



Let the Word testify

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This book has been written to achieve two objectives:

- 1) To help a person discover that Jesus Christ is the savior of humankind
- 2) Support the evangelist in the process of evangelism

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Foreword Our armour

God the Almighty Creator gave us His Identity. His Identity (the Messiah) got me to seek more of Him as I know He is the Truth. I can associate with His Identity and Person, His Identity is inviting, He comforts and brings salvation within my reach. He is not condemning nor was I created without any choices over my own future, in fact, He created me with the ability to live a full life. The greatest of this is to live in fullness through knowing and praising Him.

The author of the Bible confirms that God concerned Himself with man from the beginning in order for us to know Him.

Hebrew 1:1-3: *"¹God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, ²has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world; ³who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high"*

Today we can read the witnesses of the eyewitnesses who authentically confirm that Jesus Christ is indeed the revelation of God to men. The apostle John who lived with Jesus for approximately three years, witnessed as follows in John 1:14: *"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."*

Jesus Christ also confirmed His Identity in John 14:6: *"Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."*

John 14:9-11: *"⁹Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'? ¹⁰Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works. ¹¹Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves."*

The apostle Paul (note that the word "apostle" in the Bible refers to a messenger who saw the resurrected Jesus Himself and who did miracles in the Name of Jesus) expresses that there is no other revelation from God to man: Colossians 2:8-10: *"⁸Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ. ⁹For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, ¹⁰and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power."*

The same Paul, at the time a pharisee and called Saul had Christians prosecuted. After personally meeting Jesus he realized that Jesus is the Messiah as was prophesied through the centuries. Look what all Paul had to endure and still it did not stop him from proclaiming the Gospel: 2 Corinthians 11:24-31: *"²⁴From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one. ²⁵Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep, ²⁶in journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren, ²⁷in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness – ²⁸besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches. ²⁹Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to stumble, and I do not burn with indignation? ³⁰If I must boast, I will boast in the things which concern my infirmity. ³¹The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is blessed forever, knows that I am not lying."*

Today we know that we will be resurrected and live forever in the presence of the Creator. The message from Jesus to the Sadducees recorded in Matthew 22:29-31: *"²⁹Jesus answered and said to them, "You are mistaken, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God. ³⁰For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels of God in heaven. ³¹But concerning the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was spoken to you by God, saying, ³²I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob' ? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living."*

Jesus assures us of His return: John 14:2-3: *"²In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. ³And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also."*

The apostle Peter explains for us to fight against false doctrine we must hold onto the revelation of God, Jesus Christ: 1 Peter 3:15-16: ¹⁵*But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; ¹⁶having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed.*

We must hold on to Christ, the Word of God. This is the only explanation we can use for other people to also share in the glory of God. The Holy Spirit reaches other people through us and what we have learnt from the Word. The more we study the Bible, as it is the Word of God, the closer will the Holy Spirit bring us to the revelation of God to man – the Person Jesus Christ. The closer we are to the Person Jesus Christ the better we will get to know God and His power can then work in and through us. God becomes Lord to us as He is the God of the covenant who concerns Himself from the beginning with man. Knowing Him allows us to live a fulfilled life. 1 John 5:20: *“And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life”*

It is obvious that the Truth is not within man. We can argue and philosophize (humanly wisdom) but it will not get us closer to God. 1 Corinthians 4:20: *“For the kingdom of God is not in word but in power.”*

Humanly wisdom, philosophy, necessitates a middleman – oneself, and not the supernatural revelation through the Holy Spirit. The philosopher’s apparent wisdom is impressive but naturally pathetic. The first known theologian, Tertullianus, taught around 250 A.D. that Satan tries to interfere with the Holy Spirit’s work in a person’s life. Thus everything that you think and believe and think you believe is caught up in oneself. 1 Timothy 6:3-5a: ³*If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which accords with godliness, ⁴he is proud, knowing nothing, but is obsessed with disputes and arguments over words, from which come envy, strife, reviling, evil suspicions, ⁵useless wrangling’s of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. From such withdraw yourself.*

Paul explains to Titus what is important to an elder/bishop: Titus 1:9: *“holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict”.*

John confirms that Christ is the truth, there is and never was another revelation, or manifestation of God: 1 John 2:20-27: ²⁰*But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you know all things. ²¹I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and that no lie is of the truth. ²²Who is a liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist who denies the Father and the Son. ²³Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father either; he who acknowledges the Son has the Father also. ²⁴Therefore let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father. ²⁵And this is the promise that He has promised us—eternal life. ²⁶These things I have written to you concerning those who try to deceive you. ²⁷But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will abide in Him.*

The Son is the only truth and giver of eternal life. After all, He is the Creator of everything and it includes life, if otherwise where would you be? There were no other revelations to the Person Jesus Christ. Obviously there couldn’t be any other prophets, apostles or angels which God revealed to man. Religions, other than that of the revelation of Christ are from man or are based on some other revelations which were done in isolation. The only Person Jesus Christ, and what He is coming to do and has done, has accurately, and in details, been predicted by various prophets. You will find this from the Bible as well as various other amazing revelations regarding the person Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit works within us when we study the Bible which results in personal witnessing which, in itself, is a unique revelation from the Lord to us and how it could change our perception. This is testimonial of the joy which becomes a reality within ourselves – The Person Jesus Christ.

Paul confirms as follows Colossians 2:18-19: ¹⁸*Let no one cheat you of your reward, taking delight in false humility and worship of angels, intruding into those things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, ¹⁹and not holding fast to the Head, from whom all the body, nourished and knit together by joints and ligaments, grows with the increase that is from God.*

Jesus warns as well in Matthew 24:4-5: ⁴*And Jesus answered and said to them: “Take heed that no one deceives you. ⁵For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will deceive many. ⁶And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. ⁷For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. ⁸All these are the beginning of sorrows. ⁹”Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My*

name's sake. ¹⁰And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another.
¹¹Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many.

Jesus Christ came to earth and lived, as man, amongst us (Immanuel – God with us) therefore fulfilling the prophesy in order for us to know Him. It can also be said that He fulfilled the commandment in order to establish His identity on earth. So-called revelations outside of Him, before Him or after Him, are outside the Person of God. Such doctrines remove the True Author from the revelation.

Hundreds of years before Christ the psalmist testifies as follows: Psalms 94:12-13a: ¹²*Blessed is the man whom You instruct, O LORD, And teach out of Your law,* ¹³*That You may give him rest from the days of adversity, Until the pit is dug for the wicked”.*

Jesus Christ is the Word of God. If we seek His revelation, or even teach others, the Word of God, the Bible, is the only tutor that keeps us within the Truth through guidance from the Holy Spirit. Eyewitness John testifies as follows: John 1:14: *“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.”*

The Gospel (the good message) of Christ is unique, though available to each person. In the beginning of the Bible we already read what The Lord of Israel says: Genesis 12:3: *“I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”*

The mercy of The Lord brings His love in reach of every person's past, present and future. Paul explains in Titus 2:11-13: ¹¹*For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men,* ¹²*teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age,* ¹³*looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.”*

God, The Lord, proclaims deliverance and not damnation. Deliverance is in everybody's reach through faith in Jesus Christ. No one can receive deliverance through good works but is given to us only through faith in Jesus Christ. The most important is for us to lay down our sins and move our focus to The Person, Jesus Christ. Paul teaches one of the early congregations of Christ in Ephesians 1:7-14: ⁷*In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace* ⁸*which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence,* ⁹*having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself,* ¹⁰*that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him.* ¹¹*In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will* ¹²*that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory.* ¹³*In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise,* ¹⁴*who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory”.*

Everyone who experiences the glory of God in Jesus Christ involuntary becomes an evangelist. This, however, is an instruction from the Lord that all believers should spread the Gospel (Matthew 28:19). Logically we have not all received the same gifts to do this in the same and/or better manner but we have the Word of God, Jesus Christ, which should always be our starting point. The working of the Holy Spirit reveals, together with our own obedience, the truth of Christ to the other person. Therefore we must proclaim Christ with the Bible as the point of departure. Clever, philosophical talks and reasoning forces the discussion away from the working of the Holy Spirit, the Supernatural power of God to reveal His Son to us

Refer to the words from Jesus as written in Matthew 23:8-10: ⁸*But you, do not be called 'Rabbi'; for One is your Teacher, the Christ, and you are all brethren.* ⁹*Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven* ¹⁰*And do not be called teachers; for One is your Teacher, the Christ.”*

When we realize that Christ, the Word of God, is our Leader and He helps us through the working of the Holy Spirit, then we should realize that our witnessing should be within the context of the Gospel of Christ. It is wonderful to know that I should not attempt to witness through my own wisdom but to allow the Creator of the universe to witness through me. We are fighting a losing battle when we try on our own to fight against false doctrine. Christ has overcome the Evil One on the cross. Witness in faith about who Christ is and what He has done for us, then Christ is your Teacher. Paul wrote to Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:14-17: ¹⁴*Remind them of these things, charging them before the Lord not to strive about words to no profit, to the ruin of the hearers.* ¹⁵*Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.* ¹⁶*But shun profane and idle babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness.* ¹⁷*And their message will spread like cancer”*

This document uses as much as possible quotations from the Bible to motivate the reader to study the Bible more. It also brings us more under the guidance of the Holy Spirit for us to engage more with the Truth and to find our strength in The Lord.

In John 8:31-36 Jesus confirms that He is the only truth that sets us free: ³¹Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. ³²And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." ³³They answered Him, "We are Abraham's descendants, and have never been in bondage to anyone. How can You say, 'You will be made free?'" ³⁴Jesus answered them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin. ³⁵And a slave does not abide in the house forever, but a son abides forever. ³⁶Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed."

Paul guides as follows: Efesiërs 6:10-20: ¹⁰Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. ¹¹Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. ¹²For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. ¹³Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. ¹⁴Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, ¹⁵and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; ¹⁶above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. ¹⁷And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; ¹⁸praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints— ¹⁹and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, ²⁰for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

Discussion in this document will be using the guidelines above in order for us dress ourselves in the full armor of God to proclaim and defend the Gospel.

Chapter 1

The Bible is the Truth

Ephesians 6:17: “...And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God”

The Holy Spirit is the One that provides man with the belief in the Message of the Word of God. Through reading the Bible God becomes The Lord to you. His Name is established in you. In this chapter we will focus on the authentic foundation the Word of the Lord gives us to help those searching and address false doctrine.

1. Introduction

The Bible is the most studied book in the world as well as the most known. The Bible can also be seen as the most wonderful book in the world. This is confirmed by:

- The authors claims that they were inspired by God to write it
- The Bible has been published and distributed across the globe in spite of strong resistance from those who hate the Bible.
- Most of the authors, and actually all the authors of the New Testament, were tortured to death for what they as eyewitnesses testified about. They did, however, stood by what they saw and what they testified about.
- Those who accepted the Message from the Bible, testifies about the influence the Bible had on their lives and habits. Augustinus (354 -430 a.C.) testifies that, prior to his conversion, the Bible seemed mediocre compared to other Roman documentation. The Bible turned to joy after his conversion. That is a dynamic and relevant message to all aspects of life.
- The Bible contains detailed prophesies which has clearly been fulfilled thus assuring the reader that the contents it is from God Self. Where various prophets, from different periods, accurately predicted different facets of the same occurrence there can be no doubt that the gist is from God Self.

2. How was the Bible compiled?

It can be asked today why there aren't any of the original documents available which was used by the authors themselves? The answer to this question is: During the time that the authors themselves wrote the Bible they used **papyrus**, which is made of the Papyrus plant. The Papyrus plant used to grow in the shallow lakes and rivers of Syria en Egypt. Huge shipments of papyrus were shipped via the Syrian harbor, Byblos. It is said that the Greek word for books, bibles, stems from the name of this harbor. The English word, paper, and Afrikaans word, papier, stems from the Greek word papyrus. This papyrus did not have a long lifetime and crumbled relatively quickly. The oldest papyrus fragments available today dates back to approximately 2400 b.C. Papyrus stayed more intact in the drier areas such as the sand dunes of Egypt, the Qumran caves as well as the caves where the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered. (48, p.17-18).

Later years parchments were used. Parchments are either animal skins such sheep or goat as well as other animals. The skins were prepared, shaved and scraped to be used as sheets to write on. The word parchment stems from Pergamum, an ancient Greek city where plenty of these skins were prepared. They also used **vellum**. Vellum is calfskin which is usually purple of colour. Some of the vellum we have today are of the purple type. The olden day leather scrolls which are still available to us today dates back to approximately 1500 b.C. (48, p.18).

Due to the nonexistence of the printer/press industry at the time the Bible was written manuscripts were made of the scripts and distributed. A **Manuscript** is a handwritten copy of an original document. (48, p17). The manuscripts were done under strict control to ensure no mistakes are made. Later in this document attention will be given to how these manuscripts contributed to ensure the Bible of today is an authentic book.

3. The true Author of the Bible

Only the Truth can reveal the Truth and that is Jesus Christ, the Word of God.

John 1:1: *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."*

During Jesus Christ's questioning by Pontius Pilate, the irony of the Truth in front of the blind world can be seen clearly. The Word of God, according to the Scrolls, came to earth to testify about the Truth.

John 18:37-38: *"³⁷Pilate therefore said to Him, 'Are You a king then?' Jesus answered, 'You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.'" ³⁸Pilate said to Him, 'What is truth?' And when he had said this, he went out again to the Jews, and said to them, 'I find no fault in Him at all.'"*

As we become disciples of the Truth, we are set free of all false doctrine and spiritual lunacy.

John 8:31-32: *"³¹Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, 'If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. ³²And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.'"*

It truly can be said that the Holy Spirit inspired the authors of the Bible to write the Word of God prophesying Christ in the Old Testament and witnessing Christ in the New Testament. Today still the same Holy Spirit helps us to understand the Word of God. Jesus assures us that the Holy Spirit will reveal the Word of God to us.

John 16:12-13: *"¹²I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. ¹³However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come."*

3.1 Many writers through different time periods obviously inspired by the same God

The Bible has detailed prophecies which were clearly fulfilled in order for the reader to have the surety that the contents is from God Self. When more than one prophet, from different time periods, accurately predicts different facets of the same occurrence, there can be no doubt that the contents is from God Self. This is the unity with regards to the message from the Bible.

The Bible was written by forty different writers over a period of 1600 years. It consists of sixty six different books and each forms a structural, historical, prophetic and spiritual unity. In context, together these books form a logical entity with one message – The central figure: Jesus Christ.

3.2 The Holy Spirit is the true author of the Bible

All the writers of the Bible were people from different backgrounds. Interesting facts:

- Moses was a political leader
- Joshua a military general
- Solomon was a king
- Daniel was a prime minister
- Nehemiah was a cupbearer
- Amos was a sheep farmer
- Matthew was a tax collector
- Peter was a fisherman
- Paul was a rabbi

It is impossible for so many different writers from so many different periods of time, backgrounds, languages groups and cultures to write the same about spiritual topics unless they were inspired by God thus the perfect replica we have today, the Bible.

The Bible says in 2 Peter 1:21: *"..... for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit."*

Jesus' own words in John 5:31-32: *"³¹If I bear witness of Myself, My witness is not true. ³²There is another who bears witness of Me, and I know that the witness which He witnesses of Me is true."*

Jesus says to the nonbelievers in John 5:39: *"³⁹..... You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me."*

How wonderful is it when you can see the unity in the Bible. In Numbers 28:7-9: ⁷*And its drink offering shall be one-fourth of a hin for each lamb; in a holy place you shall pour out the drink to the LORD as an offering.* ⁸*The other lamb you shall offer in the evening; as the morning grain offering and its drink offering, you shall offer it as an offering made by fire, a sweet aroma to the LORD.* ⁹*And on the Sabbath day two lambs in their first year, without blemish, and two-tenths of an ephah of fine flour as a grain offering, mixed with oil, with its drink offering—*“

Almost 1200 years later it comes to fulfillment when Jesus, the Lamb with no blemishes, institutes the Holy Communion as described by Luke 22:14-20” ¹⁴*When the hour had come, He sat down, and the twelve apostles with Him.* ¹⁵*Then He said to them, "With fervent desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer;* ¹⁶*for I say to you, I will no longer eat of it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God."* ¹⁷*Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, "Take this and divide it among yourselves;* ¹⁸*for I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes."* ¹⁹*And He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me."* ²⁰*Likewise He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you."*

John, who sat next to Jesus during this meal, also confesses as follows in John 17:1-3: ¹*Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: "Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You,* ²*as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him.* ³*And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent."*

The Holy Spirit worked through the nation of Israel to bring redemption for all nations. Read the prophecy of Israel: *Leviticus 26:14-47*

3.3 The Lord gave prophecies as proof that the Word is true

Morgan (12, p44-45) points out that God gave the prophecies as proof that His Word is true. He used the example of William Bradford who, before he arrived in December 1620, gave a speech about the future of America. He could not do that although Moses could and other prophets could make predictions that we can see in the Word today, which was fulfilled. Morgan points out that prophecies that is fulfilled where there is no circumstantial or accidental coincidences “and the supposition that it causes it’s own fulfillment through some influence exerted by it, necessary involves supernatural agency.” He points out that the abovementioned prophecies are unique to the Bible. He further says that no other religion has the kind of prophecies the Bible has, although if there are it is minor. The documented fulfillment of the prophecies in the Bible is unique. Morgan divides prophecies into three parts: 1) With reference to Israel; 2) With reference to other nations; 3) With reference to the Messiah.

3.3.1 Prophecies about Israel

One can read in various books of the Old Testament of the Israel prophecies. Many of these prophecies has been fulfilled already and the other will still be fulfilled. The Israeli nation became faithless towards the Lord which caused them to break the covenant the Lord made with Abraham.

Deuteronomy 28:15: *"But it shall come to pass, if you do not obey the voice of the LORD your God, to observe carefully all His commandments and His statutes which I command you today, that all these curses will come upon you and overtake you"*

Deuteronomy 28:49-50: ⁴⁹*The LORD will bring a nation against you from afar, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flies, a nation whose language you will not understand,* ⁵⁰*a nation of fierce countenance, which does not respect the elderly nor show favor to the young."*

Hosea 3:4: *"For the children of Israel shall abide many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or sacred pillar, without ephod or teraphim."*

Psalms 83:4-5: *They have said, "Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation, That the name of Israel may be remembered no more."* ⁵*For they have consulted together with one consent; They form a confederacy against You"*

Isaiah 11:11-12 ¹¹*It shall come to pass in that day That the Lord shall set His hand again the second time To recover the remnant of His people who are left, From Assyria and Egypt, From Pathros and Cush, From Elam and Shinar, From Hamath and the islands of the sea.* ¹²*He will set up a banner for the nations, And will assemble the outcasts of Israel, And gather together the dispersed of Judah From the four corners of the earth."*

Morgan points out that the Babylonians in 587 b.C. chased the Israeli nation out of Palestine but 70 years later they returned. The Messiah came and was crucified. The Romans chased them out in 70 a.C. but in 1948 the Lord brought them back to Israel.

The Messiah will return a second time to earth. This will be discussed in more details later in the book.

3.3.2 Other Nations

In the previous paragraph the abduction of the Israeli nation was accurately predicted. We can also read what happened to some of them during their captivity under the Babylonian king, Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel was a Jew kept in captivity and a God-fearing man. After a dream of King Nebuchadnezzar he challenged his advisors to interpret and explain it. They were unable to do so but Daniel could with the help from the Lord. This happened approximately 600 before Christ:

Daniel 2:28-47: ²⁸*But there is a God in heaven who reveals secrets, and He has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days. Your dream, and the visions of your head upon your bed, were these: ²⁹As for you, O king, thoughts came to your mind while on your bed, about what would come to pass after this; and He who reveals secrets has made known to you what will be. ³⁰But as for me, this secret has not been revealed to me because I have more wisdom than anyone living, but for our sakes who make known the interpretation to the king, and that you may know the thoughts of your heart. ³¹You, O king, were watching; and behold, a great image! This great image, whose splendor was excellent, stood before you; and its form was awesome. ³²This image's head was of fine gold, its chest and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze, ³³its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay. ³⁴You watched while a stone was cut out without hands, which struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces. ³⁵Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were crushed together, and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; the wind carried them away so that no trace of them was found. And the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth. ³⁶This is the dream. Now we will tell the interpretation of it before the king. ³⁷You, O king, are a king of kings. For the God of heaven has given you a kingdom, power, strength, and glory; ³⁸and wherever the children of men dwell, or the beasts of the field and the birds of the heaven, He has given them into your hand, and has made you ruler over them all—you are this head of gold. ³⁹But after you shall arise another kingdom inferior to yours; then another, a third kingdom of bronze, which shall rule over all the earth. ⁴⁰And the fourth kingdom shall be as strong as iron, inasmuch as iron breaks in pieces and shatters everything; and like iron that crushes, that kingdom will break in pieces and crush all the others. ⁴¹Whereas you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; yet the strength of the iron shall be in it, just as you saw the iron mixed with ceramic clay. ⁴²And as the toes of the feet were partly of iron and partly of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly fragile. ⁴³As you saw iron mixed with ceramic clay, they will mingle with the seed of men; but they will not adhere to one another, just as iron does not mix with clay. ⁴⁴And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever. ⁴⁵Inasmuch as you saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold—the great God has made known to the king what will come to pass after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation is sure." ⁴⁶Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell on his face, prostrate before Daniel, and commanded that they should present an offering and incense to him. ⁴⁷The king answered Daniel, and said, "Truly your God is the God of gods, the Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, since you could reveal this secret."*

Five kingdoms would rule over Israel one after the other, ie. Babylon, Persia and Media, Greece, Roman and then the reformed Romans. As the value of the metal decreases these kingdoms differ from each other. Each different from the previous as the value of metal decreases. The latter already happened. The rock that broke loose would be Christ who destroys the last kingdom with catastrophic consequences. (59, p.1229).

3.3.3 The Messiah

The entire Old Testament is a forecast of the Messiah. The Messiah can be seen in each book of the Old Testament. The New Testament authentically testifies about the work of the Messiah on earth as it was predicted in the Old Testament. A person, through the mercy of the Holy Spirit, can see that the Messiah flawlessly fulfilled the prophecies from the Old Testament. The logical assumption can be made that the prophecies of the future will also be fulfilled by Him.

Huge parts of this book deals with how a person can get to know Jesus through the Bible. There are already more than 360 Messianic prophecies identified in the Old Testament which has been fulfilled in detail by Jesus Christ. As an introduction let's look at some of these prophecies as indicated by Morgan (It will be discussed later in detail later in this book)

According to Morgan:

3.3.3.1 Family Tree

Genesis 9: 26-27; Luke 3:35; Genesis 12:2-3; 21:12; 22:18; 35:10-12; 49:10; Numeri 24:17; Psalms 78:67-68; Isaiah 11: 1-2; Jeremiah 23:5; Matthew 1:1; Micah 5:2 (Bethlehem)

3.3.3.2 *Birth*

Isaiah 7:14; 9:1; 9:6-7; 11:1-5; 52:13 :12; Malachi 3:1 en 4:5;

3.3.3.3 *Climacs*

Zachariah 9:9; Haggai 2:7; Malachi 3:1

3.3.3.4 *Miracles*

Isaiah 35:5-6; Psalms 78:2; 118:22

3.3.3.5 *Phenomenal*

Psalms 41:9; 55:12-14; Zachariah 11:12-13

3.3.3.6 *Death*

Zachariah 13:7; Psalms 22:1 + 7-18; 35:11; 38:13; Isaiah 53:2-7; 53:12

3.3.3.7 *Total Image, also see:*

Genesis 3:15; Numeri 24:17; Isaiah 9:6; Genesis 22; Leviticus 22

In this regard Morgan (12, p 76-77) also refers to the following:

- Abel is an example of the need/purpose of the Lamb
- Abraham showed us the provision of the Lamb
- Exodus points us to the slaying of the Lamb
- Leviticus points to the character of the Lamb
- Isaiah refers to the personality of the Lamb
- John the Baptist identified the Lamb
- Peter described the crowning of the Lamb
- Revelation refers to the Lambs infinite reigning and eternal life to those whose name is written in the Lamb's book of life.

4. Canonical versus non-Canonical

Jos McDowell points out that the word **canonical** derived from the Greek word, canon, which means cane/rattan or reed. A reed, or cane, was used as a measuring tool and was seen as a “standard”. In a Biblical context it can be seen as the “official list of accepted books” (48, p.21). These are the books seen as the standard and recognized books considered authoritative by the Protestant Church. These are the only books inserted in the Hebrew version of the Bible (35, p1356).

It is falsely said that it was decided during a meeting of people which document would be included in the books of the Bible and which not. In the past there were meetings where the contents of the Bible were studied, as is the case today, but the meetings mentioned were held for different reasons than that of studying the contents of the Bible. Good examples of this are the rumors that a counsel of rabbis in Jamnia, near Jaffa, gathered in 90 a.C. to determine which books would be accepted. The truth is that these rabbis did not determine the final list of the canonical books but rather determined which books should be excluded. The books which the board would not accept weren't part of it originally. The discussion at Jaffa focused more on which books should be retained in the Bible and not about the inclusion of new books (48, p.26). Another example is the Board of Nicea which was convened by Constantine in 325 a.C. Dan Brown professed in his false book, *The Da Vinci Code*, that this board determined the contents of the Bible. This is also not true. The discussion that took place focused on the Godliness of Jesus Christ. In the notes of these meetings, which are still available today, there is no reference that the contents of the Bible were discussed. (Find and watch the DVD: *Da Vinci Code Deception*, 'a production of Charles E. Seller; Grizzly Adams Productions, Inc.). The people of God started hundreds of years prior to these meetings to divide the Bible into verses and chapters in order to read and duplicate the Bible easier. Proof of this dates back to earlier than 586 b.C. Ordained duplication eliminates errors which mean the contents of the Bible existed long before any consultations, discussions, or decisions could be taken about it.

The canonical books were not determined by the Church. The Church did not determine which books would be inspired by God and hence acknowledged as The Word of God. On the contrary the Church discovered and realized which books were the inspired ones. In other words “a book is not the Word of God because it was accepted by people, it was rather accepted by the people of God because it was the Word of God”. God's authority is given to the Word by God and not by man. (48, p.21).

4.1 What is Apocryphal books

Apocryphal Books (*Old-Testamentary context*). These books originated during the inter-testamentary period, although from a Protestant point of view it is seen as inferior and thus not regarded on the same level as the 66 canonical books of the Bible. (35, p1356).

Apocryphal Books (*New-Testamentary context*): This usually refers to the false papers (Pseudepigrapha) which originated between the second and fifth century after the time the New Testament was written, mainly by splinter groups who broke away from the mainstream of the Christian religion. These books are usually referred to as “false papers” as, most of the time, they were issued under a false name (that of an apostle or any other popular person). The difference between the Old Testamentary and New Testamentary Apocrypha Books are: 1) There isn't a definite outlined amount of New Testamentary apocrypha as the amount still grows as new books are found through exhumations. 2) Although there are Christian churches who regard the Old Testamentary apocrypha books as part of the Old Testament, there isn't any church that regards the New Testamentary apocrypha books as part of the New Testament. 3) The Old Testamentary apocrypha are mostly devout literature which also is distributed by various Bibles, while the New Testamentary apocrypha are purely fabricated and contains doctrines which are conflicting with the Bible (35, p1365).

Smith and Bennett points out that we can learn from the Old Testamentary apocrypha. These refer to how faith in angels and demons, which was popular during the New Testamentary times, influenced the Jews. The apocrypha shows how strong the expectation of the Messiah in the mind of the Jews was while Jesus was on earth teaching the people about the Kingdom of God (49, p.30).

Eschatology refers to the teaching of the end times (35, p1360).

Apocalyptic refers to a type of literature with the following characteristics: it is a comprehensive visionary revelation about God's plan in the history and way of world events from the beginning to the end of times, playing off in a supernatural (cosmic) space, celestial being is the mediator to explain these visions, these are usually the expressions of the minority who cannot find their salvation in the existing order and looks for a Godly intervention, symbolisms and images are strong, the fate of the righteous and sinful are determined, the end time events are in conflict between Godly might and evil, the victory over the evil leads to a new (Messianic) time. Examples are in the later Old Testamentary books ie.

Joel, Zechariah, Daniel as well as parts from Isaiah and Ezekiel. It is very evident in the New Testamentary book of Revelations. The one common thing between all these documents are the expectation that God, Himself will intervene in this world with all its sorrow and that He will remove all evil forever, which will bring a time of peace and joy. (35, p1360).

Septuagint: The Greek translation of the Old Testament which includes the apocrypha (35, p1356)

Vulgate: The Latin translation of the Bible of the Roman Catholic tradition which regards the apocrypha equal to the 66 books of the Bible. (35, p1356)

Pseudepigraphical documents: This refers to the custom instituted to publish documents under the names of well known figures such as Adam, Henoch, Moses or Isaiah. There are also a certain amount of books which were not written under fictitious names but left anonymous. These include legendary historical books, collection of Psalms, wisdom works and apocalyptic scripts. (35, p1356)

Robert van Voorst emphasizes that in this modern day and age access to these scripts is more easily available than before. Until approximately a century ago searching for Jesus beyond the New Testament was limited. There are three main reasons for this: 1) The canonical reality of the New Testament (as well as the Old Testament), 2) Scholars and researchers of the classic Roman, Jewish and Christian scriptures downgraded the less significant witnesses about Jesus outside the canonical books of the New Testament. The non-canonical literature was seen as dependant on the canonical scripts as well as unimportant in the understanding of Jesus. 3) Until approximately the second half of the twentieth century, the knowledge we had about Jesus, outside that of the New Testament, mainly originated from the opponents of the church fathers dating back to the second century. During the second century Gnosticism emerged which falsely claimed that purely the knowledge of godly beings is adequate to be saved. (34, p1-3).

The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in 1947 brought more information to light regarding the Jewish beliefs during the time of Jesus. The Nag Hammadi scrolls which was discovered in the Egyptian dessert provided insight into the Christian-Gnostic viewpoints during the earlier Christian times. As a result of the discovery of the Nag Hammadi scrolls there are now more non-canonical scrolls available than canonical scrolls. (34, p3).

The Gnostic viewpoint envisaged that awareness of the spiritual is adequate to be saved. Dr Stephan Joubert explains in his discussion about the Judas Evangelism (available at the NG Moreletapark Church) that the Gnostic is also known for their illustration of unpopular characters as heros, such as Cain, Esau, Judas, etc. The great bishop and church father, Irenaeus (130 – 200 a.C), also referred to these false doctrine. The Gnostic brought about fiction such as the Gospel of Phillipus, the Gospel of Thomas as well as the Gospel of Judas, which was written 180 a.C. falsely under the name of an apostle. It is evident in "The Da Vinci Code" that Dan Brown was encouraged by false doctrines such as these.

4.2 On what basis was it decided which scripts would form part of the canonical books?

It can be said that the Church accepted certain scripts as inspired by God. Looking at the history of the Biblical scripts it is evident there were mainly five principles used as guidance in determining whether the scripts were inspired by God. (48, p21):

- Was the book written by a prophet of God? In the case where it was written by a mediator of God, it is the Word of God.
- Has the written word been confirmed by God? Regular miracles distinguished true prophets from the false ones. The Lord provided Moses with powerful miracles in order to proof that he was inspired by the Lord (Exodus 4:1-9), through miracles Elijah proved the false prophet of Baälím wrong (1 Kings 18), Jesus performed numerous miracles to proof that the Lord works through Him (Acts 2:22).
- Was the truth about God, the Lord, witnessed? God cannot contradict Himself (2 Corinthians 1:17-18), God can only speak the truth (Hebrews 6:18). In other words, no book with false witnessing can be the Word of God. Therefore, the church fathers took the stance that "If we are in doubt, remove it"
- Was the message filled with the power of God? The word of God is "*living and powerful*" (Hebrews 4:12) and therefore has a transforming power of teaching (2 Timothy 3:14-17) and evangelism (1 Peter 1:22-25). Where the purpose of a book is not confirmed by its own message, if it does not have the power to change a life, then the power of God is most probably not the inspiration of the message. The presence of Gods life changing power has been key to whether or not God approved of the book.

- Did the people of God accept the scriptures? This can be clearly seen from Paul's letter to the Thessalonians in 1 Thessalonians 2:13 ¹³*For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe.*” The people who knew the prophet who wrote the book are the ones that would know whether the scriptures were the Word of God. In the event of a book being accepted, collected, read and used by people it was seen as a canonical book. This practice can be seen in the Bible, and an example thereof is where Peter gives recognition to the scriptures of Paul as Scriptures witnessing of the Message from the Old Testament : 2 Peter 3:15-16 ¹⁵*and consider that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation--as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, ¹⁶as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures.*”

Today, without doubt, we can be assured that the Bible books acknowledge the Truth, who is Jesus Christ. There are already more than 360 Messianic prophecies in the Old Testament which were clearly fulfilled by Jesus. Refer to the Bible studies on www.matthew28.co.za where you can find witnesses around the Old Testament prophesying about the Messiah, Jesus Christ, who is the redeemer of all man. The wonder (above all human expectation) of this is that the Creator revealed Himself in His Word in ways unheard of (humanly) and still does it today through the Holy Spirit to those who study the Word.

5. The Old Testament

5.1 The construction of the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament)

Die Hebrew Bible (our Old Testament) is known as the Tanakh. The word stems from the first letter of each of the three different parts from the Old Testament (50, p178-179).

T A	The Commandments (Written by Moses)	Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy
N A	The Prophets	Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, die 12 kleiner profete
K H	The Scrolls	Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Die Vyf Boekrolle, Ezra, Nehemiah, Chronicles

The first five books of the Old Testament: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy as known as the **Torah** or the Pentateuch, which also become the Holy Word to the Jews. (49, p.14)

It is clear from Powell that Moses was, as a result of his Egyptian upbringing, an educated man. As Luke compiled his works by working through various documents, Moses probably also did. The Hebrew nation was aware that they are God's chosen nation and that all nations would be saved through the Revelation to, and amongst them (The Messiah). They realized the importance of them noting all that God revealed to them. Moses acknowledged what the Lord revealed to him and he probably also worked with other authentic documents in order to witness. The people of this time accepted the work of Moses as inspired by God as they witnessed many of the wonders that the Lord did through Moses.

Smith and Bennett explains as follows: No document will be regarded by people as very valuable, even if the king instructs they must, unless the people themselves find it valuable, helpful and through its own merit. This also means that the events must confirm what is written and discussed in the documents.

Smith and Bennett continue by explaining that Deuteronomy addressed the nation as it comprises of important commodities of the religion of Yahweh: 1) The priestly element and, 2) the prophetic element (49, p.12).

The Jews also adapted their ceremonies to these elements. This, amongst others, is also discussed in Deuteronomy. The priestly element is clearly seen in service at the Temple. The highlight of this was seen every year on the Day of Atonement when only the high priest entered the Sacred Inner Room of the Temple (previously called the Tabernacle) for the forgiveness of his sins as well as those of the nation. Jesus Christ came as the Godly High priest, as per the order of Melchizedek and fulfilled the law by reconciliation through His salvation with all.

The prophetic elements in Deuteronomy can be seen through the way in which people are to treat each other, what is right and fair, as well as what the Lord expects from us every day. (49, p.13). In various

parts of Deuteronomy the prophecy of Jesus Christ is clear. The believers of today can without any doubt believe that Jesus Christ is the Messiah who brought the Old Testament into fulfillment. There are many examples of this for instance the Festivals of the Lord of which can be read from Deuteronomy 15. In Deuteronomy 18:15-22 there is again a clear prophecy about the Messiah. In all truthfulness it can be said that the Messiah, the Face of the Lord, can clearly be seen in each book of the Old Testament (Please read the book of Ds. Danie Haasbroek: "The Wonder of Jesus in the Old Testament" – see references at the end of this document).

The writers of the **Prophets (Neviim)** had to conform to an important regulation. There had to be a sign, preferably a predicting prophecy, which had to prove that the person speaks on behalf of the Lord. The messages and history of these people was accepted and protected for this reason. From Moses until Nehemiah there were a series of prophets whose messages was recorded. After Nehemiah the series of canonical books of the Old Testament was closed up and the series of prophets ended (50, p.182).

Smith and Bennett points out that Amos was the first prophet of a group known as literal prophets. Amos wrote during the eight century before Christ, approximately 750 b.C.. Hosea, Micah and Isaiah also wrote approximately 750 before Christ. The prophet from the seventh century before Christ of whom the most documents are available today, is Jeremiah. His contemporaries were Nahum, Zephaniah and Habakuk. During the sixth century before Christ Ezekiel, Haggai and Zechariah were active. Prophets during the fifth century before Christ were Malachi, Obadiah en Joel. These prophets all left valuable literature behind and they declared that they spoke on behalf of God (49, p.16-17).

Furthermore, Smith and Bennett points out that during the time of the prophets, each nation had its own gods. Many people regarded Yahweh as Israel's God exclusively. The message from Amos was that God Yahweh, is the God of all people and the most essential of God is His righteousness. This message from Amos is called the Ethical Monotheism which means there is only one God expecting specific behavior from people. Hosea reiterated God's salvation love after Amos.

It is during this time that Isaiah brought to light that there will come a faultless King whom will bring a new era of righteousness. You can also read in Isaiah about the Servant that leads to the savior of others (also read Deuteronomy 40-53) (49, p.18).

The latter is a clear prophecy that Jesus Christ will come as the Lamb of God to be slaughtered and bringing reconciliation between God and all people believing in His deliverance. It all happened as said in the commandment. As confirmation there are the Feasts of the Lord (Leviticus 23 en Deuteronomy 15) which established the calendar. A calendar indicates what, when, by whom and why something would take place. The books of Moses, the Law, show how the relationship between God and the people were established. The covenant with Abraham was done with blowing of a trumpet announcing the coming of the Messiah to restore the relationship, the New Covenant. The Servant of God (do what man cannot), the Son of God (in the Spirit of God), the Son of Man (for man to know Him) = the Anointed (The Messiah) rose from the dead after all people, of all times and nations, has seen what happened and therefore they all know He is the only One with power over life and death. He is the only One giving life, eternal life.

The remaining books of the Old Testament is known and accepted as **Writings Ketruvim** for specific reasons. A primary indication of this is that commentaries were written about books such as Psalms, Job and Proverbs. Many of these examples are found amongst the Dead Sea Scrolls. Non-canonical books did not inspire these comments (50, p.182)

A great witness of the authentic structure of the Old Testament books is Jesus himself. Doug Powell (50, p.177) points out that the apostles and other Jews of the first century already had Old Testament books of the Bible, and it considered the canonical books. Jesus affirmed that the Hebrew Bible is God's Word (Luke 24:44, John 10:31-36, Luke 24:44, Luke 11:51).

Today there is enough evidence that the books of the Old Testament which we have today in the Bible, were already included in the Jewish writings probably in the fourth century before Christ but not later than 150 before Christ. We also know when the latest (ie, newest) books of the Old Testament was written. Malachi was written 450-430 BC and Chronicles not later than 400 BC. These latest books, along with the rest of the Old Testament, are included in the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament) which was compiled between 250-150 BC (48, p.26-27).

Jesus made it clear that the Old Testament is God's revelation of Himself. And it is only by this revelation that man can have a relationship with God. Powell said that the framework of the Old Testament is essential to understand Jesus and His teachings. But, in turn, the teachings of Jesus' life and death, cast light on the Old Testament (50, p.178). Smith and Bennett said that the Act forms the foundation of the Old Testament, the Prophets the walls and the Writings the roof (49, p.22).

5.2 Ancient extra-biblical references to the content of the Old Testament

Besides the fact that the content of the Old Testament is confirmed by Jesus and His apostles, today there is evidence of non-believers who referred to the tripartite division of the Old Testament as well.

McDowell (48, p.28-29) refers to the following :

The foreword to the book of Ecclesiastes, dated about 130 BC. The author's grandson writes : "*The Law, the Prophets and other books of the fathers*" that clearly show the threefold division of the Hebrew Bible".

Right after the time of Christ, about 40 AD (Christ was crucified around 33 AD) Philo writes about the tripartite division of the Hebrew Bible and refers to "*the Law, the Prophets (or Prophecies) and the Psalms as well as other who attained perfect knowledge*"

The Jewish historian Josephus, who at the end of the first century AD wrote about the threefold division of the Old Testament. "*And how well have we acknowledged the books of our nation can be seen in what we do: for by so many centuries that have passed no one has ever been brave enough to add or remove anything or to make any changes, but it has become natural for every Jew, immediately and at their birth, to regard these books as books containing divine teachings, and to hold onto them, and if necessary, die for it*".

"*This is nothing new for our prisons, and there are many of them, and often too, which can be seen in many ways be killed in the theaters, and they dare not a word to say against our laws, and books in which they are contained*"

Today we know with certainty that the contents of the Bible (in this case the Old Testament) was authentically left for us, and not determined by any meeting, church council or church father.

5.3 The difference between the original Hebrew Tanakh and the Old Testament of today

The Old Testament consists of 39 books and the Tanakh consist of 24 (or 22 depending on whether Ruth is regarded as the end of Judges and whether Lamentations is regarded as the end of Jeremiah). The books with the same name are sometimes in different sequences. When these are studied however, it can be seen that it contains identical text and only the layout (or format) differ.

The longer books of the Tanakh, such as Chronicles, Kings, and Samuel have been divided in the Old Testament. The smaller prophets (with "small" is meant the prophets who did not write that much, but are equally important) are all combined as one book in the Tanakh. This re-formatting of the Tanakh to the Old Testament as we have it today was not done by the early Christians, but by the Jews themselves. It happened when the Tanakh had to be translated into Greek about 250 years before the birth of Jesus Christ. The Greek translations of the Tanakh is known as the Septuagint. After the Hellenistic of Palestine and Egypt in the fourth century b.C. by Alexander the Great, Greek was the mother tongue of many Jews. Ptolemy Philadephus, king of Egypt, ordered translation of the Torah into Greek. He instructed the high priest of Jerusalem, Eleazer, to do the translation. Eleazer arranged six translators of each of the twelve tribes of Israel. This led to 72 people who were responsible for the translation. The 72 was probably rounded off to 70 and therefore the name "Septuagint" which means seventy (also referred to as "LXX" the Latin version of 70).

By 150 BC, the Neviim and Ketuvim were also translated into Greek. During the first century b.C., the Septuagint became the standard version of the Old Testament used by the Jews in diaspora (away from their land). The Jews, in and around Jerusalem, still used the Hebrew version (50, p.184-185).

5.4 What is the Talmud?

McDowell summarizes the Talmud as an ancient collection of laws of the rabbis, decisions taken in respect of laws and commentaries on the laws of Moses. This preserved the practices of the Jewish people (48, p.28).

About 70 AD a group of men, known as the Talmud, took the responsibility to make copies of the Hebrew Tanakh. They laid down very strict rules to ensure that the copies are reliable. Powell (50, p.188) point out the rules:

- Each page must contain the same number of columns
- The columns had to be at least 48 lines long but not more than 60
- Each line had to be 30 letters long
- Specific rules had to be followed for the spacing between letters, lines, sections and books

- The Torah had to end precisely at the end of the line.
- Nothing, not even a part of a letter, could be written from memory
- The ink had to be black and prepared in a specific way.
- The name of God was not to be the first thing to be written after the pen was dipped in the ink
- The copier had to wear special clothing and adhere to specific rules in washing

For the Jews only the newest and most well-preserved version of the Tanakh were acceptable. If they came across an old version or discovered a neglected copy, they burn it, or gave it to schools for teaching purposes. That is one of the reasons why today there are so few ancient versions of the Tanakh available. This however is not the case with the New Testament. Today there is a huge variety of manuscripts of the New Testament available.

5.5 The Dead Sea Scrolls

The papyrus on which the Tanakh (and Old Testament) was written got rotten easily. The Palestinian climate contributed to the rotting. The best preserved writings are those preserved in clay pots as the clay pots protected it from moisture and other environmental conditions. A typical example is the Dead Sea Scrolls. These Scrolls were found in 1947 by a shepherd in a cave near Qumran at the Dead Sea. The shepherd found manuscripts written on parchments which were stored in clay pots.

Approximately 270 caves in the region were searched and manuscripts were found in ten of those. More than 40,000 fragments were found from 500 different books and writings. Between these books, each book of the Old Testament was found except the book Esther. Powell pointed out that it is important to realize that these manuscripts date from the third century before Christ. (a part of Samuel) until the first century after Christ. It is much older than any other manuscripts available at that time (50, p.190-191).

Comparisons between these manuscripts and those which were already available showed that more than 95% was correct and corresponded. The 5% difference was purely spelling and copying errors. This difference had no impact or change in the message.

The Dead Sea Scrolls yet again proves of the accuracy and authenticity of the Bible.

6. The composition of the New Testament

6.1 The early church had three requirements to determine which documents are authentic (30, p 66):

6.1.1 *The books must have apostolic authority.*

In other words, it should have been written by the Apostles themselves who was eyewitnesses or followers of the apostles who testified about what the apostles told them. Matthew and John were written by the apostles themselves. Mark was Peter's helper and Luke was Paul's helper (30, p 66). Geisler and Turek also draw attention to this by pointing out that Jesus fulfilled the prophecies of the Old Testament, Jesus also had His witnesses authentically confirmed and thereby enabled them to perform miracles in His name. Jesus therefore, amongst other things, appeared to these witnesses after His resurrection from the dead. It made these witnesses apostles who performed miracles and witnessed the resurrected Jesus. The conclusion is therefore that, according to Jesus, the New Testament books would only contain what was written or confirmed by the apostles. John, who knew all the apostles, had a disciple named Polycarp (69-155 n.C.) who had a disciple named Irenaeus (130-202 n.C.). Polycarp and Irenaeus jointly quoted 23 of the 27 New Testament books as authentic. Irenaeus confirmed the authorship of the four Gospels. Through the historian Eusebius, we know that Papias (60-120 AD) confirmed the authorship of Matthew and Mark. Nobody questions the authorship of Paul's letters. As a result the canonical books became a list of authentic books rather than an authentic list of books. The New Testament books were accepted as authentic by the church fathers in 393 AD and officially accepted as authentic by the Council of Hippo (22, p367-368).

John Blanchard (7, p209) states that the drastic change in the disciples' behavior convinced many that Jesus is the Messiah. After the crucifixion the disciples all went into hiding like cowards and feared for their lives. Suddenly after the ascension, they were brave, and with no doubt testified. Besides John, all were tortured and killed because of their beliefs. It is clear that Jesus appeared to them (after the crucifixion) and convinced them that He is God. This brought about the change in their lives.

According to Jesus Freaks (8, p 19), 11 of the apostles were executed because they testified about Jesus except John who wrote Revelation in exile on the island of Patmos.

6.1.2 The criteria of confirmation

In other words, the document must comply with the authority of faith. The document had to fit into the basic Christian tradition which was seen by the church as the norm. In addition, one must remember that the early church, referred to here, originated during the time of the apostles themselves as well as by them. The members of the church were people who saw Jesus and were taught by Jesus himself. The apostles, who were very close to Jesus and who also received the Holy Spirit, carried forward the "tradition". This can only refer to the true standard of tradition (30, p 66).

6.1.3 The document had to continuously be accepted by the Church

The document also had to be used by the Church continuously. In addition the earlier authentic Church also caused the books of the New Testament to become canonical because as it met the reference framework of the members of the Church from what they themselves had seen, were taught by the Lord and the apostles, and knew for themselves. We can also say that the books of the New Testament are carried by the truth. Strobel continues by pointing out that it is important to know that the canonical books (Bible books) are a list of authoritative books and not an authoritative list of books. (30, p 66)

Geisler and Turek point out the following: The New Testament consists of 27 different documents which were written on 27 different scrolls 9 different authors over a 20 - to 50-year period. The message from the Bible is supported by almost 5700 Greek manuscripts and more than 9000 manuscripts in other languages such as Syriac, Coptic, Latin and Arabic. No other historical document comes almost close to this level of confirmation. The New Testament is not only supported by many manuscripts, but manuscripts are available which was written shortly after the original texts were written. (22, p224-225)

6.2 Testimony of Paul

Paul, first known as Saul, was an active persecutor of Christians. He was a Pharisee and believed the Gospel of Jesus was heresy in respect of the Jewish faith. He was the one who approved the stoning of the first deacon of the Church, Stephen, and stood by when it took place (Acts 7:58 en Acts 8:1). On the road to Damascus, to persecute Christians, the Lord Jesus appeared to Paul (Acts 9) which changed his life and made him one of the greatest witnesses and apostles of Jesus Christ to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles. It is also important to recognize the detail given in the Bible. This is not a story, it really happened.

In Acts 9 the address: "Straight Street" (Acts 9 11) is clearly given of where Paul went as well as the names of people who came to see him is mentioned, and so on. Paul also went through a lot for the sake of preaching the Gospel and at the end he was beheaded in Rome as a result of his testimony. No one would do that for a story or a lie! This is especially impressive if one realizes that not only ALL the apostles gave their lives for their witnessing and testimonies, but that thousands of Jews were killed for their faith during this time. They saw Jesus, and even after Jesus' resurrection, they understood what their Hebrew Bible told them, Jesus is the Messiah, the High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek, born of the seed of David, the servant of God who established an eternal reconciliation with God for them.

Paul wrote many letters to churches of the ancient world and also visited them to help them in building and having a relationship with Jesus Christ, the Being and Presence of God. His letters form a great part of the New Testament to which we have the privilege to read today. On several occasions Paul also testified of the divine revelations he received. Remember these revelations are in line with the salvation plan of God as already predicted in the Old Testament.

2 Corinthians 12:2 *"²I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago--whether in the body I do not know, or whether out of the body I do not know, God knows--such a one was caught up to the third heaven....."* According to the Bible in practice this was a Jewish way of saying you are in the presence of God. Also see Galatians 1:11-12 *"¹¹But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. ¹²For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ."* Also see Galatians 2:1 *"¹Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem....."*

Paul writes to the Corinthians (2 Corinthians 12:12) as follows: *"¹²Truly the signs of an apostle were accomplished among you with all perseverance, in signs and wonders and mighty deeds."* The author would certainly not have written these things to his readers, especially when it is to a group, if it was not accurate. He really, when he visited them, showed them signs, wonders and mighty works. He could not tell them this if it was a lie because they were present! The other characteristic of an apostle, which Paul met was that he himself saw the resurrected Jesus Christ.

Paul's epistle to the Galatians points out the reality of Jesus' appearance to Paul. He reminded the congregation that he arrived at them during the time he was blind. If that did not happen he would not have been able to refer to it openly in a letter with so many eyewitnesses. Galatians 4:14-16 ¹⁴*And my trial which was in my flesh you did not despise or reject, but you received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus.* ¹⁵*What then was the blessing you enjoyed? For I bear you witness that, if possible, you would have plucked out your own eyes and given them to me.* ¹⁶*Have I therefore become your enemy because I tell you the truth?*

Paul testified how God revealed mysteries to the apostles. Ephesians 3:3-5

Paul testifies that he speaks the truth: 1 Timothy 2:7: ⁷*for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle--I am speaking the truth in Christ and not lying--a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth."*

Paul witnesses that the Lord speaks to him: Titus 1:3: ³*but has in due time manifested His word through preaching, which was committed to me according to the commandment of God our Savior;"*

Robert Coleman says: "It was clear that the Master considered no service too small nor sacrifice too great when it was rendered for the glory of God. They may not always understand it, and certainly could not explain it, but they could not mistake it (51, p 63)

Coleman continues: "Such a demonstration of love through them was the way the world would know that the Gospel was true. How else would the multitudes ever be convinced? (51, p64)

The apostles were tortured to death with the option to dispose of what they witnessed and believed. The change these people underwent is remarkable. At the crucifixion they fled like cowards but later they were prepared to offer their lives for their testimony! What caused the change?. Answer: They realized they are now directly facing God Himself when they met the risen Jesus Christ.

6.3 The apostles did not work for money

Jesus instructed His disciples when sending them out to serve, to collect no money. See Jesus' words as evidence in Matthew 10:8 ⁸*Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give."*

The apostles obeyed Jesus' commandments. Paul testifies: 2 Thessalonians 3:7-8 ⁷*For you yourselves know how you ought to follow us, for we were not disorderly among you; ⁸nor did we eat anyone's bread free of charge, but worked with labor and toil night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you"*

1 Thessalonians 4:11-12: ¹¹*that you also aspire to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you, ¹²that you may walk properly toward those who are outside, and that you may lack nothing.*

The apostles knew that they would have to die for their testimony, see Peter's words: 2 Pete 1:14: ¹⁴*knowing that shortly I must put off my tent, just as our Lord Jesus Christ showed me". In John 21:18-19 we can read what Jesus told Pete: ¹⁸Most assuredly, I say to you, when you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish. ¹⁹This He spoke, signifying by what death he would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He said to him, "Follow Me."*

6.4 The Four Gospels

Irenaeus (130-200nC) pointed out that only four gospels should and can be included, in the New Testament. He founded his statement on the basis of the four directions and four living creatures (Revelations 6-11 4). Irenaeus also said that the four Gospels were not only to have apostolic authorship, but also had to be accepted by the Church. The amount of Gnostic Gospels that originated during this time, were eliminated by this statement (14, p.3)

6.4.1 Period written

Strobel refers to Professor. Craig L. Blomberg's research as follows (30, p32-36):

- The Gospels were written during the lifetime of several eyewitnesses. Rival eyewitnesses certainly would oppose the Gospel writers if untruths were given.
- The book of Acts was written by Luke and the main character in the book is Paul while he was under house arrest. There is no mentioning of Paul's death, in other words, Acts was written before Paul's death. Therefore it could not have been written later than 62 after Christ (AD).
- The book of Luke was written before Acts and was also written by Luke. In other words, long before 62 AD. Considering that Christ was crucified during 30-33 AD, the origin of these Gospels was at least within a period of 30 years after Christ.

- Paul converted about two years after the crucifixion of Christ. His letters, which was written before the Gospels, includes doctrines which were used in the early Church as seen in Philippians 2:6-11 and Colossians 1:15-20. According to Blomberg the most important doctrine is the one in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8. *“³For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, ⁵and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. ⁶After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep. ⁷After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles. ⁸Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time”*. Blomberg points out that Paul's first encounter with the apostles probably occurred during 35 AD. In other words, the testimonies heard by Paul, as well as his own revelation and his subsequent letter dated at least within two to five years of actual events

6.4.2 The Authors

The Gospels were written by the apostles of Jesus Christ, either by themselves or by their helpers. The word apostle means messenger. If one looks at the biblical apostle who left the Gospels behind, there is a specific definition of such an apostle: 1) He can do wonders in the name of Jesus, and 2) he personally saw the risen Jesus. It is only people such as these who could give us the assurance of what they saw happening so that we can believe today in the witnesses they left for us.

The disciples of Jesus definitely saw the risen Jesus and made contact with Him after the crucifixion. This allowed them to be witnesses until they died because they realized that they were interacting with God Himself. It was also them who established the Church of God on earth and left the New Testament as Living Word. Geisler and Turek point out that, despite all the arguments against the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the best explanation is to have faith and believe that He performed these miracles and that He really rose from the dead, as he himself predicted (22, p315).

There are four Gospels in the New Testament of the Bible: Mathew, Mark, Luke and John. The writers of these Gospels : Mathew and John were eyewitnesses themselves and wrote about the events they saw. Strobel point out that Mathew was a tax collector and therefore he was not very popular under the nation but was still used to write the Gospel. If it was a farce, someone else would have been used rather than Matthew (30, p23). Matthew's Gospel was originally written by Matthew, as requested by the other Apostles, for use in the work of the apostles in Jerusalem. The intention was to summarize the ministry of Jesus Christ on earth mainly for people who knew about Jesus because Jesus lived and moved between them.

The Gospel of Luke was written by Luke. Luke is seen by all historians as a very reliable author who did factual research. Paul needed a gospel to carry the message to the people into other areas to people who did not know Jesus.

Paul instructed Luke to factually research the Matthew Gospel and to document it in order to be preached to the Gentiles. Luke testified himself in Luke 1 1-4 that he had to do factual research : *“¹In as much as many have taken in hand to set in order a narrative of those things which have been fulfilled among us, ²just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word delivered them to us, ³it seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write to you an orderly account, most excellent Theophilus, ⁴that you may know the certainty of those things in which you were instructed.”* David Black points out that Luke factually researched the Gospel of Matthew and confirmed it through talking to other witnesses thus being able to write a Gospel which Paul could use outside Jerusalem with people who did not know Jesus personally or knew about Him (31, p23).

Mark was Pete’s helper and recorded his speeches. Therefore the Gospel of Mark is a portrayal of the eyewitness, ie. Pete (31, p26). Black claims that Peter was the apostolic witness who confirmed the gospel of Luke by comparing it with the Matthew Gospel through discussions he held. To a large extent Peter spoke to a Roman audience and confirmed the Gospels of Matthew and Luke through telling his own versions of where he was present during the initial events. The use during this time was that a speaker, especially when addressing a Roman audience, should use person to record what he had to say. These discussions were then made available to the audiences afterwards. In Peter's case, Mark helped him recording his discussions and through that we have the Gospel of Mark today (31, p77).

John, the disciple who was very close to Jesus, deemed it necessary to emphasize the Deity of Jesus. John already knew what was written by Matthew, Mark and Luke and did not find it necessary to record it again. He also saw how heresy arose against the Gospel about 95 AD and wrote the Gospel of John. (31 p 31). See John 20:31: *“³¹but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name”*

Dr. Witherington points out that should one remove the whole Gospel of John you will not find any non-Messianic Jesus in any of the other Gospels. It's just not found at all (30, p.138). Jesus is always, unequivocally presented as the Messiah.

Smith and Bennett pointed out that the Gospel of John introduces the same Jesus as the three synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke), but with a different point of focus. At the beginning of the second century AD (this was the time that John wrote his Gospel), the Church became removed from the Jewish faith. Many Christians originated from Greek and Roman states. Unlike the Jews, they did not have the background on the expectation of the coming of the Messiah (49, p.36-37). The Gospel of John emphasized the divinity of Jesus to the strangers. The Gospel of John helped the Jew who clung to the law to understand that Jesus fulfilled the law. Before the Gospel of John appeared, the synoptic Gospels were distributed as separate books. They were very popular amongst Christians and when the Gospel of John appeared, it also became very popular.

Smith and Bennett emphasized that a doctrine is a belief or idea that someone or a group, believe to be the truth. The Greeks liked to reflect on their beliefs and ideas and the relative relationship of that to the essence of life and the world. The Apostle John knew how to address them. He did not begin, as the other Evangelists, with the genealogy of Jesus and the story of the birth of Christ but rather with a more philosophical approach by saying that Jesus is the living God who became man. The word Gospel means good news. We think of the four Gospels as four versions of the life of Jesus. They were not only written to tell the story of Jesus, but to convince people that Jesus was and is God with us (Immanuel). The story is told by conveying a message, and this message is the good news of Jesus (49, p.37-38).

Some intellectuals of the ancient scriptures say that there was another document available, other than the four Gospels which could have served as a source of the Mark Gospel. According to them this document is no longer available today, but its contents can be inferred from similarities in the synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke). In other words, the authors of the synoptic Gospels had this document at their disposal which resulted in them using parts thereof in their own documents during the process of confirming what they themselves testified about. This document is commonly referred to as "Q" (Q is an abbreviation of the German word Quelle, which means source). Van Voorst explains this hypothesis as follows: The author of the Gospel of Luke (as well as Matthew) used two main sources. Firstly, the Gospel of Mark that, with a few exceptions, contains approximately one third of Luke. Luke follows the order of Mark and takes over much of its contents. Both are teachings as well as narratives. The second source is Q of which about one-fifth is found in Luke. Luke might also have used other sources (oral and written) that were unique to his Gospel. These sources are referred to as "L". The content unique to Luke forms a big part of Luke as much as half thereof. Research on the historical Jesus was strongly affirmative to that found in Luke's Gospel. The Matthew gospel contains many information about Jesus not found in the other Gospels. Matthew follows to a large extent the sequence of Mark's and the unique material regarding Matthew is referred to as "M". It is then alleged that M contains all the material unique to Matthew, including Q material which differ adequately from Luke in order to create another form of Q (34, p136-148). It is clear that the "Q" theory is only a hypothesis. The explanation in the previous paragraph dealing with the Gospels as the first and original documents makes more sense in context to the events and testimonies of time.

Today there are different views between the knowledgeable and the ancient writings with respect to which of the Gospels were written first. The important however to bear in mind is with no doubt the following facts:

- The Gospels which we find in the Bible today date back to the time of the authors themselves. This will be discussed in more detail later in the document.
- The authors of the Gospels were all the apostles themselves, or a direct assistant of the apostle. It's definitely not like the apocryphal and Gnostic documents which were written by someone between 150 to 600 years after the events falsely under the name of an apostle.
- The authors of the Gospels gave their lives for that which they testified about.
- The authors were all witnesses of the events which they wrote about.
- The apostles responsible for the availability of the New Testament available today, all met the two qualities of a true apostle 1) He saw the risen Jesus, and 2) He performed miracles in the name of Jesus. We can certainly believe in what they left us.

The origin of the Gospels is clearly in line with God's redemptive plan for mankind, the Messiah. It is not written in isolation in a cave or found in solitude outside any context of prophetic reality, or based on human lust only. This is the Word of God. There is no room for any so-called renewed or last revelation from God to man about Jesus, because it does not fall prophetically into what the Hebrew Bible predicted. There is only one wonderful revelation, and it is the Messiah, Jesus Christ.

Strobel also refers to Professor. Blomberg's statement that the authors of the Gospels would not have included material about themselves which would have put them in a bad light if they wanted to be false. The truth is, they only attracted criticism, rejection and torture to death in the process. Consider the following:

- Mark recorded Peter's words as he testified himself, and Mark portrait Pete without hiding anything, he did not pull any punches. For example Pete who denied Jesus (Mark 14:66-72)
- James and John ask Jesus (Matthew 20 20-28, Mark 10 32-34 Luke 18 31-34) clearly shows that they misunderstood Jesus at the time.

Blomberg continues by confirming that the gospel writers were selective. He refers to what John said at the end of his Gospel John 21:25: *"And there are also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were written one by one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written. Amen"*. The point Blomberg is making is: If the Gospel writers did not see their way open for to testify things when it was comfortable secure to do so, there is sufficient grounds to believe they would not have created things without historical grounds (30, p49-50).

Geisler and Turek lists a few facts which portrays authors of the New Testament in a bad light by saying that they did not hesitate to testify about the truth. They would certainly not invented stories to put themselves in a bad light or endangering their lives (22, p276):

- They often misunderstood Jesus (Mark 9:32; Luke 18:34; John 12:16)
- They were unemotional - they fell asleep twice although He he asked them to pray (Mark 14:32-41)
- They were reprimanded - Peter was called "Satan" by Jesus (Mk 8 33), and Paul reprimanded Peter not to be improper with respect to a theological aspect (Galasiërs 2:11)
- They were cowards - except one (John) all the disciples went into hiding when Jesus was taken to the crucifixion. Peter denied Jesus three times after he promised that he would not do so. (Matthew 26:33-35)
- They are doubters - despite the fact that the disciples were taught several times that Jesus would rise from the dead (John 2:18-22; 3:14-18; Matthew 12:39-41; 17:9, 22-23) they were still doubtful when they heard about His resurrection. Some were even doubtful when seeing Him after His resurrection (Matthew 28:17)

Strobel also points out (with the help of Professor. Blomberg) that if the Gospels described the events inaccurately, other witnesses who were against the motion would have portrayed it to the contrary. There was a lot of resistance to the movement (originated of the Church of Jesus Christ) but no witness testified against that of the Gospel writers. They also did not try to describe the history better.

Geisler and Turek asked the question "What possible motive could the New Testament writers have to describe the Resurrection of Jesus from the dead, if it would be a farce?" The reality of deliverance, persecution, torture and death would not have been any motivation to a person to makeup such a "story". The New Testament writers must have been eyewitnesses of very strong evidence to turn against their own creeds, practices and offer their lives for their faith (22, p234).

The disciples of Jesus all changed drastically when they realized that they are dealing with the living God. During the crucifixion, they acted like cowards but the resurrection of Jesus, finally brought them to repentance. They were all tortured to death with the option to renounce their faith in Jesus Christ. The only one who survived the torture was John. John was exiled to the Greek island of Patmos where he received and written the book of Revelation (22, p292).

- **Pete**
Crucified (22, p292)
- **James**
Stoned (22, p292)
- **Paul**
Decapitated (22, p292)
- **James** (Brother of John)
The first apostle who was tortured after the execution of Stephen. The person who accused James, asked him for forgiveness after the execution and, to his own detriment, declared himself a Christian. James thought for a moment and said "Peace to your brother." then kissed him. They were beheaded together in 36 n.C. (26, p11)

- **Thomas**
Thomas were killed in Kalamina, India, where he preached (26, p12)
- **Simon** (Younger brother of Judas and James)
Simon was the bishop of Jerusalem after James. He was crucified in Egypt during the reign of Emperor Trajan the Roman (26, p12)
- **Simon** the Apostle also called Kananeus and Zealot
Simon preached in Mauritania, Africa and Britain. He was crucified (26, p12)
- **Mark**
He was the first bishop of Alexandria and preached the Gospel in Egypt. He was burned and buried in a place called Bucolus during Trajan's reign (26, p12).
- **Bartholomew**
Preached the Gospel in India and also translated the Gospel of Matthew in their language. He was beaten, crucified and beheaded in Albinopolis, Armenia (26, p12)
- **Andrew (Peter's brother)**
He preached the Gospel in Sebastopolis, Ethiopia in the year 80 AD. Andrew was crucified by Aegeas, governor of the Edessene. He was buried in Patrae, Archaia. Aegeas had him crucified after Andrew refused to worship Roman icons and kept converting the people to turn to Christ (26, p12-13).
- **Matthew**
Matthew wrote his Gospel in Hebrew for the Jews. After his large-scale conversion drive in Ethiopia and Egypt the king Hirkanus (Hircanus) sent someone to kill him with a spear (26, p14).
- **Philip**
He preached the Gospel among barbarous nations for many years. He was stoned and crucified in Hierapolis, Phrygia and was also burried there with his daughter (26, p14).Filippus
- **James** (Brother of Jesus)
James, together with the apostles managed the church. He did not drink any wine, nor ate meat and never shaved his hair. He was the only man permitted in the holy place and did not wear wool but linen only. He prayed so much for other people in the temple that he had hard crusts on his knees. After many chiefs converted to Jesus, the Jews, scribes and Pharisees began to fear that everyone would start following Jesus. They met with James and asked him to stand on the temple roof during the Passover from where he could speak to people about Jesus. They told him that everyone would be able to hear him when speaking from the roof. During James's preaching from the temple roof a lot more people were converted in spite of the Pharisees' smart talk. The latter claimed that Jesus was crucified already and it makes no sense to follow Him. People, however, kept calling, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" The scribes and Pharisees through James from the temple roof. James was not killed by the fall but although he was badly hurt, he turned on his knees and cried "Oh Father, I beg you to forgive them for they know not what they do ". They then decided to stone him but a priest told them Wait, what are you doing? This is a fair man who is just praying for you! "One of the men, a fuller of clothing, took a tool which is used to hit materials, and killed James by hitting him on the head. James was buried at the spot where he fell (26, p14-15). The impressive fact is that this same James began as a skeptical brother of Jesus. The fact that he saw the risen Lord Himself shook him to reality and he realized that his brother is the Messiah! (22, p319)

6.4.3 Consistency

Skeptics seek differences between the descriptions of the same events in order to discredit the Gospels. The latter is proof that there was no predetermined agreement between Gospel writers to tell a lie. These are people, from different perspectives, backgrounds and circumstances who described the same events. Strobel continues by referring to the words of Simon Greenleaf (Harvard Law School): Greenleaf stresses that there are enough differences between the testimonies of the witnesses proving that there could not have been any agreement between them (in advance) to cooperate (30, p46). During discussions with Dr. William Lane Craig, Strobel points out that if the Gospels would have been exactly the same, it would have pointed out plagiarism, and it is not the case (30, p215).

If the Gospel writers evoked the resurrection themselves, they would not have wanted someone else to see the empty tomb first and they would also have declared that they saw Jesus Himself rise from the

dead. To add, it was women, who at that time, were not regarded as reliable witnesses that discovered the empty tomb first! If they wanted to convince skeptics of their so-called story, they would have included much more detail which was not the case. However, all the Gospel writers consistently testified that the women saw the empty tomb first. (22, p289).

6.4.4 Number of Copies and Dates

No other ancient writings exist in the world which contains so much witnessing text than the New Testament (30, p62)

The number of copies is also available from different geographic areas and cross-references still indicate the same origin (30, P59)

The New Testament has many copies which may be compared. This allows the original message to be seen clearly (30, P59).

There are many more copies of the New Testament as copies of any other ancient work (30, P59).

Of the original copies available today from the New Testament, a single generation dates back to the original assignments. Other assignments date back ancient ages of the original (30, P59).

The New Testament was translated, at a very early stage into other languages such as Latin, Syriac and Coptic. At a later stage the New Testament was translated into languages such as Armenian and Gothic which is referred to as secondary translations. All these translations are still available today. Even if the Greek manuscripts were not available anymore, the original message could still be composed from the early versions of the other translations (30, P59). Clearly the New Testament is based on real events.

Strobel refers to research done by Normal Geisler and William Nix. It was found that the New Testament manuscripts not only survived more than any other ancient document, but also in a more pure form than any other surviving document. It is alleged that the New Testament is 95% pure (30, p65).

The original papers and subsequent copies were written on papyrus (paper plant). Papyrus is made of the Papyrus plant which grows in the marshes of the Nile delta in Egypt. Today there are still ninety nine of these papyrus copies available that contains parts and / or books of the New Testament. A few examples are as follows (30, p61-62)

- The Beatty Biblical Papyrus (discovered in 1930) number one contains parts of the four Gospels and the book of Acts. It dates from the third century.
- Papyrus number two contains eight major sections of Paul's letters, including parts in Hebrew, dating from the year 200.
- Papyrus number three contains large part of the book of Revelation and dates from the third century.
- Another group of papyrus manuscripts purchased by a Swedish collector Martin Bodmer, dating from approximately 200 contains about two-thirds of the Gospel of John.
- A different group of papyrus manuscripts contains parts of the Gospels of Luke and John, dating from the third century.
- There is also a piece of papyrus available containing parts of chapter eighteen of the Gospel of John, which dates back approximately 100-150 AD. Some intellectuals say that it dates back to the time of Trajan, ie. 98-117 AD. To add, realizing that John wrote his gospel about 95 AD, this work was written during the life of the author himself.

The above indicates that the gap between the original documents and copies that are available today decreases as new discoveries are made.

6.5 Authenticity (30, p184)

At the time the Gospels were circulated, there were still people present who themselves were witnesses of the events in the Gospels.

The question can be asked why would a person like Matthew think up a story, make it look like prophecies fulfilled from the Old Testament and stand by his story allowing to be killed as a result thereof. It makes no sense if he believed in lies, it only makes sense if he knew that he testified about the Messiah. In addition, all the disciples of Jesus stood by their testimonies until death. Everyone was killed because of their testimony and they were not willing to deny what they saw. John was the only one they could not kill (he was thrown into a pot of boiling oil at the amphitheater and nothing happened) and was exiled to the island of Patmos where he wrote Revelation.

No objections are found in any writings of that time regarding the reality that the prophecies have been fulfilled. Not even the Jews could testify against it. For instance look at one of the more than 360 Messianic prophecies that the bones of the Messiah will not be broken (Exodus 46 and 12 fulfilled about 1200 years later in John 19 32-33). The Jews could easily say that Jesus' bones were broken during the crucifixion, but not once was it said.

The authors of the New Testament placed historical making reference to real historical figures and their actions in their writings. There are at least 30 characters in the New Testament already confirmed as historical by archeology or non-Christian writings. A good example of that is Caiaphas, the high priest who condemned Jesus to death. Caiaphas is not only mentioned by the secular writer, Josephus, but his physical bones were also discovered in 1990 during a fantastic archaeological discovery. This discovery was made possible because of the ancient burial practice of the Jews (22, p269-270)

Geisler and Turek refers to the historian and expert of the classics, Colin Hemer, who investigated the accuracy of the book of Acts, verse by verse. Hemer identified, in painful detail, 84 facts of the last 16 chapters of Acts which has already been confirmed by historical and archaeological research. All 84 facts are discussed. How could Luke be accurate with environmental facts such as the direction of the wind, depth of the water, town names, etc. but not with regard to the miracles which he testifies about? (22, p256-260)

It is historically and geologically unequivocally proven that what Luke testified about is accurate and reliable. The question is posed to doubters and skeptics. Luke confirms the events which are depicted in the other Gospels, how can it be that the other Gospels do not reproduce true facts? (22, p262). However, it is unequivocally and historically and geologically evident that the other Gospels are accurate. For example there are impressive historical facts contained in the Gospel of John. Many of these are already confirmed geologically and confirmed by non-Christian writers. Many of these are historically possible because it is unlikely that the writer thereof would have imagined it. A list of 59 facts is discussed here. A good example can be seen in John 19 34. : *"But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out."* Today it is known that when a person is crucified aqueous fluid would accumulate in the bag around-the heart, the pericardium. John would not have known about this medical condition and would not have mentioned this detail if he was not present and a witness to it at that moment when it happened. In support, John writes in the next verse John 19:35 that he saw it happen. *And he who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you may believe"* (22, p267)

6.5.1 The disciples testify that they are eyewitnesses

Lee Strobel points out that the testimony of a witness is very powerful. According to him it is the most dramatic moments in a trial when the witness would describe in detail the crime that he or she saw as well as point out the suspect with confidence (30, p19). It is also important to realize that the Biblical eyewitnesses stood by their testimonies to death. Ten of the remaining eleven disciples were tortured to death because of their testimony, with the option to renounce their faith. Still, they stood by their testimony and confirmed it. Surely a person would not let that happen to you if you knew it was a lie!.

The disciples of Jesus definitely saw the risen Jesus and had contact with Him. This urged them to become witnesses to death because they realized that they were interacting with God. The definition of an apostle 1) He can do wonders and 2) he personally saw the risen Jesus, assures us that today we can believe the testimonies they left behind. Geisler and Turek pointed out that, despite all the arguments against the Gospel of Jesus Christ the best explanation is to have faith that He performed miracles indeed and that He truly rose from the dead, as predicted by Himself (22, p315). Also see 2 Corinthians 12 12 Paul, an apostle, says *"Truly the signs of an apostle were accomplished among you with all perseverance, in signs and wonders and mighty deeds."*

Let's see how the witnesses themselves testified in the Bible about being eyewitnesses

6.5.1.1 John

- John 19:33-35: ³³*But when they came to Jesus and saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs. ³⁴But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out. ³⁵And he who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you may believe."*
- John 20:30-31: ³⁰*And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; ³¹but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name."*
- John 21:24: *"this is the disciple who testifies of these things, and wrote these things; and we know that his testimony is true."*
- 1 John 1:1-4: ¹*That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life -*

²the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us - ³that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. ⁴And these things we write to you that your joy may be full."

6.5.1.2 Tomas

- John 20:27-29: ²⁷Then He said to Thomas, "Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing." ²⁸And Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!" ²⁹Jesus said to him, "Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

6.5.1.3 Peter

- 1 Peter 5:1-2: ¹The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed : ²Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly"
- 2 Peter 1:16-20: ¹⁶For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty. ¹⁷For He received from God the Father honor and glory when such a voice came to Him from the Excellent Glory: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." ¹⁸And we heard this voice which came from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain". ¹⁹And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts;" ²⁰"knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation"
- To Cornelius in Act 10:39-41: ³⁹And we are witnesses of all things which He did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem, whom they killed by hanging on a tree. ⁴⁰Him God raised up on the third day, and showed Him openly, ⁴¹not to all the people, but to witnesses chosen before by God, even to us who ate and drank with Him after He arose from the dead."

6.5.1.4 Pete together with John

- Peter's speech in Act 2:29-33 ²⁹Men and brethren, let me speak freely to you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. :³⁰Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne, ³¹he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption. :³²This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses. ³³Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear."

6.5.1.5 Paul

- In 2 Corinthians 12:1-10 Paul speaks about the special revelation he received from God: ¹It is doubtless not profitable for me to boast. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord: ²I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago—whether in the body I do not know, or whether out of the body I do not know, God knows—such a one was caught up to the third heaven. ³And I know such a man—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows— ⁴how he was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter. ⁵Of such a one I will boast; yet of myself I will not boast, except in my infirmities. ⁶For though I might desire to boast, I will not be a fool; for I will speak the truth. But I refrain, lest anyone should think of me above what he sees me to be or hears from me. ⁷And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure. ⁸Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. ⁹And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. ¹⁰Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong."
- In Galatians 1:11-2:2 Paul testifies as follows: ^{11:11} But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. ¹²For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ. ¹³For you have heard of my former conduct in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it. ¹⁴And I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries in my own nation, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers. ¹⁵But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called me through His grace, ¹⁶to reveal His Son in me, that I might

preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood, ¹⁷ nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me; but I went to Arabia, and returned again to Damascus. ¹⁸ Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and remained with him fifteen days. ¹⁹ But I saw none of the other apostles except James, the Lord's brother. ²⁰ (Now concerning the things which I write to you, indeed, before God, I do not lie.) ²¹ Afterward I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia. ²² And I was unknown by face to the churches of Judea which were in Christ. ²³ But they were hearing only, "He who formerly persecuted us now preaches the faith which he once tried to destroy." ²⁴ And they glorified God in me. ^{2:1} Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and also took Titus with me. ^{2:2} And I went up by revelation, and communicated to them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to those who were of reputation, lest by any means I might run, or had run, in vain"

6.5.1.6 There were many eyewitnesses

- Paul testifies in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8: *"³For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, ⁵and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. ⁶After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep. ⁷After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles. ⁸Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time."* It is remarkable that Paul testified this while most of the other witnesses, which he refers to, were still alive at the time. He would not have testified about this if it was a lie as the other witnesses whom he refers to would have pointed him out as a liar. On the contrary, the church has grown into the largest movement in human history, supported by the Truth against which no critic has any defense.
- Acts 13:29-31: *"²⁹Now when they had fulfilled all that was written concerning Him, they took Him down from the tree and laid Him in a tomb. ³⁰But God raised Him from the dead. ³¹He was seen for many days by those who came up with Him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are His witnesses to the people."* This testimony of Paul is about 17 years after the crucifixion of Jesus. One must also realize that this occurred during the time the witnesses were still alive and they could appose the Gospel had it not been accurate, but they did not because it reflected true events among the authoritative testimony of the apostles themselves who sacrificed their lives for the truth of what they had experienced and witnessed.
- *Summarising* the appearances of Jesus to people after his resurrection. This again proves that Jesus appeared to many, not just one or two, but many at a time. This is also confirmed by more than one Gospel as well as the creed in 1 Corinthians 15 (30, p234):
 - To Mary Magdalena (John 20:10-18)
 - To other woman (Matthew 28:8-10)
 - To Cleopas and another disciple on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-32)
 - To the eleven disciples and others (Luke 24:33-49)
 - To ten apostles and others during which Thomas was not present (John 20:19-23)
 - To Thomas and other apostles (John 20:26-30)
 - To seven apostles (John 21:1-14)
 - To the disciples (Matthew 28:16-20)
 - He was with the apostles on the Mount called Olivet just before His ascension (Luke 24:50-52 and Acts 1:4-9)
 - To more than 500 simultaneously (1 Corinthians 15)

It's clear that there were many eyewitnesses of Jesus' actions ie. suffering, crucifixion and appearance after his resurrection from the dead. The apostles also testified that they ate with Jesus after His resurrection. Apart from the apostles there were others, who are even mentioned by name, who witnessed all the events. For example Acts 1:21-23: *"²¹Therefore, of these men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, ²²beginning from the baptism of John to that day when He was taken up from us, one of these must become a witness with us of His resurrection"* ²³ *And they proposed two: Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias."* Keep in mind this was written by Luke who researched almost everything!

6.5.1.7 Luke confirms the authenticity of the witnesses and their writings

Luke further confirms that he researched the facts to ensure the accuracy thereof in the scriptures. See Luke 1:1-4: *"¹In as much as many have taken in hand to set in order a narrative of those things which have been fulfilled among us, ²just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word delivered them to us, ³it seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write to you an orderly account, most excellent Theophilus, ⁴that you may know the certainty of those things in which you were instructed."*

6.5.1.8 The author of Hebrew testifies as follows

Hebrews 2:1-4: *"¹Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away. ²For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, ³how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him, ⁴God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?"*

6.6 Witnesses from the disciples of Jesus that Jesus is God

Note how the four Gospel writers describe the events. For example, Jesus' entry into Jerusalem, the parable of the vineyard farmers (not in John), etc. It is evident that the Bible is truthful because all these witnesses testify about the same events. The testimonies from the disciples, who later became apostles, which we read today is clearly not a bunch of stories or fantasies fabricated by them. See Paul's description of Jesus in 1 Timothy 3:16: *"And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, Justified in the Spirit, Seen by angels, Preached among the Gentiles, Believed on in the world, Received up in glory."*

Jesus is God: Philippians 2:6-7: *"⁶who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, ⁷ but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men."*

Philippians 2:10-11: *"¹⁰that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, ¹¹and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."*

Peter testifies that he was a witness of the suffering of Christ in 1 Peter 5:1: *"¹The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed"*. Also see 2 Peter 1:16-20.

Colossians 1:15-20: *"¹⁵He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. ¹⁶For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. ¹⁷And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. ¹⁸And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence. ¹⁹ For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, ²⁰and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross."*

Colossians 2:9-12: *"⁹For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; ¹⁰ and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power. ¹¹In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, ¹²buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead"*

Peter's testimony about who Jesus is and what the Gospel means to us today. Acts 3:11-26: *"¹¹Now as the lame man who was healed held on to Peter and John, all the people ran together to them in the porch which is called Solomon's, greatly amazed. ¹²So when Peter saw it, he responded to the people: "Men of Israel, why do you marvel at this? Or why look so intently at us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk? ¹³The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified His Servant Jesus, whom you delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let Him go. ¹⁴But you denied the Holy One and the Just, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, ¹⁵and killed the Prince of life, whom God raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses. ¹⁶And His name, through faith in His name, has made this man strong, whom you see and know. Yes, the faith which comes through Him has given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all. ¹⁷"Yet now, brethren, I know that you did it in ignorance, as did also your rulers. ¹⁸But those things which God foretold by the mouth of all His prophets, that the Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled. ¹⁹Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, ²⁰and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was*

preached to you before, ²¹whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began. ²²For Moses truly said to the fathers, 'The Lord your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear in all things, whatever He says to you.' ²³And it shall be that every soul who will not hear that Prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people. ²⁴Yes, and all the prophets, from Samuel and those who follow, as many as have spoken, have also foretold these days. ²⁵You are sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying to Abraham, 'And in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.' ²⁶To you first, God, having raised up His Servant Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from your iniquities."

Colossians 2:8-9: ⁸Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ. ⁹**For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily;** ¹⁰and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power"

The apostle Peter testifies as following in 2 Peter 1:1: "Simon Peter, a bondservant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who have obtained like precious faith with us by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ"

Peter testifies in 2 Peter 1:16-21: ¹⁶For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty. ¹⁷For He received from God the Father honor and glory when such a voice came to Him from the Excellent Glory: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." ¹⁸And we heard this voice which came from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain. ¹⁹And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; ²⁰knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, ²¹for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit."

The man Christ was born from Israel, Romans 9:5: "of whom are the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, the eternally blessed God. Amen."

John explains the divinity of Jesus clearly: John 1:1-5: ¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. ⁴In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. ⁵And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it."

Peter declared that Jesus is the Son of the Living God without him being told. This shows that the living God revealed it to Peter! Matthew 13:17: ¹³When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, 'Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?' ¹⁴So they said, 'Some say John the Baptist, Some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.' ¹⁵He said to them, 'But who do you say that I am?' ¹⁶Simon Peter answered and said, 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.' ¹⁷Jesus answered and said to him, 'Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.'"

John addressed the reader directly, and he testifies that he saw the miracles of Jesus and more so that we can believe. John 20 30-31. But Jesus himself said: "Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." John 20:29

Peter and John healed the lame man in Solomon's porch. Peter testified that the man was healed in the name of Jesus. Acts 3:16: "And His name, through faith in His name, has made this man strong, whom you see and know. Yes, the faith which comes through Him has given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all."

7. Is the Bible true or is it just stories that we believed?

In the previous paragraphs it is evident that God revealed His Word as God's Revelation to man, and that the Church accepted and honoured it as divinely. The latter is reality because the authors wrote to their own people and it was confirmed by powerful miracles. Their testimonies have survived centuries so that we, the believer today can be part of the divine plan of salvation. The prophetic assessment and challenge of the Bible (Old Testament), fulfilled with no doubt by the Messiah, authentically confirmed by eyewitnesses (New Testament) should provide the assurance that the Bible is true.

In the Old Testament alone there are about two thousand (2000) prophecies already fulfilled. Kennedy points out that it definitely was not daring presumption. These prophecies are very prescriptive, detailed and specific. It must be said in the same breath that it all came to fulfilment. It can not only be good guesses because they kept themselves busy with things that were not likely to happen. The predictions

were opposite to the natural expectations of people. These could not have been written afterwards because hundreds of these prophecies came true hundreds of years after the prophet's death. In many cases the fulfilment came only after the completion of the Old Testament and even after its translation into Greek (150v.C.) (28, p 3-4).

For example, look at the prophecies about the cities of Tyre and Sidon, two major cities on the eastern coast of the Mediterranean Sea. The great city of Carthage was one of the daughters of Tyre, but even at the pinnacle of its existence the prophet in the Old Testament affirms that the city of Tyre will be destroyed. She will not be rebuilt nor inhabited again (Ezekiel 26:19-21). The Prophet also warned that the inhabitants of Sidon will become weak and will be reduced but that the city will continue to exist. The fact of that matter is that the city of Sidon was attacked and betrayed by its own king and forty thousand of the inhabitants were killed, but the city of Sidon still exists today.

What happened to Tyre? Here are specific prophecies about the city of Tyre which Ezekiel declared, during the pinnacle of Tyre's existence Ezekiel 26:4-5 & 12-14 *"⁴And they shall destroy the walls of Tyrus, and break down her towers: I will also scrape her dust from her, and make her like the top of a rock. ⁵It shall be a place for the spreading of nets in the midst of the sea: for I have spoken it, saith the Lord GOD: and it shall become a spoil to the nations. ¹²And they shall make a spoil of thy riches, and make a prey of thy merchandise: and they shall break down thy walls, and destroy thy pleasant houses: and they shall lay thy stones and thy timber and thy dust in the midst of the water. ¹³And I will cause the noise of thy songs to cease; and the sound of thy harps shall be no more heard. ¹⁴And I will make thee like the top of a rock: thou shalt be a place to spread nets upon; thou shalt be built no more: for I the LORD have spoken it, saith the Lord GOD."* A few years after writing this prophecy, the great Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon brought his army and conquered the city of Tyre. For thirteen years, the city resisted the efforts of the king of Babylon but eventually the walls Crumbled and the soldiers of Nebuchadnezzar stormed into the city and attacked the remaining residents by sword. Thousands, however, fled into the sea by boat to form the new Tyre on an island half a mile into Mediterranean Sea. The prophecy was fulfilled, however only half of it.

Two-hundred and fifty years later, after Ezekiel had already died, most of Tyre's walls still stood. It seemed as if the prophecy never came to complete fulfilment. Millions of tons of rocks, debris and wood are left yet God said that the city will be wiped clean as a bare stone plate – and the stones and timber of the city will be thrown into the sea. Alexander the Great prepared for his attack on the Persian Empire. He defeated the Persian king for the first time after which the Persian army fled to the West. Alexander, a great strategist, started sealing off the ports on the eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea in order to illuminate the effect of the Persian army. Alexander then also came to Tyre. He ordered the city, which stood on the island with high walls, to surrender. When the inhabitants of Tyre laughed at him, Alexander and his chief engineer Diades undertook the largest and most challenging plan in the history of warfare. They were to building a walkway through half a kilometre of the Mediterranean Sea to the island of the new city of Tyre. Where would they get building materials for a walk through? The instruction was given by Alexander: "Break down the walls of Tyre (ancient Tyre), take the wood and stones, stumps and debris and throw it into the sea." The great army of Alexander began fulfilling the Word of God. It is said that Alexander himself carried stones on his back. This debris, rocks and stumps are the same as those which Ezekiel spoke about many of years before. According to history the ancient Tyre was swept down in order to gather enough material to build the walk through to the new Tyre. New Tyre was also taken over and destroyed. The prophecy was still not completely fulfilled. The Lord said that He would destroy the walls of Tyre and leave her as a bare stone slab where nets will be dried. Kennedy mentions that a member of his church recently visited the new city of Tyre and took pictures of it. The photos clearly show the nets spread open on the flat stone slab which was once the proud city of Tyre! *"I've spoken says the Lord my God."* Ezekiel 26:5. Let any unbeliever declare this prophecy as untrue! In Kennedy's book "Why I believe" he continues to highlight more of these prophecies. It also refers in detail to cities like Samaria, Jerusalem, Edom, Petra and Babylon. Kennedy ends this passage by pointing out that more than two thousand prophecies came to fulfilment which confirmed the authenticity of the Bible.

The authenticity of the Bible is further authenticated through excavations done today confirming without doubt places and events of the Bible. An example is the great prophecy by Jesus Himself as Luke describes in Luke 19:39-40: *"³⁹And some of the Pharisees from among the multitude said unto him, Master, rebuke thy disciples. ⁴⁰And he answered and said unto them, I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out"* Kennedy pointed out that the science of archaeology already exposed so much detail in respect of the Scriptures, that the Bible can be accepted as historically accurate.

Isn't it also wonderful to understand what Jesus told the Pharisees two thousand years ago? In other words, if the two thousand prophecies of the Old Testament are not enough, then more than three hundred prophecies about the Messiah Himself which in perfect detail came to fulfilment should

convince you. If still in doubt, the Messiah performed many miracles while He was on earth for thousands of eyewitnesses in order to prove His deity. If it is not enough, there are many prophecies that saw the Messiah Himself created ie. that He would rise from the dead and the Holy Spirit would leave us behind and then made visible. If all this is still not enough, then the authentic Gospels confirm that the witnesses themselves their lives in danger to confirm the events. If it still is not enough, one can look at the uniform message throughout the Bible where God confirms His Name "I Am" God, not other names of Babylon, that the Lord throughout (more than four thousand years and many authors) the Bible refers to believers (church of Christ). as His bride through to Revelation where He, the Bridegroom fetches His bride. Throughout the Bible it refers to the Lamb who would be and was slain, and in Revelation where the Lamb fetches His bride. If it still is not enough, should there be no more witnesses; the stones will cry it out! Kennedy pointed out that more than twenty five thousand Biblical places have confirmed by excavations. Evidence of tens of thousands of individuals and events has been found. Kennedy quotes Nelson Glueck, the renowned Jewish archaeologist, "It may be stated categorically that no archaeological discovery has ever controverted a biblical reference." (28, p24).

7.1 The same persons and events described by more than one person

If more than one person describes an event it then adds significant value to the validity of the event. The authors of the Bible did not work in isolation. They had assistants who also were witnesses of the real event. For example, Moses worked very closely with the Leviticus priests. The high priest, Aaron, was his brother. These people acted as helpers and were supervised by the author while capturing the events. Not only did they record the events, but they were also witnesses who can testify if the author does not tell the truth. We can be assured that the Bible testifies about real events, because there are always details given, such as genealogies, place names, names of persons involved, who did what, etc. In a modern court an issue is binding if there are two witnesses. In the Bible there are constantly instances where more than one person, and even a group of people, describes the same event, and characteristics or themes. Here are a few samples of many:

7.1.1 The exodus from Egypt (1250 vac.)

- Exodus (Large portions written by Moses himself and therefore we still have Moses' own handwriting today)
- Leviticus (Leviticus Priests)
- Numeric (Unknown?)
- Deuteronomy (Leviticus Priest)
- Joshua (Deuteron mists)
- Judges (Someone from the time after the exile)
- 1 Samuel (Samuel and the prophets Nathan and Gad, and others)

7.1.2 Receipt of the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai

- Leviticus (Leviticus Priest)
- Numeric (Unknown?)
- Deuteronomy (Leviticus Priest)

7.1.3 People:

- David
 - Joshua (Deuteron mists)
 - Judges (Someone from the time after the exile)
 - - Ruth including the genealogy of David (Unknown)
 - 1 Samuel (Samuel and the prophets Nathan and Gad, and others)
 - 2 Samuel (Several people, possibly also Nathan and Gad)
 - 1 Kings (Unknown)
 - 1 Chronicles (The Chronicler, probably a group of people)
- Several references to numerous kings such as Saul, Solomon, As a, Jehoshaphat, Ahab, Jehu, Josh, Jeroboam II, Hezekiah, Manasseh, Josiah.

- Several references to priests and prophets such as Elijah, Elisha, Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Micah, Jeremiah.
- Matthew sees the woman as a Canaanite from whose daughter Jesus drove a demon from a distance. Mark saw her as a Syro-Phoenician woman. This highlights the fact that the two gospel writers independently of each other testify about the event. Mark 7 and Matthew 15:24-30, 21-28

7.1.4 Themes

7.1.4.1 Description of the book of Judges

- Exodus (Large portions written by Moses himself and therefore we still have Moses' own handwriting today)
- Deuteronomy (Leviticus Priest)
- Joshua (Deuteronomy mist)
- Judges (Someone from the time after the exile)
- 1 Samuel (Samuel and the prophets Nathan and Gad, and others)
- 2 Samuel (Several people, possibly also Nathan and Gad)

7.1.4.2 Work on the Temple, events in the Temple and the Temple Mount is still visible.

- 1 Kings (Unknown)
- 2 Kings (Probably made up from the annals of the kings of Israel)
- 2 Chronicles (The chronicler, probably a group of people)
- Ezra (The Chronicler, approximately 400B.C.)
- Nehemiah (The Chronicler, probably a group of people)
- Esther (Unknown)

7.2 Cross Referencing

There is multiple cross references in the Bible.

- Paul and his followers had to leave Thessalonica in Acts 17:1-10
- Samuel describes himself as the apple of his mother's eye in Proverbs 4:3. Earlier in the Bible in Samuel it is said that Hannah had other children, but had to give up Samuel to the Lord to work and grow up with Eli.
- The book Obadiah (shortest book in the Old Testament) describes God's judgment on Edom who had their brother's people destroyed. Edom was descendants of Esau and Israel was descendants of Jacob. Reference to this is already made in Genesis 25:23 as well as in Obadiah 10 and many other places in Obadiah.

7.3 Context

7.3.1 Context of the lives and customs of the people of that time.

David says that he will bring offerings in Psalm 27:6. It shows the lifestyle of the people of that time who did what is described in the guidelines of the Tabernacle.

Look at the reference of Ahvaz's sundial where the Lord says that the shadow will move back ten steps on Ahvaz's sundial Isaiah 38:8. This indicates the actual, physical reality in which the people of that time lived. Ahvaz's sundial must have been fairly well known amongst the people, although it is not elaborated. If the Bible is a story book, the author would have to expand on Ahvaz's sundial.

Look at the situation and reality of the shepherd who is searching for lice in his clothing. A story book would not have had this detail included! Jeremiah 43:12

At two places reference is made to people's hair styles from different regions. This detail would not have been in a story book. Jeremiah 25:23 and Jeremiah 49:32

"You shall have honest scales, an honest ephah, and an honest bath". Ezekiel 45:10

"And the satraps, administrators, governors, and the king's counselors gathered together, and they saw these men on whose bodies the fire had no power; the hair of their head was not singed nor were their garments affected, and the smell of fire was not on them." Daniel 3:27

The fact that Jesus told the leper whom He healed that he must go show himself to the priest, shows that this is not just stories because it was the custom at that time that a leper who was cured must show himself to the priest as well as take a offering of thanks with. Mark 1:44

In 2 Timothy 4:8 Paul refers to the crown of righteousness. This is proof of the custom at that time where a laurel wreath was given to the winner of a match.

7.3.2 Context of the environment where it is described

Look at the address to the nation, in which the situation is described, for everyone to hear. This is not something that would be in storybooks. (Jeremiah 36:10)

The city of Gadara was a non-Jewish city. This explains why there were pigs present and the evil spirits fled into the pigs at the presence of Jesus. The people in the area farmed pigs. Matthew 8:28-34

Ananias is indeed sent by the Lord to the blind Saul. Even the street called "Straight Street" is mentioned. This is detail which would not have been in a story. Acts 9:11.

Look at the context of how the people of that time lived and how authentic the Word is to that. It is seen from the words of Judges 1:2 "...mercy, peace, and love be multiplied to you." *City Walls and war was part of their lives*".

7.3.3 Context of events

Citing of earthquake in Amos 1:1.

When Jesus was asked what had to be done with the prostitute, He bent down and wrote on the ground. It highlights the reality with which the gospel writer experienced it; it is not a story book. John 8 6

Peter and John were arrested and imprisoned waiting until the next day that the board could have a hearing. The paralytic man, whom they healed, testified with them. This is details and evidence which would not have been included in a storybook. Acts 4:3

7.3.4 Detail not necessarily included in a storybook.

- Note the detail in relation to the child who fell asleep while Paul talked, and then fell three storeys down. Acts 20:7-12.
- Paul defending himself before Herod Agrippa II and discusses the shackles around his hands is detail not easily found in a story book. Acts 26:29.
- The detail that John gives in relation to the number of fish caught. John 21:11: "*Simon Peter went up and dragged the net to land, full of large fish, one hundred and fifty-three; and although there were so many, the net was not broken*"
- Acts 9:43: "*So it was that he stayed many days in Joppa with Simon, a tanner*"
- Acts 12 tells how Peter was freed from prison. When he reached the house of Mary (mother of John), the girl Rode heard his voice and realized that it is him knocking. Without opening the door, she ran inside to tell the others that Peter was there. This is detail that would not be found in a story book.
- Acts 13:16 refers to when Paul obtained the crowd's attention with a hand movement. The detail of Paul who rose points to an eyewitness who remember and described the events he saw "*Then Paul stood up, and motioning with his hand said, "Men of Israel, and you who fear God, listen!"*"
- Acts 16 refers to Paul and them who returned to Lidia's home to honour the believers. Paul also said because they were punished being Roman citizens, the city government need to apologize to them.
- Acts 26:1: "*Then Agrippa said to Paul, "You are permitted to speak for yourself." So Paul stretched out his hand and answered for himself:"*"

7.3.5 References to events also described in another place in the Bible i.e. the truth

- Peter explains how the Holy Spirit was poured out on non-Jews in Joppa. He further refers to it happening in the same manner as it happened with them. Acts 11:15-16: "¹⁵*And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them, as upon us at the beginning. ¹⁶Then I remembered the word of*"

the Lord, how He said, 'John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit.'

