main change was in the new emphasis on love as the motivation. The moving away from the fear of God, to



be motivated by the love of God. It replaced temple worship with personal worship. As Paul says you are the temple of the Holy Spirit. It moved the kingdom from a physical kingdom in a specific location to a spiritual kingdom to be built in the hearts and minds of God's children wherever they may be.

Many have never made the change and are still living in the past. To them religion is still a system of debits and credits and they are all the time checking the balance, trying to keep the overdraft under control but they are never just quite able to get into the black.

While we see a lot of talk about the fear of the Lord in the Old Testament, in the New Testament it is quite clear that God wants us to do things because you love him, not because you fear him. Jesus said, "If you love me, keep my commandments" (JOHN 14:15).

He didn't say that helping the blind man across the street is worth ten points and helping the poor is worth a hundred points, he said if you love me keep my commandments.

Ultimately that is the reward that you are given, the peace and love that comes from doing God's will.

If you are doing good so that you can get a reward, it won't work. If you are doing good to build your own goodness it won't work. If you are doing good to prove or impro-

ve your own goodness, to make yourself more righteous, you are simply going to be more self-righteous.

This concept is difficult to grasp because it is so alien to our culture, where the basic principle of earning your way is so dominant. John seemed to grasp it effortlessly. I suppose since he was so young he was not yet set in his ways. Paul seemed to have to struggle but expressed it beautifully in Corinthians 13, the famous chapter about love. I think this explains it better than I can in Chapter 13.

## **1 Corinthians 13**

1. Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become as sounding brass or a clanging cymbal.

2. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.

3. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing.

4. Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; <sup>5</sup>does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; <sup>6</sup>does not rejoice in iniquity, but

rejoices in the truth; <sup>7</sup>bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

8. Love never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away.

9. For we know in part and we prophesy in part.

10. But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away.

11. When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things.

12. For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known.

13. And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

This is a tall order and without help there is no way we can live up to these ideals. Jesus said, "This is my commandment to love one another as I have loved you". He not only told us to love but he showed us the kind of love this was to be. Love one another as I have loved you. The love that Jesus demonstrated was a total giving, a total

sacrifice, the ultimate sacrifice — he gave his life that we might live.

## **This kind of love**

This kind of love does not come naturally to us. It is only when God's Spirit in Jesus comes and lives in our hearts that we begin to take on the nature of God that we begin to feel differently. That our outlook, goals, priorities change and our desires are modified. It is not a self-imposed, not a self-willed change, it is a transformation, a new creation.

How far that transformation goes depends on how far we allow the Spirit to change us and how much authority and control we give him. How much we let go of the old and yield to the new.

All roads lead to Rome and there we find ourselves back at the same place once again. No matter what way we look at this subject we always come back to the same basic starting point. Everything revolves around the simple starting point, the moment you decide to allow the Spirit of Jesus to come in and dwell in you.

Allow the spirit of God who is love to take you over. It is impossible to have this unselfish love without first receiving it ourselves, it is not something you can just work up. We are by nature so selfish that it is almost impossible to comprehend the nature of this type of love without the lover of all lovers to teach and guide us from within.



## CHAPTER 13

# THE BIBLE

Well! Since you have stayed with me this far let's look at the book all this comes from.

### **The all time best seller**

The Bible is a wonderful book, the all-time best seller so it is surprising how many people have never read it. It was written over a period of thousands years by forty different people yet it has a continuity that defies explanation. There is no explanation other than the claim that it was inspired by one person, by Spirit of God.

This claim is not as off the wall as it would first appear. The Bible is full of deep wisdom and simple truth. Whole cultures have been developed using the principles laid down in it and it is full of predictions and prophecies that have been fulfilled.

### **One billion to one**

It has been estimated that the chances of Jesus fulfilling all of the prophecies concerning the coming Messiah

by chance, are more than one billion to one, the longest of odds. It was not possible for him to design his life to fit the prophecies since he had no control over the time and place of his birth, which had been predicted hundreds of years previously or the year of his death which was predicted almost 600 years before.

If you look at the evidence you have to face the fact that the Bible is either the most elaborate fraud in history of mankind, or it has been influenced by some extra-terrestrial force, inspired by one mind, not forty people. The Bible makes very specific predictions about the future. It describes in detail what God has planned and how it will be accomplished.

## **The mind of God**

More than all this the Bible is a tremendous source of inspiration, hope, encouragement and wisdom. It is the mind of God on paper. It is food for your soul, light for your path.

To many it is just nice thoughts and sentiments but once you become born again by the Spirit of Jesus, its pages come alive and make sense.

## **Food for your soul**

Like any new born creature your new spirit will need to be fed and Paul describes the word of God as milk and

meat. I'm sure that you have heard that well known saying — “Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that perceives from the mouth of God”.

Parts of the Bible have lost some relevance for us today because we have passed from the Old Testament to the New Testament. That is where I recommend people to begin reading, the New Testament. You will find that unlike most books you will be able to read the same passage again and again and get more meaning from it each time. It has the ability to keep renewing itself.

In the Old Testament there are many wonderful stories of God's power and goodness which we can apply to our lives today. There are the Psalms of David, full of love and joy, courage and trust. It would take a hard heart indeed not to be touched by the sentiments of Psalm 23: “The Lord be my shepherd, I shall not want”.

## **Wisdom of ages**

What about the distilled wisdom of Solomon in the book of proverbs and the prophecies of Daniel. The Bible is such a powerful source that some the religious movements have discouraged their followers from reading it. Jesus said to his disciples, “If you continue in my word you are my disciples indeed and you shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free” (JOHN 8:31, 32).



The Bible has been the source of inspiration for many the great movements to liberate the oppressed and defeat injustice. I believe that you owe it to yourself to take a good look at what the Bible has to say and if you make the effort you will find it both encouraging and enlightening.

