

# Yesterday, Today and Forever

John Vayler

# Introduction

**I**t has been in my heart for some time to combine and present a selection of Biblical topics in which, for one reason or another, I have had deep interest.

This is by no means an exhaustive study of the entire Bible, but rather a concise examination of inter-related events that span from before the Garden of Eden to the Second Coming of Christ.

The reader will notice that some of the presentations vary somewhat from traditional teachings. Progression in Scriptural interpretation when combined with the literal acceptance of what the Bible states has produced some interesting concepts that to some degree remove the conflict that has existed between religious and scientific factions.

It is my belief that the Bible is the Word of God and has been inspired by the Holy Spirit. Therefore what it contains is true. Truth is truth, and whether it is presented by religious or secular exponents there should be no conflict.

I believe that as society races on to fulfil its God foreseen destiny, more and more will be revealed to us until all confusion and discord disappears. This is a growth process. But how much time have we left?

Whether you agree, or choose to have reservations, in any or all of what is presented, is of course, your choice. Where there are differences in understanding I hope that this book will encourage a fresh interest and a re-examination of beliefs that are so dear to us.

**If this presentation achieves that, I will be thoroughly delighted. If anyone, through this work, is brought to a greater knowledge of our God and Saviour, I will be ecstatic. And if anyone were to come to a personal relationship of Jesus, our Lord, my joy would have no bounds.**

I hasten to add that any value in this work is attributable directly to the Holy Spirit, Himself, to Whom I am deeply grateful for the encouragement and insight I believe He has given me throughout this book.

Additionally, very little of this book is the result of original revelation or deduction, but rather it is the result of years of sifting through the works of authors too many to list.

**I would encourage you to find a comfortable chair and tune your minds and hearts into the wavelengths of the eternal and be prepared for an enthralling experience.**

**Enjoy.**



## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<b>IN THE BEGINNING</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>WHO IS GOD?</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>WHAT IS GOD LIKE?</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>REPENT AND CONFESS</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>THE SOURCE OF PROBLEMS</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>LOOK AT JESUS</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>IS THERE MORE THAN ONE GOD?</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>WHO IS GREATER?</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>WHAT ABOUT THE HOLY SPIRIT?</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>BUT WHAT DOES GOD LOOK LIKE?</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>HOW GREAT IS OUR GOD?</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>THE CREATOR IN ACTION</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>HOW LONG IS A DAY?</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>MORE FOOD FOR THOUGHT</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>PRE-ADAMIC EARTH?</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>OUR FIRST PARENTS</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>TREES OF LIFE AND KNOWLEDGE</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>ADAM'S COMPANION</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>MAN DECEIVED</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>THEIR EYES WERE OPENED</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>THE EFFECTS OF SIN</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>GOD CALLS ADAM</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>THE GREAT FLOOD</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>PARAPHRASE</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>POST FLOOD MAN</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>EVOLUTION?</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>WHY THE GREAT FLOOD?</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>CONTAMINATED GENES</b>	<b>27</b>

<b>MESSIAH FORETOLD</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>ARE THERE TWO MESSIAHS?</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>TIME GAP PROPHECIES</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>MESSIAH IS COMING AGAIN</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>THE RAPTURE</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>THE SECOND COMING</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>WHEN WILL THE RAPTURE OCCUR?</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>AT A TIME OF PROSPERITY?</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>PAUL'S ENCOURAGEMENT</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>THE WITNESS OF PERSECUTION</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>OVERVIEW</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>WHY MESSIAH CAME</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>APPROPRIATING MESSIAH'S SACRIFICE</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>GOD' AWESOME LOVE</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>THE GOSPEL</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>GIFT OF FAITH</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>ONLY ONE GOSPEL</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>THE POWER OF PRAYER</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>PRAYER OF SALVATION</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>GOD'S SPIRIT IN YOU</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>THE SPIRIT'S WORK</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>MANY SPIRITS</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>CONFIRMED BY THE WORD</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>THE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>TONGUES</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>PROGRESSING IN GOD</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>GOD IS THE INITIATOR</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>JESUS' OBJECTIVE</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>RECONCILIATION</b>	<b>50</b>



## In the Beginning

**T**his world, our solar system, and the very numerous stars, galaxies and constellations, that make up our universe, have not come about by chance, as if a huge explosion cast matter out like pieces of a celestial jigsaw puzzle, that came together somehow, to produce what we now see about us.

For those who believe in the Bible, much information is given regarding our origins, the whys and wherefores of our existence, and what the future promises.

The first book of the Bible, beginning at **Genesis 1:1**, states that, “In the beginning **God** created the heavens and the earth.”

This is confirmed by the Gospels which in **John 1:3**, say, “All things came into being through **Him**, and apart from **Him** nothing came into being that has come into being.”

So the Bible makes it very clear that we, and everything that exists, are the result of the creative wisdom and power of an awesome being referred to as “God.”

The universe may have experienced a huge explosion in its formative stages, but this was under the control and guidance of the Creator God.

His existence is not presented as a topic for debate, but as unquestionable fact, and within the Bible’s pages much is revealed about Him to Whom all creation owes it’s being.

## Who is God?

**D**ictionary definitions of “God” vary, with descriptions ranging from personalities to impersonal objects.

Hence “a god” can be an object or person that is worshipped, but the Bible refers to “**The God**” as a living personality, the Creator and Sustainer of all things, Who has revealed Himself to man, and Who continues to reveal Himself to all that seek Him.

**Jeremiah 29:13** states, “And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.”

Paul in **Romans 1:20** says, “For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made...”

The Jewish nation received much revelation of our Creator and they knew Him by various names:

**Adonai:** which means **Lord**.

**Elohim:** which is the plural of **El**, meaning **Almighty**.

They also knew Him by a name that they recognised as His personal name, of which they had such reverence that they refused to speak it, using instead one of the above titles. In the Hebrew language, which has no vowels, and in which the letter “J” is not found, the four letters:

“**YHWH**”

represented this sacred name, literally meaning:

“**The Eternally Existing One.**”

The Western rendition of this name is sometimes:

“**Yahweh.**”

When the letter **J** came into the English language in about the 14<sup>th</sup> century, **YHWH** was then rendered:

“**Jehovah.**”

Similarly, “**Jesus**” was obtained from **Yashua**, which has the literal meaning, “**God saves.**”

In the Old Testament of the Bible, God was recognised by several “redemptive” titles, which revealed His nature. For this study the appropriate title is:

“**Yahweh El Shaddai**”,

which literally means:

**“The Eternally Existing Almighty Provider Who Nourishes and Sustains.”**

The eternally existing God has provided all of Creation with existence, and He is continually sustaining and nourishing the work of His hands.

Writings in the **New Testament** support this:

In **Acts 14:15** Paul states, “...you should turn from these vain things to a living God, Who made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and all that is in them.”

And in **Acts 17:28** he says, “For in Him we live and move and exist.”

Also in **Romans 11:36**, “For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things.”

This is supported by **Hebrews 3:4**, “For every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God.”

So we see that the Bible reveals that there is a being Who has created what we know as the universe, and that our very existence depends on Him.

## **What is God Like?**

**A**t Mount Sinai, Moses asked God, recorded in **Exodus 33:18**, “I pray Thee, show me Thy glory.”

In other words, Moses asked to see what God looked like.

Moses, as a physical being, was referring to the physical characteristics of God. As God is Spirit, (**John 4:24**) His physical shape is irrelevant, so God in His grace gave him revelation of His **character**, the knowledge of which would be of far greater benefit to Moses than the shape of the Almighty.

The revelation that followed is one of the most profound given to us of the nature of our Creator God:

**Exodus 34:6-7**, “Then the Lord passed by in front of him and proclaimed, ‘The Lord, the Lord God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth; Who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, Who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin; yet He will by no means leave the guilty unpunished, visiting the iniquity of fathers on the children and on the grandchildren to the third and fourth generations.’”

The prophet Jonah, who is recorded in **Jonah 4:2**, received a similar revelation, and says, “...I knew that Thou art a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, and Who relents concerning calamity.”

## Repent and Confess

**I**t seems appropriate to give a word of explanation as to the means, or the pathway, of returning to God's favour after transgression has occurred.

Study of the Bible reveals that to acquire God's forgiveness, we are required to **repent** of our sins and **confess** our guilt to **Him** in order to appropriate our pardon.

**God has all knowledge. When we confess our sin to Him is not when He first knew of it. It is our heart attitude, and our relationship to Him, that He considers important.**

To **repent** means to turn away from that which caused the offence and make a change for the better.

**Acts 3:19**, "Repent therefore and return, that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord."

**1 John 1:9**, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

## The Source of Problems

**U**nrepentant sin opens the door to the devil and his influences.

It is important to understand passages of the Old Testament in the light of our New Covenant with Jesus.

In the translation from the original Hebrew, scholars tell us that the distinction between **permissive** and **causative** actions of verbs is sometimes unclear.

**This can give the impression that God Himself is putting harm or evil upon transgressors.**

Under the light of the New Covenant we see that when man chooses sin, a barrier is established between himself and God, and the door is opened for the devil's attacks.

**God permits the problems to come, but He does not cause them. It is our choice that is the heart of the matter.**

The following Scriptures throw more light on this subject.

**James 1:13**, "Let no one say when he is tempted (tested), 'I am being tempted by God'; for God can not be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt any one."

**James 1:17**, "Every **good** thing bestowed and every **perfect** gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, **with Whom there is no variation or shifting shadow.**"

**1 John 1:5**, “And this is the message we have heard from Him (Jesus) and announce to you, that God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all.”

**Acts 10:38**, “You know of Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and how He went about doing good, and healing all who were **oppressed by the devil**; for God was with Him.”

**John 3:16-17**, “For God so **loved** the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life, for God sent His Son into the world, **not to condemn** the world, but that through Him the world might be **saved**.”