- Look at David's insight and prophecy about God's work and Jesus' appearance, Psalms 67, 68 and 69.

7.3.6 Background information in support of what is described

- At the time Peter denied knowing Jesus he was standing by the fire where people warmed themselves. This refers to the context of the verse referring to the season! John 18:18.
- Annas the father in law of Caiaphas (high priest). The fact that Annas is the father in law of Caiaphas is not relevant to this letter. John 18:12. Several places in the Bible refer to these family relationships.
- The fact that Paul, at the end of his letters, takes over from the writer in order to finish it in his own handwriting shows that it was Paul who actually dictated and wrote. 2 Thessalonians 3:17-18.

7.3.7 Logic entirety that formed events and described by several people.

- The book Acts form the logical unit to the four Gospels in terms of how Christianity / Church were founded and in support and guidance the outpour of the Holy Spirit shortly after the crucifixion, resurrection and ascension of Jesus.
- Joel used the same words as what Ezekiel had used many times. "Then you will realize that I am the Lord". This is the same God they are speaking about.

7.3.8 Survival

- Paul's letter to the Romans was written before he had the opportunity to visit them. We still see the letter in the Bible today, it was not lost in spite of the limited transport during that time and long distance between Paul and Rome.

7.4 Who was the audience?

- During the time the Bible was written, the literature was not advanced enough for people to write stories. Who would read it? There were no publishers like today. During that time family strains and facts were documented, there was no market for fiction. People documented real events and experiences.

7.5 Detail still visible today

- A TV program about Egypt showed that Joseph's story is true. There is evidence of the 7-year drought and previous rich years. The "Stella" stone in front of the temple describes these events. Evidence of this was found on an island. Ramses was the Pharaoh during the exodus from Egypt. There is now evidence of the peace agreement with the Hebrews not to take their land, as well as evidence in the tombs of his eldest son who died just before him and the exodus.
- Evidence of Ramses II, the Pharaoh during the Exodus from Egypt, is still visible today in the form of his mummy.
- Parts of the temple of Solomon as well as another 25000 places mentioned in the Bible is still visible today.
- The Temple (Temple Mount) where the Temple of the Lord stood is still visible today.
- The ark of the covenant. Today there are two places where people have confirmed that the ark of the covenant existed and in both cases there is an explanation where it comes from being a replica and the original. **The Replica:** King Solomon married the Queen of Sheba. Solomon had a replica of the ark made which he donated to his bride. She took this gift with her to Ethiopia, where it is still retained today. The communist government of Ethiopia confirmed that it is still kept there, and it's in the basement of the Zion Church of Mary. Mussolini and his Italian army attempted to remove it in 1936 when he invaded the country. Prince Stephen Mengesha, who is considered the 225th descendant of King Solomon and Queen Sheba, confirmed it is, still today, kept in the basement of the Zion Church of Mary. Prince Mengesha also confirms that many famous people have visited it such as Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip in 1965, Queen Juliana of the Netherlands in 1968. He claims that more than 100 famous people have visited it. **The Original:** 586 BC the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar invaded Jerusalem with the main purpose to cause destruction. According to legend, the Ark was buried by priests in a tunnel beneath the temple. In 1981, three Jewish Rabbis investigated the matter and discovered this tunnel. Rabbi Getz Yedhuda (Chief Rabbi of the

Western Wall) was one of the tunnel diggers in 1981. He confirmed that he found the Ark with the tablets underneath the temple. This is also confirmed by Rabbi Shlomo Goren (former chief Rabbi of Israel). The Muslims have stopped process by building a wall and thus prevent further exploration.

7.6 Dating

- John Blanchard (7, p 20) shows the authenticity of the Bible dating back to the description of events less than fifty years after it happened. The Biblical manuscripts dates back much closer to the real events than any other historical writings. In the case of Caesar's Gallic War, there is a gap of 1000 years. Cornelius Tacitus's writings has a gap of 900 years and 900 years in the works of Seutorius (7, p16)

7.7 Predictions / Prophecy

- John Blanchard (7, p20) points out that Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Micah all claimed that they verbalize the Word of God during their eleven prophecies. They all predicted that Jerusalem would be destroyed, the temple will be rebuilt and that the city will be enlarged later. All of this came true. According to Blanchard, the randomness that this could be coincidence is 1 out of 8×10^{63} .
- John Blanchard (7, p20) points out that the Bible is the only manuscript that contains prophecies up to 30%. This makes the Bible unique over Islam's Koran, the Hindu Vedas or Bhagavad-Gita, the sayings of Buddha, Confucius of the Book of Morman.
- See 2 Peter 1:20-21 where Peter himself testifies saying that the prophecy is done under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

7.8 Prophecies fulfilled in the course of the Old Testament fulfilled

Dr. James Kennedy points out that in the Old Testament alone there is 2000 Prophecies already fulfilled occurred – “Not a few lucky guesses”. Kennedy pointed out that the prophecies are specific and detailed. It must to fulfilment. (28, p3-4). Kennedy also points out that there are 333 prophecies in the Old Testament concerning the Messiah which came to fulfilment (28, p109).

8. Archaeological evidence

8.1 According to Morgan (12, p 89-97)

- The Silver Scrolls ("Amulets") was discovered in 1979 in the Hinnom Valley in Jerusalem. It was stored in tombs that were carved into rock more than 2600 years ago. In other words, it is during the time when David's sons were on the throne of Israel. These rolls were rolled up very carefully and small in order to wear on a necklace. When these rolls where unrolled through a special process, text from Numbers 6:24-26 were discovered. ²⁴ *The LORD bless you and keep you;* ²⁵ *The LORD make His face shine upon you, And be gracious to you;* ²⁶ *The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, And give you peace."* This is the oldest fragment of script that we know. (12, p89).
- In 2 Kings 20:20 reference is made to the dam and the canal that King Hezekiah had built to feed water into the city. The famous archaeologist, Edward Robinson, visited the Dam of Siloam in 1833 during which he discovered the channel. A few years later, a Jewish boy also discovered hieroglyphs in the dam and when the water level was dropped, supporting scripts on how the canal was build was discovered. These hieroglyphs were removed and can be seen today in the archaeological museum in Istanbul.
- It is long believed that the existence of David is only a story. Morgan (12, p91) points out that in 1993 in northern Israel in the town Dan a monument was discovered with inscriptions which refer to the "House of David". The inscriptions refer to the fact that the king of the house of David was defeated by the king of Damascus, as described in 1 Kings 15:20. Shortly after this discovery the latest text by Andre Lemaire about the Moabite Stone (the Mesha Stela) was released. The Moabite Stone was discovered in 1868 and dates back to just after the death of King Ahab. On this stone the Moabites' version of their wars with Israel is depicted. The Israelite King Omri, see 1 Kings 16, 16-17 and 22, is also mentioned by name.
- Critics allege that Caiaphas, high priest of Israel in the time of Jesus, never existed. The name Caiaphas was never found outside the Bible. In 1990 a tomb was discovered in Jerusalem marked with the family name Caiaphas. Coins found in the tomb have confirmed that it dates back to the first part of the first century.

- The historical accuracy of Genesis and the existence of the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob have been questioned for many years by sceptics. They left few archaeological traces behind because they stayed in tents during their time living and moving around in the desert. According to Morgan (12, P93), the following, however, should be considered:
 - The remains of many of the cities of Genesis were found. The ruins are also in line with what is described in the Bible. Cities referred to are Ur, Schechem, Ai, Bethel, Hebron, Haran.
 - The name Abraham was discovered in ancient clay tablets dating from the 16th century BC.
 - Amongst the ruins of the ancient Nuzi (near modern Baghdad) a library of clay tablets confirmed the practices as described in the Bible. For example the event described in Genesis 15 where a childless Abraham declares that his servant Eliezer would get his possessions if he would die. It was the custom of that time that a trusted friend or servant of a childless couple would be their heir.
 - Morgan (12, p94) refers to the conservative Christian Professor Charles Krahmalkov, professor of Ancient Near Eastern Languages at the University of Michigan, who always believed that the Exodus was only a story. Professor Krahmalkov changed his opinion openly at the time of his research on the inscriptions on the Temple of Amon at Karnak. These inscriptions date back to 1504-1450 BC and contains a list of cities that exactly matches the cities listed in Numbers 33. In Numbers 33, the cities mentioned are those where the Israelites camped. Due to this evidence Professor Krahmalkov changed his opinion and he declares: "In short, the Biblical story of the invasion of the Transjordan that set the stage for the conquest of all Palestine is told against a background that is historically accurate..... I find myself astonished with the results. [The ancient historians of Israel] preserved in the Bible true historical sources of a very early age. They cannot possibly have invented them."
- Morgan (12, p94) also refers to the victory of Hazor as described in Joshua 11. Verses 10 and 11 *"¹⁰Joshua turned back at that time and took Hazor, and struck its king with the sword; for Hazor was formerly the head of all those kingdoms. ¹¹ And they struck all the people who were in it with the edge of the sword, utterly destroying them. There was none left breathing. Then he burned Hazor with fire"*. In 1955, an Israeli archaeologist Yigael Yadin researched the bottleneck formed area 16 km north of the Sea of Galilee. Traces were found of Canaanite worship places where a idol was found and the head was cut off. Deuteronomy 12 refers to where the Israelites were commanded to destroy pagan worship sites. The studies also showed that Hazor was a prosperous city with a population of approximately 20 000 people. It was also found that the city was indeed suddenly destroyed by fire during the time of Joshua.
- Morgan (12, P95) points out that during 1980 the Jewish archaeologist Yagil Shiloh found a room in Jerusalem near the "temple mount". In this room fifty one clay tablets were found with the names of several officials from the time King Jehoiakim. What was interesting was the name of Gemariah (Jeremiah 36) who was employed by King Jehoiakim towards the end of the 7th century BC. Morgan points out that the original was captured on papyrus but a huge fire destroyed the document, but the clay baked as hard as stone. The latter caused it to be preserved. Jeremiah 36 tells of King Jehoiakim who did not listen to the message of the Lord. Gernarja was one of the people who tried to warn him without success. As can be seen today, the punishment of the Lord came upon them.
- According to Morgan (12, P95) the most-interesting archaeological discovery is Capernaum. This is the town where Jesus lived after he left Nazareth. Jesus lived in Capernaum in the home of Peter and his brother Andrew. Peter's house, a fisherman's house, became a meeting place for Christians and was later expanded to a church. Today, with reasonable certainty, it is said that this house was also exposed with the remains of a synagogue build during the first century. This is the same synagogue referred to in Luke 7 which the Roman officers had built. This is the same synagogue from which Jesus began His ministry! Visitors can now visit the area and walk from Peter's house to the synagogue and stand in the same place where Jesus stood and taught. Also very interesting is the boat that was discovered in 1986. During 1986 a drought hit Galilee and the water level dropped so low that the outlines of an ancient boat could be noticed in the mud. The boat dates from the time of Jesus and is now on display in a museum. The boat is exactly the same as the boats as described in the Gospels. It is said that it could even be the boat in which Jesus himself sailed on the Sea of Galilee.
- Morgan (12, p 83) points out that the Dead Sea Scrolls discovered in the Qumran caves in 1947 dates back more than a 1000 years earlier than the manuscripts that we had at the time. He also points out that it matched 95%. Fragments of nearly all books in the Bible were found as well as the

entire book of Isaiah. The 5% difference is attributed to "slips of the pen" and spelling differences. The meaning was not affected in anyway.

- Morgan (12, p 85) notes that New Testament manuscripts available dates back to the time of the Apostles. He referred to the "Ryland Fragment" which contains five verses of the Gospel of John. It dates back to about 125 AD. Morgan points out that the Gospel of John was written about 100 AD written and therefor the "Ryland Fragment" dates back 25 years from that. There are numerous other references to manuscripts dating 200-300 AD

8.2 Apparent discrepancies in the Bible according John Haley (10, p.1-54)

John Haley (10, p.1) says that God introduces Himself to those who sincerely seek Him. He also says that the inconsistencies in the Bible are proof of the independence with which the authors worked.

8.2.1 Origin

- Time elapsed between the incidents described. For example it is written that God described His creation as good (Genesis 1:31) and in another place where God was grieved that He created man (Genesis 6:6). At least 1500 years elapsed between these two events.
- Differences in authorship of the authors. The authors all wrote in different styles according to their own backgrounds.
- The position from which something is described. For example, one could say that "The people of America are good leaders," or it can be said "The Americans are well governed." Both may be correct.
- The different ways authors represent facts. One follows a chronological order and the other according to principles of association of ideas. This includes the different ways in which dates are described. The same date is given in different ways. Figures are rounded differently. Some authors have written poetically and others not. Sometimes it was written emotional and sometimes analytically.
- The custom, especially in the Eastern parts, to give a person or an object more than one name. In Arabic, for example, there are 1000 different words for sword, 500 for lion, 400 for accident and 80 for money. One of the apostles had the following names Simon, Simon Peter, Cephas, Simon Bar-Jonah and Simon son of Jonah.
- Different meanings for the same word. The Hebrew word "nākar" can be used to bless or speak a curse. This depends on the context in which it is used.
- Mistakes made during the copying of the different versions of manuscripts through the years. Only the last 400 years reproduction equipment was used.
- The imagination of the critic who is also influenced by his dogmatic preferences.

8.2.2 Design

- No one has studied any other book more than the Bible. It is said that the intellect is stimulated by the Bible.
- The apparent discrepancies caused man to study the Bible more to generate deeper and more meaningful evidence. At first glance it may seem that things are inconsistent, such as the work of Paul and John, but when the deeper meaning is understood, it is seen that they perfectly complement each other.
- Haley also refers to the philosophers Kant, Hamilton and Mansel, says that the basic laws of thought, those controlling our intellectual activities, is in total contradiction. For example consider the following: there may be an instance of conflict to claim that an object exists as an entity or in relation to other objects. It can be seen as single or plural, personally or non-personal, as active or inactive. Is this the sum total of existence, or only a portion thereof? He claims further that it is our duty to regard God as personal and infinite. Our earthly frame of reference cannot grasp the attributes of God as we cannot understand infinity.
- The discrepancies show that the authors did not work together. Various authors described similar incidents.
- The discrepancies caused us to rather focus on the Spirit behind the writings than on the objects itself. If the original manuscripts in the original handwriting of the authors were found the world would have explored that more than the purpose thereof. Imagine a piece of wood from the cross

was available, how would people have chased that piece of wood rather than the message of the Gospel.

- The discrepancies are seen as a test of moral character. The chaff is separated from the wheat. Jesus example in John 6:53 said *"Then Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you"*". With these words dishonest and suspicious listeners are eliminated because they would withdraw hearing these words of Jesus. This is also confirmed in John 6:66 which refer to where many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him either. With reference to Pascal who said: "God, willing to be revealed to those who seek him with their whole heart, and hidden from those who as cordially fly from Him, has so regulated the means of knowing Him, as to give indications of Himself, which are plain to those who seek Him, and obscure to those who seek Him not".

8.2.3 Cause / Effect

- Studies have shown that the writings were handed to us unchanged. Inconsistencies do not affect the integrity of the writings.
- According to Professor Stowe, who did in-depth research on the origins and history of the writings of the Bible, the text of the New Testament is more founded than any historical writings.
- Manuscripts such as Alexandrian (AD 350), Vatican (A.D. 325), Siniatic (A.D. 325), Ephraim written a bit later than the Alexandrian and Beza (AD 490) was found amongst the manuscripts of the New Testament. It is clear that the authors of these manuscripts, which today are still available to us, worked from the original manuscripts written by the Apostles themselves.
- Considering that the various books of the Bible were written by different people from different cultures, over a period of 2,000 years, still convey the same message; it can only be inspired by the Spirit of God.

9. Conclusion

Paul explains in Colossians 1:15-20

"¹⁵He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. ¹⁶For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. ¹⁷And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. ¹⁸And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the pre-eminence. ¹⁹For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell,²⁰ and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross."

John says: *"He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life."* 1 John 5:12. It is very important to realize that Jesus is God! Only through Him you will have access to God because He is part of the Triune God! We cannot understand it as a creature will never understand its Creator, but our Creator revealed Himself to us through His Word and how we must behave and what we should believe.

What all did the Messiah have to do for us to believe in Him

Walk on water? John 6:19: *"So when they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea and drawing near the boat; and they were afraid."*

Perform miracles? John 7:31: *"And many of the people believed in Him, and said, "When the Christ comes, will He do more signs than these which this Man has done?""*

Jesus speaks to the Jews in John 10:31-32: *"³¹Then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him. ³²Jesus answered them, "Many good works I have shown you from My Father. For which of those works do you stone Me?"*

We are no longer under the law of Moses, but under grace. See Romans 6:14 en 23. *"¹⁴ For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace."* and *"²³For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."*

Dr. Ben Witherington points out that the origins of the Church who believed that God is a proper name for Jesus Christ and the traditions of the early Church took place all within just twenty-years since the crucifixion. In other words, 1) Many eyewitnesses were still present that knew Jesus Himself and could oppose the facts and events about which the Church has testified, but did not, and 2) Not enough time for all these truths to emerge out of nothing (30, p140).

Ravi Zacharias (16, P155) showing that Napoleon, in exile on St. Helena, said that all who truly believe in Jesus Christ, experiences the remarkable supernatural love for Him. He said it was an unexplained phenomenon, above man's creative power and comprehension. "The great destroyer, time is powerless against this holy flame, time cannot exhaust its power and it is not limited. That's what struck me the most, I often thought about it. This is what made me believe in the deity of Jesus Christ! "

Who despises the day of small things? ~ Zechariah 4:10: Life is filled with a series of small things that can amount to something big. Have you ever considered why the God of the universe came to earth and spent 33 years identifying with mankind through work? Jesus grew up as a carpenter's son and, no doubt, learned the trade from His daily routine of helping His father. For 30 years He worked. When it was time for Him to begin to fulfil His purpose for mankind, He told countless stories of people and their work. He told stories of landowners, farmers, fishermen, tax collectors, and so on. He related to the everyday man because He Himself was one. This is why it was important for Him to have some personal work experience. Life is filled with daily routines. Every now and then, God takes us to the mountaintop to experience His presence in a dramatic way. This is not the norm. It was not the norm for those in the Bible either. Moses spent 40 years in preparation. Paul spent a great deal of his life working toward the wrong purpose until a dramatic event changed his life. Jacob spent 20 years working for Laban. God uses work to develop character qualities that He plans to use at the appropriate time. In the small things we develop trustworthiness with God. The day-in and day-out grind of working life moulds us and makes us into what God desires. God may still be preparing you for something far greater. For now, however, you are learning the daily lessons of small things. Pray that you will be faithful. (Os Hillman)

That's what struck me most: I have often thought about. Jesus is the only way to the father. Dr. Alberts made it clear (3, p18) that Jesus is God, represented in the figure of a man. He is the logical way to the Lord for He is the Lord.

Andrew Murray, says that man was created for God, but separation was brought by sin. He also says that nature shows God and His works, but nature cannot describe Himself, His heart and His thoughts of love towards us as sinners. The latter was communicated and showed through His Son.

The American pastor Dr. Jerry Savellas uses the adage "Getting the best of God." If you walk in God ways, you experience more of God. Proverbs 19 23.

A hypocrite does not recognize the Spirit of God, he won't understand It or know It and thus have no sensitivity for God's revelation and involvement with man.

Jesus Himself says He is the way to eternal life. *"I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life."* John 8:12

Before the creation God chose us in Christ. Ephesians 1:4-5: *"⁴just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, ⁵having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,"*

Consider Paul's testimony to the Philippians (3 3-9) regarding how he pursued the earthly and persecuted the Church (maybe his conscience was bothering him) and he found fullness in Christ. This fullness is available to all of us through the grace of Jesus Christ. The human race has no excuse (Romans 1:20-32)

Notice how Jesus appreciated it that His disciples remained with him in spite of their shortcomings (Luke 22 28). The Lord definitely loves us a lot. *"Now may the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the patience of Christ."* (2 Thessalonians 3:5).

10. Annotations

- In chapters 8 and 10 of Revelation the "hidden intention of God" is revealed with the blow of the last trumpet. See Revelation 10:5-7: *"⁵The angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land raised up his hand to heaven ⁶and swore by Him who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and the things that are in it, the earth and the things that are in it, and the sea and the things that are in it, that there should be delay no longer, ⁷but in the days of the sounding of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, the mystery of God would be finished, as He declared to His servants the prophets."* Pay attention to what the Lord reveals to His prophets.
- Paul testified that he saw Jesus, 1 Corinthians 9:1 and he did so at his own expense, 1 Corinthians 9:15-18.

- The author of Chronicles refers to Jeremiah who wrote a requiem/lament about Josiah's death. Bible in practice, p.646 also confirms that this battle occurred 606 years before Christ. Then Baal became the new world power. 2 Chronicles 35:25
- In Ezra 1:1-2 it is seen that Cyrus a Persian king, declares how the Lord gave him a command. This would not have been in a storybook
- In the Bible the Lord confirmed that the prophecies were fulfilled. See for example, Ezra 1:1.
- The author refers to himself. Ezra 8:1 as well as many other verses in this piece including 9:3 & 5. Clear evidence that it is Ezra himself.
- See, in detail, the people who returned to Israel - Ezra 2.
- 2 Chronicles 35 25 indicates an author who wrote in the context of his own time and audience.
- 2 Chronicles 29 shows much detail of when Hezekiah cleansed the Temple and introduced it again. The names of the people who were involved are listed and as well as the date and time it took.
- Bethlehem Ephrathah in 1 Chronicles 4:4.
- John himself testified that he witnessed the trial of Jesus. This is proof that this witness himself was involved in writing the Gospel of John. John 18 15 " *another disciple*". John never used his own name. He referred to himself as the disciple that Jesus loved and the other disciple. What further supports this is the fact that John was the one who obtained consent for Peter to go to the high priest. John openly declared that he was one of Jesus' disciples unlike Peter. John was the only disciple who stayed behind at the cross with Mary.
- Hezekiah asked for a sign that the Lord will heal him. The Lord moved the stairs back. In the same chapter reference is made to the Siloam tunnel that was dug. The latter is seen today with inscriptions testifying how they dug it in the time of Hezekiah! See Bible in practice in 2 Kings 20. This, as well as Moses and Miriam, are good examples of where the same author writes about the detail and miracles.
- John 21 - The narration of the fishing with 153 fish and Jesus' 3rd appearance to seven of his disciples. Notice the names of the disciples, the number of fish, time of day, John who followed Jesus and Peter (then Peter turning ... ') etc. This clearly indicates a witness who testifies about his own experiences.
- Luke himself joined Paul, Silas and Timothy. It can be seen from Acts 16:11 where he refers to "we". He also tells how Paul and Silas were beaten and imprisoned after they drove a spirit out from the fortune-teller, and also saved from prison.
- Up to now, the details and name of the bronze serpent. 2 Kings 18:4.
- Until now. 2 Kings 13:23. Refer to two verses earlier, verse 21, tells how a person came to life when he touched Elisha's bones. Also link Jesus that raised Lazarus and that Jesus confirmed that these events happened so that the Son of God may be glorified. John 11:4 & 15. See where he raised another Matthew 9:18-26, Mark 5:41, Luke 8:40-56: Luke 7:11-17
- To this day - 2 Kings, specifically 2 Kings 17:23, 34, 41
- To this day - 1 Chronicles 4:43
- Details of King Asa's feet: 1 Kings 15:23
- Jesus telling His disciples that they would be killed. John 16:2
- Paul told them that they would not see him again. He knew it and the Bible itself proves that he did not lie. Acts 20:25, 37
- To this day: 2 Kings 16:6
- Deuteronomy 28: How terrible is the punishment of God on disobedient people.
- Deuteronomy writer testifies that the Lord let them move from Egypt through great and powerful miracles. Deuteronomy 26:8.
- Acts 1:13 describes who all were present at Pentecost. This cannot be a lie.
- As in 2 Kings 3, the king of Moab, Mesha rebelled against Israel. The Israelites ran out of water and found water from the Lord through Elisha. King Mesha sacrificed his son on the wall to his god Kemos. The Israelites were filled with horror and withdrew. This is evident of the sin of man to

worship other gods and what it can do to a person. The memorial stone of King Mesha was found more than a century ago and it briefly describes this battle.

- Elijah's ascension and handing over to Elisha. See 2 Kings 2. Also note the details and even cruel deaths of children as well as the details of the location.
- 2 Kings 5:5 refers in detail to all the gifts that Naaman had taken with him for his healing. Then look at the rest of the miracle. Are the first part details and the rest a lie? It is also here where Gehazi sinned.
- The followers of David who joined him, detailing the names, places and events as well as practices.
- The History of David and Solomon are recorded in the writings of Samuel, Nathan and Gad. They are also identified as seers. A man does not make up a story which also accords with the stories of two other people! These are testimonies of witnesses testifying about the events and of what the Holy Spirit revealed to them. 1 Chronicles 29:26-30
- Genealogies tracing Israel back to Adam. 1 Chronicles 1:1-54. Also see tribes of Israel 1 Chronicles 2:1-8:40 and the exiles who returned in 1 Chronicles 9:1-44. See also Genesis 5,10,11,16,25,36. Esau was the ancestor of Edom, and also married one of the daughters of Ishmael. He also married Canaanite women. His genealogy is linked to David in Matthew 1:1-17 and Luke 3:23-38 and even Adam in Luke 3:38
- Peter who raised Tabitha from the dead. Look at the detail, he helped her up with the hand, and where he lived. Why detail? Acts 9:39-43
- To this day - confirmed events in the time of Elisha: 2 Kings 8:22
- To this day. 1 Chronicles 13:11
- Genesis 41:14: *"Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph, and they brought him quickly out of the dungeon; and he shaved, changed his clothing, and came to Pharaoh."* Too much detail for a storybook.
- Genesis 41:45-46: *"⁴⁵And Pharaoh called Joseph's name Zaphnath-Paaneah. And he gave him as a wife Asenath, the daughter of Poti-Pherah priest of On. So Joseph went out over all the land of Egypt. ⁴⁶Joseph was thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh king of Egypt..."* Too much detail for a storybook.
- Genesis 42:5: *"And the sons of Israel went to buy grain among those who journeyed, for the famine was in the land of Canaan."* In the event of it being a story the fact that other people went would be completely irrelevant.
- Genesis 45:1: *"Then Joseph could not restrain himself before all those who stood by him, and he cried out, "Make everyone go out from me!" So no one stood with him while Joseph made himself known to his brothers."* Detail which would not have been included in a story book.
- Look at the character of Joseph revealed in Genesis: 42:42; 43:30; 45:2; 45:15; 46:29; 50:1; 50:17; 50:21.
- In Genesis 46:1-4: *"¹So Israel took his journey with all that he had, and came to Beersheba, and offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac. ²Then God spoke to Israel in the visions of the night, and said, "Jacob, Jacob!" And he said, "Here I am." ³So He said, "I am God, the God of your father; do not fear to go down to Egypt, for I will make of you a great nation there. ⁴I will go down with you to Egypt, and I will also surely bring you up again; and Joseph will put his hand on your eyes."*
- In Genesis 46 8-27 all the names of Jacob's descendants who left Egypt are given. Detail not belonging in a story book. Also see the reference made to Judah's sons Er and Onan, who already died in Canaan, Genesis 46:12.
- Not a storybook. Genesis 47:26: *"And Joseph made it a law over the land of Egypt to this day, that Pharaoh should have one-fifth, except for the land of the priests only, which did not become Pharaoh's."*
- The description of the cemetery land to which Joseph refers in Genesis 49:29-33 would not make sense in a story book.
- In Exodus 1:1-7, the ancestors, ie. the descendants of Jacob, are even called by name. They multiplied and became the nation who became slaves in Egypt that led to the exodus.

- Look at the genealogy of the leaders in Exodus 6:13-25. Note especially in Exodus 6:14 where it is stated that Saul is the son of a Canaanite woman in Exodus 6:19 stating that Amram married his aunt. All clear registers of actual events.
- The introduction of the Passover in Exodus 12 shows that the plagues in Egypt and specifically the death of the firstborn are true. It is still celebrated today, where did it originate from?
- The Israelites had to look back, this is a clear reference to an actual event, or else it would have said the glory of the Lord appeared. Exodus 16:10 *"Now it came to pass, as Aaron spoke to the whole congregation of the children of Israel, that they looked toward the wilderness, and behold, the glory of the LORD appeared in the cloud."*
- The Lord provided the people with manna and quail. Look at the detail of how the manna looked and tasted. Exodus 16:31: *"And the house of Israel called its name Manna. And it was like white coriander seed, and the taste of it was like wafers made with honey."*
- Moses' father-in-law who visited Moses and brought Moses' wife and two children with. The practical problem that Moses had with all the people who wanted to speak to him and his father-in-law who advised him. Exodus 18.
- The entire Bible points to the Truth. Every moment is there for us to believe. For example, the four gospels and the facts why there are four, the women who discovered the empty tomb, Peter's actions when he recognised the Lord on the beach, the disciples' sudden change.
- The fear of the Lord and the fact that the author of Exodus maintains the same reverence is also apparent in Exodus 22:8: *"If the thief is not found, then the master of the house shall be brought to the judges to see whether he has put his hand into his neighbour's goods."* If these laws were based on personal gain, the Lord would not have appointed a Judge.
- In Exodus 20 and subsequent sections, the law of is Moses discussed. Surely real customs for that time, not a story book.
- Exodus 23:20-21: *"²⁰Behold, I send an Angel before you to keep you in the way and to bring you into the place which I have prepared. ²¹Beware of Him and obey His voice; do not provoke Him, for He will not pardon your transgressions; for My name is in Him."* Surely the people experienced the angel as reality because Moses had laid down these words. Consider the prophetic reality of the angel that will not forgive you.
- Identifying and the genealogy of the people who worked at the Tabernacle and the Ark Exodus 31:2 & 6.
- Origin : The Sabbath, which is still maintained. Exodus 31:12.
- The Levites distance themselves from the golden calf. Exodus 32:26: *"then Moses stood in the entrance of the camp, and said, "Whoever is on the LORD's side—come to me!" And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together to him."*
- The Levites are appointed in the service of the Lord: Genesis 32:12: *"For You said, 'I will surely treat you well, and make your descendants as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude.'"*
- Genealogy is not part of story books. The craftsmen who had to build the Tabernacle were equipped by God to do this and also to train others to do so. See the genealogies in Exodus 35:30: *"And Moses said to the children of Israel, "See, the LORD has called by name Bezalel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah."* As well as in Exodus 35:34: *"And He has put in his heart the ability to teach, in him and Aholiab the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan."* Further reference is also made in Exodus 38:22-23.
- Look at the detail mentioned in which the Tabernacle and the Ark had to be build with all the accessories. Exodus 36-39. In the previous chapter reference is made to the people brought more than was necessary, and Moses had to stop them. This indicates an actual event. Remarkably is reference made to the origin of the bronze mirrors Exodus 38:8: *"He made the laver of bronze and its base of bronze, from the bronze mirrors of the serving women who assembled at the door of the tabernacle of meeting."* It would make no sense to mention it in fiction.
- The Levites made the calculations worked under Ithamar son of Aaron the priest. Look at the detail of all the materials used. Exodus 38:21: *"This is the inventory of the tabernacle, the tabernacle of the Testimony, which was counted according to the commandment of Moses, for the service of the Levites, by the hand of Ithamar, son of Aaron the priest."*

- The day that the tabernacle was erected is mentioned in Exodus 40:16-17: *"¹⁶Thus Moses did; according to all that the LORD had commanded him, so he did. ¹⁷And it came to pass in the first month of the second year, on the first day of the month, that the tabernacle was raised up."*
- Jesus walks on the sea is the truth. Matthew 14:25: *"Now in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went to them, walking on the sea."*
- Paul testifies that God revealed the gospel to him: 1 Thessalonians 2:4: *"But as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who tests our hearts."*
- Consider the conflict between Moses and Aaron in Leviticus 10 16-20 showing that it is real.
- Note that the Lord commands about clean and unclean animals in Leviticus 11. It is wonderful to realize that it could only be God because what did Moses and Aaron know of microorganisms at the time?!
- Look at the details as given in Leviticus 24:10-11: *"¹⁰Now the son of an Israelite woman, whose father was an Egyptian, went out among the children of Israel; and this Israelite woman's son and a man of Israel fought each other in the camp. ¹¹And the Israelite woman's son blasphemed the name of the LORD and cursed; and so they brought him to Moses. (His mother's name was Shelomith the daughter of Dibri, of the tribe of Dan.)"*
- Leviticus 25:29: *"If a man sells a house in a walled city, then he may redeem it within a whole year after it is sold."* Detail that would not be mentioned in a story book.
- In Numbers a census is held of the people 1) The names of the twelve chiefs are called as well as the names of their fathers. 2) The number of able-bodied men over 20 from all the tribes is listed. See Numbers 1:4-46. When the people had to erect their camp, all the tribes with their leaders as well as the numbers is again mentioned in Numbers 2:1-34.
- Shifts for service at the Tabernacle in Numbers 3. Also see the detail with regard to the names of the tribe of Levi and their numbers as mentioned in Numbers 3.
- Numbers 4 refers to where Moses gives commands of the Lord regarding the duties of the three Leviticus families Kohath, Gershon and Merari for when the camp has to be moved. All the details regarding the objects of the Tent of Meeting.
- Look at the detail during the dedication of the altar, especially with reference to the tools including the sacrifices itself (Numbers 7:1-8,84-88) as well as the leaders of the tribes and their fathers (Numbers 7:11-83).
- Note how one tribe was singled out during the dedication of the altar in Numbers 7:9 *"Moses did not wagons and oxen to the group given Kohath, because they were sacred objects on their shoulders."* This would not be suitable for fiction.
- John who describes his action / reaction on actual events: Revelation 1:12: *"Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me."* and Revelation 10:4: *"Now when the seven thunders uttered their voices, I was about to write; but I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, "Seal up the things which the seven thunders uttered, and do not write them.""*
- The Bible is true (description of an action) also against sects because of witnesses and prophecy, as well as strong foundations left by Jesus for us to believe. Romans 1 also relate. Revelation 19:10: *"And I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, "See that you do not do that! I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.""*
- Look at the detail in Daniel 5:5: *"In the same hour the fingers of a man's hand appeared and wrote opposite the lampstand on the plaster of the wall of the king's palace; and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote."*
- Revelation 21:9. The details regarding the specific angel talking to John: *" Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls filled with the seven last plagues came to me and talked with me."*
- The Lord spoke to Moses, Numbers 7:4, 11, 89 how the Lord spoke to Moses. Also Numbers 8:1,23;9:1,9;10:1;
- Detail: Numbers 7:11-83 - Dedication of the altar.
- The Lord reveals Himself to mankind and the Bible is true! The cloud above the Tabernacle, is described in Numbers 15-23 9, In Numbers 10 a lot of detailed data is given with regards to the

leaders with their names and the names of the tribes who respond to God's commands. The latter was also evident by the Lord speaking to Moses and the cloud. Why should some parts not be true if reference is made in so much detail to the names of people and their movements?!

- The Lord spoke to Moses - Numbers 11:16,23. Also see the Lord came down in a cloud to the 70 leaders and a part of the spirit that was on Moses came upon them and they prophesied. Even the two leaders that were not with them began to prophesise amongst the people. Joshua testified about the latter and until today we know what their names were: Eldad and Medad. Read more about the tons of quail that, by through the Lord, come to them and how the greedy were killed and buried. Numbers 11:31-34.
- The unity in the Bible's narrative. See in Judges 2 how the Lord prophesied to the Israelites that they will be entangled in the religions of other nations' religions because of their faithlessness. Also seen in the Hellenistic times, ie. sky goddess, etc..
- See the detail regarding the names in Leviticus 10:1-7 at the death of Aaron's sons, Nadab and Abihu. We can see that Aaron's sons Nadab, Abihu were Eleazar and Ithamar (verses 1 and 6).
- Note the detail during the anointing of David. 1 Samuel 16. Also see Samuel's fear of Saul as well as the details regarding Jesse's sons to be brought before Samuel. Also note the King David came from Bethlehem. All in line with the Messiah. Even the kingship which is associated with a kid (lamb, bread and wine).
- The weight of Goliath's sword, etc, 1 Samuel 17:4
- Details of who accompanies David into Saul's camp in 1 Samuel 26:1-7
- The names of the leaders, their tribes, as well as the names of their fathers are given of the people who went to explore the land of Canaan, Numbers 13:3-16
- Should one look at all the details given by the authors, why would they lie about special revelations and the involvement of God!?
- See how the Levites rebel against Moses and Aaron and the details regarding names given. Numbers 16:1-3. Numbers 16 is witness of how the Levites revolted and how the Lord openly destroyed those rebellious one by letting the earth swallowed them (Numbers 16:31-32). If it were not true the author would not describe the uprising and why would he gives so much detail and only a few verses later lie about supernatural phenomena?
- Detail: Numbers 20:1. Miriam, who died in the Wilderness of Zin. Numbers 20:13 See the details in Numbers 20:13 about Moses and Aaron's disobedience: " *This was the water of Meribah, because the children of Israel contended with the LORD, and He was hallowed among them* ". See the details about the area in Numbers 20:22-23: "²²Now the children of Israel, the whole congregation, journeyed from Kadesh and came to Mount Hor. ²³And the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron in Mount Hor by the border of the land of Edom, saying:"
- Details of all the places to which the Israelites moved and the territories conquered - Numbers 21:10-35.
- View the details in Numbers 25:14-15. The census survey as described in Numbers 26. The mentioning of the names of the daughters of Zelophehad in Numbers 27:1-11 and the referral of their father's death in the wilderness - clearly not a story.
- Detail in Numbers 31 where the names of the Midianite kings' who were slain are mentioned, mentioning of Balaam, and the details of all loot taken.
- Note the name of the Lord used by Hezekiah in Isaiah 37 and that the Assyrians who destroyed all the other gods, but not the true God of Israel. Verse 20 is important with regard to the true God who can save so that the nations may believe. See in verses 36-38 how Sennacherib, king of Assyria were punished.
- Detail of the areas divided amongst the tribes of Gad and Reuben in Numbers 32:34-38
- See the detailed discussion on how the Israelites departed from Rameses, while the Egyptians were still burying their firstborn, of all places to which they went, even where they had problems, such as at Refidim where there was no water (v. 14). Why would Moses provide this detail but lie about the revelations which the Lord gave him the times that the Lord spoke to him, etc.? (Numbers 33)
- Look at the detail in terms of the division of the country and the leaders appointed for each tribe. Numbers 34:18-29

- In Numbers 36 is evidence is given of Zelophehad's daughters. The problem was what would happen to the land they owned if they would marry. The detail regarding names and the guidance given to Moses by God, is clearly not a story.
- In Deuteronomy a Leviticus priest witnesses. In Deuteronomy 1 he tells of Moses' speech and Moses' faithful witness can be seen herein. In verse 23 Moses said that he thought it was a good plan to send out 12 scouts. In verse 42 he states what the Lord told him. He makes a clear distinction between what he thought and what the Lord told him.
- The author of Deuteronomy confirmed what Moses wrote.
- The bed of King Og that was left behind is discussed in Deuteronomy 3:11. See the end of this part where Moses asked the Lord whether he can enter the promised land, and the Lord said unto Moses not to talk to Him about it again, but should hand over to Joshua. A person will not write this in a story book.
- The author of Deuteronomy testified what Moses told the people. He mentions details like that the people saw the fire in the sky at the mountain Horeb but only heard the Lord's voice. He makes an urgent matter that the people must not build any idols because they had not seen the Lord themselves. If it was a story, this case would not have mattered. Deuteronomy 4:10-19
- Moses' statement that God gave the Ten Commandments audible to the whole Church on Mount Horeb. The specific words "*and He added no more*" shows the experience that Moses had. He was clearly in anticipation that the Lord would say even more. Deuteronomy 5:22
- All the people heard the voice of the Lord. Deuteronomy 5:24-26
- The Lord drove the nations away because they were so godless. It also strengthens our faith when realising that the Lord were prophetically involved with the people by promising to give them the powerful Anakim, and then it happens. Deuteronomy 9:4-6
- Look at the witness, Moses, who testified that the Lord wrote the Ten Commandments again in the same script: Deuteronomy 10:4
- Look at the detail of the spies and those who were after them. Also Rahab, the prostitute, who is in the genealogy of Jesus. (Matthew 1:5, James 2:25 and Hebrew 11:31) Joshua 2:6-11.
- Death of Joshua and Eleazar and Joseph's body etc.. Joshua 24:29-33
- View details of the fat king and how the left handed Ehud killed him. Judges 3:15-27
- The specific position in which Eli sat when he looked at Hannah while she was praying in the temple at Shiloh. 1 Samuel 1:9-19. If you believe this, then other witnesses / documents are authentic.
- Detail in 1 Samuel 14:14-52 about Saul's kingship and family

Chapter 2

Is the God from the Old Testament also the God of the New Testament?

1. The Truth as a girdle around the waist

Ephesians 6:10-20: ¹⁰Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. ¹¹Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. ¹²For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. ¹³Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. ¹⁴**Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth,** having put on the breastplate of righteousness, ¹⁵and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; ¹⁶above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. ¹⁷And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; ¹⁸praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints— ¹⁹and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, ²⁰for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.”

People often ask, "What is truth?". Especially people with a philosophical approach loves to do this. The best answer to be given to such a person is, Jesus Christ is the Truth. If a person says there is no such thing as the truth, you can answer as follows: If there isn't such a thing as the truth, your statement can also not be true.

John 8:31-32: ³¹Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. ³²And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

Jesus was who sentenced to death crucifixion by Pilate. During Pilate's conversation with Jesus (John 18 36-38), Jesus confirms that He is King, His kingdom is not of this world and that He is evidence of the truth. Pilate then asked: ³⁶"What is truth?" By the grace of God, today we know there is only one God, that Jesus Christ is the Messiah and that He will come again to fetch us. The Lord revealed Himself to man, amid tremendous heresy and practices, from the earliest times. Today we know the Lord through the redemptive work of the Messiah.

The Word of God is authentic and true. Through the Word the believer can withstand any attack against the Word. Attacks shouldn't be defended through arguments. The foundation on which the heresy is build can be questioned and uncovered in love. We are freed by the Word when we are busy with the Word. If you clean soap with soap, it will be clean one time or another.

Where there is an allegation against the Word, it can be asked "Based on what do you say it?" The believer can refute the answer to the latter question from the Word.

Attacks on the Word of God includes efforts to make us doubt that the God of the Old Testament is also the God of the New Testament and if the Bible is truly the authentic Word of God. For example, it is claimed that the God of the Old Testament was cruel whereas the God of the New Testament is loving. This leaves room for the lie that there could be other gods, or that there isn't just one Creator and God. This type of heresy raises the question whether you really know the truth as revealed in the Bible?

The unity in the Word of God over the centuries is one of the many truths to eradicate all doubt. This clearly indicates that it is the same God who inspired the people and who was actively involved in events in such a manner that we may know Him today. We will now look at a few of the many truths to proof that it is the same Lord of whom there is witness in the Old Testament and the New Testament.

Christ will bring salvation and rule - a specific Person		
Prophecies in the Old Testament	Discussions	Jesus is the Truth
<p>New King James Version: Genesis 3:15 - <i>"And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel."</i></p> <p>Genesis 14:18-20: - <i>"¹⁸Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was the priest of God Most High. ¹⁹And he blessed him and said: "Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; ²⁰And blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand." And he gave him a tithe of all."</i></p> <p>Psalms 110 refers to Melchizedek. It was during this time that David conquered Jerusalem</p> <p>Psalms 110:4: <i>"The LORD has sworn And will not relent, "You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek."</i></p> <p>Isaiah 9:6: <i>"For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."</i></p>	<p>Note that the offspring of the woman (Eve) is written with a capital letter "Seed". This indicates that it refers to the Messiah, the Anointed. In other words, Christ.</p> <p>Greek = Massiach; Hebrew = Christos. Both meaning : Anointed</p> <p>Man can not save himself nor can he from his fallen, sinful state, bring eternal life onto himself in the presence of the Creator . Only God, the Lord (God of the covenant = Yahweh) can do it because He is the Creator and Giver of life.</p> <p>It is clearly predicted in the Old Testament that a particular Person will bring salvation. Historically and prophetically the Messiah has been pointed out to us very clear. Jesus Christ is the Messiah who came to fulfil the prophecies as well as His prophetic utterances personally.</p> <p>He is God's Perfect Revelation to man so that we may know His Name. There has not been another revelation.</p> <p>Through Melchizedek God intervened with man, this dating back to the time prior to many of the testimonies recorded in the Bible, or even available today. More about Melchizedek later in the chapter.</p>	<p>Look at Peter's speech during Pentacost with reference to Jesus in Acts 2:33: <i>"Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear."</i></p> <p>It is said about Jesus in Hebrew 7:17: <i>" For He testifies: "YOU ARE A PRIEST FOREVER ACCORDING TO THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK."</i></p> <p>In other words, Jesus has always been the God of justice. The high priest went into the Holy of Holies of the Temple once a year to bring about reconciliation between God and man. The Messiah is the only divine High Priest who could eternalise it. Jesus came to show that He is the Messiah.</p> <p>Hebrew 9:24-28: <i>"²⁴For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us; ²⁵not that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood of another— ²⁶He then would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. ²⁷And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, ²⁸so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation."</i></p> <p>(More about the true High Priest Jesus on www.matthew28.co.za)</p> <p>Jesus' words to Thomas John 14:6: <i>"Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."</i></p> <p>1 John 5:20: <i>"And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life."</i></p>

Breaking the body and the flowing of blood are signs of a covenant		
Prophecies in the Old Testament	Discussions	Jesus is the Truth
<p>Genesis 15:7-10: <i>"⁷Then He said to him, "I am the LORD, who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to inherit it."⁸And he said, "Lord GOD, how shall I know that I will inherit it?"⁹So He said to him, "Bring Me a three-year-old heifer, a three-year-old female goat, a three-year-old ram, a turtledove, and a young pigeon."¹⁰Then he brought all these to Him and cut them in two, down the middle, and placed each piece opposite the other....."</i></p> <p><u>Leviticus 2:1-16:</u> <i>"¹When anyone offers a grain offering to the LORD, his offering shall be of fine flour. And he shall pour oil on it, and put frankincense on it" (BREAD</i></p> <p><u>Leviticus 4:3-5:</u> <i>"³if the anointed priest sins, bringing guilt on the people, then let him offer to the LORD for his sin which he has sinned a young bull without blemish as a sin offering. ⁴He shall bring the bull to the door of the tabernacle of meeting before the LORD, lay his hand on the bull's head, and kill the bull before the LORD. ⁵Then the anointed priest shall take some of the bull's blood and bring it to the tabernacle of meeting. ⁶The priest shall dip his finger in the blood and sprinkle some of the blood seven times before the LORD, in front of the veil of the sanctuary"</i></p>	<p>The custom during the Old Testament times when two parties have a covenant was to let blood flow by breaking the representative animals' bodies. The same happened between God and Abram (later called Abraham). We have already seen that the blood of the lamb vouched for the people's sins during the tenth plague in Egypt. We now see that bread was also pertinent in the offerings. The town of Bethlehem, where Jesus was born (see Micah 5), means "Place of bread." Predicted more than 500 years before Christ.</p>	<p>Important: The imperfect priest had to seek reconciliation with the Lord and achieve it with the help of covenant tools and items in the presence of the Lord.</p> <p>Jesus introduced the Last Supper together with His disciples that He taught over three years. The next day He was crucified during the Passover commemorating the Lamb's blood that flowed in Egypt for the people more than 1200 years before Christ. Luke 22:19-20:</p> <p><i>"¹⁹And He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me."²⁰Likewise He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you."</i></p>
The Old Covenant (The Act)		
Prophecies in the Old Testament	Discussions	Jesus is the Truth
<p>God remains faithful to His covenant with Abraham and confirmed His covenant with Moses at Mount Sinai (Horeb) Exodus 19:5-6:⁵⁻⁶<i>Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My</i></p>	<p>At Mount Sinai, the Israelites received the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20) and then the Law (Exodus 21) which renewed mans' focus on his own sin and the Holy Spirit of God. The law is the</p>	<p>There was separation between God and man. A Tabernacle (and later the Temple) was erected representing the Name of the Lord's presence amongst His people. The High Priest had to stand in for his own, and the people's sins once a</p>

covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine. And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel."

Leviticus 23:27-28: *"²⁷Also the tenth day of this seventh month shall be the Day of Atonement. It shall be a holy convocation for you; you shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire to the LORD. ²⁸And you shall do no work on that same day, for it is the Day of Atonement, to make atonement for you before the LORD your God."*

Who is the Angel of The Lord? Malachi 3:1-2:
"¹Behold, I send My messenger, And he will prepare the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, Will suddenly come to His temple, Even the Messenger of the covenant, In whom you delight. Behold, He is coming," Says the LORD of hosts. ²"But who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner's fire And like launderers' soap".

This was written more than 500 years before Christ.

precursor of the Gospel of life. In the whole of Psalm 119 it can be seen how the psalmist personified the Lord as the Law, and seeks salvation through obedience of the Law: For example see Psalm 119:54-56 *"⁵⁴Your statutes have been my songs In the house of my pilgrimage. ⁵⁵I remember Your name in the night, O LORD, And I keep Your law. ⁵⁵This has become mine, Because I kept Your precepts"*.

Our Holy God can only be served through obedience. The "priestly service" was introduced to enable the people to serve in obedience. The High Priest also had to, on a specific day each year, on the Day of Atonement: Yom Kippur, enter the Holy of Holies in the Tabernacle (later the Temple) beyond the veil (which separated the Holy and Most Holy), to stand in for the disobedience of the people as well as his own. The Temple which was build on the "Mountain of the Lord" (Genesis 22:14) confirms the covenant with Abraham. It was also a confirmation of the covenant with David that his son will build the Temple and the Messianic Son will establish His throne there forever (1 Chronicles 17:7-14) Psalm 107:42-43: *"⁴²The righteous see it and rejoice, And all iniquity stops its mouth. ⁴³Whoever is wise will observe these things, And they will understand the lovingkindness of the LORD"*.

year. It was an earthly priest who was bound by his own sin. Through the Tabernacle He was the middle path and the priesthood between God and man.

According to the Divine priestly order of Melchizedek Jesus is the High Priest.

Genesis 14:18-20: *"¹⁸Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was the priest of God Most High. ¹⁹And he blessed him and said: "Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; ²⁰And blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand." And he gave him a tithe of all"*.

Melchizedek received tithes from Abraham and is considered superior to Abraham: Hebrew 7:6-7: *"⁶ but he whose genealogy is not derived from them received tithes from Abraham and blessed him who had the promises. ⁷Now beyond all contradiction the lesser is blessed by the better"*.

Hebrew 9:11-12: *"¹¹ But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. ¹²Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption."*

Hebrew 9:24-28 *"²⁴For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us; ²⁵not that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood of another—²⁶He then would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. ²⁷And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, ²⁸so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation"*.

Matthew 27:50-55: *"⁵⁰ And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit. ⁵¹Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth*

		<p>quaked, and the rocks were split,⁵² and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised;⁵³ and coming out of the graves after His resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many.⁵⁴ So when the centurion and those with him, who were guarding Jesus, saw the earthquake and the things that had happened, they feared greatly, saying, "Truly this was the Son of God!"⁵⁵ And many women who followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to Him, were there looking on from afar,⁵⁶ among whom were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee's sons".</p> <p>Hebrew 10:1-7: ¹For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect. ²For then would they not have ceased to be offered? For the worshipers, once purified, would have had no more consciousness of sins. ³But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. ⁴For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins. ⁵Therefore, when He came into the world, He said: "sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but a body You have prepared for Me. ⁶in burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You had no pleasure. ⁷then I said, 'behold, I have come— in the volume of the book it is written of Me— to do Your will, o God.' "</p>
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The Name of the Lord Immanuel (God with us) stay with us through the ages		
Prophecies in the Old Testament	Discussions	Jesus is the Truth
<p>Genesis 10:1: "Now this is the genealogy of the sons of Noah: Shem, Ham, and Japheth."</p> <p>Genesis 10:21: "And children were born also to Shem, the father of all the children of Eber,"</p> <p>The word Shem means "name". The Lord's name was made known to us from the descendants of Shem. God's order to Moses: Exodus 25:8-9: ⁸"And let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may</p>	<p>God has made his name known to man as God (I Am) (Lord). This means the God of the covenant, the Savior.</p> <p>Exodus 3:14-15: ¹⁴"And God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." And He said, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.' ¹⁵Moreover God said to Moses, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel: 'The LORD God of</p>	<p>There is one God, and His name is Lord. The area Jerusalem Salem is seen by some as an abbreviation for Jerusalem but with passing of time it is connected to Jerusalem. From the beginning of all time, the Lord chose the area Jerusalem as the place where He will establish His Name. No other outside-of-the-Bible building or ritual or prophet or energy, or whatever, can compete with this.</p> <p>John 16:24: "Until now you have asked nothing in My name.</p>

<p><i> dwell among them.⁹ According to all that I show you, that is, the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furnishings, just so you shall make it."</i></p> <p>Solomon's Words at the opening of the Temple: 1 Kings 8:41-43: <i>"⁴¹⁻⁴²Moreover, concerning a foreigner, who is not of Your people Israel, but has come from a far country for Your name's sake for they will hear of <u>Your great name</u> and Your strong hand and Your outstretched arm), when he comes and prays toward this temple, hear in heaven Your dwelling place, and do according to all for which the foreigner calls to You, <u>that all peoples of the earth may know Your name and fear You</u>, as do Your people Israel, and that they may know that this temple which I have built is called by <u>Your Name</u>."</i></p> <p><i>King Darius's words for the Temple to be rebuilt : Ezra 6:12: "And may the God who causes <u>His name to dwell there</u> destroy any king or people who put their hand to alter it, or to destroy this house of God which is in Jerusalem. I Darius issue a decree; let it be done diligently."</i></p> <p><i>Psalms 89:16-18: "¹⁶In Your name they rejoice all day long, And in Your righteousness they are exalted. ¹⁷For You are the glory of their strength, And in Your favor our horn is exalted. ¹⁸For our shield belongs to the LORD, And our king to the Holy One of Israel"</i></p> <p><i>Isaiah 7:14: "Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and <u>shall call His name Immanuel</u>."</i></p>	<p><i>your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you. <u>This is My Name forever, and this is My memorial to all generations.</u>"</i></p> <p><i>Exodus 6:1-3: "¹Then the LORD said to Moses, "Now you shall see what I will do to Pharaoh. For with a strong hand he will let them go, and with a strong hand he will drive them out of his land."²And God spoke to Moses and said to him: "I am the LORD. ³I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as God Almighty, but by <u>My name LORD I was not known to them.</u>"</i></p> <p>It is important to glorify the name of the Lord. Psalms 115 to 118 is sung during the Passover. Look at words of Psalms 113:1-3 and Psalms 115:1. Through praising the Name of the Lord, and believing in the Name of the Lord, we become part of the covenant with Abraham. We become children of the covenant. The Name of the Lord was made known to us by Jesus. The Lord is everyone's God - we can have a personal relationship with Him and know Him:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Abba Father Adonai (God is our Ruler) Elohim (The One who revealed Himself as I) EI-Shaddai (The All-sufficient; the One that Satisfes) EI Gibbor (Mighty God; "Champion") EI-Roi (The God who sees) Jah (The Independent One) Jahwe (The One that exists on its own, the redemptive name of God; Eternal) Jahwe-Elohim (God the Creator) Jahwe-Jireh (God will provide; Provider) Jahwe-Mekaddishkem (Lord who sanctifies) Jahwe-Makkeh (Lord who smites/strikes) Jahwe-Nissi (The Lord is my Banner) Jahwe-Rohi (The Lord my Shephard) 	<p><i>Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full."</i></p> <p>Jesus' prayer for His disciples: John 17:6: <i>"I have <u>manifested Your Name</u> to the men whom You have given Me out of the world. They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and <u>they have kept Your word</u>."</i></p> <p>John 17:11: <i>"Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, <u>keep through Your name those whom You have given Me</u>, that they may be one as We are."</i></p> <p>John 14:25-26: <i>"²⁵These things I have spoken to you while being present with you. ²⁶But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you."</i></p> <p>Acts 2:20-21: <i>"²⁰the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the coming of the great and awesome day of The Lord. ²¹and it shall come to pass that <u>whoever calls on the Name of The Lord shall be saved.</u>"</i></p> <p>Jesus referred that they would reject him by referring to Psalm 118, Luke 20:17, Matthew 21:42 and Mark 12:10) This links Jesus to Psalm 118 where it is witnessed that the Name of The Lord brings salvation and life - Jesus!</p>
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	Jahwe-Ropheka (The Eternal-Who-Heals) Jahwe-Shalom (The Lord is Peace) Jahwe-Shammah (The Lord is there, Abundant; The ever-present One) Jahwe-Sebaoth (He who musters armies) Jahwe-Tsidkenu (The Lord Our Righteousness)	
The Holy Spirit reveals		
Prophecies in the Old Testament	Discussions	Jesus is the Truth
<p>Psalms 51:12-14: ¹²<i>Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, And uphold me by Your generous Spirit.</i> ¹³<i>Then I will teach transgressors Your ways, And sinners shall be converted to You.</i> ¹⁴<i>Deliver me from the guilt of bloodshed, O God, The God of my salvation, And my tongue shall sing aloud of Your righteousness.</i></p> <p>Isaiah 63:11-12: ¹¹<i>Then he remembered the days of old, Moses and his people, saying: "Where is He who brought them up out of the sea With the shepherd of His flock? Where is He who put His Holy Spirit within them, ¹²Who led them by the right hand of Moses, With His glorious arm, Dividing the water before them To make for Himself an everlasting name,"</i></p> <p>Nehemiah 9:20: <i>"You also gave <u>Your good Spirit</u> to instruct them, And did not withhold Your manna from their mouth, And gave them water for their thirst."</i></p> <p>In anticipation of the Lord, the prophets received the message: Habakuk 2:1-3: ¹<i>I will stand my watch And set myself on the rampart, And watch to see what He will say to me, And what I will answer when I am corrected.</i> ²<i>Then the LORD answered me and said: "Write the vision And make it plain on tablets, That he may run who reads it. ³For the vision is yet for an appointed time; But at the end it will speak, and it will not lie. Though it tarries, wait for it; Because it will surely come, It will not tarry."</i></p>	<p>The Spirit of the Lord is still revealing the will of the Lord and His Name to man. For example the writing on the wall at the meal of king Belteshazzar, more than 600 years before Christ. Daniël 5:10-12: ¹⁰<i>The queen, because of the words of the king and his lords, came to the banquet hall. The queen spoke, saying, "O king, live forever! Do not let your thoughts trouble you, nor let your countenance change. ¹¹There is a man in your kingdom <u>in whom is the Spirit</u> of the Holy God. And in the days of your father, light and understanding and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods, were found in him; and King Nebuchadnezzar your father — your father the king — made him chief of the magicians, astrologers, Chaldeans, and soothsayers. ¹²In as much as an excellent spirit, knowledge, understanding, interpreting dreams, solving riddles, and explaining enigmas were found in this Daniel, whom the king named Belteshazzar, now let Daniel be called, and he will give the interpretation."</i></p> <p>The Spirit of the Lord gives wisdom and reveals the Lord to man. Jesus perfected it by fulfilling the same prophecies: Hebrew 1:1-3: ¹<i>God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, ²has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; ³who being the brightness of His</i></p>	<p>Prophecies from the Holy Spirit 2 Peter 1: 21: <i>"for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit."</i> Revelation 19:10b: <i>"Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."</i> The Holy Spirit is the Author of the Bible. See the witness of the apostles 1 Corinthians 2:4-5: ⁴<i>And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, ⁵that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God."</i> <i>Deuteronomy 18:15 and Hebrew 11:16 as well as the words from Jesus. See Luke 2:25-38, John 8:56, Heb 4:2,6. Also Luke 16:29-31 - The people of the Old Testament had to listen to the prophets and Moses. Habakuk 2:1 Describes how the prophets received the prophecies, See 2 Peter 1:20-21</i> 1 Peter 1:11 Points out that it is the Spirit of the Lord Jesus who inspired the prophets of the Old Testament. Therefore we assume Jesus was already well-known to them and they understood the redemptive act. For example Isaiah writes in the past tense about the Messiah (Isaiah 53). Jesus confirms that the prophets wrote about him, <i>Luke 18:31, Luke 22:37.</i> Also see Isaiah 53:12. Jesus' words to the travelers to Emmaus in Luke 24:25-26 and to His disciples in <i>Luke 24:44-45.</i> They were now equipped to establish the Church. Who has the key of David, <i>Revelation 3:7?</i> David calls the Lord his Lord</p>

	<p><i>glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,"</i></p> <p>Hebrew 11:13-16: ¹³<i>These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. ¹⁴For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland. ¹⁵And truly if they had called to mind that country from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return. ¹⁶But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them."</i></p> <p>We will only know the will of God if we allow God to renew our thinking. Romans 12:1-2: ¹<i>I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. ²And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."</i></p> <p>1 Peter 1:10-12: ¹⁰<i>Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you, ¹¹searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. ¹²To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things which angels desire to look into."</i></p>	<p>confirmed by Jesus in <i>Matthew 22:45</i> Authentic apostles and witnesses, <i>Acts 1:1-3 en 1:21-22</i></p> <p>Words of Jesus: John 5:39: <i>"You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me."</i></p> <p>John 16:14-15 where Jesus talks about the Holy Spirit: ¹⁴<i>He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you. ¹⁵All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare it to you."</i></p> <p>John 8:31-32: ³¹<i>Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. ³²And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."</i></p>
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The Servant on behalf of the Jews and also for salvation of all nations		
Prophecies in the Old Testament	Discussions	Jesus is the Truth
<p>Isaiah 42:1-4 : <i>"Behold! My Servant whom I uphold, My Elect One in whom My soul delights! I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the Gentiles. ²He will not cry out, nor raise His voice, Nor cause His voice to be heard in the street. ³A bruised reed He will not break, And smoking flax He will not quench; He will bring forth justice for truth. ⁴He will not fail nor be discouraged, Till He has established justice in the earth; And the coastlands shall wait for His law."</i> (Written about 750 years before Christ)</p>	<p>Only Jesus who is flawless could bring perfect atonement. He was not only a prophet, but the Son of God. In other words, God Himself.</p>	<p>The Apostles explain in Romans 15:7-9: <i>"Therefore receive one another, just as Christ also received us, to the glory of God. ⁸Now I say that Jesus Christ has become a servant to the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made to the fathers, ⁹and that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy, as it is written: "for this reason I will confess to you among the gentiles, and sing to Your name."</i></p>
The Messiah will be revealed as man (flesh) - we can meet the Being of God		
Prophecies in the Old Testament	Discussions	Jesus is the Truth
<p>More than 600 years before Christ, Daniel writes Daniel 7:13-14: <i>"¹³I was watching in the night visions, And behold, One like the Son of Man, Coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, And they brought Him near before Him. ¹⁴Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, That all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, Which shall not pass away, And His kingdom the one Which shall not be destroyed."</i></p> <p>Isaiah 9:5-6: <i>"⁵For every warrior's sandal from the noisy battle, And garments rolled in blood, Will be used for burning and fuel of fire. ⁶For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."</i></p>	<p>A Savior is expected, someone like a human being.</p> <p>Important: Only the Lord can give perfect and eternal reconciliation which does not need to be repeated over and over annually.</p> <p>It's not about to understand God because we can't, its about knowing Him!</p> <p>Jesus first announces his death: Mark 8:31: <i>"And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again."</i></p> <p>In Jericho Jesus announces salvation also for the sinful Zacchaeus. Luke 19:9-10: <i>"⁹And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham; ¹⁰for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."¹¹"</i></p> <p>Genesis 1:26 <i>"Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea,"</i></p> <p>Luke 10:23-24 <i>"²³Then He turned to His disciples and said privately, "Blessed are the eyes which</i></p>	<p>John 1:1-5: <i>"¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. ⁴In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. ⁵And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it."</i></p> <p>John 1:14: <i>"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."</i></p> <p>2 Peter 1: 16-21: <i>"¹⁶For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty. ¹⁷For He received from God the Father honor and glory when such a voice came to Him from the Excellent Glory: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." ¹⁸And we heard this voice which came from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain. ¹⁹And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; ²⁰knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, ²¹for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit."</i></p>

	<p>see the things you see; ²⁴for I tell you that many prophets and kings have desired to see what you see, and have not seen it, and to hear what you hear, and have not heard it.”</p> <p>Luke 3:6: “and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.”</p> <p>Colossians 1:15-20: ¹⁵He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.</p> <p>Col 1:16 ¹⁶For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. ¹⁷And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. ¹⁸And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the pre-eminence ¹⁹For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell ²⁰and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.”</p>	<p>No other prophets or representatives. 3 John: 11-12: ¹¹Beloved, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good. He who does good is of God, but he who does evil has not seen God. ¹²Demetrius has a good testimony from all, and from the truth itself. And we also bear witness, and you know that our testimony is true</p> <p>The Apostle John received the revelation on the island of Patmos. Jesus appeared to him and he testified as follows in Revelation 1:10-15: ¹⁰I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet, ¹¹saying, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last," and, "What you see, write in a book and send it to the seven churches which are in Asia: to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamos, to Thyatira, to Sardis, to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea." ¹²Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands, ¹³and in the midst of the seven lampstands One like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band. ¹⁴His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire; ¹⁵His feet were like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters;”</p>
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The Messiah will be born from the seed of David, we can know Who He Is

Prophecies in the Old Testament

Deuteronomy 18:18-19. ¹⁸I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him. ¹⁹And it shall be that whoever will not hear My words, which He speaks in My name, I will require it of him.” (Written about 1220 BC). The covenant with David, prophetically the Messiah. See 2 Samuel 23:5
 Isaiah 11:10: "And in that day there shall be a Root of Jesse, Who shall stand as a banner to the people; For the Gentiles shall seek Him, And His resting place shall be glorious."

Isaiah 16:4-5: ⁴Let My outcasts dwell with you, O Moab; Be a shelter to them from the face of the spoiler. For the extortioner is at an end, Devastation ceases, The oppressors are consumed out of the land. ⁵In mercy the throne will be established; And One will sit on it in truth, in the tabernacle of David, Judging and seeking justice and hastening righteousness." (Written about 750 BC)

Jesus is the Truth

Christ came to earth to confirm the truth of God's promises received by our ancestors. See Romans 15:7-9: ⁷Therefore receive one another, just as Christ also received us, to the glory of God ⁸Now I say that Jesus Christ has become a servant to the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made to the fathers ⁹and that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy, as it is written: "for this reason I will confess to You among the gentiles, and sing to your Name."

The latter text reference comes from David who wrote it about 1000 years before Christ, see Psalms 18:50.

The detailed genealogy of Jesus as recorded in Matthew 1:17: ¹⁷So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen

<p>The David Promise (as the Abraham promise) - The Lord unconditionally committed Himself to fulfill His covenant. The David House will retain the throne as long as they remain, as David, faithful to the Lord. The Kings did not follow this example and the kingdom came to an end. A relationship can only exist if there is faithfulness. Also see Jeremiah 23:5-6 and 33:15-16 where the Messiah will sit on the throne from the kingdom of David.</p> <p>When David became king, he took Jerusalem (which was a Jebusite city at the time), made it his capital and moved the holy shrine there. Thereby he, like Melchizedek, took both politically and religiously leadership. Through this there are many parallels between David and Abraham. In this way he could retain the loyalty of both Israel and the Jebusites. No wonder Genesis 14 eventually fulfilled an important purpose. The fact that via Psalm 110 it is also in the New Testament applied to Jesus as the Priest King, emphasized the importance of the event for descendants.</p> <p>Jesus, born from the seed of David, fulfilled the order of Melchizedek.</p>	<p><i>generations, from David until the captivity in Babylon are fourteen generations, and from the captivity in Babylon until the Christ are fourteen generations."</i></p> <p><i>Revelation 5:1-5: "1And I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a scroll written inside and on the back, sealed with seven seals. 2Then I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the scroll and to loose its seals?" 3And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll, or to look at it. 4So I wept much, because no one was found worthy to open and read the scroll, or to look at it. 5But one of the elders said to me, "Do not weep. Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals." (Written about 95 years after Christ)</i></p>
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The Lord revealed Himself through the people of Israel so that we can believe today - the witnesses recorded Scriptures which is the Word we read today - The Bible

Prophecies in the Old Testament	Discussions	Jesus is the Truth
<p>Exodus 15:1-3: <i>"Then Moses and the children of Israel sang this song to the LORD, and spoke, saying: "I will sing to the LORD, For He has triumphed gloriously! The horse and its rider He has thrown into the sea! 2The LORD is my strength and song, And He has become my salvation; He is my God, and I will praise Him; My father's God, and I will exalt Him. 3The LORD is a man of war; The LORD is His name."</i></p> <p>Jeremiah 32:20: <i>"You have set signs and wonders in the land of Egypt, to this day, and in Israel and among other men; and You have made Yourself a name, as it is this day."</i></p> <p>The Lord did many signs and wonders on earth. He also established practises to enable man to serve Him for example the sacrifices and festivals. All of these also has prophetic value still strongly addressing us to this day.</p> <p>Jesus came to earth from Israel, as predicted (from the family of Jacob) and the people of Israel about 1000 years before Christ the following was written:</p>	<p>Through the people of Israel the Lord brought salvation for all nations. The prophets worked amongst them and the Lord has done wonders through them. The writers of the Bible, like Moses worked between his own people and they knew and trusted him. They knew he was inspired by God to write because he performed wonders amongst them. The people knew that what the authors left behind for them were authentic.</p> <p>Isaiah 59:20-21: <i>"20The Redeemer will come to Zion, And to those who turn from transgression in Jacob," Says the LORD. 21"As for Me," says the LORD, "this is My covenant with them: My Spirit who is upon you, and My words which I have put in your mouth, shall not depart from your mouth, nor from the mouth of your descendants, nor from the mouth of your descendants' descendants," says the LORD, "from this time and forevermore."</i></p> <p>Paul refers in Romans 11:26.</p> <p>We can read the Bible today with the confidence that it is authentic testimonies of witnesses who</p>	<p>As predicted more than 450 years before Christ in Zechariah 9:9 Jesus will be riding on a donkey amongst His people in Jerusalem.</p> <p>Zechariah 9:9: <i>"Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, Lowly and riding on a donkey, A colt, the foal of a donkey."</i></p> <p>Peter testifies as captured by Mark:</p> <p>Mark 11:7-10: <i>"7Then they brought the colt (donkey) to Jesus and threw their clothes on it, and He sat on it. 8And many spread their clothes on the road, and others cut down leafy branches from the trees and spread them on the road. 9Then those who went before and those who followed cried out, saying: "Hosanna! 'BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD!' 10Blessed is the kingdom of our father David That comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!"</i></p>

<p>Psalm 24:6-8: ⁶ <i>This is Jacob, the generation of those who seek Him, Who seek Your face. Selah</i> ⁷ <i>Lift up your heads, O you gates! And be lifted up, you everlasting doors! And the King of glory shall come in.</i> ⁸ <i>Who is this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, The LORD mighty in battle.</i>"</p>	<p>wrote about what they had seen and experienced. It was not written hundreds of years afterwards. More on this later.</p>	
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The Mighty Right Hand of God

Prophecies in the Old Testament	Jesus is the Truth
<p>Exodus 15:6 <i>"Your right hand, O LORD....."</i> Psalms 16:11: <i>"You will show me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore."</i> Psalms 17:7: <i>"Show Your marvelous lovingkindness by Your right hand, O You who save those who trust in You From those who rise up against them."</i> Psalms 20:6-7: ⁶ <i>Now I know that the Lord saves His anointed; He will answer him from his holy heaven With the saving strength of His right hand.</i> ⁷ <i>Some trust in chariots, and some in horses; But we will remember the name of the LORD our God."</i> Psalms 44:1-4: ¹ <i>To the Chief Musician. A Contemplation Of the Sons of Korah. We have heard with our ears, O God, Our fathers have told us, The deeds You did in their days, In days of old:</i> ² <i>You drove out the nations with Your hand, But them You planted; You afflicted the peoples, and cast them out.</i> ³ <i>For they did not gain possession of the land by their own sword, Nor did their own arm save them; But it was Your right hand, Your arm, and the light of Your countenance, Because You favored them.</i> ⁴ <i>You are my King, O God; Command victories for Jacob.</i> Psalms 48:10-11: ¹⁰ <i>According to Your name, O God, So is Your praise to the ends of the earth; Your right hand is full of righteousness.</i> ¹¹ <i>Let Mount Zion rejoice, Let the daughters of Judah be glad, Because of Your judgments."</i> Psalms 60:4-5: ⁴ <i>You have given a banner to those who fear You, That it may be displayed because of the truth.</i></p>	<p>Luke 22:67-70: ⁶⁷ <i>"If You are the Christ, tell us." But He said to them, "If I tell you, you will by no means believe"</i> ⁶⁸ <i>And if I also ask you, you will by no means answer Me or let Me go.</i> ⁶⁹ <i>Hereafter the Son of Man will sit on the right hand of the power of God.</i> ⁷⁰ <i>Then they all said, "Are You then the Son of God?" So He said to them, "You rightly say that I am."</i> Peter's speech at Pentecost : Acts 2:32-35: ³² <i>This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses.</i> ³³ <i>Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear.</i> ³⁴ <i>For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he says himself: 'THE LORD SAID TO MY LORD, "SIT AT MY RIGHT HAND</i> ³⁵ <i>TILL I MAKE YOUR ENEMIES YOUR FOOTSTOOL."</i> Peter and the rest of the apostles were thrown into prison to prevent them testifying about what they saw. The Lord miraculously freed them from prison and instructed them to go to the Temple to teach. They were captured again and brought to the high priest. Look at Peter's words : Acts 5:29-33 ²⁹ <i>But Peter and the other apostles answered and said: "We ought to obey God rather than men.</i> ³⁰ <i>The God of our fathers raised up Jesus whom you murdered by hanging on a tree</i> ³¹ <i>Him God has exalted to His right hand to be Prince and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins.</i> ³² <i>And we are His witnesses to these things, and so also is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him."</i> ³³ <i>When they heard this, they were furious and plotted to kill them.</i> Stephen, the first deacon of the church are stoned (while the unconverted Paul (then Saul) watches) and he says: Acts 7:55-56: ⁵⁵ <i>But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God, and said,</i> ⁵⁶ <i>"Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!"</i> Jesus intercedes for us with God. See Paul's words in Romans 8:33-34: ³³ <i>Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies.</i> ³⁴ <i>Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us."</i> Paul prayed for the Ephesians: Ephesians 1:17 ¹⁷ <i>..... that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him</i> ¹⁸ <i>the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,</i> ¹⁹ <i>and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us</i></p>

<p>Selah. ⁵That your beloved may be delivered, Save with Your right hand, and hear me.”</p> <p>Psalms 80:15-16: ¹⁵And the vineyard which Your right hand has planted, And the branch that You made strong for Yourself. ¹⁶It is burned with fire, it is cut down; They perish at the rebuke of Your countenance.”</p> <p>Psalms 89:13-14: ¹³You have a mighty arm; Strong is Your hand, and high is Your right hand. ¹⁴Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne; Mercy and truth go before Your face.”</p> <p>Psalms 110:1: “A Psalm of David. The LORD said to my Lord, “Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool.””</p> <p>Psalms 118:16-17: ¹⁶The right hand of the LORD is exalted; The right hand of the LORD does valiantly. ¹⁷I shall not die, but live, And declare the works of the LORD.”</p> <p>Isaiah 41:10: “Fear not, for I am with you; Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.”</p>	<p>who believe, according to the working of His mighty power ²⁰which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, ²¹far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come.”</p> <p>Hebrew 8:1: “Now this is the main point of the things we are saying: We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens,”</p> <p>Jesus is the Word of God (John 1) and the Lamb that was slain: Revelation 5:1-2 and 5-7: ¹And I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a scroll written inside and on the back, sealed with seven seals. ²Then I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, “Who is worthy to open the scroll and to loose its seals?”..... ⁵But one of the elders said to me, “Do not weep. Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals.” ⁶And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth. ⁷Then He came and took the scroll out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne.”</p>
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True wisdom seeks and finds the Truth		
Prophecies in the Old Testament	Discussions	Jesus is the Truth
<p>Psalms 19:8-12: ⁸The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes; ⁹The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; The judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether. ¹⁰More to be desired are they than gold, Yea, than much fine gold; Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. ¹¹Moreover by them Your servant is warned, And in keeping them there is great reward ¹²Who can understand his errors? Cleanse me from secret faults.”</p> <p>Psalms 119:65-66: ⁶⁵You have dealt well with Your servant, O LORD, according to Your word⁶⁶Teach me good judgment and knowledge, For I believe Your commandments.”</p>	<p>What happens to us if we obey God's commandments?</p> <p>Look at Jesus' words in John 14:21: “He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him.”</p> <p>Revelation 3:20: “Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.”</p> <p>John 16:24: “Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy</p>	<p>John 8:31-32: ³¹Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, “If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. ³²And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”</p> <p>But to all those who received Him, those who believe in Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God. (John 1:12)</p> <p>Through faith in Jesus Christ you are all children of God (Galatians 3:26)</p> <p>Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God. (Matthew 5:9)</p> <p>All who are led by the Spirit of God, are children of God. (Romans 8:14)</p> <p>Jesus is the source of faith Hebrew 12:2</p>

<p>Ecclesiastes 12:13 "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, For this is man's all."</p>	<p>may be full."</p>	
<p>The Word of God is the Truth and brings salvation</p>		
<p>Prophecies in the Old Testament</p>	<p>Jesus is the Truth</p>	
<p>Deuteronomy 18:18-19. ¹⁸will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him. ¹⁹And it shall be that whoever will not hear My words, which He speaks in My name, I will require it of him."</p> <p>Psalms 19:8: "The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes;"</p> <p>Psalms 119:123: "My eyes fail from seeking Your salvation And Your righteous word."</p>	<p>John 1:1-5: ¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. ⁴In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. ⁵And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it."</p> <p>John 1:12-15: ¹²But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: ¹³who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. ¹⁴And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. ⁵John bore witness of Him and cried out, saying, "This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me is preferred before me, for He was before me.'"</p> <p>John 8:51: "Most assuredly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he shall never see death."</p> <p>John 12:48-50: ⁴⁸He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him— the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day. <u>⁴⁹For I have not spoken on My own authority; but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say and what I should speak.</u> ⁵⁰And I know that His command is everlasting life. Therefore, whatever I speak, just as the Father has told Me, so I speak."</p>	
<p>Rock of Israel</p>		
<p>Prophecies in the Old Testament</p>	<p>Jesus is the Truth</p>	
<p>The Lord is the Spiritual Rock for Israel, from this Rock comes the water of life, "Living Waters" (See Jesus' conversation with the Samaritan woman in John 4). Exodus 17:5-6: ⁵And the LORD said to Moses, "Go on before the people, and take with you some of the elders of Israel. Also take in your hand your rod with which you struck the river, and go. ⁶Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock in Horeb; and you shall strike the rock, and water will come out of it, that the people may drink." And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel."</p> <p>1 Samuel 2:2: "No one is holy like the LORD, For there is none besides You, Nor is there any rock like our God."</p> <p>David's last words: 2 Samuel 23:3-4: ³The God of Israel said, The Rock of Israel spoke to me: 'He who rules over men must be just, Ruling in the fear of God. ⁴And he shall be like the light of the morning when the sun rises, A morning without clouds, Like the tender grass springing out of the earth, By clear shining after rain."</p> <p>Psalms 89:25-27: ²⁵Also I will set his hand over the sea, And his right hand over the rivers. ²⁶He shall cry to</p>	<p>Jesus' words in Mark 12:10: "Have you not even read this Scripture: 'THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED HAS BECOME THE CHIEF CORNERSTONE.'"</p> <p>1 Corinthians 10:1-4: ¹Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, ²all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, ³all ate the same spiritual food, ⁴and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ."</p>	

Me, 'You are my Father, My God, and the rock of my salvation.' ²⁷Also I will make him My firstborn, The highest of the kings of the earth."

Isaiah 8:14-15:¹⁴He will be as a sanctuary, But a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense To both the houses of Israel, As a trap and a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. ¹⁵And many among them shall stumble; They shall fall and be broken, Be snared and taken."

See Romans 9:32-33: ³²Why? Because they did not seek it by faith, but as it were, by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumbling stone. ³³As it is written: "BEHOLD, I LAY IN ZION A STUMBLING

STONE AND ROCK OF OFFENSE, AND WHOEVER BELIEVES ON HIM WILL NOT BE PUT TO SHAME."

Deuteronomy 32:3-4: ³For I proclaim the name of the LORD: Ascribe greatness to our God. ⁴He is the Rock, His work is perfect; For all His ways are justice, A God of truth and without injustice; Righteous and upright is He."

Deuteronomy 32:15: "But Jeshurun grew fat and kicked; You grew fat, you grew thick, You are obese! Then he forsook God who made him, And scornfully esteemed the Rock of his salvation"

David testifies approximately a thousand years before Christ: Psalms 19:14: "Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart Be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, my strength and my Redeemer."

The Rock in Jerusalem Isaiah 28:16: "Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: "Behold, I lay in Zion a stone for a foundation, A tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation; Whoever believes will not act hastily."

Isaiah 44:8: "Do not fear, nor be afraid; Have I not told you from that time, and declared it? You are My witnesses. Is there a God besides Me? Indeed there is no other Rock; I know not one."

2. The Lord intends rescue and salvation

The Lord hath made Himself known to man than the God of the covenant - Yahweh. He is the Creator who entered into a covenant with man so that we may have eternal life with him - that's life in completeness. We do not need all sorts of rituals today or do good deeds to receive God's favor. We already have His favor when His name lives in our lives. We take His Identity.

Jeremiah 46:27: *"But do not fear, O My servant Jacob, And do not be dismayed, O Israel! For behold, I will save you from afar, And your offspring from the land of their captivity; Jacob shall return, have rest and be at ease; No one shall make him afraid."*

Jacob blesses Joseph. Genesis 48:15-16: *"¹⁵And he blessed Joseph, and said: "God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, The God who has fed me all my life long to this day, ¹⁶The Angel who has redeemed me from all evil, Bless the lads; Let My Name be named upon them, And the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; And let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth."*

The name of the Lord was made known to us by the Temple. When we accept the name of the Lord, Jesus lives in us. We can say that Jesus is our Temple. Jesus came to make it perfect. See Jesus' prayer for His disciples in John 17:6: *"I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world. They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word."*

Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are.

John 17:11: *"Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are"*

When people want to accomplish salvation on their own, they fall into sin because it isn't the Word of God that lives in us. This can be seen through the description of the sins by Manasseh: 2 Kings 21:4-7 *"⁴He also built altars in the house of the LORD, of which the LORD had said, "In Jerusalem I will put My name."⁵ And he built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the LORD. ⁶Also he made his son pass through the fire, practiced soothsaying, used witchcraft, and consulted spiritists and mediums. He did much evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke Him to anger. ⁷He even set a carved image of Asherah that he had made, in the house of which the LORD had said to David and to Solomon his son, "In this house and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, I will put My name forever."*

3. What wisdom is then essential?

Colossians 2:8-10: *"⁸ Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ. ⁹For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; ¹⁰and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power."*

Pastor Louis Lapidés pointed out that Eastern philosophy wants us to believe that everything is in a man's mind and that every man creates his own reality. However, if God holds any significance outside my own imagination, then He should be an objective reality. (CFCrist p177)

Deuteronomy 4:9-10: *"⁹ Only take heed to yourself, and diligently keep yourself, lest you forget the things your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life. And teach them to your children and your grandchildren, ¹⁰especially concerning the day you stood before the LORD your God in Horeb, when the LORD said to me, 'Gather the people to Me, and I will let them hear My words, that they may learn to fear Me all the days they live on the earth, and that they may teach their children.'*

Paul's explanation in Colossians 1:15-20: *"¹⁵He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation ¹⁶For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. ¹⁷And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. ¹⁸And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence. ¹⁹For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, ²⁰and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross."*

John 14:21: *"He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him."*

Matthew 28:18-20: *"¹⁸And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in*

the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen."

Jesus is the Word of God, He is and was eternally, He was clearly revealed in the Old Testament and was also Self involved as the Messenger of the covenant: Micah 5 1-2 (written about 730 years before Christ) ¹"Micah 5:1 Now gather yourself in troops, O daughter of troops; He has laid siege against us; They will strike the judge of Israel with a rod on the cheek. ²"But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, Though you are little among the thousands of Judah, Yet out of you shall come forth to Me The One to be Ruler in Israel, Whose goings forth are from of old, From everlasting." ³Therefore He shall give them up, Until the time that she who is in labor has given birth; Then the remnant of His brethren Shall return to the children of Israel. ⁴And He shall stand and feed His flock In the strength of the LORD, In the majesty of the Name of the LORD His God; And they shall abide, For now He shall be great To the ends of the earth,"

4. The Face of God - The Angel of the Lord - Jesus Christ

4.1 Who is the Angel of the Lord?

Man can not see God the Father but by His grace, He reveals Himself to us through His Son Jesus Christ

About 400 years before Christ it was prophesized as follows: Malachi 3:1-2: ¹"Behold, I send My messenger, And he will prepare the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, Will suddenly come to His temple, Even the Messenger of the covenant, In whom you delight. Behold, He is coming," Says the LORD of hosts ²"But who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner's fire And like launderers' soap."

Who appeared to Abram?: Genesis 17:1: "When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am Almighty God; walk before Me and be blameless." We can now understand that it was Jesus who appeared to Abram.

Who prevents the sacrifice of Isaac: Genesis 22:10-12: ¹⁰And Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. ¹¹But the Angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" So he said, "Here I am." ¹²And He said, "Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me." Jesus Himself is the Lamb of God, He is the Angel of the Lord who appeared to Abraham.

Who did Jacob see? Genesis 32:29-30: ²⁹Then Jacob asked, saying, "Tell me Your name, I pray." And He said, "Why is it that you ask about My name?" And He blessed him there. ³⁰So Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: "For I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved."

Who appeared to Moses in the burning bush? Exodus 3:2-4: ²And the Angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire from the midst of a bush. So he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, but the bush was not consumed. ³Then Moses said, "I will now turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush does not burn." ⁴So when the LORD saw that he turned aside to look, God called to him from the midst of the bush and said, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am." Notice in verse 1 that this incident occurred at Horeb (Sinai). It is clear that when the Old Testament refers to "the Angel of the Lord" it refers to Jesus This is different than referring to "an Angel of the Lord"

Who moved in a cloud with the Israelites? Exodus 14:19: "And the Angel of God, who went before the camp of Israel, moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud went from before them and stood behind them." Jesus was with them in the desert

Who often spoke with Moses? Numeri 12:4-8: ⁴"Suddenly the LORD said to Moses, Aaron, and Miriam, "Come out, you three, to the tabernacle of meeting!" So the three came out. ⁵Then the LORD came down in the pillar of cloud and stood in the door of the tabernacle, and called Aaron and Miriam. And they both went forward. ⁶Then He said, "Hear now My words: If there is a prophet among you, I, the LORD, make Myself known to him in a vision; I speak to him in a dream. ⁷Not so with My servant Moses; He is faithful in all My house. ⁸I speak with him face to face, Even plainly, and not in dark sayings; And he sees the form of the LORD. Why then were you not afraid To speak against My servant Moses?" The only Stature of the Lord Gestalte that man can see, is Jesus.

Jesus, the Commander of the Army of the Lord : Joshua 5:13-15 ¹³And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, a Man stood opposite him with His sword drawn in His hand. And Joshua went to Him and said to Him, "Are You for us or for our adversaries?" ¹⁴So He said, "No, but as Commander of the army of the LORD I have now come." And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped, and said to Him, "What does my

Lord say to His servant?" ¹⁵Then the Commander of the LORD's army said to Joshua, "Take your sandal off your foot, for the place where you stand is holy." And Joshua did so."

Jesus appeared to Samson's mother in Judges 13:2-5: ²Now there was a certain man from Zorah, of the family of the Danites, whose name was Manoah; and his wife was barren and had no children. ³And the Angel of the LORD appeared to the woman and said to her, "Indeed now, you are barren and have borne no children, but you shall conceive and bear a son. ⁴Now therefore, please be careful not to drink wine or similar drink, and not to eat anything unclean. ⁵For behold, you shall conceive and bear a son. And no razor shall come upon his head, for the child shall be a Nazirite to God from the womb; and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines." (The Angel of God gives the same message to Abraham and Sarai in Genesis 17:19).

4.1.1 **The Angel of the Lord, the Being of God, became flesh and dwelt among us**

Matthew 1:19-20: ¹⁹Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly. ²⁰But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit." Where is the Angel of the Lord, why did not the Messiah Himself not bring the message as in the other cases? The Messiah was already in the womb of Mary.

The pregnancy came from the Lord, therefore, Jesus is the Son of God.

Matthew 1:18: ".....After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit."

4.1.2 **The presence of the Lord on earth**

The Lord commanded Moses and Aaron to bless the nation as follows: Numbers 6:24-27: ²⁴"The LORD bless you and keep you; ²⁵The LORD make His face shine upon you, And be gracious to you; ²⁶The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, And give you peace." ²⁷"So they shall put My name on the children of Israel, and I will bless them."

Isaiah 63:9: "In all their affliction He was afflicted, And the Angel of His Presence saved them; In His love and in His pity He redeemed them; And He bore them and carried them All the days of old."

Paul explains in Colossians 1:15-16: ¹⁵He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. ¹⁶For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him."

5. The Priesthood of Melchizedek

5.1 **Who was Melchizedek? The king of Jerusalem and priest of God**

Genesis 14:18-20: ¹⁸Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was the priest of God Most High. ¹⁹And he blessed him and said: "Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; ²⁰And blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand." And he gave him a tithe of all."

The area Jerusalem: Salem is seen by some as an abbreviation for Jerusalem but in time passing was connected to Jerusalem. From the beginning of all time, the Lord has chosen the area Jerusalem to be the place where His name will derive from. No other building outside the Bible or ritual or prophet or energy, or whatever, can compete with this.

5.1.1 **Not of Levitical descent and Abraham's superior**

Melchizedek received tithes of Abraham, and is considered Abraham's superior: Hebrew 7:6-7: ⁶but he whose genealogy is not derived from them received tithes from Abraham and blessed him who had the promises. ⁷Now beyond all contradiction the lesser is blessed by the better."

5.1.2 **Justice and peace is embodied in this priest king**

Priests led the nation in implementing the law and in obedience to God. Only the high priest went once a year into the Holy of Holies of the Temple in atonement of the people's, and his own, sins. He stood before the Lord on behalf of the people (more on this later).

The name Melchizedek means king of righteousness; King of Salem means King of Peace; What every man wants, justice and peace, is embodied in this priest king.

5.1.3 He is like the Son of God and remains a priest forever

Nothing is said about his genealogy nor of the end of his life. Therefore he is and stays, as the Son of God, priest forever

Hebrew 7:1-3: ¹For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, ²to whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all, first being translated "king of righteousness," and then also king of Salem, meaning "king of peace," ³without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, remains a priest continually."

6. The Lamb of God

6.1 The lamb standing in for Isaac when he had to be sacrificed .

Genesis 22:10-14: ¹⁰And Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. ¹¹But the Angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" So he said, "Here I am." ¹²And He said, "Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me." ¹³Then Abraham lifted his eyes and looked, and there behind him was a ram caught in a thicket by its horns. So Abraham went and took the ram, and offered it up for a burnt offering instead of his son. ¹⁴And Abraham called the name of the place, The-LORD-Will-Provide; as it is said to this day, "In the Mount of the LORD it shall be provided.""

Note the following:

- The Angel of the Lord who spoke to Abraham was the Lord himself. It was Jesus Himself. See Malachi 3:1-5.
- The fact that Isaac was the only begotten son of Abraham and Sarah. Jesus, the only Son of God
- The ram was provided by the Lord to stand in the place of Isaac. Jesus is the Lamb that was slain to stand in for the believers, the descendants of Isaac.
- Isaac himself collected the wood and carried it to the place of his own sacrifice. Jesus carried His cross to Calvary
- The physical location where this happened, is the same place where the Temple was later built.

6.2 Easter should be celebrated on Nisan 14 see Leviticus 23:5

Leviticus 23:5: "On the fourteenth day of the first month at twilight is the LORD's Passover."

The blood of the lamb, without blemish, slaughtered at Passover paid for the people's sins

Exodus 12:5-7: "5 Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats. 6Now you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month. Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight. 7And they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses where they eat it."

Jesus is the slain Lamb, without blemish. The flesh of the lamb is eaten during the festival and his blood is a sign of reconciliation. Jesus introduced Holy Communion to remind us that He stood in for us as the Lamb:

Matthew 26:26-29: "26And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, "Take, eat; this is My body." 27Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. 28For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. 29But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom."

Note the following:

- The lamb had to be without blemish, (Jesus perfect and without sin)
- The date when the lamb had to be slaughtered clearly specified as Nisan 14. Jesus crucified on Nisan 14
- The lamb had to be slaughtered late afternoon. Jesus died on the cross by late afternoon.

More about this in Chapter 5

6.3 The offerings confirmed the Lamb (Messiah) that had to be slaughtered brings the people into obedience through the Temple Service

- **Burnt Offering**
Leviticus 1:3-17, 6:8-13 – Reconciliation
- **Grain offering**
Leviticus 2:1-16, 6:14-23 - Devotion / isolation, Christ was fully dedicated to the Father's will
- **Peace Offering**
Leviticus 3:1-17, 7:11-36 – Reconciliation. Christ was at peace with God
- **Sin Offering**
Leviticus 4:1-5:13, 6:24-30 – Substitute Christ's death
- **Trespass Offering**
Leviticus 5:14-6:7, 7:1-10 – Confession : Christ paid all our sins/debt for our redemption

More on this in Chapter 4

6.4 The lamb that had to be slaughtered for our sins (amongst others) prophetically prophesied about 750 years before Christ (See all Isaiah 53)

Isaiah 53:5: *"But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed."*

6.5 The lamb's legs may not be broken. Jesus' legs were not broken on the cross

Exodus 12:46: (About 1250 BC) *"In one house it shall be eaten; you shall not carry any of the flesh outside the house, nor shall you break one of its bones."*

The soldiers stand before Jesus on the cross in John 19:33: *"But when they came to Jesus and saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs."*

6.6 The prophet John the Baptist confirmed the Lamb of God

John 1:29: *"The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"*

6.7 Jesus Himself prophesied about His atoning death

John 10:14-15: ¹⁴*I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own.* ¹⁵*As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep."*

Only the blood of Jesus could redeem man, and not the blood of sacrificial animals. Jesus is the **God of the covenant**. **He has the covenant in Himself**, He is **Jehovah or Yahweh**. It could not be anybody else.

6.8 Worship gives us hope for the future, we know Who is the Lamb

The final wedding as prophesied Revelation 19 7-9 : ⁷*Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready."* ⁸*And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.* ⁹*Then he said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!' "* *And he said to me, "These are the true sayings of God."*

The love of God clearly leads to salvation of all. We should not try to understand it, but should receive it with conviction and joy : Phillipians 4:6-7: ⁶*Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God;* ⁷*and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."*

6.9 We are the bride getting ready for the Bridegroom, the Lamb

Revelation 19:6-7: ⁶*And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, "Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns!"* ⁷*Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready."*

6.9.1 We will be with our Savior forever

Revelation 22:1-3: ¹*And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb.* ²*In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The*

leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. ³And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him.”

7. The Groom and bride in the Old Testament

The Revelation of God, the Light to all nations, is flawless Psalm 19:6 (about 1000 BC) “Which is like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, And rejoices like a strong man to run its race.”

7.1 The beauty of His bride whom He washed and took for Himself

The Lord is the Bridegroom for believers from all nations: Psalm 45:13-15 (about 1000 BC) ¹³*The royal daughter is all glorious within the palace; Her clothing is woven with gold. ¹⁴She shall be brought to the King in robes of many colors; The virgins, her companions who follow her, shall be brought to You. ¹⁵With gladness and rejoicing they shall be brought; They shall enter the King's palace.”*

Prophetically the faithful people are depicted as the bride in Song of Solomon 1:15 (About 750 BC): “Behold, you are fair, my love! Behold, you are fair! You have dove's eyes” and 4:7 “You are all fair, my love, And there is no spot in you.”

The Groom declared that His bride is his: Isaiah 43:1 (About 750 BC) “But now, thus says the LORD, who created you, O Jacob, And He who formed you, O Israel: “Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by your name; You are Mine.”

Isaiah encourages the captives: Isaiah 54:5 “For your Maker is your husband, The LORD of hosts is His name; And your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel; He is called the God of the whole earth.”

Isaiah 62:5 (Jerusalem) “For as a young man marries a virgin, So shall your sons marry you; And as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, So shall your God rejoice over you.”

The Lord's love affair remains to bring back the captives and to achieve salvation for all believers. Clearly, rescue refers to the good relationship between the Bridegroom and the Bride: Hosea 2:15-19 (About 722 BC) ¹⁵*I will give her her vineyards from there, And the Valley of Achor as a door of hope; She shall sing there, As in the days of her youth, As in the day when she came up from the land of Egypt. ¹⁶“And it shall be, in that day,” Says the LORD, “That you will call Me ‘My Husband,’ And no longer call Me ‘My Master,’ ¹⁷For I will take from her mouth the names of the Baals, And they shall be remembered by their name no more. ¹⁸In that day I will make a covenant for them With the beasts of the field, With the birds of the air, And with the creeping things of the ground. Bow and sword of battle I will shatter from the earth, To make them lie down safely. ¹⁹“I will betroth you to Me forever; Yes, I will betroth you to Me In righteousness and justice, In lovingkindness and mercy;”*

Jeremiah 2:2 (About 600 BC) “Go and cry in the hearing of Jerusalem, saying, ‘Thus says the LORD: “I remember you, The kindness of your youth, The love of your betrothal, When you went after Me in the wilderness, In a land not sown.”’