Another aspect that confuses people is the number of translations available. Most widely available translations say more or less the same thing. Some are more elegant than others. They are all derived from the same original Hebrew and Greek manuscripts and so must all agree in essence even though some difference of emphasis can be found.

The King James version was translated by order of King James in 1611 was the first major English translation and is written in the beautiful Shakespearean English of that day. The New King James translation is basically the same with the “thee” and “thou” changed to I and You. The living Bible is a recent translation and is written in the vernacular. Many people have several translations. The main thing to realize is that these are not different versions just different translations.

## **Read it for yourself**

The important thing is to read it for yourself. Don't just accept what someone else tells you it says, not even this book.

The Bible is the yard stick of truth by which everything should be measured. That is not to say that God is not still speaking today. God is still speaking but new messages from God will build upon the foundations of what has gone before not contradict it, as is the case with some new cults and sects who have some new proprietary revelation which on examination is not compatible with what has gone before.

It is a well accepted fact that what we feed our minds has a direct effect on how we feel and live. It is therefore not surprising that so many people feel so bad when we look at some of the garbage that they are putting into their minds. Even reading a few verses of the Bible each day and meditating on them can have a dramatic effect on how we feel and on the quality of our lives.

The ironic thing is, that people will go to such lengths to satisfy their inner hungers while all the time the answer is right under their noses. We so often ignore the obvious. Water, water, everywhere and not a drop to drink.



## CAPÍTULO 14

# END OF THE WORLD

We have heard an awful lot of bits and pieces over the years about the end of the world. Most people have heard of the anti-Christ, the Mark of the Beast and Armageddon but have no idea how they all fit together.

No discussion on the Kingdom of God would be complete without giving an overview of what the Bible says about the future. Much of the Bible was given as prophetic messages about the future. Many of these prophecies have been fulfilled in great detail and can be confirmed by studying their fulfillment in actual historical events.

It had been calculated that the chances of all of the prophecies concerning the Messiah being fulfilled, either intentionally or accidentally by Jesus are estimated to be one billion to one. Many of these events were completely outside of his control and he had no way of manipulating the situation. The crucifixion had not yet been invented when it was prophesied that his hands and feet would be pierced. The year of his death was prophesied by the prophet Daniel 600 hundred year before the event. There are

hundreds of precise prophecies that have been fulfilled not in some vague way with doubtful interpretations of events but definite predictions fulfilled in a precise manner.

This alone at the very least makes the Bible an extraordinary book that should be taken seriously. The fact that so many events in the past have been so accurately predicted gives credibility to those predictions which have yet to be fulfilled.

The Bible predicts the future in a very definite and precise way. There is nothing vague about what it says will happen. There are lots of details still not clear but the general trust and order of events are clearly outlined.

For 2,000 years Christians have been praying for God's Kingdom to come, for God's will to be done on the earth as it is in heaven.

Jesus thought his followers to pray for that in the Lord's Prayer so it is an important part of His message. He told them to pray that God kingdom would come and that God's will would be done on earth as it is in heaven. Few people have any real understanding of what this means.

Clearly at the moment that Jesus was teaching them that prayer, God's kingdom had not yet come on earth and His will was not being done on earth. He told them that it was important for them to pray that someday it would.

But God's Kingdom is going to come, his will is going to be done on the earth as it is in heaven. Jesus said that Pontius Pilate.

JOHN 18:36 Jesus answered, *"My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here"*.

For the moment, this is our world, these are our mistakes and sins. These are our wars, our famines, our injustices and our pollution.

We the human race have control and we yield that control to whom ever we choose. From time to time in history when things have really gotten out of hand, God has intervened.

Most of the time God has to work at the edges. When he has been asked to intervene, when individuals or groups of individuals have sought God's help and given him the mandate to intervene he has and will. But the human race is so much more inclined to give the authority to Satan's man, to yield to the wrong spirit many times by default. God is simply on the side lines watching the game take its course

God is not going to stand by and let this go on forever. The game is almost over and we are now in injury time. Let there be no doubt about it He is eventually going to intervene. When He is ready and mankind has finally made

his choice. But until that time his only authority to rule on the earth is in the hearts and the minds of those who have accepted him as their savior and their king.

## **The Kings dream**

In the year 534 BC Nebuchadnezzar the then king of Babylon had a nightmare which he didn't understand and it really bothered him. He asked his wise men to come up with an interpretation but in order to be sure it was the correct interpretation he refused to tell them even the dream. They would have to come up with the dream and the interpretation.

Daniel a Jew and a Prophet was the only man who could explain the dream to the King, and its interpretation was nothing less than a prophetic time line, snapshot of the future from that point until the end of time as we know it.

Daniel said that God had revealed to him what the future held. He clearly defined that the source of his knowledge was the Lord God and did not take any credit for himself.

He said that the King had seen an image which was basically in the form of man. His head was gold, his breast and arms silver, his belly and thighs brass and legs of iron and his feet and toes were of iron mixed with clay. A stone, a special kind of stone cut without hands came out of nowhere and struck the image on the toes and smashed

the image to pieces and the stone became a great mountain that filled on the whole earth.

He went on to explain the dream. Each part of the image represented a world Kingdom. The Golden head was Babylon. The whole seen was a time line and it began at Babylon where Daniel was and the rest of it was a picture of the future.

The next Kingdom was represented by the breast and arms of silver and this was the dual Kingdom of *Media Persia* followed by the belly and thighs of brass, the *Greek Empire* and the bronze age, followed by the iron rule of *Rome* which eventually split into East and West, the two legs.

