**WHICH RELIGION IS TRUE?**

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*[Unless otherwise stated, the King James Version (KJV) of the Bible has been for reference, but common modern words such as you for ‘thou’, ‘thee’ and ‘ye’ have been used, so that readers not familiar with the KJV Bible may find it easier to read. Mostly the New King James Version (NKJV) translation has been used as an alternate]*

The world has many religions. Some are based on the existence of a supreme Creator God while others are not. Then each of the religions has many different denominations. For example, Christianity alone has above 2,000 major denominations and 30,000 – 40,000 further denominations within them. After a little research one realizes that all these religions offer different salvation. Can all these religions be true? Can all of us pick and choose what religion and what salvation we want?

These questions lead to further questions. If there are so many different religions, then are there many gods working on earth, or is there only one supreme God? If there is only one supreme God, then why does He allow so many different religions to exist, often in conflict with one another? We need answers to these questions.

The truth is that there is a source that has answers to all these questions. But that source has not been properly understood. This book searches that source and provides proof that there is only one true religion and which one it is.

[The author comes from a background of Sikhism on his father’s side (a religion that has borrowed mainly from Hinduism but also some from Islam), and Hinduism because all relatives on his mother’s side are Hindus. He studied in a Christian boarding school. And he has discovered that he is of Jewish ancestry. So he has the ideal background to address this issue in depth.]

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**Introduction**

Most of us when growing through our teen years begin to ask ourselves and try to find the answers to some fundamental questions of life such as:

• Does God exist?

• Who and what is God?

• Did God create everything or is evolution correct?

• Who is Satan?

• Is there one supreme God or are there many gods? Does a supreme God have control over everything?

• Why was I born? What is the purpose of human life? Or is all that is required of human beings is to be good. But then, what does it mean to be good?

• Is there a true religion, the way of life that God wants all of humanity to live? If yes, then which is the true religion? Is it Budhism, Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, Shintoism, Sikhism or another religion? Or are all religions basically the same? The word religion means ‘way of life.’

• Holy book of which religion is the true infallible word of God? Is it the Koran, Mahabharta, Gita or Ramayana of the Hindus, Guru Granth of the Sikhs, the Bible or the holy book of another religion?

• What is salvation? Are only a few saved, or will all or a vast majority be saved?

• Is there life after death? If yes, then after death do the saved go to heaven, hell or some other place?

• Are we living in the 'time of the end'? Will all of humanity die? For the first time in its history, humanity has the weapons to destroy all life on earth.

• Can we know humanity's future?

Some try to find the answers to these basic questions through their own reasoning. Others seek guidance from gurus or ‘holy men’ of their particular religion. While there are many religions around the world, a growing number of people don’t believe in any religion at all. They think human beings don’t have to follow any religion, because they believe that humanity is basically good and that humans should live a ‘good life’ without harming any one. This ‘religion’ is also known as ‘secular humanism.’

However the idea that all humans can live basically good lives is impractical for several reasons:

1. Humans generally cannot agree on what it means to be good. Some may think some action to be good whereas others may think the same action to be evil. All religions of the world differ from each other in what they believe to be good, though they may have agreement on a few points. It’s said that more wars in the history of mankind have been fought over religion than any other cause. Then religions differ from each other. And the non-religious have even more disagreement among themselves than the religious about the right code of conduct.

2. Peoples’ ideas of what is good may change with circumstances. Under normal living conditions, most may agree that stealing is not good. But that may change under famine conditions in war or natural disasters, especially when a person has a hungry family to feed.

3. A group of persons may agree on a code of what are good actions. But others because of need, greed, lack of work ethic, envy, or hatred of others may choose not to live by that code. They may simply choose to take what others have. For them ‘survival of the fittest’ is the rule to live by. Most evolutionists follow this philosophy of life.

4. Human beings have imperfect knowledge and mostly cannot predict the future outcome of their actions. For example, many argue that there is nothing wrong about sex between consenting adults. They do not need to worry about religion or any laws to make such decisions. So they may choose to give in to temporary pleasure. They realize only later how emotionally hurtful breakup from a sexual partner can be. Then there are more hurtful consequences if children and extended families and friends are involved. Many suffer other devastating consequences such as sexually transmissible diseases.

Humanity has tried to develop codes of conduct for what it means to be good. In fact there are whole religions or ways of living based on human reasoning alone without taking into consideration whether there is a God or not. Examples include atheistic communism, Budhism, Shintoism, Taoism, Confucianism and the like. These religions are not based on the belief that God exists. They do not claim that a God revealed the code of conduct to the founder of the religion. Rather the founder developed this code himself after some enlightenment or reasoning of his own.

Since these religions are the philosophies of men, they do not address the question: What is salvation for human beings? They do not address the question of life after death in any comprehensive way.

On the other hand, major religions of the world claim that God exists and He gave them the laws for human conduct. Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and Judaism fall into this category. Sikhism claims that a supreme God exists, but does not claim direct revelation from Him to their gurus. These religions that claim that God exists and gave them the basic tenets of their religion, also address the question of life after death in some detail. In other words, they describe what salvation is. Though the Sikh gurus do not claim direct revelation from the supreme God, they do describe what salvation is. Their ideas are basically the result of learning from Hinduism and Islam, and their own thinking.

**Life’s Ultimate Question**

Since there is no agreement on the laws humanity should live by between all the non-religious, the religions based on human reasoning alone without a belief or revelation from God or gods, and religions which claim revelation for their beliefs from a supreme Creator God, we are forced to first ask life’s ultimate question: Does God exist?

If the answer to life’s ultimate question is “Yes!”, then that changes everything. Because if a Supreme Creator God exists, and He has created everything, including mankind, then the ideas of the non-religious and those of the religions based on human reasoning alone can be discarded as non-authoritative, unless the Creator created mankind and left it alone to develop its own ideas on how to live.

On the other hand, if a Creator God exists, created mankind, and also revealed the laws mankind should live by, then our task in search for the truth is much simplified. A Creator God ought to know how His product, mankind, can be best maintained. If we can find that correct instruction manual for mankind from the true Creator God, then we can reject all others and use only that correct instruction manual to live our lives.

But it is not as simple as that. There is a related question: Is there one supreme Creator God, or are there many gods? If there is one Supreme Creator God in absolute total control of all creation, then our task of finding the right way to live by is made easy, because He would have only one right way to live, unless He is experimenting, or has left mankind to experiment and decide on its own what is the right way to live. But if there are many gods, as claimed in Hinduism, or two God Beings - God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ – according to some interpretations of the Bible, or three God beings in one or one God-being in three called the Trinity according to other interpretations of the Bible (though Judaism believes there is only one God Being which is based on the Old Testament of the Bible) then we have at least the possibility of different ways of life revealed and supported by the different gods.

We will sort through these issues in the next chapters.

**Chapter 1**

**Does God Exist?**

For most efficient search for the right ‘religion’ or ‘way of life’ we must begin by asking the ultimate question: Does God Exist?

The reason this search is most efficient is that if a supreme God exists then we can simply discard all religions based on the philosophies of men. These religions include atheism, secular humanism, atheistic communism, Budhism, Shintoism, Taoism, Confucianism and the like. We can also discard all ideas of the non-religious on what is the right way to live, of which secular humanism is a part. So let’s ask ourselves the ultimate question: Does God Exist?

We have very good news in this regard. We have plenty of proof that one supreme Creator God does indeed exist. The author will not provide proof here, because the Churches of God and many other churches have written excellent books or booklets on the subject available free of charge. Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong, through whom God founded the modern era of His Church, also wrote a booklet titled “Does God Exist?”

To find proof that a supreme Creator God does indeed exist, please order, read online or download your free copy of any or all of the following publications:

1. “Does God Exist”, By Herbert W. Armstrong, available at www.pcog.org.

2. “Does God Exist”, published by the United Church of God, available at www.ucg.org.

3. “Does God Exist”, by David C. Pack, Published by the Restored Church of God, available at www.rcg.org.

4. “The Real God: Proofs and Promises” by Douglas S. Winnail, published by the Living Church of God, available at www.lcg.org.

The author does provide proof of the existence of the supreme Creator God in two ways on his web site www.ChurchofGodMessage.com. First proof is provided by his booklet “*Is Evolution True*?”, which proves that man did not evolve. Since creation demands a creator because something cannot create itself out of nothing, and humanity did not evolve out of nothing leads to the conclusion that man and all creation that we see was created by a supreme Creator. Therefore the proof that evolution is not true and the existence of creation prove the existence of a Creator God.

Second proof is provided by numerous prophecies fulfilled as detailed in this booklet. The Creator God foretold great events in the history of mankind and brought them to pass in precise detail. That proves the existence of a God who has all the power to foretell the future of man and bring it to pass. And fulfillment of these predictions should be provable from world history. Since all these prophecies are contained in only one holy book, it also proves that that holy book is God-inspired. It is the true word of God.

Now since we can prove that God exists, we can discard all religions that are entirely the philosophies of men as a poor guide on how human beings should live. This means that we no longer need to waste time with atheism, secular humanism, animism, ancestor worship, atheistic communism, Budhism, Shintoism, Taoism, Confucianism and the like.

We may be forced to look at all these religions only if the Creator God has not provided an instruction manual for mankind, and has left humans to determine for themselves how they ought to live. But it would be an unenviable task because all these religions are different from each other, often in conflict on many points. That’s why humanity has been unable to reach a consensus on its own on what is the right way to live. And that’s why more wars have been fought over religion than any other reason because humans are trying to ‘save’ others by forcing them to accept what they believe is the true religion. We will have to look at the scriptures of the various religions anchored on the existence of God to see if we can reach a conclusion on this issue. And none of these religions except two have a clear code of conduct for living everyday life. The ones that do are Christianity and Judaism with the Ten Commandments being that code.

Since we can prove a Creator God exists, we need to answer the related question: Is there one supreme Creator God, or are there many gods? If there is only one Supreme Creator God in absolute total control of all creation, then our task of answering the question which is the right religion (or way of life) is made easy. We just follow the religion revealed by this supreme Creator God. But if there are multiple gods, then we have a much more difficult task on her hands.

**Is there More than one God?**

Let’s look at the evidence for the existence of more than one God.

Before looking at the evidence, we must ask related questions so that we can look for the right kind of evidence. The questions are:

a) Are there multiple gods, and how many are there?

b) Are all the gods in harmony with one another, implying that there is one supreme God over them all, or are they in discord and in competition with one another? Another possibility is that some are in harmony with a supreme God whereas others are in direct competition and enmity with Him.

We must look for evidence in two sources: in the universe and on earth. Here is what we find.

We find the universe in harmony, perfectly obeying the laws of physics, mathematics, chemistry and astronomy. This is evidence that there is one supreme God in control of all creation. He is the Creator of everything and has total control over it all, including all the power to sustain His physical laws of the universe. Laws must be sustained to continue functioning precisely and that demands that the Lawgiver has the necessary power to do so. That’s why the universe exists in perfect harmony. If this were not so, there would be chaos with celestial bodies colliding with one another and breaking up into smithereens. There would be chaos if multiple gods in competition with one another had created their own different universe. There would be constant war in order to take over or destroy the creation of other gods with each trying to become the supreme ruler of all the universes. At least that’s the only way we humans can imagine this cosmic competition to be like.

The earth follows a precise orbit in our solar system. Even a tiny variation in its movements would make conditions too cold or too hot and all life would end on earth.

Evidence of the universe in harmony that we know of seems to prove the existence of one Supreme Creator God. But there is also other evidence in the universe that points to chaos at least at some point in time in the past.

We need to merely look at planets and their moons in our solar system. From *EnchantedLearning.com*: “The surface of the moon is scarred with millions of impact craters. There is no atmosphere on the moon to help protect it from bombardment from potential impactors (most objects from space burn up in the Earth's atmosphere). Also, there is no erosion (wind or water) and little geologic activity to wear away these craters, so they remain unchanged until another new impact changes it…These craters range in size up to many hundreds of kilometers…An impact basin is an impact crater that has a rim diameter greater than 185 miles (300 km). There are over 40 impact basins on the Moon.”

Despite the erosion problems on earth, 165 impact craters have been identified so far, and more are being identified each year.

To a question on the number of craters on Mars, the *www.quest.arc.nasa.gov* web site provides the answer: “There are literally thousands of craters on Mars and they range in size from small features a few meters across to large basins such as Hellas Basin which are between 1300 and 4200 kilometers across. The Earth was cratered just as much as Mars was. The difference is that almost all of the craters of the Earth have been eroded away or destroyed by sea floor spreading. So, the oldest crater observed on the Earth is younger than the oldest craters on Mars.”

The U.S. Geological Survey web site provides information about craters on the surface of Venus: “The NASA Magellan spacecraft provided synthetic aperture radar (SAR) image coverage of 98% of the surface of the planet Venus…The database tables include the name (where applied), coordinates, diameter, modification state, crater morphologic type, and mean elevation of 967 craters interpreted to be of impact origin within the area of the planet imaged by the Magellan spacecraft between 1990 and 1994.”

From among the many moons of Jupiter, all of which are cratered, Callisto is the most heavily cratered moon in the solar system. The moons of Saturn bear similar scars of a space battle.

From the NASA web site: *http://solarsystem.nasa.gov/planets/* “Asteroids are rocky fragments…[and] can be found orbiting the Sun in a belt between Mars and Jupiter. This region in our solar system, called the Asteroid Belt or Main Belt, probably contains millions of asteroids ranging widely in size from Ceres, which at 940 km in diameter is about one-quarter the diameter of our Moon, to bodies that are less than 1 km across. There are more than 90,000 numbered asteroids.” It further describes the meteorites: “Where do they come from? They probably come from within our own solar system, rather than interstellar space. Their composition provides clues to their origins. They may share a common origin with the asteroids.”

In addition to the Asteroid Belt, at the outer edges of our solar system is the Kuiper Belt, dwarf planets and the Oort Cloud. According to planetary scientist Alan Stern, associate administrator of NASA's Science Mission Directorate, many more planets existed in our solar system than the eight major planets we now count (Space.com; “Astronomers: Earth like Planets may be very common”, by Robin Lloyd February 18, 2008).

The suggestion that at one time there were many more major planets in our solar system than the 8 we currently have is evidence that some planets in our solar system were destroyed at some point in time, perhaps in a war between competing gods. All that space debris can be found in the asteroid belt, the Kuiper Belt and perhaps the Oort Cloud and may have even resulted in the formation of dwarf planets in our solar system.

We have not been able to send probes outside our solar system. So we don’t have photographic evidence of destruction on surfaces of planets and stars outside our solar system. But strong evidence exists that a space war was fought in much of the universe.

The Washington Observatory has discovered a vast expanse of empty space in the northern sky that does not contain a single star. The reason why there is empty space in the northern sky is that the stars may have been destroyed in this titanic space war.

Thus what astronomers and scientists observe in outer space is not evidence of an evolving universe, but the wreckage of a monumental battle waged apparently between the forces of at least two gods in competition with one another.

There is also other evidence that the earth itself was involved in a cosmic war. That evidence is provided by the fossil record.

The fossil record shows that two different kinds of animals and creatures are buried in the earth in sedimentary rocks. The two kinds of creatures are found in different strata on the earth. They are **not** found buried and fossilized together.

The earth was inundated twice in two separate catastrophic floods. The pre-Adamic earth was destroyed in a global catastrophic which included flooding of the earth. That is why the world of dinosaurs, flying reptiles and other strange animals is found buried in sedimentary rocks and older coal seams. Then another Flood (in Noah’s days) buried the world of warm-blooded mammals, many other creatures and man in overlying sedimentary rocks. But sometimes the deposits from Noah’s Flood were laid down on original rocks and the Flood washed up the earlier deposits of the dinosaur world and laid them in an inverted order. So the fossil record on earth also provides evidence that there was a likely cosmic war between gods which included the earth as well.

We will reconcile these two pieces of evidence of a universe in harmony indicating the existence of a supreme God full in control, and also a universe that experienced chaos in a cosmic war indicating the existence of more than one god competing with each other after we examine the scriptures (or holy books) of various religions.

**Further Evidence of More than One God**

Further evidence for the likely existence of more than one god is available on earth. This is available from the different religions based on the existence of God. These include Hinduism, Islam, Christianity and Judaism.

All these religions differ from each other on many issues, including the basic question of what is salvation. So the end goal they are promising their adherents is different. This evidence will be provided later. But since these religions differ from each other, they cannot be the creation of one supreme God. This points to the existence of more than one God.

Another evidence for the existence of two God Beings, or even three God Beings is provided by the Bible. The two God Beings are known as God the Father and the Word who later became Jesus Christ. But these two God Beings are in perfect harmony with each other in the Bible, with Jesus Christ being fully and totally in subjection to God the Father. So the cosmic war that resulted in chaos and destruction on earth and the universe did not result from a war of competition between these God Beings, but between two or more other gods.

According to another interpretation of the Bible, there is only one supreme God Being who exists as three God Beings: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Others say it is three separate God Beings existing as One God Being. But nobody seems to be able to explain it logically at least to human beings. So they call it a ‘holy’ mystery. But another possibility is that this is a wrong interpretation of the Bible. This issue will also be examined in detail later as Islam points to it as being illogical.

The existence of multiple gods will be examined in detail later to see if there is a logical and acceptable explanation for it.

**Chapter 2**

**Why Only One Religion Can be True**

Many people argue that all religions are basically the same; just different paths to the same goal.

It will be proved later that all the religions based on the existence of God differ from each other. Can they all be true, even though inspired by the one supreme God? Or can they be true because they are inspired by competing Gods who offer different kind of salvation to their adherents?

The fact that all these different religions exist on one earth, and yet the earth is not subject to cosmic chaos that could lead to its destruction any minute by being thrown out of orbit and crashing into other astral bodies points to two or more competing gods working on earth but being unequal in power. One is greater than the others and capable of preventing the earth from being thrown into chaos. There appears to be one supreme God working on earth. And yet the other god or gods seem to be working against Him. So there appears to be competition between the gods on earth, unless the supreme God is allowing the other god to work on earth for some great purpose. This issue will also be addressed later.

Let’s not fool ourselves into thinking that all religions are true religions, just different paths to the same goal: salvation. The reason is obvious. The goal is different in each religion. Salvation offered by each and every religion is different from that offered by the others. This will be proved shortly from the scriptures of the various religions.

Each religion in its scriptures claims that the God they worship is the one true God, who is the creator and sustainer of the universe, including man. But if the one true God has created every human being on earth, why would He promise different kind of salvation to different peoples?

Some can argue that all religions are true religions and that their adherents will receive the salvation offered by that religion. But that is a ludicrous idea.

It is unreasonable to believe that the true God will offer different salvation to different human beings when all human beings look and function alike, think alike, have similar desires and aspirations. In the author’s family he is the only Christian. His brothers and their families are all Sikhs, and all his cousins on his mother’s side are Hindus. Do you believe when each of them receives salvation, it will be different for each member of the family? Such a belief is irrational. His brothers are of the same race, born to the same parents. Clearly the one true God is not going to offer different salvation to each of them.

Consider Catholicism, Protestantism, or Islam. Each of these faiths has adherents of all races, white, black, oriental looking and mixed races. And most of humanity belongs to mixed races anyway. All these faiths offer the same salvation to each adherent who qualifies for salvation. Clearly different salvation is not going to be offered to adherents of each of these religions based on race or nation. Hinduism and Sikhism also do not offer different salvation to their adherents based on race.

There is another religion, that of the Germans or Gnostics that claims the existence of multiple gods, and sheds light on how they view themselves in relation to all other peoples. The following is a quote from a book titled “*The Gospel of Judas*”, edited by Rodolphe Kasser, Marvin Meyer and Gregor Wurst with Commentary by Bart Ehrman. Ehrman makes this statement on pages 84-85:

“Traditional Christianity has taught, of course, that our world is the good creation of the one true God. But this was not the view of the Gnostics. According to a wide range of Gnostic groups, the god who created this world is not the only god and in fact is not even the most powerful or all-knowing god. He is a much lesser, inferior, and often ignorant deity. How can anyone look at this world and call it good? Gnostics saw the disasters around them – the earthquakes, hurricanes, floods, famines, droughts, epidemics, misery, suffering – and they declared that the world is not good…

“Some Gnostic thinkers explained this evil, material world by expounding complicated myths of creation. According to these myths, the ultimate divine being is completely removed from this world, in that he is absolutely spirit – with no material aspects or qualities. This divine being generated lots of offspring known as aeons who, like him, were spiritual entities. Originally this divine realm, inhabited by God and his aeons, was all that existed. But a cosmic catastrophe occurred in which one of these aeons somehow fell from the divine realm, leading to the creation of other divine beings who therefore came into existence outside of the divine sphere. These lesser divine beings created our material world. They made the world as a place of entrapment for sparks of divinity that they had captured, to be placed within human bodies. Some humans, in other words, have an element of the divine within them, at their core. These people don’t have mortal souls, but immortal souls, temporarily imprisoned in this capricious and miserable realm of matter. And those souls need to escape, to return to the divine realm whence they came.

“The myths narrated by the various Gnostic groups differed widely from one another in many of their details…But their overriding point is clear: This world is not the creation of the one true God. The god who made this world – the God of the Old Testament – is a secondary, inferior deity. He is not the God above all who is to be worshipped. Rather, he is to be avoided, by learning the truth about the ultimate divine realm, this evil material world, our entrapment here, and how we can escape.

“I should stress that not everyone has the means to escape. That is because not everyone has a spark of the divine within them: only some of us do. The other people are the creations of the inferior god of this world. They, like other creatures here (dogs, turtles, mosquitoes, and so on), will die and that will be the end of their story. But some of us are trapped divinities. And we need to learn how to return to our heavenly home.”

Thus the German nation believes that salvation is only for them because they have the divine spark in them whereas all other humans are like animals. When they die that is the end of their story just like cats, dogs or mosquitoes. Their belief, however, has been the cause of much cruelty practiced by them throughout their history. It also explains in practice how the Germans interpret their national anthem. The first stanza is translated into English as follows:

*“Germany, Germany above all, above all in the world,*

*When for protection and defense, it always takes a brotherly stand together.*

*From the Meuse to the Memel, From the Adige to the Belt,*

*Germany, Germany above everything, Above everything in the world!”*

Though the song was originally written to help unite the various German states into one, in practice now the Germans mean Germany ruling over and above all people of the world. They initiate world wars to try and take over the world. The coming Third World War will be no exception.

The German god seems to be promising them rulership of the earth above all peoples. They do not seem to realize how irrational their belief is because they can mix with other races. Does their religion mean the Germans who are of mixed race will not qualify for salvation? Origins of the German race seem to indicate that their original ancestor Asshur, grandson of Noah and son of Shem married a white woman from among the daughters of Japheth who had married an oriental looking woman. So every German is of mixed blood. And the rest of humanity has descended from Noah as well. They can believe whatever delusion they want to believe in.

People can also change their religion and do. Would God offer such people salvation based on the previous religion or the new religion? Or can we pick and choose what salvation we want?

Moreover, in one family there can be adherents to different religions. Would they all receive different salvation based on their beliefs and be separated from each other for eternity? Then one could change one’s belief. Would that person then qualify for a different kind of salvation based on current belief? Clearly this is all confusion. But if only one true Supreme God exists, then He cannot be the author of this confusion.

Do you know that all religions based on a belief in God believe that salvation is only for the good and faithful among the adherents of their religion and not for any others? If the true God is the Creator of everything, then God’s plan to offer salvation to humanity is a colossal failure, because according to the criteria for salvation in all religions, only a tiny fraction of humanity will qualify for salvation. Hindus, however, believe all of humanity could potentially qualify for salvation, except that they will continue to go through the cycle of births and deaths as 8.4 million creatures until they qualify. However, Hinduism has failed to take into consideration the fact that in the nuclear age all life could potentially be destroyed. That would certainly end the cycle of birth and death. Hinduism has also not taken into account the fact that certain species are extinct. So should the number of different creatures that one’s immortal soul will be born as be reduced from 8.4 million to some lower figure? Again there is no proof that such a thing ever happens to the supposedly immortal human soul. More on this later!

Clearly the theories that the one true supreme God (if only one exists) will offer different kind of salvation to different human beings according to their religious beliefs, or based on their race or nationality, or that salvation is only for a tiny fraction of humanity adhering to a particular religion are not rational. They do not make sense. If one God is the Creator of all humans, then He will not offer different kind of salvation to different humans, and if He is Almighty He would certainly have a plan to offer salvation to all of humanity with the potential for most to qualify to receive salvation. The only reasonable belief is that He is going to offer one kind of salvation, and one kind only, to all of humanity.

If the only reasonable belief is that if there is one supreme God and He will offer the same salvation to every human being, then the only rational conclusion we can draw is that only one religion can be the true religion, because all the others differ from it in the salvation they offer.

**Gods of Different Religions**

We still have to consider the issue of other gods offering different salvation to their adherents. Happily there is an easy resolution to this issue.

We will see that the gods of the 3 major religions, Hinduism, Islam, Christianity/Judaism (because both claim the same holy book, the Bible, as their scriptures; though Judaism adheres only to a part of that book, but that part includes the account of creation) claim that they are the Creator of the universe and everything in it. There can be only one Creator of everything. He can be the only true God. This leaves 3 possibilities for looking at these 3 religions.

a) The one true God had nothing at all to do with what is contained in the holy books of each of these religions and they are the philosophies of mere men. But since each of these scriptures directly quote one claiming to be the Creator, we cannot accept this explanation lightly. And we have begun with the premise that a Creator God exists.

b) The true Creator God inspired all these religions and is offering different kind of salvation to adherents of each of them. But we have just concluded that this does not make sense. This would be a recipe for disaster, and we have proof of it in the past about 6,000 years of human history in the wars over religion. A true Creator God would not create a creation designed with seeds for unending conflict in it.

c) The third possibility is that there is only one true supreme God who is the true Creator and the other two are diabolical liars. He has inspired only one true religion and the others are counterfeits of a diabolical liar or liars.

In summary, since the earth is stable and not subject to chaos and instant destruction means that it is controlled by one supreme God, even though another god or gods appear to be competing against that supreme God. The one supreme God would not inspire different religions offering different kinds of salvation to various parts of humanity. The only right conclusion we can draw is that there can be only one true religion inspired by the true Creator God. All others have to be counterfeits.

The issue to resolve then is which is the only true religion, and which ones are counterfeits? That requires an examination of the claims made by the gods of each of these religions that they are the Creator and how they prove their claims.

But first we must look at the evidence whether the three major religions differ from one another or not in the salvation they offer.

**Chapter 3**

**Religions Claiming to be Inspired by the Creator**

Five major religions of the world that are based on the existence of a supreme God claim to worship the Creator. These are Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Judaism and Sikhism. Here is proof from the scriptures of these religions.

***Islam***

The inspiring spirit being of Islam claims to be the Creator in the Koran. The following quotes are from the English translation of the Koran by M.H. Shakir and published by Tahrike Tarsile Qur'an, Inc., in 1983. [There are many versions of the English translation of the Quran available online. Reader may wish to check these translations for clarity of certain passages. Shakir’s translation is used throughout this book].

[2.21] O men! serve your Lord Who created you and those before you so that you may guard (against evil).