Jeremiah 3:1: “They say, ‘If a man divorces his wife, And she goes from him And becomes another man's, May he return to her again?’ Would not that land be greatly polluted? But you have played the harlot with many lovers; Yet return to Me,” says the LORD.” (Also see Jeremiah 3:6-7; 3:20-21)

Ezekiel 16:5-14 (About 597 BC) “.....Thus you were adorned with gold and silver, and your clothing was of fine linen, silk, and embroidered cloth. You ate pastry of fine flour, honey, and oil. You were exceedingly beautiful, and succeeded to royalty. ¹⁴Your fame went out among the nations because of your beauty, for it was perfect through My splendor which I had bestowed on you,” says the Lord GOD.“

8. Groom and bride in the New Testament

The same Lord is still the Word in the New Testament. Jesus refers to himself as the “bridegroom” in various places such as in Mark 2:19: “And Jesus said to them, “Can the friends of the bridegroom fast while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them they cannot fast.”” (Also Matthew 9:15; 25:1)

In Luke 5 34 testimony over the same words of Jesus: “And He said to them, “Can you make the friends of the bridegroom fast while the bridegroom is with them?””

Ephesians 5:25-27: ²⁵Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, ²⁶that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word,

²⁷that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish."

The final wedding prophesied in Revelation 19:7-9: *"⁷Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready."⁸ And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. ⁹Then he said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!' " And he said to me, "These are the true sayings of God."*

The love of God clearly leads to salvation of all and beyond all understanding. We should not try to understand it, but should receive it with conviction and joy.: Phillipians 4:6-7: *"⁶ Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; ⁷and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."*

8.1 The promise of the true Jewish Groom

The marriage between God and Israel is already historically authentic confirmed at Mount Sinai. God offers salvation to all peoples, through the Messiah born of Israel. The Church originated as a witness to the redemptive work of the Messiah, Jesus Christ. The Messiah continues the love affair by going to prepare a place for His bride, the Church. This historical and prophetic reality speak to the believer in many ways in the Word of God. One of them is through the festivals. More about this in Chapter 5

8.2 Jesus prophesied that the Holy Spirit will be poured out

John 14:25-27: *"²⁵These things I have spoken to you while being present with you. ²⁶But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you. ²⁷Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."*

8.2.1 The Holy Spirit was poured out according to the prophecies

Acts 2:2-4: *"²And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. ⁴And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."*

8.2.2 The apostles also testified that the Holy Spirit speaks to them

Acts 15:7-8: *"⁷ And when there had been much dispute, Peter rose up and said to them: "Men and brethren, you know that a good while ago God chose among us, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe. ⁸So God, who knows the heart, acknowledged them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He did to us,"*

Acts 15:28-29: *"²⁸-For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: ²⁹that you abstain from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well. Farewell."*

8.3 Witness for the edifying of the church

One may now ask the question, would the Lord through the ages, through His Spirit speaks to man, prophetically pour out the Holy Spirit on man, which aims to teach us about all that Jesus said and did, but then be present today, passively without any purpose? No definitely not!

About 750 years before Christ it was prophesied that the Lord will be with us

Isaiah 7:14: *" Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel. " Immanuel means 'God is with us.'*

The Lord will not be with us without a purpose. The Holy Spirit is active in the man who makes himself available to the Gospel. In Revelation 3:20 the Lord says: *"Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me."*

The Gospel of Jesus Christ testifies that Jesus Christ is the Being of God who came to live on earth among us. He proved that He was the only giver of life itself, according to the prophecies, to rise from the dead. This is a reality that involuntarily forces the believer into a personal witness of the impact this miraculous act had on his / her life. One should realize that God is and will be our Father forever because He alone gives life. Jesus rose from the dead and thus

brought reconciliation between us and the Father so we can rise from the dead and receive eternal life.

Paul's defence before Felix and his wife Drusilla in Caesarea: Acts 24:20-21: ²⁰ *Or else let those who are here themselves say if they found any wrongdoing in me while I stood before the council, ²¹ unless it is for this one statement which I cried out, standing among them, 'Concerning the resurrection of the dead I am being judged by you this day.'*"

Jesus also gave us the assurance that He will come again to fetch us, those still alive and those who have already died. The fact that the Messiah rose from the dead and appeared to many people, gives us the assurance that He will do what He said He would. The person who studies the Word of God and accepts the Messiah as his personal Savior will be able to prophesy, according to the Scriptures, that the Messiah will come again, and that He gives us eternal life. See what Paul writes

1 Corinthians 14:1-3: ¹ *Pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy. ² For he who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God, for no one understands him; however, in the spirit he speaks mysteries. ³ But he who prophesies speaks edification and exhortation and comfort to men."*

The faithful believer can prophesy according to Scripture that the Messiah would come to fetch us!

9. The Lion of Zion - Jesus Christ the Messiah

The Lord will come and destroy evil and judge the unbelievers. Note that Zion is the area where the temple is built. Its near Jerusalem, the city where the cross of the Messiah stood and where he rose from the dead. He did what no other so-called god can do.

Isaiah 31:4: *"For thus the LORD has spoken to me: "As a lion roars, And a young lion over his prey (When a multitude of shepherds is summoned against him, He will not be afraid of their voice Nor be disturbed by their noise), So the LORD of hosts will come down To fight for Mount Zion and for its hill."* (Written about 740 years before Christ)

Amos 1:2: *"And he said: "The LORD roars from Zion, And utters His voice from Jerusalem; The pastures of the shepherds mourn, And the top of Carmel withers."* (Written about 760 years before Christ)

Mount Carmel is in northern Israel. The fact that the top of Carmel will wither is evident of a major and drastic event.

Amos 3:7-8: ⁷ *Surely the Lord GOD does nothing, Unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets. ⁸ A lion has roared! Who will not fear? The Lord GOD has spoken! Who can but prophesy?"*

Revelation 5:1-5 *"And I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a scroll written inside and on the back, sealed with seven seals. ² Then I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the scroll and to loose its seals?" ³ And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll, or to look at it. ⁴ So I wept much, because no one was found worthy to open and read the scroll, or to look at it. ⁵ But one of the elders said to me, "Do not weep. Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals."* (Written about 95 years after Christ)

Jesus Christ was born of the tribe of David and the triumphantly rose from the dead.

9.1 Man against the Messiah - the Lion devouring

Despite the Lord's association with man, man still wandering seeking refuge and gods. There are no other gods, and the Lord does not appear in other forms or prophets.

Hosea 2:15-16: ¹⁵ *I will give her her vineyards from there, And the Valley of Achor as a door of hope; She shall sing there, As in the days of her youth, As in the day when she came up from the land of Egypt. ¹⁶ "And it shall be, in that day," Says the LORD, "That you will call Me 'My Husband,' And no longer call Me 'My Master.'"*

Hosea 13:6-8: ⁶ *When they had pasture, they were filled; They were filled and their heart was exalted; Therefore they forgot Me. ⁷ "So I will be to them like a lion; Like a leopard by the road I will lurk; ⁸ I will meet them like a bear deprived of her cubs; I will tear open their rib cage, And there I will devour them like a lion. The wild beast shall tear them."*

9.2 The man for the Messiah - The Lion save, protect and bring peace

We should not worship the love, but the Lord, the Giver thereof. See Micah 5 5-7 (written about 730 years before Christ): ⁶*They shall waste with the sword the land of Assyria, And the land of Nimrod at its entrances; Thus He shall deliver us from the Assyrian, When he comes into our land And when he treads within our borders.* ⁷*Then the remnant of Jacob Shall be in the midst of many peoples, Like dew from the LORD, Like showers on the grass, That tarry for no man Nor wait for the sons of men.* ⁸*And the remnant of Jacob Shall be among the Gentiles, In the midst of many peoples, Like a lion among the beasts of the forest, Like a young lion among flocks of sheep, Who, if he passes through, Both treads down and tears in pieces, And none can deliver."*

9.3 The Shoot from the descendants of Jesse - The Messiah brings salvation to the people of Israel, and as well as all believers

9.3.1 Job prophesied more than 2000 years before Christ

Already in the time of the forefathers, Job prophesied the captivity of Israel and the Messiah who will bring salvation: Job 14:7: *"For there is hope for a tree, If it is cut down, that it will sprout again, And that its tender shoots will not cease."* In the Old Testament Cedar branches were used as representatives of the kings of Israel, of the seed of David (See Esther 17:3; 4; 12; 13). In the Old Testament, in Hebrew, a "shoot" refers to a son/boy. We can therefore interpret Job's words as follows: From the evil seed of Israel a perfect child will be born.

9.3.2 In the period 740-697 BC Isaiah prophesied as follows

Isaiah 3:25-4:3: ^{3:25}*Your men shall fall by the sword, And your mighty in the war.* ²⁶*Her gates shall lament and mourn, And she being desolate shall sit on the ground. - ^{4:1}And in that day seven women shall take hold of one man, saying, "We will eat our own food and wear our own apparel; Only let us be called by your name, To take away our reproach."* ²*In that day the Branch of the LORD shall be beautiful and glorious; And the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and appealing For those of Israel who have escaped."*

Isaiah 6:11-13: ¹¹*Then I said, "Lord, how long?" And He answered: "Until the cities are laid waste and without inhabitant, The houses are without a man, The land is utterly desolate, ¹²The LORD has removed men far away, And the forsaken places are many in the midst of the land. ¹³But yet a tenth will be in it, And will return and be for consuming, As a terebinth tree or as an oak, Whose stump remains when it is cut down. So the holy seed shall be its stump."*

Isaiah 11:1-2: ¹*There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, And a Branch shall grow out of his roots. ²The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him, The Spirit of wisdom and understanding, The Spirit of counsel and might, The Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD."*

Isaiah 53:1-5: ¹*Who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? ²For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, And as a root out of dry ground. He has no form or comeliness; And when we see Him, There is no beauty that we should desire Him. ³He is despised and rejected by men, A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. ⁴Surely He has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted. ⁵But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed."*

9.3.3 Ezekiel prophesied about 597 BC:

Ezekiel 17:22-23: ²²*Thus says the Lord GOD: "I will take also one of the highest branches of the high cedar and set it out. I will crop off from the topmost of its young twigs a tender one, and will plant it on a high and prominent mountain ²³On the mountain height of Israel I will plant it; and it will bring forth boughs, and bear fruit, and be a majestic cedar. Under it will dwell birds of every sort; in the shadow of its branches they will dwell."*

9.3.4 About 580 years before Christ Jeremiah prophesied as follows

Jeremiah 23:5-6: ⁵*Behold, the days are coming," says the LORD, "That I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; A King shall reign and prosper, And execute judgment and righteousness in the earth. ⁶In His days Judah will be saved, And Israel will dwell safely; Now this is His name by which He will be called: THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS."*

Jeremiah 33:15-16: ¹⁵*In those days and at that time I will cause to grow up to David A Branch of righteousness; He shall execute judgment and righteousness in the earth. ¹⁶In those days Judah will be saved, And Jerusalem will dwell safely. And this is the name by which she will be called: THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS."*

9.3.5 Zechariah prophesied about 500 years before Christ

Joshua (Israel) and the Branch later Jesus: Zechariah 3:8-10: ⁸*'Hear, O Joshua, the high priest, You and your companions who sit before you, For they are a wondrous sign; For behold, I am bringing forth My Servant the BRANCH.* ⁹*For behold, the stone That I have laid before Joshua: Upon the stone are seven eyes. Behold, I will engrave its inscription,' Says the LORD of hosts, 'And I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day. ¹⁰In that day,' says the LORD of hosts, 'Everyone will invite his neighbor Under his vine and under his fig tree'*"

9.3.6 The Son born of Israel will build the Temple and give life

More than 600 years before Christ Asaph prophesied in Psalm 80:15-16: ¹⁵*And the vineyard which Your right hand has planted, And the branch that You made strong for Yourself. ¹⁶It is burned with fire, it is cut down; They perish at the rebuke of Your countenance."*

Prophesy about 500 years before Christ: Zechariah 6:12: *"Then speak to him, saying, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, saying: "Behold, the Man whose name is the BRANCH! From His place He shall branch out, And He shall build the temple of the LORD."* Note that in Zechariah 4:8 building of the Temple is already described and already started. Therefore it refers to the future Temple that will be built by the Messiah.

The Shoot is Jesus who became the true vine for the salvation of all believers. The true vine is the Word of God, the Messiah, who gives life. Look at Jesus' words: John 15:1-8: ¹*"I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. ²Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. ³You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. ⁴Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. ⁵I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. ⁶If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned. ⁷If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. ⁸By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples."*

Chapter 3

Is Christ the only way to the Father?

In what do we believe

1. Introduction

The armor of the believer: Ephesians 6:10-20: *“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. ¹¹Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. ¹²For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. ¹³Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. ¹⁴Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, ¹⁵and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; ¹⁶above all, **taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.** ¹⁷And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; ¹⁸praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints—¹⁹and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, ²⁰for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.”*

The Face of the Lord enables us to see the Big Picture. The Truth, the Word of God, the Messiah. His right hand stretches out to us in love already from the beginning of the creation. By His grace, the Lord brought salvation so that every man may know Him, and that every one of us can be in a personal relationship with Him. Our choice to live in obedience to Him allows Him to reveal Himself more and more to us every day. His Spirit becomes reality to us and live in us. We stand in faith to His wonderful Revelation. His Revelation becomes reality in every believer's life who makes worship an essential daily bread. The believer finds meaning in life, historically strongly founded with an eternal perspective. This raises hope and longing to be in His presence forever. We experienced His love that surpasses human understanding. It keeps in the heat of fire and drives a storm with certainty that God's purpose will be achieved.

A man's soul without the Lord, on the contrary, grab pieces of incoherent knowledge. It builds hope in a vacuum of so-called facts and gets more lost in a philosophy of apparent understanding. It creates self-righteous confusion, discord and rituals with its limited normal frame of reference. The challenges for camaraderie presents temporary substitutions. He supports human statements based on prosperity or reward. It is shallow and empty and causes an eternal quest for true love. He is lost forever. He didn't allowed himself to realize that life is created beyond himself. He didn't grab the outstretched right hand of God.

Strobel invites the hypocrite by saying: “Don't accept my word for it, but don't accept your rabbi's either. Spend the time to research it yourself. Today nobody can say, 'There's no information.' There are plenty of books out there to help you. And one more thing: sincerely ask God to show you whether or not Jesus is the Messiah. That's what I did – and without any coaching it became clear to me who fit the fingerprint of the Messiah.” (30, p 185).

Faith

1.1 What is faith

Faith is the realization that Jesus lives in us, then we live in faith: 2 Corinthians 13:5: *“Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?--unless indeed you are disqualified.”*

Hebrews 11:1-2: *“¹Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. ²For by it the elders obtained a good testimony.”*

Religion gives us an eternal perspective which is based on a hope that becomes a reality more and more through the wonderful Revelations of the Holy Spirit. Hebrews 12:1-3: *“¹Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ²looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. ³For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls.”*

Religion seeks a personal relationship with the Lord. It is not focused on personal wealth. Ephesians 2:8: *“⁸For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God”*

1.2 In what do we believe?

We believe in the great monotheistic God who, from the beginning of the history of the world, reveals Himself to His creatures. His Identity is firmly established by super-natural Revelations, in the midst of thousands of witnesses, resulting in authentic writings. These Scriptures also testify about a covenant that God made with man to ascertain reconciliation between Him and man. The Scriptures, the Bible, includes prophecies of which many have been accurately fulfilled through His Son, Jesus Christ. The prophecies yet to be fulfilled, is still historically (beginning), and prophetically (finisher), in context to Jesus Christ, the Being of God on earth as a man. His suffering and exceptional resurrection from the dead, still prophetically accurate, confirmed Him as the Savior of mankind

Jesus the Author and Finisher of faith Hebrews 12:1-3: *"¹Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ²looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."*

1 John 4:2: *"²By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God."*

1 John 5:10-12: *"¹⁰He who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself; he who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed the testimony that God has given of His Son. ¹¹And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. ¹²He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life."*

John 1:11-14: *"¹¹He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. ¹²But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: ¹³who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. ¹⁴And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."*

1.3 To what does faith enable us?

Luke 17:5-6: *"⁵And the apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith." ⁶So the Lord said, "If you have faith as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, 'Be pulled up by the roots and be planted in the sea,' and it would obey you."*

Faith let me speak God's Word, not what someone else thinks. Faith let me cherish what is beyond myself and find joy above my own problems.

Faith brings me in context to the Lord's plan of salvation, therefore He is Salvation from the beginning. It enables me to see another person's situation with compassion and love. It allows me to fully worship the Lord and in obedience realize my reliance on His grace. It enables the Light of Jesus to shine through me and thereby pour favour on my neighbor.

Matthew 5:3-12: *"³Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ⁴Blessed are those who mourn, For they shall be comforted. ⁵Blessed are the meek, For they shall inherit the earth. ⁶Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled. ⁷Blessed are the merciful, For they shall obtain mercy. ⁸Blessed are the pure in heart, For they shall see God. ⁹Blessed are the peacemakers, For they shall be called sons of God. ¹⁰Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ¹¹Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. ¹²Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you."*

We can have a personal relationship with the Lord. God speaks to people today. Faith allows me to hear and recognize the Lord's voice: John 10:14-15: *"¹⁴I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own. ¹⁵As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep."*

Faith enables me to always seek the face of the Lord for strength, in good times and in bad times. 2 Corinthians 3:13-14: *"¹³unlike Moses, who put a veil over his face so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the end of what was passing away. ¹⁴But their minds were blinded. For until this day the same veil remains unlifted in the reading of the Old Testament, because the veil is taken away in Christ."*

1.4 What does faith bring?

Galatians 3:11-14: *"¹¹But that no one is justified by the law: in the sight of God is evident, for 'THE JUST SHALL LIVE BY FAITH.' ¹²Yet the law is not of faith, but 'THE MAN WHO DOES*

THEM SHALL LIVE BY THEM.' ¹³Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, 'CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO HANGS ON A TREE'), ¹⁴that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith."

The Almighty Creator revealed Himself enough to man. His Message reserves the Truth and brought within the reach of man. Faith brings eternal perspective. This ensures eternal presence of the Lord.

Hebrews 4:2-6: ²For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it. ³For we who have believed do enter that rest, as He has said: "SO I SWORE IN MY WRATH, 'THEY SHALL NOT ENTER MY REST,' " although the works were finished from the foundation of the world. ⁴For He has spoken in a certain place of the seventh day in this way: "AND GOD RESTED ON THE SEVENTH DAY FROM ALL HIS WORKS"; ⁵and again in this place: "THEY SHALL NOT ENTER MY REST." ⁶Since therefore it remains that some must enter it, and those to whom it was first preached did not enter because of disobedience,"

Romans 10:9: ⁹that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved." Also read the rest of Romans 10.

Righteousness through faith ensures that we do not cling to rituals, but strive to do the will of The Lord. Galatians 2:16-21: ¹⁶knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified. ¹⁷"But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is Christ therefore a minister of sin? Certainly not! ¹⁸For if I build again those things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor. ¹⁹For I through the law died to the law that I might live to God. ²⁰I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. ²¹I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain."

Those who believe are children of Abraham and acquitted by God. The believer is a child of the covenant. The God of the covenant, Yahweh (God), is his/her God: Galatians 3:6-7: ⁶just as Abraham "BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS ACCOUNTED TO HIM FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS." ⁷Therefore know that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham."

We receive prosperity in our relationship with God through our faith in Him. The people, under the leadership of the obedient and believing Joshua prospered in their relationship with the Lord.

Faith creates a personal testimony - what God has done in your life, and still doing. When we don't speak of it, we speak from our own wisdom - philosophy: 1 Timothy 6:3: ³If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which accords with godliness."

Realness of faith grows hope: Romans 5:2-11: ²through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. ³And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; ⁴and perseverance, character; and character, hope. ⁵Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us. ⁶For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. ⁸But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. ⁹Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. ¹⁰For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. ¹¹And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation."

A person without faith is without the amazing benefits above. The believer's life is that of joy in Christ. It invites the unbeliever to seek the Truth, Jesus Christ.

1 Peter 2:12: "having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation."

1.5 What about good deeds?

We often confuse the law of Moses with good deeds. Christ fulfilled the law of Moses. It is the Law of Moses that is fulfilled, but it does not mean that we are now exempted from being

obedient. By fulfilling the law of Moses the Lord did not change His own Identity. God is still God and we still aim to be obedient to Him. The more we get to know the Lord through worship, the better we understand what His will is in the lives of each of us. Christ has bequeathed to us the Holy Spirit to reveal His will to us.

Galatians 3:2-9: ²*This only I want to learn from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? - ³Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh? ⁴Have you suffered so many things in vain--if indeed it was in vain? ⁵Therefore He who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you, does He do it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? ⁶just as Abraham "BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS ACCOUNTED TO HIM FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS."* ⁷*Therefore know that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham. ⁸And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, "In you all the nations shall be blessed."* ⁹*So then those who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham."*

The child of the covenant takes on the Essence of Christ, full of grace and truth. John 1:14: *"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."* We live in admiration of the wonderful Revelation given to us on this earth, Jesus Christ. Proclaiming this Truth in gratitude and obedience to what it means to my life.

It is not about good works for the sake of salvation. The Person and Being of God has been revealed to us through His Son Jesus Christ. Christ has been the greatest Gift of Grace we could have received. We can not earn it by good works. When we accept Christ, the face of the Lord shines upon us. The action of the Holy Spirit is a reality in us. The latter is certainly not without purpose. The believer's life have meaning and direction.

James, Jesus' half brother on earth, who at one time was against Jesus, writes as follows: James 2:17-19: ¹⁷*Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. ¹⁸But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. ¹⁹You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe--and tremble!"*

1.6 What about wisdom and knowledge?

Before the apostle Paul came to faith in Christ, he was a Pharisee and he cruelly persecuted believers. He had a lot of knowledge, but it was built on wisdom. By the grace of Jesus Christ, he discovered the power of God. The power of God is not something of the past as the Lord works constantly in the hearts of believers. 1 Corinthians 2:4-5: ⁴*And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, ⁵that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God."*

True knowledge is found, by the action of the Holy Spirit, in the Word of God.

Psalms 19:7-8: ⁷*The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. ⁸The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes;"*

The Holy Spirit reveals the Person of Christ to the person who studies the Word of the Lord. The believer finds his/her identity in Christ. Without faith, the person remains trapped in a humanistic frame of mind.

Psalms 94:12: *"Blessed is the man whom You instruct, O LORD, And teach out of Your law,"*

Keep yourself busy with the Word of God, Jesus Christ. The best way to do this is to take time to study the Bible with an open mind. Invite the Holy Spirit into your life to reveal the Truth, Jesus to you.

1.7 What do we achieve by faith?

Faith opens the person's mind. The bias against the supernatural is overcome. The intelligent decision was taken that the natural could not exist from nothing and that wonderful Revelation of the Messiah is real. This gives us confidence in the Lord's message of salvation

Faith is to believe in what we can not see, but it is not without identity. The Lord gave us His name and authentically revealed Himself to us through His Son Jesus Christ. He was seen on earth, and today we can still read the witnesses' testimonies in the Bible, it gives us perfect joy.

Romans 15:13: *"Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."*

No substitute such as a prophet or any philosophy or any other mediator other than Christ can accomplish it!!

We accomplish the goal of our creation through thanking and praising the Lord. The life of a believer has purpose in Christ. He / she is a child of the covenant by faith in Jesus Christ.

1.8 What does the life of a believer look like?

The believer lives in worship to the true living God, the Lord. This is not an identity-less process nor hopeless. The Identity and presence of the Lord is a wonderful reality.

Isaiah 60:1: *“Arise, shine; For your light has come! And the glory of the LORD is risen upon you.”*

His / her life is focused on obeying the Lord, filled with grace and honesty.

John 1:14: *“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.”*

The believer gives up sin and strive to follow the will of the Lord. This is not to impress anyone, but a yearning for an eternal relationship.

Romans 6:15-23: *“¹⁵What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not! ¹⁶Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness? ¹⁷But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. ¹⁸And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness. ¹⁹I speak in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness. ²⁰For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. ²¹What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. ²²But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life. ²³For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*

Galatians 5:19-26: *“¹⁹Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, ²⁰idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, ²¹envy, murders, drunkenness, revellies, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. ²²But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. ²⁴And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. ²⁵If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. ²⁶Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.”*

Through renunciation of sin and faith in Jesus Christ, the believer becomes a child of the covenant. The covenant that God made with Abraham. Through this the believer takes the Identity of Christ and holiness through obedience to the will of God (more on the covenant In Chapter 4) Sanctification has nothing to do with being better than anyone else. It is identification with the sacred Person of Christ. It entails the love for the Lord and fellow man.

Ephesians 3:17: *“that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love,”*

Galatians 5:6: *“For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love.”*

The faithful makes a choice to serve the Lord. It is by choice faithful to a true love affair. There is no doubt about the Identity of the Father which hath revealed Himself to the world through His Son, the Messaih. The believer is blessed by the presence of the Holy Spirit Who reveals the will of the Father. Obedience brings joy. Obedience to a god without identity holds nothing, only abandonment. (See the section in Chapter 4 dealing with the offerings)

Divine appointments in obedience are opportunities for worship. These are opportunities to enter the holy presence of God. The believer grabs these opportunities and are blessed by spending time with the Lord. The Lord creates special opportunities for us to spend time with Him. The word "Sabbath" means that you stop what you're doing, no work and trading, for you to pay your attention to the Lord.

Exodus 31:12-17: *“¹²And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ¹³“Speak also to the children of Israel, saying: ‘Surely My Sabbaths you shall keep, for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am the LORD who sanctifies you.’”*

Isaiah 58:13-14: *“¹³“If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath, From doing your pleasure on My holy day, And call the Sabbath a delight, The holy day of the LORD honorable, And shall honor Him, not doing your own ways, Nor finding your own pleasure, Nor speaking your own*

words, ¹⁴*Then you shall delight yourself in the LORD; And I will cause you to ride on the high hills of the earth, And feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father. The mouth of the LORD has spoken.*"

Jerusalem is Zion for the believer. It is the holy city which the Lord set up as a banner for the nations. The world's attention is focussed on Jerusalem, the whole world gets to know the Messiah through the city and its people (See section in Chapter 6 dealing with Israel and Jerusalem). This is the place where the Lord's name was announced. It would make no sense to change His everlasting name. He still lives in the believer's heart as the God of the covenant who reveals Himself to His children.

In obedience to the Lord's Name and in His Holy presence, the believer sits at the feast table of the Lord. Replacing the secular calendar with a spiritual calendar. Worldly values are replaced by wonderful spiritual perspectives. The faithful celebrates the eternal and holy Name of the Lord. Weekly Sabbaths are supplemented with festive Sabbaths. The God of the Old Testament is the same as the God of the New Testament. He comes to be with us- tabernacle - Immanuel, God with us. (See Chapter 5 that deals with the Messianic reality in the feasts of the Lord).

The believer finds himself / herself at home in the presence of other believers. It is not a philosophical trial and test searching for the best and or perfect speaker. This is corporate worship in the Name of the Lord. In obedience to the Word of God the Church represents worship on earth.

Matthew 18:18-20: ¹⁸*Assuredly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. ¹⁹Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. ²⁰For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.*"

Worship for the believer includes serviceableness.

Isaiah 58:5-11: ⁵*Is it a fast that I have chosen, A day for a man to afflict his soul? Is it to bow down his head like a bulrush, And to spread out sackcloth and ashes? Would you call this a fast, And an acceptable day to the LORD? ⁶Is this not the fast that I have chosen: To loose the bonds of wickedness, To undo the heavy burdens, To let the oppressed go free, And that you break every yoke? ⁷Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, And that you bring to your house the poor who are cast out; When you see the naked, that you cover him, And not hide yourself from your own flesh? ⁸Then your light shall break forth like the morning, Your healing shall spring forth speedily, And your righteousness shall go before you; The glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard. ⁹Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer; You shall cry, and He will say, 'Here I am.' ¹⁰If you take away the yoke from your midst, The pointing of the finger, and speaking wickedness, ¹¹If you extend your soul to the hungry And satisfy the afflicted soul, Then your light shall dawn in the darkness, And your darkness shall be as the noonday. ¹¹The LORD will guide you continually, And satisfy your soul in drought, And strengthen your bones; You shall be like a watered garden, And like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail."*

By giving the believer receives blessing from the Lord

Malachi 3:10-12: ¹⁰*Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, That there may be food in My house, And try Me now in this," Says the LORD of hosts, "If I will not open for you the windows of heaven And pour out for you such blessing That there will not be room enough to receive it. ¹¹"And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, So that he will not destroy the fruit of your ground, Nor shall the vine fail to bear fruit for you in the field," Says the LORD of hosts; ¹²And all nations will call you blessed, For you will be a delightful land," Says the LORD of hosts."*

Obedience brings blessing. Faith and love speaks to people. This brings blessing to others. It proclaims the greatest act of love committed on earth, the Messiah who died for the sins of the people on earth and rose again from the dead. Death is conquered for those who believe.

1 Corinthians 14:24-26: ²⁴*But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or an uninformed person comes in, he is convinced by all, he is convicted by all. ²⁵And thus the secrets of his heart are revealed; and so, falling down on his face, he will worship God and report that God is truly among you. ²⁶How is it then, brethren? Whenever you come together, each of you has a psalm, has a teaching, has a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification."*

1.9 What does disbelief mean?

Disbelief in spiritual context, is a state of spiritual blindness. The unbelieving person is caught in only what can be observed with the senses (empiricism), or what can be explained by the human brain (rationalism).

Disbelief to believe that the universe incidentally happened and that all the millions of spiritual testimonies from people are lies, or only the imagination of the witnesses.

Michael Behe pointed out that the probability of one protein molecule to be created through pure coincidence (approximately 100 amino acids in a protein molecule) is the same as to believe that a blind man will find a specific grain of sand three times in a row in the Sahara desert. This molecule is also still not alive. To bring life to it you need to get about 200 of that protein molecule together! (22, p125)

Disbelief is blind and does not consider identity, the Identity of the Lord which has been strongly revealed to man. It is a farce against the supernatural, built on limited materialism. It is like a person who had never seen the ocean and then claim that the sea does not exist. They have consent that only that what can be seen exists, or only what one can explain is reality.

The non-believer stares him / her blind by the false opinion that he / she is thinking logically. He / she resides with limited testimonies within the tangible (materialism) to the intangible (supernatural). It is like a person who has a broken car trying to repair it by using a cake recipe. The two are dimensional unrelated.

The compiler remembers that his father told him that his faith is strengthened by thinking of the "before" and "after" of the existence of the universe. It then dawned on me that there should have been Intelligence before the creation and there should be Intelligence after the universe, it can not be otherwise - especially if you think logically. This Intelligence has a very strong Identity and is far beyond man's comprehension. His name is the Lord and He revealed Himself to man through His Son, Jesus Christ, so that we may believe. He still keeps Himself busy with the man through the power of His Holy Spirit. Scriptures we inherited from eyewitnesses and the emotions and experiences of millions of believers offer the unbeliever a challenge that would keep him / her engaged in a Identityless eternity.

Without faith in the Messiah, Jesus Christ, man worships the highest human-created form of a god, and not the Mighty, Supernatural Creator with a Personality with which we can have a relationship.

Therefore disbelief rides on the back of materialism. In other words, everything in the universe arose from matter alone. The materialist believes that the origin of everything can be explained through chemical reactions. It brings the following:

- Believing that there is no intelligence behind life. That the inherent message of life can be confirmed by unintelligent materialism (22, p128).
- To believe that human thought is the result of chemical reactions only. Chemicals are definitely involved in human thinking but it does not explain all human thought. Geisler and Turek pointed out that someone's mind, whether it's love or hate, does not react by chemicals. What is the weight of love? What is the chemical composition of hatred? (22, p128-129)
- The inability to explain why one body is alive and the other is not. All bodies are composed of the same building materials, there is definitely something apart from the building materials that is life (22, p129).
- Disbelief is to believe that materialism is true. To allege that all the testimonies of spiritual experiences are false. This includes Abraham, Moses, Isaiah, Kepler, Newton, and Jesus Christ Himself (22, p129).
- Materialism will cause reasoning to be impossible. If the mind functions only on chemical reactions it can also be argued that nothing is true, including the theory of materialism. Chemicals do not entertain reasoning, it merely reacts (22, p 125).

Christianity is the only authentic body (the Church) which testifies of a personal and living relationship with the Almighty Father, who revealed Himself through His Holy Spirit in His Word, the Messiah.

Is Jesus Christ God?

1.1 Was there really someone like Jesus Christ on earth?

1.1.1 *Secular references to Jesus Christ*

Morgan (12, p22-23) refers to the secular (non-Christian) history that refers to Jesus. Eg early coffins dating 40 AD found outside Jerusalem that words such as "Jesus help" and "Jesus, let him who rests here arise" written on it. Reference is made to Dr. Mireille Hadas-Lebel, a historian and professor at the National Institute of Oriental Languages and Cultures in Paris. She studied works of the early Jewish historian Josephus and found it consistent with the

Gospel writings. References made to Josephus' references to the census of Quirinus, the cruelty of King Herod, the preaching of John the Baptist and the rejection of a man named James, the brother of Jesus who is called Christ. Josephus described Jesus elsewhere as a wise man who was crucified and "it seems to them as though He regained life. " Josephus' writings are regarded as genuine. For example, he is quoted by Eusebius in the fourth century. There are many references to Christ in the writings of Pliny to the Emperor Trajan dated 110 AD The Apostolic Fathers also refers to Jesus - Clement of Rome, Ignatius, Hermas, Barnabas of Alexandria, Papias and Polycarp - all who lived in the first century and testify of the risen Christ.

The crucifixion of Jesus was the most gruesome and humiliating death that someone could go under, but still there were followers who gave their lives to bring about a movement following the teachings of this Man. How can this be explained? Christians began serving Jesus as God and evidence is available from the earliest times.

There are many classical writings that shed more light on the growth of the Church, cultivated contradiction to Christianity and the Roman persecution of the Christians. However, it is important to keep our eyes on what the scriptures say concerning Jesus Christ. It is also important to note that these secular references, in other words, not based on the Christian faith and the authors were even subjectively against the Christian faith. But what stands out is the historical accuracy and context referred to. Therefore it is real events. Below are examples of some of these references:

1.1.1.1 *Josephus*

This historian from the first century, Josephus, was a well-known and important Jewish historian. He was born 37 AD (In other words, about 4 years after the crucifixion of Jesus) and wrote most of his books by the end of the first century. He was a Jewish priest and Pharisee. He was not very popular amongst the Jews as he sought the companionship of the Romans. However, he was popular amongst the Christians as he referred to James the brother of Jesus, and to Jesus himself in his documents. In his paper, "The Antiquities" he describes how a priest named Ananias, used the death of a Roman governor Festus, to have James killed. Strobel refers to Dr. Yamauchi who quoted the following: "He convened a meeting of the Sanhedrin and brought before them a man named James, the brother of Jesus, who was called the Christ, and certainment others. He accused them of having transgressed the law and delivered them to be stoned." (30, p.77-78)

In his assignment "Testimonium Flavianum" Josephus wrote more about Jesus: "About this time there lived Jesus, a wise man, if indeed one ought to call him a man. For he was one who wrought surprising feats and was a teacher of such people as accept the truth gladly. He won over many Jews and many of the Greeks. He was the Christ. When Pilate, upon hearing him accused by men of the highest standing among us, had condemned him to be crucified, those who had in the first place come to love him did not give up their affection to him. On the third day he appeared to them restored to life, for the prophets of God had prophesied these and countless other marvelous things about him. And the tribe of Christians, so called after him, has still to this day not disappeared." It is important to realize that this is an important and reliable historian of his time (non-Christian) and that his mentioning of Jesus can be regarded as authentic (30, p78-81).

1.1.1.2 *Thallos (non-Christen)*

About 55 AD (in other words, about 22 years after the crucifixion of Jesus) the historian Thallos described, in Greek, the darkness that occurred after the death of Jesus (see Matthew 27:45, Mark 15:33 and Luke 23:44). Thallos had been cited by historians such as Christian Sextus Julius Africanus (160-240 AD) which was later, about 800 AD also quoted by Georgius Syncellus. Not all the works of Thallos's are available today, but his work is authentic cited by historians. Thallos attributed the darkness, which he probably experienced himself, to solar eclipse. Sextus Julius Africanus claimed that Thallos made a mistake because a solar eclipse can not occur during a full moon. The latter was the case during Passover and therefore also the time of Jesus' crucifixion. Julius claims that the darkness was a miracle of God (34, p20-21).

It is important to realize that there were secular eyewitnesses of the darkness at the death of Jesus on the cross as well as that Jesus died on the cross.

1.1.1.3 *Pliny the Younger (Non-Christian)*

Gaius Pliny Caecilius Secundus (61-113 AD) was the nephew and adopted son of the writer Pliny the Elder. Pliny the Younger was a senator and prominent lawyer in Rome and held several key administrative posts. Many of his assignments have been retained, including letters to the Emperor Trajan during 111-113 AD. In letter 96 from book 10, deals with Christians and Christ Himself is mentioned. In this letter, as well as others, he discusses difficult court cases and legal aspects. Letter 96 refers to Pliny's doubt about the persecution of Christians. In this letter, he and others discuss difficult cases and difficult legal aspects. He asked questions such

as: How Christians should be punished? Investigations against Christians are based on what? To what extent must the investigations be pushed? Must there be any distinction with respect to age, or is it just based on the promotion of Christianity? Should Christians be punished only because they are Christians, for the sake of the name "Christian", even if they are not guilty of crimes associated with the name Christian?

In this letter Pliny also gives feedback to Trajan on how he executed lawsuits against Christians: He asked the accused, three times if necessary and with warnings of punishment, whether they are Christians. In the event of them answering positively everytime "I command that they are taken for execution; whatsoever connected with them, I'm sure their stubbornness and uncompromising obstinacy should be punished." Pliny also sent Roman citizens, who have embraced Christianity, to Rome for trial. Letter 96 Pliny doubts everything in this context and he mentions Christ three times. The problem, mentioned by Pliny, is the fact that the Christians won't worship the Roman gods. He recognized their high moral standards but expressed the hope that Christians have a better opportunity at making renunciation of Christianity(34, p23-29).

Strobel refers to the research work of Dr. Yamauchi. Yamauchi also refers to the Roman, Pliny the Younger, who in turn refers to Christians in his letter. Pliny the Younger, governor of Bithynia in North-West Turkey, wrote about 111 AD to his friend, Emperor Trajan, the following:

"I asked them if they were Christians, and they confirmed it, I asked the question for a second and a third time, with a warning that they will be punished. They however did not renounced their confession. I ordered for their execution, because, whatever the nature of their profession, I am convinced that their stubbornness and "unshakable obstinacy" can not remain unpunished"

They also declared that the total of accountability is greater than that: they met regularly before sunset on a certain day to sing verses together in honour of Christ as if it was done to a god, and bound themselves by an oath, not for the purpose of any criminal reason, but to refrain from theft, robbery

This caused me to decide to choke the truth, by means of torture, with two maids they called deaconesses. All I found was a kind of cult driven to extreme proportions"

1.1.1.4 *Suetonius (non-Christian)*

Gaius Suetonius Tranquillus (70-140 AD) was a Roman writer and has been engaged with the law and was also a friend of Pliny the Younger. He was very dedicated to write about the lives of the first twelve emperors, from Julius Caesar to Domitian. He could do it because he was the secretary of the Emperor Hadrian where he had access to the archives (the latter sentence is supported by reference 40 in the section Suetonius). In his fifth book Suetonius describes the actions of Claudius (emperor 41-54 AD, ie 8 years after the crucifixion of Jesus), that included the ban of Jews from Rome. Claudius claimed that the Jews always caused disturbances as a result of the troublemaker Chrestus. Modern researchers have no doubt that Claudius referred to Christ.

Consistent with what is in the Bible and specifically in Acts 18 1-2 (34, p29-38), also confirming the date Luke wrote the book of Acts:

Acts 18:1-2: ¹After these things Paul departed from Athens and went to Corinth. ²And he found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla (because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome)...."

1.1.1.5 *Tacitus (non-Christen)*

Cornelius Takitus (about 56-120 AD) is generally regarded as the greatest Roman historian. He held several key administrative positions, including proconsulate of Asia. Many of his works have survived. His document with the name *Ab Excessu divi Augusti* ("From the death of divine Augustus") is considered by modern researchers as his best work. Tacitus also confirmed, without doubt, the existence of Jesus. In his assignment 15.38.1 Tacitus described a fire that originated in Rome on the morning of July 19, 64 AD. Large parts of the city was destroyed. It is speculated that Emperor Nero could have been responsible for the fire because he wanted to use private land for himself to erect a palace in the center of Rome. Tacitus continues as follows;

"[2] But neither human effort nor the emperor's generosity nor the placating of the gods ended the scandalous belief that the fire had been ordered. Therefore, to put down the rumor, Nero substituted as culprits and punished in the most unusual ways those hated for their shameful acts [flagitia], whom the crowd called 'Chrestians'. [3]The founder of this name, Christ, had been executed in the reign of Tiberius by the procurator Pontius Pilate [Auctor nominis eius Christus Tiberio imperitante per procuratorem Pontium Pilatum supplicio adfectus erat]. Suppressed for a

time, the deadly superstition erupted again not only in Judea, the origin of this evil, but also in the city [Rome], where all things horrible and shameful from everywhere come together and become popular. [4]Therefore, first those who admitted to it were arrested, then on their information a very large multitude was convicted, not so much for the crime of arson as for hatred of the human race [odium humani generis]. Derision was added to their end; they were covered with the skins of wild animals and torn to death by dogs; or they were crucified and when the day ended they were burned as torches. [5]Nero provided his gardens for the spectacle and gave a show in his circus, mixing with the people in charioteer's clothing, or standing on his racing chariot. Therefore a feeling of pity arose despite a guilt which deserved the most exemplary punishment, because it was felt that they were being destroyed not for the public good but for the ferocity of one man.

Besides the fact that Tacitus confirmed that Christ was crucified on earth, he also confirmed the period Pontius Pilate was the Roman governor of Judah, from 26 to 36 AD which also falls within the period of Tiberius's reign. Pilate's name, the place in Judah and period are recorded accurately and corresponds with the canonical Gospels of the Bible, Philo and Josephus. The four Gospels of the Bible clearly states that Pilate ordered the killing of Jesus. It is ironic that the only reference to Pontius Pilate in the history of a pagan writer is linked to the death penalty which he pronounced on Jesus (34, p39-53).

1.1.1.6 *Secular summarized*

Geisler and Turek (22, p222-223) points out that there are 10 non-Christian writers who mentions Jesus in their writings within 150 years of Jesus' life on earth. In contrast, over the same 150-year, Tiberius Caesar, the Roman ruler during the time of Jesus, named 9 non-Christian writers. Some of these non-Christian writers who mentioned Jesus, such as Celsus, Tacitus and the Jewish Talmud, can be regarded as anti-Christian sources. If the Christian writers are included the writers who mentioned Jesus are a ratio of 43 to 10 in respect of those mentioned by Tiberius. If one looks at what non-Christian writers say about Jesus, it is astonishingly similar to what the New Testament of the Bible says. It can be summarized as follows:

- Jesus lived during the reign of Tiberius Caesar
- He lived a righteous life
- He was a miracle worker
- He had a brother named James
- He is regarded as the Messiah by his followers
- He was crucified under Pontius Pilate
- He was crucified on the Jewish Passover
- Darkness and an earthquake occurred when he died
- His disciples believed that he rose from the dead
- His disciples were willing to die for their faith
- Christianity spread rapidly even as far away as Rome
- His disciples denied the Roman gods and worshiped Jesus as God

Yamauchi draw our attention to how quickly the Gospel spread, both in urban and rural areas, between different groups of people, maids and Roman citizens because it refers to Roman citizens who was sent to Rome to be tried (30, p83-84).

1.1.2 **Testimonies from early Christians**

1.1.2.1 *The Apostles*

The apostles as eyewitnesses left us their own testimonies and paid with their for lives. Today we can read it in the New Testament.

1.1.2.2 *Polycarp (69-155n.C.)*

Polycarp himself was a pupil of the Apostle John. He was a Christian priest and Bishop in Smyrna (now Izmir in Turkey) during the first half of the second century. He received a visit and priesthood from Ignatius (of Antioch) shortly before the torture of Ignatius's in about 116 AD. Closer to the end of his life he represented the churches of Asia Minor in meetings with Pope Anicetus who was in power in Rome 155-166 AD. One of the topics of conversation was the date of Easter. Polycarp was tortured in Smyrna at the age of 86. According to Irenaeus, a student of Polycarp, Polycarp himself communicated with the apostle John. Polycarp was a disciple of the apostle John and familiar with the other disciples of Christ. His personal relationship with the disciples of Christ, his special gift to preach and sincere character gave a position of great authority among the Churches of Asia (40, relating to Polycarp).

1.1.2.3 Irenaeus (130-200 AD)

One of the early Christians Irenaeus who lived 130-200 AD, testified that the Gospels are true witnesses and can be traced back to Jesus through the teaching of the Apostles. Irenaeus's assignment "The Demonstration of the Apostolic Teachings", was discovered in 1904. He lived during the first generation period after Jesus and left us with his personal testimony. He told the Roman Florinus in a letter that, as a boy, he heeded the words of the elderly bishop and priest, Polycarp. Irenaeus is considered the first person who formulated the Christian doctrine. He did not necessarily do it to defend the Christian doctrine, but to try and direct the false Gnostic thinkers of his time on the right track. Irenaeus, noted that the Old Testament is a prophetic capturing of the coming of the Son of God, Jesus Christ (14, p1-6). It is sad that people like Dan Brown does not take the witness of a person such as Irenaeus to heart and through his gnostic heresy produces the "Da Vinci Code".

1.1.2.4 Tertullian (160-220 AD)

Tertullian was the first key Christian spiritual writer in Latin with a particularly aggressive, devotion and expert reasoning. He was the son of a Roman chief and studied law. He practiced in Rome about 190-195 AD, while he was still in Rome, he adopted the Christian faith and also visited Greece and Asia Minor. In 197 AD he returned to Carthage and became a priest.

In 207 AD he became the leader of the Montanists, a group that believed in prophecy and self punishment. They believed that Christians should welcome prosecution and therefore not flee from it. The latter brought him into battle with Church leaders of his time and they were declared heretics.

Tertullian was an ardent defender of Christianity and has written numerous theological documents of which 31 survived. In his works he sought to either defend Christianity, or uncover heresy, or to argue a practical point relating to the morality of Church discipline.

Tertullian was the first Latin writer who formulated Christian theological principles, such as the Trinity of God. Tertullian, who had no model to follow, started a terminology that originated from many sources, mainly Greek with a vocabulary of a lawyer's from Rome. His lawyer thinking gave the theological language of the West a legal character that was never extinguished.

The most famous work of Tertullian is Apologeticus (197 AD). It is in defense of Christians against attacks of immorality, economic inferiority and political oppression (40, regarding Tertullian).

Waldeck (15, p 73) refers to the wise Tertullian. A brilliant lawyer who claimed in his famous Adversus Praxeam that he, through the affirmation of the Trinity of God, identified two focus areas of the Devil's evil functions. The Devil thrust prophecy out and brought heresy. "The Devil drove the Holy Spirit away and crucified the Father "

To add, it is enlightening to realize that the Holy Spirit is the One who reveals God's Word to us. It is also the Holy Spirit that Jesus left for us to strengthen our faith. See Jesus' words in: Acts 1:8: *"But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."* Tertullian was very wise to have pointed out, about 200 AD, that the Devil would try and bring a drift between man and the Holy Spirit. Even today we can see how the sects deny the Holy Spirit or even claim that another person followed Jesus as Prophet (ie Muhammad) and, according to them, this is what Jesus referred to as testified in Acts 1:8. Apart from the fact that Jesus clearly identified His Name with the Holy Spirit and thousands of people have already witnessed the working of the Holy Spirit in their lives, the Holy Spirit has also visibly been poured on people at more than one occasion. See for example Acts 2:2-4: *"²And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. ⁴And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."*

Tertullian was right when he referred to the Devil who would want the Father to be crucified. We constantly see the heresy of other gods and even antagonists who doesn't believe in any god. The unity in the Bible shows us clearly that there is only one God and that He clearly revealed Himself to us, still have a close connection with His children to this day, and also for the salvation of His children is and will be forever. Satan hence wants us to believe that there are many gods (or even none) and wants to remove our personal relationship with God the Father who shown Himself to us through His Son Jesus Christ.

1.2 Jesus Christ is the Image of the Being of God

Hebrews 1:3: *"who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,"*

Colossians 1:15-20: *"¹⁵He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. ¹⁶For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. ¹⁷And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. ¹⁸And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence. ¹⁹For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, ²⁰and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross."*

John Blanchard (7, p 188) points out that no one had such an impact on human history as Jesus of Nazareth. Not one of the 60 billion who had lived. Yet He was a Person who never traveled more than 200 miles from his home nor wrote a book.

Paul wrote in his letter to the Ephesians to people who saw the miracles of Jesus: Ephesians 4:20-21: *"²⁰But you have not so learned Christ, ²¹if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus:"*

Matthew 11:2-6: *"²And when John had heard in prison about the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples ³and said to Him, "Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?" ⁴Jesus answered and said to them, "Go and tell John the things which you hear and see: ⁵The blind see and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them. ⁶And blessed is he who is not offended because of Me."*

1.3 Prophecies about the Messiah

Prophecies in the Old Testament prophesy in detail with reference to the Messiah, Jesus Christ. To tell the truth, not just a few, but more than 300 (three hundred) prophecies were made by various prophets from different periods that accurately, some more than a thousand years before the time, foretold the Messiah. This refers to details such as place of birth, year of events, Name of the Messiah, manner of birth, His specific actions, how He would avoid how people would behave towards Him, the purpose of His ministry on earth, when and how He would be killed, that He would rise from the dead, that He would ascend to heaven and that He will return to earth. The latter is the only prophecy not yet fulfilled. We have the choice to decide whether we want to accept it or not.

Strobel points out the following prophecies: Isaiah states the birth of the Messiah from a virgin, Micah points out the place of birth (Bethlehem), Genesis and Jeremiah confirmed the Messiah's ancestors (A descendant of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, of the tribe of Judah and the house of David), The Psalms contains His prosecution, His indictment from false testimonies, the way He was killed (pierced in the hands and feet, although crucifixion at that stage not yet devised), and predicted His resurrection from the dead (30, p179).

Christ came to earth to confirm the Truth of God through making the promises the forefathers received reality. See Romans 15:7-9: *"⁷Therefore receive one another, just as Christ also received us, to the glory of God. ⁸Now I say that Jesus Christ has become a servant to the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made to the fathers, ⁹and that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy, as it is written: "FOR THIS REASON I WILL CONFESS TO YOU AMONG THE GENTILES, AND SING TO YOUR NAME."* The latter text reference comes from David who wrote these words about 1000 years before Christ, see Psalm 18:50.

Agnosticism is a big problem: Hebrews 3:12-19: *"¹²Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; ¹³but exhort one another daily, while it is called "TODAY," lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. ¹⁴For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end, ¹⁵while it is said: "TODAY, IF YOU WILL HEAR HIS VOICE, DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS AS IN THE REBELLION." ¹⁶For who, having heard, rebelled? Indeed, was it not all who came out of Egypt, led by Moses? ¹⁷Now with whom was He angry forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose corpses fell in the wilderness? ¹⁸And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who did not obey? ¹⁹So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief."*

God created us in unique manner that, out of free will, we can have a relationship of love with Him. We don't have built-in instinct to survive, like animals. A baby's chance of survival is zero and can not be compared to that of a small animal. Yet it is seen that the adult has the mental

capacity to rule over the animals. If we were not created that way by God, we would have moved around like a bunch of robots with no ability to have a true love relationship with our Creator.

A Love Relationship , arises from the consent of two beings. If we do not understand the latter, we will continue to grapple with questions like Why does God allow suffering? God can't be manipulated, although He steps in, but it is by grace in order to strengthen the true seeker's faith. God revealed Himself enough to man through having an open relationship with His people, identifying Himself as God ("I Am"), having His Revelation and salvation through prophecies in the Old Testament authenticated through documenting it, what was prophesied came true and His Being revealed to us in the Person of Jesus Christ, The ministry and rescue message of Jesus Christ as God and Saviour documented by authentic apostles who, in the midst of thousands of fellow witnesses, wrote down the events, Established His Church on earth to convey the message and gave man the Holy Spirit which thousands of people to this day testifies about as well as radical changes, through by the Holy Spirit, in their lives when they accept Jesus Christ as their Savior. In 1 Thessalonians 5 19-22 the apostle Paul testified as follows: ¹⁹*Do not quench the Spirit.* ²⁰*Do not despise prophecies.* ²¹*Test all things; hold fast what is good.* ²²*Abstain from every form of evil.*"

As already mentioned, there are over three hundred prophecies in the Old Testament predicting the Messiah. Here are just a few examples

Prophecies in the Old Testament	Jesus is the Truth
<p>Micah 5:2-3: ²"But you, <u>Bethlehem</u> Ephrathah, Though you are little among the thousands of Judah, Yet out of you shall come forth to Me The One to be Ruler in Israel, Whose goings forth are from of old, From everlasting." ³Therefore He shall give them up, Until the time that she who is in labor has given birth; Then the remnant of His brethren Shall return to the children of Israel."</p>	<p>Fulfilled about 730 years later, see Matthew 2:1-2: ¹"Now after Jesus was born in <u>Bethlehem</u> of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, ²saying, "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him.""</p>
<p>The Messiah is born of the seed of David. Jesse was David's father. Prophecy about 750 years before Christ in Isaiah 11:10: "And in that day there shall be a Root of Jesse, Who shall stand as a banner to the people; For the Gentiles shall seek Him, And His resting place shall be glorious."</p>	<p>In Romans 15:12 Paul confirms: "And again, Isaiah says: "THERE SHALL BE A ROOT OF JESSE; AND HE WHO SHALL RISE TO REIGN OVER THE GENTILES, IN HIM THE GENTILES SHALL HOPE.""</p> <p>Not only does many prophecies from the Old Testament indicate that the Messiah would be born of the seed of David, but we also see it confirmed in the New Testament from both paternal and maternal: Matthew 1:1-17: paternal Luke 3:23-38: maternal. John MacArthur (33, p1518) points out that Luke used the Jewish mindset to document Mary's genealogy by repeatedly referring to the male figure. Joseph, for example, is listed as the son of Heli but the latter had no children of his own, in other words, it referred to his the son-in-law.) Both genealogies indicates that Joseph was not the genetic father of Jesus, but the legal (earthly) father. Matthew 1:16 "And Jacob begot <u>Joseph the husband of Mary</u>, of whom was born Jesus who is called Christ." and Luke 3:23 "Now Jesus Himself began His ministry at about thirty years of age, being (<u>as was supposed</u>) the son of Joseph....."</p>
<p>Isaiah 7:13-14: ¹³Then he said, "Hear now, O house of David! Is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will you weary my God also? ¹⁴Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel." (Written about 750 BC)</p>	<p>Remember, the Name Immanuel means "God with us." About 700 years after this prophecy is pronounced the Apostle John witnessed as follows: John 1:1: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." John 1:14: "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." In John 14:21 Jesus says : "He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him."</p>
<p>Isaiah 35:5-6: ⁵Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, And the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. ⁶Then the lame shall leap like a deer, And the tongue of the dumb sing. For waters shall burst forth in the wilderness, And streams in the desert." (Written about 750 BC)</p>	<p>Jesus did many miracles, the largest is the fact that He rose from the dead. His miracles were also done in the presence of many eyewitnesses, hence not in isolation. In other words, if the authors of the Gospels in the New Testament lied, there would have been many people who would have said that it is not true. However, this is not the case! Paul testified in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8: ³For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, ⁵and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. ⁶After that He was seen by <u>over five hundred brethren</u> at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep. ⁷After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles. ⁸Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time."</p> <p>Jesus also healed the blind, deaf and lame in order for the Son of God to be glorified. In other words, so that we may know His name and know that He is the Messiah as foretold by the Old Testament.</p>

Prophecies in the Old Testament	Jesus is the Truth
	<p>John 9:3-7: ³Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him. ⁴I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; the night is coming when no one can work. ⁵As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." ⁶When He had said these things, He spat on the ground and made clay with the saliva; and He anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay. ⁷And He said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which is translated, Sent). So he went and washed, and came back seeing."</p> <p>It is also great to see that Jesus fulfilled the prophecies perfectly, according to the Scriptures. In other words, it happened in context to Scripture, it was not just a single, or isolated, incident. Isaiah predicted that streams of water will erupt - during the Feast of Tabernacles Jesus called out John 7:37-38: ³⁷.... "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. ³⁸He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." During the Feast of Tabernacles they scooped water from the pool of Siloam (the one who was sent - Jesus) and poured it over the altar. Read John 5 to see how Jesus healed a paralytic.</p>
<p>Zechariah 9:9: "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, Lowly and riding on a donkey, A colt, the foal of a donkey." (Written about 450 years before Christ). ("He" is written with a capital letter by the compiler because there is no doubt, to me, that he spoke of the Messiah.)</p>	<p>Jesus rides into Jerusalem on the back of a donkey: Luke 19:33-37: ³³But as they were loosing the colt, the owners of it said to them, "Why are you loosing the colt?" ³⁴And they said, "The Lord has need of him." ³⁵Then they brought him to Jesus. And they threw their own clothes on the colt, and they set Jesus on him. ³⁶And as He went, many spread their clothes on the road. ³⁷Then, as He was now drawing near the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works they had seen." Note that Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey the same time (about Nisan 9) the pilgrims gathered in Jerusalem to celebrate Passover. They had to get a lamb without blemish and show it to the priest at the Temple to be approved. Then they had to feed the lamb until Nisan 14 when the lamb was slain by late afternoon. Jesus arrived in Jerusalem, along with the pilgrims as the perfect Lamb without blemish. He was captured and taken to Herod and Pilate who both declared Him without blemish. Then Jesus was crucified on Nisan 14 and He died on the cross by late afternoon.</p>
<p>Written more than 1,200 years before Christ: Numbers 28:7-9: ⁷And its drink offering shall be one-fourth of a hin for each lamb; in a holy place you shall pour out the drink to the LORD as an offering. ⁸The other lamb you shall offer in the evening; as the morning grain offering and its drink offering, you shall offer it as an offering made by fire, a sweet aroma to the LORD. ⁹And on the Sabbath day two lambs in their first year, without blemish, and two-tenths of an ephah of fine flour as a grain offering, mixed with oil, with its drink offering."</p>	<p>The perfect Lamb, Jesus Christ, were slain for our sins as commemorated as early as more than 1200 years before Christ. As God provided a lamb in place of Isaac (Genesis 22) when Abraham had to sacrifice him, the Lord provided Jesus Christ His only Son, the Lamb without blemish, as reconciliation of our sins. Besides the lamb without blemish offered during the offerings, flour was also mixed with oil. Mixed flour and oil, and given as fire sacrifice, is nothing other than bread.</p> <p>Luke 22:14-20: ¹⁴When the hour had come, He sat down, and the twelve apostles with Him. ¹⁵Then He said to them, "With fervent desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; ¹⁶for I say to you, I will no longer eat of it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God." ¹⁷Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, "Take this and</p>

Prophecies in the Old Testament	Jesus is the Truth
	<p>divide it among yourselves; ¹⁸for I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes." ¹⁹And He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me." ²⁰Likewise He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you." Remember that the word Bethlehem, the town where Jesus was born, means "Place of bread."</p>
<p>Zechariah 11:12-13: ¹²"Then I said to them, "If it is agreeable to you, give me my wages; and if not, refrain." So they weighed out for my wages thirty pieces of silver. ¹³And the LORD said to me, "Throw it to the potter"--that princely price they set on me. So I took the thirty pieces of silver and threw them into the house of the LORD for the potter." (Written about 450 years before Christ)</p>	<p>Jesus is betrayed by Judas Iscariot for thirty pieces of silver. See how this prophecy is fulfilled about 450 years later: Matthew 26:14-16: ¹⁴"Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests ¹⁵and said, "What are you willing to give me if I deliver Him to you?" And they counted out to him thirty pieces of silver. ¹⁶So from that time he sought opportunity to betray Him."</p> <p>Not only is the thirty silver coins accurately predicted by Zechariah, but even the fact that the coins were thrown into the Temple, and that the money later ended up with the potter! Matthew 27:3-7: ³Then Judas, His betrayer, seeing that He had been condemned, was remorseful and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, ⁴saying, "I have sinned by betraying innocent blood." And they said, "What is that to us? You see to it!" ⁵Then he threw down the pieces of silver in the temple and departed, and went and hanged himself. ⁶But the chief priests took the silver pieces and said, "It is not lawful to put them into the treasury, because they are the price of blood." ⁷And they consulted together and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in."</p>
<p>Daniel 9:24-26: ²⁴"Seventy weeks are determined For your people and for your holy city, To finish the transgression, To make an end of sins, To make reconciliation for iniquity, To bring in everlasting righteousness, To seal up vision and prophecy, And to anoint the Most Holy. ²⁵"Know therefore and understand, That from the going forth of the command To restore and build Jerusalem Until Messiah the Prince, There shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; The street shall be built again, and the wall, Even in troublesome times. ²⁶"And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself; And the people of the prince who is to come Shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it shall be with a flood, And till the end of the war desolations are determined."</p>	<p>This prophecy from Daniel about 600 years before Christ. We read in Ezra 6 King Darius ordered the rebuilding of the Temple should continue. These events took place 450 years before Christ. The prophecy says that the Temple and Jerusalem will be built for 7 X 62 periods after which an innocent Ruler will be killed. 7 X 62 = 483 483-450 = 33 Jesus Christ was crucified in 33 AD! The city of Jerusalem and the Temple was also destroyed during 70 AD.</p>
<p>Isaiah 53:1-12: ¹"Who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? ²For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, And as a root out of dry ground. He has no form or comeliness; And when we see Him, There is no beauty that we should desire Him. ³He is despised and rejected by men, A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. ⁴Surely He has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted. ⁵But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him,</p>	<p>Approximately 700 years after the prophecy Christ was crucified. He did not protest when he was abused. Mark 14:60-64: ⁶⁰And the high priest stood up in the midst and asked Jesus, saying, "Do You answer nothing? What is it these men testify against You?" ⁶¹But He kept silent and answered nothing. Again the high priest asked Him, saying to Him, "Are You the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?" ⁶²Jesus said, "I am. And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven." ⁶³Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, "What further need do we have of witnesses? ⁶⁴You have heard the blasphemy! What do you think?" And they all condemned Him to be deserving of</p>

Prophecies in the Old Testament	Jesus is the Truth
<p><i>And by His stripes we are healed. ⁶All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. ⁷He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, And as a sheep before its shearers is silent, So He opened not His mouth. ⁸He was taken from prison and from judgment, And who will declare His generation? For He was cut off from the land of the living; For the transgressions of My people He was stricken. ⁹And they made His grave with the wicked— But with the rich at His death, Because He had done no violence, Nor was any deceit in His mouth. ¹⁰Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief. When You make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, And the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand. ¹¹He shall see the labor of His soul, and be satisfied. By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many, For He shall bear their iniquities. ¹²Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the great, And He shall divide the spoil with the strong, Because He poured out His soul unto death, And He was numbered with the transgressors, And He bore the sin of many, And made intercession for the transgressors.”</i></p> <p>About 1000 years before Christ, David writes as follows Psalms 22 2 " O My God, I cry in the daytime, but You do not hear; And in the night season, and am not silent.”</p> <p>Psalms 22:19: “They divide My garments among them, And for My clothing they cast lots.”</p> <p>Read the entire Psalms 22</p>	<p>death.”</p> <p>The Prophecy by Caiaphas about Jesus: John 11:49-51: ⁴⁹And one of them, Caiaphas, being high priest that year, said to them, "You know nothing at all, ⁵⁰nor do you consider that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and not that the whole nation should perish." ⁵¹Now this he did not say on his own authority; but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation,“</p> <p>Matthew confirmed that he testify about Jesus: Matthew 8:17: “that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying: “HE HIMSELF TOOK OUR INFIRMITIES AND BORE OUR SICKNESSES.”</p> <p>Even the place where Jesus was crucified, was confirmed by the customs of the old covenant and predicted. See Hebrew 13:11-12 : ¹¹For the bodies of those animals, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned outside the camp. ¹²Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate. “</p> <p>Look at the words of Jesus when He was on the cross: Mark 15:33-34: ³³Now when the sixth hour had come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. ³⁴And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?" which is translated, "MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN ME?"”</p> <p>See what Jesus saw happening from the cross. These words were written by the Apostle John who stayed by Jesus at the cross, with Mary. So, he testified what he saw: John 19:23-24: ²³Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took His garments and made four parts, to each soldier a part, and also the tunic. Now the tunic was without seam, woven from the top in one piece. ²⁴They said therefore among themselves, "Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be," that the Scripture might be fulfilled which says: “THEY DIVIDED MY GARMENTS AMONG THEM, AND FOR MY CLOTHING THEY CAST LOTS.” Therefore the soldiers did these things.”</p>
<p>Passover was introduced about 1250 before Christ. The command of the Lord to Moses and Aaron concerning the lamb / Passover, was as follows: Exodus: 12:46: “In one house it shall be eaten; you shall not carry any of the flesh outside the house, nor shall you break one of its bones.”</p> <p>(Also see Numeri 9:12)</p>	<p>John 19:32-37: ³² Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who was crucified with Him. ³³But when they came to Jesus and saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs. ³⁴But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out. ³⁵And he who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you may believe. ³⁶For these things were done that the Scripture should be fulfilled, “NOT ONE OF HIS BONES SHALL BE BROKEN.” ³⁷And again another Scripture says, “THEY SHALL LOOK ON HIM WHOM THEY PIERCED.””</p>
<p>Hosea 6:2 (722 BC): “After two days He will revive us; On the third day He will raise us up, That we may live in His sight.”</p>	<p>More than 700 years later, Jesus Himself prophesied that what the prophets wrote about him will be fulfilled Luke 18:31-33: ³¹Then He took the twelve aside and said to them, "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets</p>

Prophecies in the Old Testament	Jesus is the Truth
	<p>concerning the Son of Man will be accomplished. ³²For He will be delivered to the Gentiles and will be mocked and insulted and spit upon. ³³They will scourge Him and kill Him. And the third day He will rise again.”</p> <p>Read the piece on the "Feast of First Fruits" in Chapter 5 to see that Jesus rose from the dead precisely during this festival, three days after He was crucified. See for example, the Tabernacle of God (Chapter 6) that the bronze bowl was there in which Aaron and his sons had to wash themselves. This is reference to the blood of Christ cleansing us from our sins already hundreds of years before Jesus was on earth. Exodus 30 17-21</p>
<p>About 760 years before Christ Amos prophesied that the Only Son will die and there will be darkness when He dies. Amos 8 9-10: ⁹And it shall come to pass in that day," says the Lord GOD, "That I will make the sun go down at noon, And I will darken the earth in broad daylight; ¹⁰I will turn your feasts into mourning, And all your songs into lamentation; I will bring sackcloth on every waist, And baldness on every head; I will make it like mourning for an only son, And its end like a bitter day.</p>	<p>Jesus was God's only Son on earth and during His suffering on the cross darkness came over the earth for three hours.: Mark 15:33-34: ³³Now when the sixth hour had come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. ³⁴And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?" which is translated, "MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN ME?"</p> <p>Even today we can read how secular writers speculate on what caused this darkness. A good example is Thallus as explained in the previous paragraphs.</p>
Profesieë in die Old Testament	Jesus is die Waarheid
<p>Joel 2:28-29: ²⁸And it shall come to pass afterward That I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your old men shall dream dreams, Your young men shall see visions. ²⁹And also on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days.”</p>	<p>Peter testified in 2 Peter 1:16-21: ¹⁶For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty. ¹⁷For He received from God the Father honor and glory when such a voice came to Him from the Excellent Glory: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." ¹⁸And we heard this voice which came from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain. ¹⁹And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; ²⁰knowing this first, <u>that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation,</u> ²¹for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.”</p> <p>If you read further in Joel 2, it can be seen that the Lord also refers to the end times. We can glorify God by recognizing that His Spirit is still actively involved with us today and reveal the truth to us in our quest thereof. His Spirit will let us act as victors at the end of the world!</p>

1.4 More on the Prophecies

When we consider all the prophecies in the Old Testament and find no reason to doubt that Jesus was indeed the Messiah, we understand why the following important order was given in Deuteronomy

Deuteronomy 4:9-10: ⁹*Only take heed to yourself, and diligently keep yourself, lest you forget the things your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life. And teach them to your children and your grandchildren,* ¹⁰*especially concerning the day you stood before the LORD your God in Horeb, when the LORD said to me, 'Gather the people to Me, and I will let them hear My words, that they may learn to fear Me all the days they live on the earth, and that they may teach their children.'*"

1.4.1 Did Jesus live His life in a manner as to fulfill the prophecies?

Some unbelieving skeptics claim that Jesus lived His life as to fulfill the prophecies. Here are a few examples of prophecies that were impossible for Jesus and His disciples to plan in advance and to imitate if they were false

- The thirty pieces of silver that the Sanhedrin offered Judas to betray Jesus. Zechariah 11:12: *"Then I said to them, "If it is agreeable to you, give me my wages; and if not, refrain." So they weighed out for my wages thirty pieces of silver."* (About 450 years before Christ)
- The birth in Bethlehem: Micah 5:1-2
- The point in time that he would be crucified: Daniel 9:22-26
- His bones not to be broken. It is impossible that the soldiers would kill Jesus knowing that it is part of a lie and not to break His bones
- Who would let the natural phenomena, such as darkness, (Amos 8 9-10), actually happened if only people were involved?

There are many other parallels and prototypes in the Bible that prophesy the Messiah. Examples, discussed in other chapters are as follows

- The Tabernacle pointing to Jesus.
- The Name of the Lord
- The Old and New Covenant
- The covenant name: Israel
- The trust in God's promises: Isaiah 8:17: *"And I will wait on the LORD, Who hides His face from the house of Jacob; And I will hope in Him.* (24, p965)
- The priestly order of Melchizedek
- Prototypes like Moses and Joshua
- The Messianic reality, and prophetic reality, in the feasts of the Lord
- The Temple Service
- The Unity in the Bible (see Bible Studies: www.matthew28.co.za)
- The descendants of David

See more prophecies about Christ: Genesis 3:15; Psalms 2:7-9, 16:9-11, 22: 14-25, 30:2-9, 40: 1-3, 110:1, 118: 21-24; Hosea 5:15 – 6:3; Zechariah 12: 10 and after three days, the fish spit him out (12, p18)

1.5 Did Jesus show attributes of God?

1.5.1 In Being God

What could motivate a man, without resistance, to surrender himself to extreme humiliation and torture? An ordinary man could definitely not do it. Jesus knew what was waiting for Him, and He realized that it was the only way to save us. His purpose on earth was to pay as a substitute (according to the prophecies that we may believe) with His life as we deserve death as a result of our rebellion against God. Jesus' actions were a reflection of Divine love.

Strobel points out that God's qualities can be found in various places in the Old Testament. For example, it describes that God is omnipresent, has knowledge about everything, know everything of which can be known through to eternity, has power over all things, Over time and over the source of all time, not variable in His attributes. He also says that God is a God of love, He is holy, sincere, wise and just. Strobel consults with Dr. Donald Carson to discover whether Jesus had these divine qualities. The following was confirmed during discussions (30, p156-170)

- Jesus rose from the dead

- Jesus forgave people's sins. It is acceptable to us if a person forgives another person for injustice that is done, but if a third person comes and says that he has forgiven that person, it is a different matter. The only Person who can forgive sins is God Himself. Sin, even if it is against another person is a violation of God's will.
- Jesus did not just forgive people's sins, but He Himself was without sin.
- In the discussion of Divine attributes such as omnipresence refer to Philippians 2:5-8: *"⁵Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, ⁶who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, ⁷but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. ⁸And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross."* Jesus as God had to empty Himself of His divine attributes in order to take the form of man. In obedience He performed Godly deeds when he received instructions from the Father to do it. In Matthew 28:20 Jesus says : *"...and look, I am with you always, even to the end of the age..."* and in Matthew 18:20 Jesus says: *"For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them."*
- All knowing: John 16:30 confirmed the Apostle John 16:29-30: *"²⁹His disciples said to Him, "See, now You are speaking plainly, and using no figure of speech! ³⁰Now we are sure that You know all things, and have no need that anyone should question You. By this we believe that You came forth from God."*
- Power over everything: Jesus confirmed in Matthew 28:18: *"And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth."*
- Eternity: John declares Jesus in John 1:1-2: *"¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God."*
- Immutability: Paul confirmed in Hebrew 13:8: *"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever."*

Strobel continues by pointing out that in the Old Testament God is consistently described as Alpha and Omega, Lord, Savior, King, Judge, Light, Rock, Redeemer, Shepherd, the Creator, the giver of life, the forgiver of sin and speaker with divine authority.

It is important to note that each is applied to Jesus in the New Testament. Jesus confirmed this in John 14:7-9: *"⁷If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; and from now on you know Him and have seen Him." ⁸Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us." ⁹Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"*

See Hebrews 1:1-2: *"¹God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, ²has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds;"*

1.5.2 Evil spirits' response

The evil spirit who recognized Jesus at Capernaum and *"You are—the Holy One of God!"*. It shows how truly Jesus was and is for us today. Mark 1:23-24

Even impure spirits recognized Jesus and declares that He is the Son of God.

Mark 3:11: *"And the unclean spirits, whenever they saw Him, fell down before Him and cried out, saying, "You are the Son of God.""*

Impure spirit recognizes Jesus Mark 5:6-9: *"⁶When he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and worshiped Him. ⁷And he cried out with a loud voice and said, "What have I to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I implore You by God that You do not torment me." ⁸For He said to him, "Come out of the man, unclean spirit!" ⁹Then He asked him, "What is your name?" And he answered, saying, "My name is Legion; for we are many.""*

The mad at the graves. The spirits are "legion" went in the swine. Notice that Jesus said that He did it because he pitied the man!

Demons recognize Jesus as the Son of God.

Luke 4:33-34: *"³³Now in the synagogue there was a man who had a spirit of an unclean demon. And he cried out with a loud voice, ³⁴saying, "Let us alone! What have we to do with You, Jesus of Nazareth? Did You come to destroy us? I know who You are--the Holy One of God!"*

Luke 4:40-41: *"⁴⁰When the sun was setting, all those who had any that were sick with various diseases brought them to Him; and He laid His hands on every one of them and healed them. ⁴¹And demons also came out of many, crying out and saying, "You are the Christ, the Son of God!" And He, rebuking them, did not allow them to speak, for they knew that He was the Christ."*

1.5.3 Jesus' actions

What kind of person thinks that he has the authority to take God inspired Jewish writings and subject it to His own teaching? (30, p135)

Note the impact of Jesus' works in Mark 6:14-16: ¹⁴*Now King Herod heard of Him, for His name had become well known. And he said, "John the Baptist is risen from the dead, and therefore these powers are at work in him."* ¹⁵*Others said, "It is Elijah."* *And others said, "It is the Prophet, or like one of the prophets."* ¹⁶*But when Herod heard, he said, "This is John, whom I beheaded; he has been raised from the dead!"*

Only God can forgive sins. Jesus says to the paralytic man in Mark 2:5: *"When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven you."* (22, p344)

God gave the Ten Commandments to Moses, but Jesus says as follows in John 13:34: *"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another."*

Note Jesus' active step He took to prove His divinity through Lazarus' resurrection from the dead. All these miracles were done in the midst of many eyewitnesses. John 11:11: *"These things He said, and after that He said to them, "Our friend Lazarus sleeps, but I go that I may wake him up."*

Note Jesus' love for the people. He had barely heard of John the Baptist's unjust death, then tried to be alone, but is followed by many people and He still cared for them with the multiplication of the loaves. Matthew 14:13-21

Jesus' words show that He is the Son of God *"...How long shall I bear with you?..."* Mark 9:19

Jesus' love for us is remarkable as He said after His crucifixion to Mary Magdalene that He ascended to His Father, our Father, and to His God is our God. Only the true Saviour can reveal such love :

John 20:17: *"Jesus said to her, "Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, 'I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God.'"*

1.5.4 People's reaction

You know your family very well. You will know if your brother is busy with a charade. James, Jesus' own earthly brother believed in Jesus! James became the father of the Church. It's great to hear Jesus' earthly brother (half-brother), James, saying that he is a servant of God and the Lord Jesus Christ. He was the half brother of Jesus himself, and would thus know if there is falseness in Jesus!

James 1:1: *"James, a bondservant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad: Greetings."*

Note, Paul, to whom the Lord Himself appeared in a bright light, testifies that Jesus is Lord. Philippians 2:9-11: ⁹*Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, ¹⁰that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, ¹¹and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."*

This same Paul wrote from prison, *"and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."* Phillipians 4:7. A man who writes these words from prison, speaks from personal experience.

According to Ravi Zacharias (16, p48) Mary did not only jeopardise her own life but also that of Jesus claiming the virgin birth of Jesus. If she sought apology for an improper event, she would have claimed something that could be proven or at least logical in human context.

Ravi Zacharias (16, p16) points out that Jesus' life is the most studied on earth. He continues by saying that it is enlightening that even sceptics acknowledge His unparalleled life and influence. Zacharias was born in India and grew up in the Eastern world. He is today the president of Ravi Zacharias International Ministries who addressed people in more than 50 countries and lectured at several of the world's most famous universities . (www.rzim.org).

Jesus' deeds were indeed true and real. The people saw and realized it. Notice how the people gathered at home in Capernaum so that the paralytic had to be lowered through the roof : Mark 2:4-5: ⁴*And when they could not come near Him because of the crowd, they uncovered the roof where He was. So when they had broken through, they let down the bed on which the paralytic was lying. ⁵When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven you."*

Ravi Zacharias (16, p48-49) indicates that John the Baptist's parents, the priest Zechariah and his wife Elizabeth, lost their own child through Herod's sword. Yet they did not oppose Jesus.

When Jesus asked His disciples who He is: Matthew 16:15-17: ¹⁵*He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" ¹⁶Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."*

¹⁷Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven." Note that Jesus confirmed Peter's point of view.

Thomas' words to Jesus John 20:28: "And Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!""

Mary's, Jesus 'earthly mother, perfect trust in Jesus when she says to the servants at the wedding in Cana, "...Whatever He says to you, do it.", John 2:5. What gave her the perfect confidence? This is a clear act of established reality

Jesus' divine wisdom John 7:14-15: "¹⁴Now about the middle of the feast Jesus went up into the temple and taught. ¹⁵And the Jews marveled, saying, "How does this Man know letters, having never studied?""

Strobel talks with Dr. Ben Witherington and ask the question: Why there is no other first-century Jew who has millions of followers today? Why is there not a John the Baptist movement? Why, of all first-century people, including the Roman Empire, Jesus is still worshiped today while others disappeared in dust of history? It is because this Jesus, the historical Jesus, is the living God. This is because He is still present while others have long since disappeared (30, p141).

Simon Peter who act accordingly when he realized he was in the presence of God. In John 21 it is told, where Jesus appears to His disciples after His resurrection from the dead, where the disciples were fishing. John 21:7: "Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his outer garment (for he had removed it), and plunged into the sea."

The church historian Jaroslav Pelikan points out that the oldest Christian creed, the oldest record of a Christian martyr, the oldest worldly report of the church and the oldest liturgical prayer all refer to Jesus as Lord and God.

1 Corinthians 16:22-23: "²²If anyone does not love the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed. O Lord, come! ²³The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you."

Pelikan continues by saying that it is clear to point out that the church believed and preached that "God" is an appropriate name for Jesus Christ (30, p139).

The earliest Christian creed, 1 Corinthians 15:3-8, where Paul confirmed that he had seen the risen Jesus and of all the other witnesses who had seen the risen Jesus dating back from the period of the eyewitnesses them self. This refers to first-hand witnesses. Paul also continues in 1 Corinthians 15:11 to confirm that he and the other apostles agree on their testimonies. There was unity among the witnesses themselves about what they witnessed. "Therefore, whether it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed.." (30, p230-231)

It is also important to keep in mind that this Paul was originally Saul, a Pharisee, who persecuted and even killed Christians. Why such a man would turn in his ways and not only waive his motives but he even joined the Christians? By his own pen testifies that he had seen the risen Lord and heard Christ appointing him to be one of His followers. In 2 Corinthians Paul confirms in his letter to the church in Corinth that he performed miracles in the Name of Jesus when he was with them. He would certainly not write this to eyewitnesses if it was not true: 2 Corinthians 12:12: "Truly the signs of an apostle were accomplished among you with all perseverance, in signs and wonders and mighty deeds." (30, p248-249).

In conversation with Dr. William Lane Craig, Strobel points out that the rich man, Joseph of Arimathea (see Matthew 27:57), who buried Jesus was also a member of the Sanhedrin. This is the Sanhedrin who condemned Jesus to be crucified. Joseph of Arimathea was a follower of Jesus. Someone who is under the impression that this historic event is only a comic strip, should keep the following in mind

- If people have devised a story they would definitely not choose a famous person who was part of the Sanhedrin to fill a role in the so-called story. They would rather have chosen any other name that no one could confirm. (30, p209-210). This section, like the rest of the Bible, points to real events and real testimonies with facts under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.
- The factual account of the honorable burial of Jesus is one of the most and best confirmed facts we have today of the historical Jesus (30, p210)

The Gospel tells us that Jesus 'Own family, including James, Jesus' own brother, did not believe in Jesus (at first). They saw Him as a humiliation and sometimes confronted Jesus about what He said who He is. See Matthew 12:47, Mark 3:31-34, Luke 8:19-21 and especially Jesus' own words in Nazareth: Matthew 13:57: "So they were offended at Him. But Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his own country and in his own house."" (Also see Mark 6:4 and Luke 4:16-30) In ancient Jewish time it was very humiliating if a Rabbi's family would not accept him. The

Gospel writers would surely not have included it if they were writing a story. What is also very informative, is the fact that James himself later became the leader of the church in Jerusalem and was also killed by stoning because of his faith in his brother, Jesus. The manner in which and why was James killed, is confirmed by a non-Christian and authentic, secular historian of that time, namely Josephus. The only explanation for James's conversion is that Jesus appeared to James after His crucifixion and Paul also confirms it in 1 Corinthians 15:4-8: *"⁴and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, ⁵and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. ⁶After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep. ⁷After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles. ⁸Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time."* (30, p248 Text references updated).

The Jewish community and people survived through all their tough times. By the time Jesus was on earth, they have been persecuted for 700 years already. First by the Babylonians, Assyrians, Persians and then by the Greeks and Romans. Many of the Jews were spread all over the earth, but we still see Jews today. It can not be said of the Hittites, Ammonites, Assiriane, Persians, Babylonians and other people who then lived. Why not? The things that make Jews Jews, their social structures that gave them a national identity, was very important to them. These practices are passed on to their children, the Jews, they celebrated in the synagogues every Sabbath and reinforce it with their uses. It's been so important to them because they believed that these institutions were given to them by God. They believed that if they would abandon these practices, they would risk their souls and will be condemned to hell after death. Jesus then appeared on the scene from a lower-class region, He taught for three years, as a result had followers of lower-and middle-class people, got in trouble with the authorities, was crucified like thirty thousand other Jewish men during that time. Five weeks after Jesus' crucifixion more than ten thousand Jews began to follow Him, and they claimed that Jesus is the origin of a new religion. What is important to realize is that they were prepared to abandon all five practices they embraced over the ages. This refers to:

- Abraham and Moses' sin offerings using animals
- The Law of Moses
- The Sabbath on Saturday
- Monotheism to Trinity
- The belief that the Messiah would be a political leader who would destroy Roman army

It is clear that something very big was happening. Why would they abandon these spiritually important practices that kept them as Jews together and which they kept over the years? This also caused many of them to be persecuted and even killed. It was not only one Jew, but in a very short period of time an entire community of Jews, at least ten thousand, were willing to give up their uses/practises.

The only explanation is that they saw Jesus rise from the dead. They saw miracles which they could not explain and it forced them to see things in a different light (30, p250-252). To add, it is also clear that what they had experienced was in line with what the Scriptures told them. The Old Testament is a Messianic prophecy, with more than 330 prophecies that have already come to fulfillment in relation to Jesus. Today Christians can excitingly look forward to the coming of the Creator, the Lamb of God.

In Numbers 6:25 God already made the promise through Moses *"The LORD make His face shine upon you, And be gracious to you."* He was already here to fulfill the Scriptures and will return to perfect it - He will come to dwell amongst us. The Apostle Simon Peter, in the midst of many other eyewitnesses and participants, confirmed the reason for the turnaround to Christianity as follows in: 2 Peter 1:16-20: *"¹⁶For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty. ¹⁷For He received from God the Father honor and glory when such a voice came to Him from the Excellent Glory: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." ¹⁸And we heard this voice which came from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain. ¹⁹And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; ²⁰knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation."*

The impact of Jesus' atoning death can be seen in the fact that the first followers of Jesus began to use Communion. They came together on a regular basis to celebrate a meal for just one reason: to remember that Jesus was crucified in public in a shocking and humiliating manner. Think about this in a modern frame of reference. If a group of people really loved John F. Kennedy, they could meet to commemorate his confrontation with Russia, promotion of civil rights and his charismatic personality. They would certainly not commemorate the fact that Lee Harvey Oswald killed him. However the latter corresponds with what the early Christians did. The explanation for this is that they realized that Jesus' death on the cross was needed for a much bigger victory. His murder was

not the last word - the last word was that He conquered death for all of us by rising from the dead. They have celebrated Jesus' death on the cross because they were convinced that they had seen Him alive after His crucifixion.

John 21:18-19 : ¹⁶*For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty.* ¹⁷*For He received from God the Father honor and glory when such a voice came to Him from the Excellent Glory: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."* ¹⁸*And we heard this voice which came from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain.* ¹⁹*And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts;* ²⁰*knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation"*

In 2 Peter 1:14-15 Peter himself testifies about his faith in Jesus' prophecy: ¹⁴*knowing that shortly I must put off my tent, just as our Lord Jesus Christ showed me.* ¹⁵*Moreover I will be careful to ensure that you always have a reminder of these things after my decease."*

1.5.5 The Messiah identified

Besides the fact that God sent Jesus on earth for us, and that there were four Gospel writers, or rather eyewitnesses, and that the Lord ensured that John the Baptist identified Jesus. John himself says so and it is further proof that Jesus was the Messiah. Jesus was not just one person who elevated Himself and created a lot of followers, but throughout the Bible He is preceded by people like John the Baptist. John 3:28: *"You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, 'I am not the Christ,' but, 'I have been sent before Him.'"*

Note the soldier who testified that Jesus is truly the Son of God. The soldier who was in command of the troops there and saw all events. He is a reliable and good witness for us about what happened! Mark 15:39: *"So when the centurion, who stood opposite Him, saw that He cried out like this and breathed His last, he said, "Truly this Man was the Son of God!""*

People already testified that Jesus is the Savior when Jesus was still a baby. The shepherd Simeon and Anna who served in the temple also testify about the Child.

Luke 2:25-38: ²⁵*And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon, and this man was just and devout, waiting for the Consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him.* ²⁶*And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ.* ²⁷*So he came by the Spirit into the temple. And when the parents brought in the Child Jesus, to do for Him according to the custom of the law,* ²⁸*he took Him up in his arms and blessed God and said:* ²⁹*"Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, According to Your word;* ³⁰*For my eyes have seen Your salvation* ³¹*Which You have prepared before the face of all peoples,* ³²*A light to bring revelation to the Gentiles, And the glory of Your people Israel."* ³³*And Joseph and His mother marveled at those things which were spoken of Him.* ³⁴*Then Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary His mother, "Behold, this Child is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign which will be spoken against* ³⁵*(yes, a sword will pierce through your own soul also), that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed."* ³⁶*Now there was one, Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, and had lived with a husband seven years from her virginity;* ³⁷*and this woman was a widow of about eighty-four years, who did not depart from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day.* ³⁸*And coming in that instant she gave thanks to the Lord, and spoke of Him to all those who looked for redemption in Jerusalem."*

No one told Simeon and Anna who the baby was!

Jesus' words may seem confusing in Matthew 16:28 where He says that some disciples shall see the Man Son of Man coming in His kingdom. However, it can be affirmed in several places. One is in the next verse Matthew 17:1-8 where Jesus is seen with Moses and Elijah, or the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, or the origin of the Christian church. (Bible in practice)

1.5.6 Jesus accepts worship

Jesus recommended prayer in His name as in John 14:13-14: ¹³*And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.* ¹⁴*If you ask anything in My name, I will do it."* Also see John 15:7: *"If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you."* (22, p344-345)

Despite the fact that both the Old Testament and the New Testament forbid worshipping anyone but God (Exodus 20:1-4; Deuteronomy 5:6-9; Acts 14:15; Revelation 22:8-9), Jesus accepted worship. See for example the following (22, p345):

- The leper (Matthew 8:2)
- The Jewish councilor who's daughter which Jesus raised from the dead (Matthew 9:18)
- The disciples after the storm (Matthew 14:32-33)

- The Canaanite woman (Matthew 15:25)
- The mother of James and John (Matthew 20:20)
- The impure spirit Gerasa (Mark 5:6)
- The healed blind man (John 9:38)
- All the disciples (Matthew 28:17)
- Thomas (John 20:28)

1.5.7 Jesus declared Himself who He is

The entire Bible refers to Jesus, see John 5:39: *"You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me."*

There should be a lot of reflection on the beginning of Jesus' ministry on earth. Particularly as described in John. How He told Nathanael that it was only the beginning in what was waiting for Him until He makes His full glory known to him. Ravi Zacharias (16, p44) shows that Jesus' home is heaven. This was also the case before the creation and before He came to earth. It is also due to the Eastern context in which He began serving people. The Oriental order instigated the importance for Nathanael to know Jesus' annals. *"Where is your home?"* In The East (still today) your origin is very important. Jesus's answer to Nathanael pointed out that He is the Everlasting God, who is not bound by time and space. See Jesus' answer to Nathanael: John 1:38-39: *"³⁸Then Jesus turned, and seeing them following, said to them, 'What do you seek?' They said to Him, 'Rabbi' (which is to say, when translated, Teacher), 'where are You staying?' ³⁹He said to them, 'Come and see.' They came and saw where He was staying, and remained with Him that day (now it was about the tenth hour)."* Today we can know that Jesus' home also is our home, everlasting.

Here are more examples from Scripture where Jesus clearly states that He is God:

- Peter himself not fully realize who Jesus is and how Jesus corrects him in Matthew 16:17
- Jesus emphasize to His disciples that He is God, the Supernatural God *"...⁶²What then if you should see the Son of Man ascend where He was before?..."* John 6:61-64.
- *Jesus testified that He is Eternal God "You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?"* John 8:58
- Jesus confirms that He is the way to eternal life. John 10:1-21
- Clearly it was Jesus' intention to prove that He was the Christ and that people must believe in Him. John 11:15 11:42
- Jesus Himself says He is who He is and He does some things to prove it, eg. the prediction that Judas would betray Him. John 13:19
- Jesus refers to Himself as the Messiah. Matthew 20:28
- Jesus said that no one comes to the Father except through Him. John 14:6
- Jesus' conversation with the Samaritan woman is very important. John 4:1-42
- John 14:1-30: *"¹Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. ²In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. ³And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. ⁴And where I go you know, and the way you know." ⁵Thomas said to Him, "Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?" ⁶Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. ⁷If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; and from now on you know Him and have seen Him." ⁸Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us." ⁹Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'? ¹⁰Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works. ¹¹Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves. ¹²Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father. ¹³And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴If you ask anything in My name, I will do it. ¹⁵If you love Me, keep My commandments. ¹⁶And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever -- ¹⁷the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. ¹⁸I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you. ¹⁹A little while longer and the world will see Me no more, but you will see Me. Because I live, you will live also. ²⁰At that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you. ²¹He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him." ²²Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, "Lord, how is it that You will manifest Yourself to us, and not to the world?" ²³Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. ²⁴He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father's who sent Me. ²⁵These things I have spoken to you while being present with you. ²⁶But*

the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you. ²⁷Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. ²⁸You have heard Me say to you, 'I am going away and coming back to you.' If you loved Me, you would rejoice because I said, 'I am going to the Father,' for My Father is greater than I. ²⁹"And now I have told you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe. ³⁰I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming, and he has nothing in Me. ³¹But that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave Me commandment, so I do. Arise, let us go from here."

- In John 8:58 Jesus declared His divinity: "Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM.""
- Jesus declared He is God: John 12:44-50: "⁴⁴Then Jesus cried out and said, "He who believes in Me, believes not in Me but in Him who sent Me. ⁴⁵And he who sees Me sees Him who sent Me. ⁴⁶I have come as a light into the world, that whoever believes in Me should not abide in darkness."
- John 16:14-15 where Jesus tells of the Holy Spirit: "¹⁴He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you. ¹⁵All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare it to you."
- Jesus is God. John 8:19: "Then they said to Him, "Where is Your Father?" Jesus answered, "You know neither Me nor My Father. If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also.""
- John 17:5 and 17:24 shows that Jesus was already there before the creation, Jesus' own words goes as follows (17 5) "And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was." and (17:24) "'Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world."
- Jesus declares He is Christ and is from God. John 7:28-29: "²⁸Then Jesus cried out, as He taught in the temple, saying, "You both know Me, and you know where I am from; and I have not come of Myself, but He who sent Me is true, whom you do not know. ²⁹But I know Him, for I am from Him, and He sent Me."
- Jesus speaks in John 10:29-30: "²⁹My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand. ³⁰I and My Father are one."
- Jesus declares His authority and makes a new commandment in Matthew 28:18-20: "¹⁸And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen." (22, p344)
- Jesus Himself speaks in John 6:38: "For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me."
- John 5:30: "I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me."
- Jesus explained to the hypocrites who He is. John 5:19-22: "¹⁹Then Jesus answered and said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner. ²⁰For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself does; and He will show Him greater works than these, that you may marvel. ²¹For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to them, even so the Son gives life to whom He will. ²²For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son."

It is important to note that not only did Jesus declare many things about Himself, but He also supported and proven it by performing loving miracles such as to heal the blind. Some onlookers could not distinguish between the supernatural and the natural and claimed that Jesus was crazy.

Eyewitnesses themselves said in John 10:20-21: "²⁰And many of them said, "He has a demon and is mad. Why do you listen to Him?" ²¹Others said, "These are not the words of one who has a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?"" Strobel, in discussion with Dr. Garry Collins, shows that Jesus not only claimed that He was God, He followed it up and supported it with miracles of healing, miraculous demonstrations of power and authority over nature, with excellent and unbiased doctrine, with divine insights into people, and ultimately His own resurrection from the dead that nobody else could ever duplicate. In other words, when Jesus declared that He is God, He was not crazy, it was the truth (30, p148).

In John 4:25-26 Jesus spoke with the Samaritan woman: "²⁵The woman said to Him, "I know that Messiah is coming" (who is called Christ). "When He comes, He will tell us all things." ²⁶Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am He." Also look at the impact of the woman's testimony to the other people in her village: John 4:39-42: "³⁹And many of the Samaritans of that city believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, "He told me all that I ever did." ⁴⁰So when the

Samaritans had come to Him, they urged Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days. ⁴¹And many more believed because of His own word. ⁴²Then they said to the woman, "Now we believe, not because of what you said, for we ourselves have heard Him and we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world.""

Jesus talking to Pilate just before His crucifixion, John 18:37-38: ³⁷Pilate therefore said to Him, "Are You a king then?" Jesus answered, "You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice." ³⁸Pilate said to Him, "What is truth?" And when he had said this, he went out again to the Jews, and said to them, "I find no fault in Him at all."

C.S. Lewis puts it in perspective as follows: "Among these Jews there suddenly turns up a man who goes about talking as if He was God. He claims to forgive sins. He says He has always existed. He says He is coming to judge the world at the end of time. Now let us get this clear. Among Pantheists, like the Indians, anyone might say that he was part of God, or one with God: there would be nothing very odd about it. But this man, since He was a Jew, could not mean that kind of God. God, in their language, meant the Being outside the world Who had made it and was infinitely different from anything else. And when you have grasped that, you will see that what this man said, quite simply, the most shocking thing that has ever been uttered by human lips." (C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, New York: Macmillan, 1952, p54-55)

C.S. Lewis says that people alleged foolish things about Jesus. For example, they will say that Jesus was a great moral preacher but not necessarily God. A man who was an ordinary man, and said the things Jesus said would not have been a great moral preacher, he would rather not be by his full senses, perhaps on the same level as a man who would claim that he is a fried egg - or otherwise the Devil of Hell. We must make the choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God or otherwise crazy or something even worse. You can silence Him a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come with mitigating nonsense by referring to Him as a great moral trainer of people. He did not reveal it to us. He did not mean it like that (22, p346).

Geisler and Turek (22, p346-347) argues that because Jesus claimed that He was God, there are only three possibilities either He was a *liar*, or *crazy*, or the *Lord*:

- *Liar does not fit all the facts.* Jesus lived and taught the highest level of ethics. It is also highly unlikely that He would give His life if He knew that He did not speak the truth.
- *Crazy does not fit.* Jesus had the most outstanding teachings ever noted. Everyone, including His enemies, claimed that Jesus was a man of integrity who taught the truth (Mark 12:14).
- *This leaves us with God.* Peter Lobster writes in his book "Why I Believe Jesus Is The Son of God" The argument is very clear: "There are only two possible interpretations: Jesus is God, or Jesus is not god. The argument in its simplest form looks like this: Jesus was either (1) God, if his claim about himself was true, or (2) a bad man, if what he said was not true, for good men do not claim to be God. But he was not a bad man. (If anyone in history was not a bad man, Jesus was not a bad man.) Therefore, he was (and is) God." (22, p347)

1.5.8 Jesus' own prophecies

Jesus' prophecy about His crucifixion: John 3:14-15: ¹⁴And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life."

Jesus' reference to Himself: John 12:23-24: ²³But Jesus answered them, saying, "The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified. ²⁴Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain."

The proof of God's plan with the four Gospels where Jesus speaks of the narrative of the Gospel when the woman poured oil on Him. Jesus said that wherever the Gospel is told in the world, it will also be told of what she did.

Matthew 26:12-13: ¹²For in pouring this fragrant oil on My body, she did it for My burial. ¹³Assuredly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her."

Jesus Himself predicted His own death and resurrection a few times. Matthew Matthew 20:17-19 for the third time.

Matthew 20:17-19: ¹⁷Now Jesus, going up to Jerusalem, took the twelve disciples aside on the road and said to them, ¹⁸"Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and to the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death, ¹⁹and deliver Him to the Gentiles to mock and to scourge and to crucify. And the third day He will rise again."

Jesus predicted the outpouring of the Holy Spirit (Pentecost). Acts 1:4-5: ⁴And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise

of the Father, "which," He said, "you have heard from Me; ⁵for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."