Since *Rome* there hasn't been a dominant world empire, although many have tried their best to build one. There have been empires in competition, such as the Spanish and the Portuguese, the English and the French, the Americans and the Russians. Daniel predicts that a particular kind of Empire will emerge before the return of Christ who is represented by the stone in the dream. This empire will be an alliance of ten kings, represented by the ten toes. These kings will represent different systems of Government, some of Iron and some of clay possibly means two kinds leadership dictatorships and democracies. Something like a beefed up Security Council. The UN Security Council has ten members and would fit the bill.



Daniel says that in the day of these Kings that the God of Heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed but will destroy all of these kingdoms and will stand forever.

The stone cut out without hands is the return of Jesus as conqueror to destroy all the systems developed by man under Satan's guidance. The stone hits the image on the toes and becomes a great kingdom that fills the whole earth. You can read this for yourself in Daniel chapter 2.

Ever since Jesus went away his disciples have been saying that his return is eminent but really this has been a false hope because certain specific well defined events must occur before he returns to setup his kingdom.

The book of Matthew Chapter 24 paints a picture of what the world will be like in the days prior to the return of Jesus. He says there will be Wars, famines, earthquakes in diverse places. There will be many false Christ's and false religions but these are only the beginning of sorrows. There are many other things which must happen and are described in more or less detail in the Bible. There are four specific things that must come to pass before Jesus will return to take over His kingdom.

### **1. *The Jews must return***

The Jews must return to the Promised Land. This was fulfilled when the Jews state was founded in 1948 and

has been gradually completed step by step since then. Jesus seemed to indicate that the generation which saw the establishment of the Jewish state and these other confirming events. That generation would not pass until all the prophecies were fulfilled. The re-establishment of Jewish state seemed to be a starting point setting the process in motion. Many of the prophecies surrounding the re-establishment of the Jewish state are quite precise and have been fulfilled against all the odds in an extraordinary manner.

## **2. *Worldwide credit system***

The second condition involves the establishment of worldwide credit control and monetary system.

John says in the book of revelations that in the days shortly before the return of Christ that no-one would be able to buy or sell except he who had the mark or the name of the beast, the antichrist in his forehead or on his right hand.

This is obviously a direct reference to the commercial system and would seem to indicate that normal economic activities such as buying and selling, shopping etc., cannot be conducted except you have some kind of mark/number.

The Bible also describes some type of machine (The image of the Beast) which controls all of this and has the

power to command that anyone not having this number/mark be rounded up and exterminated.

This is obviously a world-wide credit control system, controlled and administered by a super computer which can process or monitor every credit transaction worldwide. The mark has always been thought of as some kind of tattoo or symbol but more and more as technology advances, it would appear that it could be a kind of computer chip which will be implanted under the skin of the forehead or back of right hand.

This has many advantages over the current credit card system, since it cannot be easily stolen or forged. It is always carried on the person. It cannot be left at home. The person either has it or he doesn't have it.

Those who are real fans of the new system will have the chip implanted in their foreheads, probably with some kind of symbol but otherwise it would be absolutely invisible.

Governments will have all kinds of reasons to explain why this is necessary. To prevent crime and terrorism, to control tax evasion, to administer social welfare, to eliminate credit card and other types of fraud.

It's the next logical step.

The technology is already being used with animals and property, especially horses and cars, for identification pur-

poses and the recovery of stolen property. A stolen car with a special chip can be located by satellite at any time and so it would be with a chip or mark of the Beast. In the anti-Christ system, your location can be pinpointed and movements recorded, and you would not be able to buy or sell without such a chip to authorize the transaction.

### ***The Internet***

At no time in the past would all this have been remotely possible. But now the technology is here and improving daily. At this very moment, corporations and governments are rushing at breakneck speed to establish a worldwide digital network using fiberoptic technology known generally as the INFORMATION HIGHWAY which will carry a networked communication system such as the INTERNET. This network will be in place and fully operational within 10/20 years.

The word INTERNET will become as common as highway or motorway. As the exchange of information becomes the biggest business on earth (Written May 1994).

Each home will be connected to the Internet or some such network. Initially this will be for entertainment, then shopping and then control. The anti-Christ when he appears will only be in control for a relatively short time. This system will have to be in place and operational before he takes over the use of it for his own evil ends.

### **3. *The re-building of the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem***

The Jewish Temple will be re-built in Jerusalem. When you see this happen Jesus said you had better head for the hills.

MAT 24:15 *“Therefore when you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place” (whoever reads, let him understand),*<sup>16</sup>*“then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains”.*

Temple worship and the daily sacrifice are central to the Jewish religion. The last Temple as Jesus had predicted was dismantled stone by stone by the Romans in 70 A.D.

Since then the Jewish people have had no Daily sacrifice and the rebuilding of the temple and the re-establishment of the daily sacrifice is a top priority for most believing Jews.

At the moment Jordan has the right to administer and control what happens on the Holy Mount the elevated area where the temple was sighted. This is because the Holy Mount is such a political hot potato. It is the site of the Dome of the Rock the 3rd holiest site in the Muslim world where Mohammed is said to have been taken up to heaven.

An other reason for this is that no Jew except the high priest can enter there in case they inadvertently enter the area where the Holy of Holies was situated.

To get around this the mount has been explored by tunnels underneath the mound. It was always supposed that the Dome of the rock or the Mosque of Omer was built on the site of the old temple but it now appears that the site of the old temple is more to the north and that it could be rebuilt alongside without disturbing the mosque.

It is the most fervent desire of all believing Jews that the temple be rebuilt. It's like the Irish and northern Ireland. It's a deep underlying desire of most Irish to see Ireland reunited. Although few would kill or die for it most would sacrifice a lot to make it happen.

There can be no overall peace in the Middle East without some concession to the right wing religious Jews allowing them to build their temple.

It is the ultimate carrot which could persuade them to compromise.