**So we see that God is the source of life and blessings, and that only good and perfect things come from Him, and it is His hearts desire that all men would return to Him in order to appropriate His goodness and mercy.**

## **Look at Jesus**

**F**or further information on the nature of God, a brief examination of some characteristics of Jesus is helpful.

**John’s Gospel** reveals intriguing aspects of Jesus.

**John 1:1-3** says, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.”

**Verse 14** reveals, “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory...”

Jesus is the Word of God Who came forth from the Father and took upon Himself human form.

**Jesus claimed many times to be more than human. His earthly flesh was of human origin, but His Spirit, His true identity, was divine.**

Here are only some of the many references that state this claim:

**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 8:58**, “Truly, truly I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am.”

**John 10:10**, “I and the Father are one.”

When His disciples asked to see Father God, as a final boost to their faith, Jesus replied:

**John 14:9**, “...He who has seen Me has seen the Father...”

Paul in **Philippians 2:5-7** gives further light, "...Christ Jesus, Who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men..."

**His claim to deity was clearly recognised by the Jews who openly opposed Him for this reason.**

**John 5:18**, "For this cause therefore, the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him, because He not only was breaking the Sabbath, but also was calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God."

Jesus made a very pertinent statement that is recorded in **John 6:38**, where He says, "For I have come down from Heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him Who sent Me."

**The recorded life of Jesus gives a direct insight into the nature of our Father God. When Jesus healed the sick, and set free those who were oppressed, and when He taught of God's love for us, and when He rebuked the spiritual leaders for their hardness of heart, He was acting and speaking on behalf of God Himself. In other words, Jesus revealed the invisible God to us.**

This is confirmed in **Hebrews 1:3**, which says, "And He (Jesus) is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature..."

As we study the teachings and works performed by Jesus we receive revelation of God's nature, His character, how He thinks, what His desires are, and how He feels about us. So we see that, Jesus is like God, and God reveals Himself through Jesus.

## **Is There More Than One God?**

**T**he Bible clearly states that there is only **one** God.

Isaiah gives several prophetic revelations of the oneness of God.

**Isaiah 44:8**, "...Is there any God besides Me, or is there any other Rock? I know of none."

**Isaiah 45:5**, "I am the Lord, and there is no other; beside Me there is no God."

These and other references clearly show the **singularity** of God, but other Scriptures reveal a **complexity within the Godhead**.

**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, and there is no God beside Me.'"

In the book of Revelation there are identical references to Father God and to Jesus:

**Revelation 1:8**, “I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the **Lord God**, “Who is and Who was and Who is to come, the Almighty.”

Compare this with: **Revelation 22:13** – **Jesus speaking** – “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.”

God reveals Himself through **Isaiah 9:6** in the prophetic foretelling of the Messiah, “For a Child will be born to us, a Son will be given to us; and the government will rest on His shoulders; and His name will be called Wonderful Counsellor, **Mighty God, Eternal Father**, Prince of Peace.”

This makes the existence of a plural Godhead more certain, but there is more:

**Hebrews 1:8** - God speaking – “But of the Son He says, ‘Thy throne O God, is forever and ever.’”

**Genesis 1:26** states, “Then God said, ‘Let **Us** make man in **Our** image, according to **Our** likeness...’” clearly expressing a plurality in God.

And of course there is **John 1:1**, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word **was** God.”

So the plurality of the Godhead is firmly established by the Scriptures, culminating in:

**1 John 5:7**, which states, “For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.”

## **Who is Greater?**

**H**owever Jesus in **John 14:28** states, “...the Father is greater than I.”

Does that mean that there is disunity in the Godhead because of unequal position? **Not at all.**

When Jesus spoke these words, He was in human form, and according to **Philippians 2:6-7** “...although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but **emptied** Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant.”

Here we see that in order to become truly human as we are, **Jesus laid aside His Divine attributes**, and came to earth, by human birth, just as you and I.

However, once atonement had been achieved on the Cross and Jesus rose from the dead and ascended to the Father, He again received to Himself His full privileges:

**Colossians 2:9**, “For in Him **all the fullness of Deity** dwells in human form.”

By observing the tenses of the verbs in these Scriptures, we see that at the time of speaking, as recorded in the Gospel, Jesus, as a human, was lesser than the Father. Then, after the resurrection, He again regained His rightful place with the Father, although this time in His resurrection body.

This also explains Jesus statement in **Matthew 24:36**, “But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, **nor the Son**, but the Father alone.”

At the time of speaking, in His humanity, Jesus did not know of this coming time, but now, restored to His rightful place, we can be sure that He has full knowledge.

## **What About the Holy Spirit?**

**S**cripture reveals that the Godhead consists of Three Persons in perfect unity, to Whom we refer as The Triune God, or The Trinity.

There are several references in the Bible that illustrate this:

By association, we see a **Oneness** between Father, Son and Holy Spirit:

**Matthew 28:19**, “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.”

**John 14:26**, “But 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 that I said to you.”

**2 Corinthians 13:14**, “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.”

**1 Corinthians 12** contains much that shows the Holy Spirit’s deity:

**1 Corinthians 12:4-6**, “Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same **Spirit**. And there are varieties of ministries, but the same **Lord**. And there are varieties of effects, but the same **God**, Who works all things in all persons.”

Here we see the Trinity in action, and similarly in **Ephesians 4:4-6**: “There is one body and one **Spirit**, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; one **Lord**, one faith, one baptism, one **God** and Father of all, Who is over all and through all and in all.”

**1 Corinthians 12** talks of “one and the same Spirit” imparting His gifts to all believers. This clearly shows the omnipresent nature and deity of the Holy Spirit, as only God is present everywhere simultaneously, as believers throughout the world are receiving from Him.

And, of course, in **Genesis 1:2** we see the Holy Spirit involved in creation, as He was “moving over the waters.”

So we see that the Almighty Creator God has revealed Himself to us to be a Triune Spirit, Whom we recognise as consisting of three persons, God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Ghost.

To Him, we and the entirety of creation owe our very existence.

## But What Does God Look Like?

**D**oes God look like Jesus? What does the Bible say?

Moses saw a burning bush from which a voice spoke that changed his and his people's entire life and destiny.

He was on Mount Sinai and conversed with someone whom he believed to be God, and from whom he received the Ten Commandments and the full Law, which guided the Jewish nation until the Messiah came.

On Mount Sinai he asked to see God, but was told that this was not possible, as his humanity would not be able to withstand the glory.

**Acts 7:35-38 reveals that Moses was not dealing with God directly, but his communications were with an Angel who was conveying God's message and acting on His behalf.**

The prophet Ezekiel had an awesome vision of a man-shaped figure glowing and aflame with power and majesty, recorded in **Ezekiel 1:26-28**. But we are told that this was "the appearance of the **likeness** of the Lord." The vision was telling a story, and was not the actual image of the Almighty Himself.

Regarding His appearance, the Bible further states:

In **1 John 4:12** we are told, "No one has beheld God at any time...", and in **1 Timothy 6:16**, concerning God, "...Whom no man has seen or can see..."

These Scriptures clearly tell us that it is not for unregenerate man to observe God's person, but the Bible gives us some idea of the awesome magnitude of His being.

## How Great is Our God?

**J**eremiah **23:24** says, "Do I not fill the heavens and the earth?" declares the Lord."

**Isaiah 66:1-2** says, "Heaven is My throne and the earth is My footstool...For My hand made all these things."

Solomon, one of the wisest men that ever lived, had the revelation that Heaven, and the Highest Heaven, can not contain Him.**1 Kings 8:27**.

**The whole universe and we, are too small, either to appreciate or contain the fullness of the magnitude of our Creator God. His presence envelops His entire creation and extends, we know not how far, beyond.**

My personal revelation of Him is that **the entire universe is as an embryo within the Father's womb**. If that sounds like a contradiction, so be it, but I believe it paints a picture of His greatness.

So we see that Biblical revelation shows that there is a Creator God Who made all things that exist, and His nature is demonstrated very clearly through the Scriptures, especially in the life of Jesus.

Our appreciation of the greatness and benevolence of our Creator is obviously restricted by the smallness of our intellects and our inability to access the spiritual realm except as He permits.

I believe that these shortcomings are but temporary and our revelation of Him will be greatly increased following the return of Jesus and our gathering up to meet Him. This subject is covered in a later chapter.

## The Creator in Action

The first two chapters of the Bible give an account of some of the creativity of God.

Much comment has been made of this account, and much confusion exists in the interpretation of **Genesis chapters 1 and 2**.

**The following view is the result of accepting the Bible's literal revelation of itself:**

As we look at the Biblical account of the "creation of the earth," as recorded in Genesis, it is helpful to adopt a principle taught by a fellow Christian:

In our imagination we adopt a position that is somewhere on the surface of the earth at that time, deep beneath dense, thick, impenetrable clouds of matter, and then we look upward.

Now let us read the creation account of **Genesis 1** from this perspective:

The entire earth seems to be in turmoil, with no clear distinction between the elements of gas and water and solid material.

From in the midst of this confusion we hear the Divine command, "Let there be light." **Genesis 1:3-4**.

At this command the materials of the outer regions begin to settle and separate, the upper layers become less dense, and we see the light, of **the already existing sun**, begin to **dimly** filter through.

With the light of the sun now visible, the rotation of the earth becomes obvious, as there is distinction between day and night.

God now commands the water to separate, resulting in a layer of water in the upper regions and the rest of the water at the earth's surface, the two being separated by what we know as the atmosphere, referred to in the Bible as "heaven." **Genesis 1:7-8**.

The waters of the surface are now directed to gather to allow the emergence of land, **Genesis 1:9-10**, and vegetation begins to grow at God's direction. **Gen 1:11-12**.

At God's next command, there comes a clarity in the regions of the upper atmosphere, and what was formerly dim, diffuse light, is now seen in sharper focus, as the sun, moon and stars. **Genesis 1:14-19.**

With conditions on and surrounding the earth now habitable, God produces the fish, birds and animals, and lastly, man.

## How Long Is A Day?

**T**he Bible explains itself.

The first chapter of **Genesis** depicts the creation process to have occurred over a period of six "Days," and on the seventh day, **Genesis 2:2** says that God rested.