As were the use each year for 1300 before Christ, the disciples celebrated the Feast of Weeks (Pentecost) on the fiftieth day after the Feast of First Fruits. Acts 2:1-4: "¹When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. ²And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. ⁴And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."

Jesus' words clearly show that He knew what lied ahead for Him in John 12:27-28: "²⁷Now My soul is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save Me from this hour'? But for this purpose I came to this hour. ²⁸Father, glorify Your name." Then a voice came from heaven, saying, "I have both glorified it and will glorify it again."

Jesus predicted His ascension: John 12:32: "And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself."

In John 6:70 it can be seen that Jesus already knew that Judas would betray Him: "Jesus answered them, "Did I not choose you, the twelve, and one of you is a devil?""

In John 2:19 Jesus predicted His resurrection: "Jesus answered and said to them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."

Morgan (12, p19) points out that Jesus' own predictions, and of His enemies who placed a guard at His tomb, proved that they expected His resurrection. See also Matthew 12: 40 en 17: 22-23.

1.5.9 Jesus appears to people after His resurrection

Jesus eats with His disciples after his crucifixion and resurrection: Luke 24:42-44: "⁴²So they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish and some honeycomb. ⁴³And He took it and ate in their presence. ⁴⁴Then He said to them, "These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me."

Note all the people that Jesus appeared to after His resurrection. It's proof that He was alive (the fact that people have definitely seen him). It is alleged that He never died, if that were the case He would not be so healthy and move that fast and quickly amongst the people. Yet He appeared healthy to all these people! See 1 Corinthians 15:4-8.

1 Corinthians 15:4-8: "⁴and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, ⁵and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. ⁶After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep. ⁷After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles. ⁸Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time."

The Lord appeared to Saul (Paul) in Acts 9:3-5: "³As he journeyed he came near Damascus, and suddenly a light shone around him from heaven. ⁴Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" ⁵And he said, "Who are You, Lord?" Then the Lord said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the goads."

Jesus appearing to people after His resurrection from the dead is no legend. Strobel, in conversation with Dr. Gary Habermas, points out a few truths (30, p237-238):

- The question may be asked why the Gospel of Mark makes no reference to the appearance of Jesus after His resurrection to people. There are some sceptics who claim that the references in the other Gospels to Jesus' appearances are legendary in nature. The latter is refuted by the fact that Mark was not necessarily the first Gospel. To add, the mainstream experts claim that Matthew was the earliest Gospel.
- It does not matter what is speculated about the possibility of legends that occurred, it just shows that legends may occur over time. It cannot erase the original faith and testimonies that Jesus rose from the dead. Legends can only tell you how the story grew, it can not explain the origin of the events and certainly not when those involved who were both eyewitnesses and reported the events from the beginning.
- The earliest creed, as can be seen in 1 Corinthians 15, dates back to before any of the Gospels. This confession is clearly evident of the appearances by Jesus to people, including the large number of five hundred people. These witnesses as well as the appearances of Jesus to those found in Acts was written before the Gospels and thus originated from the eyewitnesses themselves. There is no place for legends to have originated.
- Habermas ask the question: What about the empty tomb? If the resurrection of Jesus from the dead was only a legend, the grave would still have been filled. It was empty on Easter morning.

1.5.10 Supernatural confirmation

2 Peter 1:17: *"For He received from God the Father honor and glory when such a voice came to Him from the Excellent Glory: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.""*

The baptism of Jesus by John was a visible sign of God's working with the dove and the Voice of God. Mark 1:9-11: *"⁹It came to pass in those days that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized by John in the Jordan. ¹⁰And immediately, coming up from the water, He saw the heavens parting and the Spirit descending upon Him like a dove. ¹¹Then a voice came from heaven, "You are My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.""*

The Lord glorifies Jesus in front of witnesses so that we can believe, John 12:28-30 begins with Jesus' words: *"²⁸Father, glorify Your name." Then a voice came from heaven, saying, "I have both glorified it and will glorify it again." ²⁹Therefore the people who stood by and heard it said that it had thundered. Others said, "An angel has spoken to Him." ³⁰Jesus answered and said, "This voice did not come because of Me, but for your sake."*

The Heavenly Father spoke directly with people on various occasions during which He confirmed that Jesus is the Christ:

- At Jesus' baptism: Matthew 3:16-17: *"¹⁶When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. ¹⁷And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.""* Also see Mark 1:9-11, Luke 3:21-22 and John 1:31-34.
- During the glorification on the mountain where Peter, James and his brother John were present: Matthew 17:2-8: *"²and He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light. ³And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him. ⁴Then Peter answered and said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You wish, let us make here three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." ⁵While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!" ⁶And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their faces and were greatly afraid. ⁷But Jesus came and touched them and said, "Arise, and do not be afraid." ⁸When they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only.""* Also see Mark 9:2-8 and Luke 9:28-36.
- When the Greeks wanted to meet Jesus in Jerusalem. See the words of Jesus and the Father's confirmation John 12:27-30: *"²⁷"Now My soul is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save Me from this hour'? But for this purpose I came to this hour. ²⁸Father, glorify Your name." Then a voice came from heaven, saying, "I have both glorified it and will glorify it again." ²⁹Therefore the people who stood by and heard it said that it had thundered. Others said, "An angel has spoken to Him." ³⁰Jesus answered and said, "This voice did not come because of Me, but for your sake."*

Peter, James and John experienced, the glorification on the mountain and witnessed about it. God spoke from the cloud Himself and said that Jesus is His chosen Son to whom the disciples must listen. Luke 9:28-36: *"²⁸Now it came to pass, about eight days after these sayings, that He took Peter, John, and James and went up on the mountain to pray. ²⁹As He prayed, the appearance of His face was altered, and His robe became white and glistening. ³⁰And behold, two men talked with Him, who were Moses and Elijah, ³¹who appeared in glory and spoke of His decease which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. ³²But Peter and those with him were heavy with sleep; and when they were fully awake, they saw His glory and the two men who stood with Him. ³³Then it happened, as they were parting from Him, that Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah"--not knowing what he said. ³⁴While he was saying this, a cloud came and overshadowed them; and they were fearful as they entered the cloud. ³⁵And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is My beloved Son. Hear Him!" ³⁶When the voice had ceased, Jesus was found alone. But they kept quiet, and told no one in those days any of the things they had seen."*

John the Baptist himself testified that Jesus is the Christ because he saw the Spirit in the form of a dove sitting on Jesus. John 1:32: *"And John bore witness, saying, "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and He remained upon Him."*

Peter himself testifies in 2 Peter 1:16-21: *"¹⁶For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty. ¹⁷For He received from God the Father honor and glory when such a voice came to Him from the Excellent Glory: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." ¹⁸And we heard this voice which came from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain. ¹⁹And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; ²⁰knowing this first, that no prophecy of*

Scripture is of any private interpretation, ²¹for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit."

Look at miracles that occurred during the crucifixion, darkness, Temple mantle, earthquake, the sick healed, the dead rose etc.

Consider the miraculous virginal conception of Jesus' mother, Mary, by the Spirit of God

1.5.11 The name of God

Strobel points out that if one looks at the original Greek with reference to Matthew 14:22-33 and Mark 6:45-52, where it tells of Jesus walking on the water, it can be seen that Jesus said "Be of good cheer! I AM " and no " *It is I* ". See also John 8:58 where Jesus gave Himself the name " *I AM* " award See also Exodus 3:14 where the Lord appeared to Moses in the burning bush and He says to Moses, "...*I AM has sent me to you.*" (30, p29).

One can clearly see that Jesus is part of the Triune God because He calls Himself the same name as the Lord bestowed upon him in the Old Testament. God introduced Himself as the "Lord" to us to in Exodus 3:15: "*Moreover God said to Moses, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel: 'The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you. This is My name forever, and this is My memorial to all generations.'"*"

If we further look at the names of God it can also be seen that the name "Son of Man" was given to Jesus. This can be seen in the prophecies from the Old Testament. Daniel 7:13-14: "¹³*I was watching in the night visions, And behold, One like the Son of Man, Coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, And they brought Him near before Him. ¹⁴Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, That all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, Which shall not pass away, And His kingdom the one Which shall not be destroyed."*

Christ comes from the Greek word "Christos" meaning Anointed. In Hebrew it is "Messiah". The Hebrew word "Yahweh" or "Jehovah" is the same as the Greek, "Kurios" which translates as "Lord" when referring to Christ.

1.5.12 Angels care for Jesus

After the temptation in the wilderness, Matthew 4:11: "*Then the devil left Him, and behold, angels came and ministered to Him.*" Also see Mark 1:12-13 and Luke 4:1-13.

1.5.13 He has truly risen from the dead

Many witnesses were present when Jesus appeared to people numerous times after His crucifixion. At that time the apostles testify about it. If they were telling a lie, many people would have objected to it. However, there are no writings from the time of Christ, that tried to prove the contrary. The only thing that exists, is that Jesus Christ rose from the dead and appeared to many people

See Paul's testimony in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8 : "³*For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, ⁵and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. ⁶After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep. ⁷After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles. ⁸Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time."*

1.5.14 The tomb was empty

Strobel claims the fact that Jesus 'tomb was empty and that He was definitely seen by people afterwards, is the greatest proof of Jesus' divinity. People love to place emphasis on the body of Jesus that was gone after the tomb was found empty and what became of the body. The reality is that the body was not gone but seen alive by men (30, P205). To add, many also testified about it. In today's courts one eyewitness is enough to have a man found guilty. In the Bible many people testify that they saw Jesus after His resurrection, the apostles were willing to sacrifice their lives for the truth about which they testified. If we look at Romans 13:1: "*Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God.*" If the disciples (who became apostles on the basis of their personal eyewitness to the risen Jesus and the ability to perform miracles in the name of Jesus) were not obedient to the authorities of their time, we would not have had the authoritarian Gospels today. Praise the Lord! The prophet Isaiah said already about 740 years before Christ as follows (Isaiah 52:15) "*So shall He sprinkle many nations. Kings shall shut their mouths at Him; For what had not been told them they shall see, And what they had not been told them they shall see, And what they had not heard they shall consider.*"

Let's look forward to when the Lord will return to earth again. About 1200 years before Christ Moses instituted feasts in honor of the Lord namely Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles. Respectively, the celebrations referred to Jesus' crucifixion, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and the

second coming of Jesus. All the prophetic truths of the festivals have already come to fulfillment, except the Feast of Tabernacles. This is the second coming of Jesus which we look forward to with joy.

During the period that Jesus rose from the dead, it was critical for both the unbelieving Romans and the Jews to condemn this fact to try and destroy Christianity. A very easy thing they could do is to show Jesus' body in the city so everyone could see the disciples, and all the other witnesses, is making up a story. They could not do it because they were not in possession of the body of Jesus, the tomb was really empty (22, p242) To add, it was impossible for them to oppose the eyewitnesses, as there were too many witnesses who confirmed the message as the truth, and the truth itself could not be erased. The only solution was to persecute the Christians themselves and trying to wipe them out, thus the Gospel quickly spread to other areas because the Christians had to flee to other areas. However, they could not stop to testify about what they saw and experienced -Jesus Christ was crucified and rose from the dead then He ascended into heaven to prepare a place for those who believe in him.

Jesus' appearance to people after His resurrection were in places where He and His disciples were not previously. It is, therefore, not hallucinations, and He appeared to more than one person simultaneously. According to Blanchard (7, p 209) in one place appearing to 500. If a man wanted to write a story, you would not bring so many witnesses. According to Blanchard (7, p208) there were 6 witnesses of which 3 were eyewitnesses, who wrote down 11 incidents where Jesus appeared to people. When Paul told the people in Corinth about the 500 to whom Jesus appeared, he also claimed that most of them were still alive at that time. So Paul spoke to some of them and unequivocal exposed the testimonies to all.

Robert Morgan (12, p 14) who notes that the Roman guards guarding the tomb were under strict control. Jesus' own prediction that He would build the Temple in three days had them, and especially Pilate, very worrying.

Gary Habermas did a very comprehensive study on what researchers and scholars believe concerning the Resurrection. He has more than 1,400 of the most critical works written and studied about the Resurrection from 1975 to 2003. In *The Risen Jesus and Future Hope* Habermas confirms that virtually all researchers across the ideological spectrum, from ultra-liberals to Bible conservatives agree that the following points concerning Jesus and Christianity are historical facts (22, p299-300):

- Jesus was put to death by Roman crucifixion
- He was buried, probably in a private grave
- Shortly thereafter the disciples were demotivated and they lost hope
- Jesus' tomb was found empty soon after the resurrection
- The disciples had experiences that they believed was actual appearances of the risen Jesus
- As a result of these experiences, the disciples' lives change drastically. They had been willing to die for their faith
- The proclamation of the Resurrection took place very early, from the beginning of Church history
- Public testimonies and preaching of the disciples regarding the Resurrection took place in the city where Jesus was crucified and buried shortly before
- The Evangelical message centered on the preaching of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ
- Sunday was the primary day of assembly and worship
- James the brother of Jesus and sceptical before the resurrection, was converted when he had an experience that made him believe he saw the risen Jesus
- Just a few years later, Saul of Tarsus (Paul) became a Christian as a result of an experience he believed that he had seen the risen Jesus.

Was the tomb really empty, did Jesus really rise from the dead? Dr. William Lane Craig explains (30, p220):

- The empty tomb is definitely part of the earliest evidence as confirmed by Paul in 1 Corinthians 15 (³For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, ⁵and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. ⁶After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep. ⁷After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles. ⁸Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time.). This is a very old and reliable source of historical information regarding Jesus. To add, remember that Paul had to write this in approximately fourteen years after the crucifixion.

- The place where Jesus was buried, was known to Christians and Jews. If the tomb was not empty, it would be impossible for a movement that was based on faith in the Resurrection, to occur in the same city where Jesus was publicly executed and buried.
- It is evident in the language, grammar and style of Mark that the whole Gospel of Mark, including the empty tomb, was written prior to 37 AD. In other words, within 3 years after the events. There was no time for legends to arise.
- There is simplicity in the Gospel of Mark with respect to the Resurrection. In later apocryphal fiction dating from the second century after Christ, many stories were added such as Jesus rising from the grave with the power and glory where everyone could see Him, including the priests, Jewish authorities and Roman guards. This is the way how legends are written, but appears centuries after the actual events when the eyewitnesses died. In contrast, Mark's writings of the empty tomb stands out in simplicity and unadorned in theological views.
- The uniform evidence that the empty tomb was discovered by women confirmed the authenticity of the Gospels' testimonies of the resurrection. It would have been embarrassing for the disciples to acknowledge that women first discovered it, and to add in the time of Jesus, the testimony of a woman was not recognized. If this was only a legend, female testimonies would certainly not have been mentioned.
- The earliest Jewish polemic goes the historical truth about the empty tomb ahead. In other words, there was no one who claims that Jesus' body was still in the grave. The question was always, what happened to the body? The Jews started the ridiculous story by saying that the guards fell asleep. They were grasping for a reason. To add guards so erred, is punished with death, they ensured that they would stay awake. The point is: they began with the assumption that the tomb was empty. Why? Because they knew it was! To add, many people saw the living Jesus, after His resurrection, testified about it, became apostles on those grounds, and sacrificed their lives for the truth about which they testified. People say that the disciples stole the body of Jesus. Why would the disciples steal the body of Jesus and later die for their lie? The Jewish authorities would certainly not removed the body. There is only one explanation: JESUS ROSE FROM THE DEAD.

During the first century, women in the Jewish community were not considered binding witnesses. Their testimonies were considered worthless. If the empty tomb, first discovered by women, was just a made-up story of the disciples, they certainly would not use women as principle witnesses to testify that they first discovered the empty tomb, this indicates that the Gospel writers faithfully reflected what really happened, see Matthew 28:1-10, (30, p217-218).

1.5.15 Natural Phenomena

Matthew 27:45-46: ⁴⁵Now from the sixth hour until the ninth hour there was darkness over all the land. ⁴⁶And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" that is, "MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN ME?"

Strobel, in conversation Dr. Yamauchi, refers to the historian, Thallus, who describes in 52 AD the history of the eastern Mediterranean world. Thallus's original work is no longer available, but he is quoted by Julius Africanus in about 221 AD which refers to the darkness that occurred and about which is written in the Gospels. Thallus confirmed that there was darkness at the crucifixion, and in this letter sought an explanation for the darkness (remember 52 AD, in other words only about 19 years after the crucifixion). He attributed it to a solar eclipse. Africanus differed from him and claimed that it could not have been a solar eclipse due to the time that the crucifixion took place. It also refers to Tertullian (about 213 AD) who claimed that it was a global event. Phlegon, a Greek author, reported that in the fourth year of the 202 Olympiad, in other words 33 AD there was "the greatest eclipse" and that "it became night during the sixth hour of the day, in other words, 12H00, and stars became visible even in heaven. There was a great earthquake in Bithynia and many things were overturned in Nicaea."

Yamauchi emphasize the fact that there was indeed darkness during the crucifixion. Secular confirmation exist and they tried to get natural explanations for it (30, p84-85).

Besides the testimonies of nonbelievers that the darkness did take place, the prophet Amos also predicted it about 760 years before Christ: Amos 8:9-10: ⁹"And it shall come to pass in that day," says the Lord GOD, "That I will make the sun go down at noon, And I will darken the earth in broad daylight; ¹⁰I will turn your feasts into mourning, And all your songs into lamentation; I will bring sackcloth on every waist, And baldness on every head; I will make it like mourning for an only son, And its end like a bitter day."

1.5.16 The Creator of the universe

Jesus created everything Colossians 1:15-20: ¹⁵He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. ¹⁶For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. ¹⁷And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. ¹⁸And

He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the pre-eminence. ¹⁹For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, ²⁰and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.”

The author of Hebrew refers to the Son, through whom God created the world. Hebrews 1:1-4: ¹God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, ²has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; ³who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, ⁴having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.”

1.6 Geisler and Turek (22, p340) discusses the divinity of Jesus as follows:

1.6.1 Question 1: Does Jesus fulfill the characteristics of the Messiah as prophesied in the Old Testament?

- New Testament writers claim in various places that Jesus is God.
- For example, at the opening of the Gospel of John, John says “the Word was God” and “the Word became flesh” (John 1:1 en 14)
- Paul says of Christ – “of whom are the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, the eternally blessed God. Amen.” (Romans 9:5)
- Paul testified as follows – ⁹For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; ¹⁰and you are complete in Him...” (Colossians 2:9-10)
- Peter testifies that believers obtain righteousness “by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 1:1)
- Matthew quotes Isaiah 7:14 and also affirm the divinity of Jesus: “BEHOLD, THE VIRGIN SHALL BE WITH CHILD, AND BEAR A SON, AND THEY SHALL CALL HIS NAME IMMANUEL,” which is translated, “God with us.” (Matthew 1:23)
- Luke testified as follows: “who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.” (Hebrew 1:3)
- Luke also cites Psalm 45:6-7 where God says about the Son: “YOUR THRONE, O GOD, IS FOREVER AND EVER; A SCEPTER OF RIGHTEOUSNESS IS THE SCEPTER OF YOUR KINGDOM.” (Hebrew 1:8)
- Even the demons recognized Jesus as God: “And suddenly they cried out, saying, “What have we to do with You, Jesus, You Son of God? Have You come here to torment us before the time?” (Matthew 8:29; Luke 4:34, 41)

1.6.2 Question 2: Did Jesus Himself declared that He is God?

- Direct claims to God by Jesus:
 - After Jesus' imprisonment the high priest, Caiaphas, questioned Jesus where Jesus straightforwardly confirmed His Divinity ⁶¹...“Are You the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?” ⁶²Jesus said, “I am. And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven.” ⁶³Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, “What further need do we have of witnesses? ⁶⁴You have heard the blasphemy! What do you think?” And they all condemned Him to be deserving of death.” (Mark 14:61-64) He directly referred to Himself as the “Son of Man” and also adds that He will return on the clouds of heaven. Caiaphas and his entourage knew the implications because it coincided with the vision that the prophet Daniel had of the final time. Daniel 7:13-14 reads as follows: ¹³I was watching in the night visions, And behold, One like the Son of Man, Coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, And they brought Him near before Him. ¹⁴Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, That all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, Which shall not pass away, And His kingdom the one Which shall not be destroyed.” Geisler and Turek draws attention to the fact that none other than God will be served (22, p341).
 - In speaking to the Jews Jesus declares as follows in John 8:56-58: ⁵⁶Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad.” ⁵⁷Then the Jews said to Him, “You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?” ⁵⁸Jesus said to them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM.”” Important to realize that the name “I AM” is the name that God used to introduce Him for the first time to Moses. Look at Exodus 3:13-14: ¹³And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them? ¹⁴And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.” Jesus said in His conversation with the Jews, the name “I AM” is also attached to Himself (22, p341).

1.6.3 Geisler and Turek (22, p342-343) also shows indirect claims that Jesus made as God:

- In John 17:5 Jesus prays as follows: *"And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was."* In the Old Testament it is pointed out that there is only one God (Deuteronomy 6:4 and Isaiah 45:5) and that God does not give His glory to anyone else see Isaiah 42:8: *"I am the LORD, that is My name; And My glory I will not give to another, Nor My praise to carved images."*
- During Jesus' appearance to John as testified in Revelation 1:17, He declares as follows: *"¹⁷ And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on me, saying to me, "Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last." are the same words God used to refer to himself in Isaiah 44:6: *"Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel, And his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts: 'I am the First and I am the Last; Besides Me there is no God.'*" It is impressive how John recognizes Jesus when he saw Him, and it makes sense because John was an apostle of Jesus on earth: Revelation 1:12-13: *"¹² Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands, ¹³ and in the midst of the seven lampstands One like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band."* It signifies true events which is witnessed here.*
- In John 10:11 Jesus says: *"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep."* The Old Testament says in Psalms 23:1: *"The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want."* The Lord says in Ezekiel 34:12: *"As a shepherd seeks out his flock on the day he is among his scattered sheep, so will I seek out My sheep and deliver them from all the places where they were scattered on a cloudy and dark day."*
- Jesus declares that He will judge in Matthew 25:31-33: *"³¹ When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. ³² All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. ³³ And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left."* In the Old Testament Joel 3:12 God puts it clear: *"Let the nations be wakened, and come up to the Valley of Jehoshaphat; For there I will sit to judge all the surrounding nations."*
- In John 8:12 Jesus says: *"Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life."* The Psalmist in the Old Testament says in Psalms 27:1: *"The LORD is my light and my salvation; Whom shall I fear? The LORD is the strength of my life; Of whom shall I be afraid?"*
- In John 5:21 Jesus declares: *"For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to them, even so the Son gives life to whom He will."* In the Old Testament it is clearly taught that only God is the giver of life (Deuteronomy 32:39; 1 Samuel 2:6) and also the One who raises the dead (Daniel 12:2; Job 19:25) and the only Judge (Deuteronomy 32:35; Joel 3:12).
- Jesus puts it straight in John 14:6: *"Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."*
- Jesus refers to Himself as the "bridegroom" in various places such as in Mark 2:19: *"And Jesus said to them, "Can the friends of the bridegroom fast while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them they cannot fast."* (Also see Matthew 9:15; 25:1; Luke 5:34) The Old Testament clearly identifies God as the bridegroom in Isaiah 62:5: *"For as a young man marries a virgin, So shall your sons marry you; And as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, So shall your God rejoice over you."* (Also see Hosea 2:15-16) (22, p344)

1.7 Paul's explanation in Colossians 1:15-20

"¹⁵ He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. ¹⁶ For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. ¹⁷ And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. ¹⁸ And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the pre-eminence. ¹⁹ For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, ²⁰ and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross."

John says: *"He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life."* 1 John 5:12. It is very important to realize that Jesus is God! Only through Him you get access to God because He is part of the Triune God! We can not understand it because a creature can not declare his Creator, but our Creator revealed Himself to us through His Word.

What did the Messiah had to do so that we could believe in Him?

- Walk on water? John 6:19: *"So when they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea and drawing near the boat; and they were afraid."*
- Miracles? John 7:31: *"And many of the people believed in Him, and said, "When the Christ comes, will He do more signs than these which this Man has done?""*

- Jesus speaking to the Jews in John 10:31-32: ³¹*Then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him.* ³²*Jesus answered them, "Many good works I have shown you from My Father. For which of those works do you stone Me?"*

Dr. Ben Witherington points out that the origins of the Church who believed that God is a fitting name for Jesus Christ and the traditions of the early Church all originated within only twenty years of the crucifixion. In other words, 1) Many eyewitnesses was still present who knew Jesus Himself and the facts of the events which the Church testify about was challenged, but the challenges did not succeed, and 2) The period did not allow for enough time for all these truths to originate from nothing (30, p140).

Ravi Zacharias (16, P155) shows that Napoleon in exile on St. Helena, said that all those who sincerely believe in Jesus Christ, experience the remarkable supernatural love for Him. He said that it is an unexplained phenomenon, it is beyond man's creative power. "The great destroyer, time stands powerless against this holy flame; time can not deplete its power nor limit it. This is what struck me most; I've often thought about it. This is what convinced me of the Divinity of Jesus Christ! "

Who despises the day of small things? ~ Zechariah 4:10: Life is filled with a series of small things that can amount to something big. Have you ever considered why the God of the universe came to earth and spent 33 years identifying with mankind through work? Jesus grew up as a carpenter's son and, no doubt, learned the trade from His daily routine of helping His father. For 30 years He worked. When it was time for Him to begin to fulfil His purpose for mankind, He told countless stories of people and their work. He told stories of landowners, farmers, fishermen, tax collectors, and so on. He related to the everyday man because He Himself was one. This is why it was important for Him to have some personal work experience. Life is filled with daily routines. Every now and then, God takes us to the mountaintop to experience His presence in a dramatic way. This is not the norm. It was not the norm for those in the Bible either. Moses spent 40 years in preparation. Paul spent a great deal of his life working toward the wrong purpose until a dramatic event changed his life. Jacob spent 20 years working for Laban. God uses work to develop character qualities that He plans to use at the appropriate time. In the small things we develop trustworthiness with God. The day-in and day-out grind of working life moulds us and makes us into what God desires. God may still be preparing you for something far greater. For now, however, you are learning the daily lessons of small things. Pray that you will be faithful. (Os Hillman)

Jesus is the only way to the father. Dr. Alberts makes it clear (3, p18) that Jesus is God, represented in the form of a man. He is the logical way to the Lord for He is Lord.

Andrew Murray says that man was created for God, but sin brought separation. He also says that nature shows God and His work, but of Himself, His Heart and His thoughts of love for us as sinners can not be described by nature. The latter communication took place through His Son.

U.S. preacher Dr. Jerry Savellas use the proverb "Getting the best of God". If you walk as God wants, you get more or experience more of God. Proverbs 19:23: *"The fear of the LORD leads to life, And he who has it will abide in satisfaction; He will not be visited with evil."*

A hypocrite does not recognize the Spirit of God, he/she does not understand It, does not know It and is thus not sensitive to God's Revelation and human involvement.

Jesus Himself said He is the way to eternal life. John 8:12: ¹²*Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life."*

God chose us in Christ before the creation. Ephesians 1:4-5: ⁴*just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love,* ⁵*having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will."*

See Paul's statement to the Phillipians about how he pursued the earthly and persecuted the church (conscience that bothered him) and how he finds fullness in Christ.

Philippians 3:1-11: ¹*Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. For me to write the same things to you is not tedious, but for you it is safe.* ²*Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the mutilation!* ³*For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh,* ⁴*though I also might have confidence in the flesh. If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so:* ⁵*circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee;* ⁶*concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.* ⁷*But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ.* ⁸*Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ ⁹and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through*

faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; ¹⁰that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, ¹¹if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead."

Chapter 4

One of the biggest attacks on the Gospel is by claiming that the individual is responsible for salvation through his / her own works or efforts.

1. Introduction

Paul gives guidance in: Ephesians 6:10-20: ¹⁰Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. ¹¹Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. ¹²For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. ¹³Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. ¹⁴Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the **breastplate of righteousness**, ¹⁵and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; ¹⁶above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. ¹⁷And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; ¹⁸praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints-- ¹⁹and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, ²⁰for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak."

In this chapter we will see that God's sovereign plan of salvation includes all believers of all nations. We are part of this redemption on the basis of our faith in the Messiah born from the Israeli nation. Through faith in the redemptive work of the Lord, we receive forgiveness of our sins. By faith we are part of the covenant God made with Abraham.

The Almighty Creator revealed Himself authentically to man, His name announced and His Word established in the Messiah, Jesus Christ. This is perfect redemptive work of the Lord and speaks to man to believe. Man can not accomplish salvation, it is grace from the Lord. So-called good deeds, or legalistic rituals to obtain salvation is contrary to salvation through Christ. The key is to believe in Jesus Christ's salvation and renunciation of sin.

Haasbroek shows in his book " The wonder of Jesus in the Old Testament " (61, p.206) on the fact that Jesus is the key to understand the Old Testament. You will not unlock a door if you don't have the key to unlock the door. Look at Matthew 20:18,19 and Daniel 7:13 and 2 Corinthians 3:7-16. The composition of the Bible was done on the basis of the Key. Who has the key of David? Revelation 3:7-8? Revelation 3:7-8: ⁷"And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write, 'These things says He who is holy, He who is true, "HE WHO HAS THE KEY OF DAVID, HE WHO OPENS AND NO ONE SHUTS, AND SHUTS AND NO ONE OPENS": ⁸"I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name."

2 Corinthians 3:7-18: ⁷But if the ministry of death, written and engraved on stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of the glory of his countenance, which glory was passing away, ⁸how will the ministry of the Spirit not be more glorious? ⁹For if the ministry of condemnation had glory, the ministry of righteousness exceeds much more in glory. ¹⁰For even what was made glorious had no glory in this respect, because of the glory that excels. ¹¹For if what is passing away was glorious, what remains is much more glorious. ¹²Therefore, since we have such hope, we use great boldness of speech-- ¹³unlike Moses, who put a veil over his face so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the end of what was passing away. ¹⁴But their minds were blinded. For until this day the same veil remains unlifted in the reading of the Old Testament, because the veil is taken away in Christ. ¹⁵But even to this day, when Moses is read, a veil lies on their heart. ¹⁶Nevertheless when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. ¹⁷Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. ¹⁸But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord."

Faith in the One who has the key of David, Jesus Christ, means that we changed to the image of Christ. Our so-called good works can not do it. When we are changed to the image of Christ, then you take the Identity of Christ, which is Holy. It creates us living in obedience to the Spirit of God. The believer continuously seek the Face of God. James explains that when faith is without works is not true faith. James 2:12-18: ¹²So speak and so do as those who will be judged by the law of liberty. ¹³For judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment. ¹⁴What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? ¹⁵If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, ¹⁶and one of you says to them, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled," but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? ¹⁷Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

¹⁸*But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works."*

In John 1:48-51 Jesus confirms that He is Jacob's legion ⁴⁸*Nathanael said to Him, "How do You know me?" Jesus answered and said to him, "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you."* ⁴⁹*Nathanael answered and said to Him, "Rabbi, You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!"* ⁵⁰*Jesus answered and said to him, "Because I said to you, 'I saw you under the fig tree,' do you believe? You will see greater things than these."* ⁵¹*And He said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."*

See Genesis 28:12-17: ¹²*Then he dreamed, and behold, a ladder was set up on the earth, and its top reached to heaven; and there the angels of God were ascending and descending on it.* ¹³*And behold, the LORD stood above it and said: "I am the LORD God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and your descendants.* ¹⁴*Also your descendants shall be as the dust of the earth; you shall spread abroad to the west and the east, to the north and the south; and in you and in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.* ¹⁵*Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have spoken to you."* ¹⁶*Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, "Surely the LORD is in this place, and I did not know it."* ¹⁷*And he was afraid and said, "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven!"*

Revelation 4:1-4: ¹*After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven. And the first voice which I heard was like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, "Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this."* ²*Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne set in heaven, and One sat on the throne.* ³*And He who sat there was like a jasper and a sardius stone in appearance; and there was a rainbow around the throne, in appearance like an emerald.* ⁴*Around the throne were twenty-four thrones, and on the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white robes; and they had crowns of gold on their heads."*

It is Jesus who is the Way, who gives eternal life, the bridge between the natural and the Supernatural, God is spiritual (supernatural) and we must serve Him with open spiritual eyes.

In the previous Chapters it is seen that the Lord revealed Himself to man from the beginning. In different ways the God of the covenant made sure that man can know Him, and thus can have a relationship with Him.

Wickedness was the order of the day which culminated to idolatry and straying from the Lord of justice, peace and love. The True Face of the Lord is not called upon, the name of the Lord is not known. Man fell back to a culture of self-righteousness. Your own deeds need to please and serve to satisfaction in terms of meaning in life.

Idols, representing imaginary gods, were invented with limited human (natural) reference. Imaginary, mythical gods were created and worshipped which caused large-scale confusion. There was not one theistic God (theistic means it's God who creates and is still involved with His creation). In other words, if you testify what the Lord revealed to you, then there are other so-called gods who could do it, or who have the same powers.

By His grace the Lord left us His clear footprints on the earth in Israeli nation. The Lord has established His Name even through the name of the ancestor of the Israelites name. The three sons of Noah: Shem, Ham and Japheth. In Genesis 10, this can be read. By the way, if anyone would claim that the flood is only a story, how would the author know all of the descendants of Shem, Ham and Japheth if it is sucked from the thumb!?

Shem was the ancestor of the Israelites and the word Shem means "name". The Messiah, Jesus Christ, born of the descendants of Shem and announced the Name of the Lord. We can also read that the Temple helped us to know the Name of the Lord and the feasts of the Lord prophetically address us that the Messiah will come again to fetch us (Chapters 5 and 6).

The Temple and the name of the Lord can be seen by the description of the sins of Manasseh: 2 Kings 21:4-7: ⁴*He also built altars in the house of the LORD, of which the LORD had said, "In Jerusalem I will put My name."* ⁵*And he built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the LORD.* ⁶*Also he made his son pass through the fire, practiced soothsaying, used witchcraft, and consulted spiritists and mediums. He did much evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke Him to anger.* ⁷*He even set a carved image of Asherah that he had made, in the house of which the LORD had said to David and to Solomon his son, "In this house and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, I will put My name forever."* (More about this in Chapter 6)

Look to Jesus' prayer for His disciples: John 17:6: *"I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world. They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word."*

John 17:11: *"Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are."*

It is clearly not about "good works". It's about the name of the Lord, we must, and can, know and worship the Lord. If we know the Lord, then it causes us to seek His face, that we live holy. Then we can be one with the Lord. Our salvation is from outside ourselves. That is why there is also referred to the Messiah as Grace

Titus 2:11: *"For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men."*

In John 1, we read that the Messiah is the Word of God. The evangelist can take Paul's advice to heart as recorded in Titus 1:8-9: *"⁸but hospitable, a lover of what is good, sober-minded, just, holy, self-controlled, ⁹holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict."*

The believer does not do the above freely. Look what happened to the wise Solomon when he did not keep the covenant of the Lord: 1 Kings 11:9-13: *"⁹So the LORD became angry with Solomon, because his heart had turned from the LORD God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice, ¹⁰and had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods; but he did not keep what the LORD had commanded. ¹¹Therefore the LORD said to Solomon, "Because you have done this, and have not kept My covenant and My statutes, which I have commanded you, I will surely tear the kingdom away from you and give it to your servant. ¹²Nevertheless I will not do it in your days, for the sake of your father David; I will tear it out of the hand of your son. ¹³However I will not tear away the whole kingdom; I will give one tribe to your son for the sake of my servant David, and for the sake of Jerusalem which I have chosen."*

Clearly God, the Lord, does not "manifest" in another way than according to His Word. He revealed the Messiah to us! There is no other Creator God of the covenant for the salvation of man.

The Covenant

1.1 Meaning of the word "covenant"?

Kay Arthur (52, p.124) explains that the origin of the word is not sure, but the most common opinion is that it is derived from the Hebrew verb "barah". It means to cut and recalled the ceremony as described in Genesis 15:9-10: *"⁹ So He said to him, "Bring Me a three-year-old heifer, a three-year-old female goat, a three-year-old ram, a turtledove, and a young pigeon." ¹⁰Then he brought all these to Him and cut them in two, down the middle, and placed each piece opposite the other; but he did not cut the birds in two"*

Others believe it is derived from the Assyrian word "beritu", which means "to bind". It refers to a voluntary commitment between two parties (pluralistic), or a commitment enforced by one party onto the other (monopolistic). The key, however, is the nature of the agreement. In the case where God made a covenant with man, it is clearly monopolistic because the Lord is man's Superior that gives man His commands.

In the Septuagint (Greek translation - more on this in Chapter 1), the word "berith" is given as "diatheke" except in Deuteronomy 9:15 (marturion) and 1 Kings 11:11 (entole). The word "diatheke" is different from the commonly used Greek word for covenant, and refers rather to a will. In other words, the Greek word for a covenant is "suntheke" closer to the pluralistic reference of a covenant. The word "diatheke" is thus also used to refer to God's covenant of the monopolistic kind. It is also important to realize that this word is used in the New Testament to refer to the covenant between God and man.

1.2 Ancient customs when a covenant between two parties are entered into

1.2.1 The flow of blood

Genesis 15:9-18a: *"⁹So He said to him, "Bring Me a three-year-old heifer, a three-year-old female goat, a three-year-old ram, a turtledove, and a young pigeon." ¹⁰Then he brought all these to Him and cut them in two, down the middle, and placed each piece opposite the other; but he did not cut the birds in two. ¹¹And when the vultures came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away. ¹²Now when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and behold, horror and great darkness fell upon him. ¹³Then He said to Abram: "Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict them four hundred years. ¹⁴And also the nation whom they serve I will judge; afterward they shall come out with great possessions. ¹⁵Now as for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried at a good old age. ¹⁶But in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete." ¹⁷And it came to pass, when the sun went down and*

it was dark, that behold, there appeared a smoking oven and a burning torch that passed between those pieces. ¹⁸On the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying: ..."

We can see from this that the bodies of the representative animals were crushed. It was a bloody event and they moved through the blood between the pieces.

The Hebrew word used in 1 Samuel 18:3 for a covenant, "kâath" meaning "to cut" (52, p.17). The covenant fellows' bodies were cut so that the blood runs and different rituals were practiced with the blood specific to the culture and covenant. Joints were cut and then they greet one another with a handshake so that the blood mix. In many cases the blood was diluted and then drunk. Jesus is the perfect Lamb, whose body was battered and blood flowed to our rescue (See Isaiah 53 written about 750 years before Christ). Jesus instituted the Holy Communion and pointed out that the wine represents His blood that flowed for us, and we must drink to His memory. The broken bread represents Jesus' body which was crushed for us. (Matthew 26:26-28).

In other words, the members entered into a covenant got cuts and marks on their bodies through the close of the covenant. The believer's brand is already prophesied about 586 years before Christ.

Jeremiah 24:7: *"Then I will give them a heart to know Me, that I am the LORD; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God, for they shall return to Me with their whole heart."*

The covenant partners adopts each other. When we walk this path with Jesus, His life is within us. 2 Peter 1:3-4: *"³as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, ⁴by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."*

We confess that Jesus Christ is our Lord.

Romans 10:9: *"That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved."*

The believer's heart is cut and will serve the Lord, he will receive the Lord. Romans 2:28-29: *"²⁸For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh; ²⁹but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God."*

A covenant child can be identified by a heart that wants to serve the Lord!

1.2.2 The exchange of coats

1 Samuel 18:3-4: *"³Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul. ⁴And Jonathan took off the robe that was on him and gave it to David, with his armor, even to his sword and his bow and his belt."*

Jonathan, handed over to David his identity and his ability to protect himself, and David did the same. David adopted Jonathan's identity. In other words when Jonathan handed his mantle to David, David symbolically dressed himself with Jonathan (52, p.18).

When we accept Jesus Christ as our savior, we dress ourselves with Jesus' robe. We associate ourselves with Jesus and become like him. We put on the identity of Jesus by believing in Him.

Galatians 3:22-29: *"²²But the Scripture has confined all under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. ²³But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed. ²⁴Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. ²⁵But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor. ²⁶For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. ²⁷For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. ²⁸There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."*

The believer lives properly:

Romans 13:12-14: *"¹²The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. ¹³Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. ¹⁴But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts."* Also see Ephesians 4:17-32 and Colossians 3:1-17.

1.2.3 Keeping the covenant's conditions are mandatory. The contravention thereof is punishable with death.

In Genesis 15 we saw that Abram had to cut the animals in two. With the cutting of a covenant the two parties have to move between the pieces. They symbolize the path of death. This means

that the conditions of the covenant will be met to death. If they do not, the same will happen to them than what happened to the animals' bodies.

The Lord promised Abram the Seed of his seed/descendants, a large seed (therefor circumcision in Genesis 17), and a country in which they will live.

See 1 Samuel 20:13-17, 23, 42 To see how David obedience the covenant with Jonathan: 1 Samuel 20:13-17, 23, 42: ¹³*may the LORD do so and much more to Jonathan. But if it pleases my father to do you evil, then I will report it to you and send you away, that you may go in safety. And the LORD be with you as He has been with my father.* ¹⁴*And you shall not only show me the kindness of the LORD while I still live, that I may not die;* ¹⁵*but you shall not cut off your kindness from my house forever, no, not when the LORD has cut off every one of the enemies of David from the face of the earth.* ¹⁶*So Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David, saying, "Let the LORD require it at the hand of David's enemies."* ¹⁷*Now Jonathan again caused David to vow, because he loved him; for he loved him as he loved his own soul. ...* ²³*And as for the matter which you and I have spoken of, indeed the LORD be between you and me forever." ...* ⁴²*Then Jonathan said to David, "Go in peace, since we have both sworn in the name of the LORD, saying, 'May the LORD be between you and me, and between your descendants and my descendants, forever.' " So he arose and departed, and Jonathan went into the city."*

Man had to obey the covenant. They had to love the Lord and serve no other gods. See how God acts against people that break their covenant with Him: Jeremiah 34:12-22: ¹²*Therefore the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying,* ¹³*Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: 'I made a covenant with your fathers in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage, saying,* ¹⁴*At the end of seven years let every man set free his Hebrew brother, who has been sold to him; and when he has served you six years, you shall let him go free from you.' But your fathers did not obey Me nor incline their ear.* ¹⁵*Then you recently turned and did what was right in My sight--every man proclaiming liberty to his neighbor; and you made a covenant before Me in the house which is called by My name.* ¹⁶*Then you turned around and profaned My name, and every one of you brought back his male and female slaves, whom he had set at liberty, at their pleasure, and brought them back into subjection, to be your male and female slaves.'* ¹⁷*Therefore thus says the LORD: 'You have not obeyed Me in proclaiming liberty, every one to his brother and every one to his neighbor. Behold, I proclaim liberty to you,' says the LORD 'to the sword, to pestilence, and to famine! And I will deliver you to trouble among all the kingdoms of the earth.* ¹⁸*And I will give the men who have transgressed My covenant, who have not performed the words of the covenant which they made before Me, when they cut the calf in two and passed between the parts of it--* ¹⁹*the princes of Judah, the princes of Jerusalem, the eunuchs, the priests, and all the people of the land who passed between the parts of the calf--* ²⁰*I will give them into the hand of their enemies and into the hand of those who seek their life. Their dead bodies shall be for meat for the birds of the heaven and the beasts of the earth.* ²¹*And I will give Zedekiah king of Judah and his princes into the hand of their enemies, into the hand of those who seek their life, and into the hand of the king of Babylon's army which has gone back from you.* ²²*Behold, I will command,' says the LORD, 'and cause them to return to this city. They will fight against it and take it and burn it with fire; and I will make the cities of Judah a desolation without inhabitant.'"*

The Lord moved between the pieces (Gen. 15:17) and remained faithful to His covenant with man. See for example Exodus 6:4: *"I have also established My covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their pilgrimage, in which they were strangers."*

He was the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and saved the people out of Egypt 400 years after the promise to Abraham (as prophesied), and the Messiah is born of Abraham's descendants.

However, man started worshipping other gods punishable with death. See Exodus 32:19 and Isaiah 24. Jesus Christ came as the Son of God, but also the Son of Man, and carried the punishment of death for man.

1.3 The Divine Covenant

Kay Arthur (52, p.125) explained that the use of a covenant already occurred long before the Lord made formal use of the concept for the Revelation of Salvation. Covenants incurred long before the Lord entered into covenants with Noah and Abraham. This prepared man to understand the importance of a covenant in a world divided by sin. This helps us to understand the Divine Revelation when our relationship with God is represented as a covenant relationship. God planned man's life so that the use of the covenant emerged as one of the pillars of social life. After developing it, He used it to demonstrate the relationship between Him and man. The covenant relationship between God and man has existed from the beginning, long before the formal confirmation with Abraham.

We can read in the Bible that there are five everlasting Divinely originated covenants:

- 1) Covenant with Noah (Genesis 9:11-17)

- 2) Abrahamic (Genesis 17:7)
- 3) Priestly (Numbers 25:10-13)
- 4) Davidic (2 Samuel 23:5)
- 5) New (Jeremiah 32:40)

In a covenant both parties are bound to fulfill specific promises based on certain conditions. The relationship between God and man includes both a covenant of works and a covenant of redemption. Both is monopolistic and ordained by God. The Lord has priorities in both, but it is still covenants. The Lord by His grace descended to the level of a human and treated humans with respect on a kind of a level of equality. His commands and promises clearly explained. Man possesses the ability to make a choice for what the Lord commanded, and in the process become the heir of the blessings that flow from it. This is the covenant of redemption.

Through the covenant of works we comply with the conditions through our own natural existence, but in the covenant of salvation (grace) we can fulfill only by the regenerating and sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit. The Lord reveals in you to want and do both. It is called the covenant of grace because it is a Revelation of the grace of God. We received all the blessings as a gift of divine grace.

When we talk of "people of the covenant", it includes Israel who was included in Jehovah (God of salvation, the Lord) invariable covenant (old covenant Deuteronomy 30:20), but also under a different covenant, the New Covenant (Jeremiah 31:31-34). It also includes the Church which is all believers today, which falls under the new covenant through the blood of Christ (Matthew 27-28 and 1 Corinthians 26:11 25).

Jeremiah 31:31-34 already written about 586 years before Christ: ³¹"Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah-- ³²not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the LORD. ³³But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. ³⁴No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."

Look at Jesus' words in 1 Corinthians 11:25: *"In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.'"*

W.Eichrodt (Theology of the Old Testament, London, 1967), quoted by Kay Arthur (52, p.128) who notes that the concept of the covenant affirms that Israel's faith was historically correct. This is not the imagination of later generations. To add, the latter is the origin of the mythical gods.

1.3.1 **The Old Covenant - the eternal covenant**

In Genesis 11:10-32 can be read (in detail) that Abraham is born from the descendants of Shem. In Genesis 12 we read that God called Abraham and the people of Israel would be born of Abraham:

Genesis 12:1-3: ¹*Now the LORD had said to Abram: "Get out of your country, From your family And from your father's house, To a land that I will show you. ²I will make you a great nation; I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing. ³I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."*

The promises made by God to Abraham, is as follows

- A large seed
- A Country
- In him all people of the earth will be blessed.

In Genesis 15:18-21 the Lord enters into the covenant with Abraham (at that time still Abram)

Genesis 15:18-21: ¹⁸*On the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying: "To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the River Euphrates-- ¹⁹the Kenites, the Kenezites, the Kadmonites, ²⁰the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, ²¹the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites, and the Jebusites."*

The Lord Himself appeared to Abraham and promised him a son (Genesis 18). Isaac is born as per God's promise to Abraham (Genesis 21).

Abraham's faith was put to the test when he had to sacrifice Isaac (Genesis 22). This event took place on the threshing floor of Araunah later bought by David and where the Temple was erected in Jerusalem (see 2 Chronicles 3). Isaac was Abraham's only son whom he loved, Isaac himself had to carry the wood to the altar and the Lord Himself provided the sacrificial lamb. The believer can see that it points to the Messiah who was the Sacrificial lamb, who Self carried His cross, was the Anointed who was crucified.

To what faith is referred that was tested? The Lord appeared to Abraham and spoke to him. It's not about the faith if there is a God. The faith referred to here is that there is a large seed that would be born to him and all nations will be blessed through him. If Isaac died, how would the offspring be born? Abraham had to believe that the Lord will provide. And the Lord also provided by the lamb. Today we can also believe that we are part of "all nations" and the Lord has provided the Lamb, and the Lamb shall come to fetch us again.

The Messiah's atoning death, is and was an eternal reality for all believers, including the Old Testament times.

In Genesis 3:15 The Lord said unto the serpent: *"And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel."*

Note that the seed of the woman (Eve) is written with a capital letter "Seed". This is also the case in the original English Jewish Bible. The latter corresponds with the Old Testament of the Bible. It refers to the Messiah, the Anointed. In other words, the Christ.

God gives salvation to those who believe in him. He had revealed Himself clearly to man and His covenant with Abraham made it possible for everyone to know Him.

Galatians 3:2-9: *"²This only I want to learn from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?-- ³Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh? ⁴Have you suffered so many things in vain--if indeed it was in vain? ⁵Therefore He who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you, does He do it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? ⁶just as Abraham "BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS ACCOUNTED TO HIM FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS." ⁷Therefore know that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham. ⁸And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, "In you all the nations shall be blessed." ⁹So then those who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham."*

Jesus's words in John 8:56: *"Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad."*

Galatians 3:14: *"that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith."*

Galatians 3:29: *"And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."*

Ephesians 2:8: *"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God"*

The covenant God made with Abraham is an everlasting covenant. We are included in this through faith in Jesus Christ's deed of salvation for us. It still is relevant today. We can, such as Abraham, have faith in the promise of the Lord and be looking forward to the return of Christ.

1.3.2 The Law - the covenant confirmed with Moses - fulfilled by Christ

Four hundred years after the covenant with Abraham, the Lord confirmed His covenant with the Israelites at Mount Sinai.

Exodus 19:5-6: *"⁵Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine. ⁶And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel."*

The Lord did it so that no doubt could exist of His almighty presence. The people were so afraid that they asked Moses to speak with them and not the Lord (Exodus 19 and Deuteronomy 7-8).

Exodus 19:9: *"And the LORD said to Moses, "Behold, I come to you in the thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with you, and believe you forever." So Moses told the words of the people to the LORD."*

Exodus 20:22: *"Then the LORD said to Moses, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel: 'You have seen that I have talked with you from heaven.'"*

We have also seen in Chapter 5 that the rams horn sounded at this event. It was the beginning of the Feasts of the Lord celebrated annually. The priests began with the new calendar as the Lord had commanded. Leviticus 23.

However, the people sinned at Mount Sinai that caused their 40 years in the wilderness. The Lord, however, still provided by quails and manna, their clothes did not fall from them (Deuteronomy 29:5) and the Lord's presence in the Tent of Meeting.

At the end of the forty years the Lord reaffirmed His covenant with Israel at Moab as can be seen in Deuteronomy 29.

If we understand that the word "covenant" and the word "will" means the same, it is also clear that a covenant points out what someone acquires by the death of one of the parties. The Messiah died on the cross, fulfilling the old covenant - salvation to all nations. Only through faith in this redemptive act brings salvation for mankind.

Seven hundred and fifty years before Christ Isaiah wrote in Isaiah 8:14-15: *"¹⁴He will be as a sanctuary, But a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense To both the houses of Israel, As a trap and a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. ¹⁵And many among them shall stumble; They shall fall and be broken, Be snared and taken."* Paul confirms in Romans 9:32-33: *"³²Why? Because they did not seek it by faith, but as it were, by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumbling stone. ³³As it is written: "BEHOLD, I LAY IN ZION A STUMBLING STONE AND ROCK OF OFFENSE, AND WHOEVER BELIEVES ON HIM WILL NOT BE PUT TO SHAME."*"**

In John 5:46-47 we read that Jesus confirmed that Moses wrote of Him, He is the Messiah who achieved salvation by dying on the cross and fulfilled the old covenant. *"⁴⁶For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me. ⁴⁷But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?"*

1.3.2.1 The Messiah still prophetically pointed out

Deuteronomy 18:18-19: *"18I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him. 19And it shall be that whoever will not hear My words, which He speaks in My name, I will require it of him."* (Written about 1220 BC)

Isaiah 16:4-5: *"4Let My outcasts dwell with you, O Moab; Be a shelter to them from the face of the spoiler. For the extortioner is at an end, Devastation ceases, The oppressors are consumed out of the land. 5In mercy the throne will be established; And One will sit on it in truth, in the tabernacle of David, Judging and seeking justice and hastening righteousness."* (Written around 750 BC)

Isaiah 54:9-10: *"9For this is like the waters of Noah to Me; For as I have sworn That the waters of Noah would no longer cover the earth, So have I sworn That I would not be angry with you, nor rebuke you. 10For the mountains shall depart And the hills be removed, But My kindness shall not depart from you, Nor shall My covenant of peace be removed," Says the LORD, who has mercy on you."*

1.3.3 The New Covenant

In Chapter 2 we saw that Jesus is the Face of God on earth. He is the Messenger of the covenant: Approximately 430 years before Christ (BC) Malachi prophesied that Jesus is the Messenger of the covenant: Malachi 3:1-2: *"¹Behold, I send My messenger, And he will prepare the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, Will suddenly come to His temple, Even the Messenger of the covenant, In whom you delight. Behold, He is coming," Says the LORD of hosts. ²But who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner's fire And like launderers' soap."*

Jesus is the Messiah (Christ), the Promised One. Messiah is the Old Testament word for Christ, which means "the promised one." He came to earth and performed miracles, and the most wonderful of all, rose from the dead, so that we can believe and be saved.

About 750 years before Christ Isaiah prophesied as follows: Isaiah 42:5-9: *"⁵Thus says God the LORD, Who created the heavens and stretched them out, Who spread forth the earth and that which comes from it, Who gives breath to the people on it, And spirit to those who walk on it: ⁶"I, the LORD, have called You in righteousness, And will hold Your hand; I will keep You and give You as a covenant to the people, As a light to the Gentiles, ⁷To open blind eyes, To bring out prisoners from the prison, Those who sit in darkness from the prison house. ⁸I am the LORD, that is My name; And My glory I will not give to another, Nor My praise to carved images. ⁹Behold, the former things have come to pass, And new things I declare; Before they spring forth I tell you of them."*"**

The law of Moses was introduced to help man to live in obedience to the Lord and also prophetically described the Messiah. The Messiah, Jesus Christ died on the cross and rose from the dead in order to give the believer access to the Lord. Ezra restored the people's relationship with God by implementing the law again. Jesus perfected the law by His death on the cross and

resurrection and restored our relationship with God. Jesus perfected the law because He Himself was the Lamb for the sacrifice, and is the communion Himself (bread and wine) and is Immanuel Himself: 'I Am'. The people had the law, today we have the Word.

Jesus is the New Covenant that replaced the old covenant. Hebrew 8:13: *"In that He says, "A NEW COVENANT," He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away."*

The Word of God is revealed to us by the Holy Spirit. Jesus said that He will pour out the Holy Spirit. It happened on the Feast of Weeks. The Feast of Weeks was then baptised as Pentecost (Chapter 5).

About six hundred years before Christ Jeremiah already prophesied that the Holy Spirit will be poured out: Jeremiah 31:33: *"But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people."*

The old covenant referred to the land and descendants from which blessing for all nations will come. The sign of this covenant was circumcision. The new covenant relate to this but includes eternal salvation: Jesus Christ.

Hebrews 7:22-25: *"²²by so much more Jesus has become a surety of a better covenant. ²³Also there were many priests, because they were prevented by death from continuing. ²⁴But He, because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood. ²⁵Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them."*

In 1 Peter 1:11 it can be read that it is the Spirit of the Lord Jesus who inspired the prophets of the Old Testament.

1 Peter 1:11: *"searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow."*

They saw and understood the Messiah's redemptive act. About 750 years before Christ Isaiah writes in the past tense of the Messiah as seen in Isaiah 53.

Isaiah 53:5: *"But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed."* By the way, we can see here it refers to crucifixion "wounded". The time Isaiah wrote these words, crucifixion was not practised. Crucifixion was introduced later by the Romans. Jesus was crucified by the Roman custom to subdue a criminal. This again points to the authenticity of the prophecy testified about.

Jesus is regarded as a criminal and was crucified. He also predicted it: Luke 22:37: *For I say to you that this which is written must still be accomplished in Me: 'AND HE WAS NUMBERED WITH THE TRANSGRESSORS.' For the things concerning Me have an end."*

Jesus explains to the travelers to Emmaus in Luke 24:25-26 and then to His disciples in Luke 24:44-45 that He fulfilled the law of Moses. They are now equipped to start the Church.

Luke 24:44-45: *"⁴⁴Then He said to them, "These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me." ⁴⁵And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures."*

Hebrew 1:3: *"who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high."*

The Lord prepared man for the New Covenant through His law. Galatians 3:19-20: *"¹⁹What purpose then does the law serve? It was added because of transgressions, till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was appointed through angels by the hand of a mediator. ²⁰Now a mediator does not mediate for one only, but God is one."*

There is no intermediary, in other words, not ourselves, or any other prophet, or representative, or so called revelation, outside / or after Christ that could perfect the law, or could take over the role of the Messenger of the covenant. It would not make sense for God to send someone else after Christ to supposedly finally reveal God's salvation for humans. The only Person who has the Final Word, is Jesus Christ, the Promised One. It makes a lot of sense, because He is the Truth, the Word of God.

'You can only be saved if you see yourself as condemned under the law, but saved by the blood of Christ.

Galatians 4:21-5:18 *"^{4:21}Tell me, you who desire to be under the law, do you not hear the law? ²²For it is written that Abraham had two sons: the one by a bondswoman, the other by a freewoman. ²³But he who was of the bondswoman was born according to the flesh, and he of the freewoman*

through promise, ²⁴which things are symbolic. For these are the two covenants: the one from Mount Sinai which gives birth to bondage, which is Hagar— ²⁵for this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children—²⁶but the Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother of us all. ²⁷For it is written: "REJOICE, O BARREN, YOU WHO DO NOT BEAR! BREAK FORTH AND SHOUT, YOU WHO ARE NOT IN LABOR! FOR THE DESOLATE HAS MANY MORE CHILDREN THAN SHE WHO HAS A HUSBAND." ²⁸Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are children of promise. ²⁹But, as he who was born according to the flesh then persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, even so it is now. ³⁰Nevertheless what does the Scripture say? "CAST OUT THE BONDWOMAN AND HER SON, FOR THE SON OF THE BONDWOMAN SHALL NOT BE HEIR WITH THE SON OF THE FREEWOMAN." ³¹So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman but of the free. ^{5:1}Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage. ²Indeed I, Paul, say to you that if you become circumcised, Christ will profit you nothing. ³And I testify again to every man who becomes circumcised that he is a debtor to keep the whole law. ⁴You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace. ⁵For we through the Spirit eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. ⁶For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love. ⁷You ran well. Who hindered you from obeying the truth? ⁸This persuasion does not come from Him who calls you. ⁹A little leaven leavens the whole lump. ¹⁰I have confidence in you, in the Lord, that you will have no other mind; but he who troubles you shall bear his judgment, whoever he is. ¹¹And I, brethren, if I still preach circumcision, why do I still suffer persecution? Then the offense of the cross has ceased. ¹²I could wish that those who trouble you would even cut themselves off! ¹³For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. ¹⁴For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: "YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF." ¹⁵But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another! ¹⁶I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. ¹⁷For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. ¹⁸But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law."

Isaiah 59:20-21: ²⁰"The Redeemer will come to Zion, And to those who turn from transgression in Jacob," Says the LORD. ²¹"As for Me," says the LORD, "this is My covenant with them: My Spirit who is upon you, and My words which I have put in your mouth, shall not depart from your mouth, nor from the mouth of your descendants, nor from the mouth of your descendants' descendants," says the LORD, "from this time and forevermore."

Study Romans 14.

The Sacrifices

Man has always sought God. Ancient nations have always worshiped. They had a relationship with God. It is more recently that the mythical heresy has occurred and let man believe there is more than one god. It is also more recently that others mistakenly come to believe that god is some or other kind of magical power without personality.

The Creator of the universe revealed Himself clearly to man. He gave us His name and His stamp clearly imprinted on us. We got to know him as the God of the covenant (I Am – Yahweh - Lord). He made it clear that there is no other like Him. It now makes sense! Nothing can arise from nothing. Nothing can not create something. Something does not happen spontaneously from nothing.

If you are lied to, even subtly, that the universe has always existed and that it arose spontaneously over the course of millions of years, the highly intricate design of the universe is completely overlooked. The intricate design of the universe could not arise spontaneously without an intelligent Personality who established it. (Teleological Argument of Newton). The intelligent Personality would also not have created a highly complex design without a purpose. Anything that had a beginning had a purpose. Science clearly proves that the universe had a beginning, so it had a purpose (Einstein's cosmological argument). The greatest scientists of all times believed that there must have been a Creator.

The Creator of the universe is certainly not just one or another form of energy. He is also not only one or other neutral form of presence. An impersonal and unintelligent form of so-called energy, or power, can not be creative, especially aimlessly. One of the greatest thinkers of modern times, CS Lewis, testified that it is the sense of morality that brought him to faith in the Creator. CS Lewis said that one can not know something is wrong if you don't know what is right. "How can I know a line is crooked, if I do not know how a straight line looks?" Clearly any normal thinking person knows what is right and what is wrong. It is placed by the Creator in man with a purpose.

The sacred personality of the Creator can be experienced in obedience to His Being. It stands as a pole above water. It should not be confused with anything else. He has a Name, the Lord. He has given each person a unique personality who can identify himself with His Personality. They can be in relationship with

each out of free will. It is also the most important characteristic of a love relationship freely and clearly dependent on unique personalities.

In Genesis 10 it can already be read that man, however, deviated from the person of God. Lust occurred. Nimrod lived about 2000 years before Christ and believed that lust is the purpose of man. By giving yourself over to alcohol and sexual lust, according to him, was the highest form of life. For example, he took his own mother, Semiramis, as wife. She was the original "Madonna", the prostitute with blonde hair. Like Nimrod, she was later deified and worshiped as the "Queen of Heaven" (more about this later in Chapter 8).

From about 500 BC, the great philosophers emerged. They believed that all knowledge can be acquired by the man himself through the process of reasoning (rationalism). This refers to people like Socrates, Aristotle, Plato, and many others. Human thought was the only way for them to a perfect life. The big mistake they have committed was limiting themselves to human thought! Think about this: Can a dog clarify man? The logical answer is no. A dog can not clarify his owner because he does not have the mental ability to do it. Ironically, man is not the Creator of the dog. There is even a bigger gap between the Creator man. It is impossible for man to clarify his Creator, man does not have the mental ability to do so.

It becomes more clear why a true wise man and one of the first theologians, Tertullian, already about 230 years after Christ said that he identified the working of Satan 1) He crucified the Father; 2) He sent the Holy Spirit on flight. In other words

- 1) Man lost his personal relationship with the Father. There is not one true God who is worshipped. There are now a myriad of false and mythical gods, and even many who believe there is no God
- 2) The person of God is revealed to us through the work of the Holy Spirit. We can not know someone if we can not experience the person's personality. Someone without a personality does not have a presence. You can not know him! Someone who has more than one personality, is referred to as schizophrenic. There is a lot wrong with him. The Almighty Creator of the universe is certainly not without personality, and does not manifest with more than one personality. He is holy. Think carefully, you will not want to live in a pigsty. Why should God do it!? Nor will we find the Lord through a spiritual pigsty.

Where human lust is sought, the Spirit of God is absent. You get just what you are looking for, human enjoyment with spiritual desolation. The latter is self-destructive and leads to death. Only the Creator can give life, eternal life. Eternal life is obtained in the presence (in obedience and search) to the Person of God. He is the Light of the world.

If we want to get to know someone, we need to be able to do it. We need to get to know the person. You must identify your thoughts with who the person is. You can not know someone without knowing who he is. God created us so that we may know Him. He identified Himself as the God of the covenant with man so that we can identify with Him. So we can get to know Him.

The Old Testament of the Bible draws one's attention to the person of God. This gives us the frame of reference to get to know Him. At the same time the yearning for the wonderful Personality of God, the Lord, is getting bigger. It can not be otherwise. The finding is made that the origin of perfect joy is outside the humans frame of reference.

See Jesus Christ's words in John 16:24: *"Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full."*

This is not something that can be reached by reasoning but through worship. The worshiper's own arrogant view of God changed to a unique personal testimony of a living relationship with the Creator.

Only someone who has a personality for you can be in your presence. His whole being, character and identity addresses you in a unique way. Only then can there be a relationship. It would make no sense for the Creator of the universe to create man each with a unique personality, and just let go of them. The essence of man is created to find the perfect being of God. This is especially ridiculous to think that the Creator has no personality. He is not intellectually inferior to His creatures. He will also definitely not manifest with different identities. You can ask yourself the question: How strong is a witness with a lack of identity?!

You can not have a relationship with an impersonal form of energy or condition. One can enter a "trance" being that of a neutral state of mind. It is practiced to reach a higher state of relief, or experience (enlightenment). Such a process has no future perspective, but to be in a certain state.

A relationship with a merciless god, who shows no interest in you as a person, does not make sense either. A meaningful relationship only exists between two people who know and respect each other. It makes sense and has positive future value when the two parties live in obedience to each other's expectations. This process is dependent on undoubted security of identity. You know with whom you are dealing.

The Lord gave us His Name and even entered into a covenant (Genesis 15) to make a relationship with Him clear. Man's attention is drawn to this particular relationship that holds eternal perspective. You can know the Creator and be His child. He will be your God forever.

The necessary process to know the Creator of the universe, the Lord, is a wonderful (above human thought), spiritual pilgrimage. When one realizes that the Supernatural is a reality, the spiritual is true, your life starts making sense to discover the Person of God.

See what Paul testified about Jesus Christ in Colossians 2:9: *"For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; ¹⁰and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power."*

Obedience to the truth let us focus on what matters. It keeps you occupied with valuable expectations. Already about 1300 years before Christ, the Lord made it possible for man through introducing practices to set the attention on Him. This refers to offerings. The offers were a process of commemoration of the sacrifices and can be read in the first seven chapters of the book of Leviticus.

In his book, Thus Shalt Thou Serve CW Slemming (58, p.11-12) notes that the offerings held futuristic fulfillment posed in the history of Israel. It also went ahead of the greatest teachings of the Church. With the exception of one, it was a process of sacrifice where the sacrifices required the flow of blood. This is because they picturesquely held a big sacrifice that had to be made, and it was the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. To add, the one offering not requiring the flow of blood is called the Atonement Sacrifice (Peace Offering). This could only be made possible through Jesus because the Divine Sacrifice fulfilled the flow of blood to stand forever in relationship with the Creator. Man can now be part of the covenant which God entered into with Abraham through faith in the perfect sacrifice, the Lamb of God - Jesus Christ, which was made on the cross outside Jerusalem (Zion), according to the Scriptures.

In Leviticus 23 it can be read of the festivals ordained by God. The offerings were sacrificially and the feasts were ceremonially. The offerings indicates the human search for God through sacrifice and the feasts points to man's relationship with God through renunciation of sin.

Slemming also says that all the offerings, in detail, was not left to human imagination or interpretation. It focussed on obedience.

- The holiness of God necessitated a sacrifice
- The majesty of God necessitated certain regulations
- The honor of God necessitated specific actions (code of conduct)
- The perfection of God requires the best
- The purity of God compelled freedom of stigma
- The sovereignty of God compelled absolute obedience to detail

However no sacrifice that was made by man, was sufficient. There were different types of offerings, sacrificed animals and grain to seek rapprochement with God

- Leviticus 1 The burnt offering
- Leviticus 2 The grain offering
- Leviticus 3 The meal offering (atonement sacrifice)
- Leviticus 4 The sin offering
- Leviticus 5 The debt offering

Slemming pointed out that all these sacrifices were dictated to Moses by God. Nothing was left to man's imagination. The offerings were given in the order listed above, but it is not the order in which they were commemorated. The order in which it was commemorated, is as follows:

The burnt offering
The grain offering
The sin offering
The debt offering
The meal offering (atonement sacrifice)

The atoning sacrifice, third in the list, took the last place during the anniversary. This makes sense, because reconciliation can only take place through obedience to all the others. Reconciliation is achieved, not a cause. The Atonement sacrifice is third on the original list because the five offerings were divided into two categories. The first three were voluntary offerings. The Atonement sacrifice was a voluntary sacrifice and hence listed with the first two. The last two (sin offering and debt offering) was essential when it was discovered that a person sinned unknowingly.

God gave man offerings to seek His closeness - the burnt offering, grain offering and the atoning sacrifice. If you discover that you have sinned, as a child of God is not supposed to sin, you were obliged to commemorate the sin offering and the guilt offering

1 John 5:18: *"We know that whoever is born of God does not sin; but he who has been born of God keeps himself, and the wicked one does not touch him."*

Only the Son of God, Jesus Christ, the perfect Atonement sacrifice has made it possible for us, through faith in Him, to live in reconciliation with the Father. This sacrifice, the Lamb of God was sufficient. He has been identified before any human history, according to the Priesthood of Melchizedek. He was predicted the Messiah (Anointed) at the beginning of Genesis 3:15 that will destroy Evil. Evil is what remove us from a personal relationship with God the Lord (Yahweh). Evil can be written with a capital letter because it is an identified person, Satan, with his evil forces that are active in this world to try and distance man away from the true God (Ephesians 6). Evil seeks to make us believe that Evil does not exist, or that God does not exist, or that God can assume any form, or that God has no personality, or that God is not merciful, or that a God of love will make all things right.

When the Person of God is not a reality for you, you stand outside the covenant with Abraham (Genesis 15). God can not be your God and you can not be His child, the choice is up to you. The latter is the characteristic of a true love relationship. This does not mean that nothing would ever go wrong, but that you are God's child through all conditions and He would give you meaning and context beyond human understanding.

Hosea 6:4-6: *"⁴O Ephraim, what shall I do to you? O Judah, what shall I do to you? For your faithfulness is like a morning cloud, And like the early dew it goes away. ⁵Therefore I have hewn them by the prophets, I have slain them by the words of My mouth; And your judgments are like light that goes forth. ⁶For I desire mercy and not sacrifice, And the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings."* (Also see Isaiah 1:11-17; Micah 6:6-8; Jeremiah 7:21-23; Psalms 40:7-9; 51:18-19; Proverbs 21:3; Matthew 12:7)

The entire Bible refers to Jesus, see Jesus' words in John 5:39: *"You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me."*

John 1:1: *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."* John 1:14: *"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."*

The sacrifices and customs in the Old Testament, all foretold Christ. For example, in Exodus 12 (about 1200 BC) prescriptions are given for Easter. During this festival man commemorates how God protected the Israelites from the death of the firstborn. Note that this protection was obtained through smearing the blood of the paschal lamb on the doorposts. The paschal lamb had to be without blemish, slaughtered and its blood smeared on the doorposts. This festival is celebrated by believers (Israel and strangers who obey the commands of God) for more than a thousand years until the Messiah Himself rose from the dead. The latter authentically confirmed that Jesus Christ is the Messiah. Jesus was publicly crucified, buried, and amid strict surveillance rose from the dead. The fact that the tomb was empty is regarded today as one of the most historical facts.

Jesus showed Himself to many people after His resurrection from the dead, and even on a occasion appeared to over 500 people at once (read Paul's testimony in 1 Corinthians 15). The fact that Jesus rose from the dead, confirmed that he was the Passover lamb that was slain. It ensured that Christians today still maintain the Passover in order to celebrate the atoning death of Jesus. In other words, it is still the remembrance of the blood of the Lamb which flowed for reconciliation with God.

It is informative to see that the sacrifices were replaced by the Messiah. Jesus Himself took our sins upon Himself for reconciliation with God. Jesus Himself, the Lamb, introduces the Lord's Supper / Holy Communion that can be directly linked to the sacrificial animal that was slaughtered (The bread that is broken) and shed of blood (the wine) to remind us of His atoning death on the cross. Jesus came as the Lamb to be slaughtered as it is predicted centuries ago and was part of the practices of the believers. After Jesus instituted the Holy Communion, He was captured the next day to be crucified, exactly (period, method, His actions, place, his name) as all the prophecies foretold, and as He Himself prophesied it would happen. . He Himself rose from the dead after three days as predicted by the prophets, and He Himself prophesied.

Leviticus 17:11-12: *"¹¹For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul. ¹²Therefore I said to the children of Israel, 'No one among you shall eat blood, nor shall any stranger who dwells among you eat blood.'" By the blood of the sacrificial animal atonement was granted, Christ's blood has flowed for us.*

Now we can better understand why John the Baptist in John 1:29 proposed and recognize Christ as the Lamb of God. *"The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"* In verse 32 John further testified *"I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and He remained upon Him."*

As the entire Old Testament prophesied the Messiah we can also see the Messianic reality in the offerings.

The Offerings		
Burnt Offerings		
Scripture in the Old Testament	Discussion	Jesus is the Truth
<p>Leviticus 1:1-17: <i>"Now the LORD called to Moses, and spoke to him from the tabernacle of meeting, saying, ²'Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'When any one of you brings an offering to the LORD, you shall bring your offering of the livestock—of the herd and of the flock. ³If his offering is a burnt sacrifice of the herd, let him offer a male <u>without blemish</u>; he shall offer it of his own free will at the door of the tabernacle of meeting before the LORD. ⁴Then he shall <u>put his hand on the head of the burnt offering</u>, and it will be accepted on his behalf to make atonement for him. ⁵He shall kill the <u>bull before the LORD</u>; and the priests, Aaron's sons, shall bring the blood and <u>sprinkle the blood all around on the altar that is by the door of the tabernacle of meeting</u>. ⁶And he shall skin the burnt offering and <u>cut it into its pieces</u>. ⁷The sons of Aaron the priest shall put fire on the altar, and lay the wood in order on the fire. ⁸Then the priests, Aaron's sons, shall lay the parts, the head, and the fat in order on the wood that is on the fire upon the altar; ⁹but he shall <u>wash its entrails and its legs with water</u>. And the priest shall burn all on the altar as a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, a sweet aroma to the LORD. ¹⁰If his offering is of the flocks—of the sheep or of the goats—as a burnt sacrifice, he shall bring a male without blemish. ¹¹He shall kill it on the north side of the altar before the LORD; and the priests, Aaron's sons, shall <u>sprinkle its blood all around on the altar</u>. ¹²And he shall <u>cut it into its pieces</u>, with its head and its fat; and the priest shall lay them in order on the wood that is on the fire upon the altar; ¹³but he shall wash the entrails and the legs with water. Then the priest shall bring it all and burn it on the altar; it is a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, a sweet aroma to the LORD. ¹⁴And if the burnt sacrifice of his offering to the LORD is of birds, then he shall bring his offering</i></p>	<p>The burnt offering (like the grain offering and the meal offering) was optional. Thus it was a process to seek rapprochement with the Lord to repair your relationship with the Creator.</p>	<p>Through worship, man enters the presence of the Lord. Jesus Christ, the Divine High Priest according to the priestly order of Melchizedek, have made it possible for us today. The believer today can by calling the name of Jesus worship the Father.</p>
	<p>The sacrifice had to be without blemish. This rule was enforced very strictly. The priests inspected all the sacrifices that were brought to them to make sure they are without blemish. The sacrificial animal was blameless and pointed to the Perfect Sacrifice, Jesus Christ, who was sinless.</p>	<p>Just as the sacrifice was brought to the priests for inspection if it was without blemish, Jesus was brought before Pilate and Herod. They found him without blemish: Luke 23:13-15: <i>"¹³Then Pilate, when he had called together the chief priests, the rulers, and the people, ¹⁴said to them, 'You have brought this Man to me, as one who misleads the people. And indeed, having examined Him in your presence, I have found no fault in this Man concerning those things of which you accuse Him; ¹⁵no, neither did Herod, for I sent you back to him; and indeed nothing deserving of death has been done by Him."</i></p>
	<p>The sacrificial animal had to belong to the person and be a herbivore. If it did not belong to him, he had to buy it. Animals such as cats, dogs, horses, camels, donkeys and pigs were not allowed. The latter is used in the sacrifices of pagan religions.</p>	<p>Every year when the pilgrims arrived in Jerusalem for Passover, they acquired the pascha lamb as their property on about Nisan 9 (without blemish). The lamb was confirmed by the priest as unblemished and then kept and cared for until the lamb was slain on Passover, Nisan 14. Jesus came to Jerusalem on a donkey (according to the Scriptures - See Zechariah 9:9) on about Nisan 9, and was crucified on Nisan 14. This Truth must be owned by you, or you are busy with pagan religion. Then you're out of the Truth.</p>
	<p>The person making the sacrifice had to lay his hand on the head of the sacrificial animal when killed. It was a personal thing. Symbolically the sins of the person was transferred to sacrificial animal that stood in for his sins.</p>	<p>The believer today accepts the reconciliation death of Jesus who died on the cross, according to the Scriptures. He or she accepts Jesus as his or her personal Savior.</p>
<p>The sacrificial animal was slaughtered before the Lord. If referring to the presence of someone, it is clearly related to a particular and unique identity.</p>	<p>Jesus is the Face of the Lord for us on earth. We can know Him. Through His Word, the Bible, the Holy Spirit reveals Himself to us. The Lord was always recognizable involved in man. Written more than 700 years before Christ by Isaiah:</p>	

<p>of turtledoves or young pigeons. ¹⁵The priest shall bring it to the altar, wring off its head, and burn it on the altar; its <u>blood shall be drained out at the side of the altar.</u> ¹⁶And he shall remove its crop with its feathers and cast it beside the altar <u>on the east side, into the place for ashes.</u> ¹⁷Then he shall split it at its wings, but shall not divide it completely; and the priest shall burn it on the altar, on the wood that is on the fire. It is a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, a sweet aroma to the <u>LORD.</u>"</p>		<p>Isaiah 63:9: "In all their affliction He was afflicted, And the Angel of His Presence saved them; In His love and in His pity He redeemed them; And He bore them and carried them All the days of old."</p> <p>John the Baptist prepared the people in the desert wilderness for Jesus' ministry on earth, as has been prophesied by Isaiah Isaiah 40:3: "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: "Prepare the way of the LORD; Make straight in the desert A highway for our God."</p> <p>John the Baptist testified that he as a person can only baptize with water. This is the sign that Jesus washed our sins with His blood. However, it is only Jesus that can baptize us with the Holy Spirit John 1:31-34: "³¹I did not know Him; but that He should be revealed to Israel, therefore I came baptizing with water." ³²And John bore witness, saying, "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and He remained upon Him. ³³I did not know Him, but He who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' ³⁴And I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God."</p> <p>Jesus Himself explained that He gives us the Holy Spirit and it is the Holy Spirit who reveals to us the Word. In other words, without longing for the Truth, Jesus, we will remain in the dark John 16:13-15: "¹³However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. ¹⁴He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you. ¹⁵All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare it to you."</p>
	<p>The sacrificial animal was cut into pieces, and there was blood spilled which was poured against the foot of the altar.</p>	<p>The consequence of sin is always death Genesis 2:16-17: "¹⁶And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; ¹⁷but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.""</p> <p>The breaking of a body and the flow of blood are signs of a covenant (see Chapter 4). The Lord made a covenant with Abraham that He will be His God and Abraham will have a</p>

		<p>large seed (Genesis 15). All nations may be included in this covenant by faith in Jesus Christ. Jesus is indeed the Messenger of the covenant, His blood flowed at the foot of the cross</p> <p>Malachi 3:1-2: <i>"¹Behold, I send My messenger, And he will prepare the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, Will suddenly come to His temple, Even the Messenger of the covenant, In whom you delight. Behold, He is coming," Says the LORD of hosts. ²But who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner's fire And like launderers' soap."</i></p>
	The altar stood in front of the entrance of the Tent of Meeting	An encounter took place between God and the worshiper. It's a personal thing. Humility and worshipping brings people into the presence of the Lord
	The priests facilitated the process	<p>Today there is no more priestly services as in the Old Testament times. The Divine High Priest, Jesus Christ, brought the perfect sacrifice. Today the Church took over the role of the priests and the Church facilitates the worship process. The Church is the body of Christ, it creates an opportunity for believers to serve one another in love.</p> <p>1 Corinthians 12:4-13: <i>"⁴There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. ⁵There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. ⁶And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all. ⁷But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all: ⁸for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, ⁹to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, ¹⁰to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. ¹¹But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills. ¹²For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. ¹³For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body--whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free--and have all been made to drink into one Spirit."</i></p>

	The intestines and legs he had to wash with water.	Symbolically the sins of the person was washed to give a fire offering of sweet fragrance to the Lord
	When a ram (lamb) was used, it had to be a ram without blemish and it was slaughtered on the north side of the altar generation. The ash of the offerings were thrown on the east side of the altar.	<p>The sacrificial animal always had to be without blemish. Jesus was without sin. It is only He who can save others from their sins. The fact that the animal had to be slaughtered of on the north side of the altar, and that the ashes of the burnt sacrifice thrown on the east side of the altar, can be interpreted in various ways. The wonderful thing is that we as humans do not know everything. Everyting the Lord is busy with in man contains prophetic reality around the Messiah, undoubtedly Jesus Christ, according to the Scriptures. Therefore it refers to Jesus as the Word of God (John 1).</p> <p>For us it is important to seek rapprochement, and to strive for the Being of God as revealed through His Son on earth, Jesus. This can only be done under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Man remains responsible for his or her own sin. Forgiveness of sin by the Lord takes place for the believing heart that does not want to sin and the Being of Christ as his or her personal Savior from sin.</p> <p>See Jesus' words as witnessed in John 15:4-5: <i>"⁴Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. ⁵I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing."</i></p> <p>1 John 5:18: <i>"We know that whoever is born of God does not sin; but he who has been born of God keeps himself, and the wicked one does not touch him."</i></p>
	The burnt offering had to completely burn on the altar.	None of the sacrificial animal were left over. Jesus Christ, respected the Father's holiness and carried out His commands. Thereafter only He could stand in for our sins. Through faith in His redemptive acts the believer can experience perfect reconciliation with the Lord.
	It is an offering by fire of a sweet flavor unto the Lord	<p>The sacrifice was a process of worship. Today we can come before the Lord in worship in the name of Jesus Christ.</p> <p>Revelation 5:8: <i>"Now when He had taken the scroll, the four</i></p>

		<p><i>living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.”</i></p> <p>Revelation 8:4: <i>“And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, ascended before God from the angel's hand.”</i></p>
<p>The Grain Offering (The Meat offering and the firstfruits)</p>	<p>Discussions</p>	<p>Jesus is the Truth</p>
<p>The word “meat,” as it was used by the translators of the NKJV, did not mean “meat” as we now use the term, say in the expression “meat and potatoes.” This was a term which simply referred to food, and thus, in a general way, could refer to grain (either in its raw form, or cooked in some fashion) (https://bible.org).</p>	<p>Bring a meat offering to the door of the tabernacle. It refers to serving. The person making the offerings, serve the Lord. To serve is a privilege.</p>	<p>Slemming pointed out that the burnt offering was about self-sacrifice. You give yourself. The grain offering is about serving. You make yourself available to serve. This is always the order in Scripture. We can not serve the Lord until we have given ourselves. We can not obtained salvation through good works. Faith comes first, and that is to put the Lord first in our lives (58, p.42-43).</p>
<p>Leviticus 2:1-16: <i>“¹When anyone offers a <u>grain offering</u> to the LORD, his offering shall be of <u>fine flour</u>. And he shall <u>pour oil on it, and put frankincense on it.</u> ²He shall bring it to Aaron's sons, the priests, one of whom shall take from it his handful of fine flour and oil with all the frankincense. And the priest shall burn it as a memorial on the altar, an offering made by fire, a sweet aroma to the LORD. ³The rest of the grain offering shall be Aaron's and his sons'. It is most holy of the offerings to the LORD made by fire. ⁴And if you bring as an offering a grain offering baked in the oven, it shall be unleavened cakes of fine flour mixed with oil, or unleavened wafers anointed with oil. ⁵But if your offering is a grain offering baked in a pan, it shall be of fine flour, unleavened, mixed with oil. ⁶You shall break it in pieces and pour oil on it; it is a grain offering. ⁷If your offering is a grain offering baked in a covered pan, it shall be made of fine flour with oil. ⁸You shall bring the grain offering that is made of these things to the LORD. And when it is presented to the priest, he shall bring it to the altar. ⁹Then the priest shall take from the grain offering a</i></p>	<p>The grain offering had to be flour / grain. This is the only offering where no meat is used. Slemming points out the meaning of the Hebrew word <i>minchah</i> used for this offering. It means something that the less important brings for the more important and it must be something of value, otherwise it is an insult (58, p.34).</p>	<p>John MacArthur points out that "fine" flour refers to the perfection of the sacrifice just as the body without blemish at the burnt offering (59, p.157-158). The attitude is more important than the sacrifice Proverbs 21:2-3: <i>“²Every way of a man is right in his own eyes, But the LORD weighs the hearts. ³To do righteousness and justice Is more acceptable to the LORD than sacrifice.”</i> The name Bethlehem, where Jesus was born, meaning "place of bread." Christ is the Seed who died to give life to many. Flour and oil mixed form bread. Jesus is the bread of life. He is the only One that can give life, eternal life. No other god could, according to the Scriptures, rise from the dead themselves.</p>
	<p>No leaven or honey may be used because it causes fermentation. Leaven is a sign of sin in the Bible (1 Corinthians 5) and causes the breakdown of the dough – fermenting.</p>	<p>Offerings brings us in the Presense of the Lord. Christ is the Perfect Person who is revealed to us. There was no sin in Him. Jesus' body did not decompose in the grave. After three days He rose from the dead, according to the Scriptures. Today we can know that He is the only Giver of eternal life.</p>
	<p>All meal offerings should be prepared with salt. Without Leaven (sin) and salt (purity)</p>	<p>Colossians 4:5-6: <i>“⁵Walk in wisdom toward those who are outside, redeeming the time. ⁶Let your speech always be with</i></p>

<p>memorial portion, and burn it on the altar. It is an offering made by fire, a sweet aroma to the LORD. ¹⁰And what is left of the grain offering shall be Aaron's and his sons'. It is most holy of the offerings to the LORD made by fire. ¹¹No grain offering which you bring to the LORD shall be made with leaven, for you shall burn <u>no leaven nor any honey</u> in any offering to the LORD made by fire. ¹²As for the offering of the firstfruits, you shall offer them to the LORD, but they shall not be burned on the altar for a sweet aroma. ¹³And <u>every offering of your grain offering you shall season with salt; you shall not allow the salt of the covenant of your God to be lacking from your grain offering.</u> With all your offerings you shall offer salt. ¹⁴If you offer a grain offering of your firstfruits to the LORD, you shall offer for the grain offering of your firstfruits green heads of grain roasted on the fire, grain beaten from full heads. ¹⁵And you shall <u>put oil on it</u>, and lay frankincense on it. It is a grain offering. ¹⁶Then the priest shall burn the memorial portion: part of its beaten grain and part of its oil, with all the frankincense, as an offering made by fire to the LORD."</p>	<p>should be present. Salt works against corruption, it brings salvation. In Leviticus 2:13 it refers to the salt of the covenant of thy God. It is an everlasting covenant of pure truth. Salt refers to perseverance and obedience to the covenant.</p>	<p><i>grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one."</i> John 8:31-32: ³¹Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. ³²And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." The world must see that we are in a covenant with the Lord.</p>
	<p>Add oil to it. It refers to anointing.</p>	<p>The name Messiah means "anointed". Jesus Christ is the Messiah of God. When it comes to the fruit of the earth, He is the First Fruits to eternal life (See Feast of First Fruits in Chapter 5). He is the Bread of life (flour and oil mixed = bread; Bethlehem "Place of bread").</p> <p>Daniel prophesied already more than 600 years before Christ in Daniel 9:25-26: ²⁵"Know therefore and understand, That from the going forth of the command To restore and build Jerusalem Until Messiah the Prince, There shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; The street shall be built again, and the wall, Even in troublesome times. ²⁶"And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself; And the people of the prince who is to come Shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it shall be with a flood, And till the end of the war desolations are determined." (Read more about the prophecies at http // www.matthew28.co.za)</p> <p>Lazarus (whom Jesus raised from the dead) sister, Mary, discovered Jesus as the Messiah. John 12:1-3: ¹Then, six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus was who had been dead, whom He had raised from the dead. ²There they made Him a supper; and Martha served, but Lazarus was one of those who sat at the table with Him. ³Then Mary took a pound of very costly oil of spikenard, anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the oil."</p> <p>As the impact of a sweet fragrance has on people, the wonderful flavor of the Anointed of God is embodied in a person's life. Anointing the person is accompanied by a</p>

		<p>meeting with the Lord. God's Anointed (Jesus, the Messiah) has an impact on your life</p> <p>James 5:14-16: ¹⁴Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. ¹⁵And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. ¹⁶Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much."</p>
	<p>Incense is added. Incense caused a pleasant aroma when burned.</p>	<p>A life of bondage can only be successful through continued prayer.</p>
<p>The Meal Offering (Atonement Sacrifice)</p>		
<p>The Thanksgiving Leviticus 3:1-17: ¹When his offering is a sacrifice of a peace offering, if he offers it of the herd, whether male or female, he shall offer it <u>without blemish before the LORD</u>. ²And he shall lay his hand on the head of his offering, and kill it at the door of the tabernacle of meeting; and Aaron's sons, <u>the priests, shall sprinkle the blood all around on the altar</u>. ³Then he shall offer from the sacrifice of the peace offering an offering made by fire to the LORD. The fat that covers the entrails and all the fat that is on the entrails, ⁴the two kidneys and the fat that is on them by the flanks, and the fatty lobe attached to the liver above the kidneys, he shall remove; ⁵and Aaron's sons shall burn it on the altar upon the burnt sacrifice, which is on the wood that is on the fire, as an offering made by <u>fire, a sweet aroma to the LORD</u>. ⁶If his offering as a sacrifice of a peace offering to the LORD is of the flock, <u>whether male or female, he shall offer it without blemish</u>. ⁷If he offers a <u>lamb</u> as his offering, then he shall offer it before the LORD. ⁸And he shall lay his hand on the head of his offering, and kill it before the tabernacle of meeting; and Aaron's sons shall sprinkle its <u>blood all around on the altar</u>. ⁹Then he shall offer from the sacrifice of the peace offering, as an</p>	<p>CW Slemming pointed out that this sacrifice was listed third in Leviticus, but however commemorated last of the five offerings. It pointed out that peace can only be found in the soul when God's requirements are met. He also refers to Dr. JA Seiss who explained that the word "peace", and we might add, "reconciliation", has a meaning in Scripture not commonly used today. This does not only mean hospitality, harmony, agreement, or absence of disturbances. It also includes success, prosperity, and happiness (58, p.77). The atoning sacrifice symbolizes the peace that exists between God and the true worshiper.</p>	<p>John 16:24: " Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full."</p> <p>Phillipians 3:4-10: ⁴though I also might have confidence in the flesh. If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so: ⁵circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee; ⁶concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. ⁷But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. ⁸Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ ⁹and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; ¹⁰that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death"</p>
	<p>There are three types of animals used. A bull (cattle / ox), a lamb or ewe (lamb) and a goat.</p>	<p>All three animals show God's Revelation to us. The cow, or ox, strong and patient showing the Father James 5:7: "Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the</p>

<p>offering made by fire to the LORD, its <u>fat</u> and the whole fat tail which he shall remove close to the backbone. And the <u>fat</u> that covers the entrails and all the <u>fat</u> that is on the entrails, ¹⁰the two kidneys and the <u>fat</u> that is on them by the flanks, and the fatty lobe attached to the liver above the kidneys, he shall remove; ¹¹and the priest shall burn them on the altar as food, an offering made by fire to the LORD. ¹²And if his offering is a <u>goat</u>, then he shall offer it before the LORD. ¹³He shall lay his hand on its head and kill it before the tabernacle of meeting; and the sons of Aaron shall sprinkle its <u>blood</u> all around on the altar. ¹⁴Then he shall offer from it his offering, as an offering made by fire to the LORD. The <u>fat</u> that covers the entrails and all the <u>fat</u> that is on the entrails, ¹⁵the two kidneys and the <u>fat</u> that is on them by the flanks, and the fatty lobe attached to the liver above the kidneys, he shall remove; ¹⁶and the priest shall burn them on the altar as food, an offering made by fire for a sweet aroma; <u>all the fat is the LORD's</u>. ¹⁷<u>This shall be a perpetual statute throughout your generations in all your dwellings: you shall eat neither fat nor blood.</u>"</p>		<p>earth, waiting patiently for it until it receives the early and latter rain."</p> <p>The lamb shows God as humble and affable. Prophesied 750 years before Christ Isaiah 53:7: "He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, And as a sheep before its shearers is silent, So He opened not His mouth."</p> <p>The goat shows the Lord as the rejected one. Prophesied 750 years before Christ Isaiah 53:5: "But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed."</p>
	<p>A fire offering with a sweet flavor unto the Lord</p>	<p>Prayers of believers</p>
	<p>In the other sacrifices it all had to be male. In this offering male and female sacrifices are acceptable. They still had to be without blemish.</p>	<p>After reconciliation between God and man is accomplished, they celebrate. A Joyful festival. It is not about the man's physical body, it refers to your faith in Christ's atoning death. Man waives his sin and pursue the Person of God, revealed to us in Christ.</p>
<p>Leviticus 7:11-21: ¹¹'This is the law of the sacrifice of peace offerings which he shall offer to the LORD: ¹²If he offers it for a thanksgiving, then he shall offer, with the sacrifice of thanksgiving, unleavened cakes mixed with oil, unleavened wafers anointed with oil, or cakes of blended flour mixed with oil. ¹³Besides the cakes, as his offering he shall offer leavened bread with the sacrifice of thanksgiving of his peace offering. ¹⁴And from it he shall offer one cake from each offering as a heave offering to the LORD. It shall belong to the priest who sprinkles the blood of the peace offering. ¹⁵The flesh of the sacrifice of his peace offering for thanksgiving shall be eaten the same day it is offered. He shall not leave any of it until morning. ¹⁶But if the sacrifice of his offering is a vow or a voluntary offering, it shall be eaten the same day that he offers his sacrifice; but on the next day</p>	<p>The person making the offering, always had to put his hand on the head of the sacrificial animal. It had to take place before the Lord, in front of the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. The blood of the sacrificial animal was poured around on the altar by priests.</p>	<p>The person surrender his sins and put his trust in Jesus, who died for his sins. Jesus' blood flowed for our sins. The Church took over the role of the priests where the sacraments, such as Holy Communion, is served. See Jesus' words to His disciples the night before He was crucified.: Luke 22:19-20: ¹⁹And He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me." ²⁰Likewise He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you."</p>
	<p>Fat protects the body against extreme temperature changes. It is an insulator under the skin and also acts as a cushion for the organs, and a lubricant for the joints. Fat is very important. In this sacrifice it can be seen that all the fat of the sacrificial</p>	<p>The Lord expects the best from us. Warmth and love that strengthens the spiritual life. This is seen by our dedication to the Lord. Commitment to the Word of God nourishes the soul with divine energy and spiritual passion. In this sacrifice it is seen that what is adopted by the Lord, is no longer seen as generally, it is holy. (58, p.81-82).</p>

<p><i>the remainder of it also may be eaten; ¹⁷the remainder of the flesh of the sacrifice on <u>the third day</u> must be burned with fire. ¹⁸And if any of the flesh of the sacrifice of his peace offering is eaten at all on the third day, it shall not be accepted, nor shall it be imputed to him; it shall be an abomination to him who offers it, and the person who eats of it shall bear guilt. ¹⁹The flesh that touches any unclean thing shall not be eaten. It shall be burned with fire. And as for the clean flesh, all who are clean may eat of it. ²⁰But the person who eats the flesh of the sacrifice of the peace offering that belongs to the LORD, while he is unclean, that person shall be cut off from his people. ²¹Moreover the person who touches any unclean thing, such as human uncleanness, an unclean animal, or any abominable unclean thing, and who eats the flesh of the sacrifice of the peace offering that belongs to the LORD, that person shall be cut off from his people.' "</i></p>	<p>animal goes to the Lord. The best for the Lord. Man was also not allowed to eat the fat.</p>	<p>Daniel 7:18: <i>"But the saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever."</i></p> <p>The apostle Paul explained as follows: Ephesians 2: 17-22: <i>"¹⁷And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. ¹⁸For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father. ¹⁹Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, ²⁰having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone,</i></p>
	<p>This is the only sacrifice where the person making the offering, also gets a part of the offering. It symbolizes a time of peace between the worshiper and God of which everyone gets a part.</p>	<p>Christ brought reconciliation between God and man. Man is now part of His divine glory Romans 5:1: <i>"Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,;"</i></p> <p>Colossians 1:20: <i>"and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross."</i></p> <p>Eph 2:14: <i>"For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation,"</i></p> <p>2 Cor 5:19: <i>"that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation."</i></p>
	<p>Deuteronomy 12:17-18: <i>"¹⁷You may not eat within your gates the tithe of your grain or your new wine or your oil, of the firstborn of your herd or your flock, of any of your offerings which you vow, of your freewill offerings, or of the heave offering of your hand. ¹⁸But you must eat them before the LORD your God in the place which the LORD your God chooses, you and your son and your daughter, your male servant and your female servant, and the Levite who is</i></p>	<p>This feast that is celebrated in communion with each other and what Christ made possible is the peace by the blood of Christ on the cross. This community of believers should be celebrated in the Church, as it was originally celebrated in the courtyard of the tabernacle. The Word of God is celebrated! (58, p.83-84).</p>

	<i>within your gates; and you shall rejoice before the LORD your God in all to which you put your hands."</i>	
The Sin Offering		
Leviticus 4:1-35: <i>"Now the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ²"Speak to the children of Israel, saying: 'If a person sins unintentionally against any of the commandments of the LORD in anything which ought not to be done, and does any of them, ³if the anointed priest sins, bringing guilt on the people, then let him offer to the LORD for his sin which he has sinned a young bull without blemish as a sin offering. ⁴He shall bring the bull to the door of the tabernacle of meeting before the LORD, lay his hand on the bull's head, and kill the bull before the LORD. ⁵Then the anointed priest shall take some of the bull's blood and bring it to the tabernacle of meeting. ⁶The priest shall dip his finger in the blood and sprinkle some of the blood seven times before the LORD, in front of the veil of the sanctuary. ⁷And the priest shall put some of the blood on the horns of the altar of sweet incense before the LORD, which is in the tabernacle of meeting; and he shall pour the remaining blood of the bull at the base of the altar of the burnt offering, which is at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. ⁸He shall take from it all the fat of the bull as the sin offering. The fat that covers the entrails and all the fat which is on the entrails, ⁹the two kidneys and the fat that is on them by the flanks, and the fatty lobe attached to the liver above the kidneys, he shall remove, ¹⁰as it was taken from the bull of the sacrifice of the peace offering; and the priest shall burn them on the altar of the burnt offering. ¹¹But the bull's hide and all its flesh, with its head and legs, its entrails and offal-- ¹²the whole bull he shall carry outside the camp to a clean place, where the ashes are poured out, and burn it on wood with fire; where the ashes are poured out it shall be burned. ¹³Now if the whole congregation of Israel</i>	The sin offering and the guilt offering differs from the previous three offerings in the sense that they were compulsory. The previous three offerings were voluntary.	John MacArthur points out that the sin offering differs from the guilt offering (discussed next) because sin was involved here and reconciliation was not possible. (To add, the person could not compensate for the sin he committed himself by, for example, to make an additional contribution. He was still guilty before God.) The latter is possible with the guilt offering. It is sin committed unknowingly (59, p.159) ..
	The person bringing the sacrificial animal had to slaughter it himself. He is the one who has sinned, he is also responsible for the death of the sacrificial animal.	It is our sins for which Jesus died on the cross. It's a personal thing for every believer.
	The priest to sprinkle the blood seven times before the Lord, in front of the veil of the sanctuary. The remaining blood was poured at the bottom of the altar of burnt offerings.	Seven is the perfect number. This indicates it is finished. The blood of Christ that was shed brought atonement. Salvation comes from the Lord. The veil indicated the entrance to the presence of the Lord. It is only here that reconciliation can occur by grace of God alone. During our High Priest (Divine priestly order of Melchizedek), Jesus Christ's crucifixion, this veil in the temple tore in the centre. Every believer can now stand in the presence of the Lord.
	The bull had to be brought outside the camp. No part of the sacrificial animal was shared. The whole animal was sacrificed to the Lord.	Jesus was crucified outside Jerusalem. The Lord gave His only Son, His Best, so that every believer can be saved. The Lord rejected sin. Slemming explained just as the innocent animal cannot stand in for sin entirely, the law could not bring atonement. The animal does not know moral values, they do not know what is right and what is wrong. Therefore the animal could not really vouch for man's sin. The law, with all its provisions, was made weak or ineffective by the body of the innocent animal (58, p.54). So the Lord sent His Son, Jesus Christ who was without sin and as innocent as the sacrificial animal, for His flesh to be innocently crucified and invalidate the law for us. Through faith in Jesus' death on the cross for your sins, the law is ineffective for you. Slemming refers to Romans 8:3: <i>"For what the law could not</i>

sins unintentionally, and the thing is hidden from the eyes of the assembly, and they have done something against any of the commandments of the LORD in anything which should not be done, and are guilty; ¹⁴when the sin which they have committed becomes known, then the assembly shall offer a young bull for the sin, and bring it before the tabernacle of meeting. ¹⁵And the elders of the congregation shall lay their hands on the head of the bull before the LORD. Then the bull shall be killed before the LORD. ¹⁶The anointed priest shall bring some of the bull's blood to the tabernacle of meeting. ¹⁷Then the priest shall dip his finger in the blood and sprinkle it seven times before the LORD, in front of the veil. ¹⁸And he shall put some of the blood on the horns of the altar which is before the LORD, which is in the tabernacle of meeting; and he shall pour the remaining blood at the base of the altar of burnt offering, which is at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. ¹⁹He shall take all the fat from it and burn it on the altar. ²⁰And he shall do with the bull as he did with the bull as a sin offering; thus he shall do with it. So the priest shall make atonement for them, and it shall be forgiven them. ²¹Then he shall carry the bull outside the camp, and burn it as he burned the first bull. It is a sin offering for the assembly. ²²When a ruler has sinned, and done something unintentionally against any of the commandments of the LORD his God in anything which should not be done, and is guilty, ²³or if his sin which he has committed comes to his knowledge, he shall bring as his offering a kid of the goats, a male without blemish. ²⁴And he shall lay his hand on the head of the goat, and kill it at the place where they kill the burnt offering before the LORD. It is a sin offering. ²⁵The priest shall take some of the blood of the sin offering with his finger, put it on the horns of the altar of burnt offering, and pour its blood at the base of the altar of burnt offering. ²⁶And he shall burn all its fat on the altar, like the fat of the sacrifice of the peace offering. So the priest shall make atonement for him concerning his sin,

do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh,"

and Psalms 19:7-8: "⁷The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul; The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple; ⁸The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes;"

The question is asked, what is it that the law could not do? The answer is found in Galatians 2:16: "knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified."

and it shall be forgiven him. ²⁷If anyone of the common people sins unintentionally by doing something against any of the commandments of the LORD in anything which ought not to be done, and is guilty, ²⁸or if his sin which he has committed comes to his knowledge, then he shall bring as his offering a kid of the goats, a female without blemish, for his sin which he has committed. ²⁹And he shall lay his hand on the head of the sin offering, and kill the sin offering at the place of the burnt offering. ³⁰Then the priest shall take some of its blood with his finger, put it on the horns of the altar of burnt offering, and pour all the remaining blood at the base of the altar. ³¹He shall remove all its fat, as fat is removed from the sacrifice of the peace offering; and the priest shall burn it on the altar for a sweet aroma to the LORD. So the priest shall make atonement for him, and it shall be forgiven him. ³²If he brings a lamb as his sin offering, he shall bring a female without blemish. ³³Then he shall lay his hand on the head of the sin offering, and kill it as a sin offering at the place where they kill the burnt offering. ³⁴The priest shall take some of the blood of the sin offering with his finger, put it on the horns of the altar of burnt offering, and pour all the remaining blood at the base of the altar. ³⁵He shall remove all its fat, as the fat of the lamb is removed from the sacrifice of the peace offering. Then the priest shall burn it on the altar, according to the offerings made by fire to the LORD. So the priest shall make atonement for his sin that he has committed, and it shall be forgiven him.”