Peace is now steadily building in the Middle East. There is a momentum there. It is only a matter of time before the temple gets rebuilt. The plans are already drawn up, the temple furniture and accessories are already mostly made. I would not be surprised if the Arc of the Covenant turned up one of these days.

#### **4. *The rise of the Antichrist and his government***

The rise of a world dictator. People say that it could never happen but the fact is that history is littered with would-be antichrist dictators some worse than others. The people they ruled mostly let them get away with it as long as they were successful. All it usually takes is for the right conditions to come about and the masses are looking for some leader to save from their sorry state.

All it would take is some catastrophe to bring about a world crisis which would allow this man to get the attention of the world. He would hold out the promise of world peace and prosperity and the rest will be history.

He will not be world leader in the strict sense of the word, since he will not be the leader of a government which rules the whole world but rather the leader of a coalition of ten nations who will give him his power.

He will play an important part in the brokering of an agreement which will usher in a three and a half year burst of peace and prosperity. This agreement will allow the Jews to build the temple and re-establish the daily sacrifice. After 3 and a half years of this wonderful peace and prosperity this dictator will appear to the world as a savior, the answer to all their prayers, somebody who has finally sorted out the mess.

He will possibly re-structure the world economy and issue a single currency which is electronically controlled, a digital currency instead of a paper currency. A worldwide currency crash would be an ideal crisis from which such a man could arise. Such a crisis would cause a wide spread depression, unemployment and hardship and anyone who could sort it out would be a hero.

This is where the story really gets weird and most people have no idea of what will happen. Jesus said that there would be a time of great tribulation such as has not been seen since the beginning of the world or ever will be seen again. I don't pretend to understand everything the Bible says about this time but the underlying flow of events, their significance and their order is quiet clear.

## The Tribulation

God will put the inhabitants of the earth under great and increasing pressure to force them to make a decision. To force them to choose between Him and the Antichrist.

During this period Satan through the Antichrist will have a free hand to do as he wishes on the earth.

At the end of the period which the Bible says will last 3 and a





half years or 42 months or 1260 days, Jesus will return, come again the 2nd time.

This time not born as babe in a lowly manger but as a conquering king. Not secretly and in disguise but in glory and power and every eye will see him and the kingdoms of this world will become the kingdom of the lord God and his servants.

This return of Christ happens in two parts.

At the *First* coming, Jesus returns to rescue his followers who at this time are suffering tremendous persecution from the antichrist forces. Just when all seems lost and the situation seems hopeless Christ appears to save his children. At this time those who have died in Christ will also be resurrected and all of us will receive a new super-physical body.

## **The Second Coming**

The second coming happens shortly after this when Christ accompanied by all of his risen and transformed followers return to earth to defeat and destroy the forces of the Anti-Christ at the battle of Armageddon.

After this battle Christ will set up His kingdom on earth as He always said he would. This time it will be a physical kingdom not just a spiritual kingdom with Jerusalem as its capital and administered by Jesus and His followers.

Many peoples and nations will survive the terrible days of the tribulation and the wrath of God. The Earth will return to a more natural way of life.

Although there will be good and bad individuals around evil, though it will exist will not be organized since Satan during this period will be out of circulation and is bound 1000 years. The force of evil will be fragmented and there will be no wars in this period.

Christ will rule with the iron rod of total justice and love.

This situation will last for a thousand years, a millennium at the end of which Satan is let loose and once again he persuades and organizes the evil people in every nation to rise up and rebel against Christ even after a 1000 years of perfect rule.

A great battle follows after which the earth as we know it is replaced by a new heaven and a new earth and Christ establishes the seat of his power in a new structure known as the heavenly city.

## **The Second, Second Coming**

The second type of coming as king and conqueror is what the Jews were looking for. This was the Messiah that they were waiting for to deliver them from the Romans.

They weren't interested in the Lamb of God that turned the other cheek. That love your neighbor kind of Messiah. Right until the end the disciples hadn't copped it that is why Peter was so quick to pull his sword in the garden of olives when they came to take Jesus away.

The Old Testament talks a lot about the coming of the Messiah as conquering king to set up his kingdom on earth, and subdue his enemies setting up the physical earthly kingdom. They missed the part about the Messiah coming in humility as a sacrificial lamb to take away the sins of the world and to set up the spiritual kingdom.

The spiritual kingdom had to be set up first and this began when Jesus died. This had to be given time to grow and develop to a point when a great harvest is ready to be reaped. At this point God will allow conditions to come about which will force people to choose between Him and Satan. This decision will be based on faith in an unseen world and what it stands for. An unselfish decision based on love. A decision which may cost them everything, all their materials, possessions and maybe even their lives. Forced to make a total commitment, all or nothing, as Jesus said "Hot or Cold". God hates the halfhearted, the luke-warm.

Because they will be willing to give it all up for him and his name, Jesus will then be able to trust them with the

authority to rule this new world with love and justice. Let's just call this whole thing the ultimate aptitude test.

Will you be able to make the right choice, or will you sign up for the mark of the beast and sail on in your comfortable indifference until it is too late and you are over the edge. Or will you see the writing on the wall and know what is going on.

At the moment even the churches are only paying lip service to God and his plan. If God's people were really to walk the talk, putting God first and directing their efforts and resources towards establishing his kingdom in the hearts of men the work would have been done long ago. But they have loved this present world too much so it is going to take this great squeeze to sort the wheat from the chaff.

The story finishes here with the new heaven and new earth and we know that time will no longer exist so we are living in eternity, whatever that means?

One thing that I am personally convinced of is that we will always be learning and growing. The lessons we skip here, the tests we fail, exams we don't sit will have to be sat at some stage. Just like in this life people will have to grow at their own speed. They will have to actively use their will to make progress and from time to time people will get stuck at certain levels of development as we spiritually develop and evolve.