[2.22] Who made the earth a resting place for you and the heaven a canopy and (Who) sends down rain from the cloud then brings forth with it subsistence for you of the fruits; therefore do not set up rivals to Allah while you know.

[2.28] How do you deny Allah and you were dead and He gave you life? Again He will cause you to die and again bring you to life, then you shall be brought back to Him.
[2.29] He it is Who created for you all that is in the earth, and He directed Himself to the heaven, so He made them complete seven heavens, and He knows all things.

 [2.107] Do you not know that Allah's is the kingdom of the heavens and the earth, and that besides Allah you have no guardian or helper?

[2.117] Wonderful Originator of the heavens and the earth, and when He decrees an affair, He only says to it, Be, so there it is.

[2.255] Allah is He besides Whom there is no god, the Everliving, the Self-subsisting by Whom all subsist; slumber does not overtake Him nor sleep; whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is His; who is he that can intercede with Him but by His permission? He knows what is before them and what is behind them, and they cannot comprehend anything out of His knowledge except what He pleases, His knowledge extends over the heavens and the earth, and the preservation of them both tires Him not, and He is the Most High, the Great.

[3.18] Allah bears witness that there is no god but He, and (so do) the angels and those possessed of knowledge, maintaining His creation with justice; there is no god but He, the Mighty, the Wise.

[7.54] Surely your Lord is Allah, Who created the heavens and the earth in six periods [or days] of time, and He is firm in power; He throws the veil of night over the day, which it pursues incessantly; and (He created) the sun and the moon and the stars, made subservient by His command; surely His is the creation and the command; blessed is Allah, the Lord of the worlds.

[10.3] Surely your Lord is Allah, Who created the heavens and the earth in six periods [days], and He is firm in power, regulating the affair, there is no intercessor except by His permission; this is Allah, your Lord, therefore serve Him; will you not then mind?

These verses leave no doubt that the “Allah” of Islam claims to be the Creator and sustainer of the universe, the heavens and the earth and all things that are in them, and he is the most high God.

***Hinduism***

The *Bhagvad Gita*, the holy book of the Hindus quotes Lord Krishna of the Hindus as follows. We quote from the translation by Sir Purohit Swami [This translation is used throughout the book]:

In Chapter 3: There is nothing in this universe, O Arjuna, that I am compelled to do, nor anything for Me to attain; yet I am persistently active. For were I not to act without ceasing, O prince, people would be glad to do likewise. And if I were to refrain from action, the human race would be ruined; I should lead the world to chaos, and destruction would follow.

In Chapter 5: Knowing me as Him who gladly receives all offerings of austerity and sacrifice, as the Mighty Ruler of all the Worlds and the Friend of all beings, he passes to Eternal Peace.”

In Chapter 7: Earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, intellect and personality; this is the eightfold division of My Manifested Nature.

“This is My inferior Nature; but distinct from this, O Valiant One, know thou that my Superior Nature is the very Life which sustains the universe. It is the womb of all being; for I am He by Whom the worlds were created and shall be dissolved.

“O Arjuna! There is nothing higher than Me; all is strung upon Me as rows of pearls upon a thread. O Arjuna! I am the Fluidity in water, the Light in the sun and in the moon. I am the mystic syllable Om in the Vedic scriptures, the Sound in ether, the Virility in man. I am the Fragrance of earth, the Brilliance of fire. I am the Life Force in all beings, and I am the Austerity of the ascetics. Know, O Arjuna, that I am the eternal Seed of being; I am the Intelligence of the intelligent, the Splendour of the resplendent. I am the Strength of the strong, of them who are free from attachment and desire; and, O Arjuna, I am the Desire for righteousness. Whatever be the nature of their life, whether it be pure or passionate or ignorant, they are all derived from Me. They are in Me, but I am not in them.

“The inhabitants of the world, misled by those natures which the Qualities have engendered, know not that I am higher than them all, and that I do not change.”

In Chapter 8: “Arjuna asked: O Lord of Lords! What is that which men call the Supreme Spirit, what is man’s Spiritual Nature, and what is the Law? What is Matter and what is Divinity? Who is it who rules the spirit sacrifice in many; and at the time of death how may those who have learned self-control come to the knowledge of Thee?

The Lord Shri Krishna replied: The Supreme Spirit is the Highest Imperishable Self, and Its Nature is spiritual consciousness. The worlds have been created and are supported by an emanation from the Spirit which is called the Law.

“Matter consists of the forms that perish; Divinity is the Supreme Self; and He who inspires the spirit of sacrifice in man, O noblest of thy race, is I Myself, Who now stand in human form before thee.”

In Chapter 9: The whole world is pervaded by Me [thus Krishna claims to be omnipresent], yet My form is not seen. All living things have their being in Me, yet I am not limited by them. Nevertheless, they do not consciously abide in Me. Such is My Divine Sovereignty that though I, the Supreme Self, am the cause and upholder of all, yet I remain outside. As the mighty wind, though moving everywhere, has no resting place but space, so have all these beings no home but Me.

“All beings, O Arjuna, return at the close of every cosmic cycle into the realm of Nature, which is a part of Me, and at the beginning of the next I send them forth again. With the help of Nature, again and again I pour forth the whole multitude of beings, whether they will or no, for they are ruled by My Will. But these acts of mine do not bind Me. I remain outside and unattached. Under my guidance, Nature produces all things movable and immovable. Thus it is, O Arjuna, that this universe revolves.

“Fools disregard Me, seeing Me clad in human form. They know not that in My higher nature I am the Lord-God of all.”

In Chapter 10: Neither the professors of divinity nor the great ascetics know My origin, for I am the source of them all. He who knows Me as the unborn, without beginning, the Lord of the universe, he, stripped of his delusion, becomes free from all conceivable sin…I am the source of all; from Me everything flows. Therefore the wise worship Me with unchanging devotion.

“O Arjuna! I am the Self, seated in the hearts of all beings; I am the beginning and the life, and I am the end of them all. Of all the creative Powers I am the Creator, of luminaries the Sun; the Whirlwind among the winds, and the Moon among planets. I am the Beginning, the Middle and the End in creation… I am Time inexhaustible; and I am the all-pervading Preserver. I am all-devouring Death; I am the Origin of all that shall happen… I am the Seed of all being, O Arjuna! No creature moving or unmoving can live without Me… O Arjuna! I sustain this universe with only small part of Myself.”

After seeing a vision of Krishna in a part of his form, in Chapter 10 Arjuna says: “Thou art the Supreme Spirit, the Eternal Home, the Holiest of the Holy, the Eternal Divine Self, the Primal God, the Unborn and the Omnipresent.”

In Chapter 12: Those who worship Me as the Indestructible, the Undefinable, the Omnipresent, the Unthinkable, the Primeval [Thus Krishna claims himself to be the primeval source of everything, meaning the original cause], the Immutable and the Eternal…”

In Chapter 15 Krishna claims: “But higher than all am I, the Supreme God, the Absolute Self, the Eternal Lord, Who pervades the worlds and upholds them all. Beyond comparison of the Eternal with the non-eternal am I, Who am called by scriptures and sages the Supreme Personality, the Highest God.”

So in the Bhagvad Gita Lord Kirshna leaves no doubt about what he claims to be: The original primeval source of all life, creator and sustainer of the universe, the Lord-God of all.

***Sikhism***

In the Sikh Scriptures known as the Guru Granth Sahib, God the Creator and Sustainer of all is not directly quoted. But the scripture claims that there is only one Supreme God who has created everything, including the other gods of the Hindus such as Shiva, Vishnu, Brahma, Indra, Krishna and goddesses such as Lakshmi and Paarvati, and Budha. The Supreme Being is the Creator and Sustainer of all of them and the entire universe.

The Guru Granth contains the sayings of the Gurus about the Supreme God and not direct quotes from God. The Bible, the Koran and the Bhagvad Gita on the other hand all claim to contain direct words from God.

Here is a gist of what the Guru Granth [translation into English by Singh Sahib Sant Singh Khalsa MD ] of the Sikhs says about the Supreme God:

“One universal Creator God. The name is Truth. Creative Being personified [ another translation has: ‘the All-pervading Creator’]. No fear. No hatred [or ‘without fear. Without hatred’]. Image of the undying, beyond birth [or ‘Immortal, unborn’], Self-existent. True in the primal beginning, true throughout the ages. True here and now. O Nanak, forever and ever true.” (Japji 1:1)

“By thinking, He cannot be reduced to thought, even by thinking hundreds of thousands of times. By His Command, bodies are created; His Command cannot be described. By His Command, souls come into being; by His Command, glory and greatness are obtained. By His Command, some are high and some are low; by His Written Command, pain and pleasure are obtained. Some, by His Command, are blessed and forgiven; others, by His Command, wander aimlessly forever. Everyone is subject to His Command; no one is beyond His Command…one who understands His Command, does not speak in ego. (Japji 1:2)

“The Guru’s Word is the Sound-current of the Naad (those who praise God in song); the Guru’s Word is the Wisdom of the Vedas; the Guru’s Word is all-pervading. The Guru is Shiva, the Guru is Vishnu and Brahma; the Guru is Paarvati and Lakhshmi. Even knowing God, I cannot describe Him; He cannot be described in words. The Guru has given me this one understanding: there is only the One, the Giver of all souls. May I never forget Him!” (Japji 1:5).

“Only one as Great and as High as God can know His Lofty and Exalted State. Only He Himself is that Great. He Himself knows Himself…by His Glance of Grace, He bestows His Blessings (Japji 1:24).

P. 11: “You are the Primal Being, the Most Wonderful Creator. There is no other as Great as You. Age after age, You are the One. Forever and ever, You are the One. You never change, O Creator Lord. Everything happens according to Your Will. You Yourself accomplish all that occurs. You Yourself created the entire universe, and having fashioned it, You Yourself shall destroy it all.”

The Sikh scripture goes on to say in numerous other places that the Supreme God, the Creator and Sustainer of all is above all gods and He Himself knows Himself and no humans can describe Him. But the path to liberation or salvation is through the teaching of the Gurus and worship of the only one true God.

The Guru Granth is a compilation of hymns of the Sikh Gurus and some Hindu and Musllim poets describing the qualities of the one true Creator God and how He is to be worshipped and how salvation can be obtained. There is no doubt that the Sikhs claim to worship only one God whom they claim to be the only Creator supreme over all gods. The Guru Granth claims that all the gods of the Hindus, including Krishna are inferior gods.

***Judaism and Christianity***

The Bible of Judaism and Christianity claims to be the Word of God and directly quotes God in many places through the prophets. And the Ten Commandments were directly spoken by God and then written on two tablets of stone. The creation account is given in the very beginning of the Bible, and reads as follows in Genesis 1 (NIV):

“1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. 2 Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. 3 And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. 4 God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness. 5 God called the light "day," and the darkness he called "night." And there was evening, and there was morning--the first day. 6 And God said, "Let there be an expanse between the waters to separate water from water." 7 So God made the expanse and separated the water under the expanse from the water above it. And it was so. 8 God called the expanse "sky." And there was evening, and there was morning--the second day.

“9 And God said, "Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place, and let dry ground appear." And it was so. 10 God called the dry ground "land," and the gathered waters he called "seas." And God saw that it was good. 11 Then God said, "Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds." And it was so. 12 The land produced vegetation: plants bearing seed according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good. 13 And there was evening, and there was morning--the third day.

“14 And God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark seasons and days and years, 15 and let them be lights in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth." And it was so. 16 God made two great lights--the greater light to govern the day and the lesser light to govern the night. He also made the stars. 17 God set them in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth, 18 to govern the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness. And God saw that it was good. 19 And there was evening, and there was morning--the fourth day.

“20 And God said, "Let the water teem with living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the sky." 21 So God created the great creatures of the sea and every living and moving thing with which the water teems, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. 22 God blessed them and said, "Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the water in the seas, and let the birds increase on the earth." 23 And there was evening, and there was morning--the fifth day.

“24 And God said, "Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds: livestock, creatures that move along the ground, and wild animals, each according to its kind." And it was so. 25 God made the wild animals according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and all the creatures that move along the ground according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good.

“26 Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." 27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. 28God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground." 29 Then God said, "I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. 30 And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air and all the creatures that move on the ground--everything that has the breath of life in it--I give every green plant for food." And it was so. 31 God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning--the sixth day.”

Then in Genesis 2:1-3: “1 Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array. 2 By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. 3 And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.”

The Old Testament of the Bible is common to both Judaism and Christianity. Therefore, both religions claim they worship the true Creator God. The Bible has the most detailed account of actual creation than any of the other religions.

Thus we see all the major religions, Islam, Hinduism, Christianity, Judaism and Sikhism talk about the one true Creator God and claim that they have the true path to salvation. All except Sikhism claim to directly quote the Creator God Himself in their scriptures.

Because all these religions claim that their God is the Creator of everything, then can we choose any of these religions to follow? That would be acceptable if all of them essentially promised the same salvation. So before we can make a decision regarding which religion to follow, we must find out what is the promised reward for the devotees.

**Chapter 4**

**Salvation according to Various Religions**

To prove that the five major religions differ from one another, one very important way to do so would be to look at what they offer as salvation for human beings. Another way to prove that the religions differ from each other is to compare the instructions from each regarding how humans should live their lives to receive salvation.

It is important for us to compare the beliefs according to each religion from the scriptures of the religion rather than merely the writings of scholars. Unless the beliefs can be backed up by the scriptures, we cannot assume that the ideas of salvation according to scholars are backed by the God of that religion.

Let’s now examine from the scriptures what is salvation according to each religion.

**Salvation According to Islam**

Islam believes salvation means going to paradise [also called Gardens] and living forever and enjoying all the pleasures of the flesh: wine, women, food and song. And this salvation is available only to males. No such paradise is available for the female half of humanity. Those who are not granted access to paradise, burn in an everlasting hellfire. Though they feel the torture and agony of the hellfire, they are not totally consumed. So they continue to endure this torture forever.

*Reward is Gardens – paradise (with delicious food, drink, virgin companions)*

[2.111] And they say: None shall enter the garden (or paradise) except he who is a Jew or a Christian. These are their vain desires. Say: Bring your proof if you are truthful.

[89.27-30] O soul that art at rest! 28 Return to your Lord, well-pleased (with him), well-pleasing (Him), 29 So enter among My servants, 30 And enter into My garden.

[5.72] “Certainly they disbelieve who say: Surely Allah, He is the Messiah, son of Marium [Mary]; and the Messiah said: O Children of Israel! serve Allah, my Lord and your Lord. Surely whoever associates (others) with Allah, then Allah has forbidden to him the garden [paradise], and his abode is the fire [hell]; and there shall be no helpers for the unjust.”

[29.58-59] “And (as for) those who believe and do good, We will certainly give them abode in the high places in gardens beneath which rivers flow, abiding therein; how good the reward of the workers: 59 Those who are patient, and on their Lord do they rely.”

[37.40-49] “Save the servants of Allah, the purified ones. 41 For them is a known sustenance, 42 Fruits, and they shall be highly honored, 43 In gardens of pleasure, 44On thrones, facing each other. 45 A bowl shall be made to go round them from water running out of springs, 46 White, delicious to those who drink. 47 There shall be no trouble in it, nor shall they be exhausted therewith. 48 And with them shall be those who restrain the eyes, having beautiful eyes; 49 As if they were eggs carefully protected.”

[38.49-54] This is a reminder; and most surely there is an excellent resort for those who guard (against evil), 50 The gardens of perpetuity, the doors are opened for them. 51 Reclining therein, calling therein for many fruits and drink. 52 And with them shall be those restraining their eyes, equals in age. 53 This is what you are promised for the day of reckoning. 54 Most surely this is Our sustenance; it shall never come to an end…”

[39.20] But (as for) those who are careful of (their duty to) their Lord, they shall have high places, above them higher places, built (for them), beneath which flow rivers; (this is) the promise of Allah: Allah will not fail in (His) promise.

[39.73-74] “And those who are careful of (their duty to) their Lord shall be conveyed to the garden in companies; until when they come to it, and its doors shall be opened, and the keepers of it shall say to them: Peace be on you, you shall be happy; therefore enter it to abide. 74 And they shall say: (All) praise is due to Allah, Who has made good to us His promise, and He has made us inherit the land; we may abide in the garden where we please; so goodly is the reward of the workers.”

[44.51-57] Surely those who guard (against evil) are in a secure place, 52 In gardens and springs; 53 They shall wear of fine and thick silk, (sitting) face to face; 54 Thus (shall it be), and We will wed them with Houris pure [meaning virgins], beautiful ones. 55 They shall call therein for every fruit in security; 56 They shall not taste therein death except the first death, and He will save them from the punishment of the hell, 57 A grace from your Lord; this is the great achievement.”

[52.17] Surely those who guard (against evil) shall be in gardens and bliss 18 Rejoicing because of what their Lord gave them, and their Lord saved them from the punishment of the burning fire. 19 Eat and drink pleasantly for what you did, 20 Reclining on thrones set in lines, and We will unite them to large-eyed beautiful ones. 21 And (as for) those who believe and their offspring follow them in faith, We will unite with them their offspring and We will not diminish to them aught of their work; every man is responsible for what he shall have wrought. 22 And We will aid them with fruit and flesh such as they desire.”

[56.11-40] These are they who are drawn nigh (to Allah), 12 In the gardens of bliss. 13 A numerous company from among the first, 14 And a few from among the latter. 15 On thrones decorated, 16 Reclining on them, facing one another. 17 Round about them shall go youths [young virgins] never altering in age, 18 With goblets and ewers and a cup of pure drink; 19 They shall not be affected with headache thereby, nor shall they get exhausted, 20 And fruits such as they choose, 21 And the flesh of fowl such as they desire. 22 And pure, beautiful ones, 23 The like of the hidden pearls: 24 A reward for what they used to do. 25 They shall not hear therein vain or sinful discourse, 26 Except the word peace, peace. 27 And the companions of the right hand; how happy are the companions of the right hand! 28 Amid thornless lote-trees, 29 And banana-trees (with fruits), one above another. 30 And extended shade, 31 And water flowing constantly, 32And abundant fruit, 33 Neither intercepted nor forbidden, 34 And exalted thrones. 35 Surely We have made them to grow into a (new) growth, 36 Then We have made them virgins, 37 Loving, equals in age, 38 For the sake of the companions of the right hand. 39 A numerous company from among the first, 40 And a numerous company from among the last.”

[76.11-22] “Therefore Allah will guard them from the evil of that day and cause them to meet with ease and happiness; 12 And reward them, because they were patient, with garden and silk, 13 Reclining therein on raised couches, they shall find therein neither (the severe heat of) the sun nor intense cold. 14 And close down upon them (shall be) its shadows, and its fruits shall be made near (to them), being easy to reach. 15 And there shall be made to go round about them vessels of silver and goblets which are of glass, 16 (Transparent as) glass, made of silver; they have measured them according to a measure. 17 And they shall be made to drink therein a cup the admixture of which shall be ginger, 18 (Of) a fountain therein which is named Salsabil. 19 And round about them shall go youths never altering in age; when you see them you will think them to be scattered pearls. 20 And when you see there, you shall see blessings and a great kingdom. 21 Upon them shall be garments of fine green silk and thick silk interwoven with gold, and they shall be adorned with bracelets of silver, and their Lord shall make them drink a pure drink. 22 Surely this is a reward for you, and your striving shall be recompensed.”

*Punishment - Hell*

[38.55-61] “This (shall be so); and most surely there is an evil resort for the inordinate ones; 56 Hell; they shall enter it, so evil is the resting-place. 57 This (shall be so); so let them taste it, boiling and intensely cold (drink). 58 And other (punishment) of the same kind-- of various sorts. 59 This is an army plunging in without consideration along with you; no welcome for them, surely they shall enter fire. 60 They shall say: Nay! you-- no welcome to you: you did proffer it to us, so evil is the resting-place. 61 They shall say: Our Lord! whoever prepared it first for us, add Thou to him a double chastisement in the fire.”

[39.70-72] And every soul shall be paid back fully what it has done, and He knows best what they do. 71 And those who disbelieve shall be driven to hell in companies; until, when they come to it, its doors shall be opened, and the keepers of it shall say to them: Did not there come to you apostles from among you reciting to you the communications of your Lord and warning you of the meeting of this day of yours? They shall say: Yea! But the sentence of punishment was due against the unbelievers. 72 It shall be said: Enter the gates of hell to abide therein; so evil is the abode of the proud.”

Thus we see Islam is quite descriptive of the paradise or gardens it promises its followers who qualify. It also promises the punishment of hell for those who do not do their duty or do not believe in Islam.

***Salvation According to Hinduism***

Hindus believe that human souls are immortal and get their chance of salvation when they come in human form. If they do not qualify for salvation in their human life, their soul at death then transmigrates into the body of another creature. It transmigrates into 8.4 million different creatures – such as animals, birds, insects and the tiniest of creatures – before getting another chance to be born as a human being to get another chance for salvation. This cycle of transmigration continues until the immortal soul qualifies for salvation. Salvation then is being merged into the Great Soul that is God from which it had originally separated.

The following scriptural references again are from the Bhagwad Gita, the holy book of the Hindus.

Chapter 2, p 4-5:

“Why grieve for those for whom no grief is due, and yet profess wisdom? The wise grieve neither for the dead nor the living. There was never a time when I was not, nor thou, nor these princes were not; there will never be a time when we shall cease to be. As the soul experiences in this body infancy, youth and old age, so finally it passes into another. The wise have no delusion about this.

“Those external relations which bring cold and heat, pain and happiness, they come and go; they are not permanent. Endure them bravely, O Prince [Krishna here refers to Arjuna as prince]. The hero whose soul is unmoved by circumstance, who accepts pleasure and pain with equanimity, only he is fit for immortality.

“That which is not, shall never be; that which is, shall never cease to be. To the wise, these truths are self-evident.

“The Spirit, which pervades all that we see, is imperishable. Nothing can destroy the Spirit. The material bodies which this Eternal, Indestructible, Immeasurable Spirit inhabits are all finite. Therefore fight, O Valiant Man! He who thinks that the Spirit kills, and he who thinks of It as killed, are both ignorant. The Spirit kills not, nor is It killed.

“It was not born; It will never die, nor once having been, can It cease to be. Unborn, Eternal, Ever-enduring, yet Most Ancient, the Spirit dies not when the body is dead. He who knows the Spirit as Indestructible, Immortal, Unborn, Always-the-Same, how should he kill or cause to be killed?

“As a man discards his threadbare robes and puts on new, so the Spirit throws off Its worn out bodies and takes fresh ones.”

Chapter 4 p. 12:

Lord Shri Krishna…: *I have been born again and again, from time to time; thou too, O Arjuna! My births are known to Me, but thou knowest not thine.*  I have no beginning. Though I am imperishable, as well as Lord of all that exists, yet by My own will and power do I manifest Myself. Whenever spirituality decays and materialism is rampant, then, O Arjuna, I reincarnate Myself!

To protect the righteous, to destroy the wicked and to establish the kingdom of God, I am reborn from age to age. *He who realizes the divine truth concerning My birth and life is not born again; and when he leaves his body, he becomes one with Me. Many have merged their existences in Mine,* being freed from desire, fear and anger, filled always with Me and purified by the illuminating flame of self-abnegation. Howsoever men try to worship Me, so do I welcome them. By whatever path they travel, it leads to Me at last.

Chapter 9: p 25:

“Those who are versed in the scriptures, who drink the mystic Soma-juice and are purified from sin, but who while worshipping Me with sacrifices pray that I will lead them to heaven; they reach the holy world where lives the Controller of the Powers of Nature, and they enjoy the feasts of Paradise. Yet although they enjoy the spacious glories of Paradise, nevertheless, when their merit is exhausted, they are born again into this world of mortals. They have followed the letter of the scriptures, yet because they have sought but to fulfill their own desires, they must depart and return again and again [meaning go through the cycle of birth death and rebirth].

“But if a man will meditate on Me and Me alone, and will worship Me always and everywhere, I will take upon Myself the fulfillment of his aspiration, and I will safeguard whatsoever he shall attain.

Even those who worship the lesser Powers, if they do so with faith, they thereby worship Me, though not in the right way. I am the willing recipient of sacrifice, and I am its true Lord. But these do not know me in truth, and so they sink back. The votaries of the lesser Powers go to them; the devotees of spirits go to them; they who worship the Powers of Darkness, to such Powers shall they go; and so, too, those who worship Me shall come to Me.”

Chapter 8: p 22-23:

“Whosoever at the time of death thinks only of Me, and thinking thus leaves the body and goes forth, assuredly he will know Me. On whatever sphere of being the mind of a man may be intent at the time of death, thither he will go.

Therefore meditate always on Me, and fight; if thy mind and thy reason be fixed on Me, to Me shalt thou surely come. He whose mind does not wander, and who is engaged in constant meditation, attains the Supreme Spirit.

Whoso meditates on the Omniscient, the Ancient…He who leaves the body with mind unmoved and filled with devotion, by the power of his meditation gathering between his eyebrows his whole vital energy, attains the Supreme.

Now I will speak briefly of the imperishable goal, proclaimed by those versed in the scriptures, which the mystic attains when free from passion, and for which he is content to undergo the vow of continence. Closing the gates of the body, drawing the forces of his mind into the heart and by the power of meditation concentrating his vital energy in the brain; Repeating Om, the Symbol of Eternity, holding Me always in remembrance, he who thus leaves his body and goes forth reaches the Spirit Supreme.

To him who thinks constantly of Me, and of nothing else, to such an ever-faithful devotee, O Arjuna, am I ever accessible. Coming thus unto Me, these great souls go no more to the misery and death of earthly life, for they have gained perfection. The worlds, with the whole realm of creation, come and go; but, O Arjuna, who so comes to Me, for him there is no *death nor rebirth*.

Here is what Krishna says will happen to one who slips from the path of spirituality:

Chapter 6, p 19:

“My beloved child! There is no destruction for him, either in this world or in the next. No evil fate awaits him who treads the path of righteousness.

“Having reached the worlds where the righteous dwell, and having remained there for

many years, he who has slipped from the path of spirituality *will be born again* in the

family of the pure, benevolent and prosperous. Or, he may be born in the family of the wise sages, though a birth like this is, indeed, very difficult to obtain.

Then the experience acquired in his former life will revive, and with its help he will strive

for perfection more eagerly than before. Unconsciously he will return to the practices of his old life; so that he who tries to realize spiritual consciousness is certainly superior to one who only talks of it. Then after many lives, the student of spirituality, who earnestly strives, and whose sins are absolved, attains perfection and reaches the Supreme.”

In contrast, here is what Krishna says will happen to those who are given to passion and evil:

Chapter 14:44: “Puffed up by power and inordinate conceit, swayed by lust and wrath, these wicked people hate Me Who am within them, as I am within all. Those who thus hate Me, who are cruel, the dregs of mankind, I condemn them to a continuous, miserable and godless rebirth. So reborn, they spend life after life, enveloped in delusion. And they never reach Me, O Prince, but degenerate into still lower forms of life.”