Leviticus 5:1-13: ¹If a person sins in hearing the utterance of an oath, and is a witness, whether he has seen or known of the matter--if he does not tell it, he bears guilt. ²Or if a person touches any unclean thing, whether it is the carcass of an unclean beast, or the carcass of unclean livestock, or the carcass of unclean creeping things, and he is unaware of it, he also shall be unclean and guilty. ³Or if he touches human uncleanness--whatever uncleanness with which a man

may be defiled, and he is unaware of it--when he realizes it, then he shall be guilty. ⁴Or if a person swears, speaking thoughtlessly with his lips to do evil or to do good, whatever it is that a man may pronounce by an oath, and he is unaware of it--when he realizes it, then he shall be guilty in any of these matters. ⁵And it shall be, when he is guilty in any of these matters, that he shall confess that he has sinned in that thing; ⁶and he shall bring his trespass offering to the LORD for his sin which he has committed, a female from the flock, a lamb or a kid of the goats as a sin offering. So the priest shall make atonement for him concerning his sin. ⁷If he is not able to bring a lamb, then he shall bring to the LORD, for his trespass which he has committed, two turtledoves or two young pigeons: one as a sin offering and the other as a burnt offering. ⁸And he shall bring them to the priest, who shall offer that which is for the sin offering first, and wring off its head from its neck, but shall not divide it completely. ⁹Then he shall sprinkle some of the blood of the sin offering on the side of the altar, and the rest of the blood shall be drained out at the base of the altar. It is a sin offering. ¹⁰And he shall offer the second as a burnt offering according to the prescribed manner. So the priest shall make atonement on his behalf for his sin which he has committed, and it shall be forgiven him. ¹¹But if he is not able to bring two turtledoves or two young pigeons, then he who sinned shall bring for his offering one-tenth of an ephah of fine flour as a sin offering. He shall put no oil on it, nor shall he put frankincense on it, for it is a sin offering. ¹²Then he shall bring it to the priest, and the priest shall take his handful of it as a memorial portion, and burn it on the altar according to the offerings made by fire to the LORD. It is a sin offering. ¹³The priest shall make atonement for him, for his sin that he has committed in any of these matters; and it shall be forgiven him. The rest shall be the priest's as a grain offering."

The Guilt Offering		
<p>Leviticus 5:14-19: ¹⁴Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: ¹⁵<u>If a person commits a trespass, and sins unintentionally in regard to the holy things of the LORD, then he shall bring to the LORD as his trespass offering a ram without blemish from the flocks, with your valuation in shekels of silver according to the shekel of the sanctuary, as a trespass offering.</u> ¹⁶And he shall make restitution for the harm that he has done in regard to the holy thing, and shall add one-fifth to it and give it to the priest. So the priest shall make atonement for him with the ram of the trespass offering, and it shall be forgiven him. ¹⁷<u>If a person sins, and commits any of these things which are forbidden to be done by the commandments of the LORD, though he does not know it, yet he is guilty and shall bear his iniquity.</u> ¹⁸And he shall bring to the priest a ram without blemish from the flock, with your valuation, as a trespass offering. So the priest shall make atonement for him regarding his ignorance in which he erred and did not know it, and it shall be forgiven him. ¹⁹It is a trespass offering; he has certainly trespassed against the LORD."</p>	<p>The guilt offering, like the sin offering was compulsory.</p> <p>The debt (guilt) offering, unlike the others, compensation is required. The debt offering was part of the sin offering, and the situation changes. Man sinned and comes short of God's standards. It also includes the illegal possession of someone else's property (58, p.58).</p> <p>As seen with the sin offering specific sins were pointed out that makes man guilty in front of God. Examples mentioned in Leviticus 5:1-4 are truth withheld, impurity and reckless promises and then not stick to it.</p> <p>It is clear that the Lord will abhor falsehood. See for example Ecclesiastes 5:2: "Do not be rash with your mouth, And let not your heart utter anything hastily before God. For God is in heaven, and you on earth; Therefore let your words be few."</p> <p>If you read Judges 11:29-40, it can be seen through a very sad event that it is extremely important not to say careless things. Jesus makes it clear Matthew 5:33-37: ³³"Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform your oaths to the Lord.' ³⁴But I say to you, do not swear at all: neither by heaven, for it is God's throne; ³⁵nor by the earth, for it is His footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. ³⁶Nor shall you swear by your head, because you cannot make one hair white or black. ³⁷But let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No.' For whatever is more than these is from the evil one."</p>	<p>It can be seen that the believer is a person of his / her word. Jesus, who was without sin, clearly illustrated it during his trial. Jesus did not defend Himself, but then they asked Him whether He is the Son of God, He confirmed it. Two wonderful Revelations here for us:</p> <p>1) The prophecy was fulfilled Isaiah 53:7 (written about 750 years before Christ) "H <i>He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, And as a sheep before its shearers is silent, So He opened not His mouth.</i>" See what happened during Jesus' trial, just before He was crucified: Mark 15:3-5: ³<i>And the chief priests accused Him of many things, but He answered nothing.</i> ⁴<i>Then Pilate asked Him again, saying, "Do You answer nothing? See how many things they testify against You!"</i> ⁵<i>But Jesus still answered nothing, so that Pilate marveled."</i></p> <p>2) Jesus still spoke the truth. Mark 15:2: <i>"Then Pilate asked Him, "Are You the King of the Jews?" He answered and said to him, "It is as you say."</i></p>
<p>Leviticus 7:1-10: ¹Likewise this is the law of the trespass offering (it is most holy): ²In the place where they kill the burnt offering they shall kill the trespass offering. And its blood he shall <u>sprinkle all around on the altar.</u> ³And he shall offer from it all its fat. The fat tail and the fat that covers the entrails, ⁴the two kidneys and the fat that is on them by the flanks, and the fatty lobe attached to the liver above the kidneys, he shall remove; ⁵and the priest shall burn them on the altar as an offering made by fire to the LORD. It is a trespass offering. ⁶Every male among the priests may eat it. It shall be eaten in a holy place. It is most holy. ⁷The trespass offering is like the sin offering; there is one law for them both: the priest who makes atonement with it shall have it. ⁸And the priest who offers anyone's burnt</p>	<p>Sin with respect to one of the holy things of</p>	<p>Slemming points out the fact that if a promise was made, and it was a good promise, and the person did not do as promised, he was guilty and had to bring a debt offering. If a person sworn to evil, and he missed it, he sinned. Such a person was in a dilemma. If he did the evil done what he said he was going to do, he would sin. . If he would not fulfill what he said, he still sinned, and he had a debt offering. In other words, we learn from this that it is more important to the Lord that we keep our word as to nurture evil aspirations (58, p.64).</p> <p>Jesus is the firstborn of God on earth. The Holy Spirit</p>

<p>offering, that priest shall have for himself the skin of the burnt offering which he has offered. ⁹Also every grain offering that is baked in the oven and all that is prepared in the covered pan, or in a pan, shall be the priest's who offers it. ¹⁰Every grain offering, whether mixed with oil or dry, shall belong to all the sons of Aaron, to one as much as the other."</p>	<p>the Lord. The Lord is the Creator of the universe. Everything belongs to Him. He also made it clear that certain things only belong to Him, and not be shared, such as the firstborn. Exodus 13:2: ""Consecrate to Me all the firstborn, whatever opens the womb among the children of Israel, both of man and beast; it is Mine.""</p> <p>Malachi 3:7-10: "⁷Yet from the days of your fathers You have gone away from My ordinances And have not kept them. Return to Me, and I will return to you," Says the LORD of hosts. "But you said, 'In what way shall we return?' ⁸"Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me! But you say, 'In what way have we robbed You?' In tithes and offerings. ⁹You are cursed with a curse, For you have robbed Me, Even this whole nation. ¹⁰Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, That there may be food in My house, And try Me now in this," Says the LORD of hosts, "If I will not open for you the windows of heaven And pour out for you such blessing That there will not be room enough to receive it."</p>	<p>impregnated Mary. Matthew 1:20-21: "²⁰But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. ²¹And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins.""</p> <p>About 750 years before Christ the prophet Isaiah prophesied as can be read in Isaiah 9:5: "For every warrior's sandal from the noisy battle, And garments rolled in blood, Will be used for burning and fuel of fire."</p> <p>We can ask ourselves today, how do we stand towards this Wonderful Revelation today? Do I still argue that Jesus is the Son of God, or do I accept Him as my Savior? If you accept Him as your Savior, He is your first fruit to eternal life! You may share in His feast forever. Leviticus 23:9-10: "⁹And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ¹⁰"Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'When you come into the land which I give to you, and reap its harvest, then you shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest to the priest.'" (More about this in Chapter 5).</p>
	<p>If someone sins, and do something what God forbids, he / she is still guilty. If I infringe any of country laws, it will not help me to claim that I did not know what the law is. Though I really did not know, I'm still breaking the law.</p> <p>God kept Himself busy with man from the beginning. He revealed Himself enough to man. The highlight of His Revelation is His Son, Jesus Christ, who live among us on this earth, according to the Scriptures. The apostle Paul writes as follows: Romans 1:18-21: "¹⁸For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who <u>suppress the</u></p>	<p>Jesus' words, as witnessed by the Apostle (eyewitness) John 14:1-9: "¹Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. ²In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. ³And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. ⁴And where I go you know, and the way you know." ⁵Thomas said to Him, "Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?" ⁶Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. ⁷If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; and from now on you know Him and have seen Him." ⁸Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us." ⁹Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and yet</p>

	<p><i>truth in unrighteousness,¹⁹ because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them.²⁰ For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse,²¹ because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened."</i></p>	<p><i>you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"</i></p> <p>1 John 5:10-13: <i>"¹⁰He who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself; he who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed the testimony that God has given of His Son. ¹¹And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. ¹² He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. ¹³These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God."</i></p> <p>The Revelation and redemption God provided to man, is Jesus Christ. John 8:31 also says that the Son is the truth. If we don't recognized Jesus as the Truth, we are lost.</p>
	<p>The blood was poured out around the altar. Without the flow of blood there is no remission of sins.</p>	<p>Jesus Christ was crucified on earth according to the Scriptures. In other words, Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection was predicted and celebrated centuries before the event. He gave His life so that those who believe in Him, may have eternal life. His blood flowed as the perfect sacrifice.</p> <p>Paul explains in: 2 Corinthians 5:17-19: <i>"¹⁷Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. ¹⁸Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, ¹⁹that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation."</i></p>

Offer	Christ's provision	Christ's Character
Burnt offering Leviticus 1:3-17, 6:8-13	Reconciliation	Sinless Nature
Grain offerin Leviticus 2:1-16, 6:14-23	Devotion / separate	Christ was fully dedicated to the Father's will
Peace offering Leviticus 3:1-17, 7:11-36	Reconciliation	Christ was at peace with God
Sin offering Leviticus 4:1-5:13, 6:24-30	Substitute	Christ's atoning death
Debt Offering Leviticus 5:14-6:7, 7:1-10	Confession	Christ has already paid our sin debt for our redemption

Look at Jesus' words in John 6:53-54: ⁵³*Then Jesus said to them, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. ⁵⁴Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. "'*

All nations saved

Christians are often accused that they are arrogant by claiming to believe that their religion is the only truth. It is true that the Bible bears witness of the one true Creator, the Lord, who has revealed Himself to us through His Son authentically. The misunderstanding, however, is the fact that Christians preach uniqueness and not exclusivity!

The Bible tells about the Creator who has eternal salvation for all nations. Look at the following Scriptures:

- From Shekinah to Immanuel! The Temple ensured that the nations were reached 1 Kings 8:41-43 and 60; 2 Chronicles 6:32-33.
- Jesus is the seed of Abraham and all nations are saved through Abraham Genesis 12:3 and 22:18. Compare *Romans 14:6 and 17* and *Galatians 3:7-9; 14 and 29*
- If you know Jesus, you know the Father: John 14:6-7
- All nations were saved by Israel: Genesis 12:3; 1 Chronicles 16; 1 Chronicles 17:18-27; Isaiah 42:6; 49:6; Isaiah 60:3
- The people and the Word is there that we can believe: Isaiah 45:3
- The people of Israel is the light for all nations
- The people of Israel lives on because of the covenant with the patriarchs in spite of their sins. 2 Kings 13:23
- Promise to Abraham and confirmed in Malachi 1:11
- Authentic apostles and witnesses that the Gospel provides for everyone to believe. Acts 1:1-3 and 1:21-22

Jesus, the Son of Man, Son of God and Servant of God

1.1 Introduction

Jesus was unequivocally revealed to man from the beginning of creation and give us the assurance that He gives us eternal life. He is clearly visible and representative in the covenant, the sacrifices and the feasts of the Lord. There are many prophecies about him in the Old Testament.

1.2 Jesus: Son of Man

Jesus was born as a man of the house of David, according to the prophecies, and we can read His genealogies from father and mother side

Matthew 1:1-17 Father Side and Luke 3:23-38 Mother Side. John MacArthur (33, p1518) points out that Luke used the Jewish mindset to indicate Mary's genealogy by repeatedly referring to the male figure. Joseph, for example, is listed as the son of Heli but the latter had no son of his own, in other words, it refers to the son-in-law. Both genealogies indicates that Joseph was not the genetic father of Jesus, but the legal (earthly) father. Matthew 1:16: *"And Jacob begot Joseph the husband of Mary (not the fater of Jesus), of whom was born Jesus who is called Christ."* and Luke 3:23: *"Now Jesus Himself began His ministry at about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph, the son of Heli....."*

Isaiah 9:5-6: ⁵For to us a Child is born.....⁶There is no end of the increase of His government and peace on the throne of David, and on His kingdom, to order it and to establish it with judgment and with justice from now on, even forever. The zeal of Jehovah of Hosts will do this.”

Isaiah 11:10: “And in that day there shall be the Root of Jesse standing for a banner of the people; to Him the nations shall seek; and His resting place shall be glorious.” (Jesse is another name for the father of David)

Daniel 7:13-14: ¹³I saw in the night visions, and behold, One like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him. ¹⁴And dominion and glory was given Him, and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations and languages, should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.”

The census of Caesar Augustus ensured that we can know today Jesus was born of the tribe of David. Luke 2:1-4

Revelation 5:5: “But one of the elders said to me, “Do not weep. Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals.”

Messiah from the tribe of Judah, Jesus Christ

1.3 Jesus: the Son of God

Isaiah 63:9: “In all their affliction He was afflicted, And the Angel of His Presence saved them; In His love and in His pity He redeemed them; And He bore them and carried them All the days of old.”

John 1:1: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”

John 1:14: “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.”

Colossians 1:15-16: ¹⁵He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. ¹⁶For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him.”

John 14:9-11: ⁹Jesus said to him, ‘Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, ‘Show us the Father?’ ¹⁰Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works. ¹¹Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves.”

Matthew 17:2-8: ²and He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light. ³And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him. ⁴Then Peter answered and said to Jesus, “Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You wish, let us make here three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.” ⁵While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!” ⁶And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their faces and were greatly afraid. ⁷But Jesus came and touched them and said, “Arise, and do not be afraid.” ⁸When they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only.” See also Mark 9:2-8 and Luke 9:28-36.

1.4 Jesus: The Servant of God

Isaiah 42:1-4: ¹“Behold! My Servant whom I uphold, My Elect One in whom My soul delights! I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the Gentiles. ²He will not cry out, nor raise His voice, Nor cause His voice to be heard in the street. ³A bruised reed He will not break, And smoking flax He will not quench; He will bring forth justice for truth. ⁴He will not fail nor be discouraged, Till He has established justice in the earth; And the coastlands shall wait for His law.”

Isaiah 53:1-12: ¹Who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? ²For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, And as a root out of dry ground. He has no form or comeliness; And when we see Him, There is no beauty that we should desire Him. ³He is despised and rejected by men, A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. ⁴Surely He has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted. ⁵But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed. ⁶All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. ⁷He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, And as a sheep before its shearers is silent, So He opened not His mouth. ⁸He was taken from prison and from judgment, And who will declare His generation? For He was cut off

from the land of the living; For the transgressions of My people He was stricken. ⁹And they made His grave with the wicked-- But with the rich at His death, Because He had done no violence, Nor was any deceit in His mouth. ¹⁰Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief. When You make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, And the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand. ¹¹He shall see the labor of His soul, and be satisfied. By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many, For He shall bear their iniquities. ¹²Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the great, And He shall divide the spoil with the strong, Because He poured out His soul unto death, And He was numbered with the transgressors, And He bore the sin of many, And made intercession for the transgressors."

Romans 15:7-9: "⁷Therefore receive one another, just as Christ also received us, to the glory of God. ⁸Now I say that Jesus Christ has become a servant to the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made to the fathers, ⁹and that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy, as it is written: "FOR THIS REASON I WILL CONFESS TO YOU AMONG THE GENTILES, AND SING TO YOUR NAME."

Revelation 22:1-3: "¹And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. ²In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. ³And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him."

Jesus, the Son of Man, Son of God and Servant of God rose from the dead and perfected what man could not do. He also did what no other god could do. He clearly showed that He is the only God to man's existence and life, eternal life. We must accept His salvation. He went and prepared a place for us. Are we ready for when He returns to fetch us?

Jesus is eternal life! Only He can be, He ensured that we can know the true God: 1 John 5:18-21: "¹⁸We know that whoever is born of God does not sin; but he who has been born of God keeps himself, and the wicked one does not touch him. ¹⁹We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one. ²⁰And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life. ²¹Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen."

Chapter 5

Is Jesus Christ, the true High Priest who is our reconciliation with the Creator?

Many sects, such as Hinduism, TM, New Age, etc. search divinity within humans and / or nature. They claim that their "work" dates from a period before the Bible. However, we can read in the Bible that the Lord (God of the covenant) has always been present and has been the Creator. The priestly order of Melchizedek dates from a period that man is not aware of. Jesus was Reality (I Am), always been, even long before what we read in the Old Testament.

The Lord's livelihood can not be determined or pinned by us. The focus should be on the substance of the Lord so we can have a living relationship with Him.

1. Righteousness, Peace and Love - the Reality

The Bible is questioned by many by claiming that there are other writings dating from the period of the Bible and that there are other stories, such as flood stories, and thus the Bible is not unique in its message. There are also some that claims the God of the Old Testament is not the same God of the New Testament.

The above questions can easily occur when a person does not understand the real message of the Bible. It is suggested that the content of the Bible is simple and it deals with one's piety, or good deeds, in order to obtain salvation. They claim that you have to be a good person to be saved. The message of the Bible is just the opposite. Faith in Jesus Christ's atoning work brings unity with the being of God. The latter causes you to be a "holy" being in Jesus Christ. This means you receive the Person of Christ, you become like Jesus. You strive to be like Him, His Being.

We can certainly not predict our Creator's livelihood. If you could do it, you're definitely not busy with your Creator. You are busy with your own maximum concept of a god as you want to describe and understand him. In other words, you are building yourself a god as per your human, limited frame of reference, conceptualise and therefore you exclude the supernatural Revelation from the Almighty. This is worse than asking a dog to describe my livelihood.

The Lord has always been involved with His creation in such a way that we may know him. He revealed His Being to us before it could be written down first. Also consider what the Apostle John testified: John 21:25: "And there are also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were written one by one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written. Amen."

The Almighty Creator in Being was already involved with the man in the Person of Melchizedek. Melchizedek was the Divine High Priest and Mediator between man and God.

Hebrews 7:1-3: "1For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, 2to whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all, first being translated "king of righteousness," and then also king of Salem, meaning "king of peace," 3without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, remains a priest continually."

Salem is seen by some as an abbreviation for Jerusalem but with the passing of time it was called Jerusalem (32, Genesis14)

Melchizedek already received tithes of Abraham, and considered superior to Abraham Hebrews 7:6-7: "6but he whose genealogy is not derived from them received tithes from Abraham and blessed him who had the promises. 7Now beyond all contradiction the lesser is blessed by the better."

Vosloo and van Rensburg (32, part about Hebrew 7:1-28) pointed out that the priestly order of Melchizedek was of a much higher order than the Levitical priestly order. The following reasons are given

- Melchizedek was king of Salem and priest of God Most High
- Nothing is said about his genealogy and therefore he is, as the Son of God, priest forever
- The name Melchizedek means king of righteousness; King of Salem means king of peace; What every man wants *righteousness* and *peace* embodied in this priest king
- Melchizedek is the one who blessed Abram after Abram conquered kings and received tithes of Abraham. Melchizedek is at a higher level than Abraham and his descendants, the Levites. At the time Levi was still in the body of the forefathers.

It can be seen that the order of Melchizedek over the course of time, is above the laws of man, beyond nepotism (handing over to relatives). Vosloo and Van Rensburg continues by pointing out that Jesus Christ has given a new and fresh perspective as Priest and King. Jesus Christ who was appointed after the order of Melchizedek.

Melchizedek is held up as a prototype of Jesus in Hebrew 7. There is mystery about Melchizedek's person.

Psalms 110 also refers to Melchizedek. It was during this time that David conquered Jerusalem. Psalms 110:4: "The LORD has sworn And will not relent, "You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek." Look at Psalms 110:1: "The LORD said to my Lord,"Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool." See Hebrews 10:12-13: "12But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God, 13from that time waiting till His enemies are made His footstool."

Melchizedek, as king, had to act as mediator between God and His people. He also had to bless the people as priest on behalf of God, God's will made known to the people and lead the people in the Temple in their service to the Lord. That is also what David had to do. The fact that God confirmed this arrangement with an oath, means that the king would be the mediator between God and His people for as long as he lives.

He is not appointed of the earthly and temporal order of Aaron or Levi, but after the eternal priestly order of Melchizedek (5:6, compare Psalms 110:4). Melchizedek met Abraham in Genesis 14:18-20. Although he does not come from the Levitical priestly order, Abraham respected him as a priest of God Most High.

The High Priest had to once a year, on the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur), enter the Holy of Holies of the Temple and repent his own, and the people's sins. The most holy and sacred parts of the temple was separated with a "veil".

It is said about Jesus in Hebrews 7:17"For He testifies: "YOU ARE A PRIEST FOREVER ACCORDING TO THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK."".

Melchizedek was the righteous king of Salem and priest of God Most High. He blessed the patriarch Abraham. He was king of clarity and fairness, that's what his name means. Melchizedek was a non-Levitical priest from the tribe of Judah, nothing is known about this history or annals. According to the Hebrew writer, he was a foreshadowing of Jesus. Jesus is better than earthly high priest, because He comes from the timeless divine order of Melchizedek. We also know that there is no other so-called prophet or apostle that can reveal this reconciliation act to us better than the Spirit of God Himself!

When Jesus died on the cross, the veil in the temple was torn from top to bottom (Matthew 27:50-51). The earth shuddered. This event confirmed Jesus as the High Priest and Lamb of God who accomplished eternal atonement for man with the Father.

The believer can question any attempt on the Bible according to the source of the attack – where does Melchizedek fit in? The latter question may be an opportunity to testify what the true High Priest of God, Jesus Christ did for us. We know His Name, we can directly worship Him, no medium is needed, we can have a personal relationship with Him, He is our Lord and Savior, the One who rose from the dead, according to the Scriptures, and showed us that He can give us eternal life.

A powerful testimony is supported by the Word and the Word is the Son of God, the Anointed (Messiah). The feasts of the Lord is celebrated annually more than 1250 years before Christ and every year built up to Day of Atonement when the High Priest had to move past the veil and go repent to God for his own and the people's sins.

Without doubt it is wonderful to see that the feasts of the Lord remind us that Jesus Christ is the true High Priest according to God's divine order of priests, and prophetically indicate that the Messiah (Jesus Christ) will return to collect the believers. This is the most powerful prophecy that the believer can make, because it indicates the hope that becomes a reality is in him / her by the grace of Jesus Christ.

The Messianic reality in the Feasts of the Lord

(see <http://www.matthew28.co.za>)

Besides the sacrifices ordained by God, and clearly perfected the Lamb, the Lord also introduced festivals. These festivals, still celebrated today, help us today to seeing unity in the Word of God and to establish continuity so we can look forward to the coming of the Messiah.

The Lord has introduced several festivals which commemorate important milestones reached. With the passing of time, the Lord authentic fulfilled the festivals so we can see the parallel and continuity and thus believe in the Word of God. Likewise the sacrifices came in fulfillment by the Lamb that was slain. If we think about this, one realizes that there is no other sect, belief or doctrine that could institute this continuity. The obvious reason is that there is not a transcendental and theistic (God created and is still involved with his creation) God behind it. Again the Lord, through His grace, came to our rescue by His Word ..

Howard Rosenthal points out that there are seven annual festivals. Easter and the Feast of Unleavened Bread were first introduced, even before the exodus from Egypt. The Feast of Unleavened Bread was the first of the three annual pilgrim feasts. During three of the seven annual festivals (Festival of Unleavened Bread, Weeks, and Tabernacles) all Jewish males had to appear before the Lord at the Temple (Exodus 23:14-17; 34:18-23; Deuteronomy 16:16; 2 Chronicles 8:13). It is during one of this pilgrim feasts, Feast of Unleavened Bread, that the Messiah (12 years old) was responsible for great excitement (41, p66).

Luke 2:42-47: *"⁴²And when He was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem according to the custom of the feast. ⁴³When they had finished the days, as they returned, the Boy Jesus lingered behind in Jerusalem. And Joseph and His mother did not know it; ⁴⁴but supposing Him to have been in the company, they went a day's journey, and sought Him among their relatives and acquaintances. ⁴⁵So when they did not find Him, they returned to Jerusalem, seeking Him. ⁴⁶Now so it was that after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions. ⁴⁷And all who heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers."*

In Leviticus 23, about 1200 years before Christ, we read of the feasts of the Lord. Please note carefully how it is directly related to Jesus, the Messiah, the Lamb, the Bridegroom, The Rock who brought it perfect into fulfillment

1.1 Easter (Pesach)

Leviticus 23:5: *"On the fourteenth day of the first month at twilight is the LORD's Passover.."*

Howard Rosenthal pointed out that Easter holds an important message for today. It forms the primary background to understand the events in the Upper Room (the institution of the Holy Communion/Eucharist by Jesus), the symbolism behind the table of the Lord and also the significance of the death of the Messiah (41, p49).

In Exodus 12 the Lord's Passover is connected to the night the firstborn of Israel were saved from death (tenth plague) and the people saved from slavery out of Egypt. The lamb had been slaughtered and its blood smeared on the doorposts in order to save the house from the wrath of the Lord. This event is commemorated by Easter.

Exodus 12:13-14: *"¹³Now the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you; and the plague shall not be on you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt. ¹⁴So this day shall be to you a memorial; and you shall keep it as a feast to the LORD throughout your generations. You shall keep it as a feast by an everlasting ordinance."*

The innocent lamb stood in for the whole church so that God's judgment pass over them (For the Lord's judgment to "pass over" them (41, p50)).

Exodus 12:8: *"Then they shall eat the flesh on that night; roasted in fire, with unleavened bread and with bitter herbs they shall eat it."*

The lamb had to be young to show his innocence, and he also had to be fried that showed the judgment of God that came on the lamb instead of on the believers. Unleavened bread (Matzah) is eaten that showed the perfection of the sacrifice. The leavened properties also often pointed to sin. The bitter herbs are eaten to remind us of the suffering the lamb had to undergo. (41, p51).

The Lord instructed that Passover should be celebrated every year on the fourteenth day of the Hebrew month of Nisan (March-April). This is the day which the Lord saved His people from Egypt (Exodus 12:6; Leviticus 23:5; Numbers 9:3; 28:16). God's redemptive work was so powerful that Israel's religious calendar changed forever. In memory of this wonderful salvation the month Nisan (originally known as Abib before the Babylonian deportation, Exodus 13:4; 34:18) became the first month in the Hebrew calendar (Exodus 12:2; Numeri 9:5; 28:16) (41, p50).

This festival is celebrated since the time when the Israelites moved out of Egypt (Numbers 9:1-14), about 1500 years BC. It was still celebrated during Christ's ministry on earth. The Apostle John testifies in John 11:55-56 as follows

"⁵⁵And the Passover of the Jews was near, and many went from the country up to Jerusalem before the Passover, to purify themselves. ⁵⁶Then they sought Jesus, and spoke among themselves as they stood in the temple, "What do you think--that He will not come to the feast?""

How wonderful it is to realize that Jesus really was crucified during Passover! He is the Lamb that was slain to make atonement for our sins. Jesus Himself introduced Holy Communion, with the start of Passover. Thus the lamb which was to be eaten during the festival, was replaced with the bread that is broken. Easter, after Christ, is celebrated with three unleavened bread (Matzah), of which the middle one is broken. It refers to the Trinity of God the Father-Son-Holy Spirit. The middle one is broken referring to Jesus' torn body.

Matthew 26:17-19: *"¹⁷Now on the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying to Him, "Where do You want us to prepare for You to eat the Passover?" ¹⁸And He said, "Go into the city to a certain man, and say to him, 'The Teacher says, "My time is at hand; I will keep the Passover at your house with My disciples."'" ¹⁹So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them; and they prepared the Passover."*

Matthew 26:26-29: *"²⁶And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, "Take, eat; this is My body." ²⁷Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. ²⁸For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. ²⁹But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom."*

Exodus 12:5-6: *"⁵Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats. ⁶Now you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month. Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight."*

Note that the lamb had to be without blemish (Jesus is perfect), the date when he had to be slaughtered clearly determined (Jesus crucified on Nisan 14), and that the lamb had to be slaughtered late afternoon (Jesus died on the cross by late afternoon).

Keith Khodadad brought the Lamb into perspective as follows: The Pilgrims arrived in Jerusalem about a week before the festival. Each family chose a lamb on the tenth day of the month of Nisan. They then took this lamb to the officers at the Temple to be examined. If the lamb was declared without blemish, it was sacrificed on the fourteenth day of the month. As a Christian, one can clearly see the foreshadowing of the sacrifice of Christ. The Lamb of God went to Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, the same day the Jewish had to choose their Passover lamb. He was brought before the judgment seat of Pilate and Herod. After investigation, they declared Him without blemish. *"¹⁴said to them, "You have brought this Man to me, as one who misleads the people. And indeed, having examined Him in your presence, I have found no fault in this Man concerning those things of which you accuse Him; ¹⁵no, neither did Herod, for I sent you back to him; and indeed nothing deserving of death has been done by Him."* (Luke 23:14-15). So, after this public confirmation by the officers of the people to His innocence, the Lamb of God was crucified and He shed His atoning blood on that same day, probably at the same hour that the Passover lamb was sacrificed. (43, p17).

Matthew 27:45-54: *"⁴⁵Now from the sixth hour until the ninth hour there was darkness over all the land. ⁴⁶And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" that is, "MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN ME?" ⁴⁷Some of those who stood there, when they heard that, said, "This Man is calling for Elijah!" ⁴⁸Immediately one of them ran and took a sponge, filled it with sour wine and put it on a reed, and offered it to Him to drink. ⁴⁹The rest said, "Let Him alone; let us see if Elijah will come to save Him." ⁵⁰And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit. ⁵¹Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split, ⁵²and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; ⁵³and coming out of the graves after His resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many. ⁵⁴So when the centurion and those with him, who were guarding Jesus, saw the earthquake and the things that had happened, they feared greatly, saying, "Truly this was the Son of God!"*

Ironic that these same soldiers were in a hurry to remove those crucified of the crosses in order not to profane the important Sabbath without realizing that the Savior Self, who Passover is about, hung right before them on the cross!

John the apostle testified as follows: John 19:31-37³¹ *Therefore, because it was the Preparation Day, that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. ³²Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who was crucified with Him. ³³But when they came to Jesus and saw that He was already dead, they did not break His*

legs. ³⁴But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out. ³⁵And he who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you may believe. ³⁶For these things were done that the Scripture should be fulfilled, "NOT ONE OF HIS BONES SHALL BE BROKEN." ³⁷And again another Scripture says, "THEY SHALL LOOK ON HIM WHOM THEY PIERCED."

The above verse 31 refers to that the crucifixion took place on Friday. However, there are differences among scribes, whether it was Friday. In the original Greek it refers to the "day of preparation" and not Friday. Some Bible Translators interpreted it as Friday because it preceded the Sabbath. The weekly Sabbath that falls on the seventh day is Saturday. The logical conclusion is that Nisan 14 that year fell on Friday because it is said that the next day was Sabbath. The latter could still explain three days that Jesus Himself had predicted that He would be dead because Friday, Saturday to Sunday (when He rose from the dead) still stretched over three days.

The King James version gives the same John 19:31 as follows: *"The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day, for that sabbath day was an high day, besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away."* (The bones of the crucified were broken so they could not push themselves up against the cross any more with their legs to breathe properly.)

Should it be kept in mind that the first and last days of the Feast of Unleavened Bread (discussed in the next section) is also considered Sabbaths and not necessarily fell on the weekly Sabbath, the seventh day, there may be other possible conclusion of how the days were calculated. It is very important to realize that Jesus was crucified during Passover. Prophetically accurate as the festivals were celebrated for more than a thousand years before Christ. If we reflect on the Messianic reality in the Feasts of the Lord the believer realizes that Jesus is our First Fruit to eternal life (more on this later in this chapter). The first sheaf of grain from the new harvest (new age) is brought to the priest at the Temple as an offering. Jesus is the sacrifice brought for our sins. This introduced the new era, the new covenant. It is very interesting to reflect on the interpretation of exactly how the days fell during that week of the crucifixion, but it should not prejudice the fact that the event actually took place during the Passover.

Here are two interpretations of how the days during Jesus' crucifixion probably passed:

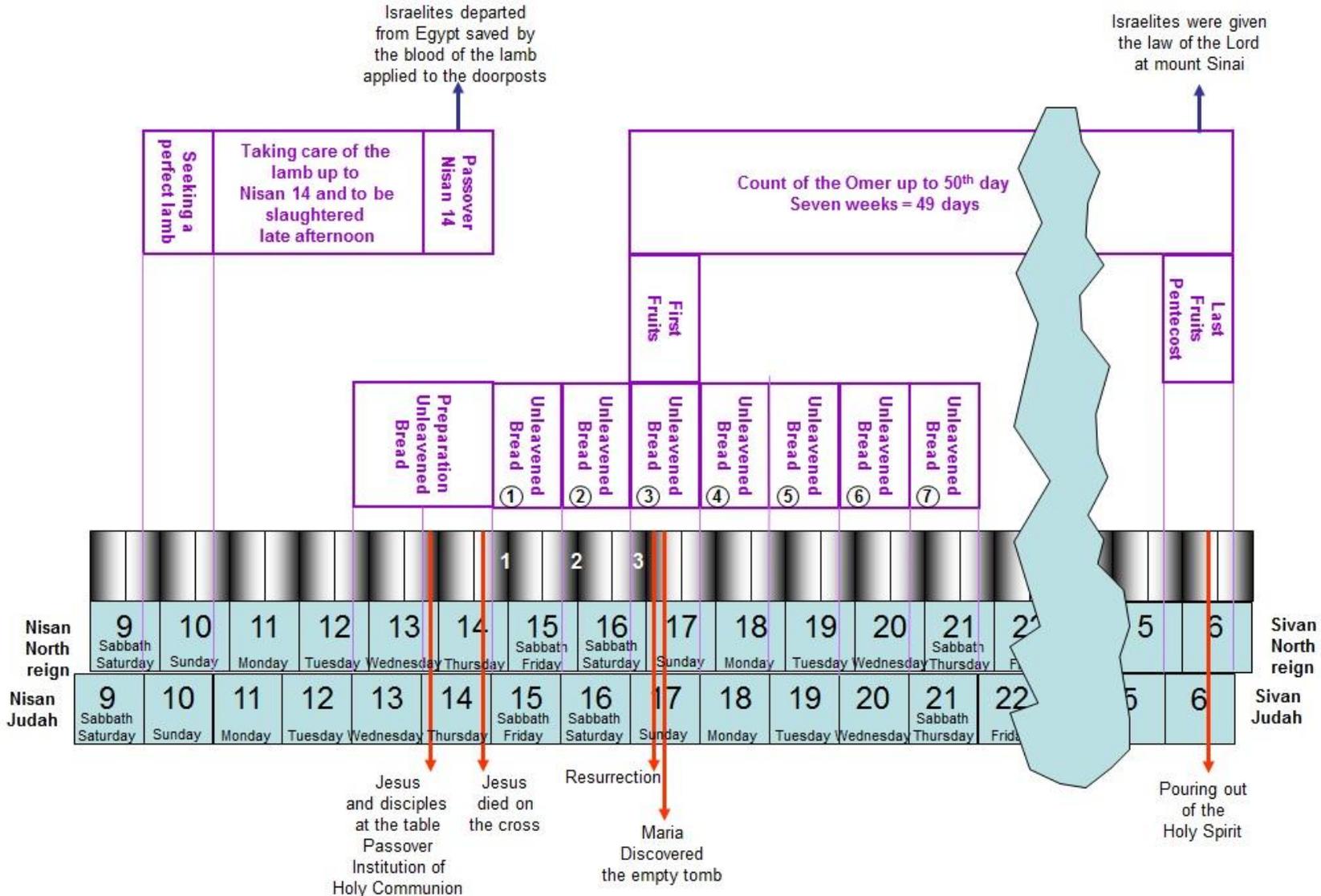
a) The crucifixion on Wednesday:

The Dyke Bible explains as follows: The special Sabbath referred to in John 19:31 stretched from sunset on Wednesday to sunset on Thursday (44, p118 NT). It was, in other words, Nisan 15. The first day of the feast of unleavened bread that is considered Sabbath. The Dyke Bible explains the chronological order of the events as follows: Judas betrayed Jesus and He was arrested early Tuesday evening. Jesus' trial took place the night of Tuesday and early Wednesday morning. The Crucifixion took place Wednesday (Nisan 14) and Jesus was buried at about sunset, Wednesday. Wednesday sunset to Thursday sunset was the important Sabbath and not the normal weekly Sabbath (44, p32 NT).

b) The crucifixion on Thursday

Jesus rose from the dead at the Feast of First Fruits. The latter feast was on Nisan 16/17. One would understand that Jesus rose from the dead during the early morning of Nisan 17 (after the offering on Nisan 16), it is possible that the crucifixion fell on the Thursday (Nisan 14) (see the diagram on the next page for a depiction of how the events could possible fall on the weekdays).

Matthew 28:1-6: ¹Now after the Sabbath, as the first day of the week began to dawn, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb. ²And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat on it. ³His countenance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow. ⁴And the guards shook for fear of him, and became like dead men. ⁵But the angel answered and said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. ⁶He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay."



A resemblance of how the events could have occurred the week of Christ's crucifixion

1.2 Feast of Unleavened Bread (Hag Hamatzot)

Leviticus 23:6-8: ⁶*And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the Feast of Unleavened Bread to the LORD; seven days you must eat unleavened bread.* ⁷*On the first day you shall have a holy convocation; you shall do no customary work on it.* ⁸*But you shall offer an offering made by fire to the LORD for seven days. The seventh day shall be a holy convocation; you shall do no customary work on it.*"

As Easter testifies of the Lord's death on Calvary - and it does so, loud and clear - the Feast of Unleavened Bread testifies to the fact that His physical body in the grave, not will undergo the dissolution of death (41, p 19).

The Feast of Unleavened Bread is a reminder of God's redemption, which He brought from the oppression in Egypt. When the Israelites moved out of Egypt, there was no time for bread to rise. So the Lord instructed:

"You shall eat no leavened bread with it; seven days you shall eat unleavened bread with it, that is, the bread of affliction (for you came out of the land of Egypt in haste), that you may remember the day in which you came out of the land of Egypt all the days of your life." Deuteronomy 16:3

Since the two festivals Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread is celebrated immediately after the other, they are often combined as an 8-day festival and referred to as "The eight days of Passover." During the time of the second temple, in other words, the time when Jesus was on earth, these eight days sometimes also referred to the Feast of Unleavened Bread. See Luke 22: 1 en 7:

Luke 22:1-2: ¹*Now the Feast of Unleavened Bread drew near, which is called Passover.* ²*And the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might kill Him, for they feared the people."*

Luke 22:7-8: ⁷*Then came the Day of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover must be killed.* ⁸*And He sent Peter and John, saying, "Go and prepare the Passover for us, that we may eat."*

Yeast (leaven or yeast) is known in Hebrew as hametz. It literally means "sour". It used to cause fermentation, particularly in bread dough. As the yeast sours the dough it creates small air bubbles that causes the dough to rise. Leaven in the Biblical times were representative of man's sin.(Matthew 16:6,11; Mark 8:15; Luke 12:1; Galatians 5:9). Therefore, during the Feast of Unleavened Bread no yeast (such as bread and rolls) was eaten or even allowed in the house (41, p66-67).

Deuteronomy 16:4: *"And no leaven shall be seen among you in all your territory for seven days,..."*

Even contemporary Jewish families celebrating these festival start preparation weeks before the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Their house walls are washed and painted, cooking utensils are cleaned, clothes washed and pockets overturned, carpets cleaned, vacuum bag discarded and special dishes are prepared for the festival. The night before the feast, the father of the house would perform Bedikat Hametz. This is the "Search for Leaven" ceremony. The mother of the house, would before the ceremony, hide a few pieces of bread at strategic places in the house so there is something to be found. The father then, in candlelight, followed by the children with a wooden paddle in one hand and a feather duster in the other hand, start looking for the bread from room-to-room. The bread that is found, is then swept into the wooden spoon. At the end of the search the woodenspoon, bread and duster is put in a bag or wrapped in a cloth. It is then tied with a rope and set aside to be burned the next morning (41, P67).

As with the other feasts of the Lord (Leviticus 23), the prophetic reality of the Feast of Unleavened Bread is found in the work of the Messiah. Easter shows the atoning death of the Messiah as the Lamb and the Feast of Unleavened Bread shows the burial of the Messiah. The celebration of the Beginning Of The Grain Harvest points to the resurrection of the Messiah.

Normally those who died a criminal death was given a criminal funeral. The prophets predicted the day that the Messiah would be sacrificed for man's sin. He would be the Lamb of God to be sacrificed as the final offer.

We read in Isaiah 53:4 one of the more than three hundred Messianic prophecies. Prophesied about 700 years before Christ as follows: *"Surely He has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted."*

The prophets also foretold about the Messiah's special funeral. Isaiah prophesied as follows: *"And they made His grave with the wicked— But with the rich at His death, Because He had done no violence, Nor was any deceit in His mouth."* (Isaiah 53:9)

The Messiah was executed as a criminal, but God did not allow His body to be thrown on a rubbish heap outside the city. The Messiah was respected during His funeral because He was perfect, a

sinless (without leaven) sacrifice. He died not as a result of His own transgressions (He was innocent), but for our sin (we are guilty). Therefor the Lord respected the Messiah by giving Him a rich man's tomb. The Messiah was buried in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea.

Matthew 27:57-60: ⁵⁷Now when evening had come, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who himself had also become a disciple of Jesus. ⁵⁸This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be given to him. ⁵⁹When Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, ⁶⁰and laid it in his new tomb which he had hewn out of the rock; and he rolled a large stone against the door of the tomb, and departed."

Howard and Rosenthal also points out that there is still further detail regarding the burial of the Messiah. It is that His body would not return to dust. About one thousand years before Christ, King David prophesied as follows with respect to the Messiah: "For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption." Psalms 16:10 (Period added). David clearly did not prophesied about himself. David's body was broken, his tomb is referred to for almost 3000 years. All people's bodies go back to dust.

Genesis 3:19: "In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread Till you return to the ground, For out of it you were taken; For dust you are, And to dust you shall return."

The Messiah's body was not broken. As the perfect, sinless sacrifice, the Messiah was not subject to the judgment of returning to dust. Therefor the Messiah rose on the third day after He removed our sins far from us. (41, p70).

David wrote about 1000 years before Christ in: Psalms 103:12: "As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us."

The author of Hebrew explains in: Hebrews 9:23-28: ²³Therefore it was necessary that the copies of the things in the heavens should be purified with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. ²⁴For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us; ²⁵not that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood of another-- ²⁶He then would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. ²⁷And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, ²⁸so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation."

The Messiah has fulfilled the Feast of Unleavened Bread because He was a perfect, sinless (without leaven) sacrifice. God confirmed it by the Messiah's burial in a rich man's tomb. This is further confirmed by the body of the Messiah was not allowed to decompose in the grave (like dough is soured by yeast). The body of the Messiah is brought to the fore because He was not a sinner who stood under the judgment of death and decomposition. (41, p70).

Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 5:6-8: ⁶Your glorying is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? ⁷Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. ⁸Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth."

According to Howard and Rosenthal (41, p70) Paul's message is clear and direct. Easter is history for the believers, who through faith, accepted the sacrifice of the Passover lamb on Calvary. Salvation through the Messiah, the true Passover Lamb has already become a reality in their lives. They now live in the Feast of Unleavened Bread where cleanliness and removal of leaven is a necessity.

1.3 The Feast of First Fruits (Yom Habikkurim)

Leviticus 23:9-14: ⁹And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ¹⁰"Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'When you come into the land which I give to you, and reap its harvest, then you shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest to the priest. ¹¹He shall wave the sheaf before the LORD, to be accepted on your behalf; on the day after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it. ¹²And you shall offer on that day, when you wave the sheaf, a male lamb of the first year, without blemish, as a burnt offering to the LORD. ¹³Its grain offering shall be two-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil, an offering made by fire to the LORD, for a sweet aroma; and its drink offering shall be of wine, one-fourth of a hin. ¹⁴You shall eat neither bread nor parched grain nor fresh grain until the same day that you have brought an offering to your God; it shall be a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings."

The Feast of First Fruits was an early spring festival, the third in the Jewish cycle of festivals. Wheat was the first grain to ripen of those sown during the winter months. During the Feast of First Fruits (Beginning of the grain harvest) a bundle of wheat was harvested and taken to the temple as

a thank offering to God for the harvest. It was representative of the entire harvest and also served as a request or guarantee that the rest of the harvest will realize in the days that would follow. There were other sacrifices that had to be sacrificed along with the bundle of wheat, as the year old lamb without blemish, a libation of wine and a grain offering of flour mixed with olive oil. The people were forbidden to use any of this crop before celebrating the Feast of First Fruits. Otherwise it was considered theft from God according to Scripture (Malachi 3:8). Deuteronomy 26:1-10 describes the process in detail.

There are different opinions as to when First Fruits occur. Robin Sampson and Linda Pierce (46, p204) attributes this to different interpretations of Leviticus 23:11: *"He shall wave the sheaf before the LORD, to be accepted on your behalf; on the day after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it."* There are two types of Sabbaths in the Bible. The seventh day of the week is regarded as the weekly Sabbath and the annual Holy Days are also considered Sabbaths. "... The day after the Sabbath ..." can mean one of two things 1) The day after the weekly Sabbath, after Passover, or 2) The day after the second day of Easter, which is a holy day.

The Messianic and Sadducee approach predicts the Feast of First Fruits (and therefore also the day the count of the Omer starts) as the day after the weekly seventh day (Saturday) during Easter. The rabbinical approach takes this as the second day of Easter, in other words, the day after the Sabbath of Passover (or the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread) instead of during Easter (46, p204).

Kevin Howard describes the rabbinical view (41, p75-87) by referring to the writings of the Jewish historian Josephus (born 37 AD) who wrote: "But on the second day of Unleavened Bread, the sixteenth day of the month, they celebrated the fruit of the earth, because they have not touched it before this day (first grain)."

During First Fruits one omer (about 2.4 liters or 5 pints) flour was mixed with about 0.35 liter (0.75 pints) of olive oil. A small amount of incense thrown over it. This became the First Fruits offering. The priest offered it to the Lord as described in Leviticus 23:11-13 and a small amount is burned on the altar. The leftovers were given to the Levites (41, P79).

Sampson and Pierce points out that Jewish literature attest to the fact that when the Israelites were informed of their future deliverance from Egypt, they would receive the Torah (the law of God) fifty days afterwards (seven weeks). They were so excited that they started counting the days until it actually occurred (46, p199).

This countdown of the days (or seven weeks) is known as the countdown of the Omer and was a period of great anticipation.

Contemporary Jews today starts the countdown on the second day of Easter. This is the first day of Unleavened Bread (Jesus was crucified on Nisan 14 and rose from the dead on Nisan 17). It's the day after the weekly Sabbath during the week of Easter (46, p201).

Sampson and Pierce (46, P203) indicates that the Israelites were never informed what the carving grain offered as offering to the Lord represented. Note the Messianic reality of this The carving grain is clearly symbolic of Jesus Christ. Jesus is the First Fruits, First Fruits of the harvest of souls resting in Christ and became reality on the glorious day of resurrection of the Lord.

First Fruits speak of the resurrection from the dead. When the scribes and Pharisees require a miracle of Jesus, Jesus rebuked them, and said that the only sign will be three days and three nights in the middle of the earth as Jonah was in the belly of the fish for three days and three nights. Therefore Jesus accurately predict His own crucifixion again.

Matthew 12:38-41: *"³⁸Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered, saying, "Teacher, we want to see a sign from You." ³⁹But He answered and said to them, "An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. ⁴⁰For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. ⁴¹The men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and indeed a greater than Jonah is here."*

Jesus died on the cross on Easter, but death could not hold Him. He rose from the dead after three days and three nights, on First Fruits, as it was celebrated already for 1500 years before Christ.

Already about 700 years before Christ, the prophet Isaiah linked First Fruits unto the Lamb, the Messiah, who would be slain.

Isaiah 4:2-4: *"² In that day the Branch of the LORD shall be beautiful and glorious; And the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and appealing For those of Israel who have escaped. ³And it shall come to pass that he who is left in Zion and remains in Jerusalem will be called holy—everyone who is recorded among the living in Jerusalem. ⁴When the Lord has washed away the filth of the*

daughters of Zion, and purged the blood of Jerusalem from her midst, by the spirit of judgment and by the spirit of burning,"

The Apostle Paul confirms this:

1 Corinthians 15:20-22: *"²⁰But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. ²¹For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. ²²For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive."*

We learn from the Word that we must honor the Lord with our possessions and with the first fruits of our crop.

Proverbs 3:9-10: *"⁹Honor the LORD with your possessions, And with the firstfruits of all your increase; ¹⁰So your barns will be filled with plenty, And your vats will overflow with new wine."*

John testified of Jesus' words:

John 12:24: *"Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain."*

The Hebrew origin of bikkurim (first fruits) is the same as that of bekhlor (firstborn). First fruits given to the Lord because, the first of all, including the firstborn of man and animal, belongs to the Lord. Jesus was the firstborn. The mother of Jesus, Mary was a virgin before the birth of Jesus.

Matthew 1:18-21: *"¹⁸Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly. ²⁰But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. ²¹And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins."*

About 700 years before Christ Isaiah prophesied in Isaiah 7:14: *"Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel."*

Paul refers to Jesus as the firstborn in Romans 8:29: *"For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren."*

The Bible tells us that God, the Bridegroom, is waiting eagerly for the precious fruit of the earth, and He also has a lot of patience to wait for it.

Jesus' own earthly half-brother, James, testified as follows: Jacobus 5:7: *"Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, waiting patiently for it until it receives the early and latter rain."*

The question may now arise, what about the countdown of the Omer? The fifty days (seven weeks)? Jesus told His disciples the following: John 16:7: *"Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you."*

Luke point out Jesus' words (after Jesus' resurrection from the dead and after He appeared to them several times) to His disciples in: Acts 1:4-5: *"⁴And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, "which," He said, "you have heard from Me; ⁵for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."*

The disciples knew that the Holy Spirit would come. Immediately after Jesus' crucifixion, in other words, right after Easter, the disciples were doing the Countdown of the Omer as their people and ancestors have already done, every year after Easter, for 1500 years. The countdown of fifty days (seven weeks) lasted every year until the start of the Feast of Weeks (Pentecost), in great anticipation. We read in the Bible that the disciples gathered in anticipation on the fiftieth day (Pentecost).

Luke confirms it in Acts 2:1: *"When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place."*

This brings us to the Feast of Weeks

1.4 The Feast of Weeks (Shavuot = Hebrew for "weeks"), Later Pentecost

Leviticus 23:15-22: *"¹⁵And you shall count for yourselves from the day after the Sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering: seven Sabbaths shall be completed. ¹⁶Count fifty days to the day after the seventh Sabbath; then you shall offer a new grain offering to the LORD. ¹⁷You shall bring from your dwellings two wave loaves of two-tenths of an ephah. They shall be of fine flour; they shall be baked with leaven. They are the firstfruits to the LORD. ¹⁸And you*

shall offer with the bread seven lambs of the first year, without blemish, one young bull, and two rams. They shall be as a burnt offering to the LORD, with their grain offering and their drink offerings, an offering made by fire for a sweet aroma to the LORD. ¹⁹Then you shall sacrifice one kid of the goats as a sin offering, and two male lambs of the first year as a sacrifice of a peace offering. ²⁰The priest shall wave them with the bread of the firstfruits as a wave offering before the LORD, with the two lambs. They shall be holy to the LORD for the priest. ²¹And you shall proclaim on the same day that it is a holy convocation to you. You shall do no customary work on it. It shall be a statute forever in all your dwellings throughout your generations. ²²When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not wholly reap the corners of your field when you reap, nor shall you gather any gleaning from your harvest. You shall leave them for the poor and for the stranger: I am the LORD your God."

The most common Hebrew for the Feast of Weeks is Hag Hashavuot "Feast of Weeks". The festival is also referred to as the Later First Fruits. In the New Testament the festival is referred to as Pentecost. The word Pentecost is derived from Greek meaning fiftieth.

Sampson and Pierce (46, p229-231) points out that this festival is considered the end of the Easter festive period. It is the anniversary of the day the Israelites received the law of the Lord at Mount Sinai. This is where the nation of Israel was born, where the Lord revealed Himself to them.

Today the Jews celebrate Pentecost on the sixth day of the Jewish month of Sivan. Originally, prior to Jesus the Messiah, The Feast of Weeks was celebrated fifty days after the Feast of First Fruits. It is on this day that the law was given to Moses, fifty days after the Israelites moved from Egypt. It is on this day that the marriage between the Bridegroom (God) and the bride (Israel) occurred. It has a huge spiritual impact. By this law Israel was saved from idolatry and immorality. The being of God was made known to them and established as support and insight to the true God, Yahweh.

The Feast of Weeks is a special time of thanksgiving. The custom is to stay awake the first night and study the Torah (The Torah contains the five books of Moses, the Prophecies and the Writings). The beginning and end of each of the portions of the Torah are reviewed, as well as those of the prophets (eg Ezekiel and Habakkuk), writings (eg Ruth) and the Mishnah (The first part of the Talmud - an oral interpretation of the Torah).

Howard and Rosenthal (41, p96) points out that one of the most popular Shavuot habits is eating dairy foods. It is a reminder of the law, for the words of Scripture are like milk and honey. Foods like cheese cake, cheese pies (cheese blintzes rolled in pancakes and fried in a frying pan), and cheese kreplach (dough pockets filled with cheese). Kreplach is triangular and each of the three recalls the statements of the ancient rabbis: "Blessed are the Merciful One who gave the threefold law (Law, Prophets, and Writings) to people from three classes (priests, Levites and Israelites), by a third-born child (Moses born after Miriam and Aaron) in the third month (Sivan).

It is also used to make two "hallah" loaves during Shavuot. It represents two loaves sacrificed in the Temple, and the two tablets of the Ten Commandments received on the Mount Sinai. A depiction of a ladder with seven rungs is traditionally recorded on the bread. The latter symbolizes Moses who went up the mountain to receive the Ten Commandments. During the first night when staying awake through the night to study the review the Torah regular breaks are taken to drink coffee and eat cheesecake. Still today, at dawn of Shavuot thousands of Jews can be seen who move from the orthodox sections of Jerusalem to the area of the ancient Temple (Temple Mount). These thousands are gathered in the square in front of the Western Wall to say the ancient Amidah prayer. The Amidah, or "standing" prayer with nineteen blessings dates back more than 2000 years. It forms the central prayer of all worship services (morning, afternoon, evening, Shabbat and holidays).

As already mentioned, the first night of the Feast of Weeks, all night, among other things, reading from the Prophets. Ezekiel and Habakkuk. This was done hundreds of years before Christ.

Ezekiel 1:4: *"Then I looked, and behold, a whirlwind was coming out of the north, a great cloud with raging fire engulfing itself; and brightness was all around it and radiating out of its midst like the color of amber, out of the midst of the fire."*

Ezekiel 3:12: *"Then the Spirit lifted me up, and I heard behind me a great thunderous voice: "Blessed is the glory of the LORD from His place!"*

Habakkuk 3:3-5: *"³God came from Teman, The Holy One from Mount Paran. Selah. His glory covered the heavens, And the earth was full of His praise. ⁴His brightness was like the light; He had rays flashing from His hand, And there His power was hidden. ⁵Before Him went pestilence, And fever followed at His feet."*

Please note that Teman refers to the Sinai area. In other words, the area where the Law of God was received. (35, p1318).

Fifty days after the Israelites were delivered from Egypt (Passover, Nisan 14, saved by the blood of the lamb) they received the law of God (the law refers to God's will). This brought them to the Feast

of Weeks. They celebrated it for about 1,500 years before Christ. Jesus Christ was crucified on Nisan 14, the Holy Spirit is indeed poured out on the Feast of Weeks, fifty days after Easter. The disciples were gathered together to celebrate the Feast of Weeks, in great anticipation, and then received the Holy Spirit as Jesus had told them would happen. Look what happened to them

Acts 2:2-4: *"²And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. ⁴And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."*

Look at Scriptures they read during the night of the Feast of Weeks (BC), Ezekiel 1:4. This again shows how authentically the Word of God. The Revelation of God to the prophets also became obvious to the disciples as can be seen in Acts 2 2-4 (fire and storm). All of that so that we can believe today.

It is with this event that Feast of Weeks changed to Pentecost. (Meaning of the word Pentecost = 50). The Holy Spirit is poured out for us to learn the will of God and His Word and Being, Jesus Christ revealed to us.

Look at the words of Jesus before His ascension:

John 14:25-27: *"²⁵These things I have spoken to you while being present with you. ²⁶But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you. ²⁷Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."*

Acts 1:5-8: *"⁵for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." ⁶Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" ⁷And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. ⁸But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."*

It is therefore the same disciples that left us the New Testament. They were tortured to death for their testimony and not abandoning it. They saw Jesus after He rose from the dead, spend time with Him several times, and even ate with Him after the crucifixion, performed miracles in His name and made sure that we believe today. These are the qualities of a true Apostle. Authentic messengers whose testimony we can believe today. It stands out above any heresy and dates from the time of the Messiah Himself. Their testimonies testify of what they had seen and experienced. It is authentically brought into context with what they learned from the Word of God concerning the Messiah, what the Messiah Himself taught them and also confirmed with His deeds. It is not based on presumption or interpretations.

See John testifying in John 21:24-25: *"²⁴This is the disciple who testifies of these things, and wrote these things; and we know that his testimony is true. ²⁵And there are also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were written one by one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written. Amen."*

Luke, the author of the New Testament books Luke and Acts, confirmed that he factually researched the witnesses, it is not stories! See his confirmation

Luke 1:1-4: *"¹Inasmuch as many have taken in hand to set in order a narrative of those things which have been fulfilled among us, ²just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word delivered them to us, ³it seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write to you an orderly account, most excellent Theophilus, ⁴that you may know the certainty of those things in which you were instructed."*

If we keep in mind that Luke lived in the time of Jesus, and therefore also the time of the disciples, who later became apostles, one realizes that the Gospels not only reflect the witnesses' own experiences, but it is also confirmed by Luke. Do not allow heresy, which originated hundreds of years after the time, like the DaVinci Code and Judas Gospel or the teachings of any replacement or so-called successor of the Messiah, or so-called prophet, or so-called messenger of God, confuse you. Nothing can be more authentically connected to the Messiah than the New Testament in the Bible. The Holy Spirit is bequeathed to us so that every one of us can have a personal relationship with the Lord. The Holy Spirit reveals the Word of God to us, the Word of God is the Messiah, Jesus Christ. There is no other representatives.

What is the New Testament really? It is the authentic affirmation that Jesus Christ is the Messiah as prophesied throughout the Old Testament. In other words, the whole Bible testifies about God's salvation for mankind. We can identify with the Person of Jesus Christ. Now we can understand what John tells us in John 1:1-5 en John 1:14:

John 1:1-5: ¹*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.* ²*He was in the beginning with God.* ³*All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.* ⁴*In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.* ⁵*And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.*

John 1:14: *“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.”*

What does Pentecost mean for us? Sampson and Pierce (46, P205) points out that First Fruits is guidance on how the Lord wants us to be transformed by Christ. When a person accepts Jesus, the Passover Lamb who died for our sins, we are then sinless in the eyes of God because Jesus took our sins. Unleavened Bread teaches us to let go of our old sinful ways and First Fruits teaches us to become new. Paul wrote to the Ephesians

Efesiërs 4:24: *“and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.”*

See Paul's words to the Galatians:

Galasiërs 2:20: *“I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.”*

1.5 The Feast of Trumpets (Rosh Hashanah)

Leviticus 23:24: *“Speak to the children of Israel, saying: ‘In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you shall have a sabbath-rest, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, a holy convocation.’”*

Numeri 29:1: *“And in the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you shall have a holy convocation. You shall do no customary work. For you it is a day of blowing the trumpets.”*

The Feast of Trumpets is the first festival of the three autumn festivals (Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur en Sukkot). Samson and Pierce pointed out that the spring festivals clearly signify the coming of the Messiah, and the autumn festivals indicates the return of the Messiah (46, p.269). In other words, the four spring festivals (Pesach, Hag Hamatzot, Yom Habikkurim and Shavuot) has been already fulfilled. The Autumn festivals are a prophetic reality for us today and we can look forward to it's fulfilment as the spring festivals were fulfilled.

Exactly how and when it will occur is a matter of interpretation of the prophetic content of what we read in the Word of God. See Jesus' words as witnessed in Mark 13:32-33: ³²*“But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.”* ³³*“Take heed, watch and pray; for you do not know when the time is.”*

We can not predict exactly when the events will take place, but the fact remains that we don't have to doubt that this is going to take place. The festivals that have already come to pass, addresses us too strong to doubt it! What we can be sure of is that it will happen in the period of this generation, the New Testament generation. Mark 13:30-31: ³⁰*“Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place.”* ³¹*“Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.”*

The Feast of Trumpets is celebrated in the beginning of the month Tishri (in line with September and October). This is the first month of the civil year. It was the first of seven days of the holy assembly. Tishri is the seventh month of the Biblical calendar and runs parallel with the Sabbath in this regard as a special and sacred time to seek the Lord. The previous month, Elul, is the month of preparation as Friday is a day of preparation for the weekly Sabbath on Saturday. This period is a time of meditation and reflection to make things right and to get our relationship with God in order (46, p.279).

Although the roots of this festival (Rosh Hashanah) are firmly planted in the Bible, it is not called that name in the Bible. In the Bible it is referred to as Zikhron Teruah (*“...you shall have a sabbath-rest, a memorial of blowing of trumpets...”*, Leviticus 23:24) and also Yom Teruah (*“...day of blowing the trumpets.”* Numeri 29:1). Based on this Biblical references of the ancient version of Rosh Hashanah it is referred to as "The Feast of Trumpets", a day of blowing the trumpets in the Temple and throughout the land of Israel (41, p 103).

The Feast of Trumpets is the celebration of the Jewish New Year. It is also regarded by both Jews and Christians as a commemoration of the creation of the world when the morning stars sang together and the sons of God shouted for joy (Job 38:7, 53 translation). It is a day where the gifts of the Lord are celebrated and prayed for the Lord's blessing for the new year.

The Feast of Trumpets and the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur), are the two holiest days of the Jewish year. This period of ten days is also called the Days of Awe (Reverence). (Unlike other festivals, these days don't commemorate a season or a historical event. It is a time of introspection for spiritual growth). Thirty days before the festival of Trumpets the period known as Teshuvah

starts (return or regret / repentance). Ten days from the beginning of the Feast of Trumpets to Atonement (Yom Kippur) is known as the Days of Repentance or Days of Awe. Sampson and Pierce (46, p.296) contends that these days in between can refer to the time of the suppression (Tribulation). The ten days between the Feast of Trumpets and the Day of Atonement may refer to the seven-year period of Jacob's Misery (Trouble). Jeremiah 30:7: "Alas! For that day is great, So that none is like it; And it is the time of Jacob's trouble, But he shall be saved out of it."

One theory divides the prophetic content of these festivals as follows

- The thirty days of the month Elul - The Church
- The day of the Feast of Trumpets - The Rapture
- The days between the Feast of Trumpets and the Day of Atonement - The Suppression (Tribulation)
- The Day of Atonement - The Second Coming of Christ

Themes for this festival are as follows (46, p.279):

- Jewish New Year (Rosh Hashanah is literally the Head or the beginning of the year)
- God's Faithfulness (Atonement)
- Day of Judgment (Amos 5:18-20)
- Remembrance (Yom Ha-Zikaron, day of memorial) (The Lord remembered Sarah, Rachel and Hannah)
- Birth of the World on Tishri 1, the seventh month of the Biblical calendar (It takes place in September)

Sampson and Pierce (46, p.283) explains that Festival of Trumpets occurs during new moon. The entire Jewish calendar depends on the position of the moon. It is therefore very important for them to determine the date of the new moon accurately. Howard (41, P104) points out that it is not always possible to determine the exact day of the new moon as clouds causes the moon not to be seen as well as the lack of sufficient witnesses. Since Rosh Hashanah falls on the first day of the new year, it is especially important to determine this day exactly. The entire Jewish community should be informed when the festival begins. To reduce the risk of a mistake, Rosh Hashanah is celebrated for two days. This tradition is still maintained in Israel today.

The two days can be seen in Nehemiah 8:1-3 and 13-14 written about 445 years before Christ: *"¹Now all the people gathered together as one man in the open square that was in front of the Water Gate; and they told Ezra the scribe to bring the Book of the Law of Moses, which the LORD had commanded Israel. ²So Ezra the priest brought the Law before the assembly of men and women and all who could hear with understanding on the first day of the seventh month. ³Then he read from it in the open square that was in front of the Water Gate from morning until midday, before the men and women and those who could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive to the Book of the Law.....¹³Now on the second day the heads of the fathers' houses of all the people, with the priests and Levites, were gathered to Ezra the scribe, in order to understand the words of the Law. ¹⁴And they found written in the Law, which the LORD had commanded by Moses, that the children of Israel should dwell in booths during the feast of the seventh month,"*

Also note that Psalms 81 is devoted to this festival: *"¹To the chief Musician upon Gittith, A Psalm of Asaph. Sing aloud unto God our strength: make a joyful noise unto the God of Jacob. ²Take a psalm, and bring hither the timbrel, the pleasant harp with the psaltery. ³Blow up the trumpet in the new moon, in the time appointed, on our solemn feast day. ⁴For this was a statute for Israel, and a law of the God of Jacob. ⁵This he ordained in Joseph for a testimony, when he went out through the land of Egypt: where I heard a language that I understood not. ⁶I removed his shoulder from the burden: his hands were delivered from the pots. ⁷Thou calledst in trouble, and I delivered thee; I answered thee in the secret place of thunder: I proved thee at the waters of Meribah. Selah. ⁸Hear, O my people, and I will testify unto thee: O Israel, if thou wilt hearken unto me; ⁹There shall no strange god be in thee; neither shalt thou worship any strange god. ¹⁰I am the LORD thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt: open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it. ¹¹But my people would not hearken to my voice; and Israel would none of me. ¹²So I gave them up unto their own hearts' lust: and they walked in their own counsels. ¹³Oh that my people had hearkened unto me, and Israel had walked in my ways! ¹⁴I should soon have subdued their enemies, and turned my hand against their adversaries. ¹⁵The haters of the LORD should have submitted themselves unto him: but their time should have endured for ever. ¹⁶He should have fed them also with the finest of the wheat: and with honey out of the rock should I have satisfied thee." (King James Version)*

Sampson and Pierce (46, p.285) points out that the ceremony of the blowing of the shofar was a wonderful sight. The priest who had to blow the trumpet had been trained from infancy. On the first day of the festival, the priest stood in front of the Temple with two trumpeters. The shofar

represents, among others, a wake up call to the conscience. According to Jewish tradition, the following occurred on Tishri 1:

- Adam and Eve were created
- The flood waters dried up
- Enoch was taken away by the Lord (Genesis 5:24)
- Sarah, Rachel and Samuel is formed (mothers became pregnant (conceived))
- Joseph was released from prison by Pharaoh
- The labor of the Hebrew slaves in Egypt ended
- Job infected with leprosy
- The beginning of sacrifices on the altar built by Ezra (Ezra 3:1-2)

Today still the Jews celebrate this festival by blowing the shofar in the synagogue every morning and read Psalms 27 twice a day. New year cards are sent out, choirs singing and special collections are done for the poor. This is a time of forgiveness, in other words, a time to forgive others and to seek forgiveness from others (family, friends and business partners). The night before Rosh Hashannah a midnight service is held, called the *Selichos* (repentant prayers), during which the worshiper is helped to prepare for the time of introspection and days of awe. The reading of the Torah focuses on texts as follows Genesis 21:1-4, 5-12, 13-21, 22-27, 28-34; Numeri 29:1-6; 1 Samuel 1:1-2:10. The theme for reading is remembrance because the Lord remembered Sarah and Hannah (46, p.287-288).

Sampson and Pierce (46, p.289-290) quoted Rabbi Saadiah Gaon (ninth century) who pointed out that there are mainly ten reasons why the trumpet is blown on Rosh Hashannah

- 1) Rosh Hashannah marks the beginning of the Creation during which the Creator created the universe and ruled over it. As kings announced their dominions with the blowing of trumpets and horns, we affirm the Lordship of the Creator with the blowing of the shofar. David said in Psalms 98:6: *"With trumpets and the sound of a horn; Shout joyfully before the LORD, the King."*
- 2) Because Rosh Hoshannah is the beginning of the ten days (Teshuvah), the shofar is sounded to show the beginning. This shows that those who want to go through the process of self-examination can do so now. If you do not do it, there is no reason to feel aggrieved. Kings do the same. Firstly they warn the people with their slogans. The excuses of those who ignore the slogans are unsounded.
- 3) The third reason for the sounding of the trumpet is to remind us of our meeting at the foot of Mount Sinai. It is said in Exodus 19:19: *"And when the blast of the trumpet sounded long and became louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God answered him by voice."* We can now assume the responsibility of our ancestors as is said in Exodus 24:7: *"Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read in the hearing of the people. And they said, "All that the LORD has said we will do, and be obedient."*
- 4) The fourth reason is to remind us of the words of the prophets that is compared to the shofar. In Ezekiel 33:4-5 is written *"⁴And when the people heard this bad news, they mourned, and no one put on his ornaments. ⁵For the LORD had said to Moses, "Say to the children of Israel, 'You are a stiff-necked people. I could come up into your midst in one moment and consume you. Now therefore, take off your ornaments, that I may know what to do to you.'"*
- 5) The fifth reason is to remind us of the destruction of the Temple and the war cries of the enemy. Jeremiah 4:19 is written *"My bowels, my bowels! I am pained at my very heart; my heart maketh a noise in me; I cannot hold my peace, because thou hast heard, O my soul, the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war."*(King James Version). When we hear the trumpet, we beg God to rebuild the Temple.
- 6) The sixth reason is to remind us of the obligation of Isaac who offered himself (sacrificed) for heaven. So we should at all times be ready to sacrifice our lives to the glory of His name.
- 7) The seventh reason is, when we hear the trumpet blow, we become fearful and we will adapt to the will of the Creator. It is written in Amos 3:6: *"If a trumpet is blown in a city, will not the people be afraid? If there is calamity in a city, will not the LORD have done it?"*
- 8) The eighth reason is to remind us of the great Day of Judgment, so that we all may fear it. In Zephaniah 1:14-16 is written *"¹⁴The great day of the LORD is near; It is near and hastens quickly. The noise of the day of the LORD is bitter; There the mighty men shall cry out. ¹⁵That day is a day of wrath, A day of trouble and distress, A day of devastation and desolation, A day of darkness and gloominess, A day of clouds and thick darkness, ¹⁶A day of trumpet and alarm Against the fortified cities And against the high towers."*

- 9) Ninth is a memory and longing for the return of the Israelites to Israel. Written in Isaiah 27:13: *"So shall it be in that day: The great trumpet will be blown; They will come, who are about to perish in the land of Assiria, And they who are outcasts in the land of Egypt, And shall worship the LORD in the holy mount Jerusalem."*
- 10) The tenth reason is to remind us of the resurrection of the dead. That we should believe. Written in Isaiah 18:3: *"All inhabitants of the world and dwellers on the earth: When he lifts up a banner on the mountains, you see it; And when he blows a trumpet, you hear it."*

During dinner the first day of the festival, sweet dishes like sweet fruit and cakes are served to symbolize a sweet new year. This can already be seen in the time of David (1000 BC.), See 2 Samuel 6:15,19: *"¹⁵So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the LORD with shouting, and with the sound of the trumpet. ¹⁹Then he distributed among all the people, among the whole multitude of Israel, both the women and the men, to everyone a loaf of bread, a piece of meat, and a cake of raisins. So all the people departed, everyone to his house."*

A very famous custom of this festival is to eat an apple dipped in honey. Bread is baked in special shapes, for example round - hoping for a good round new year; shape of a crown - the kingdom of the festival; shape of a ladder - Jacob's ladder or human striving upwards to God; a bird shaped bread illustrate the Lord's protection as in Isaiah 31:5: *"Like birds flying about, So will the LORD of hosts defend Jerusalem. Defending, He will also deliver it; Passing over, He will preserve it."*

Note again the Messianic reality of the Feast of Trumpets (46, p.293-298). The blowing of the trumpets is a sign of the coming of Christ, and also a commemoration of the Lord's grace to Abraham when He provided a lamb to be sacrificed by Abraham in place of Isaac (Genesis 22 more than 1250 BC.). Isaac is a prototype of Christ. Just as Abraham had to sacrifice his son on the altar, the Lord sacrificed His Son on the altar of Calvary.

Hebrews 11:17-19: *"¹⁷By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, ¹⁸of whom it was said, "IN ISAAC YOUR SEED SHALL BE CALLED," ¹⁹concluding that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense."*

Both Isaac and Jesus' births were miracles and both were faithful to the altar.

Trumpets were used as signs of war. Jesus is the commander of the Lord's army. He came the first time to defeat the work of Satan and the sin in the hearts of people. Colossians 2:15: *"Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it."*

This way the feast speaks to the Christian with regard to spiritual warfare. In Ephesians 6:11-13 it is written: *"¹¹Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. ¹²For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. ¹³Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand."*

The Feast of Trumpets is a very special time for Christians. Our faith in Jesus Christ leads to a repentant heart regarding our sins. We must ask the Father for forgiveness for our sins. The Father forgives his children. This reconciliation and forgiveness is made possible by the crucifixion of Jesus Christ.

James 2:19-26: *"¹⁹You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe--and tremble! ²⁰But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead? ²¹Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? ²²Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect? ²³And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS ACCOUNTED TO HIM FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS." And he was called the friend of God. ²⁴You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only. ²⁵Likewise, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out another way? ²⁶For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also."*

To add, it is impressive to realize that these words were written by Jesus' earthly brother, James. During Jesus' earthly ministry Jesus' family, including James, would have nothing to do with Jesus. However, Jesus' resurrection from the dead had such an impression on James that he became one of the founders of the Christian Church. He was killed because of his faith in Jesus Christ.

Sampson and Pierce continues by pointing out that there is evidence that Jesus was born in the autumn (More about that in the section on the Feast of Tabernacles). It is also believed that the

baptism took place in the autumn. After Jesus' baptism, he spent forty days in the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.

Matthew 4:1-2: *"¹Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. ²And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry."*

Some believe these forty days in the desert correspond with the period of forty days of Teshuvah (return or repentance). This is the time when Jesus began His ministry on earth, at the end of the forty days, when He began to preach His message.

Matthew 4:17: *"From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."*

The Feast of Trumpets is one of the three major festivals. 1) Easter - represents the crucifixion of Christ; 2) Pentecostal - outpouring of the Holy Spirit and then 3) Feast of Trumpets which clearly indicates something important. Easter and Pentecost is already fulfilled. The Feast of Trumpets has a prophetic reality, it clearly indicates an important event for the future. We can only get the answer from the Word of God to understand what the Feast of Trumpets holds. Sampson and Pierce (46, p.294) claims that it predicts one of two events: The rapture or the second coming of Christ. Kevin Howard (41, p112) points out that the autumn festivals will come to pass at the return of Christ.

To add, the prophetic Word of God puts this reality into context so that we can understand it. Through all the centuries, and by many authors, God's relationship with Israel has been depicted as a love relationship, a marriage (eg: Isaiah 54:5; 62:5; Jeremiah 2:2; 3:1; 3:6-7; 3:20-21; Ezekiel 16:5-7; 16:8, Mark 2:19-20; John 16:20-22). During the marriage, the bridegroom and the bride is reunited. The Bible also teaches us that all nations will be saved through Israel (eg: Deuteronomy 29:1; 26:18-19, Isaiah 42:6; 49:6; 60:3). If one looks at the practices of an ancient Jewish marriage it can be better understood with reference to the union of the Church (the bride) with the Bridegroom (the Messiah).

When a man in ancient Israel were to be married, he would go with a gift for the bride to the bride's house, and entered into a covenant with the bride's father. If the father accepted the gift and the man, the man poured a glass of wine. If the bride accepted the man, she would drink the wine and they would get engaged. The man would then go away and prepare a place for his bride. When the bride's father decided that the place was ready for the bride, usually one to two years later, the husband would come back and steal her when nobody expected it, like a thief in the night. The groom would then keep the bride for seven days at the place he had prepared for her. During this time, the father would have a feast, and announce the marriage. At the end of the seven days the bride and groom would join the celebration and enjoy dinner with the guests.

The ancient Jewish marriage is clearly representative of the Messiah and His bride (Church). The contract (covenant) was confirmed at the Last Supper when Jesus drank wine with His disciples.

Mark 14:23-24: *"²³Then He took the cup, and when He had given thanks He gave it to them, and they all drank from it. ²⁴And He said to them, "This is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many."*

Shortly after Jesus told them, He spoke like any Jewish husband would talk with his bride (46, p.296), see Jesus' words in John 14:2-3: *"²In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. ³And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also."*

See Jesus' words as witnessed in Matthew 24:43-44: *"⁴³But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. ⁴⁴Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect."*

Jesus, through His crucifixion, paid the bride price. The bride still has the choice to decide whether she accepts the bridegroom.

Revelation 19:7-8: *"⁷Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready." ⁸And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints."*

The above was written by John about 95 after Christ (AD). Look what Hosea has written about 720 before Christ (BC).

Hosea 2:15-19: *"¹⁵I will give her her vineyards from there, And the Valley of Achor as a door of hope; She shall sing there, As in the days of her youth, As in the day when she came up from the land of Egypt. ¹⁶And it shall be, in that day," Says the LORD, "That you will call Me 'My Husband,' And no longer call Me 'My Master,' ¹⁷For I will take from her mouth the names of the Baals, And they shall be remembered by their name no more. ¹⁸In that day I will make a covenant for them With the beasts of the field, With the birds of the air, And with the creeping things of the ground. Bow and sword of battle I will shatter from the earth, To make them lie down safely. ¹⁹"I will betroth*

you to Me forever; Yes, I will betroth you to Me In righteousness and justice, In lovingkindness and mercy;"

Eschatology refers to the study of the end times. Sampson and Pierce (46, p.297-298) deal with this theme under the title *The Coronation of Y'shua (Jesus), Our King*. They refer to Jewish eschatology that believes that on the Day of Atonement, after six thousand years have elapsed, the day of the Lord will come. On that day the trumpet /shofar will sound, the righteous will be resurrected, and join the crowning of the King. According to Jewish eschatology, the gates of heaven will be opened on Rosh Hashanah and closed on Yom Kippur. This can be seen in the book of Revelation 3:7-11:

"⁷And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write, 'These things says He who is holy, He who is true, "HE WHO HAS THE KEY OF DAVID, HE WHO OPENS AND NO ONE SHUTS, AND SHUTS AND NO ONE OPENS": ⁸I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name. ⁹Indeed I will make those of the synagogues of Satan, who say they are Jews and are not, but lie--indeed I will make them come and worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved you. ¹⁰Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth. ¹¹Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown."

Both the door and the crown refers to Rosh Hashanah.

Daniel prophesied about the Messiah who will return as King. See Daniël 7:9-14: *"⁹I watched till thrones were put in place, And the Ancient of Days was seated; His garment was white as snow, And the hair of His head was like pure wool. His throne was a fiery flame, Its wheels a burning fire; ¹⁰A fiery stream issued And came forth from before Him. A thousand thousands ministered to Him; Ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him. The court was seated, And the books were opened. ¹¹I watched then because of the sound of the pompous words which the horn was speaking; I watched till the beast was slain, and its body destroyed and given to the burning flame. ¹²As for the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away, yet their lives were prolonged for a season and a time. ¹³I was watching in the night visions, And behold, One like the Son of Man (Son of Man and also Son of God - Jesus Christ - Y'shua), Coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, And they brought Him near before Him. ¹⁴Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, That all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, Which shall not pass away, And His kingdom the one Which shall not be destroyed."*

Look at Jesus' prophecy about the Second Coming: Matthew 24:30-31: *"³⁰Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. ³¹And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other."*

Kevin Howard (41, p.114-115) points out that the script regularly refers to angels or people blowing trumpets. However, it is only mentioned twice that the Lord blows the trumpet, and both of these times, it is the ram's horn (shofar).

The first incident was at Mount Sinai when God revealed Himself and made preparations to bring the people under the Old Covenant. The Shekinah glory of the Lord came down in a fierce storm and the sound of the trumpet.

Exodus 19:18-20: *"¹⁸Now Mount Sinai was completely in smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire. Its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked greatly. ¹⁹And when the blast of the trumpet sounded long and became louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God answered him by voice. ²⁰Then the LORD came down upon Mount Sinai, on the top of the mountain. And the LORD called Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up."*

The last event will be when the Lord blows the trumpet with the coming of the Messiah. The Lord will once again descend from heaven with a storm / wind, clouds to His glory, and the sound of the trumpet. See how the prophet Zechariah predicted about 500 BC

Zechariah 9:14: *"Then the LORD will be seen over them, And His arrow will go forth like lightning. The Lord GOD will blow the trumpet, And go with whirlwinds from the south."*

To add, it is very interesting that all these prophets and apostles, over many hundreds of years, received exactly the same visions. All this is supported by the actual event at Mount Sinai which so many people testify about, the chosen people, whereby Scriptures are captured for us because of their witnesses, and from which the Messiah was born, according to the prophecies. All that so we can believe today, and can look forward to the sounding of the second trumpet, the Lord Himself!!

The last trumpet will sound, the Messiah will reveal Himself in great power, and He shall prepare the people to be brought into the New Covenant (Jeremiah 31:31; Ezekiel 20:35-38, Zechariah 13:9).

Kevin Howard continues to describe his perception of the end times. Ancient Jewish tradition teaches that the resurrection of the dead will take place on Rosh Hashanah, therefore many Jewish tombstones are engraved with a trumpet. Both of these great events - the last trumpet of the Lord and the resurrection of the righteous - are committed to the Rapture of the Church in the New Testament.

Paulus says 1 Corinthians 15:51-52 as follows: ⁵¹*Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed--* ⁵²*in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.*"

Paul writes in one of his letters :1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 ¹⁶*For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.* ¹⁷*Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord."*

In chapters 8 to 10 of the book of Revelation the "secret intention of God" is revealed by the sounding of the last trumpet. See Revelation 10:5-7: ⁵*The angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land raised up his hand to heaven* ⁶*and swore by Him who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and the things that are in it, the earth and the things that are in it, and the sea and the things that are in it, that there should be delay no longer,* ⁷*but in the days of the sounding of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, the mystery of God would be finished, as He declared to His servants the prophets."*

We can certainly look forward to the coming of our Lord!!

1.6 The Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur)

Leviticus 23:27-28: ²⁷*"Also the tenth day of this seventh month shall be the Day of Atonement. It shall be a holy convocation for you; you shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire to the LORD.* ²⁸*And you shall do no work on that same day, for it is the Day of Atonement, to make atonement for you before the LORD your God."*

Thirty days before the festival of Trumpets begins the period known as Teshuvah (return or regret / repentance). Ten days from the beginning of the Feast of Trumpets to the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur) are known as the Days of Repentance or Days of Awe. Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur) is the culmination of the ten-day period (Days of Repentance) and is celebrated on the tenth day of Tishri.

According to Sampson and Pierce (46, p.319), there are three names for this feast in the Bible 1) The Day of Atonement; 2) The Day of Judgment; 3) The Sabbath of Sabbaths.

The Day of Atonement is the day that Israel will be judged by God and reconciliation for the sins of the people. It also refers to this day as "the day of salvation." It is a day of fasting, meditation and purification.

The Day of Atonement is a reminder that the daily burnt offerings, weekly and monthly offerings, was not sufficient for the redemption of sins. Even at the altar the worshiper stood far away from the Holy of Holies (In the Tabernacle and later the Temple) which represents the presence of the Lord. On this day atoning blood of the sacrificial animal is brought into the Holy of Holies by the high priest as representative of the people.

The use is to wear white clothes on The Day of Atonement to point out that our sins were made as white as snow Isaiah 1:18: *"Come now, and let us reason together," Says the LORD, "Though your sins are like scarlet, They shall be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They shall be as wool."* (Written about 700 BC)

Day of Atonement itself points out that the law of Moses is not fulfilled. There is something wrong. It does not create perfect reconciliation with the Creator.

The apostles who acted as disciples of Jesus as eyewitnesses have seen how the prophecies of the Saviour, the Messiah, came in fulfillment. They testified about it so we can read it clearly in the New Testament today. The writer of the book of Hebrews writes from the time of the apostles as follows:

Hebrews 10:1-7: ¹*For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect.* ²*For then would they not have ceased to be offered? For the worshipers, once purified, would have had no more consciousness of sins.* ³*But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year.* ⁴*For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins.* ⁵*Therefore, when He came into the world, He said: "SACRIFICE AND*

OFFERING YOU DID NOT DESIRE, BUT A BODY YOU HAVE PREPARED FOR ME. ⁶IN BURNT OFFERINGS AND SACRIFICES FOR SIN YOU HAD NO PLEASURE. ⁷THEN I SAID, 'BEHOLD, I HAVE COME-- IN THE VOLUME OF THE BOOK IT IS WRITTEN OF ME-- TO DO YOUR WILL, O GOD.' ⁸

It can be seen that the Ten Commandments received at Mount Sinai represented the Being of God for us. Because of the sins of one man, man could not be associated with the Being of God. The offerings are set to remind man of sin. All of that, the Temple, sacrifices and festivals, are so established that it addresses the believer prophetically through the action of the Holy Spirit - This all points to the Messiah who will come to perfect it. The Messiah came himself, authentically according to the prophecies, confirmed by his own prophecies that He is the Messiah, confirmed it further by rising from the dead and reveal Himself to many people, and also confirms that the writings testify about Him ("In the scrolls it is written of me"), we saw the Being of God on earth through the Son of God - Jesus Christ. We could see and understand Him, within our human frame of reference - The Son of Man. The Messiah's redemption accomplished it by making it possible for the children of God to have a personal relationship with the Lord. The Servant of God.

The Apostle Paul testified as follows: Colossians 2:9-12: *"⁹For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; ¹⁰and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power. ¹¹In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, ¹²buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead."*

John testified that he heard Jesus say to the Pharisees in John 5:36-40: *"³⁶But I have a greater witness than John's; for the works which the Father has given Me to finish--the very works that I do--bear witness of Me, that the Father has sent Me. ³⁷And the Father Himself, who sent Me, has testified of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His form. ³⁸But you do not have His word abiding in you, because whom He sent, Him you do not believe. ³⁹You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. ⁴⁰But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life."*

We can now understand better what is written in Hebrew 7:19 *"for the law made nothing perfect; on the other hand, there is the bringing in of a better hope, through which we draw near to God."*

As already mentioned, the High Priest once a year, on Day of Atonement, entered the Holy of Holies of the Temple to obtain forgiveness for the people's sins. The interior of Solomon's Temple was divided into three parts: 1) The Foyer; 2) The Sanctuary and 3) The Holy of Holies. In the Holy of Holies stood the Ark of the Covenant containing the tablets on which the Ten Commandments were written. It was the same tablets that Moses received from God on Mount Sinai.

The high priest dressed in special clothing for the event and brought an offering to the Lord for his own sins, and for the priesthood before he entered the Holy of Holies. The high priest then filled the censer with hot coals from the altar, and put incense thereon. This caused a cloud perfumed incense smoke that covered the throne. The throne was represented by the lid of the Ark of the Covenant. Blood of the sacrificial animal (young ox) was then sprinkled on the mercy seat and on the ground in front of the ark of the covenant to purify it.

The offerings that were sacrificed were seven male lambs, each a year old; young bull; and a ram. The sin offering was one male goat. The high priest moved forty-three times between the courtyard and the sanctuary on this day to perform various written tasks. (46, p.322)

The High Priest called ten times upon the name of God on Yom Kippur. Six times with the ox, three times with the male ram and once with the draw (determining the fate of the two goats, one for God and one for Azazel). Every time the name of God was announced, everyone who was near the high priest fell on their faces and those who stood further away then agreed and said *"Blessed be His name whose wonderful kingdom exists forever and ever."* Nobody moved from their positions until the high priest moved away (46, p.324).

Modern Jews regard number ten as representing perfection and focus on the holiest day of the year. Confessing sin (Viddui) begins with immersion baptism of repentance (for sin) repeated ten times on Yom Kippur. The latter is done to correspond with ten times that the high priest originally (at the time of the Tabernacle and later the Temple) cried the Lord's name in order to seek forgiveness for the people on Yom Kippur (Also refer to Yom HaKipurrim). Yom HaKipurrim also commemorated the Ten Commandments.

On the eve of Yom Kippur (in the Western context of evening before) a special meal is prepared and eaten before sunset. The Jews then start fasting for at least 25 hours in order to focus on the spiritual and not the physical. After the meal is eaten, candles are lit to welcome the Day of Atonement. Leather shoes are replaced with non-leather shoes or slippers. Families bless their children at this stage before they go to the synagogue. The Day of Atonement starts, as the weekly Sabbath, at sunset during which a long evening service is held with the Kol Nidre and other services during the day. The shofar is blown to call the people together for the service. White

clothing is usually worn and the custom is to greet each other with the words: "Gemar Hatimah Tovah" which means May you finally be sealed (in the Book of Life) (46, p326).

The Lord always commits to a plan of salvation for mankind. True salvation can only be seen in context to a perfect relationship between man and his Creator. A perfect relationship is a love affair that consists of free choice of both parties and both parties act not to violate the other party's being. The Lord has clearly made His will and Being known to man, but man's own sin has blinded him.

See 1 Kings 14:22-24: *"²²Now Judah did evil in the sight of the LORD, and they provoked Him to jealousy with their sins which they committed, more than all that their fathers had done. ²³For they also built for themselves high places, sacred pillars, and wooden images on every high hill and under every green tree. ²⁴And there were also perverted persons in the land. They did according to all the abominations of the nations which the LORD had cast out before the children of Israel."* (Written about 925 years before Christ)

It is clear that the Lord would have to wipe out all mankind if He completely wanted to get rid of evil. It would not make sense to create man without the ability to freely choose. The Groom's (The Lord) salvation plan, however, included His bride (believers) from the beginning of all times from outside their own frame of reference. The Priesthood (consider Melchizedek) was already established before Abraham and the Messiah as the true High Priest (out of context of the Levites, and human limitations) as Son of God brought salvation to all who believe in Him. The Messiah became the sacrifice and fulfilled the law of Moses. The law is no longer being followed but a true relationship with our Creator through faith in the Messiah, Jesus Christ.

The blood of the Messiah flowed in order for God to watch the believers in context to their faith in the Savior, and not their sin. Even the Name of the Lord, Jehovah (Yahweh), "The Lord" means salvation (already introduced to us in Genesis 2 4 as the Creator of heaven and earth)! Think about it: the Creator with the Name that means salvation introduces Himself to humanity as the Creator and His Name already means Salvation! It signifies a sovereign God and Savior.

Hebrews 9:11-12: *"¹¹But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. ¹²Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption."*

Hebrews 9:24-28: *"²⁴For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us; ²⁵not that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood of another--²⁶He then would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. ²⁷And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, ²⁸so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation."*

The Old Testament sacrifices speaks prophetically of the Messiah who through His redemptive death brought redemption from the works of darkness. When Jesus died on the cross, the veil in the temple was torn in two. The veil divided the Holy and the Holy of Holies in the Temple. The Holy of Holies, only entered once a year by the high priest (Atonement) was now opened by the death of the Messiah for all believers. The believer does not have to stand aside. All believers can now approach the Throne of God through faith in the atoning death of Jesus Christ.