There has been much conjecture regarding the length of time referred to by the term "Day."

By comparing Scripture with Scripture the confusion disappears.

In **Genesis chapter 1** the Hebrew word used for "Day" is "**Yom.**"

This word "Yom" is also used in **Genesis 2:4**, referring to a period of **several** "Days" in the creation of the **earth and heaven**:

"This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day (**yom**) that the Lord God made **earth and heaven.**"

In the light of this revelation we see that when the Bible refers to a period of a "Day," in the creation account, it does not mean a period of 24 hours, but rather a period of **indefinite** length.

That is, the creation was conducted over six periods, or stages, the length of which is not disclosed.

Each "Yom" period may have been a 24-hour period, or several years, or maybe even thousands of years, we are not definitely told.

As further food for thought and prayer, the apostle Peter makes an interesting observation in **2 Peter 3:8**, where he says, "...With the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day."

## More Food for Thought

**A**dam and Eve are generally accepted as being the first intelligent occupants of the earth. That our human race began with them is without argument among Christians.

But was there intelligent life on earth before Adam? Was there a **pre-Adamic** civilisation, to which the Bible makes reference?

I do not believe that we can be dogmatic with the sparse information at hand, but here are some Scriptures that tend to indicate that our present earth **was** inhabited prior to the Adamic creation.

## **Pre-Adamic Earth?**

**G**enesis 1:2 says, “And the earth **was** formless and void ...”

Hebrew scholars affirm that the word translated as “**was**” can just as readily be translated “**became**.”

Combine this with **Isaiah 45:18**, “For thus says the Lord, Who created the heavens (He is the God Who formed the earth and made it, He established it and **did not create it a waste place**, but formed it to be inhabited)...”

This suggests that God’s original earth did not begin as a chaotic wilderness.

Now read **Genesis 1:1-2** using “**became**” instead of “**was**.”

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. And the earth “**became**” formless and void...”

**The inference here is that at the original creation God formed an earth that was perfect and without defect. Some cataclysmic event then occurred resulting in a devastated planet that again required the Creators touch.**

To support this argument, look at **Genesis 1:28** where God is addressing His human creation.

“And God blessed them; and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and **fill** the earth, and subdue it...”

The word “**fill**” is more accurately translated “**replenish**” which means “**to fill up again**.” The King James Bible actually uses “**replenish**.”

Compare this with God’s command to Noah after the flood:

**Genesis 9:1**, “And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill (**replenish**) the earth.”

The same direction is given here, after the flood had devastated the earth, and its population was reduced to Noah and his immediate family.

**In presenting this argument it is supposed that an indefinite period of time, maybe thousands of years, lies between Genesis 1:1 and Genesis 1:2.**

**During this period it is supposed that a race of beings occupied the earth and fell into great error which resulted in the devastation of the planet.**

Read **Isaiah 14:12-17** and **Ezekiel 28.1-19**. Here we have accounts of spiritual beings that may have been involved in the destruction of the pre-Adamic civilisation. As spirits they would have survived the cataclysm, and would have been present with Adam, and are here now in our present time.

This is an interesting subject, but as said before, the references are not so clear as to make the issue beyond doubt, and indeed different interpretations abound.

Paul says, in **1 Corinthians 13:12**, “For now we see as in a mirror dimly, but then face to face...”

To be absolutely dogmatic about every aspect of the Scriptures we will have to wait for the fulfilment of the “**blessed hope**,” about which more will be said at a later stage. **Titus 2:13**.

The reader is encouraged to delve into the Scriptures for him/herself. The Bible is divinely authored and much of its meaning can only be appreciated by direct revelation from the Author, the Holy Spirit Himself. As we read it is advisable that we ask Him to shine His light on our efforts to render them effective.

## **Our First Parents**

**A**dam and Eve, mankind’s original representatives, received from God the authority to occupy and develop the earth, and to be the dominant specie over all of God’s creation.

This is stated in **Genesis 1:26-28**, “Then God said, ‘Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness, and let them **rule** over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.’”

And God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him, male and female He created them.

And God blessed them, and God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply, and fill (**replenish**) the earth, and **subdue** it, and **rule** over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.’”

God placed man on the earth as the ruler of His creation, and we are told that for food a vegetarian diet was originally provided.

**Genesis 1:29**, “Then God said, ‘Behold, I have given you every plant bearing seed that is on the surface of all the earth, and every tree that has fruit yielding seed, it shall be food for you.’”

Compare this with God's command to Noah **after** the flood, "Every moving thing that is alive shall be food for you; I give it all to you, as I gave the green plant." **Genesis 9:3**

It can be argued that the flood destroyed certain plant species that provided essential nutrients now obtained from animal life, and hence the change of diet.

## **Trees of Life and Knowledge**

**I**n addition, God placed two other trees in the Garden of Eden:

**Genesis 2:9**, "And out of the ground the Lord God caused to grow every tree that is pleasing to the sight and good for food; **the tree of life** also in the midst of the garden, and **the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.**"

**Genesis chapters 1 and 2** give separate and complementary accounts of the creation story. By superimposing one account on the other more detail is obtained.

It seems that the garden in Eden, planted by the Lord, was the source of the earth's vegetation. In this garden He placed Adam with the authority to rule over all creation. But there was one restriction. He must not eat from one of the trees.

**Genesis 2:16-17**, "And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, 'From any tree of the garden you may eat freely, but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you shall surely die.'"

When this account is combined with the possibility of a Pre-Adamic civilisation that had been wiped out, understanding is clearer.

It seems that Adam was only aware of his Creator God and his immediate physical surroundings. He probably had no knowledge of the presence of the rebellious spirits that had caused the destruction of the previous earth.

In some way that we do not fully understand, the eating of the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil would have given him an awareness, or understanding, that he was surrounded by ungodly influences.

This Scripture supports that these existed:

**Revelation 12:3**, "...a great red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads were seven diadems. And his tail swept away a third of the stars of heaven, and threw them to the earth."

This tells of the revolt in heaven by Lucifer who was able to deceive one third of the angelic host to join him.

There is a theory that these fallen angels caused the corruption of the pre-adamic race. After the earth's original calamity, the spirits of these deceived beings became what we know as the demonic beings of our time.

It was God's wish that Adam live on the earth in obedience to Him and to fill the earth with a race of godly humans acknowledging their Creator.

## **Adam's Companion**

**T**o enable Adam to do this God provided him with a mate. **Genesis 2:18**, "Then the Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone, I will make him a helper suitable for him."

**Genesis 2:22-24**, "And the Lord God fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man. And the man said, 'This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh, she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of man.' For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they shall become one flesh."

And so was formed Eve who was to become the mother of all mankind.

## Man Deceived

The devil, through the disguise of a serpent, presented Eve with the lie that has not changed through the ages even to our present time.

With reference to eating of the forbidden fruit, he said to her in **Genesis 3:4-5**, "...You surely shall not die! For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and **you will be like God**, knowing good and evil."

This lie is presented in our present time through the New Age movement, which entices people to "discover the god within themselves," that they are themselves God.

The devil has always desired to be as God: **Isaiah 14:14**, "I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will make myself like the Most High."

It is this same lie that he presented to Eve, and she was deceived, and took of the fruit and ate, and she gave it also to Adam who also ate. **Genesis 3:6**

It is an interesting concept that Adam's transgression was, not as the result of rebellion against God's command, but rather that he saw his wife's dilemma at having sinned, and because of his love for her, he joined her in her error.

This thought is supported by **1 Timothy 2:14**, "And it was not Adam who was deceived, but the woman being quite deceived, fell into transgression."

This is a parable of the Son of God, Who loved His creation so much that He joined us in our fallen state to become our Saviour. More will be said on this later.

## Their Eyes Were Opened

**Genesis 3.7**, "And their eyes were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves aprons."

Before the "Fall", Adam and Eve saw themselves and their surroundings through the veil of God's covering. They saw everything from God's perspective - His Spirit reigned in their hearts and their lives were full of His fruits - all they did was ordered by love and peace and joy etc., but they did have a free will, they could choose.

The opening of their eyes refers to a change in their understanding, or perception. The reality of abandoning God's perfection and entering into a fallen creation, operating outside God's loving standards, was a bitter experience for them.

**The rebellion against God, which began in the spiritual realm and devastated the first earth, had now overtaken this world as well.**

Their first reaction was to hide their guilt, symbolically, by making aprons of fig leaves, but they could not erase the shame of having been tricked by "the father of

lies”, and they tried to conceal themselves from God, with Whom they previously had close, loving fellowship.

Now, instead of love and joy and peace in their hearts, fear and guilt and shame besieged them.

The devil was now their god, for they had chosen to believe him, and he and his ways began to reign in their hearts and in the hearts and lives of their soon coming offspring through whom the world was populated.

## The Effects of Sin

**T**hey experienced separation from God - **Genesis 3:8...**”and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of God...”

Their personal loving relationship was marred - **Genesis 3:12,**”the woman whom You gave to me, she gave me of the tree...” - he was already imitating the “accuser of the brethren.”

**Genesis 3:16** Birth, rather than being a joyful sharing in God’s creation, would become a painful experience.

**Genesis 3:17-19** The environment, instead of harmonising with man, would have to be subdued.

**Genesis 3:22** Man’s life span would be limited.

The effects of sin were transmitted to their offspring, and Cain, their firstborn, murdered his brother Abel. **Genesis 4:8**

From their family, evil spread throughout the whole world until in **Genesis 6:5,** “God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.”

**Genesis 6:11** “Now the earth was corrupt in the sight of God, and the earth was filled with violence.”

The results of Adam and Eve’s separation from God were inherited by their children and hence by all mankind. Holiness was replaced by corruption. It was impossible for corrupt man to regain his position before a Holy God, for everything he did was tainted by his newly acquired sin nature which was open to the suggestions and prompting of the spirits that had been cast out of the heavenly realms.

## God Calls Adam

**G**enesis 3.9, “And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, ‘Where are you?’“

And so began God's quest to regain His man, with whom He had planned to share His creation.