Hinduism thus leaves no doubt about what salvation is: being freed from the cycle of birth and death and merging his or her existence with the Creator God. Though the Bhagwad Gita, the Ramayana or the Mahabharata do not seem to contain the figure of 8.4 million creatures that exist into which humans can be reborn, the number seems to come from other Hindu literature; in this case the Puranas.

***Salvation According to Sikhism***

Salvation in Sikhism is the same as in Hinduism. Hinduism claims that you can take different paths to salvation whereas Sikhism maintains that the path to salvation is meditation, non-attachment and to sing the praises of the Eternal Creator God.

Passages from the Guru Granth that describe salvation in Sikhism are as follows from the translation into English by Singh Sahib Sant Singh Khalsa MD:

P 11: Those who meditate on You, Lord, those who meditate on You—those humble beings dwell in peace in this world. They are liberated, they are liberated—those who meditate on the Lord. For them, the noose of death is cut away. Those who meditate on the Fearless One, on the Fearless Lord—all their fears are dispelled. Those who serve, those who serve my Dear Lord, are absorbed into the Being of the Lord…Blessed are they, blessed are they, who meditate on their Dear Lord.

P. 18: “As metal merges with metal, those who chant the Praises of the Lord are absorbed into the Praiseworthy Lord.”

P 19: “Some are very knowledgeable, but if they do not know the Guru, then what is the use of their lives? The blind have forgotten the Naam [the praise of the Name of the Lord]. The self-willed manmukhs [those who are engrossed in the world as contrasted with gurmukhs who are engrossed with learning from the Guru] are in utter darkness. *Their comings and goings in reincarnation do not end; through death and rebirth, they are wasting away.* By true actions, the True Lord is met, and the Guru’s Teachings are found. Then, *they are not subject to birth and death; they do not come and go in reincarnation.*

“Without the Word of the Shabad [songs of praise to God], people wander lost in reincarnation…O mind, swim across, by focusing your consciousness on the Shabad. Those who do not become Gurmukh do not understand the Naam; they die, and continue coming and going in reincarnation. That body is said to be pure, in which the True Name abides. One whose body is imbued with the Fear of the True One, and whose tongue savors Truthfulness, is brought to ecstasy by the True Lord’s Glance of Grace. That person does not have to go through the fire of the womb again.”

P 23: “Practicing falsehood again and again, people come and go in *reincarnation*, and forfeit their honor.”

P. 370: “Servant Nanak chants the wisdom of God; one who listens and practices it, is *carried across [the Ocean of the World] and saved*. He is not born, and he does not die; he does not come or go. *He remains blended [merged] with the Lord*.”

P 378: “You have been blessed with this human body. This is your chance to meet the Lord of the Universe. Other efforts are of no use to you. Join the Saadh Sangat [the Company of the Holy], and meditate on the Naam [the Name of the Lord]. *Make the effort, and cross over the terrifying world ocean.* This human life is passing away in vain, in the love of Maya [materialism].

P 1427: “He has given you your body, wealth, property, peace and beautiful mansions. Says Nanak, listen, mind: why don’t you remember the Lord in meditation? The Lord is the Giver of all peace and comfort. There is no other at all. Says Nanak, listen, mind: meditating in remembrance on Him, salvation is attained. *Remembering Him in meditation, salvation is attained*; meditate on Him, O my friend. Says Nanak, listen, mind: your life is passing away!...Believe it — *you shall merge once again into the One*, O Nanak, *from whom you originated*. The Dear Lord abides in each and every heart; the Saints proclaim this as true. Says Nanak, meditate…upon Him, and you shall cross over the terrifying world-ocean.

P 111: “He created the 8.4 million species of beings. Those, upon whom He casts His Glance of Grace, come to meet the Guru. Shedding the residues of their sinful mistakes, His servants are forever pure; at the True Court, they are beautified by the Naam [praises of the Name of the Lord]. || 6 || When they are called to settle their accounts, who will answer then? There shall be no peace then, from counting out by twos and threes. The True Lord God Himself forgives, and having forgiven, *He unites them with Himself*.”

P. 1426: "He has given you a body, wealth, property, peace and beautiful mansions. Nanak says, listen mind: why don't you remember God and meditate on Him? The Lord is the provider of all peace and comfort. There is no other at all. Nanak says, listen mind: *salvation is attained by meditating on Him*" (Guru Granth Sahib Ji, 1426).

"One who is not touched by pleasure, pain, greed, emotional attachment and egotistical pride. Nanak says, listen mind: he is the very image of God. One who is beyond praise and slander, and looks upon gold and iron alike. Nanak says, listen mind: know that such a person attains salvation. One who is not affected by pleasure or pain, and looks upon friend and enemy alike. Nanak says, listen mind: know that such a person attains salvation" (Guru Granth Sahib Ji, 1427).

These scriptures thus describe what salvation according to Sikhism is. The ultimate goal is to end the cycle of birth and death and merge with the Creator God. Being born as a human being is an opportunity to do that. Those who pursue materialism are unable to do so. They must go through the cycle of birth and death as one of the 8.4 million species of creatures before they will get another chance to be reincarnated as a human being and earn salvation.

***Salvation According to Judaism***

Judaism, except for the Messianic Jews, has only the Old Testament of the Bible and does not believe in Jesus Christ and the New Testament. Hence the salvation that the Jews believe in is different from the salvation the Christians believe in.

Jews believe that they are God’s chosen people according to the Covenant God made with them at the time of Moses after they came out of Egypt. Exodus 20:2 (NIV) states: "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery."

Deuteronomy 7:6 (NIV) states: "For you are a people holy to the Lord your God. The Lord your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on the face of the earth to be his people, his treasured possession."

The Covenant was made with the people as well as their descendants in Deuteronomy 29:10-15, " 10 You stand this day all of you before the Lord your God; your captains of your tribes, your elders, and your officers, with all the men of Israel, 11 Your little ones, your wives, and the stranger that is in your camp, from the hewer of your wood unto the drawer of your water: 12 That you should enter into covenant with the Lord your God, and into his oath, which the Lord your God makes with you this day: 13 That he may establish you today for a people unto himself, and that he may be unto you a God, as he has said unto you, and as he has sworn unto your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. 14 Neither with you only do I make this covenant and this oath; 15 But with him that stands here with us this day before the Lord our God, and also with him that is not here with us this day:”

For the Jews salvation is collective for the nation of Israel rather than personal and individual. The salvation of the individual is connected with the salvation of Israel. Judaism believes based on many prophecies in the prophets that just as ancient Israel was saved out of Egypt, Israel will again be saved from its enemies to freely live in its land, restored to greatness as a nation with a new covenant between God and Israel, restoration of the Temple and sacrifices and its worship system, and all nations living peacefully under the God of Israel.

Jeremiah 31:7-14 (NKJV) describes the restoration of Israel to greatness:

“7 For thus says the Lord: "Sing with gladness for Jacob, and shout among the chief of the nations; Proclaim, give praise, and say, 'O Lord, save Your people, the remnant of Israel!' 8 Behold, I will bring them from the north country, and gather them from the ends of the earth, among them the blind and the lame, the woman with child and the one who labors with child, together; a great throng shall return there. 9 They shall come with weeping, and with supplications I will lead them. I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters, in a straight way in which they shall not stumble; for I am a Father to Israel, and Ephraim is My firstborn.

“10 "Hear the word of the Lord, O nations, and declare it in the isles afar off, and say, 'He who scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him as a shepherd does his flock.' 11 For the Lord has redeemed Jacob, and ransomed him from the hand of one stronger than he. 12 Therefore they shall come and sing in the height of Zion, streaming to the goodness of the Lord-- for wheat and new wine and oil, for the young of the flock and the herd; their souls shall be like a well-watered garden, and they shall sorrow no more at all. 13 "Then shall the virgin rejoice in the dance, and the young men and the old, together; for I will turn their mourning to joy, will comfort them, and make them rejoice rather than sorrow. 14 I will satiate the soul of the priests with abundance, and My people shall be satisfied with My goodness, says the Lord."

In verses 31-34 God promises to make a New Covenant with the house of Israel and the House of Judah:

” 31 "Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah- 32 not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the Lord. 33 But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. 34 No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."

Jews expect God to restore them collectively to greatness as a nation when the entire world will look to them for spiritual guidance. This is prophesied by the prophets as well.

Micah 4:1-4, “1 Now it shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and peoples shall flow to it. 2 Many nations shall come and say, "Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths." For out of Zion the law shall go forth, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. 3 He shall judge between many peoples, and rebuke strong nations afar off; they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore. 4 But everyone shall sit under his vine and under his fig tree, and no one shall make them afraid; for the mouth of the Lord of hosts has spoken…”

Zechariah 8:20-23, “20 Thus says the Lord of hosts; It shall yet come to pass, that there shall come people, and the inhabitants of many cities: 21 And the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying , Let us go speedily to pray before the LORD, and to seek the Lord of hosts: I will go also. 22 Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the Lord. 23 Thus says the Lord of hosts; In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you.”

Moses mentioned this in Deuteronomy 30:1-10 (NKJV):

“1 "Now it shall come to pass, when all these things come upon you, the blessing and the curse which I have set before you, and you call them to mind among all the nations where the Lord your God drives you, 2 and you return to the Lord your God and obey His voice, according to all that I command you today, you and your children, with all your heart and with all your soul, 3 that the Lord your God will bring you back from captivity, and have compassion on you, and gather you again from all the nations where the Lord your God has scattered you. 4 If any of you are driven out to the farthest parts under heaven, from there the Lord your God will gather you, and from there He will bring you. 5 Then the Lord your God will bring you to the land which your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it. He will prosper you and multiply you more than your fathers.

“6 And the Lord your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live. 7 Also the Lord your God will put all these curses on your enemies and on those who hate you, who persecuted you. 8 And you will again obey the voice of the Lord and do all His commandments which I command you today. 9 The Lord your God will make you abound in all the work of your hand, in the fruit of your body, in the increase of your livestock, and in the produce of your land for good. For the Lord will again rejoice over you for good as He rejoiced over your fathers, 10 if you obey the voice of the Lord your God, to keep His commandments and His statutes which are written in this Book of the Law, and if you turn to the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul.”

A belief in the afterlife through a resurrection has developed with the writings of the prophets and in the psalms.

Daniel the prophet mentions the resurrection in Daniel 12:2-3, “2 And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. 3 And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.”

Ezekiel 37:21-28 mentions David again being set up as King over Israel and the Temple being established:

“21 And say unto them, Thus says the Lord God; Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen [non-Israelite nations], whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land: 22 And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all: 23 Neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions: but I will save them out of all their dwelling places, wherein they have sinned, and will cleanse them: so shall they be my people, and I will be their God. 24 And David my servant shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd: they shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them. 25 And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, even they, and their children, and their children's children for ever: and my servant David shall be their prince forever.

“26 Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them: and I will place them, and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore. 27 My tabernacle also shall be with them: yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 28 And the heathen shall know that I the Lord do sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore.”

The Sadducees in Jesus’ days discussed the resurrection with Him and He corrected their ideas about it. The discussion is mentioned in Matthew 22, Mark 12 and Luke 20.

Matthew 22:23-32, “23 The same day came to him the Sadducees, which say that there is no resurrection [whereas the other sect, the Pharisees believed in the resurrection], and asked him, 24 Saying, Master, Moses said, If a man die, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother. 25 Now there were with us seven brethren: and the first, when he had married a wife, deceased, and, having no issue, left his wife unto his brother: 26 Likewise the second also, and the third, unto the seventh. 27 And last of all the woman died also. 28 Therefore in the resurrection whose wife shall she be of the seven? for they all had her. 29 Jesus answered and said unto them, You do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God. 30 For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven. 31 But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have you not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, 32 I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.”

However the ideas of the Jews [except the Messianic Jews who believe in Jesus Christ] about the afterlife and the resurrection are still hazy because their understanding is based on the writings of the prophets. Jesus’ disciples understanding of the afterlife based on the Old Testament was also hazy until Jesus clarified it for them. That is why Jesus mentioned in Matthew 13:17: “For verily [or truly] I say unto you, that many prophets and righteous men [Luke 10:24 adds ‘kings’] have desired to see those things which you see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which you hear, and have not heard them.”

With only the Old Testament scriptures as a guide, the disciples had only hazy ideas about eternal life and the resurrection, and the reestablishment of Israel as a great nation on earth. But the resurrection and the kingdom of God were indelibly ingrained in the minds of the apostles and Jesus’ other disciples when they saw Jesus Christ after His resurrection and explained the kingdom of God to them. They saw and understood what the prophets, righteous men and kings had desired to see but had not seen them.

Thus salvation for the Jews means God forgiving their sins, restoring their national blessings as a great nation with the Temple built in Jerusalem and the world coming to worship God in Jerusalem and seeking spiritual guidance from the Jews.

***Salvation According to Mainstream Christianity***

Christianity has over 2,000 major denominations and then further more than 30,000 groups within them because they have differences of beliefs among themselves. But one thing is common to all of Christianity: the centrality of Jesus Christ to salvation.

Christians believe that “23 …all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23). As a result they believe they are all subject to the death penalty because Romans 6:23 says, “23 …the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

Salvation for the Christian is forgiveness of his sins so that he can qualify for eternal life. All have sinned. But because Jesus Christ was the Creator and God of the Old Testament who created everything, His life was more valuable than all His creation put together. The God of the Old Testament emptied Himself of His divinity and came to earth as the human being Jesus Christ. He lived a sinless life and did not earn the death penalty. But He died so that He could pay the death penalty on behalf of all His creation. Because He paid the death penalty, all of humanity’s sins can be forgiven and they can now qualify to receive eternal life as a free gift as stated in Romans 6:23. Salvation for the Christian therefore is having his sins forgiven and receiving the free gift of eternal life. But that is where the differences between different Christian denominations begin.

The first major issue dividing Christians in their beliefs is how they can qualify to receive eternal life, and how many will qualify to receive it. Some believe only a few qualify whereas others believe many will qualify. Christians also believe there is some time limit before which people can accept the sacrifice of Jesus Christ as forgiveness of their sins. After that time limit there will be judgment. Those who qualify to receive eternal life will receive it. Others will not.

The second major issue dividing Christians is “what is the form of eternal life the Christian qualifies for?” Some believe the immortal Christian is a physical human being who never dies, whereas others believe that the immortal Christian receives another type of body, a spirit body.

Then the third major issue causing some division among Christians is “What happens when the Christian receives eternal life?” Much of Christianity agrees on this. They believe that those who qualify to receive eternal life go to heaven where God dwells. It is supposed to be a place of unspeakable joy and happiness. There is some disagreement on what we are supposed to do when we get to heaven. Some believe that we will spend eternity on the clouds plucking our harps and enjoying celestial music. Others believe that we will gaze on the face of God for eternity and find unsurpassable joy in doing so.

As proof that the reward of the saved is heaven Christians cite the following scriptures:

John 14:2 “2 In my Father's house [which is in heaven] are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.”

2 Corinthians 5:8 “8 We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord [Who at present is seated in heaven at the right hand of God the Father].”

Philippians 1:21-23 (NIV) “21 For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. 22 If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! 23 I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far.”

Philippians 3:20-21 (NKJV) “20 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, 21 who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.”

Revelation 21:4: “4 And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.”

Revelation 22:1-5 (NKJV):“1 And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. 2 In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. 3 And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him. 4 They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads. 5 There shall be no night there: they need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever.”

According to mainstream Christianity this supposedly describes heaven.

As further support, they cite several other experiences of godly men in the Bible.

2 Kings 2:11, “11 And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.”

As Jesus hung on the cross, He told one of the criminals hung with Him in Luke 23:43 (NKJV), “43 And Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise."

According to mainstream Christianity the wicked are punished by being sent to hell and tortured there for eternity. They cite the following scriptures in support for their belief:

Matthew 10:28, “28 And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.”

Revelation 14:9-11, “9 And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, 10 The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: 11 And the smoke of their torment ascends up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receives the mark of his name.”

2 Thessalonians 1:4-9, “4 So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that you endure: 5 Which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you also suffer: 6 Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; 7 And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, 8 In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: 9 Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.”

Revelation 19:20, “20 And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.”

Luke 16:19-31, “19 There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: 20 And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, 21 And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores.

“22 And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; 23 And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and sees Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. 24 And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. 25 But Abraham said, Son, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and you are tormented. 26 And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence.

“27 Then he said, I pray to you therefore, father that you would send him to my father's house: 28 For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. 29 Abraham says unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. 30 And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. 31 And he said unto him, if they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.”

Mainstream Christianity does believe in some sort of hell, but there is wide disagreement over it. It is impossible to reconcile the idea of a merciful Creator God whose basic character is LOVE for His creation tormenting sinners for eternity in the worst possible way in an ever-burning hell, but their bodies never really being consumed.

**Do These Concepts of Salvation Make Sense**

Do you know that all religions which believe in a higher power believe that salvation is only for their religion? Catholicism believes that salvation is only for Catholics. All others will burn in hell for eternity without being consumed. Protestants believe that Catholics don’t get their beliefs from the Bible. Hence it is not true Christianity. They believe they are the true Christians and salvation is only for them.

The Jews believe that they are a chosen people and they will be the leading nation on earth. They believe salvation is only for them.

Islam believes that salvation is only through Islam, and very few will qualify. All others will burn in hell forever.

Sikhs believe that salvation is only for Sikhs, the pure. Hinduism believes that salvation can be obtained through good deeds by anyone, but worship of their gods, who are the true gods, is essential for obtaining salvation. Then there is the German nation, which now openly acknowledges that Satan is their god. They believe that they are a special creation and are the only ones who have the divine spark in them. They are the only ones who can escape the human body that entraps the divine soul in them. Rest of humanity is mere creatures like animals and insects. When they die, that will be the end of their lives. But the Germans will escape this physical body and obtain salvation.

We have seen from the scriptures of the 5 religions that are based on the existence of God that they have different ideas about what salvation is. All cannot be right. We have concluded that if only one supreme God exists, then He would not offer different kind of salvation to different people. If any of these ideas of salvation is true, then only one of them can be true. All others must be false.

Now consider these ideas of salvation.

Islam offers an idea of paradise where one can enjoy all fleshly pleasures forever. Those in paradise will be able to eat, drink, listen to great music and enjoy sex all day long for eternity. They will have nothing else to do. Can you imagine spending eternity enjoying pleasures of the flesh with nothing else to do? But this reward is offered only to a tiny portion of male half of humanity. Can you imagine God creating humanity male and female and then offering salvation only to one half of His creation? And since only a few will qualify for this salvation, most of the rest of humanity will be tormented forever in an ever-burning hell. Can you imagine a Creator God creating His creation and then subjecting most of it to be tormented forever in pain and suffering? What a sadist God is pictured to be in Islam? Salvation in Islam thus does not make sense.

Now consider salvation offered by Hinduism and Sikhism, which is essentially the same in both religions. The goal or salvation offered to the Hindu and Sikh is to have his immortal soul be free from the cycle of birth and death as 8.4 million different creatures and merge with the great supreme soul from whom he was originally separated. Ask what purpose could God have had in creating creatures, have them go through birth and death through 8.4 million species of creatures till finally they can be born as a human being to obtain the chance to qualify for salvation through good deeds, and or worship of the Creator God and finally merge with Him? Why would God separate something from Himself (the so-called immortal soul) to create living creatures and then have them merge with Him? And why should the immortal soul be put through the horror of living life as 8.4 million creatures before getting the chance to qualify to merge with the supreme God? And it may not qualify for this ‘reward’ even in hundreds of such chances. It would be condemned to go through the same cycle one more time. The god of Hinduism appears to be a sadist as well.

Salvation is Judaism is only for the Jews. But their ideas of salvation are hazy. There are many unanswered questions. Where does the resurrection mentioned by Daniel the prophet in Daniel 12 and by Ezekiel the prophet in Ezekiel 37, which is a vision of the whole house of Israel being resurrected to physical life, fit in in the Jewish scheme of salvation? Such issues are still unresolved in Judaism. Can you imagine all those of the House of Israel who have ever lived being resurrected to live as human beings and then having children and this continuing forever. Eventually humanity will run out of land on earth. Would God design such a plan guaranteed to ultimately lead to destruction? Again ideas of salvation in Judaism are hazy because they only have the Old Testament to rely on.

Jesus Christ’s statement to His disciples explained why their understanding of the afterlife based on the Old Testament was hazy until Jesus clarified it for them. He said in Matthew 13:17: “For verily [or truly] I say unto you, that many prophets and righteous men [Luke 10:24 adds ‘kings’] have desired to see those things which you see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which you hear, and have not heard them.” The Old Testament simply does not give a complete picture about God’s plan for humanity as explained in the pages of the Bible. That’s why Jewish ideas on salvation still remain hazy.

However, from the ideas of salvation as interpreted from the Bible, it seems that mainstream Christianity may not be faring any better than Islam, Hinduism or Sikhism. Does the idea of going to heaven and gazing at God’s face for eternity, or alternately plucking harps on clouds and listening to celestial music for eternity sound appealing to anyone? Eternity is a very very very long time. It is never-ending. John MacArthur in his book *“The Glory of Heaven”* p. 49 said that if this is all they are to do forever, then the prayer of many could be: “Please God, don’t take me to heaven yet…I haven’t even been to Hawaii!”

And then there is hell to contend with. Can you imagine God creating humanity where a large portion will end up in hell tortured for eternity? And the agony will be felt deeply by even those in ‘heaven’ because they are sure to have some relatives, possibly their own children or spouse or parents, consigned to hell for eternity. Thus the idea of going to heaven as salvation or being consigned to hell does not make sense. It is not appealing to most.

***Salvation According to the Church of God***

The problem with mainstream Christianity’s idea of going to heaven or hell at the end of one’s life is that it is based on an incorrect interpretation of the various passages in the Bible. We will not go into a detailed proof of this in this book because proof has been provided in detail in the United Church of God booklet *“Heaven & Hell: What Does the Bible Really Teach?”*  It is available free of charge to read download or order a printed copy at the Church’s web site www.ucg.org. All literature provided by God’s Church is free of charge, without cost or obligation.

But essentially the confusion arises because the Bible mentions 3 heavens and 3 places called hell. The 3 heavens are, 1) The earth’s atmosphere, 2) Where celestial bodies such as the sun, moon, stars and galaxies are located, and 3) Where God’s throne is located. In interpreting some of the passages mainstream Christian denominations confuse one with the other.

Similarly in the Bible 3 kinds of words are translated as hell, 1) The grave (translated from the Hebrew word *sheol* or the Greek word *hades*), 2) place of restraint or imprisonment for the angels on earth (translated from the Greek word *tartaros,* mentioned only once in the Bible), and 3) Lake of Fire (translated from the Greek word *gahenna*, referring to the Valley of Hinnom).

The truth according to the Bible as proved in the booklet is that humans do not go to heaven on death. Jesus’ plain statement in John 3:13 is, “13 And no man has ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.” If no man has ascended to heaven, then humans do not go to heaven at death. Thus heaven cannot be the reward received by any who have died.

Many believe that they will go to heaven at death because Matthew mentions the Kingdom of Heaven’ many times in his gospel. For example, Matthew 5:3 states, “3 Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” He is the only writer who uses the term ‘kingdom of heaven.’ For the same situation Luke and other writers use the term ‘Kingdom of God.’ Luke 6:20 states, “Blessed be you poor: for yours is the kingdom of God.” When using the term ‘kingdom of heaven’ Matthew does not refer to God’s kingdom being in heaven. It is not in heaven, but of heaven because at present the King resides in Heaven.

These and many other passages interpreted by mainstream Christianity to support its belief that the reward of the saved is going to heaven are explained in detail in the booklet.

The booklet also thoroughly explains that the punishment of the incorrigibly wicked is not to burn in hell (*gahenna* or Lake of Fire) and be tortured forever. A merciful Creator God would not create beings with a plan of salvation that could potentially torture them forever. But the Bible does mention a real hell fire or Lake of Fire into which the wicked will be cast who do not repent of their sins and accept the sacrifice of Jesus Christ as payment of the death penalty on their behalf. These wicked will burn up and be consumed in the fire. Their death is permanent and will last forever. Such people are not tormented forever in the Lake of Fire. Their lives are just extinguished forever.

Salvation thus according to the Bible as understood by the Church of God is NOT going to heaven as a reward. Nor is the punishment being tortured forever in a burning hell. The punishment definitely is burning in a fire and the body and soul being consumed together (Matthew 10:28, “28 And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell [*gehenna]*). Once the body and soul are consumed and turned into ashes, there is no more torment.

In contrast to the ideas of mainstream Christianity about Christians going to heaven or hell, God’s Church believes in the return of Jesus Christ to earth very soon to set up the Kingdom of God. At His return, the saints that God has called through the first 6,000 years of man’s history will be resurrected to eternal life as God’s literal sons and daughters with a body like that of Jesus Christ Himself, and will reign with Him on earth.

This is stated in 1 John 3:1-2, “1 Behold, what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knows us not, because it knew him not. 2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it does not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him [meaning have a spirit body like that of Jesus Christ]; for we shall see him as he is.”

1 Corinthians 15:47, 49 say the same thing, “47 The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven. 48 As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. 49 And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.”

Our reward is **not** going to heaven with Jesus Christ but reigning on earth with Him. This is stated in Revelation 5:10, “10 And has made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.”

Revelation 20:4-6, “4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. 5 But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished . This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy is he that has part in the first resurrection: on such the second death [that in the *gahenna* fire] has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.”

God’s plan of salvation according to the Bible is pictured in the seven annual holy days that God’s Church celebrated. The first holy day is the Passover which pictures the sacrifice of Jesus Christ as the Lamb of God for the sins of mankind. The second festival is the seven-day Feast of Unleavened Bread which pictures the putting away of sin out of our lives. Sin is defined as transgression (violation) of God’s Law (1 John 3:4).

The third holy day is called the Pentecost which pictures God calling into His Church only a limited few (called saints) during mankind’s first 6,000 years of history. They get their one and only chance to qualify to receive eternal life through the first resurrection at the return of Jesus Christ.

The fourth holy day is the Feast of Trumpets which pictures the return of Jesus Christ to earth and the resurrection of the saints to eternal life as immortal sons of God. The fifth holy day is the Day of Atonement which pictures the putting away of Satan and the demons as rulers on earth and reconciliation of God to man.

The sixth festival is the Feast of Tabernacles which pictures the 1,000 year reign of Jesus Christ with the resurrected saints on earth as kings and priests. The seventh festival is called the Last Great Day and pictures the resurrection of all of humanity to physical life to receive its true one chance to qualify to receive salvation, which is be resurrected as God’s immortal sons and daughters. This means that all those who died without knowing the true God will now be taught God’s way of life and can qualify to receive eternal life. Most of humanity will qualify and receive eternal life.

God’s plan of salvation as pictured by the seven annual holy days is explained in great detail in the United Church of God booklet titled “*God’s Holy Day Plan: Promise of Hope for all Mankind*”, available free of charge at the Church’s web site www.ucg.org.