Matthew 27:50-55: *"⁵⁰And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit. ⁵¹Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split, ⁵²and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; ⁵³and coming out of the graves after His resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many. ⁵⁴So when the centurion and those with him, who were guarding Jesus, saw the earthquake and the things that had happened, they feared greatly, saying, "Truly this was the Son of God!" ⁵⁵And many women who followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to Him, were there looking on from afar,"*

Sampson and Pierce (46, p.330) points out that the tearing of the veil confirms that the new High Priest is Jesus Christ the Lamb of God. There is no need for annual penance for our sins. Jesus entered heaven in a new living way, the true Holy of Holies. He now lives here for ever where He stands in for the sins of the faithful.

After High Priest cleansed the sanctuary and the altar with the blood of the ox, he moved to the eastern part of the court. Here two goats waited for him. In front of the goats were a container in which two shoots were placed. The one shoot was marked as "For God" and the other "for Azazel" (scapegoat). The priest then placed the shoots in front of each goat. "For God" got sacrificed. The one designated as "For Azazel", the priest placed his hands on the goat's head and the people's sin is pronounced over him and recognized. Then the goat was sent into the wilderness to symbolically take away the sins of the people. In the same manner Jesus was brought before Pilate

and was sacrificed in order to bear the sins of the faithful. Jesus takes the responsibility of both goats as the two goats were needed for an offering (See Leviticus 16:7-10, 21-22). Jesus was sacrificed and took away the sins of the believers. The one goat was sacrificed (death of the Messiah) and the other goat was released (the resurrection of the Messiah from the dead).

The custom was to tie a piece of red wool to the horn of the freed ram. If the wool's color changed to white, it was a sign that the Lord has forgiven the sins of the people. The priest also tied a piece of red wool to the outside of the Temple door. If it changes to white, they were excited. If not, they were very sad and ashamed (46, p.331).

Isaiah wrote about 740 years before Christ in Isaiah 1:18: *"Come now, and let us reason together," Says the LORD, "Though your sins are like scarlet, They shall be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They shall be as wool."*

Jewish literature indicates that the Shekinah glory of God, had left the temple forty years before the temple was destroyed. There were three signs to confirm this 1) The western beam of the Menorah refused to burn continuously, 2) The doors of the temple opened by itself 3) The red wool did not supernaturally change to white. Through this people saw that the blood of the sacrificial animals could no longer vouch for the sins of the people. It was during this same year that Jesus began His ministry on earth! (46, p.331). The temple was destroyed 70 years after Christ. Jesus was crucified about 33 AD . Jesus' ministry began 3 years before His crucifixion.

1.7 Feast of Tabernacles (Sukkot)

Leviticus 23:33-34: *"³³Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ³⁴Speak to the children of Israel, saying: 'The fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be the Feast of Tabernacles for seven days to the LORD.'"*

The Feast of Tabernacles begins on Tishri 15, five days after the Day of Atonement, and continues for seven days to 21 Tishri (September / October). The word "Sukkot" means tents, or temporary objects of residence. Referring to the stay in the desert after the Israelites moved from Egypt. In contrast to the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur) is the Feast of Tabernacles a festival of joy.

Leviticus 23:42-43: *"⁴²You shall dwell in booths for seven days. All who are native Israelites shall dwell in booths, ⁴³that your generations may know that I made the children of Israel dwell in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God."*

Sampson and Pierce (46, p.345) points out that Sukkot reminded the Israelites to the following: The bad conditions in which the people found themselves (worked as slaves in Egypt) and the Lord delivered them from that.

That the Lord gave their huts/tents to stay in (in the desert / wilderness), and that God built Him a tabernacle amongst them. The Lord looked after them and protected them through a cloud hanging over them for protection against the sun. The original grace of God for them and their ancestors must always be kept in mind. On the eighth day they returned to their homes and appreciate it again after staying in tents/huts for seven days.

It is therefore about redemption focusing on the forgiveness of sins. According to tradition, during this festival huge candles / lamps were build and frequently young men (who climbed ladders) poured oil over it to keep it burning. It lit up the whole city. The men danced around it and sung Psalms and praises with torches in their hands.

Besides many sacrifices during the festival, water was also a very important part of Sukkot. The priest taught the people about passages of Scripture that deals with water. Water was also taken in golden containers from the fountain of Siloam and brought to the Temple. The priest then poured the water on the altar in order to demonstrate Israel's gratitude for the rain that fell during the season. They also prayed for rain for the next season. At this stage they also read from: Isaiah 12:1-3: *"¹And in that day you will say: 'O LORD, I will praise You; Though You were angry with me, Your anger is turned away, and You comfort me. ²Behold, God is my salvation, I will trust and not be afraid; 'For YAH, the LORD, is my strength and song; He also has become my salvation.' ³Therefore with joy you will draw water From the wells of salvation."*

The latter was not only done begging for rain of the Lord, but also to remind the people of the Messiah who will come and pour out His Holy Spirit on them (46, p.348).

Contemporary Jews do not bring sacrifices anymore for the temple no longer exists. They maintain the Lulav (Four Species). See Leviticus 23:40: *"And you shall take for yourselves on the first day the fruit of beautiful trees, branches of palm trees, the boughs of leafy trees, and willows of the brook; and you shall rejoice before the LORD your God for seven days."*

In Nehemiah 8:15-16 it can be read how Ezra re-established the feasts after the exile, written about 400 years before Christ: *"¹⁵and that they should announce and proclaim in all their cities and in*

Jerusalem, saying, "Go out to the mountain, and bring olive branches, branches of oil trees, myrtle branches, palm branches, and branches of leafy trees, to make booths, as it is written." ¹⁶Then the people went out and brought them and made themselves booths, each one on the roof of his house, or in their courtyards or the courts of the house of God, and in the open square of the Water Gate and in the open square of the Gate of Ephraim."

These branches were held and waved in specific ways as they move in a circle around the altar. They also prayed for the Lord's blessing and every prayer ends with the word Hoshana (please save or save now).

Already about 500 years before Christ it was prophesied by Zechariah that nations will come to praise the Lord on the Feast of Tabernacles: Zechariah 14:16: "And it shall come to pass that everyone who is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles."

Jesus Christ also participated in the Feast of Tabernacles (Sukkot) by teaching the people during the festival. On the same day that the priests would pour the water on the altar, Jesus announced the following: John 7:37-38: "³⁷On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. ³⁸He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water."

It is great to read what Jesus told the Samaritan woman in John 4:14: "but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life."

Just as the huge lamps and lanterns and candles lit the city during the Feast of Tabernacles, Jesus Christ is the Light of the world. John 8:12: "Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life."

We are temporary bodies of flesh in which we live. Our hope is eternal. Look at Jesus' words in John 14:2-3: "²In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. ³And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also."

If you still have doubts about how we better can come into contact with the being of God, look at the words of Jesus. Jesus who is the Lamb that was slain for our salvation and forgiveness of sins. Jesus replaced the law, the law that originally held the will of God. Jesus came according to the prophecies and died on the cross before thousands of eyewitnesses and rose from the dead and revealed Himself to hundreds of people at a time after His resurrection. John 14:6-7: "⁶Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. ⁷"If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; and from now on you know Him and have seen Him."

We now know the Being and the will of God through the Messiah Jesus Christ. His salvation delivered the Israelites out of Egypt from slavery, and the Messiah redeemed us from our sins so that we can look forward to and eternity in the Holy Kingdom of God.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ teaches us not to be bound by earthly things. We need to stay focused through faith in the Lord's Kingdom.

Sampson and Pierce (46, p 353) points out that the birth of Jesus Christ probably occurred during the Feast of Tabernacles (Sukkot). John the Baptist was born during Passover. In Luke 1:26-33 it can be read that the Holy Spirit, impregnated Mary 6 months after the pregnancy of John the Baptist's mother, Elizabeth. If Hanukkah (8 days) and nine months pregnancy is taken into account, it brings us to the Feast of Tabernacles (Sukkot).

Was Jesus born on 25 December? Introduction to the Festival of Light (Hanukkah)

The Bible does not give the specific date of the birth of Jesus. Experts can only make assumptions although it is interesting to note these assumptions.

Zechariah the priest was the father of John the Baptist. We can read in Luke 1:5 that he was in the priestly division of Abijah. In 1 Chronicles 24:10, we read how David divided the priests into service groups and it can be seen that the service group Abijah was the eighth group.

Luke 1:5: "There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the division of Abijah. His wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth."

1 Chronicles 24:10: "the seventh to Hakkoz, the eighth to Abijah"

They were about 20,000 priests who were divided into 24 groups to do service in the Temple. Robin Sampson and Linda Pierce claimed in their book: *A family guide to the Biblical Holidays* (Heart of Wisdom Publishing; 2001, p.354) that Abijah's turn for service was during the week Sivan 12-18.

In Luke 1:8-13 and 24 it can be seen that the angel Gabriel appeared to Zechariah during his turn in the Temple. It can also be read here that it was during this time that John's mother, Elizabeth conceived John.

Luke 1:8-13: *"⁸So it was, that while he was serving as priest before God in the order of his division, ⁹according to the custom of the priesthood, his lot fell to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord. ¹⁰And the whole multitude of the people was praying outside at the hour of incense. ¹¹Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing on the right side of the altar of incense. ¹²And when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him. ¹³But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your prayer is heard; and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John."*

Luke 1:24: *"Now after those days his wife Elizabeth conceived; and she hid herself five months, saying,...."*

It can be assumed that this conception took place about Sivan 30. If 40 weeks, the period of a normal pregnancy, is added to that it brings us to Nisan 14 (Easter) when John the Baptist could have been born.

It is seen in the Bible, Luke 1 26-30 that Mary conceived Jesus, by the Holy Spirit with, six months after Elizabeth conceived John the Baptist.

Luke 1:26-31: *"²⁶Now in the sixth month (of Elizabeths' pregnancy) the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth²⁷ to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸And having come in, the angel said to her, "Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!" ²⁹But when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and considered what manner of greeting this was. ³⁰Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS."*

It can be seen from the above that Jesus was born six months after John the Baptist. If John the Baptist was born during Nisan 14, Passover, and six months added, it brings us to the Feast of Tabernacles. On our calendar, the period from late September to early October. In all likelihood Jesus was born during the Feast of Tabernacles. (Sukkot)

It is wonderful to realize that the Feast of Tabernacles is celebrated to commemorate the Lord lived with Israelites when they were in the desert. The Lord came to dwell amongst them (He dwelled amongst His people). The Lord became man and dwelt amongst us (John 1:14) as Jesus Christ, faithful to His prophetic promises, during the Feast of Tabernacles. Many believers also believe that Jesus will return during the Feast of Tabernacles. He is coming again to dwell amongst us.

It is therefore nowhere mentioned in the Bible that Jesus was born on December 25. Scripture-based conclusions points out that Jesus was born during the Feast of Tabernacles (Sukkot), and it is early October.

1.8 Where does the date December 25 come from?

Many false religions arose over time. One can read in the Bible of them. An example is the religion of Baal that originated from Noah's son Cush. This ancient Babylonian religion acknowledge the One infinite and Almighty Creator, but they have worshipped an infinite number of gods. They believed that these gods could influence the actions of man. They saw God as far removed and inaccessible. The popular religion of Babylon was the worship of the mother (Semiramis) and child (Tammuz). Both are deified which gave rise to the so-called Queen of Heaven. After her death she was deified and given the title "Queen of Heaven". She is seen as the divine intermediary between the people and the son (Tammuz). See Jeremiah 44:15-19 which refers to the queen of heavens.

Jeremiah 44:15-19: *"¹⁵Then all the men who knew that their wives had burned incense to other gods, with all the women who stood by, a great multitude, and all the people who dwelt in the land of Egypt, in Pathros, answered Jeremiah, saying: ¹⁶"As for the word that you have spoken to us in the name of the LORD, we will not listen to you! ¹⁷But we will certainly do whatever has gone out of our own mouth, to burn incense to the queen of heaven and pour out drink offerings to her, as we have done, we and our fathers, our kings and our princes, in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem. For then we had plenty of food, were well-off, and saw no trouble. ¹⁸But since we stopped burning incense to the queen of heaven and pouring out drink offerings to her, we have lacked everything and have been consumed by the sword and by famine." ¹⁹The women also said, "And when we burned incense to the queen of heaven and poured out drink offerings to her, did we make cakes for her, to worship her, and pour out drink offerings to her without our husbands' permission?""*

The latter was written between 627 and 586 B.C. The queen of heaven is also suggested as the woman with the crown on the head, sometimes with a halo around the head, and with a cup of wine in her hand. See Revelation 18:2-8.

Revelation 18:2-8: ² And he cried mightily with a loud voice, saying, "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird! ³ For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury." ⁴ And I heard another voice from heaven saying, "Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues. ⁵ For her sins have reached to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities. ⁶ Render to her just as she rendered to you, and repay her double according to her works; in the cup which she has mixed, mix double for her. ⁷ In the measure that she glorified herself and lived luxuriously, in the same measure give her torment and sorrow; for she says in her heart, 'I sit as queen, and am no widow, and will not see sorrow.' ⁸ Therefore her plagues will come in one day—death and mourning and famine. And she will be utterly burned with fire, for strong is the Lord God who judges her."

Another example is the Greek mythology. This is a collection of traditional stories told by the ancient Greeks with respect to the heroism of imaginary gods, goddesses, heroes and heroines. The Greek religion was polytheistic. Stories about the origins and activities of gods, was of great variety. Greek mythology was like a complex and rich language through which a wide variety of perceptions about the world could be expressed. Zeus is considered the god of war and was one of many gods.

During the Hellenistic period, about 450 years before Christ, was the mythological religions intermingled. The Romans and Greeks even renamed their mythical gods. Zeus who is considered the father of all gods, celebrated his birthday on December 25.

During the Roman reign of Constantine about 320 AD religious freedom was introduced. There had to be provision for all religions and then the "Church of the day" (that's what the word Catholic means) was founded. Many of the customs and icons of other religions were introduced, as well as the birthday celebration on December 25 and the queen of heaven. Respectively December 25 became Christ's birthday and the queen of heaven brought divinity to Mary, the mother of Jesus.

1.9 Is there a real and Biblical Christian festival during December?

Yes, the Festival of Light (Hanukkah) or Feast of Dedication. This is one of the festivals that occur after the spring and autumn festivals, which God gave to Moses. . In other words, the Festival of Light is not given by God to Moses, but instituted by man himself to commemorate the reconsecration of the Temple.

Antiochus IV, the Syrian king who worshiped the Greek gods, about 180 BC ruled Judea. Initially he allowed the Jews to worship YHWH (God) but later started destruction which is recorded by many historians. Many Jews became unfaithful and started to worship the mythical gods. It is referred to as the Hellenistic Jews. They helped Antiochus IV to eradicate the Jewish faith as far as possible.

Antiochus IV moved into Jerusalem and banned the Jews to worship the Lord. He destroyed the Temple implements and defiled the Temple by offering an unholy pig on the altar. The Temple was then devoted to the Greek God Zeus and the Jews were forced to worship Zeus. They were also brutally tortured to death if they did not do it. Thousands of innocent people were killed. Antiochus IV declared himself as a god and changed his name to Epifanus (The manifestation of God). Daniel has also predicted this about 400 years before his time as can be read in Daniel 11:31: "And forces shall be mustered by him, and they shall defile the sanctuary fortress; then they shall take away the daily sacrifices, and place there the abomination of desolation."

The Hellenistic Jews caused much uproar in their destruction process to such an extent that Antiochus IV regarded it as a rebellion against his throne. He came with his army and moved into Jerusalem and destroyed the Temple and killed thousands of Jews.

God was still in control and helped the Jews against Syrian onslaught in spite the Jewish minority. A group known as the Makkabees obtained victory and finally repaired the Temple and re-introduced the Temple Service. They demolished the unholy altar and built a new one at the same place as the original. During the restoration of the Temple, they found a small amount of kerosene. The kerosene was only enough for the minora to burn one day. They celebrated the reconsecration of the Temple with festivities that lasted eight days. A great miracle occurred because the minora burned for eight days until they could get new oil. This is the origin of the Festival of Light (Hanukkah) or Feast of Dedication.

The congregation of Israel decided that the reconsecration of the altar must be celebrated for eight days the same time every year with joy and excitement. The eight days starts on Kislev 25 that fell

during December on the Roman calendar. The light of the minora symbolizes the light of God. The miracle of the minora burning for eight days remains a symbol of God's Word which gives eternal life.

Jesus also attended this festival:

John 10:22-28: ²²Now it was the Feast of Dedication in Jerusalem, and it was winter. ²³And Jesus walked in the temple, in Solomon's porch. ²⁴Then the Jews surrounded Him and said to Him, "How long do You keep us in doubt? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly." ²⁵Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in My Father's name, they bear witness of Me. ²⁶But you do not believe, because you are not of My sheep, as I said to you. ²⁷My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. ²⁸And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand."

In the above words of Jesus it can be seen, once again during the Feast of Dedication, that He showed He is the miracle of God and the One who is the eternal light.

Later, Jesus drew the attention to the fact that He is the Light. See John 12:35-36: ³⁵Then Jesus said to them, "A little while longer the **light** is with you. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you; he who walks in darkness does not know where he is going. ³⁶While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light." These things Jesus spoke, and departed, and was hidden from them."

It is wonderful to know that Jesus, during the Festival of Light, literally brought light to the blind man.

John 9:3-7: ³Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him. ⁴I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; the night is coming when no one can work. ⁵As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." ⁶When He had said these things, He spat on the ground and made clay with the saliva; and He anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay. ⁷And He said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which is translated, Sent). So he went and washed, and came back seeing."

1.10 What does the Bible say about worshipping at a tree?

Jeremiah 10:1-4: ¹Hear the word which the LORD speaks to you, O house of Israel. ²Thus says the LORD: "Do not learn the way of the Gentiles; Do not be dismayed at the signs of heaven, For the Gentiles are dismayed at them. ³For the customs of the peoples are futile; For one cuts a tree from the forest, The work of the hands of the workman, with the ax. ⁴They decorate it with silver and gold; They fasten it with nails and hammers So that it will not topple."

Also see: Deuteronomy 21:23; Deuteronomy 12:2; 2 Kings 16:3-4; 2 Kings 17:9; Isaiah 57:5; Jeremiah 2:20; Jeremiah 3:6; Jeremiah 3:13 en Ezekiel 6:13

The Lord is definitely not in favor of worshipping at a decorated tree. It was clearly a pagan custom.

Hosea 4:6: "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being priest for Me; Because you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children."

Should we celebrate?

Above question can be put differently: Should we rejoice?

Why do we celebrate? Because you rejoice and celebrate something. It's not an meaningless process. It carries a message. It speaks to other people.

We read in the Bible that we who live in the New Testament times already experienced the redemptive work of Christ, and that Christ has perfected the Law of Moses. Paul also explained that the rituals are not required for salvation, but that the attention should be drawn to Jesus Christ.

Colossians 2:16-23: ¹⁶So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, ¹⁷which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ. ¹⁸Let no one cheat you of your reward, taking delight in false humility and worship of angels, intruding into those things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, ¹⁹and not holding fast to the Head, from whom all the body, nourished and knit together by joints and ligaments, grows with the increase that is from God. ²⁰Therefore, if you died with Christ from the basic principles of the world, why, as though living in the world, do you subject yourselves to regulations—²¹"Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle," ²²which all concern things which perish with the using—according to the commandments and doctrines of men? ²³These things indeed have an appearance of wisdom in self-imposed religion, false humility, and neglect of the body, but are of no value against the indulgence of the flesh."

From the above Scripture it can be seen that it is not wrong to celebrate. We are, however, warned that if we celebrate it not be done with a wrong approach.

Paul explains in Romans 14:5-11: ⁵*One person esteems one day above another; another esteems every day alike. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind.* ⁶*He who observes the day, observes it to the Lord; and he who does not observe the day, to the Lord he does not observe it. He who eats, eats to the Lord, for he gives God thanks; and he who does not eat, to the Lord he does not eat, and gives God thanks.* ⁷*For none of us lives to himself, and no one dies to himself.* ⁸*For if we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.* ⁹*For to this end Christ died and rose and lived again, that He might be Lord of both the dead and the living.* ¹⁰*But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.* ¹¹*For it is written: "AS I LIVE, SAYS THE LORD, EVERY KNEE SHALL BOW TO ME, AND EVERY TONGUE SHALL CONFESS TO GOD."*

The crucial is clear, that we must worship the one and only Lord, who revealed Himself to us through His Son Jesus Christ. Seeing the Messiah in the Festivals, and throughout the Old Testament, give us the grace to realize that Jesus perfected the law of Moses accurately to establish His identity, and confirmed it on earth. God's Identity, Jesus Christ, is now reality to us. It is not left behind or deprived. The believer strives to draw closer to the Lord Jesus Christ. The Person of Jesus Christ, brought the Mighty Supernatural God, the Lord, within our reach so that we can know and worship Him.

The approach is therefore of worship and praise. When worshipping it is done from a personal perspective to drawing closer to the Lord. This is not done to demonstrate faith or to judge other people.

1 Corinthians 5: 6-8: ⁶*our glorying is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?* ⁷*Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us.* ⁸*Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.*

The Lord Jesus Christ perfected the festivals. He did it so that we can believe that He is the Messiah that enable us to approach God the Father. For the person who study the Word, it becomes clear that there is no doubt that Jesus Christ was on earth, and that He is the Messiah. Christ also prophetically fulfilled the festivals accurately. It is therefore obvious that if the festivals were fulfilled prophetically accurate, the Feast of Tabernacles still holds prophetic reality for the world - and that is that the Messiah will come to earth again. He will come and live with us.

See Jesus testifying in John 14:1-3: ¹*Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me.* ²*In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.* ³*And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also."*

The coming of Christ is a reality which we are looking forward to. It is celebrated. To tell the truth, it is a command of the Lord that Jesus' return should be celebrated. About 500 years before Christ Zechariah prophesied about the end times as follows: Zechariah 14:16-19: ¹⁶*And it shall come to pass that everyone who is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles.* ¹⁷*And it shall be that whichever of the families of the earth do not come up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, on them there will be no rain.* ¹⁸*If the family of Egypt will not come up and enter in, they shall have no rain; they shall receive the plague with which the LORD strikes the nations who do not come up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles.* ¹⁹*This shall be the punishment of Egypt and the punishment of all the nations that do not come up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles."*

The believer prophesies that the Messiah will come again. In worship he / she comes close to the Messiah and prophetically it speaks to him / her. We encourage one another and proclaim to the world that our Savior will come again: 1 Corinthians 14:1-5: ¹*Pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy.* ²*For he who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God, for no one understands him; however, in the spirit he speaks mysteries.* ³*But he who prophesies speaks edification and exhortation and comfort to men.* ⁴*He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the church.* ⁵*I wish you all spoke with tongues, but even more that you prophesied; for he who prophesies is greater than he who speaks with tongues, unless indeed he interprets, that the church may receive edification."*

It's all about Christ. The closer we get to Christ, the sooner the better. The closest the believer can be to Christ today, is by studying the Bible and to seek the Face of God through praises. The closer to the Scriptures, the better.

There is certainly nothing wrong with a person who celebrates the feasts of the Lord in worship in order to seek rapprochement. The key is that it's about Christ.

1.1 Particular festivals as opportunities for worship

The believer enters the presence of God through worship. By studying the covenant we have learned that God entered into an eternal agreement with man to be the Lord of the believers. The sacrifices taught us the process of obedience and that the process of worship is a very special occasion. The feasts established the Identity of the Lord, revealed through His Son, and gives the faithful perspective to eternal bliss in the presence of the Creator.

The Lord originally instituted the Sabbath so that man should spend time with Him.

The word "Sabbath" means that you should stop what you're doing.

Leviticus 23:1-4: ¹And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ²"Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'The feasts of the LORD, which you shall proclaim to be holy convocations, these are My feasts. ³Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of solemn rest, a holy convocation. You shall do no work on it; it is the Sabbath of the LORD in all your dwellings. ⁴These are the feasts of the LORD, holy convocations which you shall proclaim at their appointed times."

It can be seen from the above that the weekly seventh day should be celebrated as Sabbath. Reading in Leviticus 23, it can be seen that certain days of the festival are also considered Sabbaths. The Day of Atonement is not just a Sabbath, but also a day of fast.

The first and seventh days of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Easter (Nisan 14) is also seen as part of the Feast of Unleavened Bread as an eight-day festival (Passover). The first day of Unleavened Bread (Nisan 15) is regarded as a sabbatical. Passover (Nisan 14) is considered the day of preparation for the Sabbath of Nisan 15.	Sabbath
The fiftieth day after the Feast of First Fruits, the Feast of Weeks (Pentecost)	Sabbath
The first day of the Feast of Trumpets	Sabbath
Day of Atonement	Day of Fasting and Sabbath
The first, seventh and eighth days of the Feast of Tabernacles	Sabbath

Certainly the festivals cannot be celebrated in the same manner as the Jews did in Old Testament times. There no longer exists a physical Temple and there are no priests to facilitate the process. But still there is the Holy Spirit that lives in the believer's heart. The prophetic message of the festival continues to proclaim the coming of the Messiah.

It can be seen from the table above which days have been designated by the Lord as Sabbaths during the feasts. If the believer seek the Lord and stop what he / she is doing, it will make sense to do it Scriptural and Thematically correctly. Thematically with a capital letter because it refers to the Identity of Christ. Praise the Lord for the festivals that help us to associate with His Identity. Sabbaths in the festivities are given with a reason. It provides an opportunity to draw attention to the Lord's work of salvation.

Spring Festivals - Already fulfilled	
Easter	He is my only Lord - I get to know Him - His Name
Feast of unleavened bread	He is my Savior I abandon the sinful man. I obtained new identity in Christ
Feast of First Fruits	He Is Eternal Life - I assume the new man to be with the Lord forever - the New Covenant
Feast of weeks	He Is Immanuel to me today already - he taught and it brings change. I preach His Word to all nations
Autumn Feasts - Prophetically	

Feast of trumpets	His Mighty appearance (past and future) forces me to awe and introspection. It woke my conscience. I will adapt to the will of the Creator.
The Atonement	Our High Priest, Jesus Christ, made eternal atonement possible for me with the Lord. I believe in the power of God who raised Him. Through the Holy Spirit it speaks prophetically to me to look forward to His return. He brings salvation to <u>those who wait for Him (Hebrew 9)</u> .
Feast of tabernacles (Sukkot)	Our descendants must know that the Lord is the savior (Leviticus 23 43). We look forward to, and preach (prophecy) the coming of the Messiah that will come and dwell amongst us.

All the feasts of the Lord proclaim who the Messiah is, what He has done for us, and what He will do. The climax is the second coming when the believer will live forever in His presence.

1.2 The festivals as an opportunity to testify

Christians today does not live legalistic to try to obtain salvation. We live in obedience to the will of the Lord. The "Great Commission" in Matthew 28 given to the believer is to go out and make disciples of all nations. The feasts of the Lord today also offer exceptional opportunity to the believer to witness. For example, consider the following possible dialogue:

The believer (Pete) is celebrating the Feast of Unleavened Bread. The way he does it is that during these seven days (Nisan 15-21) he eats no bread that contains yeast i.e. leavened bread. During this time period there are often occasions where Pete is offered bread. One example is where Pete goes to lunch with colleagues.

Longer version

Colleague: "Peter, bread for you?"

Peter: "Thanks Colleague, but I don't eat leavened bread this week."

Colleague: "But why?" (Immediately creating the opportunity for Peter to testify)

Peter: "It recently dawned on me that Christ was crucified during Easter."

Colleague "Now what does this mean?"

Peter "Haven't you heard that the Israelites moved out of Egypt."

Colleague "Yes, but what does this have to do with bread?"

Peter: "The Israelites had to apply the blood of a lamb on their doorposts to protect them against the angel of death. The firstborn boys of those who did not do it, like the Egyptians, were killed. This was the tenth plague. "

Colleague: "Do you believe that it really happened?"

Peter: "The Lord instructed the Israelites to commemorate the day when the blood of the lamb protect them,. They have already started doing it about 1300 years before Christ, every year during the Jewish month of Nisan on the 14th day of the month. It is called Easter. When I realized that Christ, known as the Lamb of God, was crucified on the same day, I realized that it could not be coincidence. Therefor it has a message me."

Colleague: "And what is this message?"

Peter: "I discovered that the Israelites already celebrated the Feast of Unleavened Bread beginning each year from Nisan 15 to Nisan 21. It was a special time for them as they remember their suffering in Egypt. They had to work as slaves for the Egyptians. The Lord saved them from this hardship. I realized that the blood of the Lamb that stood up for Israel's suffering also apply to us. The Lamb of God died on the cross for our sins."

Colleague: "Can one really apply it to Christ?"

Peter: "The fact that Christ was really crucified on Nisan 14, strongly appeals to me. Further, I discovered the following "

Colleague: "What is that?"

Peter: "Another one of the festivals that the Israelites of that time had was the Feast of First Fruits. It is celebrated over two days, Nisan 16 and 17. "

Colleague: "What is so special about this?"

Peter: "Christ rose from the dead during the night of Nisan 16/17. He is the first fruit to eternal life. He was God's firstborn on earth. Because He rose from the dead, He gave me the assurance that He can give me eternal life, for He has power over life. "

Colleague: "I'm not so sure if Christ was actually crucified and rose from the dead. Isn't it all stories? "

Peter: "Why would the writers of the Gospels in the Bible make up stories? To achieve what? The apostles was tortured to death because they testified that Jesus rose from the dead and they saw him afterwards. Why would a person make up a story and stick to it until death, if it is just a story? "

Colleague: "It probably doesn't make any sense."

Peter: "What is more interesting to me is the following: From the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread the Israelites had to count down 50 days. On the fiftieth day, they had to celebrate the Feast of Weeks. In other words it is seven weeks of seven days to give you 49 days. On the first day after the seven weeks, they had to celebrate this festival."

Colleague: "What is commemorated during this festival? "

Peter: "They commemorated on this day that they received the will of the Lord (the Act) at Mount Sinai. It has been celebrated every year since about 1300 years before Christ. During this festival they read from the Scriptures Ezekiel and Habakkuk the prophets prophesy that they saw the Lord coming in storm winds and fire. "

Colleague: "So what does this mean? "

Peter: "If we realize that Jesus was crucified on Nisan 14, we also realize that the disciples celebrated the Feast of Weeks 51 days later. As customs were for about 1300 years, they waited in great anticipation for the Lord who will come in storm winds and fire. This is witnessed in the Scriptures (Acts 2) that the Holy Spirit was poured over them on that day with the sound of the storm wind and tongues of fire that sat on them. The Feast of Weeks was also baptized Pentecost, which means 50."

Colleague: "It's getting a bit much to understand!"

Peter: "Let me summarize it for you quickly. About 1300 years before Christ The Lord commanded the Israelites to celebrate His festivals. It was joyous festivals celebrating salvation. Easter, Feast of Unleavened Bread, Feast of First Fruits and Feast of Weeks. This festivals are called The Spring Festivals. In all these festivals one can prophetically see the Messiah. Christ came and fulfilled it in the finest detail, right to the days celebrated annually as early as 1,300 years before. If you read the book of Daniel it can be seen that the year in which Christ were to be crucified, was accurately predicted more than 600 years before the time By the way, there are more than 300 Messianic prophecies Christ fulfilled. To come back to the feasts of the Lord"

Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread: Jesus came to die for our sins so that we can have a relationship with the Father.

The Feast of First Fruits: Jesus rose from the dead to assure us the that He gives us eternal life.

Pentecost: Jesus gave us the Holy Spirit to reveal His Word to us today.

Colleague: "You throw many things my way now"

Peter: "I also felt that way before, but I found the more time I spend with the Word of God, the more God reveals Himself to me."

Colleague: "Must one celebrate this festive else you go to hell? "

Peter: "Christ has died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that we may believe. If we believe that Christ died for our sins and we put our trust in Christ for eternal life in His presence, we are saved. Through our own actions, such as to celebrate the festivals, we can not be delivered. God's mercy is greater than our own actions."

Colleague: "So why you celebrate the festival?"

Peter: "The Lord has created special opportunities so that we can spend time with him. Such as the Sabbath every seventh day. The festivities also have Sabbaths. For me it's like divine appointments during which the Lord bless us."

Colleague: "How does the Lord bless us"

- Peter: "You are blessed when you experience peace in the presence of the Lord. We read in Numbers 6 what the Lord said to Moses, he should say when the people were blessed. ²⁴*The LORD bless you and keep you;* ²⁵*The LORD make His face shine upon you, And be gracious to you;* ²⁶*The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, And give you peace.*"
- Colleague: "How can the Lord shine His face upon you?"
- Peter: "The Angel of the Lord's Presence is the Messiah, Jesus Christ. When we spend time with the Word of God, the Messiah, Jesus Christ is revealed to us."
- Colleague: "How does God reveal Himself to man?"
- Peter: "God keeps Himself busy with each person seeking rapprochement with Him. He does it very specifically so that the person knows it. The key is that the person engages with the Lord and not another god. The Lord gave us His Identity through His Son Jesus Christ. We get our access to God by virtue of the fact that Jesus died as divine High Priest for our sins and we believe it. "
- Colleague: "What do you mean with Jesus as Divine High Priest died? "
- Peter: "It's a very good question and it brings us back to the feasts of the Lord. The priests facilitated worshipping at the Temple. The person who stood at the head of this process was the high priest. Once a year, on a day called the Day of Atonement, he entered the most holy part of the Temple. It took place under great obedience and reverence as the Holy of Holies represented the presence of the Lord. During this process, the high priest sought forgiveness from the Lord for his own and the people's sins. In other words, we can say that the high priest pleaded for reconciliation with the Father.
- It was clearly an annual process done over and over every year,. Christ is the Son of God Himself. When Christ died on the cross, the veil in the temple tore in the middle. It caused the most holy place to be open. Only God could have brought permanent reconciliation so that it no longer had to take place annually. Christ is God and took the annual role of the high priest upon Himself to stand for man's sin. In other words, everyone has access to the Father through faith in Jesus Christ. "
- Colleague: "Do you really believe that things such as the veil that tore, really happened? "
- Peter: "Did you know that even non-believers wrote about these events.? Think of Tallos who lived in the time of Christ. Quotes from his work where he speculates what caused the darkness at Christ's crucifixion can still be seen today. Anyway, why would the Gospel writers lie about it? To achieve what? "
- What is important is that we celebrate Christ. What is very interesting is that we learn from the books of 1 Chronicles and Luke that Christ was born on earth during the Feast of Tabernacles (also called Sukkot). It is also a festival that has been celebrated annually from about 1300 years before Christ. Originally, the Israelites celebrated it to commemorate that the Lord let them dwell in huts in the dessert. The Lord took care of them and lived with them as represented by the Tabernacle and later the Temple. In other words, the Lord lived with them we can also say that the Lord dwelled amongst them."
- Colleague: "Is Feast of Tabernacles and Christmas the same?"
- Peter: During Christmas the birth of Christ is celebrated. It is however mixed with pagan practices. This festival took its current form when the Roman Emperor Constantine declared freedom of religion around 320 AD. However, at the time they provided for pagan religions. The Roman Catholic Church started. Did you know that the word 'catholic' means church of the day, 'mixed religions'?"
- Colleague: "What do you tell me now? "
- Peter: "It is certainly not wrong to love each other and give each other gifts. Nor is it wrong to be glad that Christ was born on earth. The key, however, is that our focus should be on the present and future. Christ is still alive today and He will come and live with us again. It is wonderful to know that the Lord is and has always been Immanuel to us."
- Colleague: "What do you mean thereby?"
- Peter: "Immanuel means 'God with us'. The Lord has always kept Himself busy with man. He always wanted to be near us. He even entered into a covenant with Abraham that he might be the God of all nations who believe in him. We can even read in the book of Isaiah 7, by the way it was written about 750 years before Christ, that a boy will be born and he will be called Immanuel. Jesus is God with us. He came to earth as a

man to conquer the evil and He lives today in the believer's heart through His Holy Spirit. He is still Immanuel to us.

The Israelites annually celebrated the Feast of Trumpets. It was the celebration of the Jewish New Year. It is also regarded by both Jews and Christians as a commemoration of the creation of the world. It is a day where the gifts of the Lord are celebrated and prayed for the Lord's blessing for the new year.

So it is all about the Lord. We examine ourselves and seek to discover the will of God in our lives. This is not an identity-less process, Jesus made the name of God known to us. Jesus, according to the Scriptures, came to save us from eternal condemnation and gave us the assurance that He will come again. "

Colleague: "Can any man be part of this?"

Peter: "Yes, definitely"

Colleague: "How do I do this?"

Peter: "Celebrate Christ in your heart. Accept Him and put your trust in Him for eternal salvation. Let go of wrong things and you will know what it is. Seek as many possible opportunities to spend time with the Lord. The best way and place to start is to read the Bible regularly. Regularly pray to the Father in the name of Jesus to reveal Himself more and more to you. Strive to serve the Lord with devotion."

Shorter version:

Colleague: "Peter, bread for you?"

Peter: "Thanks Colleague, but I don't eat leavened bread this week."

Colleague: "But why?" (Immediately creating the opportunity for Peter to testify)

Peter: "It recently dawned on me that Christ was crucified during Easter."

Colleague: "Good for you!"

Peter: "Thanks. Yeast found in normal bread were considered representative of a person's sin in the Biblical times. I realized I do a lot of wrong things and try to fix my life. "

Colleague: "This is not the time to talk about such things."

Peter: "I am just quickly answering your question why I do not eat leavened bread this week. I realized that Christ came to die for our sins on earth. Hence, He stood in for our sins. The fact that he was crucified on the very day commemorated every year for 1300 years before Him, made me think a lot.

As he accurately according to the Scriptures also rose from the dead, I now know that He will come again to earth, as there has been predicted for hundreds of years before Christ.

I celebrate the Feast of Unleavened Bread not because I must, but it is a wonderful opportunity for me to tell other people that God reveals Himself to us through His Son, Jesus Christ "

1.3 Give Christmas a Biblical content

No feast in the Bible refers directly to the birth of Jesus, but all focus on the Savior Jesus. The reality is the Savior Jesus and not the baby Jesus. The focus should be on the present and the future, and not only the past.

If we want to celebrate during December, it makes sense to celebrate the fact that Jesus is the light of the world - Festival of Light (Dedication)

The use of Christmas is definitely not purely Scriptural but the reality is that this Hellenistic and commercial festival is well established. It is certainly not wrong to love each other and give gifts. The whole world knows of Christmas and take part themselves, even if they are not Christians. The nature and origin of Christmas allows for the latter.

Christmas can be used to educate people regarding the Messianic reality in the feasts of the Lord.

This is an ideal opportunity for families and friends to read from the Bible together, see the Savior Jesus and in excitement look forward to His return. This book's chapter on the Feasts of the Lord and the PowerPoint presentation "The Feasts of the Lord" at [http // www.matthew28.co.za](http://www.matthew28.co.za) should help with this.

The focus therefore shifts from Bethlehem to Jerusalem

The Savior is born in Bethlehem, as predicted, over 500 years prior, in Micah 5:1-2: *"¹Now gather yourself in troops, O daughter of troops; He has laid siege against us; They will strike the judge of Israel with a rod on the cheek. ²But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, Though you are little among the thousands of Judah, Yet out of you shall come forth to Me The One to be Ruler in Israel, Whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting."*

Salvation comes from Zion (Jerusalem), Jesus was crucified in Jerusalem. Jesus will return to Jerusalem during the Second Coming.

Psalms 14:7: *"Oh, that the salvation of Israel would come out of Zion! When the LORD brings back the captivity of His people, Let Jacob rejoice and Israel be glad."* Written about 1000 years before Christ.

Jesus Christ, the Light of the world's body who is without sin, was broken for us. We have seen His sincerity and truth By the action of the Holy Spirit we can still see Him today and have a personal relationship with Him, we can worship Him.

Paul encourages the faithful to celebrate, but within the context of the Truth 1 Corinthians 5:8: *"Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth."*

Jesus Christ is the Truth, and He is coming again. We should not fail to celebrate it!

Revelation 22:16-21: *"¹⁶I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star." ¹⁷And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely. ¹⁸For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; ¹⁹and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book. ²⁰He who testifies to these things says, "**Surely I am coming quickly.**" **Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!** ²¹The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen."*

The Christian, Buks Moolman, testifies in his email ministries (AnotherBrother) as follows:

Early Christians regularly greeted each other using the Aramaic expression "Maranata". The meaning of this is "Come Lord" or "The Lord is coming". Doing this they reminded each other that Jesus might return any moment to fetch us. Simultaneously it also was a prayer for the Lord to return soonest. (Note – Die Radikale JeugBoodskap – bl 748)

Maranata is an Aramaic word used in certain translations, for example 1 Corinthians 16:22 in the NKJV it was translated "O, Lord, come!" but it also means "the Lord did come".

This is a word that most properly was used during the Holy Communion for the Lord to be present during the event (in the sense of "O, Lord, come!") or as an assurance that the Lord is present. As plea it could have had the double meaning for the Lord to be present during Holy Communion and for Him to return according to His promise ("Surely I am coming quickly", Revelation 22:20).

When we realize the important difference between celebration and worship it brings us to reality. We not only commemorate Christ, but we worship Him. He is Reality - "I Am", He gives us eternal life. In, and through Him, we have an eternal identity.

The Apostle Peter confirmed as follows in 1 Peter 1:13: *"Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ,"*

Maranata!!!!

Chapter 6

The Temple of the Lord

1. Introduction

The armor of the believer: Ephesians 6:10-20: ¹⁰Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. ¹¹Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. ¹²For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. ¹³Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. ¹⁴Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, ¹⁵and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; ¹⁶above all, **taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.** ¹⁷And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; ¹⁸praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints—¹⁹and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, ²⁰for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.”

Faith is a gift of God. This enables the believer and the witnesses, not to doubt despite the approaches of the Enemy. The Rock of Israel holds us tight midst the trials. Faith and worship brings the person in the presence of the Lord. The Lord lives in the believer.

The Meaning of a temple

In this letter, the word Temple is with a capital letter when referring to the Temple of the Lord. However, there are also other temples which holds no Truth and is build on the basis of human fantasy and evil influence

1.1.1 The concept of the temple in general

- General Hebrew *hekal* (probably derived from the Sumerian word (area in ancient SE Asia, today Iraq) (*e-gal*) which means Big House. This word is very little used in the Bible
- The Ancient Greek word *temenos* (enclosed space) derived from the Sumerian word *temen* - it refers to an area set aside for general use and are dedicated to a god
- These terms define a special place of manifestation where a god appeared as a revealer, doctor or giver of fertility, but have not lived there.
- The term can be used for any ancient Near-Eastern center for worship, pagan or Israeli. In this sentence it can be referred to as a "sanctuary" (shrine) and today has a modern Hebrew meaning *Hekal Ha Sefer* (the Sanctuary of the Book). It is also the name of the museum in Israel where the Dead Sea Scrolls are kept.

1.1.2 The Understanding of Temple in the Bible

- The Bible describes the Temple in Jerusalem *Beit 'Adonai* (the "house of God") or *Beit 'Elohim* (the "house of God")
- The above describes the meaning of the Temple better as a "place where God dwells." This can be connected to the earliest Hebrew term for God's dwelling place, *Mishkan* ("Tabernacle," literally, "live")
- Another Biblical term for the Temple (and much used in modern Hebrew), is *Beit Hamikdash* (the "Sanctuary" - literally "house of holiness"). It is also referred to in English as Sanctuary or *Mikdash* ("Holy [Place]"). This term is found in the Old Testament with reference to the official Israelite Temple in Jerusalem (Isaiah 63:18; Ezekiel 5:11; 9:6; Psalms 74:7; 96:6; Lamentations 1:10; 2:7,20). It can refer to either the entire Tabernacle (Leviticus 19 30; 26 2), or the entire area of the Temple (Ezekiel 43:21; 44:1,5,7-8), or exclusively the Most Holy (Leviticus 16:33). It is sometimes also used for other Israelite temples within and outside the country (Amos 7:9,13; Isaiah 16:12)
- Note that the common name for a temple in the Greek Old Testament (Septuagint) is *heiron* ("holy place"). However, it is not used but *Beit Hamikdash* ("Sanctuary") to refer exclusively to the Temple of God in Jerusalem This was adopted by the Greek of the New Testament which also join the Holy of Holies in the Temple in contrast to the other part of the Temple Complex called *heiron*.
- Important: *Beit Hamikdash* (the "Sanctuary" - literally "house of holiness") also used in the New Testament which refers to the believer's body as "a temple." In both cases, it is used to show the dwelling of God (indwelling) in the Temple and the believer's body. This corresponds to the presence of the Holy Spirit.

In Biblical context the word Temple refers to the presence of the Lord. Making Temple on earth for the salvation of all nations, was predicted by many prophets. The prophet Isaiah prophesied about 750 years before Christ in Isaiah 7:14: *“Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.”* The word Immanuel means "God with us". Jesus is God with us.

Paul explained as follows: Colossians 2:8-9: *“For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; ¹⁰and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.”*

Origin of the physical Temple of the Lord

1.2 The Tabernacle

The Tabernacle was a mobile, physical, structure for revelation to the children of Israel for almost five hundred years, from Moses to David. It was then replaced by a permanent structure, namely the Temple. The latter occurred during the time of Solomon's reign. Solomon was the son of David.

The Israelites were freed from slavery in Egypt and then received the law on Mount Sinai. The Lord revealed Himself to them again and they were afraid, and asked Moses that he speaks to the Lord. On Mount Sinai God gave Moses this commandment:

Exodus 25:8: *“And let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them.”*

Stephen Olford notes that the Hebrews of ancient times discovered that it is Gods nature to reveal Himself to man by dwelling amongst man. Olford says that to a certain extent it is the key message of the Bible. When reading the first five books of the Old Testament (Genesis to Deuteronomy), we see the story of the visits from God, the Lord, to man. It increased so the Lord "camped" with the people in the Tabernacle. The Tabernacle is designed and constructed to enable the purpose, power, and Shekinah of the divine presence.

Olford goes ahead and points out that the New Testament began similarly. The first five books dealing with the Lord whom lived between them ("Camping with God"). We read in John 1 1 as follows: *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”*

John 1:14: *“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.”*

When we move from the four Gospels to the Acts of the Apostles, we see that the same grace and glory is communicated to the disciples of the early Church until the world took notice that Jesus was with them. God made man to have a relationship with Him and He will continue until it is perfectly fulfilled, not only here on earth, but forever.

Olford pointed out that the overall message of the Tabernacle is Christ. Christ made it clear to the Emmaus-travellers. Jesus appeared to the Emmaus-travellers after His resurrection from the dead. They did not recognize Him and told him in dismay that they are worried about what the women told them. The women testified that they found the tomb empty.

Jesus answered them, as witnessed in Luke 24:25-32: *“²⁵Then He said to them, “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! ²⁶Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?” ²⁷And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself. ²⁸Then they drew near to the village where they were going, and He indicated that He would have gone farther. ²⁹But they constrained Him, saying, “Abide with us, for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent.” And He went in to stay with them. ³⁰Now it came to pass, as He sat at the table with them, that He took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. ³¹Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him; and He vanished from their sight. ³²And they said to one another, “Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?””*

The Lord allows us, as we read, to learn and internally process, things regarding Him, so that we can say "Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?" (54, p.6-8).

Although the physical Tabernacle and the Temple, no longer exist today, the message conveyed did not disappear. It is about Christ, the Savior of mankind. The rich archaeological returns of Israel and Jerusalem, and the Jewish people who survived despite severe attacks from all sides, further confirms the prophecies to be fulfilled. When studying the Bible, it is clear that the message is that of salvation accomplished by Christ. Christ came and unequivocally confirmed the name of God, the Lord, the God who gives eternal life.

About 1250 years before Christ, the Lord instructed Moses to build the Tabernacle so that He could dwell among His people. It was a command from God and not an initiative of the people.

CW Slemming (55, p.15) quotes 2 Corinthians 5:19 and we realize that the Lord used the Tabernacle for reconciliation with man, and this salvation work has found expression in Christ.

“that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.”

And so He is called Immanuel (God with us).

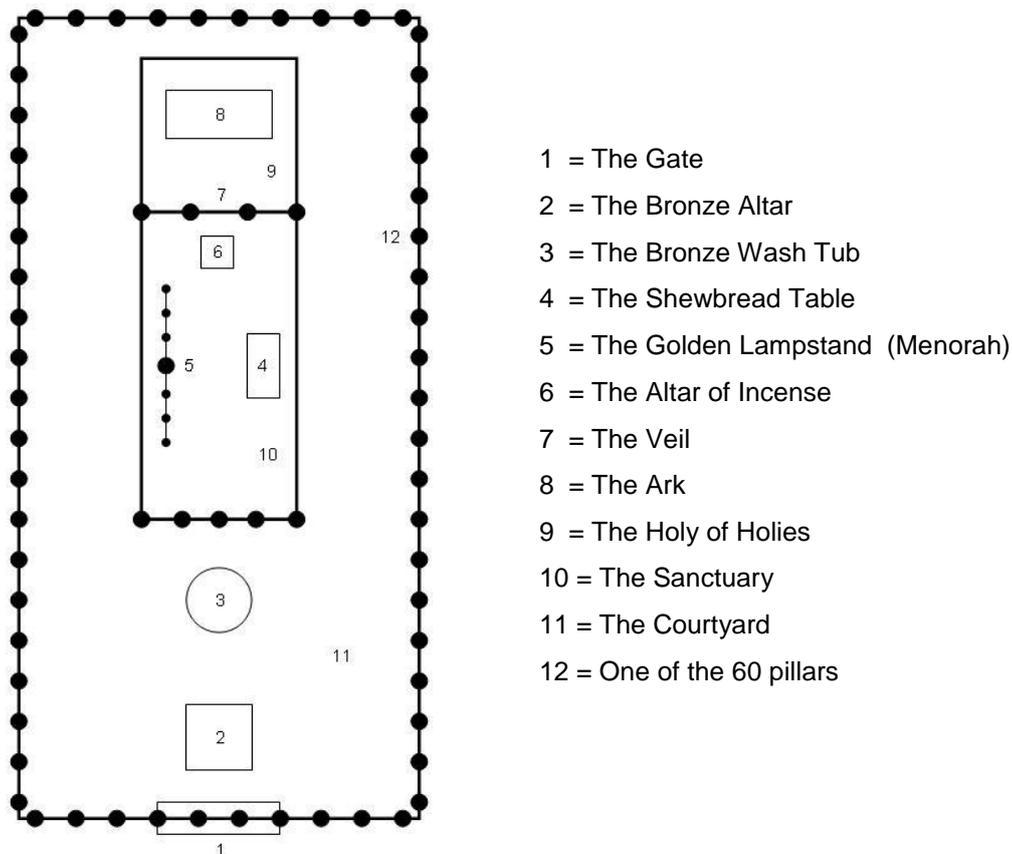


Figure 6.1 Presentation of the Tabernacle

In Exodus 25-27 we read how the Lord instructed Moses to build the Tabernacle and all its accessories. It became a temporary structure while they moved through the desert. It was erected when the Lord commanded them at a certain place, and when they had to go (in command of the Lord), the Tabernacle was packed up again carried in a prescribed manner to the new location.

Figure 6 1 shows how the Tabernacle looked, seen from above. It mainly consisted of three areas 1) The Courtyard (11); 2) The Sanctuary (10); 3) The Holy of Holies (9).

1.2.1 The Courtyard (11)

The Tabernacle is entered by the Gate (1) accessing the forecourt (11). This entry always pointed in an easterly direction. The sacrificial animal was offered on the altar of Burnt Offering (2) and the priests washed themselves at the wash tub (3). They always had to wash before entering the Sanctuary (10).

1.2.2 The Sanctuary (10).

Found in the Sanctuary were three objects. The Shewbread Table (4) on which twelve loaves were placed. These loaves represented the twelve tribes of Israel. The priests ate the bread on the weekly Sabbath and the bread is then replaced. The bread always remained fresh.

The Lampstand (Menorah) (5) with its seven lamps were kept burning constantly by the priests.

The Altar of Incense (6) was used to burn incense. It caused a sweet smelling



Figure 6.2: Model of the Menorah in Jerusalem

1.2.3 The Holy of Holies (9)

The Holy of Holies was separated from the Sanctuary by the Veil (7). Within the Holy of Holies was the Ark of the Covenant (8) placed. The Ark, Showbread Table and the Altar of Incense were all made of acacia wood and overlaid with gold.

The following articles were placed inside the Ark of the Covenant,

- The two stone tablets on which the Ten Commandments was written by God. This is the stone tablets that Moses received on Mount Sinai from the Lord.
- The Rod of Aaron
- The bowl of Manna

The law received at Mount Sinai, was placed next to the Ark of the Covenant. The lid of the Ark of the Covenant was known as the Mercy Seat. Two cherubim (a kind of angel that is directly in the presence of God) were put on top of the Mercy Seat. The cherubims were directed at each other with their stretched out wings to one another. In the middle of the cherubims was the area where the presence of God manifested.

When an animal was sacrificed on the Fire Altar, the blood was collected and sprinkled at the foot of the altar. Only once a year, on the Day of Atonement (more on this in Chapter 5), the High Priest entered the Holy of Holies and the blood of the sacrificial animal was sprinkled in front of the Mercy Seat. This was done for atonement of the priest, and the people's transgressions.

1.2.4 Mighty Divine Presence - Immanuel

In Exodus 40 it can read how Moses erected the Tabernacle according to the instructions of the Lord. When the Tabernacle was inaugurated, the presence of God was visible for all

Exodus 40:34-38: *"³⁴Then the cloud covered the tabernacle of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. ³⁵And Moses was not able to enter the tabernacle of meeting, because the cloud rested above it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. ³⁶Whenever the cloud was taken up from above the tabernacle, the children of Israel would go onward in all their journeys. ³⁷But if the cloud was not taken up, then they did not journey till the day that it was taken up. ³⁸For the cloud of the LORD was above the tabernacle by day, and fire was over it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys."*

The Tent of Meeting was Moses' tent where he received instructions from the Lord.

1.2.5 Christ the Message of the Tabernacle

Since Moses was instructed to build the Tabernacle, it took nine months for preparation until the Tabernacle was inaugurated. Jesus Christ born as a person on earth was nine months in Mary's womb. We also read that the outer material covering the Sanctuary and the Holy of Holies, was made of goats hair (Exodus 36:14). It represents flesh and the presence of the Lord was in there (at the Mercy Seat of the Ark of the Covenant). Jesus was God in flesh, the Man Jesus, the Son of God and Son of Man.

The forecourt was entered through the only gate. This makes us realize that Jesus Christ is the only way to the Father. He is the only Entrance. The offerings were sacrificed on the altar of Burnt Offering. Jesus was crucified and died for our sins. He is the perfect Lamb that was slain. The atoning death occurred. Then move to the laver where cleansing takes place. Jesus stood in for our transgressions. Our sins are washed off.

Moving into the Sanctuary. Here the Shewbread Table is found first. Jesus is the Bread of life. He provides for us. Jesus was born in Bethlehem. Bethlehem means "Place of bread." On the left in

the Sanctuary is the Lampstand on which seven lamps are burning. The only light provided in the dark Sanctuary. Jesus is the Light of the world, the only Light. His light casts away all darkness. The darkness cannot overcome the Light. The Altar of Incense stood before the Veil. The sweet-smelling smoke recalls the prayers of the faithful rising to the Lord.

Revelation 8:3-4: *"³Then another angel, having a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. ⁴And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, ascended before God from the angel's hand."*

Move through the Veil to gain access to the Holy of Holies. In other words, the Veil was the separation between man and God. Before Christ's crucifixion the high-priest could only once a year move past the veil to plea for reconciliation amongst God and man. When Jesus died on the cross, the Veil in the temple was torn in the midst. Jesus is the High Priest, the Divine Priestly order of Melchizedek, eternal reconciliation between God and man. All people now have access to God through faith in the Messiah, Jesus Christ.

There are many books written about the Tabernacle and there are many truths that can be further discovered by the symbolism of the Tabernacle. Such as the meaning of the materials used to make the implements of the Tabernacle. Even the composition of the 60 Pillars that stood outside the forecourt, clearly symbolizes Christ. The pillars are made of:

- Acacia Wood - This is wood not easily ruined. Christ's body did not decompose in the grave. Hard wood of the environment and full of knots. This is a reference to the imperfection of the people.
- Bronze sockets - Bronze refers to death. Christ was killed and buried
- Silver headsets - Silver is representative of redemption. Jesus is our Savior.

It's clearly all about Christ, and Christ conquered reconciliation for us with the Father. Chaim Richman (56, p.13) also points out that the whole process of offering's main purpose was to seek rapprochement with the Lord. It was not just a case of a sacrificial animal vouch for man's sin, but a quest to draw closer to the Lord. Richman said that the Hebrew word for sacrifice, (corban, lehakriv) is of the same origin as "seek a close relationship with someone." It's about the quest for rapprochement.

It may wrongly be argued that one includes Christ in the Tabernacle to fit the Christian faith. However, the actual impossible challenge is, to remove Christ from the Tabernacle! The latter is impossible when the Lord has made you His Temple.

1.3 The Temple

Nearly five hundred years after the Tabernacle was inaugurated, David brought the ark to Jerusalem and his son Solomon built the Temple of the Lord. The Israelites did not need to pass through the desert anymore. Jerusalem housed the more permanent Tabernacle, the Temple. The layout of the Temple was the same as that of the Tabernacle, still prophetically Christ.

God is the Savior and provides for His children. When Abraham had to sacrifice Isaac, the Lord provided. According to tradition, this is the same place where the temple was later built: Genesis 22:13-14: *"¹³Then Abraham lifted his eyes and looked, and there behind him was a ram caught in a thicket by its horns. So Abraham went and took the ram, and offered it up for a burnt offering instead of his son. ¹⁴And Abraham called the name of the place, The-LORD-Will-Provide; as it is said to this day, "In the Mount of the LORD it shall be provided."*

There was as a rock earlier used for thrashing. The threshing floor belonged to a certain Araunah. David bought it from him to offer to the Lord there. 1 Chronicles 21:22: *"²²Then David said to Ornan, "Grant me the place of this threshing floor, that I may build an altar on it to the LORD. You shall grant it to me at the full price, that the plague may be withdrawn from the people."*

David's offerings were done there, and he called it " *the house of the LORD* " 1 Chronicles 22:1: *"¹Then David said, "This is the house of the LORD God, and this is the altar of burnt offering for Israel."* Later the Temple was built on that same place (35, p561).

It is also here where the Lord appeared to David and Solomon built the Temple: the threshing floor of Araunah. Read 2 Chronicles 3. It is wonderful to realize that David knew the Face of the Lord. The Angel of the Lord.

The land of Israel was already promised to Abraham's descendants during the covenant that God made with Abraham (more on the covenant in chapter 4). The fact that David made Jerusalem the spiritual capital, is consistent with the covenant. In Ezekiel 47:22-23 you can also read that this area was also made available by the Lord to all nations, but still under the obedience of the covenant.

Ezekiel 47:22-23: ²²*It shall be that you will divide it by lot as an inheritance for yourselves, and for the strangers who dwell among you and who bear children among you. They shall be to you as native-born among the children of Israel; they shall have an inheritance with you among the tribes of Israel.* ²³*And it shall be that in whatever tribe the stranger dwells, there you shall give him his inheritance," says the Lord GOD."*

Isaiah 56:6-7: ⁶*Also the sons of the foreigner Who join themselves to the LORD, to serve Him, And to love the name of the LORD, to be His servants-- Everyone who keeps from defiling the Sabbath, And holds fast My covenant--* ⁷*Even them I will bring to My holy mountain, And make them joyful in My house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices Will be accepted on My altar; For My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations."*

Zion is the name given to Jerusalem when reference in spiritual context is made to the place of worship. The establishment of the Temple of God in Jerusalem, brought the name Zion to his full right. This is where the name of the Lord is worshiped - by all nations.

Derek Prince points out that one can understand that Satan will attack this area and will try to acquire control. In 1917 the Balfour Declaration assigned the territory to the Jews which includes the entire Jordan. (To add, it was already in Joshua's time granted to the Jews by God). In 1922, with the writing of a British pen, Winston Churchill granted an area from this area to the Arabs which at that time was known Transjordan Today known as Jordan. Through this 78 percent of the Jewish homeland was given to the Arabs. Even worse, Jews are not allowed to live in Jordan, but Arabs are allowed to dwell in Israel!

This means that only 22 percent of the original area that belonged to the Jews, is their homeland. This is not yet the end. In this small area they are constantly attacked by political aggression and open cases of aggression. To add, they are also often blamed for attacks on them, not to mention what happens if they try to defend themselves (60, p.68). Today the blue Islamic Dome of the Rock, with its distinctive golden roof is built over the area where it is alleged the place where Abraham had to offer Isaac. It is also in this area where the original Temple stood.

Derek Prince (60, p.68) points out that the Lord warned the nations of the world that there will come a time when He will demand an account for what was done to Israel. See Joel 3:1-2: ¹*For behold, in those days and at that time, When I bring back the captives of Judah and Jerusalem,* ²*I will also gather all nations, And bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat; And I will enter into judgment with them there On account of My people, My heritage Israel, Whom they have scattered among the nations; They have also divided up My land."* This is what the United Nations did on 29 November 1947 when they voted to divide Palestine into two areas, one for Jews and one for Arabs.

It was mentioned earlier that David knew the Angel of the Lord. About 1000 years before Christ, David writes Psalms 35:5-6: ⁵*Let them be like chaff before the wind, And let the angel of the LORD chase them.* ⁶*Let their way be dark and slippery, And let the angel of the LORD pursue them."*

David, for example, refers to the Angel of the Lord who protected His people and is their Savior: Psalms 34:8: ⁸*Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good; Blessed is the man who trusts in Him!"* We know the Angel of the Lord, or we can say that He took stature in the person of Jesus Christ. Today through faith in Jesus we are saved from eternal death.

The last place where the Tabernacle was erected was in Gibeon, north of Jerusalem. Before the Temple in Jerusalem was built, it was the main place where God was worshiped. When the ark was brought to Jerusalem, David appointed priests and Levites to do service there. As it became clear that the Lord listen to prayers at the threshing floor of Araunah in Jerusalem, the interest of Gibeon started to decline in favor of Jerusalem (35, p.561).



Figure 6.3 Model of the Temple in Jerusalem

The Temple had the same layout as the Tabernacle and the message of salvation continued. When Solomon dedicated the Temple, the presence of the Lord was visible.

1 Kings 8:10-11: *"¹⁰And it came to pass, when the priests came out of the holy place, that the cloud filled the house of the LORD, ¹¹so that the priests could not continue ministering because of the cloud; for the glory of the LORD filled the house of the LORD."*

However, the people became unfaithful to the Lord and, as prophetically predicted taken away in captivity. Firstly the Northern Kingdom, and later the Southern Kingdom. The Temple was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar. After seventy years of exile, they returned to Jerusalem and the Temple was rebuilt by Zerubbabel. This can be read in the Bible Book of Ezra. The Temple was rebuilt about 450 years before Christ. This temple is referred to as the Second Temple. However, there is no mention whether the Ark was returned to the Holy of Holies of the Temple, or if the Presence of the Lord was evident to everyone here. What we do know is that the Second Temple had the approval of the Lord.

About 19 years before Christ, Herod upgraded the Second Temple by increasing the Temple Mount to be a large platform and did renovations to the Temple itself.

It is this temple that stood during the time of Jesus. We read that He was busy at the Temple and that Jesus called it "The House of My Father" when he expelled the merchants. We read this in Luke 19:45-48: *"⁴⁵Then He went into the temple and began to drive out those who bought and sold in it, ⁴⁶saying to them, 'It is written, 'MY HOUSE IS A HOUSE OF PRAYER,' but you have made it a 'DEN OF THIEVES.'" ⁴⁷And He was teaching daily in the temple. But the chief priests, the scribes, and the leaders of the people sought to destroy Him, ⁴⁸and were unable to do anything; for all the people were very attentive to hear Him."*

Jesus clearly confirmed that the Temple was not used as it should be. God's presence was not in the Temple, but in the Person of Jesus. He dwells amongst us through Jesus Christ. He is Immanuel for us - God with us.

Prof. Jeffrey Niehaus (57, p.125) refers to the prophet Jeremiah warning the people that they should not put false hope on the Temple that stood in their midst.

Jeremiah 7:3-6: *"³Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: "Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place. ⁴Do not trust in these lying words, saying, 'The temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD are these.' ⁵"For if you thoroughly amend your ways and your doings, if you thoroughly execute judgment between a man and his neighbor, ⁶if you do not oppress the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, and do not shed innocent blood in this place, or walk after other gods to your hurt,"*

Jeremiah makes it clear that God will leave His Temple if the people continues to sin: Jeremiah 7:9-15: *"⁹Will you steal, murder, commit adultery, swear falsely, burn incense to Baal, and walk after other gods whom you do not know, ¹⁰and then come and stand before Me in this house which*

is called by My name, and say, 'We are delivered to do all these abominations?' ¹¹Has this house, which is called by My name, become a den of thieves in your eyes? Behold, I, even I, have seen it," says the LORD. ¹²"But go now to My place which was in Shiloh, where I set My name at the first, and see what I did to it because of the wickedness of My people Israel. ¹³And now, because you have done all these works," says the LORD, "and I spoke to you, rising up early and speaking, but you did not hear, and I called you, but you did not answer, ¹⁴therefore I will do to the house which is called by My name, in which you trust, and to this place which I gave to you and your fathers, as I have done to Shiloh. ¹⁵And I will cast you out of My sight, as I have cast out all your brethren--the whole posterity of Ephraim."

The Lord has withdrawn from the Temple. He, however, by His grace and faithfulness to His covenant with Abraham, revealed Himself in Jesus on earth, according to the Scriptures. Jesus was crucified, rose from the dead, and ascended into heaven. He left the Holy Spirit to reveal the Word of God to us. Everything according to the Scriptures.

The temple was finally destroyed about 70 AD by the Romans and not rebuilt.

More information about Temple

The Holy Temple was not just some magnificent building or synagogue rooted in Jerusalem's ancient Biblical past; it was an arena of cosmic themes; a place where man could meet with his Creator ... It is the reality of the living memory of that relationship as it once was, and the dream of its renewal – as promised by God Himself – that keeps the fires of the Temple altar burning within the collective heart of the nation of Israel, and the hearts of all those who cherish Israel's God and His message for humanity – The orthodox Jew: Rabbi Chaim Richman was quoted in this paragraph (45, p31).

- In the Bible we can see that the Temple is a place where the needs of the people are addressed, but it was mainly a testimony of God's existence, His covenant with Israel and His purpose by Israel as a kingdom of priests, to make God's omnipotence known to the whole world. To achieve this sacred mandate, the Jewish people had to comply with the requirements of the covenant, which was given them (45, p.35-36)
- 1 Chronicles 29:1: *"Furthermore King David said to all the assembly: "My son Solomon, whom alone God has chosen, is young and inexperienced; and the work is great, because the temple is not for man but for the LORD God. ""*
- The Temple was a visible place of the invisible presence of the Lord: Exodus 15:17: *"You will bring them in and plant them in the mountain of Your inheritance, in the place, O LORD, which You have made for Your own dwelling, the sanctuary, O LORD, which Your hands have established."*
- It is said that the Lord's name is present. It was a place where God, in His omnipresence and incomparability, was accessible to man. This divine presence is referred to by Jews as Shekinah.
- A sign of the covenant. The Tabernacle and the Temple also served as a witness of God's covenant with Israel. God's presence in the Temple represented the covenant relationship. The Temple was built to house the Ark containing the tablets on which the Ten Commandments were written. The building of the Temple on the "Mount of the LORD" (Genesis 22:14) confirms the covenant with Abraham. It was also a confirmation of the covenant with David that his son will build the Temple and the Messianic Son will establish His throne there forever (1 Chronicles 17:7-14)
- A sign of the end of the exile. Deuteronomy 12:9: *"for as yet you have not come to the rest and the inheritance which the LORD your God is giving you."*
- A Socio-Political Institution. The Temple played a major role in the Jewish national unity. The Temple also affected the daily life of the Jew because they lived according to the festivals, pilgrimages, offerings and the read and study of the Torah
- A symbol of national unity. Their enemies destroyed the Temple. The Jews always attempted to rebuild the Temple, and their enemies will try to stop the rebuilding. The Romans had control over the Jews through political appointments in the office of the high priest.
- The Temple ensured national blessing. Haggai 2:15-19: *"¹⁵And now, carefully consider from this day forward: from before stone was laid upon stone in the temple of the LORD-- ¹⁶since those days, when one came to a heap of twenty ephahs, there were but ten; when one came to the wine vat to draw out fifty baths from the press, there were but twenty. ¹⁷I struck you with blight and mildew and hail in all the labors of your hands; yet you did not turn to Me," says the LORD. ¹⁸Consider now from this day forward, from the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month, from the day that the foundation of the LORD's temple was laid--consider it: ¹⁹Is the seed still in the barn? As yet the vine, the fig tree, the pomegranate, and the olive tree have not yielded fruit. But from this day I will bless you.' ""*
- The Temple served as a central location for Prayer. 1 Kings 8:48-49: *"⁴⁸and when they return to You with all their heart and with all their soul in the land of their enemies who led them away captive, and pray to You toward their land which You gave to their fathers, the city which You have chosen and the temple which I have built for Your name: ⁴⁹then hear in heaven Your dwelling place their prayer and their supplication, and maintain their cause,"*

1.4 Confirmation of the Covenant

The building of the Temple on the "Mount of the LORD" (Genesis 22, 14) confirms the covenant with Abraham. It was also a confirmation of the covenant with David that his son will build the Temple and the messianic Son will establish His throne there forever (1 Chronicles 17:7-14)

In the Temple we see the Lord's blessing and punishment: Leviticus 26:9- : ⁹*For I will look on you favorably and make you fruitful, multiply you and confirm My covenant with you.* ¹⁰*You shall eat the old harvest, and clear out the old because of the new.* ¹¹*I will set My tabernacle among you, and My soul shall not abhor you.* ¹²*I will walk among you and be your God, and you shall be My people.*". from verse 14 it is said what the Lord said He would do if they break His covenant. The latter is what happened. This defection of the people in respect of the covenant, caused the direct access to the Lord's presence to be impossible. The people had to take up their priestly role again. The Lord made it possible for man and also remain faithful to His prophetic covenant See Isaiah 61:6 and 66:21: *"But you shall be named the priests of the LORD, They shall call you the servants of our God. You shall eat the riches of the Gentiles, And in their glory you shall boast."*

Isaiah 66:21-23: ²¹*And I will also take some of them for priests and Levites," says the LORD.* ²²*"For as the new heavens and the new earth Which I will make shall remain before Me," says the LORD, "So shall your descendants and your name remain.* ²³*And it shall come to pass That from one New Moon to another, And from one Sabbath to another, All flesh shall come to worship before Me," says the LORD."*

Randall Price explains as follows: although direct access to the Lord's presence was impossible (Exodus 33:20; 34:2-3 en Leviticus 16:1-2), the Lord made a compromise through the Tabernacle and the priesthood. With the blood brought by the priest and shed (Gen 3 24) restoration takes place. It was promised in Genesis 1:28: *"Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.""* - This could only be done by the shedding of blood. It put the people in a proper state of repentance so they could serve the Lord as priests and His light and salvation (Isaiah 49:6) bring in fulfilment for both the covenant with Abraham (as mediators of God's blessing to all nations Genesis 12:2-3) and the New Covenant (in the new spiritual order of the Millennium Jeremiah 31:31-34). In this way what was not fulfilled in the beginning of the history could be fulfilled at the end of history. God is the Beginning and the End! (45, p202)

Samson and Pearce pointed out that the tabernacle was designed to teach the Israelites that sin prevents us from being in the presence of the Lord. See also: Hebrews 9:6-8: ⁶*Now when these things had been thus prepared, the priests always went into the first part of the tabernacle, performing the services.* ⁷*But into the second part the high priest went alone once a year, not without blood, which he offered for himself and for the people's sins committed in ignorance;* ⁸*the Holy Spirit indicating this, that the way into the Holiest of All was not yet made manifest while the first tabernacle was still standing."* (46, p329)

The Lord made Himself known to us as the God of the covenant: Yahweh (English = Lord). He is the Savior, who from the beginning, kept Himself busy with His creation, and was revealed Himself to man in various ways.

Numbers 14:10-11: ¹⁰*And all the congregation said to stone them with stones. Now the glory of the LORD appeared in the tabernacle of meeting before all the children of Israel.* ¹¹*Then the LORD said to Moses: "How long will these people reject Me? And how long will they not believe Me, with all the signs which I have performed among them?"*

God remains faithful to His covenant. He will be the God of Israel. Prophetically He introduced Himself clearly in the Old Testament and pointed out that the Messiah is His face on earth that will make His Name known. More than 360 Messianic prophecies have already been identified that has been fulfilled by Jesus Christ, it includes details such as: what He will be called, where He would be born, many details about what He would do and how He would act, exactly how He would be killed and exactly when He will be crucified, What will happen around the cross and even His words on the cross (Psalms 22 about 1000 years before Christ). That in three days He will rise from the dead, and many other (visit www.matthew28.co.za - Bible Studies on the prophecies and Unity in the Bible).

The fact that Jesus Christ acted as the lamb during Passover, and then also specifically during Passover (which has been introduced about 1500 years before Christ), was killed as the perfect Lamb for our sins. It is like the sacrificial animal had to vouch for man's sin. Prophetically this reality was clearly indicated in various ways, such as the lamb's legs may not be broken (predicted 1200 years before Christ), that He had to die late (15h00) on Passover and that His blood vouch for man's sin.

Exodus 12:5-6: ⁵Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats. ⁶Now you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month. Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight.”

Exodus 12:46: ⁴⁶In one house it shall be eaten; you shall not carry any of the flesh outside the house, nor shall you break one of its bones.”

Just as Jesus Christ died on Passover, at 15:00 and the soldiers both broke the legs of the other two men who crucified either side of Jesus, but not Jesus' bones. John 19:32-33: ³²Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who was crucified with Him. ³³But when they came to Jesus and saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs.”

Through (among other things) the offerings, festivals and literal Revelations the Temple and the Temple Service brought the Messianic reality closer to the people so that we can believe.

The Messiah, the Face of God, is worshiped thousands of years before He himself appeared on the earth as the man Jesus. He perfected everything as prophetically predicted and He also Self predicted that He would be killed and will rise from the dead. He did it and revealed Himself to many people on several occasions, and also poured the Holy Spirit on the people (Prophetically accurate - on the Feast of Weeks that became Pentecost), which had already been foretold in the Old Testament.

The Temple is a clear proof of all these things that happened. This is the place where the priests did the Temple Service that supported and maintained the offerings and the festivals, and it is also the place where the high priest once a year prayed for the sins of the people. The Temple is a result and a proof of a relationship that existed between God and man before the building itself. Israel worshiped the Lord before the physical Temple was built. In the section "Origin" we can see that the Temple is based on the original Tabernacle that contained the Ark of the Covenant. This commitment already existed from the time of Abraham, restored by Moses and perfected by Jesus. Jesus has also been predicted at the beginning when God said that from Eve's descendants the Savior will be born: Genesis 3:15: *“And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel.”* In this NKJV translation of the Bible is the seed of the woman with a capital letter, because it refers to the Messiah.

The Temple stamped Jerusalem as the city of Zion, the place to worship the Lord's name. Today we cannot physically see the cross on which Jesus was crucified, but still in the Temple Mount it is clear where the Temple stood at that time. The Revelation of God, the Lord, took place through the Jews. The land of Israel was given to the Jews by the covenant that God made with Abraham. This reality still faces the world historically and prophetically.

1.5 Obedience to God

The Temple and the Temple Service puts the focus on obedience to God's Revelation, His Face. There is no other Face to be worshiped because it is the only Face that poses a wonderful (wonder = beyond human understanding) and eternal reality for us. The rest is of human, mortal origin draped in false and misleading armor.

Hebrews 8:1-13: ¹Now this is the main point of the things we are saying: We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, ²a Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not man. ³For every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices. Therefore it is necessary that this One also have something to offer. ⁴For if He were on earth, He would not be a priest, since there are priests who offer the gifts according to the law; ⁵who serve the copy and shadow of the heavenly things, as Moses was divinely instructed when he was about to make the tabernacle. For He said, "SEE THAT YOU MAKE ALL THINGS ACCORDING TO THE PATTERN SHOWN YOU ON THE MOUNTAIN." ⁶But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as He is also Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises. ⁷For if that first covenant had been faultless, then no place would have been sought for a second. ⁸Because finding fault with them, He says: "BEHOLD, THE DAYS ARE COMING, SAYS THE LORD, WHEN I WILL MAKE A NEW COVENANT WITH THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL AND WITH THE HOUSE OF JUDAH-- ⁹NOT ACCORDING TO THE COVENANT THAT I MADE WITH THEIR FATHERS IN THE DAY WHEN I TOOK THEM BY THE HAND TO LEAD THEM OUT OF THE LAND OF EGYPT; BECAUSE THEY DID NOT CONTINUE IN MY COVENANT, AND I DISREGARDED THEM, SAYS THE LORD. ¹⁰FOR THIS IS THE COVENANT THAT I WILL MAKE WITH THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL AFTER THOSE DAYS, SAYS THE LORD: I WILL PUT MY LAWS IN THEIR MIND AND WRITE THEM ON THEIR HEARTS; AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE. ¹¹NONE OF THEM SHALL TEACH HIS NEIGHBOR, AND NONE HIS BROTHER, SAYING, 'KNOW THE LORD,' FOR ALL SHALL KNOW ME, FROM THE LEAST OF THEM TO THE GREATEST OF THEM. ¹²FOR I WILL BE MERCIFUL TO THEIR UNRIGHTEOUSNESS, AND THEIR SINS AND THEIR LAWLESS DEEDS I WILL REMEMBER NO MORE." ¹³In that He says, "A NEW

COVENANT," He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away."

Paul points out that the Lord Jesus Christ made it possible for us to serve Him: Ephesians 2:18-22: ¹⁸"For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father. ¹⁹Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, ²⁰having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, ²¹in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, ²²in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit."

Approximately 430 years before Christ, Malachi prophesied as follows: Malachi 3:1-2: ¹"Behold, I send My messenger, And he will prepare the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, Will suddenly come to His temple, Even the Messenger of the covenant, In whom you delight. Behold, He is coming," Says the LORD of hosts. ²"But who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner's fire And like launderers' soap."

Academics explain that the Temple referred to in Malachi 3, can also be seen as the body of the believer. The Lord Jesus Christ came to make His Name known on earth and also gave us the Holy Spirit to live in us and revealed Himself to us. From the start The Lord revealed Himself to the people at the Temple.

1 Kings 8:10-11: ¹⁰"And it came to pass, when the priests came out of the holy place, that the cloud filled the house of the LORD, ¹¹so that the priests could not continue ministering because of the cloud; for the glory of the LORD filled the house of the LORD."

If it is alleged that God is manifest in any way, in other words, with any identity, it is a lie. God, the Creator of the universe, revealed Himself with clear, immortal Identity to man. The name of God is the one introduced by the Messiah. Obedience to the Holy Temple awareness is essential to inherit eternal life: 1 John 2:20-25: ²⁰"But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you know all things. ²¹I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and that no lie is of the truth. ²²Who is a liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist who denies the Father and the Son. ²³Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father either; he who acknowledges the Son has the Father also. ²⁴Therefore let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father. ²⁵And this is the promise that He has promised us--eternal life."

1.6 At the Temple the Name of the Lord was worshiped.

Through The Temple we can see that the Lord Jesus was worshiped thousands of years before His coming to earth. Jesus, the true High Priest according to the Divine priestly order of Melchizedek caused the veil in the Temple to tear when He died on the cross. The same Jesus prayed for His disciples after His resurrection from the dead, during which he confirmed that He came to make the Name of the Lord known to man. Through Jesus we know the Name of the Lord, and have access to God the Father. We can now wear robe of Christ (as David dressed the garment Jonathan: 1 Samuel 18) in obedience to His Being, the new covenant.

Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the Temple: 1 Kings 8:28-30: ²⁸"Yet regard the prayer of Your servant and his supplication, O LORD my God, and listen to the cry and the prayer which Your servant is praying before You today: ²⁹that Your eyes may be open toward this temple night and day, toward the place of which You said, 'My name shall be there,' that You may hear the prayer which Your servant makes toward this place. ³⁰And may You hear the supplication of Your servant and of Your people Israel, when they pray toward this place. Hear in heaven Your dwelling place; and when You hear, forgive."

King Darius's words supporting the rebuilding of the Temple (original commandment of Cyrus) and allowed the elders of Judah and Benjamin to continue with the rebuilding of the Temple: Ezra 6:12: "And may the God who causes His name to dwell there destroy any king or people who put their hand to alter it, or to destroy this house of God which is in Jerusalem. I Darius issue a decree; let it be done diligently."

Nehemiah's prayer after the exile: Nehemiah 1:8-9: ⁸"Remember, I pray, the word that You commanded Your servant Moses, saying, 'If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the nations; ⁹but if you return to Me, and keep My commandments and do them, though some of you were cast out to the farthest part of the heavens, yet I will gather them from there, and bring them to the place which I have chosen as a dwelling for My name.'"

The Temple and the Name of the Lord seen by the description of the sins of Manasseh: 2 Kings 21:4-7: ⁴"He also built altars in the house of the LORD, of which the LORD had said, "In Jerusalem I will put My name." ⁵And he built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the LORD. ⁶Also he made his son pass through the fire, practiced soothsaying, used witchcraft, and consulted spiritists and mediums. He did much evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke Him to

anger. ⁷He even set a carved image of Asherah that he had made, in the house of which the LORD had said to David and to Solomon his son, "In this house and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, I will put My name forever;" (See 2 Chronicles 34:4-7)

Jeremiah 34:15: "Then you recently turned and did what was right in My sight—every man proclaiming liberty to his neighbor; and you made a covenant before Me in the house which is called by My name."

The Lord dwells amongst us (making Temple) through Jesus Christ and to our Grace. Jesus established and confirmed The Lord's Identity forever, so that we can believe and can be saved from death. Jesus' prayer for His disciples: John 17:6: "I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world. They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word."

John 17:11: "Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are."

Clearly God does not manifest in different ways. His Identity has been clearly established by Jesus Christ.

1.7 Salvation for all nations

The Temple of the Lord, the proof of the covenant, enable all nations to know the Name of the Lord and worship the Lord. See Solomon's prayer: 1 Kings 8:41-43: "⁴¹Moreover, concerning a foreigner, who is not of Your people Israel, but has come from a far country for Your name's sake ⁴²(for they will hear of Your great name and Your strong hand and Your outstretched arm), when he comes and prays toward this temple, ⁴³hear in heaven Your dwelling place, and do according to all for which the foreigner calls to You, that all peoples of the earth may know Your name and fear You, as do Your people Israel, and that they may know that this temple which I have built is called by Your name."

The Temple of the Lord, is a house of prayer for all nations: Isaiah 56:6-7: "⁶Also the sons of the foreigner Who join themselves to the LORD, to serve Him, And to love the name of the LORD, to be His servants-- Everyone who keeps from defiling the Sabbath, And holds fast My covenant-- ⁷Even them I will bring to My holy mountain, And make them joyful in My house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices Will be accepted on My altar; For My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations."

From the above we can see that the Lord made it possible for us today to stand in a real and ongoing worshipping relationship with Him. The Temple has put it in context for us to understand. Jesus Christ lives in the believer by the Holy Spirit. The Lord made Temple with the believer by the grace of Jesus Christ. The faithful does not pray in the direction of the physical Temple, but in the Name of Jesus Christ. Jesus is surely the best direction we can have! Pray that the Holy Spirit will live in your heart and that you will know the Truth, Jesus Christ.

John 16:24: "Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full."

Who can compete with this?

Today we can look to the Temple Mount and to walk on it and know and see that it housed the original Temple. We can also read the Word in Ezekiel 40 and look forward to an amazing eternal life with the Creator that the Heavenly Temple holds for us.

What other temple or prophet, or god, or whoever, can compete with this? Rest assured, no one. The Lord, the God of the covenant, provided - Praise the Lord!! There have been many so-called prophets and even called Messiahs' who wanted their followers to believe that they are the called messengers, or incarnations of God, but none of them have been worshiped for thousands of years before their lives on earth, and could not rise from the dead themselves, and was not able to present themselves to hundreds of people after resurrection. Jesus, even after His resurrection, let people touch Him, and He even ate with them.

The Second Coming of Christ will be clearly visible for the whole world. It will not be necessary for a man to point it out for you. Look at Jesus' words: Luke 17:22-24: "²²Then He said to the disciples, "The days will come when you will desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you will not see it. ²³And they will say to you, 'Look here!' or 'Look there!' Do not go after them or follow them. ²⁴For as the lightning that flashes out of one part under heaven shines to the other part under heaven, so also the Son of Man will be in His day."

Matthew 24:23-28: ²³"Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'There!' do not believe it. ²⁴For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. ²⁵See, I have told you beforehand. ²⁶"Therefore if they say to you, 'Look, He is in the desert!' do not go out; or 'Look, He is in the inner rooms!' do not believe it. ²⁷For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. ²⁸For wherever the carcass is, there the eagles will be gathered together."

It is this Jesus who made it clear that He and the Father are One, in other words, He is the Being of God who walks on this earth so that we can have an eternal relationship with Him. He Himself also made it clear that there will be many pretenders after Him and that He is the only way to the Father. The latter is so logical, because He is God Himself! What is your only way to God? It is by God alone. Jesus is the Person which embody the whole Being of God, He is God Himself and is the only One who can bring us to God, the Creator of life, that gives life, eternal life. There is no other creature in this universe that can give life to you, except Jesus Christ.

The Apostle (eyewitness of the risen Jesus and performed miracles in the name of Jesus) testified as follows: 1 John 1:1-4: ¹"That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life-- ²the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us-- ³that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. ⁴And these things we write to you that your joy may be full."

John confirms that Jesus is the face of the Father John 14:5-11: ⁵"Thomas said to Him, 'Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?'" ⁶Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. ⁷"If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; and from now on you know Him and have seen Him." ⁸Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us." ⁹Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father?' ¹⁰Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works. ¹¹Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves."

See what has been written about 750 years before Christ: Isaiah 63:9: "In all their affliction He was afflicted, And the Angel of His Presence saved them; In His love and in His pity He redeemed them; And He bore them and carried them All the days of old."

Paul testified as follows: 1 Corinthians 15:3-8: ³For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins **according to the Scriptures**, ⁴and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day **according to the Scriptures**, ⁵and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. ⁶After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep. ⁷After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles. ⁸Then last of all He was **seen by me** also, as by one born out of due time."

Paul, can not warn us enough: Colossians 2:8-10: ⁸"Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ. ⁹**For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily;** ¹⁰and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power."

2 Thessalonians 2:9-12: ⁹"The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, ¹⁰and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. ¹¹And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, ¹²that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness."

Prophetic reality and Revelation regarding the Temple

1.8 Everyone will be aware

Already about 750 years before Christ the prophet Isaiah foretold the coming of Christ. The whole world will be aware of God's presence on earth. The heavenly Temple will be reality to the world. It will be great for those who waited on the Lord, who can say "This is our God!"

Isaiah 25:6-9: ⁶"And in this mountain The LORD of hosts will make for all people A feast of choice pieces, A feast of wines on the lees, Of fat things full of marrow, Of well-refined wines on the lees. ⁷And He will destroy on this mountain The surface of the covering cast over all people, And the veil that is spread over all nations. ⁸He will swallow up death forever, And the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces; The rebuke of His people He will take away from all the earth; For the LORD has spoken. ⁹And it will be said in that day: "Behold, this is our God; We have waited for Him, and

He will save us. This is the LORD; We have waited for Him; We will be glad and rejoice in His salvation."

Each person's caring relationship with Israel will be important : Isaiah 27:12-13: *"¹²And it shall come to pass in that day That the LORD will thresh, From the channel of the River to the Brook of Egypt; And you will be gathered one by one, O you children of Israel. ¹³So it shall be in that day: The great trumpet will be blown; They will come, who are about to perish in the land of Assyria, And they who are outcasts in the land of Egypt, And shall worship the LORD in the holy mount at Jerusalem."*

1.9 Jerusalem established as Zion

In his book, "The Promised Land" (53, p.10-14), Derek Prince writes that Biblical truth got another dimension for him during his stay in Israel (during the Second World War). He said he realized that the spiritual truth of the Bible is not written in a vacuum. The Bible can be seen in a particular geographical order. During the time of the patriarchs, it was known as the land of Canaan. After the Israelites (led by Moses and Joshua) took it, it was known as the land of Israel. This name is still used in the New Testament (Matthew 2:20) though the area was at that time a province of the Roman Empire.

The name Palestine, means the land of the Philistines. It was first used by the Greeks and later by the Romans and other rulers, including the British. The name "Holy Land", is used by Christians from about the fifth century. Since independence from Britain in 1948 and the subsequent Arab / Israel conflict, the country was divided into two states Israel and Jordan. Today it is known as Israeli and Palestinian territories. Derek Prince said that he realized that when you read the Bible in geographical context, the events become real in a new and sustainable manner. Prince continues and tells of a day in 1946 when he stood on the Mount of Olives and Scripture written by Zechariah, got a new meaning

Zechariah 14:4-8: *"⁴And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, Which faces Jerusalem on the east. And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two, From east to west, Making a very large valley; Half of the mountain shall move toward the north And half of it toward the south. ⁵Then you shall flee through My mountain valley, For the mountain valley shall reach to Azal. Yes, you shall flee As you fled from the earthquake In the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Thus the LORD my God will come, And all the saints with You. ⁶It shall come to pass in that day That there will be no light; The lights will diminish. ⁷It shall be one day Which is known to the LORD Neither day nor night. But at evening time it shall happen That it will be light. ⁸And in that day it shall be-- That living waters shall flow from Jerusalem, Half of them toward the eastern sea And half of them toward the western sea; In both summer and winter it shall occur."*

The past has already proven that this area is subject to earthquakes. The hospital Augusta Victoria Hospice, in this area, was hit by an earthquake during 1926 so that the square tower cracked. To the west, through the Kidron Valley, geological research shows that the area holds underground water under the city of Jerusalem. Derek Prince confirmed that Zechariah's prophecy is not far from fulfillment.

See prophecies: Ezekiel 47:1-12: *"¹Then he brought me back to the door of the temple; and there was water, flowing from under the threshold of the temple toward the east, for the front of the temple faced east; the water was flowing from under the right side of the temple, south of the altar. ²He brought me out by way of the north gate, and led me around on the outside to the outer gateway that faces east; and there was water, running out on the right side. ³And when the man went out to the east with the line in his hand, he measured one thousand cubits, and he brought me through the waters; the water came up to my ankles. ⁴Again he measured one thousand and brought me through the waters; the water came up to my knees. Again he measured one thousand and brought me through; the water came up to my waist. ⁵Again he measured one thousand, and it was a river that I could not cross; for the water was too deep, water in which one must swim, a river that could not be crossed. ⁶He said to me, "Son of man, have you seen this?" Then he brought me and returned me to the bank of the river. ⁷When I returned, there, along the bank of the river, were very many trees on one side and the other. ⁸Then he said to me: "This water flows toward the eastern region, goes down into the valley, and enters the sea. When it reaches the sea, its waters are healed. ⁹And it shall be that every living thing that moves, wherever the rivers go, will live. There will be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters go there; for they will be healed, and everything will live wherever the river goes. ¹⁰It shall be that fishermen will stand by it from En Gedi to En Eglaim; they will be places for spreading their nets. Their fish will be of the same kinds as the fish of the Great Sea, exceedingly many. ¹¹But its swamps and marshes will not be healed; they will be given over to salt. ¹²Along the bank of the river, on this side and that, will grow all kinds of trees used for food; their leaves will not wither, and their fruit will not fail. They will bear fruit every month, because their water flows from the sanctuary. Their fruit will be for food, and their leaves for medicine."*

Derek Prince pointed out (53, p18-19) that the Jews played a special role in history. All 39 books of the Old Testament was written by Jews, and Jesus was born a Jew and will return as a Jew. More than 90 percent of the people described in the Bible, are Israelites. Each of the 27 books of the New Testament was written by Jews (Luke may be regarded as an exception, but he has adopted the Jewish faith). It was Jews who founded the Church and spread the Gospel. All 12 Apostles were Jewish, and the future city in Revelation contains the names of the 12 tribes of Israel. The foundation of the city bears the names of the 12 apostles.

After Jesus ascended into heaven, the persecution of the Jews continued. They were brutally murdered and driven away. They were taken away from the country where they lived as a nation, and they were spiritually removed from the belief that they themselves established.

As prophesied by many prophets in the Bible, the Jews were moved away to other countries, those who survived the persecution. During this process, the Gospel was spread worldwide. However, we read in the Bible that God will ensure the Jews return to Israel, and that the dramatic events of the end times will take place in this area.

For example see what Jeremiah wrote about 600 years before Christ Jeremiah 3:14-18: *"¹⁴Return, O backsliding children," says the LORD; "for I am married to you. I will take you, one from a city and two from a family, and I will bring you to Zion. ¹⁵And I will give you shepherds according to My heart, who will feed you with knowledge and understanding. ¹⁶Then it shall come to pass, when you are multiplied and increased in the land in those days," says the LORD, "that they will say no more, 'The ark of the covenant of the LORD.' It shall not come to mind, nor shall they remember it, nor shall they visit it, nor shall it be made anymore. ¹⁷At that time Jerusalem shall be called The Throne of the LORD, and all the nations shall be gathered to it, to the name of the LORD, to Jerusalem. No more shall they follow the dictates of their evil hearts. ¹⁸In those days the house of Judah shall walk with the house of Israel, and they shall come together out of the land of the north to the land that I have given as an inheritance to your fathers."*

Derek Prince draws our attention to the fact that the return took place in 1946 from the "northern region". These include Russia, Poland, Germany and other countries in eastern Europe and the Balkans (53, p.22).

We can see today that the Temple of the Lord established Jerusalem as Zion. This is the place where the Name of the Lord was established by the people of Israel for the salvation of all nations. Customs of obedience by the priests (Levites) in the Temple service is clear, according to the prophecies, through the divine High Priest Jesus Christ, according to the priestly order of Melchizedek (Divine priestly order) fulfilled. Jesus is the Messenger of the covenant:

Malachi 3:1-4: *"¹Behold, I send My messenger, And he will prepare the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, Will suddenly come to His temple, Even the Messenger of the covenant, In whom you delight. Behold, He is coming," Says the LORD of hosts. ²But who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner's fire And like launderers' soap. ³He will sit as a refiner and a purifier of silver; He will purify the sons of Levi, And purge them as gold and silver, That they may offer to the LORD An offering in righteousness. ⁴Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem Will be pleasant to the LORD, As in the days of old, As in former years."* (Written about 430 years before Christ.)

The highlight of the Lord's Revelation to mankind occurred in Jerusalem. By faith we become children of the covenant. When Jesus died on the cross, the veil of the temple rent in twain. The Holy of Holies was opened by Jesus so that all people can worship the Lord and share in the Divine nature. Peter explained as follows: 2 Peter 1:3-4: *"³as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, ⁴by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."*

Today the Jews return to Israel. At the end of the fifteenth century, only 4,000 families lived in Jerusalem, of which only 70 were Jews (53, p.31). Between 1904 and 1915, 40,000 Jews arrived in Israel (53, p.40). Between World War I and World War II, the Jewish population in Israel grew by 380,000 (53, p.43).

Miracles speak to the world today to attend to the spiritual reality of the city of Zion, and that is the fact that the small group returned and established the state of Israel on 14 May 1948. This is despite many Palestinian (Arab) opposition, and deadly brutality from all sides! The amazing growth of this new state is clearly visible because the original population of approximately 640,000 doubled in the first decade

Jesus is indeed born from the family of Jesse (David's father, according to the prophecies. The Lord drew the world's attention to the miracles (Revelations) which took place in Jerusalem, and those yet to come.

About 750 years before Christ Isaiah prophesied as follows Isaiah 11:9-12: ⁹*They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD As the waters cover the sea.* ¹⁰*And in that day there shall be a Root of Jesse, Who shall stand as a banner to the people; For the Gentiles shall seek Him, And His resting place shall be glorious."* ¹¹*It shall come to pass in that day That the Lord shall set His hand again the second time To recover the remnant of His people who are left, From Assyria and Egypt, From Pathros and Cush, From Elam and Shinar, From Hamath and the islands of the sea.* ¹²*He will set up a banner for the nations, And will assemble the outcasts of Israel, And gather together the dispersed of Judah From the four corners of the earth* (Capital letters where referring to the Messiah installed by the compiler)

Isaiah 66:8-10: ⁸*Who has heard such a thing? Who has seen such things? Shall the earth be made to give birth in one day? Or shall a nation be born at once? For as soon as Zion was in labor, She gave birth to her children.* ⁹*Shall I bring to the time of birth, and not cause delivery?" says the LORD. "Shall I who cause delivery shut up the womb?" says your God.* ¹⁰*Rejoice with Jerusalem, And be glad with her, all you who love her; Rejoice for joy with her, all you who mourn for her;"*

Derek Prince draws our attention to the fact that God says in Isaiah 11:11 He will hold out His hand a second time to let the people return (53, p.61-64). It is clear that this refers to a period after the exile, in other words, a period that still lies ahead for us. This is what we see happening today. Jews return to Israel and the State of Israel has already been established. This relatively small nation is in the news every day. The world's attention is focused on Israel and the Messiah, Jesus Christ, who fulfilled the historical practices and prophecies which took place on the holy mountain, about the Temple,

We can still visit the Temple Mount today where the Temple stood. The wall of mourning – Western Wall - where the Jews still worship today, is part of the original Temple mount. Besides the prophecies already fulfilled, the historic is also strongly confirmed by what we can see today. The Bible describes in detail everything that happened. There is no doubt that what is said in the Bible about the now and future will be fulfilled perfectly. We can safely call Jerusalem the city of Zion. Our Lord come again!

About 750 BC the Lord says by the prophet Isaiah as follows: Isaiah 46:9-13: ⁹*Remember the former things of old, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me,* ¹⁰*Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things that are not yet done, Saying, 'My counsel shall stand, And I will do all My pleasure,'* ¹¹*Calling a bird of prey from the east, The man who executes My counsel, from a far country. Indeed I have spoken it; I will also bring it to pass. I have purposed it; I will also do it.* ¹²*Listen to Me, you stubborn-hearted, Who are far from righteousness:* ¹³*I bring My righteousness near, it shall not be far off; My salvation shall not linger. And I will place salvation in Zion, For Israel My glory."*

We can definitely take the words of Jesus Christ's to heart as testified in Matthew 24:11-14: ¹¹*Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many.* ¹²*And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold.* ¹³*But he who endures to the end shall be saved.* ¹⁴*And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come."*

If any doctrine, philosophy, religion, book or person tries to convince you that Jesus Christ was not crucified, nor rose from the dead, you can be very sure that it is dealing with a lie. Jesus is clearly according to the Scriptures the only Divine Revelation on earth. All the others are false. This Gospel is unique but uniquely to the salvation of all, anyone can accept Jesus as his / her Savior.