In creation, God revealed His wisdom and power. Now He begins to reveal the depths of His love and compassion.

**God** saw man's dilemma, that he was powerless to help himself, and His love provided the **Answer** - He foretold the coming of a **Saviour** for man.

**Genesis 3:15**, "And I will put enmity between you (the devil) and the woman, and between your seed and her seed. He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise Him on the heel."

**Messiah, the Seed**, would come and destroy the devil's authority in man's life.

The promise of redemption was made to all mankind through Adam and Eve. It was kept alive during the Flood through Noah and his family, and when Abraham received a covenant with God, his descendants, the Jews, became the means by which God was to bring the Saviour into the world.

God's Saviour of mankind was finally manifested in the form of Jesus the Christ, Who payed the price of man's sins by His death on the cross and thereby became the eternal bridge of reconciliation with our Creator God.

In the most awesome display of love the Almighty God took human flesh upon Himself in order to prevent the eternal loss of the man whom He created and with whom He longed to share His creation.

## The Great Flood

**Genesis 6:12-13**, “And God looked on the earth, and behold it was corrupt, for all flesh had corrupted their way upon the earth. Then God said to Noah, ‘The end of all flesh has come before Me, for the earth is filled with violence because of them, and behold, I am about to destroy them with the earth.’”

God gave elaborate instructions to Noah for the construction of an “ark” to house he and his wife, their three sons and their wives, and representatives of all the animal species of the earth.

To understand the operation of the Flood it must be understood that the structure of the earth then, differed to what it is now.

**Genesis 1:6-7** says, “Then God said, ‘Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.’ And God made the expanse (sky), and separated the waters which were below the expanse from the waters which were above the expanse, and it was so.”

The earth, from the beginning, contained vast amounts of water. From a literal acceptance of what the Bible unfolds, we see that as well as on the surface, there was water below the ground and in the upper atmosphere.

**Genesis 7:11**, “...all the fountains of the great deep burst open, and the floodgates of the sky were opened.”

The ecology of the entire earth was vastly changed.

**Genesis 2:5-6** reveals, in part, the earth **before** the flood. “...the Lord God had not sent rain upon the earth...but a mist used to **rise from** the earth and water the whole surface of the ground.”

Then, **during** the Flood in **Genesis 7:12**, we see, “And the **rain fell upon** the earth for forty days and forty nights.”

Take this together with what **Genesis 8:2** shows as the Flood is brought to an end: “Also the fountains of the deep and the floodgates of the sky were closed, and the rain from the sky was restrained.”

Also **Genesis 9:13**, “I set My bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a sign of a covenant between Me and the earth.”

## Paraphrase

**A** paraphrase of the above produces the following:

Before the Flood a canopy of water in the upper atmosphere surrounded the

earth. This differed from clouds in that it was transparent, permitting the stars, moon and sun to be seen clearly.

Additionally, the crust, or outer layer of the earth, formed a relatively smooth surface, below which there was much water.

We are not told what means God used to initiate the Flood. Possibly a great asteroid passed close by, or maybe even collided with the earth.

This great trauma resulted in the collapse of the surface crust, a tilt in the earth's axis and the deposition of the vast upper atmospheric waters to the surface. As the earth's crust gradually subsided, the surface formed into great depressions that became the oceans, into which the atmospheric, as well as, previously subterranean, waters gathered.

Clouds now floated in the sky, and as a result of rain and sunshine, for the first time the rainbow was seen.

## **Post Flood Man**

**T**he effect on mankind, as a direct result of these enormous ecological upheavals, was devastating.

### **Population**

The most obvious outcome was a reduction in population from possibly millions (we are not definitely told), to eight people, namely Noah and his wife, and their three sons Shem, Ham and Japheth, and their wives.

### **Lifespan**

Longevity was the next obvious victim of the enormous changes brought upon the earth. Look at the life spans of several of the early inhabitants:

Adam...	930years...	<b>Genesis 5:5</b>
Methuselah...	969years...	<b>Genesis 5:27</b>
Noah...	950years...	<b>Genesis 9:29</b>

The above are typical examples of pre-Flood life spans.

**Now observe the dramatic reduction of life span as a result of the Flood.**

Terah (Abraham's father)...205years...**Genesis 11:32**

Abraham...175years...**Genesis 25:7**

Moses...120years...**Deuteronomy 34:7**

Joshua...110years...**Joshua 24:29**

Possibly one of the causes of this great reduction in the life expectancy of man, was the removal of the layer of water from the upper atmosphere. This layer may have functioned as a filter against cosmic radiation and its harmful effects.

## Evolution?

The life expectancy of modern man is in the vicinity of 80 years. So we see that even with our medical advancements we have slipped significantly when compared with early post Flood man. This shows that mankind is not evolving into a superior species, as some suggest, but has greatly degenerated when compared to his forefathers.

Let us now see in greater detail why God brought the Flood on the earth with its resulting effects.

## Why the Great Flood?

If the coming Saviour would free the human race from the effects of sin and attain reconciliation with God, why was it necessary to once again destroy all life on the earth?

The Bible gives clues that remove the confusion.

**Genesis 6:1-2**, “Now it came about, when men began to multiply on the face of the land, and daughters were born to them, that the **sons of God** saw that the daughters of men were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves, whomever they chose.”

Who are these “**sons of God**?”

The answer is in **2 Peter 2:4-5**, “For if God did not spare **angels** when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgement; and did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a preacher of righteousness, with seven others, when He brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly....”

This receives support in **Jude 6-7**, “And **angels** who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgement of the great day. Just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them, since they in the same way as these indulged in gross immorality and went after strange flesh, are exhibited as an example, in undergoing the punishment of eternal fire.”

So we see that the “**sons of God**”, referred to in **Genesis 6:2**, are **angels** who disobeyed God in the early world.

## Contaminated Genes

It has been suggested by Biblical scholars that what the disobedient angels achieved was a contamination of the gene pool of the human race.

**Genesis 6:4** supports that their offspring were different: “The Nephilim (giants) were on the earth in those days, **and also afterward**, when the sons of God came into the daughters of men, and they bore children to them. Those were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown.”

God’s promise to Adam and Eve of a Saviour, necessitated that a pure descent from Eve would occur.

**Genesis 3:15**, “And I will put enmity between you and the woman, between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise Him on the heel.”

The reference here to “seed” clearly is one of descent, and refers to a descendant of Eve, bearing only her genes, uncontaminated by those of the spiritual transgressors.

“But Noah found favour in the eyes of the Lord.” **Genesis 6:8.**

To interpret this, it must be inferred that the gene pool of Noah and his family was uncontaminated, and they alone were chosen to survive the Flood and carry with them the necessary genes from which God’s promise of a Saviour would come.

To ensure the purity of the human gene pool, the transgressing angels were immediately cast into hell (**2 Peter 2:4**) to prevent a repetition of this offence and as a deterrent to others contemplating similar actions.

(That this offence did again occur is suggested in **Genesis 6:4** “There were giants in the earth in those days; **and also after that...**”

The re-occurrence was at the time when Moses led the Israelites from Egypt. The record is in **Numbers 13:33** “And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak...”. This report was made as a result of a spying expedition into the Promised Land, and resulted in a bad report by the spies which resulted in the nation of Israel wandering the wilderness for 40 years.

As only Noah and his immediate family survived the Flood, the presence of these giants can reasonably be explained through the re-occurrence of an angelic transgression.)

From Noah and his family descended all of mankind, including the Jewish race from which the Messiah came.

Because of the resultant purity of the human gene pool, when Messiah came in the form of Jesus, He was able to refer to Himself as:

“The Son of Man.” (**Luke 12.8**)

His Spirit is of divine origin, but His flesh was composed of human genes, descended from Adam and Eve, uncontaminated by the transgression of the rebellious angels.

## Messiah Foretold

The Jews, through the prophets, received much information of the coming Messiah.

### (1) His Divine Nature

**Isaiah 7:14**, “Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall bear a Son, and they shall call His name **Emmanuel**, which means, **God with us**. “

**Isaiah 9:6**, “For a Child will be born to us, a Son will be given to us, and the government shall rest on His shoulders, and His name will be called Wonderful Counsellor, **Mighty God, Eternal Father**, Prince of Peace.”

### (2) His Human Nature

**Isaiah 9:7**, “There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, on the throne of David and over His kingdom.”

**Isaiah 11:1**, “Then a shoot shall spring from the stem of Jesse (David’s father), and a branch from his roots will bear fruit, and the Spirit of the Lord will rest on Him.”

### (3) His birthplace

**Micah 5:2**, “And you Bethlehem, land of Judah, are by no means least among the leaders of Judah, for out of you shall come forth a Ruler, who will shepherd My people Israel.”

The Jews readily accepted these prophecies and acknowledged that they referred to the coming Messiah.

Other prophecies produced problems.

## Are There Two Messiahs?

Prophecies foretold that Messiah was to fulfil two seemingly conflicting roles.

### The Suffering Messiah

**Isaiah 53:4-6**, “Surely our sickness He Himself bore, and our sorrows He carried; yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities, the chastening for our well being fell upon Him, and by His scourging we are healed. All of us like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way, but the Lord has caused the iniquity of us all to fall upon Him.”

**Isaiah 50:6**, “I gave My back to those who strike Me, and My cheeks to those who pluck out the beard; I did not cover My face from humiliation and spitting.”

(See also **Psalm 22:11-18, Psalm 88:1-18, Zechariah 12:10**)

### **The Mighty King**

**Daniel 7:13-14**, “I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven one like a **Son of Man** was coming, and He came up to the Ancient of Days and was presented before Him. And to Him was given dominion, glory and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations, and men of every language might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which will not pass away; and His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed.”