In the beginning man and woman were at one with God, his children, his own creation but as yet untested, having never had to choose between right or wrong, good or evil. By choosing to eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, they set mankind out on a journey which would eventually bring them back to the garden.

Once man had been exposed to evil, his capacity to indulge in it didn't take long to become evident. Almost immediately Cane murdered his brother Abel, man's language had to be confused at the tower of Babel and most of mankind had to be wiped out in the flood, simply because they got so bad so fast.

Soon after the flood God picked one man, Abraham, who then became a tribe, which then became a nation, then became a people, then a country, then a kingdom, God's people living in a physical kingdom.

This physical kingdom continued with various ups and downs until finally there was a quantum leap into a spiritual kingdom in the hearts of men, with the beginning of the New Testament "and man was restored to the Garden as God's Children by faith". Ultimately with the second return of Jesus another quantum leap will be made into a spiritual / physical kingdom to be ruled and administered by Jesus and his followers during the millennium.

This is the gospel of hope, the gospel of the Kingdom of God that in the end justice will be done, that right will reign, that wrongs will be righted and the meek shall inherit the earth.

We cannot take the law into our own hands. “Justice is mine” says the Lord, “I will repay”. In the meantime we must turn the other cheek, love our enemies and leave the judgment and vengeance to God. He will be well justified in pouring out his wrath on those who have stood against his plan and oppressed and abused his children and each other over the ages.



# CONCLUSION

There are many aspects of the Gospel I have not covered here and there is a reason for that.

Firstly one book cannot cover everything and second I have wanted to concentrate on the main event, the Gospel and that is Salvation, what is it and how it works.

Hopefully you have gotten the message, The Good News. That you can have eternal life, your needs met and joy unspeakable just by asking for it.

Some of the things I have said in this book may seem totally alien to you, not what you expected, even surprising, unbelievable, and unacceptable and that is good.

What we are talking about here are simple ideas expressed simply. What we are talking about is a different way of looking at things. A different approach, a different concept. Sometimes it is immediately obvious but more often it takes time for an idea to take hold in the subconscious, to be factored into the equation of life.



Ultimately it is not a mind game, it's not a learning process it's got to be a revelation.

All it takes is a small step of faith to trigger the process. Take one step for Jesus, open the door, ask him to come in take away your sin and reveal Himself to you. If you haven't already done it, do it now, there will never be a better time.

**You're just one step from heaven!!**

# APPENDIX

## 1. WHAT IS ALL THIS BORN AGAIN STUFF?

MARK 10:13 Once when some mothers were bringing their children to Jesus to bless them, the disciples shooed them away, telling them not to bother him.

<sup>14</sup>But when Jesus saw what was happening he was very much displeased with his disciples and said to them, “Let the children come to me, for the Kingdom of God belongs to such as they. Don’t send them away! <sup>15</sup>I tell you as seriously as I know how that anyone who refuses to come to God as a little child will never be allowed into his Kingdom.”

<sup>16</sup>Then he took the children into his arms and placed his hands on their heads and he blessed them.

JOHN 3:1-2 After dark one night a Jewish religious leader named Nicodemus, a member of the sect of the Pharisees, came for an interview with Jesus. “Sir,” he said, “we all know that God has sent you to teach us. Your miracles are proof enough of this.”

<sup>3</sup>Jesus replied, “With all the earnestness I possess I tell you this: Unless you are born again, you can never get into the Kingdom of God.”

<sup>4</sup>“Born again!” exclaimed Nicodemus. “What do you mean? How can an old man go back into his mother’s womb and be born again?”

<sup>5</sup>Jesus replied, “What I am telling you so earnestly is this: Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God. <sup>6</sup>Men can only reproduce human life, but the Holy Spirit gives new life from heaven; <sup>7</sup>so don’t be surprised at my statement that you must be born again! <sup>8</sup>Just as you can hear the wind but can’t tell where it comes from or where it will go next, so it is with the Spirit. We do not know on whom he will next bestow this life from heaven.”

<sup>9</sup>“What do you mean?” Nicodemus asked.

<sup>10-11</sup>Jesus replied, “You, a respected Jewish teacher, and yet you don’t understand these things? I am telling you what I know and have seen—and yet you won’t believe me. <sup>12</sup>But if you don’t even believe me when I tell you about such things as these that happen here among men, how can you possibly believe if I tell you what is going on in heaven?”

JOHN 3:13-21 For only I, the Messiah, have come to earth and will return to heaven again. <sup>14</sup>And as Moses in the wilderness lifted up the bronze image of a serpent on a pole, even so I must be lifted up upon a pole, <sup>15</sup>so that anyone who believes in me will have eternal life. <sup>16</sup>For God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son so that anyone who believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. <sup>17</sup>God did not send his Son into the world to condemn it, but to save it. <sup>18</sup>“There is no eternal doom awaiting those who trust him

to save them. But those who don't trust him have already been tried and condemned for not believing in the only Son of God. <sup>19</sup>Their sentence is based on this fact: that the Light from heaven came into the world, but they loved the darkness more than the Light, for their deeds were evil. <sup>20</sup>They hated the heavenly Light because they wanted to sin in the darkness. They stayed away from that Light for fear their sins would be exposed and they would be punished. <sup>21</sup>But those doing right come gladly to the Light to let everyone see that they are doing what God wants them to."

MATHEW 11:25 And Jesus prayed this prayer: "O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, thank you for hiding the truth from those who think themselves so wise, and for revealing it to little children. <sup>26</sup>Yes, Father, for it pleased you to do it this way!"

GENESIS 2:15 The Lord God placed the man in the Garden of Eden as its gardener, to tend and care for it. <sup>16-17</sup>But the Lord God gave the man this warning: "You may eat any fruit in the garden except fruit from the Tree of Conscience—for its fruit will open your eyes to make you aware of right and wrong, good and bad. If you eat its fruit, you will be doomed to die."