After Jesus Christ and the saints have brought salvation to all of humanity on earth, then the entire universe is available to rule for all of humanity together now glorified as sons of God. In fact God has already allotted the stars and planets to various nations to rule after they become sons of God. Moses prophesied this in Deuteronomy 4:19, “19 And lest you lift up your eyes unto heaven, and when you see the sun, and the moon, and the stars, even all the host of heaven, should be driven to worship them, and serve them, which the Lord your God has divided unto all nations under the whole heaven.”

When God’s plan of salvation for all of humanity is complete, humanity will get to see God the Father whom no human has ever seen, because He will live with mankind, who will then have become His literal immortal sons and daughters just as Jesus Christ is His Son now. After all God is reproducing Himself to have an everlasting relationship with His children. This is prophesied in Revelation 7:17, “15 Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sits on the throne shall dwell among them.”

Revelation 21:1-5, “1 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. 2 And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. 4 And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. 5 And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.”

As we have seen from the pages of the Bible, God has a dynamic plan for humanity. Humans will be able to see and meet the supreme God personally, look at Him as long as they want. He also has a dynamic future planned for them which includes ruling the universe with Him. That means no scarcity of anything. They will be given spirit bodies that will not be subject to the limitations of time and space. And they will have gained victory over death. And there are other exciting things God has planned for us which we don’t yet know (1 Corinthians 2:9, “9 But as it is written, Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for them that love him”).

The way to attain salvation is explained in the United Church of God booklet titled “The Road to Eternal Life” available free of charge and without any obligation at the Church’s web site www.ucg.org.

Now we have seen from the respective scriptures the concept of salvation offered by each of the religions that have belief in the existence of a supreme God as their basis. You decide which concept of salvation makes sense.

**Chapter 5**

**How do we Prove which Plan of Salvation is True**

We have seen some bewildering ideas about salvation. Then there are differing ideas about God Himself and His nature. Islam believes in only one God. So does Sikhism. Krishna of Hinduism claims he is the supreme God, but the Ramayana of the Hindus does not acknowledge that. It claims that Rama is a god, and that there are many other levels of gods and demi-gods. The Germans also believe in many levels of divine beings.

Christianity claims that there is one Triune God (also known as the Trinity) who exists as three coequal personages: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.God’s Church on the other hand believes that there is one supreme God known as God the Father, the original source of all life, and that Jesus Christ is also God. But the Church of God does not believe that the Holy Spirit is a person but is the spirit essence or energy of God. Judaism also believes in one God though they use the same Old Testament as does Christianity to formulate their beliefs which shows the existence of at least two Beings called Lord.

Who is correct in their beliefs? How can we prove what is the truth? Is there any evidence available to decide which belief is the truth, and which idea of salvation is true?

Consider the various ideas of salvation of different religions. Catholics and Protestants believe that those Christians who qualify for salvation go to heaven. Those who don’t go to hell! Is there any proof for any of these beliefs? How do we know with absolute certainty whether a loved one who died is in heaven or burning in hell? Without proof, these are mere beliefs of men.

Is there any proof that the paradise promised to males in Islam exists? No one has ever provided any proof. Without proof it is a mere philosophy of a man. A man claims that the Quran was revealed to him. How do we know whether it is revelation from the true God or is the lies of another god?

Who has seen an immortal soul, or seen the immortal soul transmigrate into another creature on the death of a human being as claimed by Hinduism and Sikhism? Without proof it is mere conjecture, a mere belief without any evidence. It is faith without any basis. Without proof it is a mere philosophy of men. Since the immortal soul is supposed to be invisible, and we cannot experience it with any of our physical senses, this belief is unprovable for human beings. We have to accept it on faith. It could very well be a lie, because we cannot prove it to be the truth.

We have seen that ideas of salvation offered to Jews in Judaism are inconsistent with all the Old Testament scriptures. Many passages have not been explained and Jews still debate them. Also Judaism offers salvation only to the Jews. Why would God choose just one people as His favorite chosen people and treat the vast majority of others as less favored people? Many of these things remain unexplained in Judaism.

Can God’s Church prove that its belief about salvation offered to Christianity is true? Can it prove its views about what God is? It proves its views on the basis of the Bible. But why should anyone believe the Bible above any of holy books of other religions?

Since all these ideas on salvation differ from one another, only one can be true, if any. All others have to be mere philosophies of men at best, or the deliberate diabolical lies of another god or gods competing against the true God. How do we prove what is the truth?

These days it has become fashionable for all religions to claim that their holy book is the direct revelation of God through the founder of their religion. However, these religions do not provide evidence that their scriptures have been backed by the authority of a Supreme Being who has total control over the affairs of men.

Any writer of a so-called holy book can lie, or be deceived into lying by the spirit world; unless he can provide evidence that his religion’s holy book is backed by the power and authority of the only true God. We are not saying that the writers of the scriptures are lying deliberately. We do not doubt their sincerity. They may have very sincerely believed that what they wrote was revealed to them by a superior non-human power. They believed that words and thoughts were put into their minds by a higher power, or in the case of Mohammad, he heard a spirit being, claiming to be the archangel Gabriel, who spoke to him as a representative of the one great Allah. The presence of an angel can be absolutely overwhelming for a human being. A person can be easily misled to believe that communication from such beings is from God Himself. So when the founders of the religions claim that the words that they wrote in their scriptures were revealed to them, they may have been absolutely sincere.

However, if Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs, Jews, Christians, ancestor worshippers and those of other faiths cannot prove that their holy books are backed by the authority of Almighty God, then why should we believe him when he says he is the creator of the universe? Anybody can lie, including great spirits, and claim that he has created everything. Why should we believe such a liar if he cannot demonstrate that he is the Almighty God? There is also no reason to believe that the salvation offered by these religions has any truth to it. Without proof ideas of salvation offered by different religions are likely to be mere figments of the imagination of the founders of the religions, or even worse, inspired by one or more lying spirits or gods. Without proof, we would be asked to accept these offers of salvation on blind faith.

**How do we Prove which Holy Book is Inspired by God**

The holy books of all the religions that we have now are complete. Nothing is being added to them. All the ideas of all the religions based on the existence of God are based on the understanding and interpretation of the holy books. So it is important for us to obtain our ideas about each religion from its holy book.

Since all our ideas about each religion must come from its holy book, the great question before us is: How do we prove which holy book is inspired by the supreme Creator God and is the true word of God?

What criteria can we use to evaluate each of the holy books?

The only real acceptable criterion must be a demonstration of the power of Almighty God in the pages of the holy book. This means that in the pages of the holy book God must have told us that He would do numerous great things (not just one, two or three events because they can come true by mere coincidence) well in advance and brought them to pass exactly as foretold. Instruction on how to live our lives cannot provide us the irrefutable proof we need. Such instructions differ in each of the holy books, with some commonalities. We are not always able to evaluate the long-term result of following the instructions because of the short span covered in them except the Bible, and certainly not on how they affect salvation. But if we can prove that the entire holy book of a religion is backed by the power of God, then we can obey all the instructions in that holy book with confidence as well as accept the promises of salvation it offers.

**Caution about Imperfect Human Beings**

Since we are trying to prove which holy book is inspired by the supreme God, we must be cautious about two great issues that can prejudice us while seeking the truth. That issue is the conduct of the professing adherents to the religion.

It is generally true that you can know a religion by the fruits it produces, or the conduct of the average adherent to the religion. But the truth is that all claiming adherence to a particular religion are not devout believers and practitioners of the religion. Most of humanity claims to profess a religion, but have never even read their religion’s entire scriptures, leave alone understanding them. The average person’s understanding of his religion comes by hearsay, by whatever little he or she has learnt from the family or preachers. They are busy with the cares of this world and have little time to practice their religion devoutly. Thus one will not find the true fruits of the religion by evaluating the conduct of the average adherent.

The non-Christian world evaluates Christianity from the conduct of the average Christian in America, the British Commonwealth nations, France and the Benelux and Scandinavian countries. But homosexuality, sexual immorality of every kind, drug abuse and other sins run rampant in these nations. The non-Christian world believes that is what the Bible teaches. Hence they reject Christianity as a false religion. But that is a wrong premise for rejecting the religion.

In reality such practices are condemned in the Bible in the harshest possible terms and the death penalty is prescribed for such sins. Just as an example, here is God’s condemnation of the sin of homosexuality in the Bible.

Actual command against homosexuality and the penalty for this violation of the law is described in Leviticus 20:13 (NIV):“ 13 " 'If a man lies with a man as one lies with a woman, both of them have done what is detestable. They must be put to death; their blood will be on their own heads.”

God warns America, British Commonwealth nations and the Jews through Isaiah the prophet in Isaiah 3:8-9 (NIV): “8 Jerusalem staggers, Judah is falling; their words and deeds are against the LORD, defying his glorious presence. 9 The look on their faces testifies against them; they parade their sin like Sodom; they do not hide it. Woe to them! They have brought disaster upon themselves.”

God is prophesying here that America, British Commonwealth nations and the Jewish state of Israel are going to bring ruin on themselves for the sin of homosexuality in addition to their other sins. God is actually going to punish them for violating the laws that true Christianity requires them to obey.

You can clearly see that the fault is not with the religion but with those who profess to follow it but are not devout adherents. So be careful not to reject the true religion by merely looking at the average adherent to the religion. The right way to judge the religion is by evaluating the conduct of its devout followers. But even that criterion is not perfect because even devout followers can sin and fall short. The Bible in fact says “all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23).

Second issue is the different interpretations of the scriptures. Each religion has many different sects and denominations because of different interpretations of the scriptures of the religion. Christianity alone by some counts has 30,000 – 40,000 different denominations, with about 2,000 being major denominations. All have different interpretations of the Bible. They believe in and adhere to their own interpretation of the Bible.

Then all tenets of the religion are usually not derived from the scriptures. They have added many other things, such as thoughts and philosophies of the great past leaders of the religion to their religious practices from outside the Bible. Various preachers have added their own ideas, philosophies and traditions to what the scriptures say and gained a following for themselves, thus creating a new sect or denomination in the religion, or a new religion altogether. And the biggest denomination, Catholicism maintains that the Bible is not the sole authority to be relied on for obtaining salvation, but the teachings and traditions of their Church in addition to the Bible have greater weight. Obviously such tenets not derived from the scriptures do not have God’s authority behind them, if we have proved the holy book of the religion to be inspired by God.

So let’s begin evaluating various religions according to the criterion we have set to determine which is the one and only true religion, if one exists.

**Chapter 6**

**Which Religion is Backed by the Supreme God**

So how can we prove the holy book of which religion is inspired and backed up by the power of Almighty God? To reiterate, the only way we can prove that the holy book of a religion is backed by the power of Almighty God is to find proof in the recorded pages of that book that God said He would do great things in the past and brought them to pass precisely as prophesied without fail. This will also be one proof that the holy book of that religion is the true word of God so that we can believe in its doctrines concerning salvation and how to live our lives to attain that salvation.

Let’s now look at how various religions stack up.

***Islam and the Quran***

Islam says that males who have done good deeds according to the criteria the Koran defines as good deeds go to paradise. All others will go to hell. But good deeds cannot guarantee you paradise. Allah can still choose if he wants to give you paradise or not, even though you may have done good deeds. So going to paradise also depends on the mercy of Allah on the Muslim.

But we have no proof that such a paradise as promised by Allah exists. Nor do we have proof that the hell described as the fate of those who have not pleased Allah exists. These are mere promises for the future, not prophecies for the future.

The Koran contains no prophecies that came true in the past. Our criteria to evaluate the truth of the holy book of the religion of not one, two or three prophecies, but numerous prophecies that have already come true in the history of mankind. The Koran is totally silent on the subject.

There is a future prophecy of the coming of the 12th Imam Mahdi [meaning ‘the guided one’] to lead Muslims to victory over the Christian west. Then the antichrist will come and the Mahdi will fight the antichrist. Then Jesus Christ will return to earth to fight along with the Mahdi to defeat and kill the antichrist. Then the entire world will convert to Islam, and Jesus Christ, a Muslim Himself, will rule over the earth and then die.

This prophecy is not in the Koran, but is contained in the Hadiths or sayings attributed to Mohammad by the companions of Mohammad. The authenticity of many of these sayings is doubtful. Still why should we believe this prophecy in Islam? The Hadiths or the Koran do not contain any prophecies about the past that came to pass exactly as foretold? Therefore the coming of the 12th Imam is merely a statement about the future without incontrovertible proof that it has been given by Almighty God and backed by His power. There is no reason to believe in this prophecy. Hence the Koran and the Hadiths have miserably failed the test that they are backed by the power of the Almighty Creator God. The Allah of Islam is more likely a liar, an imposter and counterfeiter. There is also no reason to believe in the promises of reward in paradise and punishment in hell in the Koran on blind faith. God instead wants us to prove all things before actually believing in them.

***Hinduism and the Gita, Ramayana and Mahabharata***

Now let’s look at Hinduism. Krishna of the Hindus claims to be the creator or sustainer of the universe. How are we to believe whether his claim is true, or he is simply another liar, imposter, a charlatan and counterfeiter trying to deceive humanity?

The Bhagvad Gita is a discourse between Krishna and Arjun just before a great battle. One can claim that its words have divine backing because Arjun and his side won that battle with the backing of Krishna who claimed to be the creator and sustainer of the universe. The Ramayana is similarly a story of the victory of Rama over Ravana. But such a story can be written by any winning side in a battle, providing its victory as proof of divine backing. One event coming true does not constitute irrefutable proof. For incontrovertible proof of backing of the Almighty God, there must be numerous predictions, stated in great detail and proof from history that they came to pass precisely as prophesied. The holy books of Hinduism are utterly lacking in such proof of the backing of Almighty God behind their words.

The three scriptures of the Hindus, the Gita, the Mahabharata and the Ramayan tell us that humans are born again and again as humans, or if they have done particularly evil deeds then as animals until they attain salvation.

These are mere statements we are required to believe on blind faith alone. There is no proof that any human being is born again and again as a human, or that the immortal soul of a dead human being is born into the body of an animal or another creature? These statements about the future of mankind after death are simply unprovable.

The Hindu scriptures contain fantastic mythological tales of myriads of gods, fighting each other, showing off their powers by empowering human beings with special unbelievably fantastic powers to curse and vengefully use against other human beings to get even with them. Humans are also able to curse gods and the curses come true. The gods cower in fear and obey when cursed by them. How ridiculous. You can read about such curses in the Ramayan and the Mahabharat. Then there are tales of birds and monkey armies protecting human beings. How much more foolish and unreal can it get than that? But the Hindus confer the status of ‘holy’ on the fantastic tales told in the Mahabharata and Ramayana of the exact same nature as the Greek, Roman and Egyptian myths, only more fantastic than them.

One can still see Hindu fakirs wasting their lives on the banks of the Ganges river around the city of Benares in torturous meditation, austerities such as sitting in front of fires in the summer, with the hope of gaining yogic powers and boons from one of the gods so that they can curse whoever offends them. They survive by begging. Outside of the fantastic tales in the Hindu scriptures, there is not even one single story in provable genuine history of any human ever having gained such yogic powers. If the Almighty God was backing up the Hindu scriptures, we should be able to see many of these almost naked begging fakirs with yogic powers today. Don’t waste your time trying to find such proof. If there was such proof, most of India would have flocked to that fakir in veneration.

Thus the holy books of Hinduism have failed to prove by our criterion that they are backed by the power of Almighty God.

***Sikhism and the Guru Granth***

The holy book of the Sikhs, the Guru Granth also contains no prophecies of many great events that came to pass precisely as foretold to provide us incontrovertible proof that its words are backed by Almighty God. So its words are mere philosophies of men, and not inspired by the true Creator God. We are asked to simply believe on blind faith that the salvation promised in it is the truth. The Guru Granth of the Sikhs thus has failed our test that its words are backed by the power of Almight Creator God.

***Span of History Covered in the Holy Books***

You will also notice that the span of human history covered by the holy books of various religions is very short. Human history covered by Islam can only be about 120 years, from the life of Mohammad and his companions who could have lived a maximum of about 60 years after he died. The history covered by the Gita and Mahabharata of the Hindus is just a few days of the battle. The Ramayan plays around with thousands of years, just as evolutionists can play around with time by mentioning that evolutionary events took place over millions and billions of years. We are asked to believe such foolish nonsense on blind faith, without a shred of evidence of prophecies that came true to support it. Sikhism covers a period of about 240 years beginning with the life of the first Guru Nanak and ending with the 10th Guru Gobind Singh. In contrast the Bible covers the history of mankind from the creation of man to about 4,000 years. But it also contains very detailed prophecies of great empires and what is going to happen during the following 2,000 years right down to our time and beyond.

What this means is that the holy books of all other religions except the Bible do not contain enough history which we can use to test whether the words of those holy books have been backed by the power of Almighty God or not. On the other hand the Bible contains detailed history which we can compare with secular history to apply our test of the inspiration of its words by Almighty God.

We have thus seen that the three religions of the world: Islam, Hinduism and Sikhism have failed our test that their holy books are backed by the power of Almighty God.

Next we will examine the holy book of Judaism, the Old Testament of the Bible, and the holy book of Christianity, the entire Bible according to the criteria we have established to determine whether its words have the backing of the power of Almighty God or not.

**Chapter 7**

**Prophecies in the Bible till Noah’s Flood**

We have tested Islam, Hinduism and Sikhism so far to see whether their holy books are inspired and backed by the power of Almighty God. They have all miserably failed our test. The Bible on the other hand contains numerous prophecies of the past and the future. Let’s now examine these prophecies to test whether they have been backed by the power of Almighty God.

In this chapter we will examine prophecies till Noah’s Flood.

***Curse on the Earth***

The very first prophecy God pronounced was a curse on the ground which is still being fulfilled today.

After Adam and Eve had disobeyed God in the Garden of Eden and eaten of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, God pronounced a sentence on them in Genesis 3:17-19 (NKJV): “17 Then to Adam He said, "Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat of it': "Cursed is the ground for your sake; In toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life. 18 Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the herb of the field. 19 In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for dust you are, and to dust you shall return.”

In the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve had their food provided for them. They just had to tend the Garden. But after they disobeyed God’s instructions, they were expelled from the Garden of Eden and had to produce their own food by toil and hard work. It has not been easy for humanity to feed itself since then. Many have starved to death in the history of mankind, and many don’t eat to the full every day even today, despite our so-called matchless advances in technology. We are always trying to play catch-up in feeding all of humanity. It will continue to be our condition until our Creator Jesus Christ returns to earth, rules over all of humanity and lifts this curse.

Humanity has suffered from the ravages of this punishment throughout its history. And usually God does not have to intervene to make lives difficult for us. With Adam and Eve humanity chose to go its own way rather than obtain all its instructions from God. It is our own ways, and our wrong agricultural practices that bring this curse on us. But God prophesied this and this prophecy has continued to be fulfilled throughout man’s history.

***Prophecy about Cain***

One of the earliest prophecies about the future of a man in the Bible was about Cain, the first son of Adam and Eve who murdered his righteous brother Abel. After the murder God pronounced a curse on Cain, meaning predicted his future course of life, which is stated in Genesis 4:8-12(NKJV):

“8 Now Cain talked with Abel his brother; and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him. 9 Then the Lord said to Cain, "Where is Abel your brother?" He said, "I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper?" 10 And He said, "What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood cries out to Me from the ground. 11 So now you are cursed from the earth, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. 12 When you till the ground, it shall no longer yield its strength to you. A fugitive and a vagabond you shall be on the earth.”

Here is evidence that this prophecy about Cain’s future came true as prophesied.

After God pronounced the curse on Cain, he complained about the severity of his punishment. Verses 13-15 state: “13 And Cain said to the Lord, "My punishment is greater than I can bear! 14 Surely You have driven me out this day from the face of the ground; I shall be hidden from Your face; I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond on the earth, and it will happen that anyone who finds me will kill me." 15 And the Lord said to him, "Therefore, whoever kills Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold." And the Lord set a mark on Cain, lest anyone finding him should kill him.”

The mark God set on Cain has been misunderstood, but Deuteronomy 32:8 (NKJV) explains what happened: “8 When the Most High divided their inheritance to the nations, when He separated the sons of Adam [that is Cain from the other sons of Adam], He set the boundaries of the peoples according to the number of the children of Israel.”

The mark on Cain was simply a land boundary marker God set between Cain and the other descendants of Adam so that they would live separately and develop their own civilizations. Then verse Genesis 4:16 states: “16 Then Cain went out from the presence of the Lord and dwelt in the land of Nod on the east of Eden.”

Thus after separating from the other future descendants of Adam, Cain went away and traveled to the East. The details of what Cain and his descendants did are provided by the Jewish historian Josephus. He states in Antiquities 1.1.2 that Cain “wandered over many countries.” Thus Cain became a vagabond as prophesied. The reason he became a vagabond was the curse pronounced on his agricultural pursuits. God had said to him: “12 When you till the ground, it shall no longer yield its strength to you.”

The reason Cain’s agricultural pursuits were cursed is provided by Josephus. He states in Antiquities 1.2.1: “But Cain was not only very wicked in other respects, but was wholly intent upon getting; and he first contrived to plough the ground.” Josephus further says that he was “a covetous man’ and “forced the ground.” In other words, Cain used farming methods that depleted the soil. He would use land for raising crops for a few years. Then when the soil got depleted, he would move on and raise crops on new soil. When that soil got depleted, he would be forced to move on to new land. That is why he became a vagabond on earth.

The problem with Cain was that he did not want to raise animals as he probably did not want to take the trouble of looking after them and cleaning up after them. The reason he became angry with his brother Abel was that Abel brought to God an offering of the best of his animals because he raised animals. Cain brought an offering of the grain and fruits and vegetables he raised. But God rejected Cain’s offering because God required an offering of animals and not of grain, fruits and vegetables. So Cain got angry with his brother because his offering was accepted, but his was rejected. That is why he murdered his brother.

Then after Cain was punished for murdering his brother, he began to hate God. In his rebellion he would not raise farm animals which would have helped maintain the fertility of the soil he used for agriculture. Instead his agricultural practices depleted the soil and he was forced to till new land. Since Cain had to produce his own knowledge by trial and error, he did not know that his agricultural pursuits came to nothing because of lack of animal manure.

This story was repeated wherever he wandered on earth. He was forced to live by hunting and gathering. But he also had no weapons for hunting. And the clean animals like deer were too swift for him to hunt. So his descendants had to resort to hunting unclean animals like elephants, mammoths, bears and other animals to make a living. They also began to live in caves. So Cain and his descendants began to live a degenerate lifestyle, becoming wanderers and vagabonds on earth. Archaeology has provided evidence of this.

Finally when he was unable to make a comfortable living on the earth, he decided to move near the other descendants of his father Adam. Josephus again describes what happened in Antiquities 1.2.2: “And when Cain had traveled over many countries, he, with his wife, built a city, named Nod, which is a place so called, and there he settled his abode; where also he had children. However, he did not accept of his punishment in order to amendment, but to increase his wickedness; for he only aimed to procure every thing that was for his own bodily pleasure, though it obliged him to be injurious to his neighbors. He augmented his household substance with much wealth, by rapine and violence; he excited his acquaintance to procure pleasures and spoils by robbery, and became a great leader of men into wicked courses. He also introduced a change in that way of simplicity wherein men lived before; and was the author of measures and weights. And whereas they lived innocently and generously while they knew nothing of such arts, he changed the world into cunning craftiness. He first of all set boundaries about lands: he built a city, and fortified it with walls, and he compelled his family to come together to it; and called that city Enoch, after the name of his eldest son Enoch.”

Josephus shows that Cain after wandering the earth for more than a century came back and settled near the other descendants of Adam. He built a city fortified with walls and began to make a living by robbery, plunder and violence. He began to steal from the other descendants of Adam, forced them to pay him tribute or he threatened them with violence. He fortified his city with high walls for protection. Because of his robberies, crimes and violence, he and his descendants began to be hunted. That’s how he became a fugitive. Thus each and every prophecy pronounced on him became true, providing us proof that it had to be God Almighty indeed to pronounce such a curse on Cain and bring it to pass on him and his descendants, precisely as prophesied.

**The Flood**

But Cain’s story does not end there. People before the Flood had very large families. Many children were born to Cain, and the non-white races originated in Cain’s line of descendants. Cain’s descendants continued in his way of robbery, violence, plunder and imposing tribute on others by force. One of his descendants named Lamech became a very powerful man in the world and ruled by imposing tribute on others by force. It was inevitable that Lamech and Cain would eventually clash because of trying to extract tribute from the same peoples. This clash eventually led to war between them in which Lamech killed his ancestor Cain. This is also indicated in Lamech’s statement to his two wives in Genesis 4:23 (NKJV): “23 Then Lamech said to his wives: "Adah and Zillah, hear my voice; Wives of Lamech, listen to my speech! For I have killed a man for wounding me, Even a young man for hurting me.” According to Jewish tradition, the great man Lamech killed for wounding him was his ancestor Cain.

After Cain’s violent death, his descendants continued in his way. Genesis 4:17-24 provides Cain’s genealogy to the 7th generation which lived in the period just before Noah’s Flood, the last of which died in the Flood.

After Enoch the son of Cain, the names of the next 3 descendants of Cain are listed simply because they were part of the genealogy of Lamech. They did nothing significant to which God wanted to draw our attention. But when the Bible comes to Lamech, seven verses are devoted to seven key individuals in his family: Lamech himself, his two wives Adah who was racially white, and Zillah [name means dark] who was negroid black, his sons Jabal, Jubal, Tubalcain and his daughter Naamah. These were seven world famous individuals in the generation just before the Flood. They forced the people to worship them as gods.

Paganized version of their story has come to us in the myths of various nations such as the Greek, Roman, Egyptian and Indian myths. These individuals deified themselves as gods and demanded to be worshipped by the people. Lamech was worshipped as Zeus, Adah as Hara, Zillah as Demeter, Jabal as Hercules, Jubal as Apollo, Tubalcain as Vulcan and Naamah as the goddess Athena.

They lived the way of Cain, forcing others to pay tribute to them or face violence. Also notice that Lamech had two wives that the Bible recognizes: Adah and Zillah. He apparently was the first bigamist in the history of mankind. But the myths tell us that he had many wives, mistresses and took other women as he chose. He and his descendants specially took white women of the line of Seth, the son of Adam, as they chose.

The Bible describes this condition in Genesis 6:1-2 (NKJV): “1 And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, 2 That the sons of God [the Hebrew word used here is Elohim, the correct translation of which is gods] saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose.”

The sons of gods referred to here are Lamech and his descendants who had deified themselves as gods. They took as many of the fair women of the line of Seth as they chose. These were interracial relationships. The result of these interracial marriages and relationships was violence in the extreme. The whole earth became saturated with violence. This condition is described further in Genesis 6 and what God decided to do about it.

“5 Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. 6 And the Lord was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. 7 So the Lord said, "I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping thing and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them." 11 The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence.12 So God looked upon the earth, and indeed it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth.”

The Bible says that because of the evil ways of Cain’s descendants, all of humanity had become corrupt and every intent of the thoughts of each and every human being was only evil continually. As a result, the earth had become saturated with violence. All had become corrupt except Noah and a small part of his family. Verses 8-10 state: “8 But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. 9 This is the genealogy of Noah. Noah was a just man, perfect in his generations. Noah walked with God. 10 And Noah begot three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth.”