**Jeremiah 23:5-6**, “Behold, the days are coming,” declares the Lord, “When I shall raise up for David a righteous Branch; and He will reign as king and act wisely and do justice and righteousness in the land. In His days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely; and this is the name by which He will be called, ‘**The Lord our righteousness.**’”

(See also: **Isaiah 9:2-7, Isaiah 11:1-10, Zechariah 14:3-4, Daniel 2:34-35**)

The Jews, after being subjected to oppressive rule for many years, were awaiting the coming King. Their years under Roman tyranny, and their religious blindness, prevented them from seeing the **Truth** when **He** came. **Their rejection and crucifixion of the Messiah fulfilled prophecy.**

At that time they did not realise that for Messiah to fulfil all relevant prophecy, two separate periods of time would be involved.

## **Time Gap Prophecies**

**T**hese are prophecies with **primary** and **secondary** fulfilments separated by a period of time.

### **Examples of Time Gap Prophecies:**

1...**Luke 4:18-19**, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are downtrodden to proclaim the favourable year of the Lord.”

This Scripture, as quoted by Jesus, is only a portion of the original prophecy recorded in **Isaiah 61:1-2**. Jesus stops in mid sentence, which in Isaiah goes on to say, “And the day of vengeance of our God...”

Jesus role at that time was to fulfil the first portion of the prophecy, and the remainder was for a later period of time.

2...**Daniel 9:25-27**. In this account of the 70 prophetic weeks there is an unstated pause between the 69<sup>th</sup> and 70<sup>th</sup> week - the church age.

3...**Daniel 12:2** Speaks of two resurrections, which are shown in **Revelation chapter 20**, to be separated by 1000 years:

- (a) The resurrection accompanying the Rapture.
- (b) The resurrection at the Great White Throne judgement.

4...**Isaiah 11:1-10**. This is a progressive prophecy foretelling Messiah's ancestry and advancing to His millennial reign and the partial restoration of the earth.

Note: **Daniel 9:26** should be conclusive proof to the Jews that Jesus is the Messiah. It states that Messiah is killed before the destruction of the city and the temple, which occurred in 70 AD.

Prophecies foretelling Messiah's coming were not specific as to their time of fulfilment. The Jews missed their Messiah by expecting Him to appear fulfilling another role.

**When the Jews accept Jesus, He will actually be coming for the second time.**

## **Messiah is Coming Again**

**T**he coming of Messiah was foretold prophetically using primary and secondary fulfilment phases.

We have seen other examples of Time-gap Prophecies in the Scriptures. The Gospels and Epistles tell us much of Messiah's first visit. What is said of His return?

That Jesus will return is emphasised in: **Acts 1:11**, "and they also said, 'Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven.'"

And also in **John 14:3** Jesus said, "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."

**A study of Scripture regarding Jesus return reveals that this event also occurs in two stages.**

**Titus 2:13** speaks of the dual nature of Jesus return: "Looking for the blessed hope, and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour, Christ Jesus."

The **blessed hope** refers to the **Rapture**.

The **appearing of the glory** of Jesus refers to His **Second Coming**.

## The Rapture

**T**he Blessed Hope, or Rapture, is vividly described in **1Thessalonians 4:13-18**:

“But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve, as do the rest that have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. 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, shall not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first. 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. Therefore comfort one another with these words.”

This is the fulfilment of **John 14:1-3**:

“Let not your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. 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.”

This is also referred to in **Revelation 3:10**:

“Because you have kept the word of My perseverance, I will also keep you from the hour of testing, that hour which is about to come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell upon the earth.”

**These Scriptures speak of Jesus gathering His followers to Himself before His return to the earth is complete.**

At this time the following events will also occur:

- (a) **1 Corinthians 15:50-53** Our bodies are changed to immortal bodies.
- (b) **Philippians 3:20-21** We are told that our bodies will be changed to be like Jesus’.
- (c) **1 John 3:2** Confirms that we will be like Him.

The title “**Blessed Hope**” is appropriate because:

- 1...We are united forever with Jesus.
- 2...Our bodies are changed.
- 3...We are removed from the earth before the Great Tribulation.

## The Second Coming

In the “**Blessed Hope**”, we the believers, rise to meet Jesus before He actually reaches the earth – “in the clouds.” This event is quite different to the “**Second Coming**”.

Scripture tells us that Jesus physical return to earth is at a time of great conflict, and that He returns with His “holy ones” to establish His kingdom.

**Zechariah 14:3-5**, “Then the Lord will go forth and fight against those nations, as when He fights on a day of battle. And **in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives**, which is in front of Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives will be split in its middle from east to west by a very large valley, so that half of the mountain will move toward the north and the other half toward the south. And you will flee by the valley of My mountains, for the valley of the mountains will reach to Azel; yes, you will flee just as you fled before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. **Then the Lord, my God, will come, and all the holy ones with Him.**”

**Colossians 3:4**, “When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then **you also will be revealed with Him in glory.**”

**1 Thessalonians 3:12-13**, “May the Lord cause you to increase and abound in love for one another, and for all men, just as we also do for you, so that He may establish your hearts unblamable in holiness before our God and Father at **the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His saints.**”

**Jude 14-15**, “And about these also Enoch, in the seventh generation from Adam, prophesied, saying, ‘**Behold the Lord came with many thousands of His holy ones**, to execute judgement upon all....’ “

**Revelation 19:11-16**, “And I saw heaven opened; and behold a white horse, and He who sat upon it is called Faithful and True; and in righteousness He judges and wages war.

And His eyes are a flame of fire, and upon His head are many diadems; and He has a name written upon Him which no one knows except Himself.

And He is clothed with a robe dipped in blood; and His name is called The Word of God.

**And the armies, which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, were following Him on white horses.** And from His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may smite the nations; and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the winepress of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty.

And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, “King of kings, and Lord of lords.””

At the **Rapture** (The Blessed Hope), the believers are taken from the earth. At the **Second Coming**, Jesus returns with the believers.

The word **Rapture** does not occur in the Bible. It is taken from the Latin translation of “to snatch away,” or “to be caught up,” in **1 Thessalonians 4.17**, “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.”

The occurrence of the Rapture has a strong Scriptural foundation, and yet is not taught in many mainline churches.

For those who accept the Bible’s revelation of this topic there is great peace, hope and expectation, being aware that the Master’s return is at hand.

## **When Will the Rapture Occur?**

**T**his question is of great interest to many believers. What does the Bible say?

**2 Thessalonians 2:1-3**, “Now we request you brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together to Him, that you may not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the **falling away**, comes first, and the **man of lawlessness** is revealed....”

At the time this was written two conditions were required before the Rapture occurred:

- (a) The “falling away” had first to happen.
- (b) The “man of lawlessness” had to be revealed.

These two points, in my opinion, need further revelation from the Holy Spirit. But obviously they had not been fulfilled in Paul’s time.

## **At A Time of Prosperity?**

**1 Thessalonians 5:2-3**, “For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. While they are saying, “Peace and safety,” then destruction will come upon them suddenly like birth pangs upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.”

The suggestion is that the world will be in a state of false peace and safety, and possibly prosperity will abound.

This is supported by **Luke 17:26-32**, which gives the account of the days of Noah and Lot where eating, drinking, buying, selling, building, marrying etc. were abounding, suggesting prosperity. And also by:

**Matthew 25:1-13**, where all ten virgins were asleep. That is, they were at ease and not expecting the Lord. Also:

**Revelation 3:17**, “Because you say, ‘I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing...’” This strongly supports the prosperity theory.

**Matthew 25:13**, “Be on the alert then, for you do not know the day nor the hour.” Here Jesus confirms that His return is at an unexpected time.

## **Paul’s Encouragement**

**1 Thessalonians 5:4-6**, “But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that the day should overtake you like a thief; for you are all sons of light and sons of day. We are not of night nor of darkness; so then let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober.”

**1 Thessalonians 5:9**, “For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

These verses show that the “sons of light” will not be taken by surprise. We are to remain “alert and sober”, and He can be fully trusted to care for His family.

The work that God has begun in our hearts shall be brought to completion, not by the pouring out of wrath, since for us there is no condemnation (**Romans 8:1**), but by the removal of His church from a world that has firmly settled its allegiance.

## **The Witness of Persecution**

**In Mark 10:29-30**, Jesus said, “Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers and sisters or mother or father or children or farms, for My sake and for the gospel’s sake, but that he shall receive a hundred times as much now in the present age, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and farms, **along with persecutions**; and in the age to come, eternal life.”

Jesus here promises His followers to expect persecution.

This will be especially so after the Rapture for those left behind.

That the Thessalonians believed this is the reason for Paul’s second letter to them.

**2 Thessalonians 1:4**, “...we ourselves speak proudly of you among the churches of God for your perseverance and faith in the midst of all your persecutions and afflictions which you endure.”

These persecutions resulted in false prophecies to them, suggesting that their problems were a direct result of missing the Rapture and they were now experiencing the expected tribulations. (**2 Thessalonians 2:2**)

Paul assures them that the previously mentioned two conditions must be fulfilled before the Rapture could occur.

That is, the falling away, and the revealing of the man of lawlessness must first happen.

The persecution and martyrdom of post-Rapture believers is described in **Revelation 7:14**, "...These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

## Overview

**M**y belief, supported by my interpretation of Scripture, is that the Church and Antichrist will co-exist in his early reign.

Under his early leadership prosperity and peace will cover much of the earth and men will say “Peace and safety” and trade and build and marry.

I believe it is in this “quiet” time that the true believers will be removed - the ones who are watching and waiting with lamps full of oil, who open when the Lord knocks.

The removal of the Church heralds the change of Antichrist to show his true colours, and war, persecution and death will spread throughout the world.

The 144,000 Jewish evangelists are sent forth and make converts who in turn are martyred for their faith. (See **Revelation chapter 7**)

When all the converts are martyred – ie, no more believers remain on the earth (except the two witnesses - **Revelation chapter 11**) then the **Wrath of God** begins - see **Revelation 8** onwards.

Up to this time the earth has only been experiencing “birth pangs” - see **Matthew 24:8**.

The Wrath of God is culminated by the return of Jesus, Who establishes His Millennial Kingdom on earth, which is restored to great peace and fruitfulness for a literal thousand years.