GENESIS 3:1 The serpent was the craftiest of all the creatures the Lord God had made. So the serpent came to the woman. "Really?" he asked. "None of the fruit in the garden? God says you mustn't eat any of it?"

<sup>2-3</sup>“Of course we may eat it,” the woman told him. “It’s only the fruit from the tree at the center of the garden that we are not to eat. God says we mustn’t eat it or even touch it, or we will die.”

<sup>4</sup>“That’s a lie!” the serpent hissed. “You’ll not die! <sup>5</sup>God knows very well that the instant you eat it you will become like him, for your eyes will be opened—you will be able to distinguish good from evil!”

<sup>6</sup>The woman was convinced. How lovely and fresh looking it was! And it would make her so wise! So she ate some of the fruit and gave some to her husband, and he ate it too. <sup>7</sup>And as they ate it, suddenly they became aware of their nakedness, and were embarrassed. So they strung fig leaves together to cover themselves around the hips.

<sup>8</sup>That evening they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden; and they hid themselves among the trees. <sup>9</sup>The Lord God called to Adam, “Why are you hiding?”

<sup>10</sup>And Adam replied, “I heard you coming and didn’t want you to see me naked. So I hid.”

<sup>11</sup>“Who told you you were naked?” the Lord God asked. “Have you eaten fruit from the tree I warned you about?”

<sup>12</sup>“Yes,” Adam admitted, “but it was the woman you gave me who brought me some, and I ate it.”

<sup>13</sup>Then the Lord God asked the woman, “How could you do such a thing?”

“The serpent tricked me,” she replied.

ROMANS 3:23 Yes, all have sinned; all fall short of God's glorious ideal.

JOHN 1:1-2 Before anything else existed, there was Christ, with God. He has always been alive and is himself God. <sup>3</sup>He created everything there is—nothing exists that he didn't make. <sup>4</sup>Eternal life is in him, and this life gives light to all mankind. <sup>5</sup>His life is the light that shines through the darkness—and the darkness can never extinguish it.

JOHN 1:6-7 God sent John the Baptist as a witness to the fact that Jesus Christ is the true Light. <sup>8</sup>John himself was not the Light; he was only a witness to identify it.

<sup>9</sup>Later on, the one who is the true Light arrived to shine on everyone coming into the world.

<sup>10</sup>But although he made the world, the world didn't recognize him when he came. <sup>11-12</sup>Even in his own land and among his own people, the Jews, he was not accepted. Only a few would welcome and receive him. But to all who received him, he gave the right to become children of God. All they needed to do was to trust him to save them. <sup>13</sup>All those who believe this are reborn!—not a physical rebirth resulting from human passion or plan—but from the will of God.

## 2. CHOICE

MATTHEW 18:18 And I tell you this—whatever you bind on earth is bound in heaven, and whatever you free on earth will be freed in heaven.

<sup>19</sup>“I also tell you this—if two of you agree down here on earth concerning anything you ask for, my Father in heaven will do it for you. <sup>20</sup>For where two or three gather together because they are mine, I will be right there among them.”

REVELATIONS 3:20 Look! I stand at the door and knock. If you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in, and we will share a meal together as friends.

JOHN 15:12 I demand that you love each other as much as I love you. <sup>13</sup>And here is how to measure it—the greatest love is shown when a person lays down his life for his friends; <sup>14</sup>and you are my friends if you obey me. <sup>15</sup>I no longer call you slaves, for a master doesn't confide in his slaves; now you are my friends, proved by the fact that I have told you everything the Father told me.

MATTHEW 11:28 Then Jesus said, “Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup>Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls.”

### **3. THE WHORES AND THE TAX-COLLECTORS**

MATTHEW 21:31 Which of the two was obeying his father?” They replied, “The first, of course.”

Then Jesus explained his meaning: “Surely evil men and prostitutes will get into the Kingdom before you do. <sup>32</sup>For

John the Baptist told you to repent and turn to God, and you wouldn't, while very evil men and prostitutes did. And even when you saw this happening, you refused to repent, and so you couldn't believe."

MATTHEW 5:20 But I warn you—unless your goodness is greater than that of the Pharisees and other Jewish leaders, you can't get into the Kingdom of Heaven at all!

2 CORINTHIANS 11:3 But I fear that somehow your pure and undivided devotion to Christ will be corrupted, just as Eve was deceived by the cunning ways of the serpent.

LUKE 18:9 Then he told this story to some who boasted of their virtue and scorned everyone else:

<sup>10</sup>"Two men went to the Temple to pray. One was a proud, self-righteous Pharisee, and the other a cheating tax collector. <sup>11</sup>The proud Pharisee 'prayed' this prayer: 'Thank God, I am not a sinner like everyone else, especially like that tax collector over there! For I never cheat, I don't commit adultery, <sup>12</sup>I go without food twice a week, and I give to God a tenth of everything I earn.'

<sup>13</sup>But the corrupt tax collector stood at a distance and dared not even lift his eyes to heaven as he prayed, but beat upon his chest in sorrow, exclaiming, 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner.' <sup>14</sup>I tell you, this sinner, not the Pharisee, returned home forgiven! For the proud shall be humbled, but the humble shall be honored."



ROMANS 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ.

EPHESIANS 2:8 Because of his kindness, you have been saved through trusting Christ. And even trusting is not of yourselves; it too is a gift from God. <sup>9</sup>Salvation is not a reward for the good we have done, so none of us can take any credit for it.