1.10 Our responsibility towards Israel

Throughout the years, many so-called Christians attempted to "liberalize" the Holy Land. Consider, for example, the Crusaders during the Middle Ages, who under the name of Christ, moved through Europe and massacred entire communities of Jews - men, women and children. When they later managed to take over Jerusalem, they allowed more blood flow than the rulers before them. The Romans under Titus possibly had allowed more blood flow. All this the Crusaders did under the name of Jesus with the cross as their emblem.

Later, in the remote areas (ghettos) of Europe and Russia, the so-called Christian priests carried crosses and incited people against the Jewish communities. They burned their homes and synagogues, women were raped and those who try to defend themselves killed.

During the second world war, the Nazis systematically killed six million Jews. Their accomplices to commit the act were so-called Christians. No Christian nation raised their voices against the Nazis murdering the Jews. (60, p.151).

Many of these crimes were done because it was alleged that it was the Jews who killed Jesus. However, if looking today at the decline of moral values in society and the wickedness that exists in so-called Christian cultures, the question can be asked whether it is not everyone who kill Jesus!?

Many Christians go to Israel today to go "evangelize" to Israel not realizing what view the Jews really have of Christians. Who do not realize the responsibility of other nations have towards Israel.

The Lord revealed His Identity to us through His Son, Jesus Christ. It is also important that the believer seeks and discover his / her own identity in Christ, and understand the responsibility Christians have regarding Israel.

1.11 The non-Jewish believer in context to Israel

The Temple confirmed Jerusalem as the city of Zion, the place where the Lord's name is worshiped. Today, the cross on which Jesus was crucified can not be seen physically, but the Temple Mount is clear where the Temple stood during that time. The Revelation of God, the Lord, to mankind happened through the Jews. The land of Israel was given to the Jews by the covenant that God made with Abraham. The world is still facing this reality.

Genesis 15:18-21: ¹⁸*On the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying: "To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the River Euphrates--¹⁹the Kenites, the Kenezites, the Kadmonites,²⁰the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim,²¹the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites, and the Jebusites."*

We also know that Jesus was born as a Jew on earth. We can read His genealogy of Joseph's side and from Mary's side. Jesus confirmed to the Samaritan woman that salvation (Jesus refers to Himself) is from the Jews.

John 4:21-22: ²¹*Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. ²²You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews."*

Matthew 24:14-22: ¹⁴*And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come. 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), ¹⁶then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. ¹⁷Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. ¹⁸And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. ¹⁹But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! ²⁰And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath. ²¹For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. ²²And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened."*

We also know today that Jesus is coming again to rule. It has been predicted by many prophets. About 750 years before Christ Isaiah prophesied in Isaiah 11:9-11: ⁹*They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD As the waters cover the sea. ¹⁰"And in that day there shall be a Root of Jesse, Who shall stand as a banner to the people; For the Gentiles shall seek Him, And His resting place shall be glorious." ¹¹It shall come to pass in that day That the Lord shall set His hand again the second time To recover the remnant of His people who are left, From Assyria and Egypt, From Pathros and Cush, From Elam and Shinar, From Hamath and the islands of the sea."*

The author of Hebrew confirmed in Hebrews 9:27-28: ²⁷*And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, ²⁸so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.*

About 600 years before Christ, the Temple of the end times were revealed to the prophet Ezekiel. We read about it in the book of Ezekiel, and especially from Chapter 40 about information on how it will look. The Lord also confirmed that He will be present there forever:

Ezekiel 43:5-12: ⁵*The spirit lifted me up and brought me into the inner court; and behold, the glory of the LORD filled the temple. ⁶Then I heard him speaking to me from the temple; while a man stood beside me. ⁷And he said to me, Son of man, this is the place of My throne and the place of the soles of My feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel for ever. No more shall the house of Israel defile My holy name, they nor their kings, by their harlotry, or with the carcasses of their kings on their high places. ⁸When they set their threshold by My threshold, and their doorpost by My doorpost, with a wall between them and Me, they defiled My holy name by the abominations which they committed; therefore I have consumed them in My anger. ⁹Now let them put away their harlotry and the carcasses of their kings far away from Me, and I will dwell in their midst for ever. ¹⁰Son of man, describe the temple to the house of Israel, that they may be ashamed of their iniquities; and let them measure the pattern. ¹¹And if they are ashamed of all that they have done, make known to them the design of the temple and its arrangement, its exits and its entrances, its entire design and its ordinances, all its forms and and all its laws. Write it down in their sight, so that they may keep its whole design and all its ordinances, and perform them. ¹²This is the law of the temple: The whole area surrounding the mountaintop is most holy. Behold, this is the law of the temple.*

We can therefore with certainty make the following conclusions:

- The Israelites are the chosen nation of God through whom the world may know God, the Lord through His Son, Jesus Christ.
- Jesus Christ is the Messiah, and He will come again to earth.
- As the Temple was the last representative of the Lord's presence among the Israelites, will be the future Temple.
- The future Temple will stand on a sacred mountain, and it will be among the Israelites.
- All nations will be aware of God's presence and will be blessed through faith in Jesus Christ.
- Jesus Christ was born of the Israelites, but also the Israelites stood in for all people as an example of what wickedness brings - the judgment of God. This message was also bequeathed to us by them and their prophets and apostles.

The non-Jewish Christian ought to realize that the Jews are the chosen people that God used to bring salvation to all nations. The city of Jerusalem is the holy city where many of the Lord Revelations has already occurred and deeds of salvation took place. Jesus will return to Jerusalem. The believer's responsibility is to pray for the salvation of Jerusalem in order for the Kingdom of God to be established on earth.

1.11.1 Are all believers regarded as Jews?

In Romans 2:28-29 the apostle Paul specifically writes to the Jews as follows:

Romans 2:28-29: *"²⁸For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh; ²⁹but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God."*

Paul speaks to the Jews of his time who believe that knowledge of the law of God alone brings salvation. He advises that it is more important for the religious Jew to pursue the will of God than to know the law. What Paul actually says is that a true Jew is a religious Jew who seek the will of God, and that not all believers are regarded as Jews (60, p.20). By the blood of Jesus Christ, Jew and non-Jew are united as one body in worship. More on this later.

1.11.2 Does Israel include all believers of all nations?

There are many who mistakenly believe that all believers are regarded as Israel, no matter what nation the person comes from. This problem arose mainly due to erroneous translations of the original Scriptures.

Important to realise is it is the heart of the believer that is important, not whether he / she is circumcised. In other words, faith in the Messiah.

New King James Version: Galatians 6:15-16: *"¹⁵For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation. ¹⁶And as many as walk according to this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God."*

In the New King James Version, it can be seen that Israel is clearly a separate entity. In other words, all believers are under the blessing of God through faith in the Messiah, but not all believers are considered Israel.

In Romans 9:4-9 Paul discusses the Jews as follows: Romans 9:4-9: *"⁴who are Israelites, to whom pertain the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God, and the promises; ⁵of whom are the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, the eternally blessed God. Amen. ⁶But it is not that the word of God has taken no effect. For they are not all Israel who are of Israel, ⁷nor are they all children because they are the seed of Abraham; but, "IN ISAAC YOUR SEED SHALL BE CALLED." ⁸That is, those who are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted as the seed. ⁹For this is the word of promise: "AT THIS TIME I WILL COME AND SARAH SHALL HAVE A SON."*

Paul explains that for a person to be part of God's promise to Abraham, it is not sufficient to only stem from Jacob. To make part of the agreement, a person must have the same faith as Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. What is important is that Paul is not claiming that the word Israel includes all believers. The word Israel in this context only includes descendants of Israel who came to faith in the Messiah (60, p.24).

We can therefore say that the Church includes all people, Jews and non-Jews who accept Jesus Christ as their Saviour.

1.11.3 Did the Church take the place of Israel?

Nowhere in the New Testament, the Church is used as a synonym for Israel. We have already seen that in the New Testament clear distinction is made between believing Jews, non-believing

Jews and Christians (and non-believers) who are non-Jews. We refer to believing Jews as Messianic Jews today.

When Jesus, after His resurrection from the dead, appeared to many people, and poured out the Holy Spirit on the apostles, many people have come to realize that Jesus really is the Messiah. The Church received its identity in Christ because everyone who came to faith in Jesus Christ, started acting as witnesses for the rest of the unbelieving world.

In the early stage, the larger number of faithful people were Jews. The non-believing Jews, in cooperation with the Romans, persecuted and murdered the Messianic Jews. This has caused many believers to flee from Israel, and lived among the Gentiles. The latter in turn caused the Gospel to be preached to the Gentiles. Paul testified as follows

Romans 11:11-12: *"¹¹I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall? Certainly not! But through their fall, to provoke them to jealousy, salvation has come to the Gentiles. ¹²Now if their fall is riches for the world, and their failure riches for the Gentiles, how much more their fullness!"*

A relatively small number of religious Jews caused many of the Gentiles to come to faith in Jesus Christ. It shows how powerful the message is.

Romans 11:17-27: *"¹⁷And if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them, and with them became a partaker of the root and fatness of the olive tree, ¹⁸do not boast against the branches. But if you do boast, remember that you do not support the root, but the root supports you. ¹⁹You will say then, "Branches were broken off that I might be grafted in." ²⁰Well said. Because of unbelief they were broken off, and you stand by faith. Do not be haughty, but fear. ²¹For if God did not spare the natural branches, He may not spare you either. ²²Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in His goodness. Otherwise you also will be cut off. ²³And they also, if they do not continue in unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again. ²⁴For if you were cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these, who are natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree? ²⁵For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. ²⁶And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: "THE DELIVERER WILL COME OUT OF ZION, AND HE WILL TURN AWAY UNGODLINESS FROM JACOB; ²⁷FOR THIS IS MY COVENANT WITH THEM, WHEN I TAKE AWAY THEIR SINS."*

The Lord foretold the Messiah, Jesus Christ in the Old Testament by Israel. Jesus fulfilled all these prophecies on earth for the salvation of all nations. Hardening of the Jews caused the brutally persecution of Christians. The latter caused the believers to flee to other cities and thus took the Gospel with them. It shows the Lord's faithfulness to His covenant with Abraham (Genesis 15), that he will have a big seed and salvation for all nations.

The Church is thus in context to Israel. Rescue came through Israel and the Church is the witness. The Church (believing Jews and non-believing Jews) now plays a role to be a blessing to Israel.

1.11.4 Did the Church replaced the Temple?

The Temple is a historic institution given by God to Israel as a central point of His presence and His covenant with them. This contributes to the restoration of their nation and spiritual unity, a symbol of the people of God - it is bigger than the Church. To unite Jew and Gentiles by Christ in worship, the Temple is out of time. The Lord will forever be the Temple for all believers.

Paul explains in Ephesians 2:11-22: *"¹¹Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh-- who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands-- ¹²that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. ¹³But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. ¹⁴For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, ¹⁵having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, ¹⁶and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. ¹⁷And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. ¹⁸For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father. ¹⁹Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, ²⁰having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, ²¹in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, ²²in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit."*

Jesus did not come to destroy the Temple, nor to punish the Jews. He came as a servant of the Lord, to bring reconciliation. He was also predicted by the prophets as such. The New Testament confirms the eschatological (end times) promise of salvation and national and cultural restoration of

Israel as a sign of God's faithfulness to the covenant. The future of the Church lies in the redemption of Israel.

Romans 11:25-27: ²⁵*For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.* ²⁶*And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: "THE DELIVERER WILL COME OUT OF ZION, AND HE WILL TURN AWAY UNGODLINESS FROM JACOB;* ²⁷*FOR THIS IS MY COVENANT WITH THEM, WHEN I TAKE AWAY THEIR SINS."*

Ephesians 1:9-10: ⁹*having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself,* ¹⁰*that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth-- in Him."*

1.12 New Testament approaches to the Temple

1.12.1 Evangelical Christianity

The early Christians and the apostles considered the Temple as relevant to the future generations and events. The Lord is the believer's Temple that got identity for man through Jesus Christ, and can understand what Jesus said in Matthew 12:6: *"Yet I say to you that in this place there is One greater than the temple."*

- James (half-brother of Jesus) was known for his worship in the Temple
- The early Christians understood God's eschatological plan. This includes both the city and the Temple for the future renewal. Jesus described the desecration of the Temple as a sign of His coming (Matthew 24:3-31; Mark 13:3-37; Luke 21:5-38).
- Acts 3:20-21: ²⁰*and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before,* ²¹*whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began."*
- In the time of future universal blessings the Temple plays an important role. All nations will not only help with the construction (Zechariah 6:15; Haggai 2:7), but will also participate in worship there (Isaiah 2:2-3; 11:10; 56:6-7, Zechariah 14:16-19)
When Paul uses a comparison between Temple and the believer's body (1 Corinthians 3:16-17; 2 Corinthians 6:16-17) or the body of Christ (Ephesians 2:21-22) he does not replace the physical Temple with the spiritual Church. He rather defends the sanctification of one because of the association with the other. (45, p.155)
Ephesians 2:20-22: ²⁰*having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone,* ²¹*in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord,* ²²*in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit."*
- Peter, the leader of the apostles, and John, sees the Temple as authoritarian and as a sacred institution that should be celebrated by all Christians.

In 1 Peter 2 1-9 it can be seen that Peter sees the community of believers as a holy priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifices. Peter refers to the Temple in spiritual context and brings the original priestly services in context to worship without the physical Temple.

1 Peter 2:1-9: ¹*Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking,* ²*as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby,* ³*if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious.* ⁴*Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious,* ⁵*you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.* ⁶*Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture, "BEHOLD, I LAY IN ZION A CHIEF CORNERSTONE, ELECT, PRECIOUS, AND HE WHO BELIEVES ON HIM WILL BY NO MEANS BE PUT TO SHAME."* ⁷*Therefore, to you who believe, He is precious; but to those who are disobedient, "THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED HAS BECOME THE CHIEF CORNERSTONE,"* ⁸*and "A STONE OF STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF OFFENSE."* ⁹*They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed.* ⁹*But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;"*

The spiritual home is the believers and the community of believers is the Church, and the Church took over the role of the original priestly service. The Church plays an important role in the spiritual offerings. As the process of worship in the Temple was facilitated by the priests by the physical offering of sacrifices thus the Church today facilitates the process of worship through bringing the Word, serving Sacraments, worship, charity, and so on. The Church has not replaced the Temple, but represent the original process of worship in the presence of the Lord. When referring to the presence of the Lord it is referring to the Temple. The Holy Spirit lives in the hearts of the believers,

so the body of the believer becomes a Temple of the Lord in his / her heart. God is still present in heaven. Therefore there is a holy Temple in heaven.

According to Randall Price (45, p.138-140) the physical Temple, before Christ, was the central place of worship for the Jews. The Jews therefore had a problem when the Temple was totally destroyed about 70 AD. They found a replacement for the Temple by studying the uses of the Temple in the Torah. Christians had a problem with the Temple and its uses from the beginning. They have found a substitute for it, the Church, and the Church's rituals. The majority of Christians regarded the Temple as part of ancient and abandoned, way of worship that will never take place again. The Jews see the latter as the view of Christians, and that Christians claim that the Messiah has come and became the Temple. This has caused the Christian no longer needing an earthly temple. A spiritualization occurred which made it impossible for the sanctification of any construction.

We have seen in the previous paragraphs that the Church is the witness of the Messiah, Jesus Christ, who died for our sins on earth (according to the Scriptures) and will come again to rescue the believers. This is probably the strongest prophecy a believer could utter! Paul also points out that this Truth builds believers.

1 Corinthians 14:5: *"I wish you all spoke with tongues, but even more that you prophesied; for he who prophesies is greater than he who speaks with tongues, unless indeed he interprets, that the church may receive edification."*

The wickedness on the earth had already caused much heartache and devastation in the past. Already about 750 years before Christ Isaiah prophesied that great destruction is the fate of the wicked world. Isaiah speaks of the powers in the heavens and the Kings of the earth who will be punished. It refers to the heavenly bodies which is worshipped (astral bodies, "star signs" is a good example) and through it wicked leaders pull their followers further into wickedness.

The wonderful is that in this time of devastation there will be joy for the believers because they know and worship the Lord through His Son, the True Temple of God. The Church is looking forward to the Lord's reign on Mount Zion in Jerusalem. The Temple that Solomon built in obedience to the Lord, caused the world's attention, still today, on Mount Zion in Jerusalem. The Temple is a place of universal worship. The key is that the Lord God of Israel, is worshipped. The Church that conveys this message, draws attention to the eternal Temple of the Lord that will on the earth let the Lord's power appear before the leaders of His people.

Isaiah 24:1-23: *"¹Behold, the LORD makes the earth empty and makes it waste, Distorts its surface And scatters abroad its inhabitants. ²And it shall be: As with the people, so with the priest; As with the servant, so with his master; As with the maid, so with her mistress; As with the buyer, so with the seller; As with the lender, so with the borrower; As with the creditor, so with the debtor. ³The land shall be entirely emptied and utterly plundered, For the LORD has spoken this word. ⁴The earth mourns and fades away, The world languishes and fades away; The haughty people of the earth languish. ⁵The earth is also defiled under its inhabitants, Because they have transgressed the laws, Changed the ordinance, Broken the everlasting covenant. ⁶Therefore the curse has devoured the earth, And those who dwell in it are desolate. Therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, And few men are left. ⁷The new wine fails, the vine languishes, All the merry-hearted sigh. ⁸The mirth of the tambourine ceases, The noise of the jubilant ends, The joy of the harp ceases. ⁹They shall not drink wine with a song; Strong drink is bitter to those who drink it. ¹⁰The city of confusion is broken down; Every house is shut up, so that none may go in. ¹¹There is a cry for wine in the streets, All joy is darkened, The mirth of the land is gone. ¹²In the city desolation is left, And the gate is stricken with destruction. ¹³When it shall be thus in the midst of the land among the people, It shall be like the shaking of an olive tree, Like the gleaning of grapes when the vintage is done. ¹⁴They shall lift up their voice, they shall sing; For the majesty of the LORD They shall cry aloud from the sea. ¹⁵Therefore glorify the LORD in the dawning light, The name of the LORD God of Israel in the coastlands of the sea. ¹⁶From the ends of the earth we have heard songs: "Glory to the righteous!" But I said, "I am ruined, ruined! Woe to me! The treacherous dealers have dealt treacherously, Indeed, the treacherous dealers have dealt very treacherously." ¹⁷Fear and the pit and the snare Are upon you, O inhabitant of the earth. ¹⁸And it shall be That he who flees from the noise of the fear Shall fall into the pit, And he who comes up from the midst of the pit Shall be caught in the snare; For the windows from on high are open, And the foundations of the earth are shaken. ¹⁹The earth is violently broken, The earth is split open, The earth is shaken exceedingly. ²⁰The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, And shall totter like a hut; Its transgression shall be heavy upon it, And it will fall, and not rise again. ²¹It shall come to pass in that day That the LORD will punish on high the host of exalted ones, And on the earth the kings of the earth. ²²They will be gathered together, As prisoners are gathered in the pit, And will be shut up in the prison; After many days they will be punished. ²³Then the moon will be disgraced And the sun ashamed; For the LORD of hosts will reign On Mount Zion and in Jerusalem And before His elders, gloriously."*

The physical Temple no longer exists today, and the Jews and the Christians have found substitutes for the Temple. The word "temple" refers to the place of presence (dwelling place). It can be seen from the prophecies that the glory of the Lord will be established on earth. In other words, temple making will happen on earth again. There is prophetic reality with respect to the Temple. Many people, Christians and Jews have different views on whether the physical Temple will be rebuilt or not, and whether it should only be viewed in a spiritual context. It is foretold in the Old Testament that a physical Temple will exist, as prophesied by Daniel (more on this later in the chapter). We can conclude from this that a physical Temple in direct command of the Lord will not be built, but from human initiative.

Price notes that some early defenders (apologists) of the Church, such as Justin Martyr, believed that God has always had His chosen people. According to him, these elected people are the "new spiritual Israel" - the Church - which replaced the old ethnic Israel. This view stands in contrast to Scripture where Israel was called as a separate entity. Galatians 6:15-16. According to Martyr this body of believers arranged by the Lord as the true spiritual Temple in which God lives. The latter is in contrast to the physical Temple abandoned by God. According to Price early church fathers like Origen and Chrysostom followed this believe and maintained that the physical Temple will never be rebuilt.

However, there were other early church fathers such as Irenaeus, who saw the rebuilding of the physical Temple as part of God's prophetic plan. In 185 AD Irenaeus claims as follows: "When the Antichrist destroyed all things on this earth, he will reign for three years and six months and sit in the Temple in Jerusalem. Then the Lord will come from heaven on the clouds, in the Glory of the Father, and the Antichrist and all his followers will be cast in the lake of fire, but will bring the time for the Kingdom to the righteous" The view that the Lord's kingdom in future will be established on earth, is known as Chiliasm or Millenaries. It is also referred to as the Reign of Christ on earth.

In 313 AD the Roman Emperor Constantine declared Christianity as the new state religion. With this action a Christian political kingdom came into existence. Many also believed that the spiritual kingdom, foretold by Jesus, also came into being. Jewish and premillennial doctrine views of a future kingdom was now in competition with this, and caused conflict between the respective followers. During the fourth century after Christ, the church historian Eusebius, alleged that the Lord is present in the hearts of believers. In other words, there is no longer a purpose for a physical temple building. This view is also referred to as "replacement theology".

Randall Price explains that the early Christians saw the destruction of the Temple as permanent. Especially under the direction of Constantine's mother, Queen Helen, the Christians began to turn Jerusalem into a Christian city. Christian churches were erected at important places, except at the Temple Mount. The Temple Mount was deliberately left abandoned as a sign of God's judgment.

With the passage of time this view remained part of the church, even during church reform. This view has become part of evangelical Christianity.

Evangelical Christian view of the Temple (45, p141-142)

- **Literally hermeneutic (method of interpretation) view:** Interpret the prophecies in the Old Testament literally. They believe that symbolic language can imagine literal events. The prophecies that have not been fulfilled by the Messiah as yet, has to take place, eg. the reform of Israel, judgment, and the empire of universal peace is seen as literal events during the coming of the Messiah. So they see the rebuilding of the Temple as part of the coming of the Messiah and the restoration of Israel.
- **Spiritual Symbolic hermeneutic:** They see the Old Testament prophecies in the light of New Testament fulfillment in Christ. Thus they see all the prophecies, whether symbolic language was used or not, as a symbol of the New Testament, or Church. They believe that almost all the prophecies about the coming of the Messiah 2000 years ago came to pass during the first coming of Jesus, or the experience of His Church. This view claims that all the prophecies concerning Israel, and the physical and spiritual restoration of the Jewish people, was accomplishment within the Church. . This means that, in most cases, these prophecies were spiritually intended for the Church, or they found their historic accomplishment in the Church. They see the prophecies concerning the future Temple as symbol to the Church and its priestly role under the new covenant. The only exception, which is also shared by the literal view is that it is expected that Christ at the end will return a second time (physically) to earth before the resurrection of the dead.

Christ will definitely come again to earth and He is the True Temple of God on earth. The future construction of the physical Temple in Jerusalem, will not represent the presence of the Lord, but keeps prophetic reality. It is predicted, see the following paragraph.

1.12.2 The prophecies by Daniel

Daniel lived during the seventh century before Christ. The Lord made wonderful Revelations of what lies ahead in the future through him. As we can see through the feasts of the Lord (chapter 5)

what have been already accomplished by Christ and what lie ahead in the future, we can also see in the prophecies of Daniel what have already been accomplished, and what lie ahead. It is clear that the Lord shows us that just as the prophecies accurately predicted history, so we can be sure that the prophecies not yet fulfilled, will be fulfilled.

Daniel's prophecies can be interpreted in many cases to see what have already been accomplished, and what it hold for the future. More than 600 years before Christ, the Lord prophesied through Daniel as follows:

Daniel 9:24-27: *"²⁴Seventy weeks are determined for your people and for your holy city, To finish the transgression, To make an end of sins, To make reconciliation for iniquity, To bring in everlasting righteousness, To seal up vision and prophecy, And to anoint the Most Holy. ²⁵Know therefore and understand, That from the going forth of the command To restore and build Jerusalem Until Messiah the Prince, There shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; The street shall be built again, and the wall, Even in troublesome times. ²⁶And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself; And the people of the prince who is to come Shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it shall be with a flood, And till the end of the war desolations are determined. ²⁷Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; But in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, Even until the consummation, which is determined, Is poured out on the desolate."*

"Seventy weeks" As can be seen from the prophecy above it predicted seventy periods during which evil will be eradicated. During this period, Jesus Christ overcame Satan by rising from the dead, and we know that He will come again to give the final victory.

"Going forth of the commandment to restore Jerusalem" The Persian king, Darius, commanded that Jerusalem and the Temple be rebuilt. This commandment is actually about 450 years before Christ. We read in Ezra 6

Ezra 6:1-4: *"¹Then King Darius issued a decree, and a search was made in the archives, where the treasures were stored in Babylon. ²And at Achmetha, in the palace that is in the province of Media, a scroll was found, and in it a record was written thus: ³In the first year of King Cyrus, King Cyrus issued a decree concerning the house of God at Jerusalem: "Let the house be rebuilt, the place where they offered sacrifices; and let the foundations of it be firmly laid, its height sixty cubits and its width sixty cubits, ⁴with three rows of heavy stones and one row of new timber. Let the expenses be paid from the king's treasury."*

"Seven weeks": $7 \times 7 = 49$

"Sixty-two weeks": $62 \times 7 = 434$

The total period predicted for the rebuilding of the Temple : $434 + 49 = 483$

The order was given about 450 years before Christ: $483 - 450 = 33$

"Messiah shall be cut off": Jesus Christ was crucified about 33 AD

"the people of the prince who is to come Shall destroy the city" The Romans around 70 AD destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple.

We can see through this prophesy that events were accurately predicted ahead of time, in detail. We can also see in the same prophecy what lies ahead

In the Old Testament using the term "week" also refers to a period of seven years.

There are seven periods predicted for all these events. The seventieth period referred to the coming of Christ. We can not know exactly when the seventieth time will be, but we can be sure that it is going to happen!

"He will for one week": At the end there is a destroyer for seven years who will play an evil role. He will make a covenant and pretend that all is well. Remember that "a week" in Biblical times could also refer to seven years.

" middle of the week" After three-and-a-half years he will bring destruction.

1.12.3 The Temple in the book of Revelation

In the book of Revelation you can read of the Apostle John's testimony of the Revelation which he received when he was exiled on the island of Patmos. Jesus Christ revealed to John as follows:

Revelation 3:12: *"He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And I will write on him My new name."*

Christians are the people who triumphed through faith in Jesus Christ's atoning death. Every believer will find an eternal place in the Lord's presence. The Temple of my God refers to God's presence. When the name of God is written onto the believer, the believer becomes the property of the Lord. "New Jerusalem" refers to the capital of heaven (59, p1997).

Revelation 11:1-2: *"¹Then I was given a reed like a measuring rod. And the angel stood, saying, "Rise and measure the temple of God, the altar, and those who worship there. ²But leave out the court which is outside the temple, and do not measure it, for it has been given to the Gentiles. And they will tread the holy city underfoot for forty-two months."*

From the above it can be seen that there will be a physical temple on earth. We also read about it as prophesied by Daniel more than 600 years before Christ. This temple will exist during the time of oppression (Tribulation) and the domination of the Antichrist. The measuring with the measuring stick shows on the Lord's ownership of the most holy and sacred. The altar referred to here, is the altar of incense. For three-and-a-half years, (forty-two months), the Antichrist will rule and cause destruction (59, p. 2005).

Revelation 11:16-19: *"¹⁶And the twenty-four elders who sat before God on their thrones fell on their faces and worshiped God, ¹⁷saying: "We give You thanks, O Lord God Almighty, The One who is and who was and who is to come, Because You have taken Your great power and reigned. ¹⁸The nations were angry, and Your wrath has come, And the time of the dead, that they should be judged, And that You should reward Your servants the prophets and the saints, And those who fear Your name, small and great, And should destroy those who destroy the earth." ¹⁹Then the temple of God was opened in heaven, and the ark of His covenant was seen in His temple. And there were lightnings, noises, thunderings, an earthquake, and great hail."*

Can be seen from the above that God's omnipotence will be clear. Still the unbelieving people will revolt against the Lord, but to no avail. The judgment will be just. As the ark in the first Temple represented the presence of the Lord visibly the throne of the Lord will be visible (59, p.2007)

Revelation 14:14-18: *"¹⁴Then I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and on the cloud sat One like the Son of Man, having on His head a golden crown, and in His hand a sharp sickle. ¹⁵And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to Him who sat on the cloud, "Thrust in Your sickle and reap, for the time has come for You to reap, for the harvest of the earth is ripe." ¹⁶So He who sat on the cloud thrust in His sickle on the earth, and the earth was reaped. ¹⁷Then another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. ¹⁸And another angel came out from the altar, who had power over fire, and he cried with a loud cry to him who had the sharp sickle, saying, "Thrust in your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth, for her grapes are fully ripe."*

The imagery of the Lord above on the white cloud joins Daniel's prophecy in Daniel 7:13-14 and shows Almighty Dominion. The Lord will come with a golden crown on his head that shows that He is coming to celebrate victory over His enemies. The cutting off of the grapes refers to the judgment that will occur (59, p.2012)

Revelation 15:3-8: *"³They sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying: "Great and marvelous are Your works, Lord God Almighty! Just and true are Your ways, O King of the saints! ⁴Who shall not fear You, O Lord, and glorify Your name? For You alone are holy. For all nations shall come and worship before You, For Your judgments have been manifested." ⁵After these things I looked, and behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened. ⁶And out of the temple came the seven angels having the seven plagues, clothed in pure bright linen, and having their chests girded with golden bands. ⁷Then one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God who lives forever and ever. ⁸The temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from His power, and no one was able to enter the temple till the seven plagues of the seven angels were completed."*

As can be seen from the above there are two songs that is sung. The song of Moses and the song of the Lamb. The song of Moses is sung by the Israelites after they passed through the Red Sea in commemoration of the deliverance of the Egyptian soldiers. It is a song of deliverance and victory. It is also a prophetic song that the redeemed, who is not caught in the Antichrist and his system can associate with. Singing the Song of the Lamb is in commemoration of the deliverance from sin through Christ. After the judgement is finished, Christ's millennial reign will be established on earth and the chosen one of all nations shall come and worship him. The seven plagues refers to the final judgment that will take place afterwards. The bright shining garments of the angels indicates holiness and perfection. The gold stripes indicate loyalty, wealth and glory. The wrath of the Lord shall overwhelm all who did not accept the redemption in Christ, (59, p.2013).

Revelation 16:1: *"Then I heard a loud voice from the temple saying to the seven angels, "Go and pour out the bowls of the wrath of God on the earth.""*

Revelation 16:17-21: *"¹⁷Then the seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, "It is done!" ¹⁸And there were noises*

and thunderings and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such a mighty and great earthquake as had not occurred since men were on the earth. ¹⁹Now the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. And great Babylon was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath. ²⁰Then every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. ²¹And great hail from heaven fell upon men, each hailstone about the weight of a talent. Men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, since that plague was exceedingly great.”

The seventh angels' bowl that is spilled out indicates the final wrath of God that is poured out on the earth and points directly ahead of the Second Coming of Christ. It does not include the final judgment. The voice out of the temple in heaven is the Lord's voice "it's over". The Lord will conclude the closing of the outpouring of His wrath by an earthquake as there never was. Jerusalem will be divided into three parts to prepare the city for its central position in the sovereignty.

(See Zechariah 14:4-9: ⁴“And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, Which faces Jerusalem on the east. And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two, From east to west, Making a very large valley; Half of the mountain shall move toward the north And half of it toward the south. ⁵Then you shall flee through My mountain valley, For the mountain valley shall reach to Azal. Yes, you shall flee As you fled from the earthquake In the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Thus the LORD my God will come, And all the saints with You. ⁶It shall come to pass in that day That there will be no light; The lights will diminish. ⁷It shall be one day Which is known to the LORD Neither day nor night. But at evening time it shall happen That it will be light. ⁸And in that day it shall be-- That living waters shall flow from Jerusalem, Half of them toward the eastern sea And half of them toward the western sea; In both summer and winter it shall occur. ⁹And the LORD shall be King over all the earth. In that day it shall be "The LORD is one," And His name one.”)

Because of remorse Jerusalem will be the only city to be spared the judgement and will still be made prettier. The other cities will collapse. The capital of the Antichrist will be destroyed under the wrath of God. The whole topography of the earth will be changed in preparation for the millennial kingdom (reign) (59, p.2015).

In many passages it can be seen that there is a Temple in heaven. In Revelation 21:22 it can be seen that there is never going to be a Temple on the new earth, how is it possible?

Revelation 21:22-24: ²²“But I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. ²³The city had no need of the sun or of the moon or of the stars to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb is its light. ²⁴And the nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light, and the kings of the earth bring their glory and honor into it.”

However, in Revelation 21:23 we can see that the Lord is the Temple, the Light of the world. The Temple is not a building, but the Lord Himself.

Revelation 7:15-17: ¹⁵“Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple. And He who sits on the throne will dwell among them. ¹⁶They shall neither hunger anymore nor thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any heat; ¹⁷for the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”

In eternal perspective there is no need for a physical temple. The glory of the Lord illuminates the universe as His Temple. The Lord Himself is the Temple in Whom everything exists. The presence of the Lord lights, and fills the new heaven and new earth (59, p.2024).

1.13 Eschatology by John MacArthur (33, p.2197-2198)

Eschatology refers to the study of the end times. It is the study of the Scriptures to understand what the future holds. See the approach according to John MacArthur.

1.13.1 Physical death

The physical death does not cause the loss of consciousness

Revelation 6:9-11 ⁹When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held. ¹⁰And they cried with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" ¹¹Then a white robe was given to each of them; and it was said to them that they should rest a little while longer, until both the number of their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they were, was completed.

and a separation occurs between body and soul

James 2:26: *For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.*

The soul of the redeemed enters directly the presence of Christ

Luke 23:39-43: ³⁹*Then one of the criminals who were hanged blasphemed Him, saying, "If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us."* ⁴⁰*But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying, "Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation?"* ⁴¹*And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong."* ⁴²*Then he said to Jesus, "Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom."* ⁴³*And Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise."*

2 Corinthians 5:4-8: ⁴*For we who are in this tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life.* ⁵*Now He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who also has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.* ⁶*So we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord.* ⁷*For we walk by faith, not by sight.* ⁸*We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.*

Philemon 1:21-23: ²¹*Having confidence in your obedience, I write to you, knowing that you will do even more than I say.* ²²*But, meanwhile, also prepare a guest room for me, for I trust that through your prayers I shall be granted to you.* ²³*Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, greets you,*

For the redeemed, this separation will last until the rapture

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18: ¹³*But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope.* ¹⁴*For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.* ¹⁵*For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep.* ¹⁶*For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.* ¹⁷*Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.* ¹⁸*Therefore comfort one another with these words.*

The rapture will bring about the first resurrection

Revelation 20:4-6: ⁴*And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.* ⁵*But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.* ⁶*Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.*

When our soul and body will be reunited forever in God's holy presence

1 Corinthians 15:35-44: ³⁵*But someone will say, "How are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come?"* ³⁶*Foolish one, what you sow is not made alive unless it dies.* ³⁷*And what you sow, you do not sow that body that shall be, but mere grain--perhaps wheat or some other grain.* ³⁸*But God gives it a body as He pleases, and to each seed its own body.* ³⁹*All flesh is not the same flesh, but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of animals, another of fish, and another of birds.* ⁴⁰*There are also celestial bodies and terrestrial bodies; but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another.* ⁴¹*There is one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differs from another star in glory.* ⁴²*So also is the resurrection of the dead. The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption.* ⁴³*It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power.* ⁴⁴*It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.*

1 Corinthians 15:50-54: ⁵⁰Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. ⁵¹Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed-- ⁵²in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. ⁵³For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. ⁵⁴So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "DEATH IS SWALLOWED UP IN VICTORY."

Philippians 3:20-21: ²⁰For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.

Until then, the souls of the redeemed in Christ will be in a joyful relationship with our Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Corinthians 5:8: *We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.*

There will be a physical resurrection of all men, saved to eternal life

John 6:39-40: ³⁹This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. ⁴⁰And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day."

Romans 8:10-11: ¹⁰And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. ¹¹But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.

Romans 8:19-23: ¹⁹For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. ²⁰For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; ²¹because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. ²²For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. ²³Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body.

2 Corinthians 4:14: *knowing that He who raised up the Lord Jesus will also raise us up with Jesus, and will present us with you.*

And the unsaved to judgment and everlasting punishment

Daniel 12:2: *And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, Some to everlasting life, Some to shame and everlasting contempt.*

John 5:28-29: ²⁸Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice ²⁹and come forth-- those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.

Revelation 20:13-15: ¹³The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. ¹⁴Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. ¹⁵And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.

The souls of the unsaved at the time of death are kept under punishment until the second resurrection

Luke 16:19-26: ¹⁹"There was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day. ²⁰But there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, full of sores, who was laid at his gate, ²¹desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table. Moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. ²²So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried. ²³And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. ²⁴"Then he cried and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.' ²⁵But Abraham said, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented. ²⁶And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us.'

Revelation 20:13-15: ¹³The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. ¹⁴Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. ¹⁵And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.

When the soul and the body will be reunited

John 5:28-29: ²⁸Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice ²⁹and come forth-- those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.

They will then appear at the Great White Throne of judgment

Revelation 20:11-15 ¹¹ Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. ¹²And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. ¹³The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works ¹⁴Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death ¹⁵And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.

And will be thrown into hell, the lake of fire

Matthew 25:41-46: ⁴¹"Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: ⁴²for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink; ⁴³I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.' ⁴⁴"Then they also will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?' ⁴⁵Then He will answer them, saying, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.' ⁴⁶And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

Cut off from the life of God forever

Daniel 12:2: "And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, Some to everlasting life, Some to shame and everlasting contempt."

Matthew 25:41-46: ⁴¹"Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: ⁴²for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink; ⁴³I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.' ⁴⁴"Then they also will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?' ⁴⁵Then He will answer them, saying, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.' ⁴⁶And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

2 Thess 1:7-9: ⁷and to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, ⁸in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know

God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power,"

1.13.2 The Rapture of the Church

The Lord Jesus Christ will physically (bodily) return to earth before the seven-year persecution (Tribulation). To add, this is a subject distilled by many believers. Is the rapture going to happen, and if so, will it be before or after the tribulation? Important however, is that we should know that the Lord Jesus Christ will come to take us to Him. We should expect Him and be prepared for this. Only He knows the exact date when this will happen.

1 Thess 4:16: For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

Titus 2:13: looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,

To take His Church away from this earth

John 14:1-3: ¹ "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. ²In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. ³And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.

1 Kor 15:51-53: ⁵¹ Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—⁵²in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. ⁵³For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality."

1 Tes 4:15-18: ¹⁵For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. ¹⁶For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. ¹⁸Therefore comfort one another with these words.

1 Tes 4:5-11 ¹But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. ²For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. ³For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape. ⁴But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief. ⁵You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness. ⁶Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober. ⁷For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night. ⁸But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation. ⁹For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁰who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him. ¹¹Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing.

And, between this event and His glorious return with His saints, to recognize believers for their works

1 Corinthians 3:11-15: ¹¹For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. ¹²Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, ¹³each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. ¹⁴If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. ¹⁵If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

2 Corinthians 5:10: For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

1.13.3 The Tribulation Period

Immediately after the rapture of the church from the earth

John 14:1-3: ¹ "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. ² In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.

1 Tess 4:13-18 ¹³ But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. ¹⁴ For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. ¹⁵ For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. ¹⁸ Therefore comfort one another with these words.

The righteous judgment of God will be poured out on the unbelieving world

Jeremiah 30:7: *Alas! For that day is great, So that none is like it; And it is the time of Jacob's trouble, But he shall be saved out of it.*

Daniel 9:27: *Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; But in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, Even until the consummation, which is determined, Is poured out on the desolate."*

Daniel 12:1-2: ¹ "At that time Michael shall stand up, The great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people; And there shall be a time of trouble, Such as never was since there was a nation, Even to that time. And at that time your people shall be delivered, Every one who is found written in the book. ² And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, Some to everlasting life, Some to shame and everlasting contempt. "

2 Tess 2:7-12: ⁷ "For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way. ⁸ And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming. ⁹ The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, ¹⁰ and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. ¹¹ And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, ¹² that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness."

Revelation 16: ¹ Then I heard a loud voice from the temple saying to the seven angels, "Go and pour out the bowls of the wrath of God on the earth." ² So the first went and poured out his bowl upon the earth, and a foul and loathsome sore came upon the men who had the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. ³ Then the second angel poured out his bowl on the sea, and it became blood as of a dead man; and every living creature in the sea died. ⁴ Then the third angel poured out his bowl on the rivers and springs of water, and they became blood. ⁵ And I heard the angel of the waters saying: "You are righteous, O Lord, The One who is and who was and who is to be, Because You have judged these things. ⁶ For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, And You have given them blood to drink. For it is their just due." ⁷ And I heard another from the altar saying, "Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are Your judgments." ⁸ Then the fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, and power was given to him to scorch men with fire. ⁹ And men were scorched with great heat, and they blasphemed the name of God who has power over these plagues; and they did not repent and give Him glory. ¹⁰ Then the fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and his kingdom became full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues because of the pain. ¹¹ They blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and did not repent of their deeds. ¹² Then the sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up, so that the way of the kings from the east might be prepared. ¹³ And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs coming out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. ¹⁴ For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather

them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. ¹⁵"Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame." ¹⁶And they gathered them together to the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon. ¹⁷Then the seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, "It is done!" ¹⁸And there were noises and thunderings and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such a mighty and great earthquake as had not occurred since men were on the earth. ¹⁹Now the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. And great Babylon was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath. ²⁰Then every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. ²¹And great hail from heaven fell upon men, each hailstone about the weight of a talent. Men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, since that plague was exceedingly great.

God's judgment will reach its climax at the glorious return of Christ to earth

Matthew 24:27-31: ²⁷For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. ²⁸For wherever the carcass is, there the eagles will be gathered together. ²⁹Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. ³⁰Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. ³¹And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

Matthew 25:31-46: ³¹"When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. ³²All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. ³³And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. ³⁴Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: ³⁵for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; ³⁶I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.' ³⁷"Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? ³⁸When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? ³⁹Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' ⁴⁰And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.' ⁴¹"Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: ⁴²for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink; ⁴³I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.' ⁴⁴"Then they also will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?' ⁴⁵Then He will answer them, saying, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.' ⁴⁶And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

2 Tess 2:7-12: ⁷For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way. ⁸And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming. ⁹The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, ¹⁰and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. ¹¹And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, ¹²that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

At that time the persecuted from the Old Testament will be raised and the living will be judged

Daniel 12:2-3: ²And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, Some to everlasting life, Some to shame and everlasting contempt. ³Those who are wise shall shine Like the brightness of the firmament, And those who turn many to righteousness Like the stars forever and ever.

Revelation 20:4-6: ⁴And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. ⁵But

the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. ⁶Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.

This period includes the seventieth week of Daniel's prophecy

Daniel 9:24-27: ²⁴"Seventy weeks are determined For your people and for your holy city, To finish the transgression, To make an end of sins, To make reconciliation for iniquity, To bring in everlasting righteousness, To seal up vision and prophecy, And to anoint the Most Holy. ²⁵"Know therefore and understand, That from the going forth of the command To restore and build Jerusalem Until Messiah the Prince, There shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; The street shall be built again, and the wall, Even in troublesome times. ²⁶"And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself; And the people of the prince who is to come Shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it shall be with a flood, And till the end of the war desolations are determined. ²⁷Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; But in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, Even until the consummation, which is determined, Is poured out on the desolate."

Matthew 24:15-31: 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), ¹⁶"then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. ¹⁷Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. ¹⁸And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. ¹⁹But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! ²⁰And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath. ²¹For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. ²²And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened. ²³"Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'There!' do not believe it. ²⁴For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. ²⁵See, I have told you beforehand. ²⁶"Therefore if they say to you, 'Look, He is in the desert!' do not go out; or 'Look, He is in the inner rooms!' do not believe it. ²⁷For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. ²⁸For wherever the carcass is, there the eagles will be gathered together. ²⁹"Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. ³⁰Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. ³¹And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other."

Matthew 25:31-46: ³¹"When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. ³²All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. ³³And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. ³⁴Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: ³⁵for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; ³⁶I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.' ³⁷"Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? ³⁸When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? ³⁹Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' ⁴⁰And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.' ⁴¹"Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: ⁴²for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink; ⁴³I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.' ⁴⁴"Then they also will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?' ⁴⁵Then He will answer them, saying, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.' ⁴⁶And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

1.13.4 The Second Coming and the Millennial Reign

After the prosecution period, Christ will come and take up the throne of David

Matthew 25:31: ³¹"When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory.

Luke 1:32-33: ³² He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. ³³ And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end."

Acts 1:10-11: ¹⁰ And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, ¹¹ who also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven."

Acts 2:29-30: ²⁹ "Men and brethren, let me speak freely to you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. ³⁰ Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne,

And establish His Messianic kingdom on earth for a thousand years

Revelation 20:1-7: ¹ Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand ² He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; ³ and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while. ⁴ And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. ⁵ But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. ⁶ Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years. ⁷ Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison

During this time the resurrected saints will reign with Him over Israel and all the nations on earth

Ezekiel 37:21-28: ²¹ "Then say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "Surely I will take the children of Israel from among the nations, wherever they have gone, and will gather them from every side and bring them into their own land; ²² and I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king over them all; they shall no longer be two nations, nor shall they ever be divided into two kingdoms again. ²³ They shall not defile themselves anymore with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions; but I will deliver them from all their dwelling places in which they have sinned, and will cleanse them. Then they shall be My people, and I will be their God. ²⁴ "David My servant shall be king over them, and they shall all have one shepherd; they shall also walk in My judgments and observe My statutes, and do them. ²⁵ Then they shall dwell in the land that I have given to Jacob My servant, where your fathers dwelt; and they shall dwell there, they, their children, and their children's children, forever; and My servant David shall be their prince forever. ²⁶ Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them, and it shall be an everlasting covenant with them; I will establish them and multiply them, and I will set My sanctuary in their midst forevermore. ²⁷ My tabernacle also shall be with them; indeed I will be their God, and they shall be My people. ²⁸ The nations also will know that I, the LORD, sanctify Israel, when My sanctuary is in their midst forevermore."

Daniel 7:17-22: ¹⁷ "Those great beasts, which are four, are four kings which arise out of the earth. ¹⁸ But the saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever.' ¹⁹ "Then I wished to know the truth about the fourth beast, which was different from all the others, exceedingly dreadful, with its teeth of iron and its nails of bronze, which devoured, broke in pieces, and trampled the residue with its feet; ²⁰ and the ten horns that were on its head, and the other horn which came up, before which three fell, namely, that horn which had eyes and a mouth which spoke pompous words, whose appearance was greater than his fellows. ²¹ "I was watching; and the same horn was making war against the saints, and prevailing against them, ²² until the Ancient of Days came, and a judgment was made in favor of the saints of the Most High, and the time came for the saints to possess the kingdom.

Revelation 19:11-16: ¹¹ Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. ¹² His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. ¹³ He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. ¹⁴ And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. ¹⁵ Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. ¹⁶ And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

Prior to this ruling the Antichrist and the false prophet will be exposed and Satan will be removed from this world

Daniel 7:17-27: ¹⁷ Those great beasts, which are four, are four kings which arise out of the earth. ¹⁸ But the saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever. ¹⁹ Then I wished to know the truth about the fourth beast, which was different from all the others, exceedingly dreadful, with its teeth of iron and its nails of bronze, which devoured, broke in pieces, and trampled the residue with its feet; ²⁰ and the ten horns that were on its head, and the other horn which came up, before which three fell, namely, that horn which had eyes and a mouth which spoke pompous words, whose appearance was greater than his fellows. ²¹ I was watching; and the same horn was making war against the saints, and prevailing against them, ²² until the Ancient of Days came, and a judgment was made in favor of the saints of the Most High, and the time came for the saints to possess the kingdom. ²³ Thus he said: 'The fourth beast shall be A fourth kingdom on earth, Which shall be different from all other kingdoms, And shall devour the whole earth, Trample it and break it in pieces. ²⁴ The ten horns are ten kings Who shall arise from this kingdom. And another shall rise after them; He shall be different from the first ones, And shall subdue three kings. ²⁵ He shall speak pompous words against the Most High, Shall persecute the saints of the Most High, And shall intend to change times and law. Then the saints shall be given into his hand For a time and times and half a time. ²⁶ But the court shall be seated, And they shall take away his dominion, To consume and destroy it forever. ²⁷ Then the kingdom and dominion, And the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, Shall be given to the people, the saints of the Most High. His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, And all dominions shall serve and obey Him.'

Revelation 20:1-6: ¹ Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand ² He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; ³ and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while. ⁴ And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. ⁵ But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. ⁶ Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.

The kingdom itself will be the fulfillment of God's promise to Israel

Isaiah 65:17-25: ¹⁷ For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; And the former shall not be remembered or come to mind. ¹⁸ But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create; For behold, I create Jerusalem as a rejoicing, And her people a joy. ¹⁹ I will rejoice in Jerusalem, And joy in My people; The voice of weeping shall no longer be heard in her, Nor the voice of crying. ²⁰ No more shall an infant from there live but a few days, Nor an old man who has not fulfilled his days; For the child shall die one hundred years old, But the sinner being one hundred years old shall be accursed. ²¹ They shall build houses and inhabit them; They shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit. ²² They shall not build and another inhabit; They shall not plant and another eat; For as the days of a tree, so shall be the days of My people, And My elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands. ²³ They shall not labor in vain, Nor bring forth children for trouble; For they shall be the descendants of the blessed of the LORD, And their offspring with them. ²⁴ It shall come to pass That before they call, I will answer; And while they are still speaking, I will hear. ²⁵ The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, The lion shall eat straw like the ox, And dust shall be the serpent's food. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain," Says the LORD.

Ezekiel 37:21-28: ²¹ "Then say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "Surely I will take the children of Israel from among the nations, wherever they have gone, and will gather them from every side and bring them into their own land; ²²and I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king over them all; they shall no longer be two nations, nor shall they ever be divided into two kingdoms again. ²³They shall not defile themselves anymore with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions; but I will deliver them from all their dwelling places in which they have sinned, and will cleanse them. Then they shall be My people, and I will be their God. ²⁴"David My servant shall be king over them, and they shall all have one shepherd; they shall also walk in My judgments and observe My statutes, and do them. ²⁵Then they shall dwell in the land that I have given to Jacob My servant, where your fathers dwelt; and they shall dwell there, they, their children, and their children's children, forever; and My servant David shall be their prince forever. ²⁶Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them, and it shall be an everlasting covenant with them; I will establish them and multiply them, and I will set My sanctuary in their midst forevermore. ²⁷My tabernacle also shall be with them; indeed I will be their God, and they shall be My people. ²⁸The nations also will know that I, the LORD, sanctify Israel, when My sanctuary is in their midst forevermore."

Zechariah 8:1-17: ¹ Again the word of the LORD of hosts came, saying, ²"Thus says the LORD of hosts: 'I am zealous for Zion with great zeal; With great fervor I am zealous for her.' ³"Thus says the LORD: 'I will return to Zion, And dwell in the midst of Jerusalem. Jerusalem shall be called the City of Truth, The Mountain of the LORD of hosts, The Holy Mountain.' ⁴"Thus says the LORD of hosts: 'Old men and old women shall again sit In the streets of Jerusalem, Each one with his staff in his hand Because of great age. ⁵The streets of the city Shall be full of boys and girls Playing in its streets.' ⁶"Thus says the LORD of hosts: 'If it is marvelous in the eyes of the remnant of this people in these days, Will it also be marvelous in My eyes?' Says the LORD hosts. ⁷"Thus says the LORD of hosts: 'Behold, I will save My people from the land of the east And from the land of the west; ⁸I will bring them back, And they shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem. They shall be My people And I will be their God, In truth and righteousness.' ⁹"Thus says the LORD of hosts: 'Let your hands be strong, You who have been hearing in these days These words by the mouth of the prophets, Who spoke in the day the foundation was laid For the house of the LORD of hosts, That the temple might be built. ¹⁰For before these days There were no wages for man nor any hire for beast; There was no peace from the enemy for whoever went out or came in; For I set all men, everyone, against his neighbor. ¹¹But now I will not treat the remnant of this people as in the former days,' says the LORD of hosts. ¹²'For the seed shall be prosperous, The vine shall give its fruit, The ground shall give her increase, And the heavens shall give their dew— I will cause the remnant of this people To possess all these. ¹³And it shall come to pass That just as you were a curse among the nations, O house of Judah and house of Israel, So I will save you, and you shall be a blessing. Do not fear, Let your hands be strong.' ¹⁴"For thus says the LORD of hosts: 'Just as I determined to punish you When your fathers provoked Me to wrath,' Says the LORD of hosts, 'And I would not relent, ¹⁵So again in these days I am determined to do good To Jerusalem and to the house of Judah. Do not fear. ¹⁶These are the things you shall do: Speak each man the truth to his neighbor; Give judgment in your gates for truth, justice, and peace; ¹⁷Let none of you think evil in your heart against your neighbor; And do not love a false oath. For all these are things that I hate,' Says the LORD."

To bring them back their land which they lost because of their disobedience to Him

Deuteronomy 28:15-68: ¹⁵ "But it shall come to pass, if you do not obey the voice of the LORD your God, to observe carefully all His commandments and His statutes which I command you today, that all these curses will come upon you and overtake you: ¹⁶"Cursed shall you be in the city, and cursed shall you be in the country. ¹⁷"Cursed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl. ¹⁸"Cursed shall be the fruit of your body and the produce of your land, the increase of your cattle and the offspring of your flocks. ¹⁹"Cursed shall you be when you come in, and cursed shall you be when you go out. ²⁰"The LORD will send on you cursing, confusion, and rebuke in all that you set your hand to do, until you are destroyed and until you perish quickly, because of the wickedness of your doings in which you have forsaken Me. ²¹The LORD will make the plague cling to you until He has consumed you from the land which you are going to possess. ²²The LORD will strike you with consumption, with fever, with inflammation, with severe burning fever, with the sword, with scorching, and with mildew; they shall pursue you until you perish. ²³And your heavens which are over your head shall be bronze, and the earth which is under you shall be iron. ²⁴The LORD will change the rain of your land to powder and dust; from the heaven it shall come down on you until you are destroyed. ²⁵"The LORD will cause you to be defeated before your enemies; you shall go out one way against them and flee seven ways before them; and you shall become troublesome to all the kingdoms of the earth. ²⁶Your carcasses shall be food for all the

birds of the air and the beasts of the earth, and no one shall frighten them away. ²⁷The LORD will strike you with the boils of Egypt, with tumors, with the scab, and with the itch, from which you cannot be healed. ²⁸The LORD will strike you with madness and blindness and confusion of heart. ²⁹And you shall grope at noonday, as a blind man gropes in darkness; you shall not prosper in your ways; you shall be only oppressed and plundered continually, and no one shall save you. ³⁰"You shall betroth a wife, but another man shall lie with her; you shall build a house, but you shall not dwell in it; you shall plant a vineyard, but shall not gather its grapes. ³¹Your ox shall be slaughtered before your eyes, but you shall not eat of it; your donkey shall be violently taken away from before you, and shall not be restored to you; your sheep shall be given to your enemies, and you shall have no one to rescue them. ³²Your sons and your daughters shall be given to another people, and your eyes shall look and fail with longing for them all day long; and there shall be no strength in your hand. ³³A nation whom you have not known shall eat the fruit of your land and the produce of your labor, and you shall be only oppressed and crushed continually. ³⁴So you shall be driven mad because of the sight which your eyes see. ³⁵The LORD will strike you in the knees and on the legs with severe boils which cannot be healed, and from the sole of your foot to the top of your head. ³⁶"The LORD will bring you and the king whom you set over you to a nation which neither you nor your fathers have known, and there you shall serve other gods—wood and stone. ³⁷And you shall become an astonishment, a proverb, and a byword among all nations where the LORD will drive you. ³⁸"You shall carry much seed out to the field but gather little in, for the locust shall consume it. ³⁹You shall plant vineyards and tend them, but you shall neither drink of the wine nor gather the grapes; for the worms shall eat them. ⁴⁰You shall have olive trees throughout all your territory, but you shall not anoint yourself with the oil; for your olives shall drop off. ⁴¹You shall beget sons and daughters, but they shall not be yours; for they shall go into captivity. ⁴²Locusts shall consume all your trees and the produce of your land. ⁴³"The alien who is among you shall rise higher and higher above you, and you shall come down lower and lower. ⁴⁴He shall lend to you, but you shall not lend to him; he shall be the head, and you shall be the tail. ⁴⁵"Moreover all these curses shall come upon you and pursue and overtake you, until you are destroyed, because you did not obey the voice of the LORD your God, to keep His commandments and His statutes which He commanded you. ⁴⁶And they shall be upon you for a sign and a wonder, and on your descendants forever. ⁴⁷"Because you did not serve the LORD your God with joy and gladness of heart, for the abundance of everything, ⁴⁸therefore you shall serve your enemies, whom the LORD will send against you, in hunger, in thirst, in nakedness, and in need of everything; and He will put a yoke of iron on your neck until He has destroyed you. ⁴⁹The LORD will bring a nation against you from afar, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flies, a nation whose language you will not understand, ⁵⁰a nation of fierce countenance, which does not respect the elderly nor show favor to the young. ⁵¹And they shall eat the increase of your livestock and the produce of your land, until you are destroyed; they shall not leave you grain or new wine or oil, or the increase of your cattle or the offspring of your flocks, until they have destroyed you. ⁵²"They shall besiege you at all your gates until your high and fortified walls, in which you trust, come down throughout all your land; and they shall besiege you at all your gates throughout all your land which the LORD your God has given you. ⁵³You shall eat the fruit of your own body, the flesh of your sons and your daughters whom the LORD your God has given you, in the siege and desperate straits in which your enemy shall distress you. ⁵⁴The sensitive and very refined man among you will be hostile toward his brother, toward the wife of his bosom, and toward the rest of his children whom he leaves behind, ⁵⁵so that he will not give any of them the flesh of his children whom he will eat, because he has nothing left in the siege and desperate straits in which your enemy shall distress you at all your gates. ⁵⁶The tender and delicate woman among you, who would not venture to set the sole of her foot on the ground because of her delicateness and sensitivity, will refuse to the husband of her bosom, and to her son and her daughter, ⁵⁷her placenta which comes out from between her feet and her children whom she bears; for she will eat them secretly for lack of everything in the siege and desperate straits in which your enemy shall distress you at all your gates. ⁵⁸"If you do not carefully observe all the words of this law that are written in this book, that you may fear this glorious and awesome name, THE LORD YOUR GOD, ⁵⁹then the LORD will bring upon you and your descendants extraordinary plagues—great and prolonged plagues—and serious and prolonged sicknesses. ⁶⁰Moreover He will bring back on you all the diseases of Egypt, of which you were afraid, and they shall cling to you. ⁶¹Also every sickness and every plague, which is not written in this Book of the Law, will the LORD bring upon you until you are destroyed. ⁶²You shall be left few in number, whereas you were as the stars of heaven in multitude, because you would not obey the voice of the LORD your God. ⁶³And it shall be, that just as the LORD rejoiced over you to do you good and multiply you, so the LORD will rejoice over you to destroy you and bring you to nothing; and you shall be plucked from off the land which you go to possess. ⁶⁴"Then the LORD will scatter you among all peoples, from one end of the earth to the other, and there you shall serve other gods, which neither you nor your fathers have known—wood and stone. ⁶⁵And among those nations you shall find no rest, nor shall the sole of your foot have a resting place; but there the LORD will give you a trembling heart, failing eyes, and anguish of soul. ⁶⁶Your life shall hang in doubt before you; you shall fear day and night, and have no assurance of life. ⁶⁷In the morning you shall say, 'Oh,

that it were evening!' And at evening you shall say, 'Oh, that it were morning!' because of the fear which terrifies your heart, and because of the sight which your eyes see. ⁶⁸"And the LORD will take you back to Egypt in ships, by the way of which I said to you, 'You shall never see it again.' And there you shall be offered for sale to your enemies as male and female slaves, but no one will buy you."

The result of their disobedience was that they were temporarily removed

Matthew 21:43: "Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it.

Romans 11:1-26: ¹I say then, has God cast away His people? Certainly not! For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. ²God has not cast away His people whom He foreknew. Or do you not know what the Scripture says of Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel, saying, ³"LORD, THEY HAVE KILLED YOUR PROPHETS AND TORN DOWN YOUR ALTARS, AND I ALONE AM LEFT, AND THEY SEEK MY LIFE"? ⁴But what does the divine response say to him? "I HAVE RESERVED FOR MYSELF SEVEN THOUSAND MEN WHO HAVE NOT BOWED THE KNEE TO BAAL." ⁵Even so then, at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace. ⁶And if by grace, then it is no longer of works; otherwise grace is no longer grace. But if it is of works, it is no longer grace; otherwise work is no longer work. ⁷What then? Israel has not obtained what it seeks; but the elect have obtained it, and the rest were blinded. ⁸Just as it is written: "GOD HAS GIVEN THEM A SPIRIT OF STUPOR, EYES THAT THEY SHOULD NOT SEE AND EARS THAT THEY SHOULD NOT HEAR, TO THIS VERY DAY." ⁹And David says: "LET THEIR TABLE BECOME A SNARE AND A TRAP, A STUMBLING BLOCK AND A RECOMPENSE TO THEM. ¹⁰LET THEIR EYES BE DARKENED, SO THAT THEY DO NOT SEE, AND BOW DOWN THEIR BACK ALWAYS." ¹¹I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall? Certainly not! But through their fall, to provoke them to jealousy, salvation has come to the Gentiles. ¹²Now if their fall is riches for the world, and their failure riches for the Gentiles, how much more their fullness! ¹³For I speak to you Gentiles; inasmuch as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry, ¹⁴if by any means I may provoke to jealousy those who are my flesh and save some of them. ¹⁵For if their being cast away is the reconciling of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead? ¹⁶For if the firstfruit is holy, the lump is also holy; and if the root is holy, so are the branches. ¹⁷And if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them, and with them became a partaker of the root and fatness of the olive tree, ¹⁸do not boast against the branches. But if you do boast, remember that you do not support the root, but the root supports you. ¹⁹You will say then, "Branches were broken off that I might be grafted in." ²⁰Well said. Because of unbelief they were broken off, and you stand by faith. Do not be haughty, but fear. ²¹For if God did not spare the natural branches, He may not spare you either. ²²Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in His goodness. Otherwise you also will be cut off. ²³And they also, if they do not continue in unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again. ²⁴For if you were cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these, who are natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree? ²⁵For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. ²⁶And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: "THE DELIVERER WILL COME OUT OF ZION, AND HE WILL TURN AWAY UNGODLINESS FROM JACOB;

But will return because of remorse

Jeremiah 31:31-34: ³¹"Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah—³²not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the LORD. ³³But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. ³⁴No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."

Ezekiel 36:22-32: ²²"Therefore say to the house of Israel, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "I do not do this for your sake, O house of Israel, but for My holy name's sake, which you have profaned among the nations wherever you went. ²³And I will sanctify My great name, which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in their midst; and the nations shall know that I am the LORD," says the Lord GOD, "when I am hallowed in you before their eyes. ²⁴For I will take you from among the nations, gather you out of all countries, and bring you into your own land. ²⁵Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. ²⁶I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them. ²⁸Then you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; you shall be My people, and I will be your God. ²⁹I will deliver you from all your uncleannesses. I will call for the grain and multiply it, and bring no famine upon you. ³⁰And I will multiply the fruit of your trees and the increase of your fields, so that you need never again bear the reproach of famine among the nations. ³¹Then you will remember your evil ways and your deeds that were not good; and you will loathe yourselves in your own sight, for your iniquities and your abominations. ³²Not for your sake do I do this," says the Lord GOD, "let it be known to you. Be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel!"

Romans 11:25-29: ²⁵ For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. ²⁶And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: "THE DELIVERER WILL COME OUT OF ZION, AND HE WILL TURN AWAY UNGODLINESS FROM JACOB; ²⁷FOR THIS IS MY COVENANT WITH THEM, WHEN I TAKE AWAY THEIR SINS." ²⁸Concerning the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but concerning the election they are beloved for the sake of the fathers. ²⁹For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.

The Lord Jesus Christ's ruling will be harmony, justice, peace and long life

Isaiah 11: ¹There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, And a Branch shall grow out of his roots. ²The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him, The Spirit of wisdom and understanding, The Spirit of counsel and might, The Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD. ³His delight is in the fear of the LORD, And He shall not judge by the sight of His eyes, Nor decide by the hearing of His ears; ⁴But with righteousness He shall judge the poor, And decide with equity for the meek of the earth; He shall strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, And with the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked. ⁵Righteousness shall be the belt of His loins, And faithfulness the belt of His waist. ⁶"The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, The leopard shall lie down with the young goat, The calf and the young lion and the fatling together; And a little child shall lead them. ⁷The cow and the bear shall graze; Their young ones shall lie down together; And the lion shall eat straw like the ox. ⁸The nursing child shall play by the cobra's hole, And the weaned child shall put his hand in the viper's den. ⁹They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD As the waters cover the sea. ¹⁰"And in that day there shall be a Root of Jesse, Who shall stand as a banner to the people; For the Gentiles shall seek Him, And His resting place shall be glorious." ¹¹It shall come to pass in that day That the Lord shall set His hand again the second time To recover the remnant of His people who are left, From Assyria and Egypt, From Pathros and Cush, From Elam and Shinar, From Hamath and the islands of the sea. ¹²He will set up a banner for the nations, And will assemble the outcasts of Israel, And gather together the dispersed of Judah From the four corners of the earth. ¹³Also the envy of Ephraim shall depart, And the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off; Ephraim shall not envy Judah, And Judah shall not harass Ephraim. ¹⁴But they shall fly down upon the shoulder of the Philistines toward the west; Together they shall plunder the people of the East; They shall lay their hand on Edom and Moab; And the people of Ammon shall obey them. ¹⁵The LORD will utterly destroy the tongue of the Sea of Egypt; With His mighty wind He will shake His fist over the River, And strike it in the seven streams, And make men cross over dryshod. ¹⁶There will be a highway for the remnant of His people Who will be left from Assyria, As it was for Israel In the day that he came up from the land of Egypt.

Isaiah 65:17-25: ¹⁷"For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; And the former shall not be remembered or come to mind. ¹⁸But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create; For behold, I create Jerusalem as a rejoicing, And her people a joy. ¹⁹I will rejoice in Jerusalem, And joy in My people; The voice of weeping shall no longer be heard in her, Nor the voice of crying. ²⁰"No more shall an infant from there live but a few days, Nor an old man who has not fulfilled his days; For the child shall die one hundred years old, But the sinner being one hundred years old shall be accursed. ²¹They shall build houses and inhabit them; They shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit. ²²They shall not build and another inhabit; They shall not plant and another eat; For as the days of a tree, so shall be the days of My people, And My elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands. ²³They shall not labor in vain, Nor bring forth children for trouble; For they shall be the descendants of the blessed of the LORD, And their offspring with them. ²⁴"It shall come to pass That before they call, I will answer; And while they are still speaking, I will hear. ²⁵The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, The lion shall eat straw like the ox, And dust shall be the serpent's food. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain," Says the LORD.

Ezekiel 36:33-38: ³³Thus says the Lord GOD: "On the day that I cleanse you from all your iniquities, I will also enable you to dwell in the cities, and the ruins shall be rebuilt. ³⁴The desolate land shall be tilled instead of lying desolate in the sight of all who pass by. ³⁵So they will say, 'This land that was desolate has become like the garden of Eden; and the wasted, desolate, and ruined cities are now fortified and inhabited.' ³⁶Then the nations which are left all around you shall know that I, the LORD, have rebuilt the ruined places and planted what was desolate. I, the LORD, have spoken it, and I will do it." ³⁷Thus says the Lord GOD: "I will also let the house of Israel inquire of Me to do this for them: I will increase their men like a flock. ³⁸Like a flock offered as holy sacrifices, like the flock at Jerusalem on its feast days, so shall the ruined cities be filled with flocks of men. Then they shall know that I am the LORD."

And will be brought to an end with the release of Satan

Revelation 20:7: *Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison*

1.13.5 Judgment of the Lost

After the release of Satan (the millennial reign of Christ on earth)

Revelation 20:7: *Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison*

Satan will deceive the nations of the earth and gather them to battle against the saints, of the beloved city. During this time, Satan and his army, will be overcome by fire from heaven

Revelation 20:9: *They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them.*

Satan will be cast into the lake of fire

Matthew 25:41: *"Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels:*

Revelation 20:10: *The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.*

Christ the Judge of all men

John 5:22-23: ²² For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son, ²³ that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.

judge all at the Great White Throne of justice.

The resurrection of the unsaved dead to judgment will be a physical resurrection to receive their punishment

John 5:28-29: ²⁸ *Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice* ²⁹ *and come forth— those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.*

They will be delivered to an eternal conscious punishment in the lake of fire

Matthew 25:41: *"Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels:*

Revelation 20:11-15: ¹¹ *Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them.* ¹² *And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books.* ¹³ *The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works.* ¹⁴ *Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.* ¹⁵ *And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.*

1.13.6 Eternity

After the completion of the millennial reign, the temporary release of Satan, and the condemnation of unbelievers

2 Tess 1:9: *These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power,*

Revelation 20:7-15: ⁷ *Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison* ⁸ *and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number is as the sand of the sea.* ⁹ *They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them.* ¹⁰ *The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.* ¹¹ *Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them.* ¹² *And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books.* ¹³ *The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works.* ¹⁴ *Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.* ¹⁵ *And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire."*

the saved will enter the eternal state of glory with God. After this event the elements of the earth will be broken up

2 Peter 3:10: *But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.*

and be replaced with a new earth in which righteousness will prevail only

Ephesians 5:5: *For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.*

Revelation 20:15: ¹⁵ *And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire."*

Revelation 21: ¹ Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. ² Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. ⁴ And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away." ⁵ Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." And He said to me, "Write, for these words are true and faithful." ⁶ And He said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts. ⁷ He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son. ⁸ But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." ⁹ Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls filled with the seven last plagues came to me and talked with me, saying, "Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife." ¹⁰ And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, ¹¹ having the glory of God. Her light was like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, clear as crystal. ¹² Also she had a great and high wall with twelve gates, and twelve angels at the gates, and names written on them, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: ¹³ three gates on the east, three gates on the north, three gates on the south, and three gates on the west. ¹⁴ Now the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. ¹⁵ And he who talked with me had a gold reed to measure the city, its gates, and its wall. ¹⁶ The city is laid out as a square; its length is as great as its breadth. And he measured the city with the reed: twelve thousand furlongs. Its length, breadth, and height are equal. ¹⁷ Then he measured its wall: one hundred and forty-four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of an angel. ¹⁸ The construction of its wall was of jasper; and the city was pure gold, like clear glass. ¹⁹ The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with all kinds of precious stones: the first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third chalcedony, the fourth emerald, ²⁰ the fifth sardonyx, the sixth sardius, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst. ²¹ The twelve gates were twelve pearls: each individual gate was of one pearl. And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass. ²² But I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. ²³ The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb is its light. ²⁴ And the nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light, and the kings of the earth bring their glory and honor into it. ²⁵ Its gates shall not be shut at all by day (there shall be no night there). ²⁶ And they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it. ²⁷ But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life

Revelation 22: ¹ And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. ² In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. ³ And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him. ⁴ They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads. ⁵ There shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever. ⁶ Then he said to me, "These words are faithful and true." And the Lord God of the holy prophets sent His angel to show His servants the things which must shortly take place. ⁷ "Behold, I am coming quickly! Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book." ⁸ Now I, John, saw and heard these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel who showed me these things. ⁹ Then he said to me, "See that you do not do that. For I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren the prophets, and of those who keep the words of this book. Worship God." ¹⁰ And he said to me, "Do not seal the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand. ¹¹ He who is unjust, let him be unjust still; he who is filthy, let him be filthy still; he who is righteous, let him be righteous still; he who is holy, let him be holy still." ¹² "And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work. ¹³ I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last." ¹⁴ Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city. ¹⁵ But outside are dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie. ¹⁶ "I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star." ¹⁷ And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely. ¹⁸ For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; ¹⁹ and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the

things which are written in this book. ²⁰He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming quickly." Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus! ²¹The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

It is at this stage that the heavenly city will come down on earth

Revelation 21:2 . Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

And it will be the abode of the saints, where they will have a joyfull relationship with the Lord forever and with each other

John 17:3 And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. (See Revelation 21-22).

Our Lord Jesus Christ, now that He completed His redemptive work, will hand over the kingdom to God the Father, so that the Triune God will reign forever in all respects

1 Corinthians 15:28: Now when all things are made subject to Him, then the Son Himself will also be subject to Him who put all things under Him, that God may be all in all.

Chapter 7

A personal relationship with the Creator

1. Introduction

The armor of the believer: Ephesians 6:10-20: ¹⁰Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. ¹¹Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. ¹²For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. ¹³Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. ¹⁴Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, ¹⁵**and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace;** ¹⁶above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. ¹⁷And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; ¹⁸praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints-- ¹⁹and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, ²⁰for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak."

The Bible teaches us that we must be born again to see the kingdom of God (John 3:3). The believer accepts Jesus as his/her personal Savior and becomes a child of the covenant. By the covenant we take Christ's identity. The Face of God shine upon the humble (Psalms 138:6). The believer looks forward with joy to a life in fullness in Christ.

Before Jesus ascended into heaven, He gave the "Great Command" as witnessed in Matthew 28:19-20: "¹⁹Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Amen."

The hope that has come into the believer's life, in obedience to the "Great Command", creates a desire to share it with others. The believer constantly seeks the best way to preach the Gospel. Through the study of the Word he / she realize that the Holy Spirit brings the strongest witness in him / her out due to the sacred respect to the Lord's grace and love. When I, through my own sins, come to the realization of God's grace it enables me to offer the choice for the Truth to the other person, not a dogma. That is why Jesus introduces Himself as the Bridegroom and the Church is the bride so the bride stays devotedly to the most important characteristic of a love affair, by choice, to choose Him.

False allegations are made that the Lord does not speak to us today, and we cannot have a personal relationship with the Creator, and that God reveals Himself in any way. The latter is the perfect recipe for confusion. The question may be asked, how well does a lack of identity witness? The Creator of the universe, the Lord revealed Himself very authentic to man by His Son, Jesus Christ, the Messiah. There is no excuse. His fullness is revealed to us as man, according to the Scriptures, so that we can understand. His Holy Spirit is actively working in the believer's heart and mind to reveal the Word. It would make no sense for the Holy Spirit to be present aimlessly. Every believer can testify from personal encounters with God which have eternal value for him / her. The latter brings the believer to a personal witness addressing other people - the Word, Jesus Christ, is the strongest witness the believer may have!

2. The Holy Spirit is our source of knowledge and wisdom

The Lord is the Almighty and supernatural God who revealed Himself to us through His Son. His Holy Spirit is still actively working in us today (in other words, superhuman) for us to understand his revelation.

We must make ourselves available for the Lord to reveal Himself to us, and only God can do it because He is supernatural. In other words He is beyond the reach of the human frame of reference. However, the Lord gave us the ability to know Him and He reveals Himself to us in His Word (His Son) through the work of the Holy Spirit. The apostle John explained as follows :

1 John 2:27: *“But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will abide in Him.”*

The author of Hebrews points out that the Son is the image of God: Hebrews 1:1-3: *“¹God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, ²has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; ³who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,”*

God poured out the Holy Spirit in a visible manner, and according to the prophecies on us (remember Chapter 5 The Feast of Weeks).

Jesus prophesied that He will pour out the Holy Spirit: John 14:25-27: *“²⁵These things I have spoken to you while being present with you. ²⁶But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you. ²⁷Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”*

Jesus also explained to us that the Holy Spirit will teach us only what he heard from Jesus: John 16:12-15: *“¹²I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. ¹³However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. ¹⁴He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you. ¹⁵All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare it to you.”*

Just before Jesus was taken up into heaven, he said the following: Acts 1:8: *“But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”*

Luke testified how the Holy Spirit was poured out on the disciples in Acts 2:2-4: *“²And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. ⁴And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.”*

The believer can be sure that he / she is filled with the Holy Spirit and through the Holy Spirit be educated to maturity in the Son, the Word of God. The Son came to make known the name of the Lord (John 17) and thus enables us to know the Lord. The Spirit of the Lord enables us to serve one another in love, each in a particular way according to the will of the Spirit. Paul explained

1 Corinthians 12:4-13: *“⁴There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. ⁵There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. ⁶And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all. ⁷But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all: ⁸for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, ⁹to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, ¹⁰to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. ¹¹But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills. ¹²For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. ¹³For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body--whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free--and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.”*

The believers serve one another by witnessing what the Holy Spirit revealed to them. This revelation is also a testimony to the world for the salvation of souls to enter into eternal life in the presence of God. Truth is unique but available to everyone.

One can now understand that Satan and his evil forces will want to try to disguise the Holy Spirit in man's life. There are different ways how heresy try to do this - more on this in chapter 8. For example, it tries to convince those seeking to believe that the Holy Spirit (and the Lord) does not

exist, or trying to replace the Holy Spirit with a middleman (as another doctrine, book, or so-called apostle or prophet) so that the authentic scripture (Bible) is falsely interpreted, or even trying to replace it.

One big danger is looking for wisdom within us alone. In other words, a bias against the supernatural. This type of reasoning based on human wisdom and knowledge is limited to man's limited frame of reference only. It is those who claim that you cannot have a personal relationship with the Lord, in other words, those who falsely claim that God cannot talk to us. They seek answers from other people and remain lost of the True Great Teacher Jesus Christ.

Matthew testified of Jesus' words in: Matthew 23:5-12: ⁵*But all their works they do to be seen by men. They make their phylacteries broad and enlarge the borders of their garments.* ⁶*They love the best places at feasts, the best seats in the synagogues,* ⁷*greetings in the marketplaces, and to be called by men, 'Rabbi, Rabbi.'* ⁸*But you, do not be called 'Rabbi'; for One is your Teacher, the Christ, and you are all brethren.* ⁹*Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven.* ¹⁰*And do not be called teachers; for One is your Teacher, the Christ.* ¹¹*But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant.* ¹²*And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."*

Sustained and scriptural prayer and worship enables the believer to hear the Lord's voice. John testified of Jesus' words

John 10:22-30: ²²*Now it was the Feast of Dedication in Jerusalem, and it was winter.* ²³*And Jesus walked in the temple, in Solomon's porch.* ²⁴*Then the Jews surrounded Him and said to Him, "How long do You keep us in doubt? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly."* ²⁵*Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in My Father's name, they bear witness of Me.* ²⁶*But you do not believe, because you are not of My sheep, as I said to you.* ²⁷*My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.* ²⁸*And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.* ²⁹*My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand.* ³⁰*I and My Father are one."*

3. Can man describe God? Philosophy

What does the Bible say about our wisdom, in other words, the philosophy without God?

Colossians 2:8-9: ⁸*Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ.* ⁹*For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily;"*

Pastor Louis Lapidés pointed out that according to Eastern philosophy they believe everything is in a person's mind and that everyone creates his/her own reality. However, if God holds any significance outside my own imagination, then He should be an objective reality (30, p177)

The Oxford English Dictionary explains the word philosophy as follows: The study of the fundamental nature of knowledge, reality, and existence.

If a person would attempt to declare God without the Holy Spirit, the answer remains a god as created by the limited human frame of reference. This is when false gods and religions arose, and as it is transferred to the offspring, it is built bigger by connecting it to human fantasies.

Are we really aware of everything that goes on around us? Do we have the ability to explain everything? What we see and experience around us, is it reality or is it just an illusion? What is the reality then? These are questions that the wise kept them busy with throughout the centuries. Several theories emerged to try to answer all these questions, as well as various approaches to test so-called reality. Terminology arose to support and promote the rational.

The rational reminiscent of Descartes (1596-1650) referred to as the father of modern philosophy (17, p45-46). Descartes lived in a period of great skepticism. He strived to erase doubt in philosophy by getting to something beyond all doubt. Descartes isolated himself during the winter of 1619-1620 in a warm room with the sole aim to doubt everything that can be doubted. After many hours, he came to the conclusion that his mind must exist otherwise he would not have had the ability of doubt. Descartes used this solid foundation, along with logic, to confirm the existence of God and the material world. Descartes realized that he was an imperfect and dependent being who made him more aware of the complete and independent Being that he wrote as follows "I do not think that the human mind is capable of knowing anything with more evidence and certitude. This certainty was underlined by the related idea of God as a Perfect Being, who must therefore exist. Through Descartes' work he became one of the founders of modern rationalism, which says that reason alone is the primary source of all human knowledge and is sufficient to solve all the problems relating to man's nature and destiny.

Although Descartes did not mean it, he prepared the way for those who used rationalism as the basis of abandoning any faith in the Lord! Everything was left to nature and the so-called facts. We

can say that the natural bias acted against the supernatural. Everything had to be empirical (observable by the senses) and materialistic founded before it could pose any credibility.

Man has reached the stage where reason was only accepted if it occurred within the context of human comprehension in relation with empirically grounded stimulation. The shortcoming of this approach can be illustrated as follows: Using a dog as an example, and the dog would be asked to explain the origin and destiny of man, it can be argued as follows: The dog's effort will in the context of his observations and conceptualization ability of what he observes around him, in other words, his frame of reference. If the dog would not be able to explain the origin of man, it can be concluded that man does not exist. The irony is that the gap between a dog and man is much smaller than the gap between man and God. If I, as human, would try to explain to the dog where people come from, the dog would not understand. In other words, even if humans come across the correct facts in their quest to declare the Lord, they will not understand it anyway. The latter is logical, because the Lord is Almighty and supernatural, therefore He revealed Himself to man through His Son, so that man may know Him in context to the human frame of reference.

CS Lewis used the example of a woman who is kept in a well. She was pregnant when she was placed in the well. The child was born in the pit that meant that she had to educate him through pictures of how it looks out there. His perception of the outside world was two-dimensional. It consists of flat surfaces with lines. How would he experience the outside if he was suddenly lifted out of the well and witnessed a three-dimensional world?

So the empirical and materialistic views moved man further from God by limiting themselves to their own frame of reference.

If we look at how the thinking has changed through the ages John Blanchard explained (17, p27-39) that mysticism came to an end with Thales.

Thales (585BC.) is seen as the father of the Greek philosophy. He rejected mythological explanations regarding the origin and nature of the universe by following the basic principles of natural science. Thales believed that the physical world holds rational and understandable evidence regarding its origins. He was a fan of monism (all reality consists of one basic substance from which everything in the universe is made of, such as water). Thales claimed that all things are full of gods.

Socrates (470-399 BC) claimed that the human soul is a prisoner of the human body and that death releases the soul to propel into the eternal world of ideas. Socrates was a naturalist, he believed in no god.

Plato (428-347 BC) came up with his Theory of Forms. Plato claimed that the world is divided between reality and appearances. He believed that we can have only views about tangible things and that real knowledge is acquired by reason. Plato believed in a divine architect who designed the world from pre-existing materials.

Aristotle (384-322 BC) claimed that humans, like all other things, is a mixture between form and matter. Reason, however, made them unique and enabled them to maintain unity with the divine. Many of Aristotle's principles can be found in the minds of atheists. God was pure form, which existed without matter, separate from all material things and not subject to change. God is the 'Unmoved Mover' or the 'First Cause' that is abstract, cold intellectual, impersonal, removed with no interest in the world.

Hastings quotes Augustine (353-430 AD) by pointing out that philosophers can see the 'home land', but not necessarily the road thereto (14, p27).

Hastings says of the early philosophers (14, p. lx) 'A hunger for integrity of thought and life in response to the mystery of the Christian God characterizes them, and an awareness, too, of the Dangers and limitations of human cleverness.'

It is clear that many of these around wisemen were without a personal relationship with the Creator. However, a true wiseman like Jacob in Genesis 32:10 prayed "*I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies and of all the truth which you have shown Your servant*" Why did Jacob experience God's care? It is significant that belief should be first in order to obtain actual knowledge of the Creator.

Many of them reasoned within the framework of the limited human frame of reference. The different views on the world, and its relation to God, according to George WF Hegel (17, p 60) was the result of a process described as dialectical. Hegel (1770-1831) is referred to as one of the great philosophical system builders. He alleged that the successive philosophies was not stand alone, but was part of a continuous, dynamic process. Once a statement is reached, a contrast is created. The latter causes a new statement. The interaction between the two processes is then referred to as a synthesis. It can also be said that it would form a complete picture. Hegel believed that this process created the self-awareness. Hegel also claimed that the spiritual is the only reality, and that God exposed Himself as a 'world spirit' to the world and that God is not a Being lifted and separated from the world. Clearly Panentheism.

Aninism:	The worship of spirits that would occupy or seize the natural phenomenon
Pantheism:	Claiming that God is the world. Everything is divine.
Panentheism:	Claiming that God is in the world.
Poly theism:	Belief in multiple and separate gods.
Mono theism:	Belief in one God.
Monism:	The theory that all reality consists of one basic substance or substance from which everything in the cosmos is made of. This has been pursued by the Greek philosopher Thales 585 BC. Monism was the first theory where the origin of the universe is based on the natural. Evidence is therefore possible and the only explanation.
Atheism:	Does not believe there is a transcendent God.

Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) an Italian philosopher and considered one of the greatest Western philosophers, pointed out that God is greater than we can say, more than we can know, and He not only exceeded our language and knowledge, but he is outside and beyond the capabilities of any mind, even of the angels, and above the existence of any material or substance (14, p48).

Knowledge alone cannot bring us to God. 1 Corinthians 8:2-3: *"²And if anyone thinks that he know anything, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know. ³But if anyone loves God, this one is know by Him."*

Frank Turek points out that we do not have knowledge to prove both the existence and non-existence of God. He also says that a person reaches a certain stage when you have enough information to come to a conclusion. The questions that are not answered then, remain questions. An atheist believes that there is no God hath not have all the answers to support it. An atheist can not answer all the questions against atheism (22, p25).

Frank Turek states the following in support of his statement: 'I don't have enough faith to be an atheist' (22, p26-27):

- Science has proven that the universe came into existence from nothing. Or someone created something out of nothing (Christian viewpoint) or no one created something out of nothing (atheistic view). Which view do you think is the most realistic? The Christian view. Which view needs more faith? The atheistic view.
- The simplest form of life on earth contains information equal to 1000 encyclopedias. Christians believe that only an intelligent Being is able to create a life that contains the equivalent of 1000 encyclopedias. Atheists believe unintelligent natural forces can do that as well. Christians have evidence to support their conclusions. Because atheists do not have any evidence, they need much more faith to support their view.
- Hundreds of years ago ancient authors predict ahead that a Person will come who would actually be God. It is accurately predicted that this man-God will be born in a particular town of a specific bloodline, will suffer in a certain way at a specific time to die and will rise from the dead in the redemption of the sins of the world. Immediately after the predicted time, several witnesses testified and documented that these predictions actually occurred. This eyewitness were persecuted, tortured to death where they could save themselves by simply denying what they saw. Thousands of people came to faith in Jerusalem when they saw or hear of these events, and this belief spread across the ancient world. Ancient authors also support these events and archeology confirm this. After evidence was seen in science that God created (point 1), Christians believe that these multiple facts proved beyond all understanding that God was involved in these events. Atheists must have much more faith to have these predictions, the testimonies of the witnesses, the willingness of the eyewitnesses to be tortured and die, the origin of the Christian church, and the corresponding testimonies of other authors (secular) and archaeological findings declared as false pathway.

If one therefore say that there is no God, he is called an atheist. If you translate the word directly from Greek, it means 'negative God.' In other words, the person attempts to prove that God does not exist. If it is thought through carefully, you realize that it is a self-contradictory statement. In other words, the person states that he / she possesses infinite knowledge and wisdom, and consequently can deny the existence of God! Impossible.

Many unbelievers, when they grasp the above reality, they move on to an agnostic view. This means that he / she does not know. They claim they do not have sufficient evidence that God exists. Look what Paul says:

Romans 1:18-25: ¹⁸*For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, ¹⁹because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. ²⁰For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, ²¹because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. ²²Professing to be wise, they became fools, ²³and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man--and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things. ²⁴Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, ²⁵who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen."*

There are unfounded conversations claiming that science has proven that God does not exist. However, this is not true. Reality surrounding man has already initiated more than 70% of the studies to assume that there is a Creator. Should one like to struggle with this question, it would certainly have been more of a challenge to prove that there is no a God.

A few examples of general or natural revelations of God which has been confirmed by leading scientists and academics:

- **The cosmological argument:** Albert Einstein's principle of General Relativity supports this argument: 1) Everything that had a course had a cause to its existence; 2) The universe had a course; 3) Therefore, the Universe has a cause of its existence
- **The teleological argument:** Sir Isaac Newton confirmed the teleological argument as follows: 1) Each design had a designer; 2) The universe has a highly complex design; 3) Therefore, the universe had a Designer
- **Die moral argument:** Clive Staple Lewis confirmed the moral argument as follows: *"As an atheist my argument against God was that the universe seemed so cruel and unjust. But how had I got this idea of just and unjust? A man does not call a line crooked unless he has some idea of a straight line. What was I comparing this universe with when I called it unjust?"*

Specific Revelations of God. Revelations by authentic Scripture, the Bible. Throughout the Bible, there is not hesitation to describe events in detail. Consider the following facts:

- Place names are mentioned. More than 20,000 (twenty thousand) are already discovered today through excavations. Many of them are still in use today
- Names of persons mentioned by secular writings (which did not originate from the Christian faith) were confirmed
- Genealogies are given in detail
- Events are presented in the midst of it being documented by other witnesses / participants
- No documentation was ever found of any witnesses to reject what was written in the Old Testament and the New Testament. It is also important to realize that the Bible is an authentic scripture that survived the truth survived amid eyewitnesses and confirmations from people who witnessed the events in question. This is not a group of people who decided on a day what should and should not be in the Bible. Constantine had nothing to do with the content of the Bible
- Events, customs, creeds, relationships, and practices are described true to the order of the historical characters, cultures and governments
- Several authors describing the same events
- Many cross-references
- Detail such as: attitudes of people; positions; motives; gestures; consequences; dates are always given
- The entire Bible is a complete and well-rounded Word, Christ. The Old Testament is a prophecy of Christ. The New Testament's four Gospels describe in detail by various witnesses, the prophecies of the Old Testament came to fruition. After the Gospels it is clearly described how the Holy Spirit, as prophesied by the Messiah, established the Church on earth by authentic witnesses. The letters of the Apostles further reveals to us the process of "rebirth" in order to live in fellowship with God. The Bible is also concluded with the apocalyptic Revelation, still 100% in line with the whole Bible, the coming of the Messiah, described with a clear purpose.

This brings us to what the greatest scientists in history said:

Sir Isaac Newton (1642-1727)

Mathematician and Scientist. He is considered the Person who made the greatest impact on science in the human history. Newton testified as follows:

“In absence of any proof, the thumb alone would convince me of God's existence.....Was the eye contrived without skill in optics, and the ear without knowledge of sounds?” (17, p318)

Albert Einstein (1879-1955)

Most famous scientist of the 20th century, testified as follows:

“God does not play dice with nature!”

“Science without religion is lame; religion without science is blind.”

His theory of General Relativity (scientific evidence that the universe had a beginning) stands today as one of the strongest evidences for a theistic God (Creator involved in the creation). Indeed, General Relativity supports one of the oldest arguments in support of the existence of a theistic God. With this argument, he claims: *“The beginning of the end for atheism”* (22, p74-75)

In his discussion: *“Why I am not an atheist”* (weekly program *“Let my people think”* - www.rzim.org) Dr. Ravi Zacharias explains that there are three levels of philosophy

- Level 1: Theoretical level

Formal and classical evidence is given for the existence of God. Socrates, Plato and Aristotle philosophised at this level. Another good example is the 'Cosmological Argument' of Einstein (More about this later).

- Level 2: Drama, music, fantasy, romance and the existential struggle in your mind.

“Let me write the songs of a nation, I do not care who write their laws”. Dr. Zacharias uses the example of a teenager who turn on the television or listen to music. This process is accompanied by a philosophy, there is a certain view of life that plays a role. The most effective philosophers of the sixties worked at this level to defend their views.

- Level 3: Prescriptive - Why do you believe it?

A teenager sits for example at the dinner table and says to his father that they discussed a moral issue at school today. It is about a certain lifestyle, and wants to know what his father thinks about it. The father would then express a view and a quote from Romans 1 to support his statement. The child listens to his father's answer, based on the Bible, and says that he did not get the same effect at school when he quoted the Bible. This is not acceptable. The father quoted in a prescriptive style from Romans 1. The child then adds, he does not want to know what is written in Romans 1, but why his father believes in what is written in Romans 1.

Advice from Dr. Zacharias if there is a conversation with someone at these levels are as follows: Argue at level 1, illustrate at level 2 and apply on level 3.

Dr. Zacharias continues and illustrates at Level 2 by saying that if atheism were true, there would be no moral law in the universe. For the atheist, if there is a moral challenge, the answer is sought in the value of something, whether it is seen as pragmatic (stubborn), subjective or emotional. For the atheist, anything regarding good or bad is a product of your environment and culture. (Chapter 8 looked at the result of this)

History proved that we can not survive without this moral law. Without God, there is a total loss and loss of meaning. No hope is the next problem with atheism.

Bertrand Russell (1872-1970) is a good example of this. Russell was a British philosopher and mathematician and focused on the logical analysis that influenced the direction of the 20th century philosophy. This humanist claimed as following: *“No Fire, no heroism, no intensity of thought and feeling can preserve an individual life beyond the grave....all the labour of the ages, all the devotion, all the inspiration, all the noonday brightness of human genius are destined to extinction..... When I die I shall rot..... Man is the result of accidental collocations of atoms”* (17, p317)

Russell claimed that all knowledge is only accessible through science. According to him man could not know anything that was not explained through science. Russell also came very close to Logical Positivism. The latter has it that only allegations that could be confirmed by the human senses have any meaning.

This is not about whether something is true or false, but whether it makes sense or not. If this principle is followed, the claim that God exists, is rejected because it can not be tested empirical or by means of logical positivism, therefore it has no meaning for them.

To return to Dr. Zacharias. He confirmed that when death occurs, no one turns himself/ herself to the great philosophers! Love is unique and can not be replaced by another. What happens to the person when he / she dies? What is the meaning of life? Small particles reason with no overarching reason have no purpose. The secular can not give answers to these vital questions.

Bertrand Russell was also known for having said that he was looking for love all his life, and never found it.

4. Evolution and Faith

4.1 The misunderstanding of evolution

Evolution is the name given to a theory which explains the characteristics of a living being been transferred to the descendants with an emphasis on those characteristics from which survival transpires in a specific environment (habitat).

To better illustrate this, here are two examples:

Imagine an environment with moths of the same species, some white and some black. If factories are erected in this area and causes severe smoke and the leaves of the plants in the area becomes black in color as a result of the soot that falls on them, the birds in the area will catch more white moths than black moths. The reason for this is that the black moths would be better camouflaged than the white ones. The birds won't see the black moths so easy and therefore more white moths will be caught than black moths. After a period of time there will only be black moths in this area and the genes of the white moths will be extinct. It is no longer left to the descendants

Imagine an environment where bears many occur. Bears have a thick fur to protect them against the cold winter months. This is especially important because they hibernate (sleep) during the winter. If their environment gets colder over time, the bears with a thicker coat will survive and not those with a thinner coat. The thin fur genes of the bears then becomes extinct and thick fur genes of bears is transferred to the offspring. After a period of time only bears with thick fur will be found in this environment. It may be that some of these bears migrated to a warmer environment. Here the opposite would occur. In other words, it would be too hot for the bears with a thick coat and they would die. The thin coat genes of the bears in the hot environment will be left for the descendants. It can therefore be argued that there are two types of bears found that all had their origin in a common ancestor. It is also referred to as natural selection. Conditions in nature thus causing organisms naturally and involuntarily, to adapt and survive.

If, over thousands of years in relation to the above examples and the environment changes and the organisms migrate to other areas, there will be certain characteristics that logically will adapt better to the environment or circumstances, be transferred to the descendants. This will cause the organisms to be changed as and how nature forces the change on them. This change as a result of natural selection, was christened Evolution. There is no doubt that this happens in the wild.

The first person who observed and documented this process, was the English scientist Charles Darwin (1809-1882). Darwin was involved in the church and married to a Christian wife, Emma Wedgwood. His heart was torn apart when his ten-year-old daughter, Anne, died in 1851. He stopped going to Church and started to look for the origins of the universe in nature. He did not want to believe that there is a supernatural Creator. Thus he was a naturalist.

Darwin undergone many trips to explore the process of evolution. He conducted a lot of work in this regard, on the Galapagos Islands and in 1859 published his book: 'The Origin of Species'. Darwin claimed in this book that all life on Earth, as a result of natural selection, descended from a common ancestor. For him his theory is proof that nature creates, and not God. For Darwin evolution became a religion because for him it is a testimonial of where everything he observes around him comes from. People who support Darwin's view, are referred to as Darwinists, or we can talk about Darwinism. It is also sometimes referred to as Evolutionists. Many adherents of this faith regard themselves as atheists and vest in the imperfect Darwinian view as evidence that there isn't a Creator. Such persons will get involved in huge arguments to prove that evolution does occur in nature. In his / her turn, the inexperienced believer will try to find evidence that evolution does not occur. The irony of the matter is that although you can prove evolution right (or wrong), it still does not explain the origin of everything, but only the adaptation to circumstances.

The key is to realize that natural selection or evolution does exist in nature. Even more important is to realize that the perception of this reality in nature is not sufficient, in theory, to explain the origin

of everything - because it can not! Darwinist arguments to explain the creation, always begins at a starting point to existing natural resources. For example, that light fell on matter and this caused certain chemical reactions and later caused the building blocks of life. According to them this was also the beginning of the protein molecules, and so on. There are arguments that energy caused matter to develop. It then undergoes chemical reactions which later formed Carbon Atomic and so on. It should also be kept in mind that, according to the evolutionist, everything occurred randomly, in other words, incidentally.