See **Isaiah 11:6-10; 25:6-9; chapter 35; 65:17-25**.

## Why Messiah Came

**I**t is only of secondary importance to make a study of what we have just covered in the preceding pages.

What is of paramount importance is how to acquire for oneself what Jesus, the Messiah, came to give.

**Why did a member of the Triune, Sovereign Deity, take human flesh upon Himself and suffer, not only the most degrading and agonising death on a Roman cross, but also endure spiritual severance from the Father God?**

The short answer is that God did it for mankind because of His great love.

**John 3:16**, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.”

**John 15:13**, “Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.”

**Obviously God sees things differently to what we do.**

He declares in **Isaiah 55:8-9**, “For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways,” declares the Lord. “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.”

God’s vision of man must be vastly different to that of our own. His view is unhindered by mortal frailty. He is perfect in every way, from which stems the term, “**Holy.**”

To be “holy” means to be complete, or entire, not lacking in any aspect, but being totally perfect in wisdom, knowledge, power, love, justice etc, etc, etc.

God alone is “Holy.” He is so perfect in every attribute, that He can not be challenged in any matter whatsoever.

Whatever He does is right. His works are “goodness and perfection”, for only good and perfect things come from Him.

So we see a perfect God, encompassing a creation that has fallen from it’s perfect origins and descended into moral and physical decay.

Here arise so many questions and enigmas.

How can fallen mankind even faintly begin to appreciate the Almighty’s omniscient outlook on any matter? We can not. We are not able by our own cleverness, **for we are flawed.**

Only by accepting our complete need of Him, at every level, and believing what He reveals of Himself in His Word, the Bible, do we begin to grasp a minute portion of the awesome magnitude of One, Who is infinitely beyond measure from every perspective that we are able to imagine.

That “understanding” is also entirely the result of His goodness, His grace, as His Spirit shines His light of revelation on His Word and gives our hearts and minds the capacity to see beyond our natural, temporal state, and grasp straws of comprehension of the eternal realm. We must become as little children, humbling ourselves in the recognition of His greatness, and our complete dependence upon Him.

It is no mean thing for “man,” in the prime of life, possessing health, prosperity and all that the world offers, to acknowledge that he is but a passing vapour in the mist of time. Here now. Tomorrow? Who knows?

The acknowledgment of our need and dependence on God is more than what the wisdom of man can achieve. It is brought about by a sovereign act of the Creator, in grace and love offering Himself to us for our salvation.

## Appropriating Messiah's Sacrifice

**W**hen Messiah came, in the form of Jesus, He came to fulfil the Father God's will in everything He did.

Here are some Scriptures that clearly show the Father's will in the ministry of Jesus:

**John 3:16**, "For God so loved the world, that **He gave** His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

**John 4:34**, "Jesus said unto them, 'My meat is to do **the will of Him** that sent Me, and to finish **His work**.'"

**John 5:36**, "But I have a greater witness than that of John: for **the works which the Father has given Me to finish**, the same works that I do, bear witness of Me, that **the Father has sent Me**."

**John 6:38**, "For I came down from heaven, not to do My own will, **but the will of Him that sent Me**."

**John 9:4**, "I must work **the works of Him that sent Me**..."

**John 10:25**, "Jesus answered them, 'I told you, and you believed not: **the works that I do in My Father's name**, they bear witness of Me.'"

**John 12:49-50**, "For I have not spoken of Myself, but the Father Who sent Me, **He gave Me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak**. And I know that His commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, **even as the Father said unto Me, so I speak**."

**John 14:24**, "He that loves Me not keeps not My sayings: and the word which you hear is not mine, **but the Father's Who sent Me**."

**John 17:8**, "For I have given unto them the words **which You gave Me**, and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from You, and they have believed **that You did send Me**."

So we see the Father and His will revealed in the ministry of Jesus.

**When Jesus healed the sick, it was because the Father God desires to heal the afflicted.**

**When Jesus drove out demons, it was because the Father desires His kingdom of love and peace and joy to abide in all His creation and to drive out the transgressors that caused mankind's fall.**

**When Jesus rebuked the spiritually blind teachers, He showed the Father's desire to shine His truth upon His people.**

**When Jesus opened His arms and welcomed the little children to Him, the depth of the Father's love for all people became evident.**

It is this love that God offers to all that are prepared to take that step of faith and accept **His plan of salvation.**

**“Jesus” is God's plan of salvation.**

**Jesus, the Christ, the Son of the living God, took upon Himself the sins of all mankind, and payed their price on the cross on Calvary.**

Man, because he is flawed and corrupt, can not do anything to make himself acceptable before a perfect God.

Try as he may, mankind's best efforts are marred and inadequate, and at best he can only stand afar off and hang his head in despair, knowing that the gulf between himself and the Almighty can not be bridged by human efforts.

Man-made religion imposes many and varied works and penances on its followers in the vain hope of attaining reconciliation with God.

**Religion recognises man's lowly condition and attempts to atone for his unworthiness by the performing of many 'good works' to appease a perfect God.**

The Word of God tells us that the **righteous acts of man** are but **filthy rags** in the eyes of the Creator (**Isaiah 64:6**), and that by our works we are unable to make amends with Him Who dwells in unapproachable light (**1 Timothy 6:16**).

Man's position in making himself worthy before God by his own efforts is hopeless. It is impossible for sin-scarred, defiled and degenerate man to save himself.

## **God's Awesome Love**

**B**ut what is impossible for man, God is able to do, for to Him all things are possible.

God in His omniscience looked down upon His man and saw his hopeless situation, and His love reached down and provided the **Answer.**

**The Triune Deity, from before the advent of time, agreed that the Word would descend into the abode of mortal man, reveal the Father's will, and take upon Himself the guilt and sin of the world and pay its price on a cruel and uncompromising cross.**

Jesus took the sin of the ages upon Himself.

**Why?**

**To show the Father's love and compassion and become the Bridge between God and man for all eternity, in order to save man from eternal separation from the Creator.**

He became the sacrificial Lamb of God that bore the penalty of our offences by shedding His spotless blood on the cross.

How do we appropriate this sacrifice, this atoning, cleansing work of the Cross? By many good and arduous works of great difficulty, involving much self-sacrifice and deprivation?

No! There is only one way, and it is declared in:

## **The Gospel**

**G**ospel means "Good News." What is **THE** Good News?

It is that the fullness of God's plan for man's salvation is a **free gift**, which is acquired **not by works but by faith**.

**We are made right with God by believing that Jesus has payed the full price for all sin, for all time, and receiving Him, personally, as Saviour and Lord.**

We are all equal in the Almighty's sight. Individual ability or performance is of no avail. It is as Paul explains in **Ephesians 2:8**: "**By grace are we saved, through faith, and that not of ourselves, it is the gift of God, not through works, so that no one may boast.**"

**This act of faith renders us at peace with the Almighty. Our debt has been paid, not by our works, but by the blood of the spotless Lamb, Who took upon Himself the sins of the world. What we are not able to do, God did through His Son.**

## **Gift of Faith**

**A**s the Scripture shows, we are not even able to believe of ourselves, we need Him even for this, for the faith to believe in Jesus as Lord and Saviour, is also a gift from God, through His grace, His unmerited favour.

Well did Jesus say that we must humble ourselves, as little children, in order to enter the kingdom of heaven.

**Humility is not one of man's abundant natural attributes. We need much persuasion before conceding our inability to achieve anything by our own wisdom and ability.**

God knows us better than we know ourselves, and He alone has the answer to every problem.

## Only One Gospel

**T**he Scriptures make it very clear that God only has one plan of salvation.

He has established **only one Gospel**, and that surrounds the ultimate sacrifice, of Himself, performed by Jesus.

There are many voices in the world that claim there are many paths to God, but the Word of God declares that forgiveness of sins, reconciliation and peace with the Almighty can only be achieved through believing in and receiving Jesus, the Christ, as Saviour and Lord.

**There is only ONE WAY to God, and HE is JESUS.**

In the Gospel of **John 14:6**, Jesus emphatically declares, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me.”

This is supported by the Gospel of **Mark 16:15-16**, where He is recorded as saying, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. He who has believed and has been baptised shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned.”

**In this statement Jesus clearly shows the power and authority of the gospel.**

That the disciples understood that to be the meaning is shown in the following Scriptures:

**Acts 4:12**, where Peter states, referring to Jesus, “And **there is salvation in no one else**; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved.”

Also in **1 John 5:11-12** we are told, “And the witness is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life.”

## The Power of Prayer

**I** believe that no one is able to enter the kingdom of God unless someone has prayed and sought the Father on their behalf.

**This is how it works:** The Spirit of God prompts someone, who is a believer, to pray or an unbelieving person. When the believer obeys and prays, the Lord moves on the unbeliever’s heart and draws him in love to respond and receive Jesus as Lord.

**No one can be saved unless someone prays.**

**No one prays unless the Holy Spirit prompts them.**

**1 Timothy 2:1** states, “First of all then, I urge that entreaties, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men...”

The reason for this is revealed in **1 Timothy 2:3-4**, “This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, **Who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.**”

When this is combined with **John 6:44**, where Jesus says, “No one can come to Me, unless the Father Who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day,” we now see the full meaning of the Father’s arms extending His salvation to all men.

**That this awesome free gift involves the co-operation of mortal man to preach the gospel and to pray, is a sobering realisation that God has involved us in His plan of eternal reconciliation with Himself.**

Even then the salvation of the unbeliever is not certain, for his will is involved.

**God will not force anyone to accept His love.**

Man has a free will.

Because his will is “free,” God places no coercion on him, but instead draws him, in his heart, over a period of time, until the man is convinced of his need of Jesus and takes the necessary steps to acquire salvation.

**He may of course stubbornly refuse the grace offered him.** The choice is his. But God is always there prompting us to “choose life.” **Deuteronomy 31:19.**

The “**Life**” which God offers is **eternal.**

The price we are asked to pay, and the work we are asked to do is one and the same, **it is to believe in Jesus.**

This is clearly demonstrated in the Gospel of **John 6:27-29**, in which Jesus says,

**“Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man shall give to you, for on Him the Father, God, has set His seal.”**

**They said therefore to Him, “What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?”**

**Jesus answered and said to them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in Him Whom He has sent.”**

What is required of us is to believe that Jesus, the Son of God, has payed the price for our sin on the cross. He died that we may live.