#### **4. RELIGION THE HARD WAY**

JOHN 10:1 “Anyone refusing to walk through the gate into a sheepfold, who sneaks over the wall, must surely be a thief! <sup>2</sup>For a shepherd comes through the gate. <sup>3</sup>The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice and come to him; and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. <sup>4</sup>He walks ahead of them; and they follow him, for they recognize his voice. <sup>5</sup>They won’t follow a stranger but will run from him, for they don’t recognize his voice.”

<sup>6</sup>Those who heard Jesus use this illustration didn’t understand what he meant, <sup>7</sup>so he explained it to them.

“I am the Gate for the sheep,” he said. <sup>8</sup>“All others who came before me were thieves and robbers. But the true sheep did not listen to them.

JOHN 10:10 The thief’s purpose is to steal, kill and destroy. My purpose is to give life in all its fullness.

<sup>11</sup>“I am the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.”

MATTHEW 11:28 Then Jesus said, "Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup>Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls."

## 5. THE KINGDOM

MATTHEW 6:10 We ask that your kingdom will come now. May your will be done here on earth, just as it is in heaven.

LUKE 16:16 Until John the Baptist began to preach, the laws of Moses and the messages of the prophets were your guides. But John introduced the Good News that the Kingdom of God would come soon. And now eager multitudes are pressing in.

JOHN 18:36 Then Jesus answered, "I am not an earthly king. If I were, my followers would have fought when I was arrested by the Jewish leaders. But my Kingdom is not of the world."

DANIEL 2:44 During the reigns of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed; no one will ever conquer it. It will shatter all these kingdoms into nothingness, but it shall stand forever, indestructible.

DANIEL 7:22 Until the Ancient of Days came and opened his court and vindicated his people, giving them worldwide powers of government.

## 6. THE HOLY SPIRIT

ACTS 1:8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

JOHN 14:26 But when the Father sends the Advocate as my representative—that is, the Holy Spirit—he will teach you everything and will remind you of everything I have told you.

JOHN 20:22 Then he breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit.”

MATTHEW 28:19 Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. <sup>20</sup>Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: “I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

1 CORINTHIANS 6:19 Don't you realize that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourself.

## 8. THE BATTLE GROUND

MATTHEW 27:46 About three o'clock, Jesus shouted, “Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?” which means, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”

PROVERBS 1:7 How does a man become wise? The first step is to trust and reverence the Lord!

1 JOHN 4:16 We know how much God loves us because we have felt his love and because we believe him when he tells us that he loves us dearly. God is love, and anyone who lives in love is living with God and God is living in him. <sup>17</sup>And as we live with Christ, our love grows more perfect and complete; so we will not be ashamed and embarrassed at the day of judgment, but can face him with confidence and joy because he loves us and we love him too.

<sup>18</sup>We need have no fear of someone who loves us perfectly; his perfect love for us eliminates all dread of what he might do to us. If we are afraid, it is for fear of what he might do to us and shows that we are not fully convinced that he really loves us.

ISAIAH 1:18 Come, let's talk this over, says the Lord; no matter how deep the stain of your sins, I can take it out and make you as clean as freshly fallen snow. Even if you are stained as red as crimson, I can make you white as wool! <sup>19</sup>If you will only let me help you, if you will only obey, then I will make you rich! <sup>20</sup>But if you keep on turning your backs and refusing to listen to me, you will be killed by your enemies; I, the Lord, have spoken.

MATTHEW 8:26 Jesus responded, "Why are you afraid? You have so little faith!" Then he got up and rebuked the wind

and waves, and suddenly there was a great calm. <sup>27</sup>The disciples were amazed. “Who is this man?” they asked. “Even the winds and waves obey him!”

MATTHEW 6:26 Look at the birds! They don’t worry about what to eat—they don’t need to sow or reap or store up food—for your heavenly Father feeds them. And you are far more valuable to him than they are. <sup>27</sup>Will all your worries add a single moment to your life?

<sup>28</sup>“And why worry about your clothes? Look at the field lilies! They don’t worry about theirs. <sup>29</sup>Yet King Solomon in all his glory was not clothed as beautifully as they. <sup>30</sup>And if God cares so wonderfully for flowers that are here today and gone tomorrow, won’t he more surely care for you, O men of little faith?

<sup>31</sup>“So don’t worry at all about having enough food and clothing.

2 TIMOTHY 1:7 For the Holy Spirit, God’s gift, does not want you to be afraid of people, but to be wise and strong, and to love them and enjoy being with them.

ISAIAH 9:6 For unto us a child is born; unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder. These will be his royal titles: “Wonderful,” “Counselor,” “The Mighty God,” “The Everlasting Father,” “The Prince of Peace.” <sup>7</sup>His ever-expanding, peaceful government will never end. He will rule with perfect fairness and justice from the throne of his father

David. He will bring true justice and peace to all the nations of the world. This is going to happen because the Lord of heaven's armies has dedicated himself to do it!

## **9. FORGIVENESS**

1 JOHN 1:9 But if we confess our sins to him, he can be depended on to forgive us and to cleanse us from every wrong. And it is perfectly proper for God to do this for us because Christ died to wash away our sins. <sup>10</sup>If we claim we have not sinned, we are lying and calling God a liar, for he says we have sinned.

JOHN 1:29 The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look! There is the Lamb of God who takes away the world's sin!"

ISAIAH 44:22 I've blotted out your sins; they are gone like morning mist at noon! Oh, return to me, for I have paid the price to set you free.

ISAIAH 1:18 Come, let's talk this over, says the Lord; no matter how deep the stain of your sins, I can take it out and make you as clean as freshly fallen snow. Even if you are stained as red as crimson, I can make you white as wool!

MATTHEW 6:14-15 Your heavenly Father will forgive you if you forgive those who sin against you; but if you refuse to forgive them, he will not forgive you.

## 10. PRAYER

1 THESSALONIANS 5:17 Always keep on praying. <sup>18</sup>No matter what happens, always be thankful, for this is God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus.