Because Noah walked with God, God decided to destroy all of humanity in a Flood and save only Noah alive with his 3 sons and their 4 wives. So God instructed Noah to build an ark to save his family and animals of each kind. These instructions continue in Genesis 6:13-22:

“13 And God said to Noah, "The end of all flesh has come before Me, for the earth is filled with violence through them; and behold, I will destroy them with the earth. 14 "Make yourself an ark of gopherwood; make rooms in the ark, and cover it inside and outside with pitch. 15 And this is how you shall make it: The length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits, its width fifty cubits, and its height thirty cubits. 16 You shall make a window for the ark, and you shall finish it to a cubit from above; and set the door of the ark in its side. You shall make it with lower, second, and third decks.

“17 And behold, I Myself am bringing floodwaters on the earth, to destroy from under heaven all flesh in which is the breath of life; everything that is on the earth shall die. 18 But I will establish My covenant with you; and you shall go into the ark--you, your sons, your wife, and your sons' wives with you. 19 And of every living thing of all flesh you shall bring two of every sort into the ark, to keep them alive with you; they shall be male and female. 20 Of the birds after their kind, of animals after their kind, and of every creeping thing of the earth after its kind, two of every kind will come to you to keep them alive. 21 And you shall take for yourself of all food that is eaten, and you shall gather it to yourself; and it shall be food for you and for them." 22 Thus Noah did; according to all that God commanded him, so he did.”

God told Noah what he was about to do and gave him instructions on how to save his family, then carried out what He said He would do. These details are provided in Genesis 7:

“7 So Noah, with his sons, his wife, and his sons' wives, went into the ark because of the waters of the flood. 8 Of clean animals, of animals that are unclean, of birds, and of everything that creeps on the earth, 9 two by two they went into the ark to Noah, male and female, as God had commanded Noah.10 And it came to pass after seven days that the waters of the flood were on the earth. 11 In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, on that day all the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened. 12 And the rain was on the earth forty days and forty nights…

“17 Now the flood was on the earth forty days. The waters increased and lifted up the ark, and it rose high above the earth. 18 The waters prevailed and greatly increased on the earth, and the ark moved about on the surface of the waters. 19 And the waters prevailed exceedingly on the earth, and all the high hills under the whole heaven were covered. 20 The waters prevailed fifteen cubits [or above 22 ½ feet] upward, and the mountains were covered. 21 And all flesh died that moved on the earth: birds and cattle and beasts and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, and every man… 23 Only Noah and those who were with him in the ark remained alive. 24 And the waters prevailed on the earth one hundred and fifty days.”

God of the Bible prophesied about the Flood in Noah’s day and brought it to pass. Only an Almighty God could gather such quantity of water to cover the highest mountain tops to a depth of 22 ½ feet. That does provide strong evidence that the God of the Bible is indeed the Almighty God.

PROOF OF NOAH’S FLOOD

God rejecting historians, archaeologists, evolutionists and others label the Biblical account of the Flood a myth. Yet if such an unprecedented event did occur, we should find stories or traditions of such an unforgettable catastrophe. Here than are the proofs of Noah’s Flood.

*Proof #1 - Universal Flood Traditions*

When we examine the historical testimony, we find that all peoples, including primitive people, relate the occurrence of a Flood. Here are some examples from the Summary of Flood traditions in many countries in the *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* (ISBE) which provide unanimous testimony to the Bible story.

The Babylonians and Assyrians have preserved accounts of the Flood on clay tablets that match the Biblical account most closely and are exact in many details. These, therefore, are the most important of the traditions. The first account has come down to us only through the 4th century Greek historian Berosus. An earlier and far more important tradition was found inscribed on clay tablets in Babylon, which were discovered by George Smith in 1870 and filled as many as 180 lines. This account is known as the Epic of Gilgamesh. Both traditions give vivid accounts of the building of the ark, the dimensions of the ark, coming of the Flood, preservation of Noah and his family and the ark finally coming to rest in Armenia.

All Flood stories, however, have pagan embellishments to one degree or another and differ from the Bible account. An Egyptian legend of the great Flood is mentioned in Plato's Timaeus, from which only a few shepherds escaped.

The Greek tradition pictures their “Noah” building an ark to escape the waters. Later he is described as sending out a dove twice to check that the waters had abated, before setting foot on land again.

The traditional founder of Chinese civilization is represented as having escaped from a Flood because man had rebelled against heaven and despised the supreme power of the universe. Those preserved with him were his wife, three sons and three daughters.

ISBE states about traditions of the American Indians: “Among the American Indians traditions of the Deluge were found by travelers to be widely disseminated. Mr. Catlin says, "Among the 120 different tribes which I visited in North, South, and Central America, not a tribe exists that has not related to me distinct or vague traditions of such a calamity, in which one, or three, or eight persons were saved above the waters upon the top of a high mountain" (quoted by Wm. Restelle in Biblical Sac. (January, 1907), 157).”

The Peruvian version of the legend is that one man and one woman were saved in a box which floated on the flood waters for hundreds of miles. The Mexican account states that one man, his wife and children were saved in a ‘ship which sailed safely over the tumultuous waters which overwhelmed the earth.’ The Polynesians from the South Pacific maintain that a Flood overwhelmed all but eight people.

“The Indian [Flood] tradition,” according to William Smith’s Dictionary of the Bible: Comprising its Antiquities, “appears in various forms. Of these, the one which most remarkably agrees with the Biblical account is that contained in the Mahabharata. We are there told that Brahma, having taken the form of a fish, appeared to the pious Manu (Satya, i.e. the righteous, as Noah is also called) on the banks of the river Wirini…Brahma now announces to Manu the approach of the Deluge, and bids him build a ship, and put in it all kinds of seeds together with the seven Rishis, or holy beings. The Flood begins and covers the whole earth. Brahma himself appears in the form of a horned fish, and the vessel being made fast to him he draws it for many years and finally lands on the loftiest summit of Mount Himarat (i.e. the Himalaya). Then by the command of God, the ship is made fast…By the favor of Brahma, Manu, after the Flood creates the new race of mankind, which is hence termed Manudsha [Manusha] i.e. born of Manu. The Puranic or popular version is of much later date, and is, according to its own admission, ‘colored and disguised by allegorical imagery.’ “

Since after the Flood all nations were one family (that of Noah) before they separated, we should expect all of them to have ancient traditions of such a spectacular event as the Flood. And that is exactly what we find.

Think about it. If the Flood had not occurred, would all human families have preserved an account of that event? It is too preposterous to believe that people even in remote tribes, many living in primitive conditions, would have retained knowledge of the event if it had not occurred. All people certainly would not have been deceived into believing the story if it were not true. No people can dream up such an event.

*Proof #2 - Mention of the Ark*

Despite denials from God rejecting historians, archaeologists and scholars that the Flood ever occurred, the ark has held great fascination for mankind.

Ancient writers have indicated that people in ancient times knew of the ark’s location. Ancient Jewish historian Josephus recorded that a great number of ancient historians commented on the subject. He writes in Antiquities of the Jews I, III, 6: “Now all the writers of barbarian histories make mention of this flood, and of this ark; among whom is Berosus the Chaldean [who lived in the third century B.C.E.]. For when he is describing the circumstances of the flood, he goes on thus: "It is said there is still some part of this ship in Armenia, at the mountain of the Cordyaeans; and that some people carry off pieces of the bitumen, which they take away, and use chiefly as amulets for the averting of mischiefs." Hieronymus the Egyptian also, who wrote the Phoenician Antiquities, and Mnaseas, and a great many more, make mention of the same. Nay, Nicolaus of Damascus, in his ninety-sixth book, hath a particular relation about them; where he speaks thus: "There is a great mountain in Armenia, over Minyas, called Baris, upon which it is reported that many who fled at the time of the Deluge were saved; and that one who was carried in an ark came on shore upon the top of it; and that the remains of the timber were a great while preserved.”

Then much later in Antiquities, Josephus writes about events within his own lifetime. In book 20, chapter 2.2, he tells of a king who, when he was about to die, bestowed on his son a country in Armenia, of which he further states: “There are also in it the remains of the ark, wherein it is related that Noah escaped the Deluge, and where they are still shown to such as are desirous to see them.” Here is a plain statement that the ark still existed in first century A.D.

Reports of the ark have persisted through the years. An expert on the Flood, the historian, Dr. Aaron Smith of Greensboro, has patiently collected all the flood stories he could find. His collection comprises 80,000 works in 72 languages about the Deluge. About 70,000 of these mention the wreckage of Noah’s ark. If the Flood did not occur, why would so many nations’ ancient traditions mention the ark?

*Proof #3: The Geologic Evidence for the Flood*

Look at the Bible description of the Flood in Genesis 7:11: “In the six hundredth year of Noah’s life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, the same day were all the fountains of the deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened. And the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights.”

The *Bible Knowledge Commentary* explains the meaning of the terminology “the fountains of the great deep were broken up": "…There were corresponding gigantic upheavals and shiftings of the earth's crust which caused the oceans' floors to rise and break up their reservoirs of subterranean waters."

This comment indicates that due to volcanic eruptions, gigantic quantities of underground water were released, and some new geologic strata were formed on the earth. The geologic evidence of enormous volcanic activity during the Flood is provided by huge areas in many parts of the earth being covered by immense lava flows. The Columbia Plateau in the northwestern United States is a tremendous lava outpouring, covering an area of about 200,000 square miles to a depth of several thousand feet. Other parts of the United States that were covered by lava outflows include Idaho, Oregon, and California.

In fact, much of the world is covered in plateaus of hardened magma. Two million square miles of Canada is covered by lava flows, which is known as the Canadian Shield. Around the world some of the most famous outpourings include Iceland, India, Siberia, parts of South America, the rift valley in Africa, and the Sierra Nevada. In India the Deccan Plateau is an example. It is estimated to be more than 10,000 feet thick. These plateaus indicate that the entire earth was undergoing vast volcanic activity and geologic changes to its surface.

Most of the islands of the world were formed as a result of Noah’s Flood. Many of the islands such as the Hawaiian Islands, Easter Island, Tonga Island and the famous Galapagos Islands are ocean peaks that are remnants of volcanoes. The island nations of New Zealand and Japan are formed by volcanic mountain chains.

Sedimentary rocks (which are formed by settling down of mineral matter, mud and silt in water) and sea shells are found on the tops of most of the world’s mountains, including Mount Everest (Odell N.E.; The Highest Fossils in the World; Geology Magazine’ 104:173-74, 1967; and Thompson I. National Audubon Society Field Guide to North American Fossils. Alfred A. Knopf, NY., 1997.) Many people hiking into the mountains have reported finding fossilized seashells, fish and other aquatic creatures. This proves that these strata in the world’s highest mountains were under water at one time in the past, just as the Bible says. One would not expect to find fossils of seashells, fish and sea-life on the highest mountains unless they were under water at one time.

Thus geologic evidence indicates that the earth went through a catastrophic event involving water and a tremendous amount of volcanic activity. The evidence agrees with the description of Noah’s Flood in the Bible.

*Proof #4: Fossil Evidence for Noah’s Flood*

Finding remains of massive numbers of mammals and other creatures together in many areas worldwide would provide proof that they were buried suddenly in a global catastrophe. Here are some examples of fossil graveyards:

The *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* provides such evidence of the Noachian Flood: "Among these evidences one of the most convincing is to be found in the cave of San Ciro at the base of the mountains surrounding the plain of Palermo in Sicily. In this cave there was found an immense mass of the bones of hippopotami of all ages down to the fetus, mingled with a few of the deer, ox and elephant.

"Evidently the animals furnishing these bones had taken refuge in this cave to escape the rising water which had driven them in from the surrounding plains and cooped them up in the amphitheater of mountains during a gradual depression of the land.

"Similar collections of bones are found in various ossiferous fissures, in England and Western Europe, notably in the Rock of Gibraltar and at Santenay, a few miles South of Chalons in central France, where there is an accumulation of bones in fissures 1,000 ft. above the sea, similar in many respects to that in the cave described at San Ciro, though the bones of hippopotami did not appear in these places; but the bones of wolves, bears, horses and oxen, none of which had been gnawed by carnivora, were indiscriminately commingled as though swept in by all-pervading currents of water" (1915, "Deluge of Noah"). Since the carnivores had not made attempts to eat the herbivores, this shows that a great catastrophe had brought all these diverse animals together.

Another example, is an outcropping at Agate Springs in northwestern Nebraska: "What remains of the hill covers about ten acres. This bone bed was accidentally discovered in 1876. It contains the bones of rhinoceroses, camels, giant wild boars, and other animals, buried together in a confused mass as only water would deposit them.

"It is estimated that the bones of about nine thousand complete animals are buried on this one hill…Hence, it is likely that many times that number of animals were brought together at this hill and buried there by the action of water…This is a fact that is most important. Animals of every kind died in great numbers and were buried almost instantly" (Alfred Rehwinkel, The Flood, 1951, p. 183). The fact to be emphasized is that this massive deposit of many kinds of animals was obviously made by a huge amount of water.

One of the greatest fossil graveyards is Alaska. Professor Frank C. Hibben writes: "In many places the Alaskan muck blanket is packed with animal bones and debris in trainload lots."

"Within this mass, frozen solid. lie the twisted parts of animals and trees intermingled with lenses of ice and layers of peat and mosses. It looks as though in the middle of some cataclysmic catastrophe…the whole Alaskan world of living animals and plants was suddenly frozen in mid-motion in a grim charade" (Frank C. Hibben, *The Lost Americans*, New York; Apollo Editions, 1961. pp. 90, 91).

The animals include millions of wooly mammoths, mastodons, bison, horses, wolves, bears and lions, all hopelessly entangled! Another author counted 1,766 jaws and 4,838 meta-podials from ONE species of bison in a small area near Fairbanks, Alaska, alone.

Hibben continues: “Seemingly, no animal was spared. "The young lie with the old, foal with dam and calf with cow. Whole herds of animals were apparently killed together, overcome by some common power" (ibid, p. 170).

He further states: "Throughout the Alaskan mucks, there is evidence of atmospheric disturbances of unparalleled violence. Mammoth and bison alike were torn and twisted as though by a cosmic hand in godly rage" (Frank C. Hibben, The Lost Americans, New York: Apollo Editions, 1961, p.177).

The Alaskan massacre of mammals is just one case in point. Much of North America’s wild animals would have made modern Africa’s big game preserves look like a children’s petting zoo in comparison. The largest known members of the elephant family, the Imperial mammoths thundered across vast areas of western North America; the mastodon made northeast New England its home, and further north, the wooly mammoth roamed the wide countryside. Besides the giants of the elephant family, the woolly rhinoceros, giant ground sloths, giant armadillos, bear-sized beavers, saber-toothed tigers, camels, antelopes, giant jaguars ALL made North America home. Then, suddenly, all these creatures perished. The fossil record provides abundant evidence of this mammal destruction.

But mammal massacre is not only a North American phenomenon. To differing degrees, all continents on earth bear testimony to this sudden catastrophic destruction. Across the vast stretches of Siberia, the same type of mammalicide is evident as in Alaska. Africa’s immense population of wild animals is a mere shadow of its former self. Fossils in South America bear similar testimony to extinction of strange large animals. Europe and Asia were struck by a similar catastrophe destroying vast herds of mammals.

World-known British zoologist Ivan T. Sanderson, discussed the Siberian remains in a popular magazine article some years ago: "The greatest riddle…is when, why and how did all these assorted creatures, and in such absolutely countless numbers, get killed, mashed up and frozen into this horrific indecency?" (Ivan T. Sanderson, "*Riddle of the Frozen Giants*," Saturday Evening Post, January 16, 1960, p. 82.)

The worldwide destruction of mammal life is clearly evident in the Shiwalik Hills in the foothills of the gigantic Himalayas. In the nineteenth century, remains of living and extinct animals were found in great abundance.

Geologist D. N. Wadia describes the finds in D. N. Wadia, *Geology of India*, 2nd edition, London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1939, p. 268: "The sudden and widespread reduction, by extinction, of the Siwalik mammals is a most startling event for the geologist as well as the biologist.

"The great carnivores, the varied races of elephants belonging to no less than 25 to 30 species...the numerous tribes of large and highly specialized ungulates [hoofed animals] are to be seen no more in an immediately succeeding age" (ibid., p. 279).

European evidence of the worldwide massacre, is provided by a great fossil graveyard is Geiseltal, Germany, where more than 6,000 types of fossil vertebrae, including insects, mollusks, and plants are found. Millions of creatures are buried.

The earth today has only a small number of the immense types of mammals that roamed the earth providing evidence that many animal species became extinct in a global catastrophe. And most remarkable of all, ONLY LAND MAMMALS became extinct in any appreciable numbers. Sea and plant species are basically the same today as in pre-catastrophic times.

Anthropologist P.S. Martin writes: "Survival of the small, includes survival of the pelagic [water-living creatures]…the Pleistocene-Recent boundary cannot be recognized by marine guide fossils…At no time in the Pleistocene was there massive marine extinction...Nor were the largest mammals of the world, the cetaceans [water-living mammals such as porpoises], affected by late-Pleistocene extinction.

"Finally, late-Pleistocene extinction is not evident in the plant kingdom (P. S. Martin, "*Prehistoric Overkill," in Pleistocene Extinctions*, edited by P. S. Martin and H. E. Wright, Jr., New Haven: Yale University, 1967, pp. 78, 79).

But why is this so? Why were ONLY land-living, air-breathing, mammal species exterminated? Why did plants seem to survive the catastrophe and grow back into the same species? The answer should be evident. Many land-living, air-breathing animals and birds life died in the Flood. Only those in Noah’s ark survived. All sea-life survived the Flood. And plant life, though devastated by the Flood was able to grow back quickly after the Flood. Thus the fossil record provides solid evidence for Noah’s Flood, and agrees completely with its detailed description in the Bible.

*Proof #5: Was Noah’s Ark Big Enough*

Many scoffers argue that Noah’s ark was not big enough to carry the huge number of animals and their food supplies for more than a year. Therefore, they dismiss the Genesis Flood account as a myth. But take a look at the figures.

Noah did not have to take two of every living creature on board the ark. The specific requirement for the creatures to be taken on board is stated in Genesis 6:19-20 (NKJV): “And of every living thing of all flesh you shall bring two of every sort into the ark, to keep them alive with you; they shall be male and female. Of the birds after their kind, of animals after their kind…"

From these instructions it is clear that there were three requirements for the type of animals that were to go into the ark. They were to be 1) air breathing, 2) living on land, and 3) the Biblical kind, that can interbreed. He did not need to carry any sea creatures in the ark.

For estimating the numbers of animals that Noah had to carry in the ark, the Biblical kind should be understood. It is not the same as species. The Biblical kind is a much broader concept than the species. Many species can be included in a single Biblical kind. The word ‘kind’ is probably closer the modern term ‘genus,’ and in some case the larger unit, the ‘family.’

For example, The Canidae (canine) family includes about 14 genera of dog like animals. These include the dog, coyote, wolf, dingo, jackal, the African wild dog etc. Noah was not required to take the hundreds of species of canines constituting this group. He had to take only the few “kind” that represented all these species. After the Flood, these kinds would reproduce all the species that make up the Canidae family.

Thus, the ark was not required to carry every species of animals, possibly numbering in the millions. Noah had to take along only every Biblical kind numbering in the few thousands.

Many critics argue that it would have been impossible for a eight person crew to care for tens of thousands of animals. The truth is that labor savings methods could have been incorporated into the design. Therefore the animals would have required very little care once in the ark. For example, Noah could have designed self-feeding, self-watering and self-cleaning systems. The cages of smaller animals could have slanted floors for moving animal wastes into a gutter where it could dry and become inert and odorless, or be composted by bacteria. The stalls for larger animals could have been designed with slatted floors allowing wastes to collect and become dry. With these devices, the waste would not require human handling.

Food could have been loaded into a chute or container on the side of the cages and the animals could self-feed. Extra food could have been loaded in bins nearby. Such techniques are used today in the livestock industry to reduce labor costs. Water could also have been piped into self-filling bows or troughs. Rainwater cistern system could have been used to collect water.

With properly designed systems, most of the animals would have required very little if any care once loaded onto the ark. Studies from the livestock industry have shown that a few people can care for tens of thousands of animals. The ingenuity of ancient people should not be underestimated. The pyramids of Egypt and the seven wonders of the ancient world have not been duplicated since.

The next question is: Was the ark large enough to accommodate all the animals? It is a misconception that the ark was a small vessel. The ark was at the minimum 450 feet long, 75 feet wide and 45 feet high. The capacity of the ark was the equivalent of 569 modern railroad stock cars. That would make a train more than 5 ½ miles long. It was probably the largest sea-going vessel ever built until the late 1800's when metal ships were first constructed (John Whitcomb and Henry Morris, *The Genesis Flood*, 1998 edition, p.10).

The estimates of the average size of animals vary from a small animal like a rabbit to about the size of an average sheep. Being conservative with the calculations, take the average size of the animals on the ark to be that of a sheep.

John Woodmorappe (*Noah's Ark: A Feasibility Study*, 1996, p.7) estimates that the number of animals that Noah needed to take with him in the ark would have been between 2,000 and 16,000.

Whitcomb and Morris on the other hand in their book, The Genesis Flood, estimate that approximately 35,000 animals were placed on board the ark (this would account for the sevens – not seven pairs – of clean animals that were carried aboard the ark). Now be more conservative and allow for 5,000 more animals (for a total of 40,000) that may have become extinct after the Flood or may have been improperly excluded from the Biblical ‘kind.’ Here then are the space requirements calculations for carrying the animals aboard the ark.

The average space occupied by an average sheep is about 11.125 ft3. Here we have taken the average size of the animals to be the larger sheep rather than rabbit.

The Volume of the ark = 450x75x45 cu.ft = 1,518,750 cu.ft.

The percentages of space occupied in the ark if there are 2,000 animals is only 1.5%; if 16,000 animals were to be carried aboard the ark it is 11.7% and if 40,000 animals were to be carried aboard the ark, the most conservative estimate of the number of animals and their size, the percentage of space occupied by the animals would only be 29.3%, or just a little more than 1/4th. The rest of the space would be available for other uses in the ark, such as for interior fixtures, living space for Noah’s family, their baggage or other things. All the animals could actually fit in only one deck and a portion of the second deck of the ark.

Thus when we look at the evidence honestly, we can only conclude that Noah’s Flood was a fact. The Almighty God did really drown that world because of its wickedness, corruption and violence. But above all, Jesus Christ Himself affirmed in Luke 17:26-27 that Noah’s Flood was a fact. He stated: “…as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all.”

***Prophecy About Destruction of the Earth***

Now see another prophecy at the time of the Flood still being fulfilled today.

When God informed Noah of His intention to destroy all flesh on land, the Bible states in Genesis 6:12-13 (NIV): “12 God saw how corrupt the earth had become, for all the people on earth had corrupted their ways. 13 So God said to Noah, "I am going to put an end to all people, for the earth is filled with violence because of them. I am surely going to destroy both them and the earth.”

Did you catch that? God said He was also going to destroy the earth along with mankind. This was a further curse on the earth in addition to the curse in Adam’s time. Both these curses are still in effect today. That is why we see the crust of the earth broken up, resulting in all the violent volcanic, earthquake, flood, draught, tsunami, hurricane and tornado activity resulting in human death and destruction. Much of the earth remains covered in permafrost, and the geology of the earth has also produced large desert and mountainous areas which are not accessible for food production. Only about 10-15 percent of the earth’s land mass is cultivatable.

Further evidence of the destruction of conditions on earth which were conducive to good human health is that life span of human beings decreased from around 1000 years before the Flood to about 70 years today. Conditions on earth are simply not conducive to human health and longevity. We age and grow old quickly and die.

Of course, so-called German rationalism has made us all believe that the human life span of about 1000 years before the Flood is a myth. But paleontology [which is a science dealing with the life of past geological periods as known from fossil remains] and historical evidence has provided proof that human beings had very long lives at one time.

Paleontology shows that one striking characteristic of the oldest human fossil remains is the extreme longevity characteristic of the skeletons. Sir J. William Dawson writes: “Another point which strikes us in reading the descriptions of these skeletons is the indication which they seem to present of an extreme longevity. The massive proportions of the body, the great development of the muscular processes, the EXTREME WEARING OF THE TEETH…THE OBLITERATION OF THE SUTURES OF THE SKULL [seams between the various bones of the skull], along with SLOW OSSIFICATION of the ends of the long bones, point in this direction, and seem to indicate a SLOW MATURITY and GREAT LENGTH OF LIFE in this most primitive race” (*The Meeting Place of Geology and History*” by Sir J. William Dawson, pp. 62-63).

These scientific findings do not prove the theory of evolution but support the biblical record that ancients lived close to 1000 years.

Besides the Bible, ancient writers also testify that men lived nearly a thousand years. Josephus mentions this in Antiquities I, III, 9: “Now I have for witnesses to what I have said, all those that have written Antiquities, both among the Greeks and barbarians; for even Manetho, who wrote the Egyptian History, and Berosus, who collected the Chaldean Monuments, and Mochus, and Hestieus, and, besides these, Hieronymus the Egyptian, and those who composed the Phoenician History, agree to what I here say: Hesiod also, and Hecatseus, Hellanicus, and Acusilaus; and, besides these, Ephorus and Nicolaus relate that the ancients lived a thousand years.”

How could these early historians have been sure that the ancients had very long lives? Because Noah and his descendants in the early years after the Flood for 4 generations lived more than 400 years! Shem the son of Noah lived to be 600 years old. Egyptian history records that Shem was a very old high priest. Noah after the Flood died at age 950 years. After the Flood, most peoples around the world maintained king lists which showed the early kings lived long lives. This is recorded history of many peoples on earth after the Flood which is available today. So they knew for a fact through Noah and his sons, Shem, Ham and Japheth and their wives that those before the Flood lived more than 900 years.

What caused the life spans of human beings to decline after the Flood? After the Flood the earth was very different. Changes in the climate, composition of the atmosphere, loss of water canopy, changes in the geology of the earth, kind of radiation reaching the earth, along with possibly genetic changes wrought by God and other natural factors were responsible for a rapid decline in the life spans of humans and animals. These changes in the earth that shortened human life spans and the destructive forces of nature such as earthquakes, hurricanes, tsunamis, floods, draughts, tornadoes, only about 10-15 percent of the earth’s land being cultivatable are ongoing fulfillment of God’s prophecy that He would destroy man and the earth.

Only an Almighty God who has total control over the universe, the earth and everything in it could prophesy these great events before and at the time of the Flood and continue to uphold His prophecies for nearly 6,000 years now. Such prophecies are recorded only in the Bible, proving that its words are backed by the power of Almighty God.

**Chapter 8**

**Prophecies After the Flood**

***A Major Prophecy About the Races***

Not only did God prophesy about the future of humanity in general, He also foretold the future of the three broad races, white, black and yellow on earth. This is how this came about.

Noah himself was racially white, along with his wife and 3 sons Shem, Ham and Japheth. But his 3 sons married women of different races. Shem married a white woman, Ham a black negro woman and Japheth an oriental looking woman. That is how the different races originated after the Flood.