The faith that rises up in our hearts is the result of the work of the Holy Spirit within us. He has begun the Father’s work in us and it is by His power that the darkness within our souls has been pushed aside and the light of the Gospel enters.

From the start He has called us to Jesus and ignited a spark inside us that we would begin to examine and learn about the Saviour and His awesome work on the cross.

The difference between someone that believes and someone who does not believe has to do not only with God working within the person's heart, but it also involves the person's response to that grace offered to them.

The response of a believer is to receive Jesus as Lord and Saviour.

His faith is proven genuine by the words of his mouth and the progressive assumption of a changed lifestyle.

## **Prayer of Salvation**

**H**aving believed in the atoning work of the Saviour, we now take the step to receive Him as our personal Redeemer and Lord.

This process is very simple. We follow the outline given by Paul in **Romans 10:10-11** which says, **“If with our mouth we confess that Jesus is Lord, and believe in our hearts that God raised Him from the dead, we shall be saved.”**

Using ordinary speech and simple words, we speak to the Almighty from a heart that is heavy with conviction of our need for His mercy. The following prayer is an example of a **“Salvation Prayer”** which if said with a **believing heart** ensures the eternal destiny of the speaker:

**“Holy Father God in heaven, I believe that Jesus Your Son died on the cross to pay the price of my sins, and that You raised Him from the dead to prove the truth of His claims. I can not save myself for I am sinful, and all I do is far removed from Your perfection. I need Jesus as My personal Saviour and Lord, and here and now I come to You and submit myself to You in all things.**

**Jesus, come into my heart and cleanse me with Your blood. Be my Saviour and Lord. Fill me with Your Holy Spirit and for all eternity lead and guide me in Your paths.**

**Jesus, I want Your will to be my will. I want Your ways to be my ways. I can not do it by myself, that is why I am asking for Your help in every area of my life.**

**Jesus, I need You. I want You. I love You. Now You alone are my Lord. I now trust You alone as My Saviour. I turn away from everything in my life that I recognise as sinful, and I endeavour to obey the prompting of Your Spirit Who now lives in my heart.**

**Thank You, my Father God, for accepting me now as Your son through faith in Jesus, my Lord and Saviour. For all eternity I will love and praise and honour You, for Your love and mercy and grace.”**

This is only an example of how to pray to receive God's gift of eternal life. Remember that as you pray, even at this early stage, it is the Holy Spirit that is guiding you, so speak what comes to your heart, and don't be afraid for it is the Father's love that is drawing you.

## God's Spirit In You

**T**he presence of God's Spirit within us is the most significant evidence we have, here and now, of the reality of God's promises regarding our salvation.

In Old Testament times the anointing of God's Spirit resided only on three classes of people:

1. The High Priest,
2. The Prophets, and
3. The King.

Now, in the time of the New Covenant, which has been brought in by Jesus death and resurrection, **every believer becomes a place of residence of the Holy Spirit.**

Scriptures support this:

**1 Corinthians 3:16**, "Do you not know that you are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?"

**1 Corinthians 6:19**, "Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit Who is in you, Whom you have from God..."

Jesus, in telling of His eminent departure, foretold the Holy Spirit's coming upon us:

**John 16:7**, "But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper shall not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you."

To prepare the disciples for what was to happen, Jesus gave the following instructions:

**Luke 24:49**, "...I am sending forth the promise of My Father upon you; but you are to stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high."

**Acts 1:8**, "...you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."

The fulfilment of these words is recorded in:

**Acts 2:1**, "And when the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place."

**Acts 2:4**, “And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance.”

The explanation of the dynamic effects, experienced by the believers, is given by Peter in,

**Acts 2:15-21**, “For these men are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only the third hour (9a.m.); but this is what was spoken of through the prophet Joel (**Joel 2:28-32**):

‘And it shall be in the last days,’ God says, ‘That I will pour forth of My Spirit upon all mankind; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; even upon My bondslaves, both men and women, I will in those days pour forth of My Spirit and they shall prophecy...’”

## **The Spirit’s Work**

**N**ow that we are reconciled to God and indwelt by His Spirit, we can expect the “supernatural” to become commonplace in our lives.

This is not a fearful experience, but rather exciting, with a degree of awe associated with the realisation that we now have a real contact with the Creator Himself.

How is this contact manifested?

The Bible is always our guide to all aspects of our life, and it gives much information regarding our Christian walk and interaction with the Holy Spirit.

## **Many Spirits**

**A**s has been discussed before, we know that there are many spiritual beings in our environment.

God Himself is spirit (**John 4:24**), and we are told that angels, His messengers, are spirit beings (**Hebrews 1:14**).

The reality is that a rebellion has occurred in the spiritual realm and renegade spirits now oppose God’s purposes and seek to deceive and lead God’s people astray.

The Bible warns us of this and gives the answer:

**1 John 4:1-2** says, “Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God.”

By this we are to understand that as we receive communications from spirits, often in the form of thoughts, we are not to blindly follow their leadings, but we are to question them as to their relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now that we are sons of God, through faith in Jesus (**Galatians 3:26**), we have authority in the spiritual realm to use the name of Jesus, to either worship the Father or to drive off deceiving spirits.

**Philippians 2:9-10** reveals, “Therefore also God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, that **at the name of Jesus every knee should bow**, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth.”

As Jesus stated in **Matthew 28:18**, “...All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.”

He then commanded His disciples to go to all the nations and spread the Gospel, but He cautioned them (**Acts 1:4-8**) to remain where they were until they received power from the Holy Spirit.

**It is important to realise that we are under the guidance and direction and empowerment of the Holy Spirit.**

With Jesus now returned to heaven to the Father, the Holy Spirit has taken His place and becomes our guide, comforter and strengthener.

**John 16:7**, “But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper shall not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you.”

Also **2 Corinthians 3:17** says, “Now the **Lord is the Spirit**; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.”

We are to be under the direction of the Holy Spirit in every area of our lives.

This is a joy, as He is gentle and loving, and understands us better than we know ourselves, and we can be confident that as we follow His leadings only good will result.

## **Confirmed by the Word**

**2 Timothy 3:16** strongly states that, “All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness.”

**Here we have the certain knowledge that as the Bible has been inspired by God Himself, the Spirit of God will never go against it in any of His leadings.**

Therefore we must acquire a thorough knowledge of the Bible as the foundation of our beliefs. **It is the reference to which we compare all spiritual prompting and revelations.**

We can be confident that the Holy Spirit will not contradict His own words, and our relationship with Him is such that we can freely ask Him for confirmation of what He says from His word.

**We are children of a loving Father, not a tyrant.** He nurtures and cares for us gently, with much grace and compassion as we progress towards spiritual maturity.

## **The Gifts of the Spirit**

**A**s Peter revealed to the bystanders at Pentecost, (**Acts 2:17-18**), the presence of the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers results in supernatural occurrences including prophetic utterances and dreams and visions.

In **1 Corinthians 12**, Paul describes the Gifts of the Spirit, of which he lists nine:

- 1...The word of wisdom.
- 2...The word of knowledge.
- 3...The gift of faith.
- 4...The gift of healing.
- 5...The working of miracles.
- 6...Prophecy.
- 7...Discernment of Spirits.
- 8...Tongues.
- 9...Interpretation of tongues.

He states that the Holy Spirit bestows all these gifts, and their purpose is “for the common good.”

The gifts of the Spirit are to help, not only ourselves, but also all around us.

They are for building up, not for pulling down. They are to encourage and make strong.

**1 Corinthians 12, 13 and 14** are very important in the lives of the believer. A thorough knowledge of their meaning is imperative to aid, not only individual growth, but also that of the Church as a whole.

Briefly, Paul states that in the use of gifts, **Love** for each other is of foremost importance, and we are to realise that individuals will receive different gifts just as the human body has different organs, to fulfil different functions but each being of great importance.

The proper functioning of the body requires it's every part to be present and operating well.

## Tongues

**M**uch has been said about the gift of “Tongues.”

My understanding is that Tongues is a gift from God, and even though it is listed as the least of the gifts, **because it is from God, it is of great importance** and must not be ignored nor misused.

The primary function of Tongues is to build up, or edify, the believer himself. It is an unmistakable manifestation of the presence of the Holy Spirit in the believer's life, and it is for the spiritual growth of the believer (**1 Corinthians 14:4**).

Primarily, Tongues is for our private communication with God, Who alone understands what is being uttered (**1 Corinthians 14:2**), but when used in public meetings it must always be accompanied by the gift of interpretation.

Of foremost importance is the realisation that all of the gifts are from God, through His grace, and not because of any quality we might have, and their purpose is to build up the Church, and not to inflate our egos.

## Progressing in God

**R**evelation 3:20, “Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If any one hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him, and will dine with him, and he with Me.

On receiving Jesus the resulting relationship is a two-sided fellowship in which Jesus desires to receive from us even as we receive from Him. He desires friendship and love even as we are hungry for more of Him.

In **Revelation 2:1-5**, Jesus shows that he is aware of the labours and good intentions of the Ephesians' church, but warns, “But I have this against you, that you have left your first love.” This clearly shows that works without love of Him is empty.

Our first responsibility is to maintain a vibrant, living relationship with our Lord.

**John 15:5**, “I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing.”

Abiding has the emphasis of personal, close relationship. Jesus instructs us that without such a lifestyle we can not be fruitful.

## God is the Initiator

It is important to realise that our relationship with God has been brought about by Himself. He sought us and gave us the grace to have faith in His Son.

**Ephesians 2:8**, “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.”

**John 15:16**, “You did not choose Me, but I chose you....”

When we feel the desire within us to draw closer to Him, we must not hesitate for:

**John 6:37**, “....The one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out.”

Our salvation and our resulting relationship with God is the Father’s will:

**John 6:40**, “For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him may have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day.”