JOHN 14:14 Yes, ask anything, using my name, and I will do it!

MATTHEW 6:9 Pray along these lines: "Our Father in heaven, we honor your holy name. <sup>10</sup>We ask that your kingdom will come now. May your will be done here on earth, just as it is in heaven. <sup>11</sup>Give us our food again today, as usual, <sup>12</sup>and forgive us our sins, just as we have forgiven those who have sinned against us. <sup>13</sup>Don't bring us into temptation, but deliver us from the Evil One. Amen."

PSALM 100:4 Go through his open gates with great thanksgiving; enter his courts with praise. Give thanks to him and bless his name.

PSALM 23:1 Because the Lord is my Shepherd, I have everything I need! <sup>2-3</sup>He lets me rest in the meadow grass and leads me beside the quiet streams. He gives me new strength. He helps me do what honors him the most. <sup>4</sup>Even when walking through the dark valley of death I will not be afraid, for you are close beside me, guarding, guiding all the way.

<sup>5</sup>You provide delicious food for me in the presence of my enemies. You have welcomed me as your guest; blessings overflow!

<sup>6</sup>Your goodness and unfailing kindness shall be with me all of my life, and afterwards I will live with you forever in your home.

LUKE 11:9 And so it is with prayer—keep on asking and you will keep on getting; keep on looking and you will keep on finding; knock and the door will be opened. <sup>10</sup>Everyone who asks, receives; all who seek, find; and the door is opened to everyone who knocks.

## 11. THE LAW

EXODUS 20:1 Then God issued this edict:

<sup>2</sup>“I am Jehovah your God who liberated you from your slavery in Egypt.

<sup>3</sup>You may worship no other god than me.

<sup>4</sup>You shall not make yourselves any idols: no images of animals, birds, or fish. <sup>5</sup>You must never bow or worship it in any way; for I, the Lord your God, am very possessive. I will not share your affection with any other god!

And when I punish people for their sins, the punishment continues upon the children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren of those who hate me; <sup>6</sup>but I lavish my love upon thousands of those who love me and obey my commandments.



<sup>7</sup>You shall not use the name of Jehovah your God irreverently, nor use it to swear to a falsehood. You will not escape punishment if you do.

<sup>8</sup>Remember to observe the Sabbath as a holy day. <sup>9</sup>Six days a week are for your daily duties and your regular work, <sup>10</sup>but the seventh day is a day of Sabbath rest before the Lord your God. On that day you are to do no work of any kind, nor shall your son, daughter, or slaves—whether men or women—or your cattle or your house guests. <sup>11</sup>For in six days the Lord made the heaven, earth, and sea, and everything in them, and rested the seventh day; so he blessed the Sabbath day and set it aside for rest.

<sup>12</sup>Honor your father and mother, that you may have a long, good life in the land the Lord your God will give you.

<sup>13</sup>You must not murder.

<sup>14</sup>You must not commit adultery.

<sup>15</sup>You must not steal.

<sup>16</sup>You must not lie.

<sup>17</sup>You must not be envious of your neighbor's house, or want to sleep with his wife, or want to own his slaves, oxen, donkeys, or anything else he has."

## **12. THE NEW IMPROVED RULES**

JOHN 13:34 "And so I am giving a new commandment to you now—love each other just as much as I love you. <sup>35</sup>Your strong love for each other will prove to the world that you are my disciples."

JOHN 14:15-16 If you love me, obey me; and I will ask the Father and he will give you another Comforter, and he will never leave you.

2 CORINTHIANS 5:17 When someone becomes a Christian, he becomes a brand new person inside. He is not the same anymore. A new life has begun!

### **13. THE BIBLE**

MATTHEW 4:4 But Jesus told him, “No! For the Scriptures tell us that bread won’t feed men’s souls: obedience to every word of God is what we need.”

1 PETER 2:1 So get rid of your feelings of hatred. Don’t just pretend to be good! Be done with dishonesty and jealousy and talking about others behind their backs. <sup>2-3</sup>Now that you realize how kind the Lord has been to you, put away all evil, deception, envy, and fraud. Long to grow up into the fullness of your salvation; cry for this as a baby cries for his milk.

HEBREWS 4:12 For whatever God says to us is full of living power: it is sharper than the sharpest dagger, cutting swift and deep into our innermost thoughts and desires with all their parts, exposing us for what we really are.

### **14. END OF THE WORLD**

PSALM 22:14 My strength has drained away like water, and all my bones are out of joint. My heart melts like wax; <sup>15</sup>my

strength has dried up like sun-baked clay; my tongue sticks to my mouth, for you have laid me in the dust of death. <sup>16</sup>The enemy, this gang of evil men, circles me like a pack of dogs; they have pierced my hands and feet. <sup>17</sup>I can count every bone in my body. See these men of evil gloat and stare; <sup>18</sup>they divide my clothes among themselves by a toss of the dice.

DANIEL 9:24-27



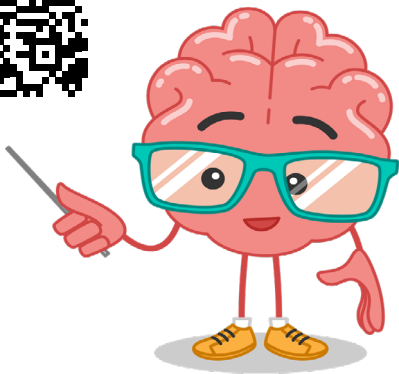
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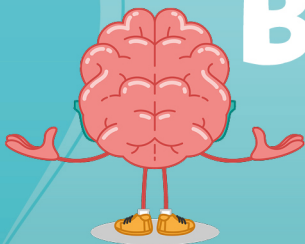




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