About 45-50 years after the Flood, Noah returned to the activity of growing a vineyard and producing wine. This probably was the first vineyard after the Flood and Noah was probably returning to this activity after many decades. So he perhaps forgot the potency of wine and inadvertently got drunk. As a result when Noah was unaware of his surroundings, somehow he became naked in his tent. Canaan the younger son of Ham then committed a perverted act with his grandfather Noah.

Notice verse Genesis 9:24: “And Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son [that is, Ham’s younger son Canaan] had done unto him.” When Ham came to the tent he merely looked on or “saw the nakedness” of his father (vs. 22)! He immediately told his two brothers and they covered him, as described in verse 23: “And Shem and Japheth took a garment, and laid it upon both their shoulders, and went backward, and covered the nakedness of their father; and their faces were backward, and they saw not their father’s nakedness.”

After this incident, what Noah said is recorded in verses 25-27: “And he said, Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren. And he said, Blessed be the Lord God of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant. God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant.”

Here Noah pronounced a curse on Canaan. Canaan was punished for his sin! A superficial reading of these verses may lead one to conclude that Noah was striking out against Canaan in anger. His words were not uttered in uncontrolled emotion. Noah here was directly inspired by God to make these statements. He was speaking a MAJOR PROPHECY about the races that would affect the fortunes of all peoples after the Flood. Peter the apostle said: “Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the holy Ghost [spirit] (2 Peter 1:20-21).

Noah prophecy concerning the races has proved true through all generations since the Flood and is still being fulfilled today.

Let’s analyze this prophecy. The descendants of Shem are today located mainly among the Semitic and Northwestern European peoples. The descendants of Japheth are found among the Latin, Slavic, and Oriental peoples. Remember Japheth himself was white but had married an oriental woman. So some of his descendants would be born white, some oriental and some mixed looking. And the descendants of Ham are found primarily among the dark races in parts of India and black African peoples.

Now notice what God said about the future status of each of Noah's three sons in world-wide terms. First, Shem: "Blessed be the Lord God of Shem ..." This expression shows that the knowledge of God would be preserved among the descendants of Shem -- a prophetic fact true to this day. The knowledge of the true God has been preserved among the sons of Shem while the descendants of Ham and Japheth have received their little understanding of God through Shem's offspring! God’s blessings also imply material prosperity.

Next, Japheth: “God shall enlarge Japheth.” This means that they would spread out and experience great growth in population. The proof of fulfilment of this prophecy is the fact that the greatest concentrations of earth's population exist in the Orient. Yet they would live under the influence of Shem, which is what is meant by the next phrase "he shall dwell in the tents of Shem!”

Lastly, the descendants of Ham except for Canaan are not mentioned in the prophecy. The descendants of Ham, the black race, were not given any special blessings. Many countries descended from him are some of the poorest nations on earth, and live in squalor, poverty and disease. The descendants of Canaan were destined to be "servants of servants" in this world. Presumably it is Canaan’s children scattered among nations after Joshua drove them out of the land of Canaan throughout Asia, Africa, North and South America, as well as in Europe that have been reduced to the general status of servants. In nearly every nation they would constitute the lowest classes.

But why did God not pronounce any blessings on the descendants of Ham? It has to do with Canaan’s sin, which earned him the curses, and Ham’s personal attitude under the influence of his Negro wife, the pre-Flood Naamah, the daughter of Lamech which earned him no blessings from God. In pre-Flood society the charge to make the world one race through interracial marriages was led by the dark descendants of Cain, particularly those of Lamech and Zillah. Naamah was their daughter. They successfully achieved this goal because they were the leading mighty and technologically advanced people of that world. If they had achieved similar success after the Flood, they would have continued on the same path of forced interracial marriages, and the result would have been the same: the world would have become one racially, socially, culturally, and of one pagan religion led by the black descendants of Ham.

In fact, after the Flood, the descendants of Ham, Cush and Nimrod, started on precisely that same path. They rebelled against God and Noah and separated themselves from the other descendants of Noah to build their own society and religion opposed to the true God. Then they went about building a great empire to bring the entire world under their control. Cush and Nimrod were also forcing interracial marriages. They would have achieved the same goal as before the Flood of making the world one religion, one society, one race, if they had not been stopped by direct intervention from God. This intervention came in the form of confusing the language of mankind at the Tower of Babel which led to races being separated. And then Nimrod was executed by Shem for his many crimes, probably at God’s command.

Canaan’s descendants also followed their ancestor in committing sexual perversions. That is why God gave the laws to Israel in Leviticus 18 against sexual perversions and incest. This is confirmed by Leviticus 18:27: “(For all these abominations have the men of the land done, which were before you, and the land is defiled.)” In addition, the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah were descendants of Canaan (Genesis 10:19), who perished when God rained fire and brimstone on them for their sexual perversions. Later God decided to destroy the Canaanites utterly and give their land over to the Israelites. Some of them escaped destruction and fled to other nations.

Now think of the significance and impact of this prophecy! Years before the Tower of Babel, God foretold the status of the white, yellow, and dark races for all future generations. So Noah’s prophecy given soon after the Flood, now about 4,300 years ago is still being fulfilled today proving that the words of the Bible are backed by the power of Almighty God who declares great events and then continues to bring them to pass in precise detail over thousands of years.

To appreciate why God of the Bible gave further prophecies, we should first briefly understand man’s history for the first 2,000 years from the pages of the Bible. The author has reconstructed that history in his two books titled “*Satan vs God: From the Beginning to the Flood*” *Volume 1* and “*Satan vs God: From the Flood to Abraham’s Call” Volume 2*. The second book covers the period from the Flood till the time God began to deal with Abraham. This brief history in the next chapter has been condensed from the two volumes.

**Chapter 9**

**Man’s Ancient History in Brief**

[The source for the following brief history of man is the author’s two books on ancient history titled: “*Satan vs God: From the Beginning to the Flood”* Volume 1 and “*Satan vs God: From the Flood to Abraham’s Call*” Volume 2.]

Even though some don’t believe it, most have heard of the Bible story that God initially created Adam and Eve and placed them in the Garden of Eden. They could eat of every fruit in the Garden except of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. But under Satan’s lying influence they disobeyed God and ate of the forbidden fruit. As a result they were expelled from the Garden of Eden to build their civilization on their own with little guidance from God.

Their very firstborn son Cain murdered his righteous brother Abel. As punishment Cain was separated from the rest of Adam’s children to build his own civilization. In stubborn rebellion against and hatred of God Cain refused to raise domestic animals and continued to be a farmer. But his agricultural pursuits came to nothing because without maintaining the fertility of the soil with animal manure, the soil soon depleted. So Cain was forced to constantly move to find new land that would yield crops. Thus he became a vagabond on earth.

At that time mankind had no good metal-tipped weapons (because the science of metallurgy had not yet been discovered) to hunt clean wild animals such as deer, wild sheep, goats and oxen. These animals were too swift for them. So to supplement their poor crops, children of Cain were forced to hunt the slow moving unclean animals such as the mammoths, elephants, bears, hyenas and the like. Of course the other children of Adam faced no such problem because they kept domestic animals such as cows, sheep and goats.

According to the ancient historian Josephus, after wandering the earth for a century and a half, Cain came to live near Adam’s other children. He saw them living in relative ease and comfort because of the animals they kept for meat, milk, and for maintaining the fertility of the soil with manure. Cain and his descendants still refused to keep animals. He then began to make a living by robbing crops and animals from the families of his brothers, Adam’s other children.

Then Cain saw that humanity needed items like salt, and building materials such as naturally occurring bitumen or asphalt. He simply occupied the sources of supply and called them his own. He then began to sell those things to anybody who could pay for them for what he needed. He also continued to rob and plunder, thus becoming a fugitive from the rest of society. For protection he built a great wall around his city. Then he started fencing the grazing land that Adam’s other children used and called it his own. Others would have to pay him for the right to graze their animals in that land. Finally, just like the Mafia of recent years, he forced people to pay him tribute, or he would rob and plunder them or do violence to them. So people could buy protection from his robberies and plunder by paying tribute. That is what the Bible calls Cain’s Way, the way of life he originated, which all of humanity has followed ever since.

Cain also continued to hate God and did not want to worship Him. He and his descendants also deified themselves and began to call themselves gods. Their names ending in el, meaning the eternal prove that. This is the origin of ancestor worship among Cain’s descendants.

As punishment for his continually multiplying sins, non-white children began to be born to Cain. Thus all the non-white races originated with Cain. In the meantime, the children Cain had left in other parts of the world when he wandered the earth also grew into tribes. Since they did not keep domestic animals, and continued to follow Cain’s wrong agricultural practices, and still did not have effective weapons to hunt clean animals such as deer, sheep and goats, they continued to follow the herds of mammoths, and elephants for their meat. They also lived a degenerate lifestyle in caves, and even became cannibals. Archeology has discovered their remains.

In the meantime, Cain’s descendants became worse and worse in following Cain’s lifestyle. Then rivalries developed between Cain and his descendant Lamech for control of as much of the population as possible for collecting tribute. Lamech also started the practice of taking multiple wives and marrying interracially. He began to take wives from the white descendants of the line of Seth, the obedient son of Adam after Abel was murdered. Some of these wives were taken by force.

Then Lamech and his children began to make great material progress. The greatest progress was made by four of Lamech’s children mentioned in the Bible in Genesis 4:20-22. Jabal became a great herdsman and kept vast herds of cattle. His brother Jubal became the greatest musician of his day and began to produce great musical instruments. Their half-brother Tubalcain developed the art of smelting and began to produce metals such as iron and brass and great metal products. Though the activities of their sister Naamah are not mentioned, according to Jewish tradition she originated the production of cloth and textiles. All this material progress brought immense wealth to Lamech and his family.

But they still hated the true God and would have nothing to do with Him. They continued to widen their influence forcing the rest of humanity to pay tribute. They deified themselves as gods, set up metal idols of themselves and demanded that they be worshipped by the people. Today we know Lamech as the god Jupiter, Jabal as Hercules, Jubal as the god Apollo, Tubalcain the inventor of the art of smelting to extract metals from ore as Vulcan, and their sister Naamah as the goddess Athena.

They were not content merely to have the rest of humanity worship them. They also under the threat of violence, torture and death forced the rest of humanity to stop worshipping the true God. They forced interracial marriages; themselves setting the example by taking scores of wives and mistresses.

Their influence had become so great that Lamech is the only human being in man’s history who seems to have come close to ruling the entire world. Conditions had reached such a stage that only Noah and his wife, were left racially pure, and only Noah refused to give up the worship of the true God. Lamech then threatened Noah’s life. Noah had to flee to protect himself and his family.

Lamech then died of old age. But after his death conditions on earth became manifold worse. Many strong men around the world started fighting each other to increase their influence. There was no one to enforce the rule of law. So the strong men killed innocent people at whim, and some did it even for sport. Can you imagine tens of thousands of strong men vying for control of as many people as they could through force and intimidation, challenging, fighting and killing each other in individual combat? The result was that the world had become saturated with violence, and the thought of every human being was only evil continually. Then these strongmen wanted to be worshipped as gods and forced others to stop worshipping the true God.

When God saw the conditions on earth, He decided to destroy everything on land and in the sky in a Flood and save only Noah, his racially pure 3 sons Shem, Ham and Japheth and their four wives. But first God warned all of humanity through Noah for about 100 years to repent. When no one did, God drowned them all in the Flood. We hope you can now appreciate why God drowned that entire world because of its wickedness. They will be a sobered bunch when God resurrects them again to a physical life and gives them one more chance to repent and accept His way of life as the only way that can produce happiness, joy, peace, harmony and prosperity for all creation.

***Conditions after the Flood***

Noah, his wife, his 3 sons Shem, Ham and Japheth were all racially white. Shem had married a white wife. But Japheth married an oriental looking wife, a descendant of Cain, and Ham had married the negro Naamah, the famous daughter of Lamech, also a descendant of Cain. So the 3 basic races, white, black and oriental, were preserved through the Flood.

After the Flood, Noah instructed his family in God’s way of life. But Naamah who was worshipped as a goddess herself before the Flood instructed her black children in the way their family had lived and ruled the world before the Flood. Japheth’s wife instructed her children in the way of life of ancestor worship that her family followed before the Flood.

Then the incident of Noah inadvertently getting drunk and Canaan the son of Ham and Naamah committing a perverted act occurred. This led Noah to pronounce a curse on Canaan, and prophesy about the future of the three races of his family.

Before the Flood Lamech had ruled almost the entire world! Because of interracial marriages, the world had become filled with violence. God wanted to prevent one man from ruling the world again and prevent interracial marriages because it led to violence. So God gave Noah a plan to colonize different areas of the earth. This would separate the various races, and each would develop their own civilization, and not try to force their rule over others.

Noah took a ten year long journey with his sons to different areas to explore lands to send colonies to. While they were gone, Ham’s son Cush, which means black, probably seduced and raped or had an illegal relationship with the strikingly beautiful young Semiramis, a great granddaughter of Japheth. She became pregnant and the black Nimrod was born to her as a result of that relationship.

When Noah returned from his journey, he refused to let Cush interracially marry Semiramis, and because he was already married to his black sister possibly with straight hair and had children by her. He simply was not going to allow conditions to develop as they had developed before the Flood due to forced interracial marriages.

At that time wild animals multiplied faster than human beings and began to threaten the tiny human population. Nimrod the physically powerful young son of Cush and Semiramis rose to the occasion and began to protect humans from wild animals. He began to organize hunting parties to hunt and kill wild animals which drove them away from human populations. Thus Nimrod began to be looked upon as a savior of mankind.

Noah then began to implement God’s plan and send out colonies to different areas of the earth. But Cush, Nimrod, Semiramis, and Shem’s son Asshur and a majority of humanity rebelled against God’s colonization plan. They refused to go to their assigned territories. Instead they separated from Noah and those loyal to him and went to the land of Shinar in modern day Iraq and set up their own civilization. Thus after the Flood this rebellion against God and Noah was led by the black part of the human family, though they had white and oriental followers as well.

These rebels began to hate the true God and in rebellion set up their own god, the Sun-Fire-Serpent god. They developed their own pagan worship system, and set up a very high tower as a sanctuary for worship and began building a city. Cush and Nimrod became the high priests of the god they had set up.

Cush and Nimrod were also basically rebelling against not being allowed to marry whomever they wanted, mainly white women. Now that they were free from Noah’s influence, they again began to force interracial marriages among those who followed them.

Just as Nimrod’s great grandfather and Cush’s grandfather Lamech had done before the Flood, they too began to develop plans to rule all of humanity, and make the world of one race, one religion [their religion] and one society, under their control. To accomplish that they would probably have to assassinate Noah, his loyal son Shem and those with them who would refuse to come under their rule.

When God saw their plans, He decided to intervene. He confused the language of mankind and destroyed the tower (Genesis 11:1-9). Because of confusion of language men could no longer freely communicate with everyone else, but only with those of their own race. So they were forced to separate by race and move away from the city they were building.

After the destruction of the Tower and confusion of language, Cush, Nimrod and Semiramis began to pick up the pieces of their empire. Their goal to control the entire world population still remained. At that time the population of the world had reached only 5,000. Slightly less than half that number were loyal to Noah and Shem and had started going out in colonies as instructed by them. But they had not travelled far. So the population of the world was still concentrated around the Middle East, in and around the land of Israel, Iraq, coasts of Egypt and the Mediterranean in Europe.

The destruction of the tower and the confusion of language were not lost on those in the Cush and Nimrod camp. They knew that the destruction of their project was from God, and they noticed that the language they could understand was only of those of their race, according to the division Noah had made for colonizing the earth. This caused a division in the Cush and Nimrod camp. Asshur the white son of Shem separated himself and built Nineveh to the north of the cities Cush and Nimrod were building. This is described in Genesis 10:10-12: “10 And the beginning of his [that is, Nimrod’s] kingdom was Babel [meaning Babylon], and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar. 11 Out of that land went forth Asshur, and builded Nineveh, and the city of Rehoboth, and Calah. And Resen between Nineveh and Calah: the same is a great city.” However, Asshur and his descendants at that time still were part of Nimrod’s empire, and worked with him, under his rule.

For the efficient working of people on their projects of building cities, places of worship and growing food, Cush [the Menes of Egypt and known as Manu in the Indian scriptures] had organized all the workers in their camps according to the tasks performed by them, as he had determined what ‘aptitude’ they had. But this division of labor was rigid. Those working on growing food would always remain on agriculture and would not be allowed to change their work to construction and building. Those assigned the task of keeping the cities clean would always attend to that task. Cush and Nimrod enforced their rigid division of labor on all. The people could not choose what tasks they wanted to perform according to what they enjoyed or had an aptitude for. Such division was passed along to the children also as they grew up.

Thus the system Cush had originated which he and Nimrod enforced became highly oppressive. The people could not get away from it though many longed to do so, because of the fear of being killed for their rebellion. But others still did not forget the deliverance brought to them by Nimrod from wild animals and remained loyal to him, accepting their oppressive division of labor.

The ancient Jewish historian Josephus describes the result of the policies of Cush and Nimrod in Antiquities I, IV, 2: “He [that is Nimrod] also gradually changed the government into Tyranny…seeing no other way of turning men away from the fear of God, but to bring them into a constant dependence on his power…” This was the nature of the merciless, brutal, oppressive, freedomless regime that was developing in Babylon.

We see the continuation of this horrible and oppressive system in the development of the rigid caste system in India and to some extent in Egypt. The straight haired dark Indians were Cush’s descendants. Raamah the son of Cush mentioned in Genesis 10:7 is none other than the Rama of Ramayana who was deified by his descendants. And Nimrod is being worshipped in India as Krishana. Both the Mahabharata and the Ramayana glorify the caste system developed by Cush, the father of both Rama and Nimrod.

Cush, Nimrod and Semiramis continued to develop their worship system opposed to the worship of the true God. At this time for the first time in human history Nimrod introduced live human and infant sacrifices in his worship system. The live humans being sacrificed were probably captives who rebelled against Nimrod’s religion.

Some evidence of human and infant sacrifices instituted by Nimrod can be found in the practice of Sati in India before the 19th century A.D., which is the wife jumping alive into the fire that is cremating her dead husband and immolating herself. Such evil practices are glorified in the Hindu scriptures. The British had to outlaw the practice of Sati in India to end it in the 19th century.

Other evidence of infant sacrifice by burning alive comes from the Bible itself. Nimrod was later deified as the god Baal. The Canaanites were Baal or Nimrod worshippers and infant sacrifices, i.e. burning them alive in the fire, was one of their practices. That is why God ordered the Israelites to exterminate them. But part of the population of ancient Israel ended up adopting their practices.

Can you imagine the hideous religious practices of these pagans? How would you feel if you were forced to give up your infant to be burnt alive as a sacrifice to the pagan god Baal or the Sun-fire-serpent god? Such was the tyrannical rule of Nimrod.

And Cush and Nimrod continued to promote and force interracial marriages. Evidence of forced interracial marriages can be found all over the world. Much of Japhethites, the ancestor of the Oriental peoples had joined Cush and Nimrod in their rebellion. Evidence of their mixing with blacks can be found in South and Southeast China, Tibet, Nepal, Southeast Asia, among Native Americans in north, but particularly South America. Many in the pure white line of Arphaxad were lured to become priests. They were also forced to mix with the black and yellow races. Their mixed descendants are the Brahmins of India and others are mixed among the Egyptians. Later interracial mixing has also continued to occur.

*Rebellion against the Rule of Cush and Nimrod*

At that time there was movement between the camps of Noah and Cush and Nimrod. Some escaped the camp of Cush and Nimrod to join up with Noah’s camp, while others who had gone out in colonies came and settled in Cush and Nimrod’s camp. One such person was Magog, the ancestor of the Chinese people, the son of Japheth. He and his descendants had gone out as colonists as instructed by Noah. They were allotted the land of China and were given maps by Noah on how to get there. This is not fiction. These maps were made by the Creator Himself and given to Noah as proved in the second volume of the author’s book on ancient history.

Magog and his children took the north route to get to China over many centuries. But because of the cold conditions during their journeys Magog decided with a part of his children to seek out the camp of Cush and Nimrod, as he had heard they were building cities to live in and life was more comfortable.

Magog soon got a taste of the brutal and oppressive conditions there. He objected to the forced interracial marriages of his descendants with the blacks. As a result he was imprisoned by Nimrod. This eventually led most of the descendants of Japheth to rebel against the rule of Cush and Nimrod. As this resistance from the Japhethites got stronger over the years, Cush saw the handwriting on the wall. He departed for Ethiopia with his children with frizzy hair along with Semiramis to the land allotted to him by Noah according to God’s plan. Nimrod tried to maintain his empire in Babylon alone, but as the children of Japheth got stronger and stronger, he too was forced out and went to Egypt. Two years later his father Cush disappears from Egyptian history, presumably murdered by his illegitimate son Nimrod and his mother Semiramis.

For the next 28 years Nimrod and Semiramis continued to propagate their pagan religion among the descendants of Ham in Africa, as well as the Canaanites. Nimrod likely also travelled and propagated his religion among the other sons of Cush with the straight hair who were still around the Middle East, but were destined to end up in India according to the allotment made for them in God’s colonization plan. He also had started making inroads into Italy, Spain and areas along the shores of the Mediterranean in Europe where some of the fairer descendants of Japheth had settled at that time. He was now beginning to make inroads into areas where Shem was active. At this stage God decided Nimrod should be executed for his many crimes including live human and infant sacrifices. This is the first execution in the history of mankind ordered by God.

At that time Nimrod was in Egypt. Shem immediately set about the task. He came to Egypt from Europe and convinced 70 princes in Egypt and surrounding areas to join him in bringing Nimrod to justice. Nimrod wasted no time and attacked Shem and those with him as soon as he got word. Nimrod and his forces were defeated and he fled to Italy. Shem followed him and found him after a year, executed him, cut off his body into pieces and sent the pieces to different areas of the population which was still all mainly in the Middle East as a warning against apostatizing. Noah was still alive and well at that time and would live about 150 more years.

Thus after the Flood, the black portion of the human family led the rebellion against God. Now perhaps we can appreciate why God prophesied the future of the 3 races through Noah the way He did. Even after the Flood, the black portion of the human family ruled a majority of mankind. But over the centuries they were to lose their influence. If God had continued to let them materially prosper and rule the rest of mankind with force, they would have driven all of humanity away from the true God, and forced everyone to marry interracially. The result would have been the same as before the Flood: worldwide violence, corruption and bloodshed.

After Nimrod was executed, a fear fell on the entire world population, which at that time was small and concentrated largely in and around the Middle East and southern Europe, around the shores of the Mediterranean Sea. They could no longer openly worship their false Sun-fire-serpent god for fear of being executed. After Nimrod’s execution, Semiramis fled to the delta region of Egypt, and from there to Babylon. The world population at that time was only around 90,000.

At that time Noah left Armenia and took a 115 year long journey to visit the colonists he had sent to inquire about their welfare. When he reached Egypt, he saw that his descendants there were living a degenerate life style. He spent 50 years there, countering the pagan teachings of Cush, Nimrod, Semiramis and his own son Ham who by that time had been thoroughly corrupted by his wife Naamah. Noah’s work with the Egyptians was to lay the foundation of Egypt’s greatness in the centuries following.

Meanwhile Semiramis fled to Babylon and had an illegitimate son with Ninus II the son of Asshur and named him Horus. She soon returned to Egypt with her young son and reigned there. Horus then became the ruler in Egypt. She continued to develop and propagate her pagan religion from there.

Because of the fear of being executed for propagating paganism, Semiramis now began developing her Mystery religion, which later would become known as the Babylonian Mystery Religion. In this religion they outwardly worshipped objects such as trees, and creatures such as the bull, but those initiated in the mysteries knew exactly what they were worshipping. Bull worship was Nimrod worship and tree worship (which has come down to our time as the Christmas tree) was actually worship of Semiramis. Since Nimrod was worshipped as a bull or calf, his mother Semiramis would obviously be worshipped as a cow. That is the origin of cow worship among the Hindu Indians.

Only those initiated in the mysteries knew what really they were worshipping in animals, objects and idols. Those not initiated in the mysteries just followed the priests in their worship without really knowing what they were worshipping. Over the centuries even the priests forgot what they were actually worshipping. But they continue to follow traditions and worship cows, trees and other objects even today.

It seems at this time Satan and the demons for the first time understood the very first prophecy given in the Bible in Genesis 3:15 (NKJV): “And I [that is God] will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed, it shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.”

This is actually a prophecy of the woman’s Seed coming to earth to redeem mankind from death, making eternal life possible. That promised Seed was Jesus Christ. Satan bruising his heel was understood to mean that Satan would cause Him to be put to death. But He would bruise Satan’s head by defeating him and ending his rule on earth.

It seems Satan then immediately began developing a counterfeit religion through Semiramis centered around this prophecy. Nimrod was already considered a savior of mankind for having saved humans from wild animals. Now Semiramis deified him as the promised Seed of the woman sent to save mankind. She said he had been killed to save mankind. She then deified herself as the Mother of the Savior and began to be worshipped. So worship of the Madonna and Child originated with Semiramis soon after the Flood. It did not originate with the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. The Bible nowhere tells us that Mary is to be worshipped in any way. Worship of the Madonna and Child in mainstream Christianity is an ancient tradition going back above 2000 years before the birth of Jesus Christ, foisted on Christianity by the great false Church based in Rome.

All the false worship traditions, customs and festivals such as Christmas and Easter of modern Christianity are nowhere required in the Bible. Our modern word Easter comes from the name “Ishtar” which was the Assyrian name of Semiramis. Worship of the Trinity, the cross, hot cross buns of Easter, colored eggs and rabbits, the tree of Christmas, worship of the bull, calf and cow, worship of the Sun god on Sunday, worship of relics, start of the new year in the dead of winter, all originated with Semiramis soon after the Flood and have been foisted on a gullible Christianity by the false Church. Worship of idols had originated before the Flood and remained an important part of the religion originated by Semiramis.

*Assyrian Conquests*

Not only did innovations in pagan religion increase and flourish under Satan’s guidance through Semiramis, the religion began to be enforced on other people. The main instrument to accomplish this after Nimrod’s death was Asshur, the son of Shem, and his descendants. After Nimrod’s death, the Babylonians who were mainly Japhethites mixed with other peoples and the Chaldeans who were descendants of the white Arphaxad were active in Babylon whereas the Assyrians [whose modern day descendants are the Germans] became active in consolidating power north of them in the cities they had built.

Much of the world population was still living around the Middle East and coasts of the Mediterranean and had not moved too far away. Asshur, the ancestor of the Assyrians then under the generalship of his son Ninus II began conquests of the nations around to impose tribute on them. And they had also begun building a fortified city, Nineveh, with very high and thick walls to protect themselves. The conquests took 17 years enabling the Assyrians to put many peoples under tribute.