## Jesus’ Objective

Jesus primary work on earth was: **1 John 3:8**, “....The Son of God appeared for this purpose, that He might destroy the works of the devil.”

Through His death and resurrection, Jesus effectively bruised the devil’s head (**Genesis 3:15**). That is, Jesus destroyed satan’s authority over man by paying the price of all sin on the cross and forever wiping away the associated guilt. This is dramatically portrayed in **Colossians 2:13-15**:

“And when you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions, having cancelled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us and which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him.”

## Reconciliation

The result of Jesus work was to bring about our **reconciliation** with the Father:

**2 Corinthians 5:18**, “Now all these things are from God who reconciled us to Himself through Christ....”

This reconciliation with the Father was the direct result of His love for us:

**John 3:16**, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” And also:

**1 John 4:10**, “In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.”

## **Life and Death**

**F**rom God’s perspective, “Life” is His presence, and “Death” results from separation from Him.

**Genesis 2:7**, “Then the Lord God formed man of the dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a **living** soul.”

Compare this with what Jesus told Nicodemus:

**John 3:3**, “...Truly, truly I say to you, unless one is born again, he can not see the kingdom of God.” And also:

**John 3:5**, “...unless one is born of water **and the Spirit** he can not enter into the kingdom of God.” Then in:

**John 20:22**, “...**He breathed on them** and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit.” This was to prepare them for the day of Pentecost:

**Acts 1:4-5, 8**, “...He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem but to wait for what the Father had promised.....for John baptised with water, but you shall be baptised with the Holy Spirit.....but you shall receive power after that the Holy Spirit has come upon you.”

**The Holy Spirit’s action in the New Birth is the same as that in Genesis, and that is to impart God’s “Life” into man.**

Without the Holy Spirit we are “**dead men walking**,” but when He comes into us we receive God’s life within us and we become **new creations**:

**2 Corinthians 5:17**, “...if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature, the old things have passed away, behold all things have become new.”

## **Now the Lord is the Spirit**

**I**t is important to realise that without the Holy Spirit’s empowerment we are to remain in “Jerusalem” until He directs otherwise.

In our New Covenant with God, now that Jesus has ascended to heaven, we are under the direct command of the Holy Spirit:

**2 Corinthians 3:17**, “Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty.”

The action of the Holy Spirit is to set captives free from darkness and instil into them the Life of God, which enables them to lead a victorious life, and to perform His works:

**Acts 1:8**, "...you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and in Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth." And also:

**Ephesians 2:10**, "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them."

God has already prepared what works we are to do. Our relationship with Him must be close so that by His Spirit we can receive instruction as to our daily walk.

## **Growth and Maturity**

**I**n the young Christian's walk the direction is not always clear. It is imperative that we stay in a place of Christian fellowship with mature believers who will shepherd, nurture, encourage, teach and help us in our growth – this is our "Jerusalem."

As we grow we become more sensitive to the Holy Spirit and sometimes hear His voice and obey His instructions. This brings great joy.

At other times when we do not hear Him but still have a hunger to do the works of God, this is achieved by co-operating with the leadership where we choose to fellowship. That is, we follow their God given direction.

It is important in our growth not to blindly follow the teachings of those who stand behind the pulpit, but to validate their teachings by personal study of the Word, and to seek further help through prayer and trusted friends if difficulties arise. As we mature we become more sensitive to the Holy Spirit Who becomes our Chief Guide as He illuminates the Bible for us.

In instances where we perceive differences between the instruction of the Spirit and our human leadership, we must not hastily take action and enter into strife, but as young believers we must spend much time in prayer, in study of the Bible, and in sharing with trusted friends who are more mature than ourselves, before stepping out.

Often our inner leading is not clear, resulting in confusion. We know that the Holy Spirit is never the author of confusion, and so we must pray and seek more guidance until our directions are clear.

All believers pass through these stages. We must not condemn ourselves when these situations arise, for they are but "growth pains."

## **Consider Yourselves Dead to Sin**

Regarding the inner conflict between our natural desires and the desires of our re-born spirits, Paul says much.

**Romans 6:4**, "...we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, in order that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of God, so we too might walk in newness of life." And also:

**Romans 6:6**, "... our old self was crucified with Him that our body of sin might be done away with...."

**Romans 6:11**, "... consider yourselves to be dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus."

**Romans 7:22-23**, "For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man, but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind..."

Our wills and attitudes will determine the speed at which we progress in the Spirit.

**We must guard ourselves against spiritual fanaticism and realise that the desires of our flesh all have a legitimate area of fulfilment, and are not in themselves evil.**

It is only when we gratify our flesh outside the parameters set by God that sin results.

For example, our desire and need to eat food and to have a mate, are good God given desires when satisfied within the boundaries of moderation and the married life, as outlined by the Bible. It is only when excesses of gluttony and sexual activity outside of marriage take place that sin is committed.

**Romans 14** and **1 Corinthians 7** are two chapters of the Bible touching these areas.

Our will and attitude will determine the speed at which we progress in the Spirit.

We all experience conflicts in our spiritual walk, but we are not alone for God has prepared the path for our victory and all we have to do is be obedient to Him.

## **The Battleground of the Mind**

The mind is the chief battleground. It is the frontline of all spiritual conflicts.

**Romans 8:6**, "For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace."

**2 Corinthians 10:3-5**, "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for

the destruction of fortresses. We are destroying imaginations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and **we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.**”

**Ephesians 6:12**, “For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world-forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.”

**Colossians 3:2**, “Set your minds on the things above, not on the things that are on earth.”

**Romans 8:13-14**, “.... If you are living according to the flesh, you must die, but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body you shall live.”

This is a growth process and takes time. The Holy Spirit helps us in our walk:

**Romans 8:26**, “The Spirit also helps our weakness, for we do not know how to pray, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.”

## **The Need For Prayer**

**H**ere we are directed to the need for prayer, even as Jesus prayed much to the Father while He was on earth.

Our victory in our walk will depend on:

- Setting our mind on spiritual things.
- Praying to God, not only for assistance, but sharing with Him every part of our daily walk.
- Always remembering that our old self has died to sin and we are now alive to righteousness.

These points are greatly overlapping, and in all of them the Holy Spirit is very much active, for He knows us better than we know ourselves, and He is always guiding and helping as we are sensitive to His leading.

Of one thing we can be sure:

**Philippians 1:6**, “I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.”

**1 Corinthians 15:57**, “...thanks be to God, Who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

**Romans 8:37-39**, “But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him Who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor

depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

So therefore, paraphrasing **Romans 8:31**, “Since God is for us, what does it matter who or what is against us.”

## Eternal Consequences

**T**he Almighty God encompasses all His creation, and declares us to be His sons, and co-heirs with Jesus, of all He has made.

He only requires us to remain strong in our faith and love of Him, Who has given the perfect example of love by dying on the cross for us, that we might have life.

**1 John 5:13**, “These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, in order that you may know that you have eternal life.”

## Conclusion

**T**his booklet is intended only as a very basic introduction to the Word of God.

Hopefully it will instil into the reader a desire to delve deeper into these matters.

There is much, much more in the Bible, revealing the greatness of our Creator, God, Lord, Saviour, Brother and Friend, than is covered in this very brief study.

Indeed the Bible urges us to go further:

**2 Peter 1:2** says, “**Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.**”

**1 John 5:20** says, “And we know that the Son of God has come, and **has given us understanding**, in order **that we might know Him Who is true...**”

**John 17:3** says, “And this is eternal life, that **they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ Whom Thou has sent.**”

**Colossians 1:9-10** states, “...we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the **knowledge of His will** in all spiritual wisdom and **understanding**, so that you may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and **increasing in the knowledge of God...**”

And Paul encourages us in **2 Timothy 2:15**, “**Study (be diligent) to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the Word of Truth.**”

**These Scriptures all have in common the stressing of the value of knowledge of God and of His Word, the Bible, and that blessings will abound to us if we are obedient.**

Jesus personally encourages us in **John 8:31** to continue in Him, the Living Word, “If you abide (live) in My word, then you are truly disciples of mine; and **you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.**”

The result will be a knowledge of the ultimate truth, as revealed by our Creator God Himself, which will guard us from all error, and provide us with that inner peace in the certainty of His Love overflowing toward us by His Spirit now living within.

Finally, a word of warning and exhortation:

**Galatians 5:1, “It was for freedom Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.”**

Therefore guard zealously the truth you hold in your hearts, knowing that you now stand on the firm foundation, which is the Lord Jesus Himself.

And to those who still have not taken that plunge into eternity, who are laden down with guilt and fear in the awareness of their own unworthiness, hear the words of Him, Whose love for us will never end:

**Matthew 11:28-30**, “Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart; and you shall find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My load is light.”

**John 6:37**, “All that the Father gives Me shall come to Me; and **the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out.**”

**1 Timothy 2:3-4**, “This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, **Who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the Truth.**”

Father, help them. Reveal Jesus to them. Draw them to Your Son, the one and only Saviour.

Pour out Your Spirit of love upon their souls and wash away all uncertainty and fear, and give them the grace to believe in Jesus and receive Him into their lives as Lord and Saviour. They can not do it without Your help, Father, even as we needed Your help and encouragement and love.

We cry out to You, Dear Lord, with the voice of Jesus, as He hung between heaven and earth:

Father, into Your hands we commit our spirits. **Luke 23:46**

**Amen.**

**Even so, come, Lord Jesus.**

**Revelation 22:20**

## **Postscript**

“Yesterday, Today and Forever” was first printed in January, 2001, in the city of Perth, Western Australia.

The author’s name is John Vayler, and his contact number is (08) 92793480.

The Scripture quotations in this study are largely taken from the King James Version of the Bible.

This book is **not for sale**, but is freely available to encourage and foster study of the Word of God.

**My Father God in heaven,  
Take this work and use it to the glory of Jesus  
Your Son and to the advancement of Your  
Kingdom.  
Amen.**