One can ask the evolutionist (Darwinist) where the starting aids came from, such as the energy, or light, or whatever. Even the time and space in which this random processes took place, must have had a beginning. This brings us back to the statement of the atheists themselves. Such a person claims that there is not a God, in other words, he / she will claim that they have infinite, unlimited knowledge. They think they know everything. If you ask such a person a question about any simple fact that he / she is not aware of, and there are many, he / she will have to answer: 'I do not know.':

Question: 'Are there fish with red fins and blue lips in the Atlantic?' Answer: 'I do not know.' Another question: 'When did I last have my car serviced?' Answer: 'How can I know that, you did not tell me? '

The above simple example shows that it is impossible for a us to know everything. Apart from the fact that one can not know everything, we do not have the mental capacity to attest the Creator. The creature can not attest his Creator, he can only understand the traces / Revelations left by his Creator. Consider the example of the dog. A dog can not explain where humans came from. If the dog can not do that, it does not mean that humans do not exist! Man is not even the dog's Creator.

Now think how ridiculous it is for a person to say there is no Creator God! The so-called atheist does not even know what is happening a hundred meters away from him, but he makes the statement that there is no Creator!

In this brief discussion one can already see two of the great blunders committed by the Darwinist:

- a) The creature can not declare his Creator
- b) Evolution does not explain the creation, it is only the process of adaptation by organisms to the environment over time. The Creator actually formed the genetic system of plants and animals in such a manner that they can survive changes in the nature.

The Darwinist will sometimes use his faith in evolution against the Bible's story of creation where it is told that God created the heavens and the earth in six days and rested on the seventh day. This causes a lot of controversy between Darwinists (Evolutionists) and inexperienced believers. .

The Darwinist believe that the universe already existed millions of years. For him it is proof that the creation story of the Bible cannot be true, and then he / she assumes that the rest of the Bible is not true.

Among Christians, there are mainly two groups with regard to the creation story of the Bible:

- a) Those who believe that the universe was created in six days and the Lord rested the seventh day - Creationism

This group believes that the creation literally took place as described in the Bible. They also believe that the earth is six thousand years old - 'Young Earth' approach

- b) Those who believe that the universe was created by God, but it took place over millions of years - the so-called 'Old Earth' approach

The Hebrew word 'Yom' which was originally used in the Bible for 'day' in the creation model, can also refer to a specific period. This group therefore believe that the seven days in the creation story, can also mean seven periods of time. These periods could then be stretched over millions of years. This viewpoint is supported by many Christian scientists.

Unfortunately, these two approaches sometimes causes quarrels between the supporters of the two groups which in turn cause the focus to stray from the fact that God created it all. The creationist claims that the earth was created in six days and the Lord rested on the seventh day. They also say that if you do not believe the Bible should be interpreted literally, you would blaspheme the Word of God. They also claim that the earth is about six thousand years old (young Earth view). The Old Earth devotee will in turn argue that there is enough scientific evidence that the earth is millions of years old, but the work and presence of God can be observed in the creation.

Here are some facts that can be agreed upon:

- a) The focus should be that God created. Man will never be able to describe how everything around us came into existence out of nothing. It includes everything such as time, space, matter and so on. If the evolutionist comes with the statement: 'Let's think logically,' and they

do it on a regular basis to try and support their belief in evolution, a question is asked: 'How did everything around us, the universe, time, space, matter, everything, come about out of nothing?' The most logical answer to this question is that there must have been a Supernatural Creator who created everything out of nothing. Nothing can not create something, only the Supernatural can create the natural - very logical!

- b) Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Creator of the universe. He is the best explanation for all the questions about the origin of the universe. The Bible confirms in more than one place that Jesus is the Creator. See for example Hebrew 1:2.

Hebrew 1:2: *"has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds;"*

If God really wanted to describe to us exactly how He created, we would certainly not be able to understand it and would not have been enough room on earth to accommodate all the scrolls:

John explains as follows in: John 21:25: *"And there are also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were written one by one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written. Amen."*

- c) God has created in His own will and He still reveals Himself through His creation to us. If He could create the universe in six days He could also perform many other miracles, such as to make the fossils look older than they really are, or He was using the word 'Yom' which refer to periods. The Creator could even through the process of evolution bring different species into existence, within six days or over periods of millions of years.

The main thing is that it was the Lord who, in the creation stories of the Bible, entered into conversation with the man saying that it is He who has created. Both the Old Earth and Young Earth interpretations has many interesting arguments to substantiate their view. This is what it should be - interesting. However, there is a lot upon which there can be agreed and this is where the focus should be.

- d) Evolution is a fact. It occurs in nature. By studying the process amazing discoveries are made and the Creator's involvement is clearly recognized. It is a mistake if thought that evolution is evidence that there is no Creator.
- e) Although it is clear that evolution is present in nature, the interpretations are based on theories. These are assumptions made on genetic changes (ie transferable) which organisms underwent over many years as a result of changes in natural conditions. None of the scientists were present over the many years to observe it all. This is not an experiment that can be done again to get the same results. These are all theories, and time is often used as an explanation for the lack of sufficient evidence. In other words, it is alleged that two organisms had a common ancestor two hundred million years ago. It might have been, but it is lacking the intermediaries.

4.2 Evolution in perspective

- 1) Evolution are occurring in nature, but it is just one of the billions of processes in nature observed and documented. Unfortunately uninformed Darwinists link faith value to it which quickly falls apart when the facts are studied. The word faith value is used as the Darwinist (evolutionist) believe that evolution is for him / her sufficient proof that everything was by chance created from nothing. The latter is impossible!

The time (1859) when Darwin wrote and published 'The Origin of Species', was the same time the European monk, Gregor Mendel (1822-1884), did his work in relation to genetics. Genetics is the study of the transmission of traits from one generation to the descendants. Mendel died just two years after Darwin. Mendel's pioneering work was published in 1866 and remained unknown until 1900. It is also during this time that the first microscope came into use to observe processes such as cell division. Mendel's theories are still used today by scientists, and farmers to grow better varieties / breeds. Mendel's work and the microscope became available after Darwin's work. Darwin did not have the key facts about genetics. Darwin's faulty theory for portability was called 'pangenesis'. He claimed that so called portability particles in our bodies are affected by things that we do. These particles would then, according to him, be transferred through our blood to the reproductive system and thus the immediate offspring would receive these characteristics. This theory was soon proven wrong. It would have been very interesting if Darwin had the opportunity to study Mendel's 'genetics' and had the availability of an electron microscope. Darwin would have learned that chromosomes carry the genetic information (code) of each unique individual. It is not affected by the individual's actions.

Each individual has billions of properties. These qualities are carried by amino acids (proteins) that make up RNA molecules. In turn they are arranged in a unique sequence to form the DNA molecule. When referring to a chromosome it is referred to the special, organized structure of DNA and protein found in every cell of a living organism, plants and animals. The unique arrangement of the RNA molecules to the DNA molecule is referred to as genes. This is where the unique characteristics of each cell of the individual is housed. The genes in the chromosome is essential during cell division and plays a special role to ensure genetic variation in descendants and to ensure survival.

It is important to realize that the process of genetic duplication produces diversity. If the latter does not occur, all organisms on earth would have looked the same, and no one could survive in different circumstances. The genes that ensure the organism to better adjust to changing environmental conditions are present and dominant in the descendants. This process can be referred to as evolution. Darwin was quite right to observe that diversity in the nature makes selection possible, but he did not understand how the diversity was made possible.

When we look at the structure of DNA and protein, as well as the process of genetic duplication, coincidence is completely eliminated. There is a clear intelligent design present to ensure a variety, descendants and ensure survival. This strongly reminds of what one of the greatest scientists, Sir Isaac Newton, said:

Teleological argument: 1) Every design has a designer; 2) The universe has a highly complex design; 3) Therefore, the universe had a Designer

Newton also said: "In absence of any proof, the thumb alone would convince me of God's existence.....Was the eye contrived without skill in optics, and the ear without knowledge of sounds?"

- 2) The evolutionist believes that everything that exists today came into being by chance. According to him, a very simple start resulted in complex structures with the passing of time. Logically he can not explain where the ingredients came from at the start, but lets leave it there.

Reality in nature is that coincidence can not be a progressive process. Simplicity cannot get complicated without intelligent influence. Neither can simplicity, by chance, cause duplication. Why would something without intelligence, replicate and reproduce? What drives the process? Why would a unintelligent process form survival structures?

There should definitely be a theistic (Intelligent, Creative and still relevant) God who created and made survival possible.

- 3) Natural selection (Evolution) is made possible by the genetic code that is already present. Evolution is the result of intelligent design and not its origins. There are many processes in nature which could not commence by a reactive process. Consider the following:

Blood: Vitamin K causes blood clotting. Clearly vitamin K had to be present before organisms with blood in their veins could survive. The veins had to be there before the blood could flow to the right places. Hemoglobin had to be present to carry oxygen in the blood. By claiming that it all occurred by coincidence, and regressive, is similar to say the following: There existed only simple bakeries in which people baked bread. The bakeries began to reproduce and over the course of millions of years more complicated bakeries were made. Because bakeries needs electricity electric wires began to form by itself to transport power to the rooms. The properties of bakeries with wires were transferred to the bakery-descendant in order for wired bakeries to start where bakers are present and live. The following questions can be asked: It makes sense that bakeries are where bakers are present, but why would the process itself takes place without bakers who initiated and drive the process? The existence of bakeries are dependent on bakers. In no way could bakeries start spontaneously without bakers.

Reproduction: From the above example it is illustrated that reproduction does not occur spontaneously. Intelligence had to be present to provide the need and the codes. If we look at mammals. What came first? The ovary and the sperm or the beast? Why male and female? Why preserve the gene pool within a particular species? How did the babies survive before mammary glands to feed them? These are questions that can not be answered by an involuntary process.

If in the nature intersection of different gene pools occurs, the offspring are sterile, or no offspring. Take the mule. A mule is a cross between a donkey and a horse. A mule can not reproduce. Different species such as kudu and springbok, will not pair. It indicates intelligent

design that ensures uniqueness in the nature. A random and unintelligent process would not protect itself.

Metamorphosis: This is a process where different forms of life in a cycle makes survival possible. It is for example observed in silkworms. The egg hatches as a worm. The worm forms a cocoon. The cocoon forms a moth. The moths are male and female. They mate and afterwards the female moth lays eggs. The whole process starts again from scratch. An Involuntary process can not cause a cycle. Without Intelligence the end can not cause the beginning.

Consciousness: There is no doubt that humans are created bi-dimensional. Each person has a physical body and spirit. The soul of man refers to his / her being. A person is not only driven by natural needs. You live by choices of your own. Many people testify to out-of-body experiences (or also called 'near death experience' NDE). A good example is that of Vicky Nuratuk. Vicky was born blind and has never been able to see in her life. She had a NDE and could see during the event. Please see on Youtube: "The NDE of Vicky Nuratuk - Blind from Birth But Able to See". Millions of other people have witness about this reality. The fact is, that a man's spirit, which can observe without the physical body's senses, could not have evolved. Man's spirit lives on after the physical body died.

4.3 The misunderstanding with the Big Bang Theory

The Big Bang theory is a theory that seeks to explain why the universe is expanding. It is a scientific fact that the celestial bodies (stars and planets) are moving apart. It can today be observed through modern telescopes and measuring instruments.

Georges Lemaître, a priest of the Catholic University of Louvain in 1927 stated that if all move apart, the conclusion can be drawn that there must have been a common starting point. In other words, if they move apart, and the movement is reversed, all will come together again. Lemaître has come up with its primordial atom hypothesis. The primordial atom is described as a state of extreme density and high temperature. This condition, according to this hypothesis, caused large and powerful movements and everything started to move apart. Hence the name Big Bang. Albert Einstein's theory of general relativity supports the Big Bang model. It also reminds us of Einstein's Cosmological Argument which prove that the universe had a beginning.

Einstein pointed out that everything in space relative to each other, move apart. It is as if every star and planet could be placed on a grid and the distances between them relatively increased by the same amount. Another scientist, Alexander Friedman, formulated this theory further. In 1929, Edwin Hubble described the so-called red shift effect. It points out the wavelengths of light that extend as objects move away from the eye. Hubble's observation has led to claims that galaxies that are very far from the earth, moving directly away from the earth. The farther away, the greater the speed.

The Big Bang theory does not explain how the original bang occurred. It only gives a possible explanation why the universe is moving apart. The original scientists who documented the Big Bang theory, were all people of faith. They believed that there is a Creator who created and the Big Bang was part of the creative process. In fact, the Big Bang indicates that the universe had a cause.

It strongly reminds of Einstein's Cosmological Argument:

- 1) Everything that had a course had a cause; 2) The universe had a cause; 3) Therefore, the universe had a purpose

In other words, even if one can prove that a big bang occurred, it does not mean that there is no Creator. There is also this misconception among evolutionists. Even if you prove that evolution occurs, it is not a proof that there is no Creator. The likelihood that the Almighty Creator has used the Big Bang in order to cause the formation of stars and planets, is great. It shows that He is Almighty. Researchers of the Big Bang is very outspoken about the precision with which it happened to make the planet Earth possible.

5. What is life then about?

When we look at Mark 10:47-52 it can be seen that if we are seeking in the right place, then the Truth will be revealed to us, so that we can see. In this Passage it is testified about how Jesus healed blind Bartimaeus so he could see. Jesus is the Light, only He can give us life.

Mark 10:47-52: ⁴⁷And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" ⁴⁸Then many warned him to be quiet; but he cried out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" ⁴⁹So Jesus stood still and commanded him to be called. Then they called the blind man, saying to him, "Be of good cheer. Rise, He is calling you."

⁵⁰And throwing aside his garment, he rose and came to Jesus. ⁵¹So Jesus answered and said to him, "What do you want Me to do for you?" The blind man said to Him, "Rabboni, that I may receive my sight." ⁵²Then Jesus said to him, "Go your way; your faith has made you well." And immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus on the road."

Dr. Zacharias refers to questions he asked war prisoners (POW's) regarding their greatest need, and always got the answer that they have a need for love and relationships.

Here are a few thoughts on godless philosophy:

- It allows you to falsely get stuck: Go live and work the earth is the purpose of man on earth. If I build a car its mission is not to be a car, but to transport people. If he is car, he is like an animal.
- Philosophy will attempt to show you that today you can not have a relationship with the Lord. Clearly it does not understand the redemptive work of Jesus Christ who, in the priesthood of Melchizedek, the veil tore in the Temple, so that everyone, by faith, have access to the Father. Consider further the Church that arose and became the largest organization in the world. The whole purpose and witness of the Church is that you can be born again and in faith get to Jesus Christ's redemptive work. Therefore you can really believe that you can experience an eternal relationship with the Creator. Think of Matthew 28:19 where the Lord commands us to make disciples of people. How do you make disciples and the Lord came to live with you if a relationship is not possible? Why was the Holy Spirit poured out? For doing nothing?
- True knowledge is what teaches me about God and establish faith which goes over in acts of love, and it is peculiar to the Being of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- The Lord knows the thoughts of the wise men, and it means nothing: 1 Corinthians 3:18-23
- Knowledge makes you boastful but love builds up: 1 Corinthians 8:1
- James 5 where the elders should anoint someone and they should pray for their sins. You just know your sins through a relationship with the Lord
- Ask the philosopher how his / her theories brings man closer to God if it is realized that the Lord is the Almighty supernatural God.
- Your personal witness places the focus on the Lord, and not unto thine own wisdom.
- If you teach a person and you don't abide by the teachings of Jesus Christ, you're presumptuous and you know nothing: 1 Timothy 6:3-4
- Wisdom Learning takes away the true author of the Revelation
- The Lord makes His covenant known to them that fear him: Psalms 25:14
- Seek Divine Revelation in Divine Revelation - The Word of God
- Philosophy's focus on human wisdom is making the philosopher a loner. He / she is trapped within his / her own wisdom. This cuts him / her off from the body of Christ. Psalms 26:11-12 - I will praise the Lord in the assembly of the congregation.
- Everyone who is led by the Spirit of God, are sons of God: Romans 8:13-14. No other middlemen can do it for you. It just proves that the Lord speaks to us.
- God's Son is the truth (John 8:31). The Holy Spirit reveals the Word (the Son), the Being of God to us. This is done by reading the Word. Other books and philosophers should not distract you.
- A person who claims that a man can not say that God can tell you something, can be asked: On which model do you based it? Where in the Bible is it written? In fact, anything you say that is written in the Bible, please provide the references and proper context.
- Philosophy makes you think you can decide when and how God must act and be involved with man. God lives in all of us (Ephesians 4) and people are gifted according to His will. God does what He wants and when He wants, as He wants. We can not have the Lord in one or another category, and thus tried to declare Him. Our goal is building up the body of Christ: Ephesians 4:12
- Philosophy wants you to do and believe as he likes, it's the only way for him. If you disagree, he has a subtle underhanded strategy. He wants to raise for himself so that you follow him and miss the wonderful Revelation of the Lord, the Holy Spirit.
- Is the philosopher doing 'ethical philosophy' and it fool you? Only true theology can lead to worship. The latter finds it difficult in isolation.
- Revelation of God to the knowledge of God is the only Truth: Colossians 1:9-10 ⁹.... *For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;* ¹⁰ *that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God"*
- But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not the under law. God still speaks with us today: Galatians 5:18
- Refrain from pointless talk and arguments of knowledge: 1 Timothy 6:20-21

5.1 Theological Thoughts

Theological thinking is uttered by those who believe that life on earth has a purpose and an end. Kennedy (Why I believe; D. James Kennedy; Word Publishing; 1999, p 46-50) points out that there are really only two religions today that addresses the consciousness, hearts and loyalties of the modern man:

One of these religions is Christianity and other is evolution (Darwinism in this context). If anyone would believe that evolution is not a religion, it is clear the person does not know much about evolution. Kennedy points out that evolution is a religion that is passionately followed by his followers. Listen to what some of the well-known evolutionists have to say. Professor Louis T. More, one of the most outspoken evolutionists: *"The more one studies palaeontology (fossil records), the more certain one becomes that evolution is based on faith alone."* Professor D.M.S. Watson, a well-known evolutionist, made the impressive observation that evolution itself is a theory generally accepted, *"not because it has been observed to occur or can be proved by logically coherent evidence to be true, but because the only alternative - special creation - is clearly incredible."*

Kennedy points out that for the wicked sense, creation is unbelievable because it requires faith in a Creator, and it is in principle unacceptable for people like that. A popular British evolutionist Sir Arthur Keith says: *"Evolution is unproved and unprovable. We believe it because the only alternative is special creation, which is unthinkable."* Kennedy goes on to point out that evolution is the faith of the modern unbelieving person. This is the pseudo-scientific (mock-scientific) foundation of all false and anti-Christian religions being used over the past hundred years.

Note Paul's reference to ignorant people 2 Corinthians 10:12-13 ¹²*For we dare not class ourselves or compare ourselves with those who commend themselves. But they, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise. ¹³We, however, will not boast beyond measure, but within the limits of the sphere which God appointed us--a sphere which especially includes you."*

An eyewitness of the sufferings of Jesus Christ and an apostle of Jesus Christ says as follows 2 Peter 1:8-9: ⁸*For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins."*

5.2 How can Christians be so arrogant and not consider or recognized other religions

Believers are often admonished by others not to judge other people's beliefs. This is, ironically, often done by colleagues who claim themselves to be believers.

The Lord is very clear that He is the only true God, the Creator of the universe, Who can give eternal life to those who believe in His Son. In John 8:31 we read that the Son is the Truth and lends freedom to man.

Jesus also said in John 14:6 that He is the only way to the Father. If you are a Christian, there is no other way than to proclaim the Son unequivocally.

It is true that you should not act unwisely on insensitive, but the Truth can never be hidden or distort to accommodate some heresy! The believer in Christ testifies about his/her personal experience of the Person of Christ through the Holy Spirit. The focus hence is not on how wrong the unbeliever is, but how true Christ is.

The Christian should just realize that the unbeliever is going to an eternity without God. If the unbeliever follows another way than the redemption by the Son of God, Jesus Christ they must certainly realize that the longer you are 'nice', and support the person in his heresy, you become an accomplice to him / her being Godless.

The wonderful part is that the believer does not do this work on its own power The Holy Spirit is the One who does the Revelations work. It is also true that the faithful witness and experience many surprises in evangelism, because the Holy Spirit works as He wishes.

However, the Lord set the right example for us: Love:

6. The Lord makes it possible for us through a true love affair

6.1 The characteristics of a love affair

If two people think the same all the time and one do exactly what the other one wants him to do all the time, is there really a relationship between them, or even an understanding between them? No, definitely not. A man can not have a meaningful relationship with a robot.

God created man so that He can have a meaningful love affair / relationship with him. This is only possible if both parties do it by choice. It is not God that condemned man in the Old Testament, it is man who in spite of the Lord's open relationship with man, turned away from Him.

God is also a God to all nations. He chose his people Israel, and entered a covenant with them, but that does not mean He condemned other nations. God's relationship and the approaches to it really strengthens our faith. Jesus is the only way to the Father, for He is a part of God as is the Father and the Holy Spirit. If we do not accept Jesus as our Savior, we will undergo His judgment.

Should we not read the Scriptures, we would have wrong perceptions to the love of God. We can not decide how the Lord must act in order for it to make sense to us. True love is that which effect eternal salvation for man in the presence of the Lord. Perfect love is an eternal relationship with God.

The love of God is redemptive love. It ensures an eternal relationship with the Lord. God always put His hand out to those who call upon Him, He is above human understanding. He reveals to those who seek Him. He embraced and holds us, according to our faith. Our faith paves the way for the love of the Lord. God, by His grace, give us faith in His Word that the Holy Spirit reveals The Word is the Being of God, the Messiah. As man He gave His life for us, according to the prophecies. No one has greater love than this. No one was willing to take His place on the cross, no one could rise from the dead. Especially not according to the prophecies. Nobody could, according to the prophecies, act like the true Bridegroom who brought assurance that He goes to prepare place for his bride, and is coming to take Her away. Rest assured, there is only one God: 'I Am' - God.

Galatians 5:6b: *"but faith working through love."*

6.2 The Covenant, love and joy

Paul explains in 1 Corinthians 13 that those who don't have love, has nothing.

1 Corinthians 13:1.....: *"Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. and though I give my body to be burned, Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil Love never fails And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.*

In other words, without love you will be looking forever for nothing, you will hide from the one dark room to the next 2 Chronicles 18:23-24: ²³*Then Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah went near and struck Micaiah on the cheek, and said, "Which way did the spirit from the LORD go from me to speak to you?"* ²⁴*And Micaiah said, "Indeed you shall see on that day when you go into an inner chamber to hide!"*

Aristotelles said nothing is what rocks dream of.

The Lord made a covenant with Abraham that he would have many descendants and that the Messiah will be born of his seed. It also happened like that. The believer is a child of the covenant and can therefore be assured of God's eternal love: Isaiah 54:10: *"For the mountains shall depart And the hills be removed, But My kindness shall not depart from you, Nor shall My covenant of peace be removed," Says the LORD, who has mercy on you."*

God reveals Himself to us through His Holy Spirit so that we can experience His love as covenant children through faith in Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit is the source of joy:

1 Tesselonisense 1:6 *"And you became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit,"*

Without this reality in your life, you will continue to believe that man can not have a relationship with the Creator.

6.3 Faith and Love

Love is an active ingredient of faith. Paul explained in Galatians 3:25 29 that we are children of Jesus Christ by faith.

Galatians 3:25-29: ²⁵*But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor. ²⁶For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. ²⁷For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. ²⁸There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."*

John explains that he who does not love does not know God!

1 John 4:7-10: ⁷*Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. ⁸He who does not love does not know God, for God is love. ⁹In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. ¹⁰In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins."*

Therefore faith and love goes together. Love enables me to have a living relationship with the Lord. Love is the only reality that speaks of order and fairness of control and predictability / familiarity. You can rely on love.

A person can only have a love relationship with the Creator if you know Him and believe in Him. The Creator also clearly introduced by Himself through His Son. The Creator will definitely not somehow reveal something contrary to His whole plan of salvation for man.

Through love and faith, we can see the Truth. We see the Messiah. Now we can be a blessing to other people / nations. However, we need love to live this faith. Our love must activate our faith. It mobilises the faithful. It makes the trumpet sound and declares that the Lord is King (Feast of Trumpets).

6.4 Love of the Lord is above all lies. It cannot be copied.

The love of the Lord addresses the contrast. Sin to love. Sin would come, therefore God was love from the start. If you deny sin, you are within it.

The love of God has eternal value. If a person believes in nothing, or believe that a person can not have a relationship with God, eternity is also not a reality. God clearly introduced Himself as the God of love and of life. According to the prophecies He rose from the dead when He was on earth so that we can believe. This love exposes all other religions and sects. Our love for God brings salvation, it brings Revelation. See Jesus' words:

John 14:21-26: ²¹*"He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him."* ²²*Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, "Lord, how is it that You will manifest Yourself to us, and not to the world?"* ²³*Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. ²⁴He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father's who sent Me. ²⁵These things I have spoken to you while being present with you. ²⁶But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you."*

Without this love relationship with the Lord the person is just where Satan wants him - without the Lord.

7. The Love Relationship clearly illustrated for us to believe

The redemptive plan of God is perfect, that there can be no doubt that there is only one God who preaches the Truth to man. One example of this is the unity that can be seen in the Bible. The same themes, prototypes, prophecies, representations etc. can be seen throughout the Bible, Old Testament and New Testament, because one Author by the help of people advocated the Word. This unit is also in the context with the messianic, prophetic reality. In other words, the prophecies is not only true, it is also true in context.

One of these very Revelations that can be seen in the Bible is where God through the centuries, Old Testament and New Testament, presents His love affair with us as a marriage.

7.1 The Groom and bride in the Old Testament

The Revelation of God, the Light of all nations, is flawless: Psalms 19:4-6 (about 1000 BC) ⁴*Their line has gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them He has set a tabernacle for the sun, ⁵Which is like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoices like a strong man to run its race. ⁶Its rising is from one end of heaven, And its circuit to the other end; And there is nothing hidden from its heat."*

7.1.1 The beauty of His bride whom He cleansed and took for Himself

The Lord is the Bridegroom of believers from all nations: Psalms 45:13-15 (about 1000 BC) ¹³*The royal daughter is all glorious within the palace; Her clothing is woven with gold. ¹⁴She shall be brought to the King in robes of many colors; The virgins, her companions who follow her, shall be brought to You. ¹⁵With gladness and rejoicing they shall be brought; They shall enter the King's palace."*

Prophetic, the faithful people are depicted as the bride Song 1:15 (About 950 BC): *"Behold, you are fair, my love! Behold, you are fair! You have dove's eyes."* and 4:7 *"You are all fair, my love, And there is no spot in you."*

The Groom stated that His bride belongs to Him: Isaiah 43:1 (about 750 BC) *"But now, thus says the LORD, who created you, O Jacob, And He who formed you, O Israel: "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by your name; You are Mine."*

Isaiah encourages those in exile: Isaiah 54:5 *"For your Maker is your husband, The LORD of hosts is His name; And your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel; He is called the God of the whole earth."*

Isaiah 62:5 (Jerusalem) *"For as a young man marries a virgin, So shall your sons marry you; And as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, So shall your God rejoice over you."*

The Lord's love affair remains to bring back the exiles and to bring salvation to all believers. Salvation refers to the good relationship between the Groom and the bride: Hosea 2:15-19 (about 722 BC) ¹⁵*I will give her her vineyards from there, And the Valley of Achor as a door of hope; She shall sing there, As in the days of her youth, As in the day when she came up from the land of Egypt. ¹⁶"And it shall be, in that day," Says the LORD, "That you will call Me 'My Husband,' And no longer call Me 'My Master,' ¹⁷For I will take from her mouth the names of the Baals, And they shall be remembered by their name no more. ¹⁸In that day I will make a covenant for them With the beasts of the field, With the birds of the air, And with the creeping things of the ground. Bow and sword of battle I will shatter from the earth, To make them lie down safely. ¹⁹"I will betroth you to Me forever; Yes, I will betroth you to Me In righteousness and justice, In lovingkindness and mercy;"*

Jeremiah 2:2 (about 600 BC) *"Go and cry in the hearing of Jerusalem, saying, 'Thus says the LORD: "I remember you, The kindness of your youth, The love of your betrothal, When you went after Me in the wilderness, In a land not sown."*

Jeremiah 3:1: *"They say, 'If a man divorces his wife, And she goes from him And becomes another man's, May he return to her again?' Would not that land be greatly polluted? But you have played the harlot with many lovers; Yet return to Me," says the LORD." (Also see Jeremiah 3:6-7; 3:20-21)*

Ezekiel 16:5-14 (about 597 BC) ¹³*".....¹³Thus you were adorned with gold and silver, and your clothing was of fine linen, silk, and embroidered cloth. You ate pastry of fine flour, honey, and oil. You were exceedingly beautiful, and succeeded to royalty. ¹⁴Your fame went out among the nations because of your beauty, for it was perfect through My splendor which I had bestowed on you," says the Lord GOD."*

7.2 The Groom and bride in the New Testament

Jesus refers to Himself as the "groom" in various verses such as in Mark 2:19: *"And Jesus said to them, "Can the friends of the bridegroom fast while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them they cannot fast."* (Also see Matthew 9:15; 25:1)

In Luke 5:34 there is testimony about the same words of Jesus: *"And He said to them, "Can you make the friends of the bridegroom fast while the bridegroom is with them?"*

Ephesians 5:25-27: ²⁵*Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, ²⁶that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, ²⁷that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish."*

The final wedding is prophesied in Revelation 19:7-9: ⁷*"Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready." ⁸And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. ⁹Then he said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!' " And he said to me, "These are the true sayings of God."*

The love of God is clearly for the salvation of all and beyond all understanding. We should not try to understand it, but can grab it with conviction and joy: Phillipians 4:6-7: ⁶*"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; ⁷and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."*

8. Jesus is the Truth and the Light

There are over three hundred Messianic prophecies in the Old Testament. For instance, what the Psalmist wrote about a thousand years before Christ:

Psalms 43:2-3: ²For You are the God of my strength; Why do You cast me off? Why do I go mourning because of the oppression of the enemy? ³Oh, send out Your light and Your truth! Let them lead me; Let them bring me to Your holy hill And to Your tabernacle."

Paul confirms very clearly where our insight comes from: 2 Corinthians 10:17: *"¹⁷But "HE WHO GLORIES, LET HIM GLORY IN THE LORD." ¹⁸For not he who commends himself is approved, but whom the Lord commends."*

8.1 Jesus is the Light of the world

1 John 1:5: *"This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all."*

The words of Jesus:

John 12:35-36: ³⁵Then Jesus said to them, "A little while longer the light is with you. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you; he who walks in darkness does not know where he is going. ³⁶While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light." These things Jesus spoke, and departed, and was hidden from them."

It is wonderful to know that Jesus during the Festival of Light (also referred to as the Feast of Dedication) literally brought light to the blind man.

John 9:3-7: ³Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him. ⁴I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; the night is coming when no one can work. ⁵As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." ⁶When He had said these things, He spat on the ground and made clay with the saliva; and He anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay. ⁷And He said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which is translated, Sent). So he went and washed, and came back seeing."

8.2 Jesus is the Truth of God

In Paul's pastoral letter to Titus he testifies as follows:

Titus 1:1-3: ¹Paul, a bondservant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect and the acknowledgment of the truth which accords with godliness, ²in hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began, ³but has in due time manifested His word through preaching, which was committed to me according to the commandment of God our Savior;"

Jesus confirms He is the Truth:

John 8:31-32: ³¹Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. ³²And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

If anyone claims that there is no such thing as the truth, it is also a self-contradictory statement because if there is no truth, the statement made itself cannot be true!

We can know the Truth, Jesus Christ. The Lord had His essence, and our Savior, Jesus Christ, brought within our reach.

For instance, see how the Lord confirmed more than 740 years before Christ that He prophesy into the future so that we can believe. The greatest prophecy is that of the Messiah who would come and bring reconciliation"

Isaiah 42:8-9: ⁸I am the LORD, that is My name; And My glory I will not give to another, Nor My praise to carved images. ⁹Behold, the former things have come to pass, And new things I declare; Before they spring forth I tell you of them."

8.3 Salvation is available to all who ask.

David wrote about one thousand years before Christ: Psalms 145:18: *"The LORD is near to all who call upon Him, To all who call upon Him in truth."*

The prophets in the Old Testament pointed out that one should seek the Lord and His will. See Jeremiah 29:13-14: *"¹³And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart. ¹⁴I will be found by you, says the LORD, and I will bring you back from your captivity; I will gather you from all the nations and from all the places where I have driven you, says the LORD, and I will bring you to the place from which I cause you to be carried away captive."*

The words of Jesus in John 14:21: *"He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him."*

It's great to know that God reveals Himself to us when we seek His closeness. It is in fact a supernatural intervention that occurs in our lives. This occurs so that we can personally testify. See how Paul writes from squalor:

Phillipians 4:4-7: *"⁴Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice! ⁵Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand. ⁶Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; ⁷and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."*

9. The believer stands in the service of the Lord

In the previous section it is seen that love is an integral part of faith. It reflects the being of God living in us. The Holy Spirit is the only One that reveals the Word and teaches. It can therefore be concluded that if a believer ministers outside the love of the Gospel, he / she makes himself / herself guilty of hypocrisy

Jesus warns against this: Matthew 23:3: *"Therefore whatever they tell you to observe, that observe and do, but do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do."*

Jesus makes it clear who the real Leader is:

Matthew 23:8-12: *"⁸But you, do not be called 'Rabbi'; for One is your Teacher, the Christ, and you are all brethren. ⁹Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven. ¹⁰And do not be called teachers; for One is your Teacher, the Christ. ¹¹But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant. ¹²And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."*

Teachers will be evaluated more strictly James 3:1: *"My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment."*

The believer can be assured that the Creator of the universe is his / her Teacher and Leader. He keeps His powerful Word.

Hebrew 1:1-3: *"¹God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, ²has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; ³who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,"*

The believer studies the Word of God, and this leads to knowledge of the Truth, which leads to the service of the Lord. The hope that our lives within us then becomes a witness to others.

Titus 1:1-3: *"¹Paul, a bondservant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect and the acknowledgment of the truth which accords with godliness, ²in hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began, ³but has in due time manifested His word through preaching, which was committed to me according to the commandment of God our Savior;"*

A person's life has value and meaning as long as your life is in service and obedience to the Lord (Bybel in Praktyk OT p597). Also see Phillipians 2:13 confirming that the Lord is what makes us willing and able to perform His will:

Phillipians 2:12-14: *"¹²Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; ¹³for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure. ¹⁴Do all things without complaining and disputing,"*

Also see 2 Chronicles 15:2: *"And he went out to meet Asa, and said to him: "Hear me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin. The LORD is with you while you are with Him. If you seek Him, He will be found by you; but if you forsake Him, He will forsake you."*

David testified already in 1 Chronicles 29:10-13: *"¹⁰... "Blessed are You, LORD God of Israel, our Father, forever and ever. ¹¹Yours, O LORD, is the greatness, The power and the glory, The victory and the majesty; For all that is in heaven and in earth is Yours; Yours is the kingdom, O LORD, And*

You are exalted as head over all. ¹²Both riches and honor come from You, And You reign over all. In Your hand is power and might; In Your hand it is to make great And to give strength to all. ¹³Now therefore, our God, We thank You And praise Your glorious name."

The 'Great Commission' by the Creator

Matthew 28:19-20: *"¹⁹Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen."*

10. How do you present the Gospel of love without hurting or insulting the other person?

Dr. Ravi Zacharias said in one of his talks 'Let my people think' that it is a good method when the Gospel is discussed and questions are asked to the person. There are many unfounded accusations against the Gospel, but when the allegation is questioned, it is discovered that it was not really in the scriptures. Questions also helps the other party to get to the source or origin of his / her own misconceptions.

However, we have clearly seen in this study that the approaches should be done in context to the love of God. The believer is not the one to be judge, but acts as the messenger and witness.

By the grace of Jesus Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit, the believer develops a desire to serve the Word and not to stand philosophically towards it. The faithful is more of a servant than what he / she shows. We are privileged disciple and not a savior. We are part of the body of Christ - the Church. This reality in the believer's life must address the companion to be part of it.

Ephesians 4:10-16: *"¹⁰He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things. ¹¹And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, ¹²for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, ¹³till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; ¹⁴that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, ¹⁵but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head--Christ-- ¹⁶from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love."*

The Holy Spirit is a person we receive when we are born again, and we share in the Divine nature!

2 Peter 1:1-21: *"¹Simon Peter, a bondservant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who have obtained like precious faith with us by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ: ²Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, ³as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, ⁴by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. ⁵But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, ⁶to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, ⁷to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. ⁸For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins. ¹⁰Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; ¹¹for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. ¹²For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth. ¹³Yes, I think it is right, as long as I am in this tent, to stir you up by reminding you, ¹⁴knowing that shortly I must put off my tent, just as our Lord Jesus Christ showed me. ¹⁵Moreover I will be careful to ensure that you always have a reminder of these things after my decease. ¹⁶For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty. ¹⁷For He received from God the Father honor and glory when such a voice came to Him from the Excellent Glory: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." ¹⁸And we heard this voice which came from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain. ¹⁹And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; ²⁰knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, ²¹for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit."*

2 Corinthians 4:5: *"For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus' sake."*

Clearly the Lord revealed His Word to man through His Son Jesus Christ. Hence we know the Father through the Son.

About 1300 years before Christ the Lord said to Moses:

Deuteronomy 18:18: *"I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him."*

Today we can see that Jesus Christ manifested the Name of the Lord to us and that He manifested the words of the Father to us. He is the Word of God. Jesus prayed for his disciples as follows:

John 17:6-8: *"⁶I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world. They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word. ⁷Now they have known that all things which You have given Me are from You. ⁸For I have given to them the words which You have given Me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came forth from You; and they have believed that You sent Me."*

The Holy Spirit was sent by Jesus to manifest the Word of God to man. It is only the Lord, through the grace of His Son, that manifests Himself to man. Should we say that we should win people for Christ, the best way to do this is through the Divine Manifestation we see in the Word of God - Jesus Christ. This brings the believer to a "personal testimony" of Whom the Lord manifested to him or her. This is a person's personal testimony speaking to other people. The believer lets the Word testify.

Chapter 8 Introduction to heresy

11. Introduction

The armor of the believer: Ephesians 6:10-20: ¹⁰Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. ¹¹Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. ¹²For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. ¹³Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. ¹⁴Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, ¹⁵and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; ¹⁶above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. ¹⁷**And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God;** ¹⁸praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints-- ¹⁹and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, ²⁰for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak."

The redemptive work of the Lord enables us to believe in spite of the attacks of the evil one. The Word of God is so far presented with a strong apologetic approach in order to highlight and to meet the reality of the Messiah. This knowledge now serves as protection against the lies offered in the world. We can only understand and address a lie if we adopted the Truth.

We should not be ashamed to proclaim the message of the Lord!

2 Timothy 1:8: "Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God."

2. We are conquerors in Christ

The Word of God, the Messiah has given complete redemption for all who believe in Him. This redemptive act of God is clearly far beyond heresy. Truth is perfectly revealed for all may know God and believe in His eternal covenant with man.

2.1 The name of the Lord was known from the beginning and makes perfect and everlasting reconciliation possible between God and the believer

God is the only God who is the Creator of the universe and is still actively involved with His creation (theistic God) In the previous chapters we have seen that He made His Name known from the beginning and communicated as God ('I AM' God of the Covenant) and also made His name known through His Son and Messiah, Jesus Christ. Through the Temple the Lord addresses the believer in Jesus Christ (The Lamb and divine High Priest) historically to be obedient to the covenant. The same Jesus Christ (The Face and Being of God in a tangible (empirical) method), restored the Covenant (prophetically accurate) and left the Word of God (the Bible) which bears witness of the Holy Spirit and His atoning work. Still through the Temple the Lord confirmed prophetically (Ezekiel 40 and Revelation 21) that through His atonement (The Messiah, Jesus Christ) there is eternal life for the believer. The believer can look forward to eternal joy when the Lord becomes the perfect Temple in his life.

Hebrew 2:10-17: ¹⁰For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. ¹¹For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren, ¹²saying: "I WILL DECLARE YOUR NAME TO MY BRETHREN; IN THE MIDST OF THE ASSEMBLY I WILL SING PRAISE TO YOU." ¹³And again: "I WILL PUT MY TRUST IN HIM." And again: "HERE AM I AND THE CHILDREN WHOM GOD HAS GIVEN ME." ¹⁴Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, ¹⁵and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. ¹⁶For indeed He does not give aid to angels, but He does give aid to the seed of Abraham. ¹⁷Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people."

2.2 By the Spirit of God we are free from the law and get our life in Jesus Christ

By the Spirit of God only are we the sons of God. The Son of God came as Son of man, and beat sin on our behalf. It made the Son of God the Servant of God who did the atonement, which man could not do .

Romans 8:1-4: *"¹There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. ²For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. ³For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, ⁴that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit."*

Romans 8:14-17: *"¹⁴For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. ¹⁵For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father." ¹⁶The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷and if children, then heirs--heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together."*

2.3 The Lord frees us from all corruption

The Word of God (Jesus Christ, see John 1) was from the start openly involved with man. The Lord provided testimonies and prophecies which brought authentic hope for the believer. Think of the more than 330 Messianic prophecies in the Old Testament that Jesus perfectly fulfilled. Think of the Messianic reality in the Feasts of the Lord (Chapter 5). Most of the festivals have been perfectly fulfilled in Jesus Christ. If most were fulfilled in detail, those not yet fulfilled will surely be realized through the same Jesus Christ, who is clearly the Messiah. The Lord has many other parallel and unity truths put in place. Consider, for example, the Groom and bride and the fact that the Bridegroom will come to fetch his bride. This is spotted throughout the Bible. There are many other similar truths in the Bible (Please see several Bible Studies: <http://www.matthew28.co.za>).

The Word of God makes it possible for man to have faith. The Holy Spirit reveals the Word (Messiah) to the people who seek the face of God (John 14:21 and Revelation 3:20). Authenticity means that the Word stand out above any other forgery. Nothing or no one can compete or replace it, or reinterpreted, or imitate, or follow-up, or whatever. Immorality is forever out of the way for the faithful. We can serve Him because we can know Him!

Romans 8:22-25: *"²²For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. ²³Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body. ²⁴For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? ²⁵But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance."*

2.4 We obtain a new identity in Christ.

In Christ the believer is part of the covenant with God. You become part of God's salvation plan. You are a child of Abraham from whose seed the Messiah, Jesus Christ was born. In 1 Samuel 18 we read how Jonathan handed his robe to David. This he did because he loved him as he loves himself. David wore the garment. This confirms that David adopted the essence of Jonathan. They made a covenant.

The believer of God's Revelation and redemption wears the robe of Christ. He (or she) obtains new identity in Christ.

Ephesians 4:17-24: *"¹⁷This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind, ¹⁸having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart; ¹⁹who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. ²⁰But you have not so learned Christ, ²¹if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus: ²²that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, ²³and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, ²⁴and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness."*

2 Timothy 2:22-26: *"²²Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. ²³But avoid foolish and ignorant disputes, knowing that they generate strife. ²⁴And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, ²⁵in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, ²⁶and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will."*

It is clear that man can only accept one Being, that of the Lord Jesus Christ, by faith in eternal reconciliation, immortality with the Creator. No other doctrine, scripture, prophet, apostle, priest, interpreter, messenger god, successor, or whatever, can do it for you. If any doctrine wants to teach you something else than the fact that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and rose from the dead, you have to ask: where does it fit into God's plan of salvation?

John 8:31-32: *"³¹Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. ³²And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.""*

2.5 Summary: Victory in Christ

The words of C.S. Lewis: "There are only two kinds of people in the end: those who say to God, 'Thy will be done,' and those to whom God says, in the end, 'Thy will be done.'" (22, p377) Geisler en Turek says as follows: "God does not send anyone to hell! If you reject Christ, you'll send yourself there." (22, p385)

See Romans 1:18-25: *"¹⁸For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, ¹⁹because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. ²⁰For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, ²¹because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. ²²Professing to be wise, they became fools, ²³and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man--and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things. ²⁴Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, ²⁵who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen."*

God makes it clear that he reveals Himself to those who seek Him. By His grace He gives us insight into His Word.

See Psalms 119:130: *"The entrance of Your words gives light; It gives understanding to the simple."*

The biggest Revelation thus far was Jesus who revealed Himself on earth as a human being of God. He is the truth who testified about Himself. Jesus talking to Pilate just before His crucifixion John 18:37-38: *"³⁷Pilate therefore said to Him, "Are You a king then?" Jesus answered, "You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice." ³⁸Pilate said to Him, "What is truth?" And when he had said this, he went out again to the Jews, and said to them, "I find no fault in Him at all."*

The Holy Spirit still works actively to reveal the Word of God to us.

Abraham Lincoln said: "The Bible is the best present given by God to man."

Through the Word we gain identity in the Messiah. Through the power of the Holy Spirit we act in obedience to His Being and find eternal reconciliation with God, the Father.

3. Apologetics

3.1 Definitions

- Norman Geisler en Frank Turek say that insufficient grounds for religions opens the way to sufficient grounds to the seeker after the truth (22, p53).
- Geisler en Turek say that an apologist is someone who shows how good reason and evidence support or contradict a certain faith (22, p53)
- Dr Ravi Zacharias: "To clear the bushes so that the people can have an unobstructed view of Christ."
- Compiler's note: Apologetics is the technique used to bring the person as effectively as possible to the Truth Jesus Christ. The better apologetics is used, the less the process itself is needed.

3.2 Why is Apologetics important?

Norman Geisler and Frank Turek says in their book (22, p14) that it is not the most important that they are Christians, but why they became Christians, they were not always Christians.

Frank Turek (22, p22) states that it is difficult to prove that chocolate ice cream tastes better than vanilla ice cream. This is the problem with different religions.

Dr. Normal Geisler (22, p37) refers to the incident where the humanist, Michael Constantine held Dr. Geisler's book, *Christian Apologetics*, up and claimed that Christians are 'narrow-minded'. Dr. Geisler in turn held the humanist's book up, *Religion Without God*, claiming that humanists are 'narrow-minded' because everyone claimed everything outside their own doctrine as false.

Geisler and Turek points out the following three important facts (22, p53-54):

- Any doctrine, religious or not, can be trusted only if it refers to the truth. Indifferences to the truth is dangerous. In fact, to believe in falsehood can have deadly consequences, both temporal and eternal.
- Many faiths supported today are not supported by evidence but only by subjective preferences of those people who supports it.
- If a person wants to get to the truth he / she must be ready to give up the subjective preferences in favor of the objective facts.

It is extremely important to decide on the right thoughts. In Ephesians 6 we read of the spiritual battle which the believer has to fight. The apologist brings the person to the Truth Jesus Christ, and may also play an important role to support the person in the process of exploration. Joyce Meyer points out the need to focus on the mind and attitude of Christ . She suggests the following points (36, p161-181)

- *Maintain positive thoughts:* The mind of Christ is positive, therefore, the moment when we become negatively, we are not within the framework of Christ's thinking. God wants to exalt man and Satan wants to demean man. He uses negative events and situations of a persons life to depress him / her.
- *Keep God in mind:* It is impossible to have intercourse with a person without having to establish your thoughts on that person. It is very positive and supportive to think about the goodness of God and all the wonderful works of His hands.
- *Remember that God loves you.* 1 John 4:16: *"And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him."*
- *Maintain encouraging (reassuring) thoughts* Romans 12:8: *"he who exhorts, in exhortation...."* The person with the mind of Christ, thinks positive and optimistic, and identifies thoughts about other people and about him / herself and his / her own circumstances. It is not possible to encourage someone else with your words if you do not have positive thoughts about that individual. Joyce also points out that whatever is in your heart will come out your mouth. Send thoughts of love to others. Speak words of encouragement to them. We don't keep ourselves in the Word of God if our thoughts are the opposite of what it says. We don't move within the Word unless we think within the Word.

Develop an attitude of gratitude. Psalms 100:4-5: *"⁴Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, And into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, and bless His name. ⁵For the LORD is good; His mercy is everlasting, And His truth endures to all generations."*

A person adhering to the mind of Christ will find his / her mind is filled with praise and thanksgiving. Many doors are opened for the enemy because of grumbling. Complaining by thoughts or words, is a principle of death, but to be grateful and to speak it, it is a principle of life. God's Word is His thoughts written down on paper for us to study and to consider. His Word is how He thinks about any situation and subject. To meditate in and about the Word of God is one of the most important life principles that we can learn. Meditation on the Word of God brings life to you and eventually those around you.

3.3 Strategically faithful to the work of the Holy Spirit

The believer must be faithful to the work of the Holy Spirit and not try to do the work out of his/her own power.

Seek the truth only within the truth, or in the context of the truth, and that's the Word. Remember John 8:31-32 where Jesus makes it clear that the Son is the Truth, and He alone sets us free. The Holy Spirit does the work:

Romans 14:17-18: *"¹⁷for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. ¹⁸For he who serves Christ in these things is acceptable to God and approved by men."*

1 Corinthians 2:4-5: *"⁴And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, ⁵that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God."*

Religion makes you a child of the covenant, and then Revelation 19:9 will have relevance in your life. *"Then he said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!' " And he said to me, "These are the true sayings of God.'"* Jesus made it all possible for us. Matthew 28:19-20: *"¹⁹Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen."*

Frank Turek (22, p39) points out that if you become aware of 'self-defeating' statements, you will become a great defender of the truth. For example: 'There is no such thing as the truth' is a very popular statement by the modern wise people. The fact that the statement contradicts itself is proof that the statement is unsound.

3.4 The witness and faith

Only faith in Jesus Christ brings salvation and brings the witness in obedience to the Word. Without faith we worship the most comprehensible form of a god, and not the Creator with a personality with whom we have a relationship.

Ephesians 3:17: *"that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love."*

Romans 10:9: *"that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved."* Also read the rest of Romans 10.

John 1:11-14: *"¹¹He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. ¹²But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: ¹³who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. ¹⁴And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."*

Francis Frangipane (www.frangipane.org, comments@frangipane.org) writes: We also need to know Christ is not just our Saviour, but He also is the "author and perfecter" of our faith (Heb 12:2). In order for faith to mature, it needs situations where faith alone can sustain us. "Faith" is not merely a proper understanding of doctrinal issues; faith is the spiritual "substance of things hoped for; the evidence of things not seen" (Heb 11:1). We must not only possess accurate doctrines about faith; we must live by faith as well.

Indeed, there are times when, for faith to develop, we must trust God in spite of how things appear. Jesus often told people to take courage, for their faith had saved them (see Mt 9:2, 9:22, etc.). There will always be times when, against the glaring face of a negative reality, true faith arises, appropriates courage and locks into the integrity of God's promise. We must let faith arise in the context of resistance. This is the faith that touches God's heart.

The enemy comes to dis-courage or remove the courage from our hearts, and thus causes us to withdraw into unbelief. To win our fight of faith, we must not surrender to discouragement. Yes, times will come when we will ask God for greater wisdom; certainly, we will adjust our attitudes and become both flexible and wiser as we process the faith assignment destiny has set before us. But we must not give up: *"For yet in a very little while, He who is coming will come, and will not delay. But My righteous one shall live by faith; and if he shrinks back, My soul has no pleasure in him"* (Heb 10:37-38).

A person must avail themselves to God through faith for Christ to communicate with you. Why were Revelations not made to all the great thinkers and philosophers? They did not come to God by faith. Faith in Jesus Christ enables us to overcome the bridge between the natural and the spiritual world.

We will only know the will of God if we allow God to renew our minds Romans 12:1-2: *"¹I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. ²And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."*

It is clear that our faith is the grace of the Lord, and we are involuntarily in obedience to the Lord's great commission - Make disciples of all nations. Our service to God is more important than our service to the world.

Although you have the knowledge, without faith it helps you nothing.

God can only be known by faith. Karl Rahner (1904-1984), a German theologian who is seen as one of the most important Roman Catholic theologians, said inherent and coherent to every human endeavor of knowledge and motive, there is a certain awareness of the greatness of existence (infinity of being), in other words, of God. He claimed that God can not be known directly. God can not be an understanding of the mind as a chair or a table can be. However, when we know a

certain thing or require a certain specific value, then we are not satisfied with the specific value or concept, but we always seek something that goes beyond that, to the total essence of existence and therefore to God. He says that all are conscious of God to a certain extent, whether they are aware of it or not, and that our most simple contact with the world would be impossible without this awareness (14, p175).

Richard Armstrong (23, p57) claim that faith is the key to the Gospel. Faith is our personal appropriation of God's gift of grace.

Søren Kierkegaard (1813-1855), a Scandinavian philosopher, claimed that the self is a process that is incomplete without God (14,p129).

Rudolf Bultman (1884-1976), a German who was strongly opposed to Hitler, strived to wipe out mythology by focusing on the New Testament. He pointed out that Jesus Christ is central to the individual's transition from a non-authentic to an authentic life (14, p142). To add, we can say: unreal to real, not credible to credible, unreliable to reliable. See Psalms 19:8: *"The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes."*

Faith allows the Holy Spirit to work in us The Swiss theologian, Karl Barth (1886-1968), who is considered one of the greatest theologians of the 20th century, pointed out that the Holy Spirit alone can point out the divine reality of God's Revelation to us. Barth also supplemented the doctrines of Schleiermacher (1768-1834) that focused on God's Revelation to mankind through Jesus Christ. Barth said that God's Revelation to mankind is a Triune incident. God reveals Himself to us in His Son through the working of the Holy Spirit (14, P158). To add to this, it's the only way we can meet God with our limited frame of reference.

Faith makes us part of God's covenant nation. God Himself chose His involvement in us with the covenant and faith makes us the other part of the covenant nation of God. Karl Barth (1886-1968) came to this conclusion after his teaching on God's Revelation to man was completed. He also subsequently explained the ontology (philosophy of reason to exist) of the person (14, p159).

4. The world without God

4.1 What is immorality?

Immorality can be seen as a life without God. God-less. The perfect form of understanding without God, the Lord. Characteristics of the spirit without God, are among others, as follows

- He presents himself as the wise. The expert who looks objectively at life, the great philosopher. But inherently he is lost. He is seeking others who are lost and finds a home in perpetual anxiety.
- When he is in the minority, he presents himself as the gentle and friendly, even sometimes social worker. When he becomes majority, or gets supremacy, destroys everything and everyone who does not experience the anxiety with him.
- He walks around with secrets and strategies that pursue the origin to the destruction of himself, and he does not realize it.
- He believes he has the answer, he does not have to seek the truth, but can not give meaningful answer regarding eternity. His limited background / frame of reference ties him to the natural. He does not realize that the natural had to have an origin from the Eternal, the Supernatural.
- He deals with things and statements of man, with energy levels and zodiac forecasts. He seeks purpose in a state of exaltation which in reality is nothing but a neutral state of mind. Think of nothing, accomplish nothing and becomes lost.

In Chapter 7, we looked at philosophy and Dr. Ravi Zacharias asked, if man can live without God?

It is ironic when you notice that the ideologies posing as the answer to humanity, destroys humanity. The focus on believers. Good examples of this are Feuerbach the father of communism and Hitler with his 'Super Nation'. More of this in the section: Chronological summary of sects and other trends.

The world without God is lost, it is self-destructive. Moral decay occurs. History has proven that we can not survive without this moral law,

With atheism there is no room for moral values, but it has been proven that we can live without the moral values

Without God there is a total loss and loss of meaning.

Waldeck (15, p 73) refers to the wise Tertullianus. A brilliant lawyer who in his famous *Adversus Praxeam* (about 200 AD) claimed that, through the existence of the Trinity of God, two focus areas of the Devil's activities have been identified. The Devil casted out prophecies and brought in heresy: 'The Devil has sent the Holy Spirit away and crucified the Father.'

To add to this, it is insightful to realize that the Holy Spirit is the One who reveals God's Word to us. It is also the Holy Spirit that Jesus left behind for us to give us strength in our faith. See Jesus' words in Acts 1:8: *"But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."* Tertullian was very wise to have pointed out about 200 AD that the Devil will try to drive us away from the Holy Spirit. We can still see today how the sects deny the Holy Spirit or even claim that another person succeeded Jesus as a prophet (ie Muhammad) and, according to them, it is what Jesus referred to witnessed in Acts 1:8:

Acts 1:8: *"But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."*

Apart from the fact that Jesus clearly identified the Holy Spirit by His name and thousands of people have already testified to the power of the Holy Spirit in their lives, the Holy Spirit was also visibly poured out on people on more than one occasion. For example see Acts 2:2-4: *"²And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. ⁴And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."* Remember that this event also occurred prophetically on the Feast of Weeks, which became Pentecost - part of God's plan of salvation.

Tertullian was right by referring to the Devil who would have it that the Father was crucified. We see throughout the heresy of other gods, even to atheists who believe in no god. The Antagonists who claim that they do not have enough evidence clearly did not study the Word. The unity of the Bible shows us clearly that there is only one God and that He clearly revealed Himself to us, is still closely involved with His children to this day, and also for the salvation of His children and will be forever. God does not keep Himself busy with others. He does not manifest in different ways. Christ came to establish God's Identification, according to the Scriptures, He made God's Name known to us.

Chronological summary of sects and other major trends				
Origin	Name	By who	Where	Explanation
3900BC.	Fall from Grace	Adam & Eva	Paradise	Genesis 3:15: "And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel."
2303BC	The Flood	Noah and his descendants Shem, Ham and Japheth		Descendants of Shem: Elam, Assyria Arpaksad, Lud, and Aram. Descendants of Japheth: Gomer, Magog, Madai, Greece, Tubal, Meshech and Tiras. Descendants of Ham: Cush, Egypt, Put, and Canaan (see Genesis 8)
2000BC.	Mother and Child Worship	Semiramis and Nimrod	Mesopotamia (Babylon) was transferred to Egypt passed to Greece later mixed with Romans	<p>Ancient Babylonian religion acknowledge the Infinite and Almighty Creator, but they worshipped an infinite number of gods. These gods could have an influence on the affairs of man. They saw God as far removed and unreachable. The popular religion of Babylon was the worship of the Mother and Child.</p> <p>Nimrod (also called Ninus and Kronos), son of Cush (also known as Hermes, Mercury, Bel, Belus, Marduk, Janus, Hephaestus and Vulkan), son of Ham, son of Noah (see Genesis 10:1-8) took his mother as his wife. Nimrod's mother / wife Semiramis (also known as Rhea, Diana, Osiris, Chrishna, Cybele).</p> <p>Nimrod's father, Cush, is suggested as was one of the ringleaders of the great apostasy. He was the original founder of idolatry, because the Gentiles recognized him as the author of their religious rites, and the interpreter of the gods. Nimrod was the great mighty warrior who trained other young men to conquer the other Kings of Assyria and was also the first person who started wars on earth. Nimrod was also the first governor on earth (Genesis 10:8) and his kingdom began at Babel (Genesis 10:10).</p> <p>After Nimrod's death Tammuz was born who Semiramis claimed as the reborn Nimrod. Scripture also refers to him as Tammuz in Ezekiel 8:14 but with classical writers he was commonly known as Bacchus ('The One who is been mourned over'). The goal of the distinctive horrors and orgies was the 'cleansing of the soul' - cleansing of guilt and sins. Nimrod's mother, Semiramis, was exceptionally beautiful and engaged in atrocities of lust and prostitution. She also deified Nimrod after his death and claimed divinity herself. Daniel 11:38 refers to the god connected with Nimrod. Semiramis, the mother and the wife of Nimrod, acquired the title of the Mother of all the gods, or 'Queen of Heavens'. This is where the representation of the mother with the child in her arms came from. She also stated that she would bring forth the seed of the woman (Tammuz), who would bash the serpent's head, as described in Genesis 3:15. After her death she was deified in the title 'Queen of Heavens'. She is seen as the divine mediator between man and the boy. See Jeremiah 44:15-19 which refers to the queen of heaven. The latter was written between 627 and 586BC. The queen of heaven is also regarded as the woman with the crown on her head, sometimes with a halo around the head, and with a cup of wine in her hand. See Revelation 18:2-8.</p> <p>From Babylon, this worship of Mother and Child spread to the ends of the earth. Egypt: Isis and Osiris India: Isi and Iswara Asia: Cybele and Deoius Pagan Rome: Fortuna and Jupiter Greece: Ceres (or Irene) and the boy Plutus in her arms Even in Tibet, China and Japan the Jesuit missionaries were amazed when they find that the image of the Madonna likewise worshiped as in Papal Rome itself. Sing Moo, the Holy Mother in China, is represented with a child in her arms and a glow that surrounds her.</p> <p>According to Nimrod's system, people did not believe in a real spiritual change of heart, but that man could be recreated by mere external means. He urged humanity to indulge themselves in sensual pleasures, and taught them to regard sin as fun and enjoy it without any fear of a holy God's retribution. Many women always accompanied him on all his ways (39, p3-35).</p>
800BC.	Greek Mythology	Greek	Greece	It is a collection of traditional stories told by the ancient Greeks concerning the exploits of gods, goddesses, heroes and heroines. The Greek religion was polytheistic. Stories about the origins and activities of gods are of

Chronological summary of sects and other major trends				
Origin	Name	By who	Where	Explanation
				great variety. Greek mythology was like a complex and rich language through which a wide variety of perceptions about the world could be expressed. Zeus was one of many gods and considered the god of war. The Eastern Mythology had 360 gods with Allah the god of war. Muhammad, who established Islam, rejected the other 359 gods and preserve only Allah the god of war: clearly not the same god as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob!
585-435BC.	Monism	Thales	Greece	Thales rejected Greek mythology and claimed that all things are full of gods. All reality consists of only one basic ingredient, namely water, from which the universe is made (Monism).
470-399BC.	Humanism & Naturalism	Socrates	Greek	Human soul is the prisoner of the body. Only world of thought. Reality, he says, is the world of thought.
400BC.	Eastern Mysticism	Hindu, Transcendental Meditation, Divine Light Mission, Hare Krishna, Buddhism, Baha'isme, Vedanta Society, Yoga and Zen Buddhism	India	They started searching for 'sects' sharing their spiritual outlook for the purpose of discovering the inner that is independent of the material. It is also referred to as Enlightenment. A so-called state of spiritual insight and knowledge. In every Eastern religious experience is central. They believe that the universe contains no restrictions or variety, according to them all is an illusion (MAYA). Their basic need is to obtain freedom (MOKSHA) of this variety and thereby experience unity with Universe (SAMADHI). This then resulted in different versions of the Hindu and Buddhist practices in their efforts to experience the maximum experience in 'enlightenment'. According to them, there is no beginning or end for 'God' is the time and these manifestations of time periods will last forever. Many Hindus see Brahman as a personal, loving god, who has the salvation of all people at heart. Brahman, however, is often portrayed as the impersonal powerful being totally superior to the creation and indifferent to life on earth. The latter is also the basis for their doctrine of reincarnation. They believe in incarnations or manifestations of god in the past also known as BHAKTI YOGA movements and one particular branch of Buddhism, MAHAYANA. Jesus, according to them is one of these incarnations of God but according to Guru Maharaj Ji, Jesus is, Ram, Krishna, and Buddha all united in one great power. They accept the Bible as credible scripture but it is interpreted in terms of Hindu and Oriental philosophy. Christ's second return, for example, is centred on Guru Maharaj Ji himself
Jesus Christ, the Messiah, Truth on Earth				
79-81	Destruction of Jerusalem	Titus Flavius Sabinus Vespasian (39-81)	Roman	Roman emperor 79-81AD. that destroyed Jerusalem in 70AD and built the Kolosseum. Titus was appointed as the commander of the Roman army in Palestine in 69AD. when he still fought under his father. Josephus (37-101AD.) wrote that 1.3 million Jews were killed in a 6-month period . Titus died in 81 after his brother, Emperor Domitian took over. Domitian erected the Arch of Titus, in 81AD. to celebrate his brother's victory over the Jews. The Arch of Titus still stands today clearly showing how the sacred articles of the Temple was taken.
134-135	Suppression of the Jews	Publius Aelius Hadrian (76-138)	Roman	Roman emperor 117-138AD who visited Judea during 134-135AD. During this visit he impeded a Jewish revolt and killed about 500,000 Jews. He also had Judea removed from the map.
325	Roman Catholic Church	Constantinople	Egypt passed to Greece later mixed with Romans	This section should be read in context with the section on 'Mother and Child Worship'. In Egypt worship with the 'Queen of Heavens' (with the child in her arms) continued until Christianity penetrated. Instead of the Babylonian goddess overturned, her name just changed in many cases. She was called the Virgin Mary, and many professing Christians have worshipped her and her child with the same pagan passion as self recognized Pagans practiced. The Council of Nicaea was called together 325 AD to condemn the heresy of Arius (who denied the true divinity of Christ). It did not, however, happen without the help of people who clearly indicated that the creation is on par with the Creator. They wanted to place the Virgin Mother on the same level as her son. The author of 'Nimrod' says that 'the Melgitic delegation' (called Christianity's representatives in Egypt) were of the opinion that there are three persons in the Trinity: the Father, the Virgin Mary and the Messiah her son.' 'Here they say that if we acknowledge that Christ is truly God deserves the honor of true divinity, then His mother, from whom He just received His humanity, also be recognized as such. She should be elevated above the level of all creatures, and worshiped as a participant in the deity. The deity of Christ stands or falls with that of His mother. (39, p53).

Chronological summary of sects and other major trends				
Origin	Name	By who	Where	Explanation
				The Roman Catholic Church claims that the Pope is the successor of the apostle Peter. A hierarchy of control was introduced by claiming that the Pope and his Cardinals alone control the church. It went so far that the Bible itself was kept from the believers in order for all contact with the Word had to take place through the cardinal. It resulted in reform in the 15th and 16th centuries where the Protestants (those who resisted it) like Martin Luther and John Calvin reformed the church in obedience to the true Trinity of God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and the fact that salvation is obtained through faith in Jesus Christ's redemption for mankind. This salvation is through the centuries prophesied to man by the Word of God, perfectly fulfilled by the Messiah and recorded for us by the witnesses in the New Testament. All these witnesses, personally saw the Messiah before and after the crucifixion and have paid with their lives (except John) for their testimony. See Revelation 19:10.
600-700AD.	Islam	Mohammed	India	Mohammed is considered by Islam as the last prophet in the line of prophets such as Abraham, Moses, the Biblese prophets and Jesus. Mohammed established the monotheistic faith (belief in one god) Islam in response to the polytheism and dissipation of the Arab culture of his time. Islam, within a century, conquered a larger area than the Roman Empire when it was at its strongest. (21) Mohammad is seen as the recipient of the Revelation which was dictated to him. This Revelation is contained in the Qur'an which are regarded by Muslims as the true and final Revelation of Allah according to them the perfect book that was started in the Bible. Mohammed is convinced by his Revelation to act against infidels and that he was the one who was appointed by Allah to bring the judgment of the Jews. According to Mohammed Judas was crucified not Jesus. Islam also insists that Jesus left Mohammed behind and not the Holy Spirit. They deny Trinity of God and therefore the divinity of Jesus.
1600	Rationalism and skepticism			Reason alone is the primary source of all human knowledge and is able to solve all problems related to man's origin and destination.
1700	Empiricism	John Locke	England	True knowledge does not come from thinking and reasoning, but is developed by human sensory experience
1717	Freemasonry		England to USA	They claim that all Freemasons, Christian, Jew, Islam, go by different routes to the same place. This is nothing more than the continued worship of the old pagan gods of ancient Egypt, Greece, India. "The Masonic Religion should be by all of us initiates of the high degrees maintained in the purity of the Luciferian doctrine ... Yes, Lucifer is God". For the newcomer, God is presented as The Great Architect Of The Universe. God is presented as a multi-god and even Greek and Egyptian gods Bacchus and Osiris are listed. Other gods like Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva and Krishna (Hindu gods) are also included. All these gods would be on par with Jehovah. The newcomer must admit that he is in darkness, and will find the light in the secrets of the movement. The Trinity of God is a no reality to them. According to them Jesus Christ was a man just like us and is of lower status than the gods of the Greek mythology. Very interesting that the name of Jesus Christ may not be called in their sermons and prayers. Although Jesus, according to them, is on the same level as gods like Osiris and Bacchus, or teachers such as Buddha, Zoroaster and Mohammad, Jesus's name may not be mentioned, but the others may!? The redemption accomplished by Christ is blatantly ridiculed. Christ's resurrection and second return is rejected. Newcomers should only believe in a Supernatural Being. He must also attain his own salvation. When he reaches the level of guild-brother, he then receives spiritual gifts only accordingly to what he deserved. They claim that every Mason must work out his own understanding of God and thereby achieve salvation. The latter will then be a place among the gods after death. Religion plays no role
1750	Unity	John Murray	England to USA	They claim that Unity is the truth that is taught in all religions, the truth is then simplified and systematised so that everyone can understand and apply it. They claim that God is not a Personality with life, intelligence, love and power. For them, God is the invisible, intangible, but a real thing called life. The source of everything. God is the totality of all that is good, whether it manifested or was uttered. They believe that God is always present, inherent Head - the Father in us, the source of truth under every form of life, love, intelligence or power. There is no punishment for sin. Myrtle Fillmorehet stated in 1942 that there is harmony between all adherents of any religion. They claim that human beings are part of God. According to them, God is in each person, and every person is the Son of God, there is not a Son of God
1822-1830	Mormons	Joseph Smith	New York	Claims to have got a vision at age 15 to become a 'prophet of the Most High God'. Also alleges that in 1822 an angel (Moroni) informed him that he would find a valuable religious document hidden in a hill near New York.

Chronological summary of sects and other major trends				
Origin	Name	By who	Where	Explanation
				They claim that God was an ordinary man and went through the school on earth like all people and later became an exalted being. According to them, man can become a god. They claim that there are many gods who dwell on the earth. These gods create mental child bodies that ingest bodies who can create gods. They also claim that Adam is the God of the Bible. They claim that Jesus Himself was intimate with Mary and Martha so He could see His children before His crucifixion. According to them, Satan was the spiritual brother of Jesus prior to incarnation. Satan would then be jealous of Jesus because Jesus was named by the gods to save and not him. Thus, Satan came to ruin, in his rebellion against God. They claim that God is not omnipresent because according to them the Father has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as that of man. They claim that Jesus was the executive during the creation and was assisted by Michael, or Adam, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Peter, James, John, Joseph Smith, and others. They do not believe in the Triune God, but in a multiplicity of gods. They also believe that every person has to atone for his sins. According to them, Jesus will return to earth where all the Jews will be together again in Palestine, and all the Mormons in Missouri. The judgment of God will come over the earth except in the two places Palestine and Missouri
1832	Old / New Apostles	Drummond	England	They believe that Jesus Christ is in charge of the church and that Christ manages church through modern apostles. According to them, Peter was the first Chief Apostle. They go so far by claiming that the modern Chief Apostle is the replacement of Christ on earth (in the flesh). They believe that only their movement makes salvation possible for man, and also claims that the Bible is useless without their living Apostles. According to them, the Bible is a 'dead letter'. They claim that only the Chief Apostle and his Apostles have the ability to interpret the Bible and writings. They also claim that the Christian Church is dead without the guidance of their Apostles. They believe that people outside their movement is doomed and also alters the truth. Waldeck points out that many of the prophecies of the Apostles have not been realized, such as of the Chief Apostle Bischoff who claimed that Christ will return during his lifetime. It did not happen. This movement believes that baptism bring salvation to the body (infant baptism) and that the 'adoption' occurs when the person accept the movement's teachings during a ceremony where the Apostle visits the person in order to be 'sealed'. According to them, this is where the person's name is written in the Book of the Lamb.
1838	Christadelphians	John Thomas		They see God as the sole creator. According to them, there is only one God, the Father. The Holy Spirit is the energy that comes from the Father only, it is not a Personality. They claim that the only way to obtain salvation is by baptism by immersion and only if it is done by Christadelphians. They do not believe that Satan is a reality. Christ not the Son of God, and did not exist before. Only the Spirit of God was in the man Jesus. Trinity of God is denied
1846	Communism	<u>Ludwig Feuerbach</u> (1804-1872) with great influence on his student <u>Karl Marx</u> (1818-1883) later by <u>Lenin</u> (1870-1924) in Russia was brought in from 1917. <u>Joseph Stalin</u> (1879-1953) succeeded Lenin. Mao Tse-tung establish communism in China in 1949. Pol Pot in Cambodia in 1975.	German	<p>Claim that religion is a product of man. God was created by man in their own thinking. Man is the beginning, the center and the end of religion.</p> <p>Marx was of Jewish origin. Along with Friedrich Engels they publish The Communist Manifesto in which they declared atheism. They declared: 'Communism rejects all forms of faith and morals.' Marx himself states as follows: 'Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the sentiment of a heartless world and the soul of soulless conditions. It is the opium of the people. Worth noting is the fact that the infidel Marx himself died in 1883 as a highly depressed man and only eight people attended his funeral.</p> <p>Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov (Lenin) states as follows: 'There is nothing more abdominal than faith. Every religious idea, every idea of God, each playing around with the idea of God is unspeakable disgusting..... every person who deals with the construction of god, or even one who only tolerates the idea of god building belittles himself at the worst possible way. 'Many people refused to waive their faith and was sent to institutions, prisons, concentration camps or the grave</p> <p>Stalin was one of the main designers of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). This ungodly union had 7 million members by 1932 in 80,000 cells. About 20 million people were forced into slave work camps to</p>

Chronological summary of sects and other major trends

Origin	Name	By who	Where	Explanation
				<p>develop the socialist state of which about 4 million were in prison under appalling conditions. Stalin cruelly persecuted believers and the systematic killing of about 10 million people followed.</p> <p>Tse-tung (People's Republic of China) had all evangelists removed from the country, all religious organizations were liquidated and all believers persecuted cruel and merciless. Literally millions of people were killed. At one point more than 22,000 per month.</p> <p>Pol Pot established communism in Cambodia. His goal was to brutally break down a person's individuality and then establish new communist values. Between April 1975 and January 1977, one-fifth of the country's population, 1.5 million people, were killed.</p> <p>In summary it can be stated that Marxism at some point was seen as an alternative to theism and many believed that God was on the run as a result thereof. The <i>Black Book of Communism</i> published in 1997, notes that the number of victims of communism from the Russian Revolution, eighty years earlier, equates to between 85 to 100 million people. Blanchard points out the irony in Marxist governments as they spend large sums of money in an attempt to destroy faith which they claim has no foundation, and that they forbid people to serve a God who they claim does not exist! (17, p60-72)</p>
1848	Spiritism	Fox sisters	New York	<p>A spiritualist is someone who believes, as a basis of his or her religion, in the communication between this and the spiritual world through a medium (middleman). The person attempts to form his or her character and to act according to the knowledge gained during this communication. This movement believes that God is an eternal Intelligence who rules the world but is impersonal. They deny the Trinity of God and the divinity of Jesus Christ. They do say that Jesus is the Son of God, but puts him on the same level as humans. They also deny the force and the divinity of the Holy Spirit. They also alleges that the Bible is not the only Divine Book of Revelation. They claim that demons do not exist. They say that there are only intelligent and ignorant spirits. They also believe in different spheres and not in heaven and hell. They claim that Christ is the Son of God but also argues that all people are sons of God. They advocate that man has a moral responsibility in respect of the individual, the latter creates his own happiness or unhappiness as the individual obeys or disobeys nature's physical and spiritual laws. They say that all men will reach the highest spiritual level through their own efforts. The second coming of Christ and the resurrection of the believer is denied.</p>
1859	Evolution	Charles Darwin	England	<p>"The origin of species through natural selection" and "Survival of the fittest". Claims that humans and the Chimpanzees had common predecessor had lived about 2 million years ago.</p>
1866	Christian Science	Mary Baker Eddy	Hampshire	<p>She claimed that she succeeded Jesus Christ as the Great Healer. The term God is relative because it can be replaced with terms such as life, truth, principle, intelligence, soul, mother, mind, etc.. God is all and in all. Therefore, there is no room for evil. Deny Trinity. Eddy do see the Bible as her 'only authority' but challenges the God inspired fact. She sees herself as the 'Divinely appointed interpreter.' They deny the deity of Christ. They claim that Christ was a good man, inspired by the 'Christ Idea'</p>
1872	Jehovah Witnesses	Charles Taze Russel	USA	<p>He wrote a seven volume assignment: 'Studies in the Scriptures.' He also claims that it is the only way to understand the Bible. He goes as far as to say that it is the Bible itself. He condemned all organized religion and all ministers of the Gospel outside of its own organization. He explains all Bible translations are unreliable. Russell was followed up by 'Judge' Rutherford after his death in October 1916 who attackd all churches and described it as 'rackets'. He also claims that the Catholic and Protestant churches are run by Satan. According to Jehovah Witnesses the death of Christ did not bring eternal life or blessing to man. It only gave man a second chance at eternal life. You must therefore still achieve it through faith in the organization's teachings. They claim that Jesus already visually returned to earth in 1914, cast Satan out of heaven and is busy to throw Satan's organization overboard. Jehovah's Witnesses claim that there are only 144,000 'spiritual brothers' who will reign with Christ in heaven for 1000 years. They also believe that Satan will be destroyed and that there is no hell. Hell is just a state of non-existence. They created their own version of the Bible 'The new world translation of the</p>

Chronological summary of sects and other major trends

Origin	Name	By who	Where	Explanation
				Bible' which is regarded more important than any other translation of the Bible. They also use their own 'Watchtower Magazine' for Bible study. The latter was found to have only 6% Scripture. They reject the doctrine of the Trinity of God. They reject the divinity of Christ and claim that Christ was a spiritual being called Michael, the first of God's creation, in which God created all things. They teach that Jesus was the Son of God but not God Himself. They reject the physical return of Christ. According to them, the Holy Spirit is not a person, nor God.
1875	New Age Movement	Cooperation of thousands of groups and individuals. Later officially opened by Madame Helena Petrova Blavatsky		They claim that God is impersonal and is an integral part of creation itself (Pantheism). They also claim that God was created by man. They encourage people to serve so-called saints as Pan, Buddha, Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva and even Lucifer. All except Jesus Christ. They claim the 'Ultimate One' is yet to come, it is also the Antichrist. This will lead man in his greatest time. They alleged that man is reincarnated until he is of God. They said there had been no sin. They teach in their literature that Jews, Christians and groups who believe in one God (Monotheism) must be eradicated. They believe that everything on earth must return to one (religious, monetary, government, etc.) because they believe everything was made from one thing (Monism). According to them, man himself must discover the Christ in himself, self-realization. The Trinity of God is not recognized and they even claim that God is a product of man's own mind. They claim that Jesus is a sublime master ('ascended master') which, like Buddha leads man to a new era. According to them, Jesus has been reincarnated many times throughout history. For them, God is an impersonal force, who represents the Holy Spirit. They also claim that the crucifixion of Jesus Christ had no meaning. The N.A.M. also argues that the Bible is evil because it would cause isolation
1882	God is dead	Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900)	German	Nietzsche was a mythological atheist who claimed that the God myth was once alive in the sense that people believed in it. According to him, the myth was now dead because it was no longer feasible (in context seen as communism). He claimed that people feel inadequate and need someone to meet their needs. The latter would be the creation of God that has no objective reality. Nietzsche brought naturalism to its logical conclusion: If man is trapped in a closed system, with no transcendent God in control, things like the truth, the moral and ethics are available as you want it. This is nothing more than what we decide for ourselves. These new values decided by the man himself, should be forced on others, even if they do not cooperate. According to Nietzsche traditional values maintain the weak who make no contribution to society. In the new order only the strongest will then survive. Man must be his own Superman that will not succumb to political pressure or any religious authority. He must move beyond good and evil in the process to establish its own value system. The latter will dominate all weaknesses and despise it in others. It is this approach on which Hitler based his actions (17, P74)
1937	School of Truth	Nicol Campbell	South Africa, Johannesburg	They serve the highest Being. The member can decide who is the supreme Being. They claim that God is not a Person. They say that God is everything and everything is God. All creatures and things are one, and have no separate existence apart from one another. Everything is part of God, according to them. They also claim that we are not created by another Being, but is part of God. 'You are God just as Surely as the drop in the ocean is the ocean.' The doctrine of the Trinity of God in their opinion is a delusion. Christ is an Example according to them. They claim that man himself can reach the level of Christ through self-development. They also claim that there is no evil. They speak not of Christ as the Son of God, nor as the Savior and Redeemer of mankind. They do not see Christ as divine, but only as the Example. According to them, Christ is divine just like other people are divine. They also claim that the crucifixion of Christ did not bring redemption for man. They therefore deny the concept of sin and see the crucifixion only as an example of a heroic deed. They also do not believe that Christ will return again
1943	Holocaust	Hitler	Europe	Fundamental atheism (Nietzsche), which the world regarded as a closed system, well suited Hitler's thinking. Also then the idea of the execution of the so-called weak, the mentally unstable and everyone who cannot make a positive contribution to society. He wanted his Third Reich to become a super nation, and thus executed about 12,000 Jews per day which led to more than 6 million Jews murdered. Ravi Zacharias says: 'Hitler inadvertently exposed atheism and dragged it where it reluctantly, but logically, went (17, p75). Survivors of the Holocaust such as Rose Price, testified that the Germans always told them that it happened to them because they killed

Chronological summary of sects and other major trends				
Origin	Name	By who	Where	Explanation
1954	Moonies	Sun Myung Moon (Shining Dragon Moon)	Korea	Jesus. 'Jesus hates you', they were snapped at (Video: Survivor Stories; Jews for Jesus). Moon claimed that Jesus appeared to him when he was 16 and that Jesus had commissioned him, to complete the work done by Jesus 2000 years ago. To form God's perfect kingdom on earth. Moon was locked up on more than one occasion for bigamy, adultery, theft, ritual sex with women in his church. He (Moon), however, claims that he is the savior of the world and would be sinless. According to Moon, Korea is a descendant of the ten lost tribes of Israel and that would be the birthplace of the 'Lord of the Second Advent.' He claimed that the new Messiah was born in Korea in 1920 (his birth year). Moon married his second wife in 1960 which would match the wedding of the Lamb described in Revelation 19. America would also be the visible stronghold of the Lamb on earth. Moon moved his movement's headquarters to New York in 1972 and settled himself there. The Moonies claim that man is the visible form of God on earth. God is not Triune for them. According to them Adam was supposed to marry Eve in the beginning, have perfect children, and then Adam and Eve would, with God, form the Trinity. Moon however, claimed that Eva was sexually seduced by Lucifer / Satan which brought about another trinity of Adam, Eve and Satan. Moon claimed that a third Adam would be needed to save and that he would be the chosen one to do it. Moon as the third Adam would then marry the perfect woman in order to form the final trinity with God. Their offspring would be perfect. According to Moon God started His new body on earth and withdrew His guidance to the Christian church. According to Moon, those who received his blessing received a sin-free seed. Moon claimed that his goal is to bring all Christians together in one family before the Lord returns. Moon's book 'The Divine Principle' was published in 1957 which he claims is directly from God. He would have received when he was in heaven for a period. They claim that Jesus was a man and not divine. According to Moon, Jesus was the second Adam which failed. Moon claimed that he (Moon, Adam 3) is the savior of the world, according to him Christ did not achieve his goal. Christ would die a premature death. According to Moon the Bible was written in codes and can only be understood if it is declared by his movement's documentation.
1954	Scientology	Ron Hubbard		Hubbard wrote the movement's book in 1950: 'Dianetics: "The modern science of mental health'. It is also marketed as the best method of physiotherapy and self-improvement. Two years later, he published the book: 'Scientology: A history of man. ' The movement offers self-improvement courses each costing a sizeable sum of money. Scientology has no doctrine or dogma. According to them each person has to decide how he/she wants to see and experience God. They claimed that there were many prophets and leaders who opened the way to God. Scientology sees Christ as a great philosopher of His time. Christ is on the same level as other so-called prophets and leaders. They claim that man is basically good and that he must care for his survival. Salvation through Christ and the second coming of Christ does not form part of their dogma.
1959	Transcendental Meditation	Maharishi Mahesh Yogi		Maharishi Mahesh Yogi established this in 1959. His name means: 'The great saint and master of Yoga.' He claimed that he gave his life for the spiritual revival of the world. TM is close to Hindu where physical and mental control is used to achieve a state of satisfaction and supposedly be united with the Absolute. Their goal is also to be God and as God. Maharishi said he had ceased to exist and became himself what exists. He states as follows: " I am the transmitter of ancient human wisdom and a manifestation of abstract being. I am that Eternal Being, I am THAT, and all this is THAT." This motion propagates Pantheism, in other words, all is one, all according to them an illusion. They claim that success is where the individual reaches a state where he supposedly can not be distinguished from God. The person reach their state of perfection.
1960	The Divine Light Mission (DLM)	Paran Sant Satgurudev Hans Ji Maharaj	India	They believe Maharaj Ji has replaced Jesus Christ as 'the Word became flesh' as described in John 1. Maharaj Ji is also seen as 'the fullness of Divine Love.' They also claim that unity can only be achieved in this life by it and DLM's system of meditation.
1968	Children of God	David Brandt Berg later changed his name to Moses, David.		Berg says he is 'God's prophet for the last days.' Through 'Mo Letters' control his followers. Dogma anti-parents, anti-state, anti-democracy. Claimed that the earth would cease to exist in 1993. Claimed that all those outside the sect is lost. To be saved you must follow Christ 100%, all handed over to the sect. If you are lucky you would have a chance to be one of the 144,000 who survive the tribulation

For a summary of the different sects see 'Introducing sects' <http://www.matthew28.co.za>

5. Notes

Pontius Pilate, Caiaphas and many others would not have been so famous if it was not the crucifixion of Jesus. Why do all remember and know them but Jesus??!!

If your neighbor visits you and claims to be God, would you believe him just like that? Absolutely not. Anyway, if you at point in time, believe that he could be God, you would not be able to handle it. Jesus, in which the whole being of God and bodily God (Colossians 2:9), had no choice but to reveal Himself to us in such a way that we could associate with it. This is what He did and He also confirmed it through His own life on earth and in the midst of the apostles, the eyewitnesses.

Jesus is our only way of salvation: In John 14 He pointed out that He Himself is God and the Father appointed Him as head over all people and the Church. See Ephesians 1:9-11.

How could Jesus, if He is not God, accurately predict His death and advise His followers then to love one another and continue to serve one another as He had commanded and taught and to bear the Gospel to His death? What benefit would it have for him? In many places in the Bible Jesus predicted the pouring out of the Holy Spirit, for example :

John 15 :26 : *" But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me."*

The message of reconciliation 2 Corinthians 5:19: *" that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation."*

It is clear that Jesus in his preaching and sayings wanted to make it clear that He is God. However, it was also very clear to see it through:

- All the Old Testament prophecies, which He brought to fruition
- The miracles that He Himself performed
- A Sinless life lived
- Angels who testified about Him
- His glorification that took place at various locations for more than one witness
- His enemies could find no fault with Him
- Miracles occurred in His name and still occurs today
- That He accurately predicted and fulfilled His resurrection
- That He appeared to many people after His resurrection (and still appear to people today)
- Before the eyes of many ascended to heaven.

Jesus, in which the fullness of the Godhead was (Colossians 2:9-10), was indeed faithful to His human limitations. He is the supernatural God who limited Himself to the natural, cosmic dimension. This enabled people to identify with him, see through His miracles that He is who He says He is and see that He is the Messiah foretold by the prophets.

He also did what no other mythological god or man created god could do, and that is to rise from death Himself. The mythological and other gods created and fantasized by man, rejected God's supernatural Revelations to the people saying that it is only one of the gods that you could choose from. For example, the Eastern mythology had a god for every day. Allah was the mythological god of war identified by Muhammad as a god to be worshiped. It originated from different sources and periods, such as the queen of heaven, the mother and wife of Nimrod, the son of Cush (Genesis 10). She was deified and worshiped after her death, the first Madonna, a beautiful blonde woman full of lust. She also carried for her son Nimrod, a son. In many mythological icons the image / picture / representation of the woman with the child on her lap with a halo around her head can also be seen. Krishna also presented her with her foot on the serpent's head. Notice this confusion because we can see in Genesis 3:15 the Lord said unto Satan (serpent) her offspring (Eve) shall bruise thy head. The Lord clearly referred to the Messiah, Jesus Christ, and not to anyone else.

It can also be passed to Babylon because Cush, the grandson of Noah who begat Nimrod, was the first king of Babylon. The Lord also warned, do not call me the names of Babylon. The

mythology originated about 800 years before Christ, was originally stories told by the wise. The offspring have deified these stories and drifted man further away from God.

It is also during the Hellenistic period (period about 600 years before Christ, when Greek mythology and Roman mythology mixed) that the confusion and aberration has become even greater. The open relationship that the Lord had with man was now completely masked by man himself to just another one of the many gods that you could choose from.

The Creator, Savior, and King of the universe indeed intervened and openly demonstrated who He was in line with His Word, the clearly paved the way to salvation through Jesus Christ. Jesus made sure that the Church was established on earth with authentic witnesses and the command to make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:19). The Foundation established ensured that man has a clear guideline that stands above lies. This reality has been prophesied about 700 years before Christ in Isaiah 28:16 that the stone in Zion (Jerusalem) will be laid and make foundation to foundation " *Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: "Behold, I lay in Zion a stone for a foundation, A tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation; Whoever believes will not act hastily."*

The Lord also left the Holy Spirit that reveals God's will and Word to man.

The Lord reveals to Himself to those who accept His Word, which is Jesus Christ, John 1:1: *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."* John 1:14: *"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."* In John 14:21 Jesus Himself says: *"He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him."*

The Holy Spirit is there to give us guidance. The main thing is that we make ourselves available to the Holy Spirit to do it. The only way to the truth is, faith in Jesus Christ. Jesus says in John 16:7-9: *"Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you."* ⁸ *And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: ⁹of sin, because they do not believe in Me;"*

During the reign of the Roman emperor Constantine (306-337 AD) he established religious freedom. The queen of heaven worshipers mixed their icon with Christianity to assist in the Trinity of God (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) disguised as follows. They worship the Father, Son and Mary. The queen of heaven is replaced by Mary (mother of Jesus) and will continue to be presented with the mother and child on her lap, with a halo around the head. Others believe that the successor of Jesus is a prophet, like Mohammed. Whatever the case, each time the Holy Spirit is moved out of the Trinity of God. In other words, the Truth, Jesus Christ, can not be revealed to them. They can not testify with millions of born-again Christians of the change that took place in their lives when they accepted Jesus Christ as Saviour. It is scary to read in 2 Thessalonians 2:9-12: *"⁹The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, ¹⁰and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. ¹¹And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, ¹²that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness."*

Romans 15: 21: *"but as it is written: "TO WHOM HE WAS NOT ANNOUNCED, THEY SHALL SEE; AND THOSE WHO HAVE NOT HEARD SHALL UNDERSTAND."* Also see Isaiah 52:15: *"So shall He sprinkle many nations. Kings shall shut their mouths at Him; For what had not been told them they shall see, And what they had not heard they shall consider."* Do yourself the biggest favor you can: worship the living God in the name of Jesus Christ

Dan Brown in his book Da Vinci Code, then try very diligently to disguise the divinity of Christ with so-called fiction based on the so-called truth. The perfect recipe for sure to confuse the unsure person further. This article is not intended to discuss Da Vinci Code, there are already many scholars who have pointed out the lies in this book (please see 'The Da Vinci Code Deception') and Dan Brown accused his wife as the one who conducted the research. The so-called Gospel of Judas is a good example of such heresy. Why would you rather believe in a document written more than 180 years after Christ than in the Gospels of the Bible itself which was written by eyewitnesses of the events themselves? These witnesses testified that they had seen and experienced in the midst of hundreds of other witnesses. The true God clearly revealed

Himself to man through prophecies, the prophecies fulfilled, Himself prophesied that He will rise from the dead, ascended to heaven, pour the Holy Spirit out in a visible way, and the Church established with this authentic witnesses who gave their lives for what they witnessed. Isaiah prophesied about 700 years before Christ

Isaiah 59:20-21: ²⁰"The Redeemer will come to Zion, And to those who turn from transgression in Jacob," Says the LORD. ²¹"As for Me," says the LORD, "this is My covenant with them: My Spirit who is upon you, and My words which I have put in your mouth, shall not depart from your mouth, nor from the mouth of your descendants, nor from the mouth of your descendants' descendants," says the LORD, "from this time and forevermore." This true Revelation certainly would not make sense if it was performed to an illiterate person in isolation, in a cave, or by a wiseman who causes followers to worship of an abstract doctrine, certainly not as part of a tangle of mixed religions where any god is actually acceptable! It also does not fit in with meditation processes to explore your own divinity.

The Messiah's resurrection from the dead, His public appearance to many people at different times and places, and His overt ascension to heaven in front of many witnesses, was the final stamp on any attempt to call it a lie. Those who still do not believe it, are lost. He proved that He is the only true God who has life and then logically the only God who gives eternal life to man. Does it not make sense that His angels took care of Him when He was on earth?

Matthew 4:11: "Then the devil left Him, and behold, angels came and ministered to Him."

Jesus' miracles that He performed, and the fact that it confirmed the coming of the Son of God (30, p135)

Jesus did not base His teaching on someone else, He based it on His own authority, (30, p136).

Jesus showed that He was not only God inspired like David, but also have Divine authority and also direct Divine action (30, p136)

When Jesus referred to God, He referred to 'Abba'. The latter is a term used by the early Jewish referring to the intimate relationship between a child and his father. The Jews of that time were very set on blasphemy. They would not address God directly, but only referred to 'The Holy One.' Jesus is the source of the intimate relationship with God that was not possible before. The question can be asked: What type of person can change the type of human relationship with God? (30, p136).

Jesus referred to Himself as 'The Son of Man.' This is a reference to Daniel 7 (30, p136).

According to Derek Prince (6, p156-171), the purpose of the Act is as follows:

- To expose sin
- To illustrate man's inability to save himself.
- To prepare man for the coming of the Messiah
- To protect Israel

It's all perfectly perfected by Christ!

We are with Jesus and the angels of one Father. Therefore Jesus calls us His brothers: Hebrew 2:11-18

Jesus, the Lamb: The providence of God from the earliest times through Melchizedek. Melchizedek himself was a prototype of Jesus, and Jesus Himself replaced him and left the Gospels for us. In Revelation those found written in the book of the Lamb is saved. Not the book of God. Jesus said with a reason to make people of all nations My disciples. The Lamb's disciples.

6. He will come again

The believer's gaze is drawn to the return of Christ. Reading Hebrew 1, we celebrate Christ, when we read Hebrew 2 we can see that Jesus also enables us to look beyond the physical reality at the spiritual, He came to save us. He called us His brothers based on the redemption He attained for us.

To serve Jesus Christ, we receive divine power:

2 Peter 1:3-4: ³as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, ⁴by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." (Also see Romans 1-2)

The believer looks forward to the heavenly homeland ahead:

Hebrew 11:13-14: ¹³These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. ¹⁴For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland."

The message of God through the ages still have to come to us today, and it is in line with His plan, the return of Jesus to earth. Prophets prophesy according to strengthen our faith and to place the focus in anticipation for the coming of the Kingdom of God.

2 Peter 1: 16-21: ¹⁶For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty. ¹⁷For He received from God the Father honor and glory when such a voice came to Him from the Excellent Glory: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." ¹⁸And we heard this voice which came from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain. ¹⁹And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; ²⁰knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, ²¹for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit."

We can only by studying the Word of God gain more knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ:

2 Peter 3:17-18: ¹⁷You therefore, beloved, since you know this beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked; ¹⁸but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen."

When we accepted Christ, He becomes the Light over darkness:

1 John 1:1-5: ¹That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life-- ²the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us-- ³that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. ⁴And these things we write to you that your joy may be full. ⁵This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all."

John 1:1-5: ¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. ⁴In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. ⁵And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. "

When the darkness is cast out by the Word of God, the faithful honours the Lord speaking to us:

Hebrew 12:25-29: ²⁵See that you do not refuse Him who speaks. For if they did not escape who refused Him who spoke on earth, much more shall we not escape if we turn away from Him who speaks from heaven, ²⁶whose voice then shook the earth; but now He has promised, saying, "YET ONCE MORE I SHAKE NOT ONLY THE EARTH, BUT ALSO HEAVEN." ²⁷Now this, "YET ONCE MORE," indicates the removal of those things that are being shaken, as of things that are made, that the things which cannot be shaken may remain. ²⁸Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. ²⁹For our God is a consuming fire."

Those who accepted Christ, can know that they will be alive through Christ:

1 Corinthians 15:22-28: ²²For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. ²³But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming.

²⁴Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power. ²⁵For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. ²⁶The last enemy that will be destroyed is death. ²⁷For "HE HAS PUT ALL THINGS UNDER HIS FEET." But when He says "all things are put under Him," it is evident that He who put all things under Him is excepted. ²⁸Now when all things are made subject to Him, then the Son Himself will also be subject to Him who put all things under Him, that God may be all in all."

No one knows exactly when the second coming will be:

Jesus spoke to His disciples after His resurrection Acts 1:6-8: ⁶Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" ⁷And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. ⁸But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

Do not let people tell you that God lied to us. He will come again:

2 Peter 3:3-11: ³knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, ⁴and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation." ⁵For this they willfully forget: that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water, ⁶by which the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water. ⁷But the heavens and the earth which are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. ⁸But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. ⁹The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. ¹⁰But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. ¹¹Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness,"

Jesus gave the assurance that believers have eternal life: John 6: 43-44: ⁴³Jesus therefore answered and said to them, "Do not murmur among yourselves. ⁴⁴No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day."

Jesus made it clear that the second coming will be long after the time when He was on earth. In Matthew 12:41 Jesus points out that it will occur further in the future. "The men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and indeed a greater than Jonah is here."

Jesus, the Temple of the Lord on earth, is the best place to be. Abide in Him and praise the Lord:

Luke 24:50-53: ⁵⁰And He led them out as far as Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. ⁵¹Now it came to pass, while He blessed them, that He was parted from them and carried up into heaven. ⁵²And they worshiped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, ⁵³and were continually in the temple praising and blessing God. Amen."

May the blessing of the Lord be with you as Moses and Aaron already blessed the people:

The priestly blessing: Numbers 6:24-27: ²⁴"The LORD bless you and keep you; ²⁵The LORD make His face shine upon you, And be gracious to you; ²⁶The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, And give you peace." ²⁷"So they shall put My name on the children of Israel, and I will bless them."

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