The Assyrians were extremely brutal in their conquests. Ninus II had some rulers murdered with all their children so as to leave no heir. Here is what Diodorus of Sicily the ancient historian writes in his “*Historical Library*” Book II, chapter 1, pp 100 about Ninus II:

“Ninus therefore, the Assyrian king, with the prince of Arabia, his assistant, with a numerous army invaded the Babylonians then next bordering upon him: for the Babylon that is now [that is, in the time of Diodorus] was not built at that time; but the province of Babylon had in it then many other considerable cities, whose inhabitants he easily subdued (being rude and unexpert in matters of war), and imposed upon them a yearly tribute; but carried away the king with all his children prisoners, and soon after put them to death…

“Being thus strengthened, he invaded Media [i.e. the Medes, the descendants of Japheth], whose king Pharnus coming out against him with a mighty army was utterly routed, and lost most of his men, and was taken prisoner with his wife and seven children, and afterwards crucified.”

After 17 years of conquests when the Assyrians had become masters of that part of the world, they lived in their well-fortified cities with Nineveh their capital and tribute was brought to them on a yearly basis by all of their subject nations. The only way people could get away from the oppression of the Assyrians was to move away from them. And they did move away, led by God in their migrations to the places He had allotted them in His colonization plan given to Noah.

But the brutal treatment of other rulers by the Assyrians was not forgotten. They planned and plotted against the life of Ninus. As mentioned earlier, Ninus II had a son named Horus with Semiramis. The year Ninus II finished his conquests, Semiramis left Egypt permanently and came and settled in Babylon. She continued to develop and spread her Babylonian Mystery religion from there. She literally committed fornication with the kings of nations around, which included most nations still living close by, which became a means also to spread her religion. That is why myths of all peoples have so much in common because all peoples followed Semiramis’ religion.

Ninus II could not be brought to justice by conquest because of the well-fortified city Nineveh he lived in. So the kings around hatched a plot with Semiramis. Remember Semiramis herself was a Japhethite, and most of the kings brutally treated by Ninus II were Japhethites. Semiramis now renewed her relationship with Ninus II and could easily move in and out of Nineveh. Ninus II again became very fond of her and probably married her this time.

Then Semiramis probably played a prank on Ninus II and asked him to give her royal authority for 5 days. She held a sumptuous banquet for the army commanders and the nobility so that all her subjects could observe that she ruled. These commanders and the nobility included many from among the provinces that Ninus II had conquered and were now allied with the Assyrians. She then secretly committed Ninus II to jail. Then she carried out Ninus II’s plans and invaded Armenia in which she was successful. She then had Ninus II assassinated and ruled in his place. Thus though Ninus II could not be conquered because of his highly fortified capital city, he was brought down by intrigue.

This brought Horus, the illegitimate son of Ninus II and Semiramis back from Europe and a struggle followed between him and his mother for the throne of Assyria. After many years Semiramis fled to Armenia and was slain in a battle with her son Horus.

*Assyrians and Abraham*

Even after the death of Semiramis, the Babylonian Mystery religion she had developed had taken deep hold over the people. As mentioned earlier, the pure white descendants of Arphaxad the son of Shem had been lured through financial incentives to become priests of the pagan religion. They settled among the ancestors of the Indian Cushites, or Kassites or Kshatriyas, where they are known as the Brahmins today, and among the Egyptians, Babylonians and in Italy. They propagated the pagan religion of Semiramis as enforced by the Assyrians, or through cunning craftiness in Italy and Europe where enforcement was not possible. In Italy where Noah had settled, these priests convinced the people that they were honoring Noah, but cunningly taught the Babylonian Mystery religion, telling the people that Noah himself had preached that way.

Besides the priests who had dispersed among different peoples, there were other descendants of Arphaxad living in Mesopotamia. The Assyrians began to bring them into subjection. Because of the treacherous ways of the Assyrians, all these peoples were forced into living ways of lying, deceit, trickery and intrigue. They were forced to abandon the ways of truth and serve other gods.

Joshua 24:2 records: “And Joshua said unto all the people, Thus says the LORD God of Israel, Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time, even Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor: and they served other gods.” This shows that Abraham’s father served other gods and idols and not the true God. Later we have the example of Jacob learning the ways of trickery from his mother Rebecca who came from that area and tricked his brother Esau and his father Isaac out of Esau’s birthright and blessing. We learn of the trickery of Laban the brother of Rebecca in his dealings with his nephew Jacob. We see the competitive dealings between the two wives of Jacob, the sisters Leah and Rachel. It was the treacherous influence of the Assyrians that had turned away these descendants of Arphaxad from the pure ways of God. They are the only ones who had retained the knowledge of the true God. But through financial incentives to become priests of the pagan religion and from pressure from the Assyrians, all descendants of Arphaxad had also turned away from the true God.

So after the Flood, a great struggle was waged between the pagans and those loyal to Noah and Shem to impose their religion over all of humanity. Paganism won out and all of humanity was corrupted and began to follow pagan worship practices. The Assyrians began to impose the pagan religion by force on descendants of Shem. In about 400 years after the Flood, all of humanity once again turned away from worship of the true God.

This is the world into which the 3 sons of Terah, Haran, Abraham and Nahor were born. Terah and Nahor had turned away from the true God to serve other gods. At this time Noah had passed away, but Shem was still alive. There can be no doubt that Haran and Abraham went and visited Shem in the Danubian Valley where he lived in his old age, and learnt about the true God from him. In the early years of Abraham, they had respite from Assyrian oppression because Horus and his mother Semiramis were engaged in a tussle to gain or maintain control of the Assyrian Empire. But after gaining control of the Empire, Horus began imposing the pagan religion on all peoples. Haran and Abraham were bound to come into conflict with Horus and his governors and lesser Assyrian rulers. Jewish and Arab traditions tell us that Horus persecuted Abraham.

The Bible records that Haran and Abraham lived in Ur of the Chaldees. This was also the place where the Chaldean priests, the descendants of Arphaxad lived. The Chaldean priests had knowledge of the eclipses of the sun and moon and had learnt astronomy from Noah. So they could predict the movement of the celestial bodies. To gain hold over the people they falsely taught that they could communicate with the Sun and Moon gods who would tell them about their movements. But Abraham countered their teaching, having possibly learnt astronomy directly from Shem. He began to argue and teach that the sun and moon could not control their own motions, but were subject to the laws of the supreme God. Their movements could be predicted. So the sun and moon were not gods, but that there was a Supreme God who governed their motions. He proved that the creation was proof of the existence of the true Supreme God. This brought Abraham into conflict with the Chaldean priesthood as described by Josephus the ancient historian. The Chaldean priesthood visioned their lofty status in society slipping away. So Josephus records that they raised a tumult against Abraham.

At this time probably Haran and Abraham refused to pay tribute to the Assyrians. One of their lesser rulers Count Sattan came against them to enforce tribute. In this battle Haran the older brother of Abraham died. Abraham had to flee for his life to the Danube Valley with his wife Sarah. But he had to leave his Assyrian wife Susanna and their son Achim behind as the Assyrians would not harm one of their own.

After a few years when Count Sattan died, Abraham decided to return to his former home in Ur of the Chaldees to be with his wife Susanna and their son Achim. But God changed Abraham’s plans from then onwards. God appeared to him for the first time, called him and gave him a command and a new plan for his life. This is recorded in Genesis 12:1-5 (NKJV):

“1 Now the Lord had said to Abram: "Get out of your country, from your family and from your father's house, to a land that I will show you. 2 I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." 4 So Abram departed as the Lord had spoken to him, and Lot went with him. And Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. 5 Then Abram took Sarai his wife and Lot his brother's son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the people whom they had acquired in Haran, and they departed to go to the land of Canaan. So they came to the land of Canaan.”

For about 2,000 years since the creation of Adam and Eve, God worked with all of humanity in general. But twice all of humanity had turned its back on Him: once before the Flood and now in about 400 years after the Flood. All except Abraham, Lot, Abraham’s wife Sarah and Shem, who was still alive, had turned away to worship other gods. God then decided to no longer work with all of humanity. He decided to create a model nation as mentioned in His promise to Abraham, with which He would work, bless that nation for the entire world to see as an example and learn from. Just as before the Flood God found Noah who was completely loyal to His way of life and worked with him to save humanity through the Flood, He now chose to work with one man, Abraham, who remained loyal to Him after the Flood when the rest of humanity had succumbed to paganism. The next set of great prophecies and promises of God relate to Abraham and his descendants.

These prophecies were not after thoughts. All this was thought out and planned even before the foundation of the world. In Deuteronomy 32:8 Moses states: “8 When the Most High divided their inheritance to the nations, when He separated the sons of Adam, He set the boundaries of the peoples according to the number of the children of Israel.” This states that when God gave inheritance to the sons of Adam, He did it according to the number of children that would be born to Israel after the Flood. This means the inheritance of the nations was planned even at the time of Adam and Eve, meaning it was already pre-planned. So when Abraham was asked to go to the land of Canaan, he was asked by God to go to his inheritance which the descendants of Canaan had usurped in the rebellion against God’s colonization plan.

Abraham was completely obedient to God and did not question why He asked him to go to Canaan. He simply obeyed God’s instructions and departed.

**Chapter 10**

**God’s Promises to Abraham**

God appeared to Abraham for the first time and gave him a command and a new plan for his life. This is recorded in Genesis 12:1-5 (NKJV):

“1 Now the Lord had said to Abram: "Get out of your country, from your family and from your father's house, to a land that I will show you. 2 I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." 4 So Abram departed as the Lord had spoken to him, and Lot went with him. And Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. 5 Then Abram took Sarai his wife and Lot his brother's son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the people whom they had acquired in Haran, and they departed to go to the land of Canaan. So they came to the land of Canaan.”

It is to be noted in these promises that all peoples on earth shall be blessed materially and spiritually through Abraham’s descendants.

Abraham was completely obedient to God and did not question why God asked him to go to Canaan. He did not argue with God to bless him in the land where he was rather than asking him to go to a strange land. He simply obeyed God’s instructions and departed.

God later began to add more details to His promises. Genesis 13:16 adds (NIV): “16 I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth, so that if anyone could count the dust, then your offspring could be counted.” This means descendants of Abraham will increase greatly in population.

God then further expanded the scope of His promises to Abraham in Genesis 17:1-7 (NKJV): “1 When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to him and said, "I am God Almighty; walk before me and be blameless. 2 I will confirm my covenant between me and you and will greatly increase your numbers." 3 Abram fell facedown, and God said to him, 4 "As for me, this is my covenant with you: You will be the father of many nations. 5 No longer will you be called Abram; your name will be Abraham, for I have made you a father of many nations. 6 I will make you very fruitful; I will make nations of you, and kings will come from you. 7 I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you. Also I give to you and your descendants after you the land in which you are a stranger, all the land of Canaan, as an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.”

Now the promises include instead of one nation, many nations being formed from the descendants of Abraham, and he becoming an ancestor of kings. Also God promised him all the land of Canaan in which he was a stranger.

Later when Abraham was willing to offer his son Isaac as a sacrifice, God’s promises to him became *unconditional*. The account is stated in Genesis 22:11-12, 15 -18 (NKJV): “11 But the Angel of the Lord called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" So he said, "Here I am." 12 And He said, "Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me…15 Then the Angel of the Lord called to Abraham a second time out of heaven, 16 and said: "By Myself I have sworn, says the Lord, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son-- 17 blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies. 18 In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice."

This time the promise of Abraham’s descendants possessing the gates, meaning narrow land and sea passages of access to enemies’ lands and strategic islands around the world is added.

*Promises to Abraham Passed on to Isaac and Jacob*

God then reconfirmed His covenant or unconditionally binding agreement [meaning Abraham had to do nothing more, but God was binding Himself to do His part and perform His promises to Abraham] with Abraham’s son Isaac and his descendants in Genesis 26:1-5. Then in Genesis 27:26-29, 28:1-4, 10-14, 25:9-12, the covenant and the promises were reconfirmed with Abraham’s grandson Jacob.

In confirmation of God’s promises to Jacob, many interesting details of the promises are revealed. First of all, Jacob received the birthright, which naturally belongs to the firstborn. Esau the firstborn sold the birthright to his younger brother Jacob for bread and stew of lentils.

The *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* explains that the birthright was "the right belonging naturally to the firstborn son...Such a person ultimately became the head of the family, the line being continued through him. As firstborn he inherited a double portion of the paternal estate...The firstborn was responsible for...exercising authority over the household as a whole" (1979, Vol. 1, "*Birthright*," pp. 515-516).

Isaac pronounced the following blessing on his son Jacob in Genesis 27:28-29 (NKJV): “28 Therefore may God give you of the dew of heaven, of the fatness of the earth, and plenty of grain and wine. 29 Let peoples serve you, and nations bow down to you. Be master over your brethren, and let your mother's sons bow down to you. Cursed be everyone who curses you, and blessed be those who bless you!"

Isaac also let Jacob know that the promises of Abraham were being passed on to him in Genesis 28:3-4 (NRSV): “3 May God Almighty bless you and make you fruitful and numerous, that you may become a company of peoples. 4 May he give to you the blessing of Abraham, to you and to your offspring with you, so that you may take possession of the land where you now live as an alien—land that God gave to Abraham." Here Jacob is promised that his descendants will become a company of peoples, meaning many nations.

God then revealed through Jacob what the birthright and the blessing entailed in Genesis 28:14 (NKJV): “Also your descendants shall be as the dust of the earth; you shall spread abroad to the west and the east, to the north and the south; and in you and in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

God promised that peoples and nations would serve the descendants of Jacob and bow down to them, meaning they will be the foremost nations on earth. They would spread around the world in all directions, north, south, east and west, from the Middle East. They would multiply greatly in numbers, as the dust of the earth. These are not idle words. When we consider what God has in store for humanity for eternity in the universe, descendants of Jacob will literally multiply in numbers as the dust of the earth and the stars in heaven.

*Jacob Passes on God’s Promises to his Twelve Sons*

Before Jacob’s twelve sons, God had passed on His promises to Abraham to one son, preferring him over the other son. Abraham’s promises were passed on to Isaac instead of Ishmael. Then Isaac passed on Abraham’s promises to his son Jacob instead of his older son Esau. But then God began to pass on Abraham’s promises collectively to all the twelve sons of Jacob. Among the twelve sons of Jacob, God chose out two sons for special national blessings.

In Genesis 35:11-12 (NKJV) God promises Jacob: “Also God said to him: "I am God Almighty. Be fruitful and multiply; *a nation and a company of nations* shall proceed from you, and kings shall come from your body. 12 The land which I gave Abraham and Isaac I give to you; and to your descendants after you I give this land." Here God promises Jacob that a great nation and a company or commonwealth of nations would proceed from him.

That part of God’s promise Jacob then passed on to his two grandsons, Manasseh and Ephraim, the sons of Joseph in Genesis 48:14-19 (NKJV): “14 Then Israel [Jacob’s other name] stretched out his right hand and laid it on Ephraim's head, who was the younger, and his left hand on Manasseh's head, guiding his hands knowingly, for Manasseh was the firstborn. 15 And he blessed Joseph, and said: "God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, The God who has fed me all my life long to this day, 16 The Angel who has redeemed me from all evil, Bless the lads; Let my name be named upon them, And the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; And let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth." 17 Now when Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand on the head of Ephraim, it displeased him; so he took hold of his father's hand to remove it from Ephraim's head to Manasseh's head. 18 And Joseph said to his father, "Not so, my father, for this one is the firstborn; put your right hand on his head." 19 But his father refused and said, "I know, my son, I know. He also shall become a people, and he also shall be great; but truly his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his descendants shall become a multitude of nations."

So God’s promise to Jacob that a great nation and a commonwealth of nations would proceed from him is conferred by him on his son Joseph’s two sons Ephraim and Manasseh. This way, the birthright that conferred a double portion of the paternal estate was given to Joseph. However, not all dimensions of the promises to Abraham would go to Joseph. Judah received a very important promise of great physical and spiritual dimension.

Through Jacob God prophesied in Genesis 49:10 “the scepter [ruler’s staff] shall not depart from Judah.” That prophecy pointed to the dynasty of Israel’s future king David, a descendent of Judah, and also to Jesus, a descendent of Judah and king David as the Messiah, and ruler of the earth as King of Kings.

1 Chronicles 5:2 clarifies these two promises: “…Judah prevailed above his brethren, and of him came the chief ruler; but the birthright was Joseph's.” Thus the birthright promise of great material blessings and to become a great nation and a company or Commonwealth of Nations went to the descendants of Joseph, but the promise of rulership went to the descendants of Judah.

*Details of Promises to Joseph and Judah*

When Jacob was close to death, he called his twelve sons together and prophesied what would happen to descendants of each of them in the last days, meaning our time. These blessings provide more details on the birthright promise to Joseph.

Genesis 49:1 states: “1 And Jacob called his sons and said, "Gather together, that I may tell you what shall befall you in the last days.” Then Genesis 49:22-26 (*New Century Version*) states: “22 "Joseph is like a grapevine that produces much fruit, a healthy vine watered by a spring, whose branches grow over the wall. 23 Archers attack him violently and shoot at him angrily, 24 but he aims his bow well. His arms are made strong, and his strength from the Shepherd, the Rock of Israel. 25 Your father's God helps you. God Almighty blesses you. He blesses you with rain from above, with water from springs below, with many babies born to your wives, and many young ones born to your animals. 26 The blessings of your father are greater than the blessings of the oldest mountains, greater than the good things of the long-lasting hills. May these blessings rest on the head of Joseph, on the forehead of the one who was separated from his brothers!”

This prophetic blessings pronounced on Joseph's descendants "in the last days" mean that they will live in a very fertile, well-watered highly fruitful land. They will be a people “whose branches run over the wall” means they will expand their territory by being a colonizing people. At times they will be attacked by their enemies but they will remain strong and victorious through God’s miraculous intervention and help.

Their population will continue to grow steadily, enjoying blessings of great herds of livestock, bumper crops due to climate favorable for agriculture, and extensive mineral resources to support a robust economy. They will receive these blessings "in the last days," meaning in our time.

God’s promise of the scepter [or kingship] to Judah would be fulfilled through the descendants of King David. After David planned to build a temple for God, He made a covenant with David which provides details of the promise of that kingship as stated in 2 Samuel 7:12-16 (NKJV): “"When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for My name [which was fulfilled by David’s son King Solomon], and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his Father, and he shall be My son. If he commits iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men and with the blows of the sons of men. But My mercy shall not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I removed from before you. And your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you. Your throne shall be established forever." Here God promised David that his dynasty would last forever.

*Summary of God’s Promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob*

God’s promises to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Judah and King David can now be listed as follows:

1) God promised incredible material blessings of resources of the earth and riches to all of Jacob’s descendants, but primarily to Joseph’s sons Ephraim from whom would come the company or commonwealth of nations and to Manasseh from whom would come the single great nation. These blessing would be theirs in the last days, or our time.

2) Descendants of Jacob would possess the gates of their enemies.

3) All nations would be blessed materially and spiritually through the descendants of Jacob.

4) The chief ruler would come from Judah through king David, with an everlasting dynasty.

*Fulfillment of the Promises*

All these promises of God to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were major prophecies. To see how all these incredible promises have been fulfilled, we must first identify who the modern descendants of Jacob are. Fortunately various Church of God organizations have published excellent books and booklets on the subject. For comprehensive proof that white Americans are mainly the modern descendants of Manasseh the son of Joseph, the son of Jacob or Israel, and the British are the modern descendants of Manasseh’s brother Ephraim the reader may refer to the following five booklets:

1. *The United States and Britain in Prophecy*; by Herbert W. Armstrong, available from the Philadelphia Church of God at www.pcog.org.

2. *The United States and Britain in Bible Prophecy*; published by the United Church of God, available at www.ucg.org.

3. “*The Throne of Britain: Its Biblical Origin and Future,*” eBook published by the United Church of God, available at its web site www.ucg.org under booklets.

4. *America and Britain in Prophecy*, by David C. Pack; published by the Restored Church of God, available at www.rcg.org.

5. *The United States and Great Britain in Prophecy*; published by the Living Church of God, available at www.lcg.org.

For detailed proof of where the other tribes of Israel are settled, the best source is “*America and Britain in Prophecy*” by David Pack. From his book, here is where the modern descendants of the other tribes of Israel can mainly be found:

Reuben – France

Simeon and Levi – Prophesied to be dispersed among all the tribes of Israel. Largest portion of Levi or the priestly tribe lives among the Jews.

Judah – The Jews worldwide, with a branch in Irelend.

Zebulun – Holland

Issachar – Finland

Dan – Primarily Ireland and Denmark

Gad – Switzerland

Asher – Belgium

Naphtali – Sweden

Benjamin – Norway, Iceland and among the Jews

Here is how God’s promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob have been fulfilled in the American, British and Jewish people.

1) God promised incredible material blessings of resources of the earth and riches. This promise has been fulfilled in the descendants of Jacob in our time which are the people of the USA, British Commonwealth Nations, France, Switzerland, Ireland, Scandinavia, the Benelux countries and the Jews.

2) The nations of the earth would be blessed through them both materially and spiritually. The world has indeed been materially blessed through them by trading with them, and the British have been the engine of the world’s economy in the 19th and the Americans in the 20th century. The French too made significant contributions.

The world has also been spiritually blessed through them because the Savior Jesus Christ was a descendant of Judah, the son of Jacob. In addition, the knowledge of the true God has been preserved through them and propagated by the British and the Americans translating the Bible in virtually every language on earth and making it available to the world.

3) God also promised to bless those who bless them and seek their welfare, and curse those who curse them and seek their destruction. When the catastrophes that are soon to engulf the entire world are all over, we will see that this promise will have been fulfilled, and we will continue to see its fulfillment throughout God’s Kingdom into eternity.

4) The patriarchs were promised that their descendants would multiply as the stars and the sand on the seashore in number. They already number more than 500 million today. But true fulfillment of this prophecy will go on throughout eternity.

 5) The promises included the land where the patriarchs roamed. The Jews today possess that land. But the true fulfillment of this prophecy will be in God’s Kingdom when descendants of Jacob will possess all the land between the Nile and the Euphrates rivers, as promised in Genesis 15:18. Eventually Israelites will fill much of the world with fruit, meaning with their population (Isaiah 27:6, “6 He [God] shall cause them that come of Jacob to take root: Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit.”)

6) In Genesis 17, when Abram was ninety-nine years old the Lord changed his name to Abraham and promised that he would become the father of many nations and of kings. Today, the Israelite nations, the Jews, the Arabs, the Turks and many other nations we may not fully know are all descendants of Abraham, including obviously all their royalty. So this promise has been fulfilled.

7) Abraham’s promises were passed on to his son Isaac, who then passed on the promises to his son Jacob and not his brother Esau. Many more prophetic details were further added to the promises. Isaac pronounced the following blessing on Jacob in Genesis 27:28-29: “28 Therefore may God give you of the dew of heaven, of the fatness of the earth, and plenty of grain and wine. 29 Let peoples serve you, and nations bow down to you. Be master over your brethren, and let your mother's sons bow down to you.”

Here instead of merely the land of Canaan, the promise of land is expanded to include the fatness of the earth, meaning lands that are richest in agriculture and mineral resources of the earth. Just look at the lands possessed by the British, American, French, Scandinavian and Benelux peoples to see how this promise has been dramatically fulfilled. And nations of the world have bowed down to and served the British through their colonial empire.

8) Then Isaac also let Jacob know in Genesis 28:3(NRSV) that his descendants will become a company of peoples, meaning many nations. Then Jacob passed on these promises to his 12 sons. The company of peoples promise has been fulfilled in the nations descended from the 12 tribes of Israel in Europe, and the Jews worldwide.

9) When passing on these promises to his sons, Jacob singled out Joseph and his two sons Manasseh and Ephraim that they would become a great nation and a commonwealth of nations. Their descendants are the peoples of the USA and the British Commonwealth of nations. There has been no other single greatest nation on earth than America and the greatest Commonwealth of Nations than the British Commonwealth who have been closely allied ever before in the history of mankind.

Joseph was given the birthright of the firstborn which is a double portion of a father’s inheritance. Joseph’s two sons Manasseh and Ephraim actually became two tribes, each receiving their separate inheritance, thus obtaining a double portion of their father’s inheritance.

The birthright people were also promised they would be famous on earth and possess the richest resources of the earth. At the zenith of their power, the British and the American people constituted only 4% of the world’s population, but possessed about 70% of the world’s agricultural and mineral resources.

10) Then when Abraham was willing to offer his son Isaac as a sacrifice, God’s promises to him became unconditional. In Genesis 22:11-12, 15 -18 the additional promise that Abraham’s descendants would possess the gates, meaning narrow land and sea passages of access to enemies’ lands was added. This incredible promise has been fulfilled in the British and American peoples who at the zenith of their power have possessed almost every major gate and strategic island on land and sea such as the Suez and Panama canals, the Rock of Gibraltar, the Khyber Pass, Hong Kong, the islands of Malta, Mauritius, Sri Lanka, Singapore the Falklands Islands and virtually every other gate around the world. Outcome of the Second World War hinged on the possession of these strategic gates. Most of the world’s commerce also passes through these gates. Even the Strait of Bosporus has been possessed by the Turks, the descendants of Esau, the son of Isaac, the son of Abraham.

11) In prophesying the future of Joseph’s descendants, Jacob stated in Genesis 49:22: “22 Joseph is like a grapevine that produces much fruit, a healthy vine watered by a spring, whose branches grow over the wall.” A people "whose branches grow over the wall," or beyond their original borders, certainly means that they will be a colonizing people. There have never been such a colonizing people in the history of man as the British and American peoples. Thus this prophecy stands fulfilled about 3,500 years after it was given.

12) And finally, the promise of the scepter, meaning the chief ruler would come from Judah through King David, with an everlasting dynasty. Today, Queen Elizabeth II of Britain sits on that throne in unbroken dynasty from King David. In God’s kingdom, Jesus Christ, also a descendant of King David, will be the chief ruler over the earth, occupying that throne for eternity. What an incredible way for God to fulfill His promise and continue to have this prophecy come true throughout eternity?

But from the founding of ancient Israel as a nation after the Exodus from Egypt around 1443 BCE till God began to bestow His blessings on Israel around 1800 A.D. there has been a time gap of more than 3,240 years. God gave many detailed and incredibly intricate prophecies to chart the future course of Israel and Judah after coming out of Egypt till these prophecies would be fulfilled in these ‘last days’. It makes for a story more thrilling than fiction, and shows God’s Almighty power to fulfill all the prophecies over a period of more than 3,000 years.

A people can fulfill one or two prophecies by mere coincidence, but when a people fulfill hundreds of prophecies, then probabilistically we can be absolutely certain of the identity of those people as the one whom the prophecies were written about. If Britain and America fulfill hundreds of prophecies about Ephraim and Manasseh and Israel, then there can be no doubt in our minds that they are in fact the descendants of those patriarchs. We will look at these intricate prophecies next.

**Chapter 11**

**Prophecies Fulfilled by the American and British Peoples**

From the time Israelites came out of Egypt till the ‘last days’ God gave incredibly intricate prophecies which the house of Israel would fulfill along the way for over more than 3,000 years. When blessing Joseph’s sons, Jacob said in Genesis 48:16, “The Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads; and let my name be named on them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth.” Jacob’s other name was Israel. So most of the prophecies concerning Israel apply to the British and American peoples.

Here is a brief description of only some of the incredible prophecies fulfilled by the British and American peoples:

1) *The Northern Kingdom (House of Israel) would be lost from world view was prophesied*. After the reign of David’s son Solomon, the Kingdom of Israel was divided into two kingdoms. The northern Kingdom was known as the House of Israel and the southern Kingdom as the House of Judah. The descendants of the House of Judah are still known as the Jews today. But the identity of the descendants of the northern Kingdom was not known. They became known to history as the ‘lost ten tribes.’

The reason was that in Exodus 31:12-17 God instructed Moses that His Sabbaths were to be a sign between Him and Israel forever. A sign is something that identifies. The Sabbath is a perpetual reminder of God as the Creator and who His people are. As long as Israel kept the Sabbath, they maintained their identity. That is why the Jews have maintained their identity as “God’s people” throughout their history. But king Jeroboam of the northern Kingdom of Israel abandoned God’s Sabbaths. When they lost the identifying sign, they became lost to history as God’s people.

The other prophecies indicating that the House of Israel would lose its identity are:

Deuteronomy 32:26 where God warned Israelites through Moses: “…I would make the remembrance of them to cease from among men.”

Isaiah 8:17 says: “And I will wait upon the Lord, that hides His face from the House of Jacob [whose other name was Israel].”

2) *House of Israel would lose its language, which was Hebrew*. This was prophesied in Isaiah 28:11 where God says He will speak to this people of Israel “11 …with… another tongue.” They now speak English, French, Dutch and the other north European languages.

3) *House of Israel would lose its national name*. Isaiah 62:2 states: “2…You shall be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord will name.” This prophecy has already been fulfilled because the Israelites are known by different names today such as the British, Americans, French, Swiss, Dutch, Scandinavians, Belgians etc. The Jews are still known as Jews today.

4) *Birthright blessings of national prosperity would be withheld 2,520 Years*. After Abraham was willing to sacrifice his son Isaac, the blessings on his descendants had become unconditional promises from God.

When Israel came out of Egypt, God through Moses told them that there were conditions to receiving His blessings. In Genesis 17:1-2 God told Abraham to walk before Him and become blameless and He would confirm His covenant with Him. When Abraham walked blameless, God did confirm His agreement with him. Similarly, for Israel to receive the promised blessings, the conditions were laid down in Leviticus 26, and also the consequences if they did not fulfill the conditions.

Leviticus 26:3-12 states: “3 'If you walk in My statutes and keep My commandments, and perform them, 4 then I will give you rain in its season, the land shall yield its produce, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit. 5 Your threshing shall last till the time of vintage, and the vintage shall last till the time of sowing; you shall eat your bread to the full, and dwell in your land safely. 6 I will give peace in the land, and you shall lie down, and none will make you afraid; I will rid the land of evil beasts, and the sword will not go through your land. 7 You will chase your enemies, and they shall fall by the sword before you. 8 Five of you shall chase a hundred, and a hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight; your enemies shall fall by the sword before you. 9 'For I will look on you favorably and make you fruitful, multiply you and confirm My covenant with you. 10 You shall eat the old harvest, and clear out the old because of the new. 11 I will set My tabernacle among you, and My soul shall not abhor you. 12 I will walk among you and be your God, and you shall be My people.”

So the conditions God laid down for Israel to be blessed were to keep God’s commandments and statutes, which is what Abraham was required to do to have the agreement with God confirmed. However, if Israel failed to fulfill the conditions to receive the blessings, curses would follow. The curses are stated in the rest of Leviticus 26. God continues from verse 14 onwards:

“14 'But if you do not obey Me, and do not observe all these commandments, 15 and if you despise My statutes, or if your soul abhors My judgments, so that you do not perform all My commandments, but break My covenant, 16 I also will do this to you: I will even appoint terror over you, wasting disease and fever which shall consume the eyes and cause sorrow of heart. And you shall sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it. 17 I will set My face against you, and you shall be defeated by your enemies. Those who hate you shall reign over you, and you shall flee when no one pursues you.”

The history of ancient Israel after it was set up as a nation shows that she refused to keep God’s commandments. So they did not receive God’s blessings but were cursed with terrorism and fighting with all the nations around them. They even rejected God as their king and asked for a human king to be set up over them by Samuel the prophet. When their human king David obeyed God, Israel greatly prospered, and even in the early days of King Solomon when he obeyed God. But 1 Kings 11:1-4 says King Solomon loved many strange wives, marrying seven hundred and keeping 300 others as mistresses, and when he was old, they turned his heart towards other gods so that his heart was not perfect with the God of his fathers. Such disobedience kept Israel from continuing to receive God’s material blessings.

Things became progressively worse with Israel and Judah for refusing to keep God’s commandments. God sent prophets to warn the nations, but they refused to repent. So God could not confer the blessings on them that He promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. But the blessings to Abraham were promised unconditionally. God would then fulfill the prophecy given through Jacob to confer the unconditional blessings promised in the last days, meaning in our time. In doing so a further incredible prophecy had to be fulfilled that is stated in Leviticus 26:18, “18'And after all this, if you do not obey Me, then I will punish you seven times more for your sins.”

In prophecy, a time refers to one year. So seven times would be seven years. With 360 days in a year, seven years then would equal 2,520 days. But another principle of prophecy is a day being equivalent to one year in fulfillment of prophecy, as given in Numbers 13 and 14 when ancient Israelites were punished for forty years from entering the Promised Land, for the forty days they went and spied out the Promised Land, but refused to go in and possess it. Thus seven years or 2,520 days of punishment of withholding the unconditional birthright blessings would in prophecy equal 2,520 years.

The ten-tribed northern kingdom of Israel did not repent throughout the period of their kingdom at the preaching of the prophets. So God carried out His prophecy of punishing them by withholding the birthright blessings for 2,520 years. The ten tribes were carried into captivity by the Assyrians in 722-721 B.C. Then 2,520 years after that would bring us to the year 1800-1801 A.D. When the seven times duration or 2,520 years of punishment of withholding the birthright ended in 1800-1801 A.D., God began to confer the unconditionally promised blessings on the descendants of Joseph, USA and British Commonwealth nations as well as the nations of northwestern Europe. That is when Britain began building its empire and America burst forth into national greatness.

5) *Prophecies concerning David’s Throne*

The story of how God kept His promise to David that his dynasty will continue unbroken till the return of the Messiah is an incredibly fascinating one. These prophecies are explained in detail in Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong’s book “*United States and Britain in Prophecy*.”

i) *Descendants of David to rule over the House of Israel not Judah* - After the reign of David’s son Solomon over Israel, David’s descendants ruled over only the House of Judah (the Jews) and not the House of Israel till King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon carried Judah captive. But God prophesied in Jeremiah 33:14: "…thus says the Eternal: David shall never want a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel."

Descendants of David were prophesied to rule over the House of Israel and not the Jews. After Judah’s captivity, David’s descendants have never ruled as kings over the Jews who can be identified as Jews, but have ruled over descendants of the House of Israel, in Britain.

ii) *Prophet Jeremiah transplants David’s Throne* – Jeremiah’s commission from God is stated in Jeremiah 1:10 (NKJV), “10 See, I have this day set you over the nations and over the kingdoms, To ROOT OUT and to pull down, To destroy and to throw down, To BUILD AND TO PLANT."

Jeremiah prophesied about the end of Judah’s kingdom during the reign of the last kings of Judah. He was thus used to “root out” David’s throne from Judah and to BUILD and to PLANT it in the Kingdom of Israel. And that throne had to be planted within a generation according to God’s promise to David, or in Jeremiah’s lifetime.

After most of Judah was carried captive to Babylon, the remnant of Judah decided to go to Egypt for protection even though Jeremiah warned them not to do so. This is recorded in Jeremiah 43:5-7 “ [And so Johanan] “took all the remnant of Judah…even men, and women, and children, **and the king’s daughters**…and Jeremiah the prophet, and Baruch the son of Neriah [Jeremiah’s scribe, or secretary]. So they came to the land of Egypt.”

Here we see that the only “remnant” left for Jeremiah’s mission of transplanting the throne of David was the king’s daughters. The fascinating story of how Jeremiah did this is told in Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong’s book “*United States and Britain in Prophecy*” and an electronic booklet titled “*The Throne of Britain: Its Biblical Origin and Future*” published by the United Church of God, available at its web site www.ucg.org under booklets.

Briefly the story is this. King David was a descendant of Judah’s son Pharez. But Pharez had a twin brother Zarah. When King Nebuchadnezzar had besieged Judah, a son of the king of the Zarah line of Judah who reigned in Ireland was visiting Jerusalem. This prince was acquainted with Tea-Tephi, one of King Zedekiah’s daughters. Shortly after the fall of Jerusalem he married her. From Egypt, Jeremiah took this royal party to Ireland where the prince ascended the throne of Ireland over a part of the descendants of Israel. Thus a daughter of the Pharez line of Judah was grafted into the Zarah line of Judah in Ireland. This is how Jeremiah fulfilled the second part of his commission about David’s throne: TO BUILD AND TO PLANT.

iii) *Daughter to be used to transplant David’s Throne was prophesied*

The fact that a daughter would be used to transplant David’s throne was also prophesied, in addition to many other detailed prophecies.

The truth of PLANTING and the REBUILDING of David’s throne was revealed in prophecy given in a “riddle and a parable” through the prophet Ezekiel.

First Ezekiel is told to speak a riddle, and then a parable. The riddle is found in Ezekiel 17 verses 3 to 10. Then beginning in verse 11, the Eternal explains its meaning. A great eagle came to Lebanon and took the highest branch of the cedar. This is explained to represent King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon who came to Jerusalem and took captive the king of Judah. The cropping off of the cedar’s young twigs and carrying them to a land of traffic is explained to picture the captivity of the king’s sons. “He took also of the seed of the land” means Nebuchadnezzar took also of the people, and the mighty of the land of Judah. He “set it as a willow tree. And it grew, and became a spreading vine of low stature” means the Jews were given a covenant whereby, although they were ruled over by the Chaldeans, they might live in peace and grow. The other “great eagle” is explained to represent Pharaoh of Egypt.

Thus the riddle covers the first half of Jeremiah’s commission. Now notice what is revealed concerning the second part – the PLANTING of David’s throne! It comes in the parable, verses 22-24: “Thus says the Lord God; I will also take of the highest branch of the high cedar.” From God’s own explanation we have learned that the cedar tree represents the nation of Judah; its highest branch is Judah’s king. The riddle told us Nebuchadnezzar took the highest branch – the king. The parable now tells us God – not Nebuchadnezzar, but God – will take of the highest branch. Not the branch, but of the branch – of Zedekiah’s children. But Nebuchadnezzar took, and killed, all his sons.

God, through his prophet Jeremiah, is now going to take of this highest branch and “SET IT (verse 22). “I will crop off from the top of his young twigs A TENDER ONE, and will plant it upon an high mountain and eminent,” continues the Almighty. The twigs of this highest branch represent the children of King Zedekiah! Certainly a young tender twig, then, represents a DAUGHTER!”…and will PLANT it.” Symbolic language could not be more plainer in saying that this young Jewish princess is to become the royal seed for PLANTING again of David’s throne? Where? “…upon an high mountain and eminent,” says the Eternal! A “mountain” in symbol always represents a NATION.

“In the mountain of the height of Israel will I plant it,” answers the Eternal. David’s throne now is to be planted in Israel, after being thrown down from Judah. After this Hebrew princess is “planted” on the throne, now in Israel, lost from view – that throne is to BEAR FRUIT. She is to marry, have children, and her sons are to continue David’s dynasty!

Israel had already been independent in Ireland for four centuries. Israel in Ireland already had a kingly line onto which Zedekiah’s daughter was grafted. The Irish Israelites were an ancient colony and had not gone into Assyrian captivity.

iv) *Healing of ‘breach’ between the Pharez and Zarah lines prophesied*

The Bible mentions a mysterious ‘breach’ that occurred in the days of Judah (Genesis 38:28-30).

Judah was the father of twin sons. The firstborn was royal seed, for through him the scepter promise was to be carried down. It seems the midwife knew twins were about to be born. It is recorded that just before birth one of the twins ‘put out his hand: and the midwife took and bound upon his hand a scarlet thread, saying, ‘This came out first’. But the child drew back his hand and the other was actually born first.”

The midwife exclaimed, “How have you broken forth? This breach be upon you: therefore his name was called Pharez,” meaning “breach”. The other twin was named Zarah.

This strange occurrence was recorded in Bible history because this breach was to be healed between the sons or their descendants at some future time?

History shows the descendants of Zarah became wanderers, later migrating to Ireland. But meanwhile, the Pharez-David-Zedekiah line possessed the scepter (rulership) – was HIGH – exalted. The Zarah line, feeling it rightfully should possess the scepter, and some day would, was low, abased – so far as royal power was concerned.

Now consider another prophecy given in Ezekiel 21:25-26 (KJV) “And you, profane wicked prince of Israel [Zedekiah], whose day is come, when iniquity shall have an end, thus says the Lord God; remove the diadem, and take off the crown [from Judah, as did happen, through the first half of Jeremiah’s commission]; this [the crown] shall not be the same: ***exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high***.”

“Remove the diadem, and take off the crown,” means that the crown was removed from king Zedekiah of David’s dynasty. “This shall not be the same,” means that the diadem is not to cease, but a change is to take place. “Exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high,” means that King Zedekiah of Judah, who is high is to be abased. He is to lose that crown. House of Judah has been “high” while the House of Israel has been “low” – these many years without a king (Hosea 3:4). The Pharez line has been “high”; the Zarah line “low.”

This prophecy thus points to the breach between the Pharez and Zarah lines of the Jews (descendants of Judah) being healed with the Zarah line possessing the scepter over the House of Israel through marriage with the Pharez line.

v) *David’s throne was prophesied to be overturned three times*

Ezekiel the prophet continues his prophecy of Ezekiel 21 in verse 27: “I will overturn, overturn, overturn it: and it shall be no more [overturned], until he come whose right it is; and I will give it him.” The diadem and the throne were to be overturned. Not once, but three times. It was to be overturned by abasing Zedekiah, the house of Judah and the Pharez line, and exalting the house of Israel, and one of the Zarah line! The first of the three overturns was performed as the first half of Jeremiah’s commission, by rooting out the throne of David from Jerusalem.

“And it shall be no more, until he come whose right it is; and I will give it him,” means that the throne would be no more overturned after the third overturn, and will be given to Jesus Christ, whose it is by right.

The prince and husband of the Jewish princess Tea-tephi ascended the throne of his father. The son of this king and the Jewish Princess continued on the throne of Ireland and this same dynasty continued unbroken through all the kings of Ireland. It was then overturned the second time and transplanted in Scotland, from where it was overturned the third time and moved to London, England, where this same dynasty continues today in the reign of Queen Elizabeth II. Thus the three overturns of the throne prophesied in Ezekiel 21:25-27 have been fulfilled.

vi) *Ephraim settled exactly where prophesied to settle*

If God kept His promise to David, the throne of David was to be planted ‘in the mountain of the height of Israel’ (Ezekiel 17:22-23: “I will crop off from the top of his young twigs a tender one, and will plant it upon an high mountain and eminent: 23 In the mountain of the height of Israel will I plant it). We should find it in the leading nation of the descendants of Ephraim, the birthright holders.

The precise location where Ephraim was to settle was also prophesied in the Bible.

The prophet Amos wrote in Amos 9:8-9 “Behold, the eyes of the Lord God are upon the sinful kingdom [house of Israel – Judah had not yet sinned], and I will destroy it [the kingdom, or government, not the people] from off the face of the earth…For, lo, I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel among all nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth.”

This prophecy says that the ten-tribed house of Israel (not Judah) was to be sifted among the nations, losing their identity. It was during this time that the children of the house of Israel were to “abide many days without a king” (Hosea 3:4). Although many of them were still scattered among various nations in the first century A.D., a portion of them had become established in a definite location of their own by Jeremiah’s time – 140 years after their original captivity.

In prophecy, the holders of the birthright are distinguished from Judah (the Jews) by various names: “Ephraim,” “Joseph,” “Jacob,” “Rachel” (Joseph’s mother), “Samaria” (their former capital), “Israel.”

According to Hosea 12:1: “Ephraim…follows after the east wind.” An “east wind” travels west. Ephraim must have gone west from ancient Assyria. When the Eternal swore to David that He would perpetuate his throne, He said: “I will set his hand [scepter] also in the sea” (Psalm 89:25). The throne is to be “set” or planted “in the sea.”

Through Jeremiah the Eternal said: “Backsliding Israel has justified herself more than treacherous Judah. Go and proclaim these words toward the north, and say, Return you backsliding Israel, says the Lord (Jeremiah 3:11-12). So in these last days, messengers are to go “toward the NORTH (of Jerusalem where Jeremiah prophesied) in order to locate lost Israel and proclaim the warning message. So the location, we now find, is toward the north, also west, and in the sea.

In Jeremiah 31:10, the message is to be declared “in the isles afar off” and is to be shouted in “the CHIEF OF THE NATIONS” (verse 7). So, finally, today, as in Jeremiah’s day, the house of Israel is in the isles, which are “in the sea,” the chief of the nations, northwest of Jerusalem, a coast-dwelling, and, therefore sea-dominant people. Certainly there can be no mistaking that identity.

Take a map of Europe. Draw a line due NORTHWEST of Jerusalem across the continent of Europe, until you come to the sea, and then to the islands in the sea! This line takes you directly to the British Isles! So prophecy shows us where the prominent nation from the northern ten tribes can be located in our days.

For fascinating and much more thrilling than fiction details on Jeremiah’s “planting” and the present location of “lost” Israel and David’s throne, please read the United Church of God eBooklet titled “*The Throne of Britain: Its Biblical Origin and Future*” and Mr. Armstrong book *"The United States and Britain in Prophecy"*.

*6) Prophecies concerning wanderings of the House of Israel*

i) *Tribe of Dan prophesied to leave clues about wanderings of the House of Israel*

The Israelites were prophesied to leave highway signs or waymarks along the trail they traveled from the land of ancient Israel after being deported by the Assyrians. Speaking to Ephraim, the ancestor of the British people, God through the prophet Jeremiah says in Jeremiah 31:20-21: “20 Is Ephraim My dear son? Is he a pleasant child? For though I spoke against him, I earnestly remember him still; therefore My heart yearns for him; I will surely have mercy on him, says the Lord. 21 "Set up signposts, make landmarks; set your heart toward the highway, the way in which you went.”

In Genesis 49:17, the patriarch Jacob blessing his sons prophesied what would befall them. He said about his son Dan: “Dan shall be a servant by the way.” Another translation of the original Hebrew can also be “Dan shall be a serpent’s trail.” It is a very significant fact that the tribe of Dan named every place they went after their father Dan. It started way back when they had just settled in their land. Joshua 19:47 records: “…the children of Dan went up to fight against Leshem, and took it…and called Leshem, Dan, after the name of Dan their father.”

Judges 18:11-12 records that the Danites took Kirjath-jearim and “called that place Mahaneh-dan unto this day.” Then the same company of 600 armed Danites captured Laish and “called the name of the city DAN, after the name of Dan their father (verse 29). This shows how the Danites left their “serpent’s trail” by the way as signposts by which they can be traced.

In Hebrew the vowels are not preserved. So for Dan, if we leave the vowel a out, the Danites could be identified with names that could be spelled as “Dn”, meaning Den, Din, Don, or Dun in addition to Dan.

During the time of ancient Israel, the tribe of Dan occupied two different areas in the Holy Land. One part lived on the seacoast, and the other colony occupied the northernmost area. That is why Israel’s boundary is listed in the Bible as from Dan to Beersheba.

When the Assyrians defeated Israel, the seacoast Danites sailed away in their ships to Ireland. Irish history shows that the new settlers in Ireland were the “Tuatha de Dananns”, which translates to “Tribe of Dan.” They left their sign posts in names such as Dans-Laugh, Dan-Sower, Dun-dalk, Dun-drum, Don-egal Bay, Don-egal City, Dun-gloe, Din-gle and Dunsmor.

The northern colony of Danites, however, was captured by the Assyrians along with the other nine tribes. They settled and later traveled from the land just west of the Black Sea and northwest of the Caspian Sea. They left their “serpent’s trail” in names of rivers such as the Danube, Dneiper, Dniester and the Don in Europe. From there they migrated further west, finally settling in Denmark, which means “Dan’s mark.” So the tribe of Dan has left a “serpent’s trail” as prophesied by Dan’s father Jacob, in his blessing of Dan. This enables us to piece together the wanderings of the northern ten tribes of Israel after their captivity and deportation at the hands of the Assyrians.

ii) *Part of Israel were to take their name from Isaac, the father of Israel*

God promised that Isaac, the son of Abraham and Sarah, would leave the track of his name on history. Genesis 21:12 states: "In Isaac your seed shall be called." Ancient written Hebrew didn't include vowels, so the written letters for Isaac were the SC or SK sound.

After the Assyrian captivity, those Israelites migrating north around the Black Sea to Europe were called Scythians. Initially, the eastern branch between Persia and China were called the Sakka or Saka. Later in Europe they became Sacesones (sons of Saka) and finally Saxons —settling in England and later America. The SK/SC sound is found yet today among descendant nations of some of the tribes: Scotland, Scotia, Scandinavia, etc.

***All Nations should Ponder these Promises***

The God of the Bible has demonstrated through these incredible prophecies and promises to one man and his descendants that He is the Almighty God who has total and complete control over everything in the universe because He has created it all. And the very reason He gave these astounding material and physical promises and fulfilled them is that you may have evidence of His almighty power so that you may believe the promises of salvation He offers. In contrast, the gods of other religions have not backed up their promises of salvation by a demonstration of their power. They have not proved to us that they are the Almighty. They have not foretold of any great events they would do in the affairs of mankind and demonstrated their Almighty power by fulfilling them exactly as they foretold.

But the God of the Bible has amply demonstrated that He is indeed the Almighty and has full and total control over the affairs of man. He has kept His promises to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Judah and King David over thousands of years and still keeps them today. He has performed all this unconditionally for Israel so that you may believe his promises of universal prosperity to all nations in His soon coming Kingdom on earth; and His equally incredible promise of eternal life to each and every human being on earth as His own literal son or daughter.

With fulfillment of these incredible promises and prophecies, compared to the God of the Bible, the gods of Islam, Hinduism and other world’s religions stand proved as charlatans, deceivers and counterfeiters who have inspired scriptures which contain philosophies and cunningly crafted lies as offers of salvation which are destructive to human well being, designed to lead them away from the true God.

Now some may argue that gods of the various religions help their people. So it is natural for the God of the Bible to help Christian nations, or the British, American and Jewish peoples. In the past the Allah of Islam helped built the great Islamic empires of the past. Before that the gods of the Egyptians, Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians, and Greeks helped them.

But, the gods of these peoples did not demonstrate they are the Almighty because they did not foretell their peoples’ rise to power. The God of the Bible on the other hand debunks this notion altogether because He foretold these nations’ rise to power centuries before it happened and brought it to pass exactly as He foretold. Thus He demonstrated that He is the supreme God over all the earth.

We will examine these prophecies next.

***Rise of Arab and Ottoman Empires Also Prophesied***

But Islamists should also know that the rise of the Arabs as a great nation, and then the Turks as a great empire have also been prophesied in the Bible.

The Arabs are the descendants of Ishmael the son of Abraham. God in His blessings on Ishmael stated in Genesis 17:20 (NKJV) states: “20 And as for Ishmael, I have heard you [Abraham]. Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly. He shall beget twelve princes, and I will make him a great nation.”

The promise to Ishmael is repeated through his mother Hagar in Genesis 21:17-17 (NKJV), “17 And God heard the voice of the lad [Ishmael]. Then the angel of God called to Hagar out of heaven, and said to her, "What ails you, Hagar? Fear not, for God has heard the voice of the lad where he is. 18 Arise, lift up the lad and hold him with your hand, for I will make him a great nation."

The descendants of Ishmael never became a great nation until the Islamic Empire founded by Mohammad. After the successors of Mohammad, the Umayyad Caliphate ruled from 661 – 750 A.D which was followed by the Abbasid Caliphate which ruled from 750 A.D till 1258 A.D.

At the time of the Abbasids Europe lay in the Dark Ages while the torch of civilization in the form of preserving literature and scientific learning in the form of knowledge of mathematics, chemistry, physics, medicine, geography and astronomy was kept burning by Islam. Thus God fulfilled His promise to Ishmael to make him a great nation, the greatest on earth during the zenith of its power.

The Turks are descendants of Isaac’s son Esau or Edom. They too became a great nation during the time of the Ottoman Empire. Their dominion was also prophesied in the Bible.

Genesis 27:39-41 states, “39 And Isaac his father answered and said unto him, Behold, your dwelling shall be [other translations add ‘away from’ here] the fatness of the earth, and of the dew of heaven from above; 40 And by your sword shall you live, and shall serve your brother [Jacob]; and it shall come to pass when you shall have the dominion that you shall break his yoke from off your neck.”

Thus the descendants of Esau were also to have dominion or rule, but they were not to be the ‘great nation’ of their time. The Ottoman Empire has not been the greatest Empire of its time whereas the Arab empire of the descendants of Ishmael was. But the Ottoman Empire was a great Empire. They did have dominion as prophesied in God’s promise to Esau.

Thus though the Koran never prophesied the greatness of the Islamic Empires, the Bible did prophesy the rise of the Islamic Empires in the blessings to the original ancestors of the nations.

Next we will examine the prophecies concerning the rise of the world’s great empires.

**Chapter 12**

**God of the Universe**

Some may hold to the notion that different people have their own gods whom they worship who help them. But this issue was addressed in the very beginning. We simply cannot have different gods all working on the same earth to help their worshippers against worshippers of other gods to make them the chief people on earth. If this were true, the earth itself would be in chaos. But the earth and the heavens continue in their finely tuned courses such that life is sustainable on earth. If anything was to change even slightly, the earth would become too hot or too cold making life impossible. So the only conclusion we can reach is that there is only one supreme God who has created the entire universe and is in total and complete control of it.

However, to debunk the human idea that the gods of different peoples have control of different peoples, the God of the Bible plainly declares that He is in total control of the universe and in the affairs of man.

Speaking through Isaiah the prophet God challenges doubters to prove Him. He says in Isaiah 46:9-10 (NKJV): "For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand…"

God did tell the end from the very first prophecy in the Bible in the Garden of Eden in Genesis 3:15 when the serpent or Satan was cursed for deceiving humanity. God said: “15 And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; it shall bruise your head, and you shalt bruise his heel.” Here God prophesied that He would send the Savior to defeat Satan and redeem mankind from death.

God Himself says in Isaiah 46 that prophecy is a proof of the true God. The gods of all other religions are mere idols, incapable of predicting the future and bringing it to pass. The God of the Bible throws the gods of all other religions a challenge through Isaiah the prophet in Isaiah 41:22-23 (*Revised English Bible*): "Let these idols come forward and foretell the future for us. Let them declare the meaning of these past events that we may reflect on it; let them predict the future to us that we may know what it holds. Declare what is yet to happen; then we shall know you are gods."

After God dealt with Israel and she proved unfaithful to Him for over more than 850 years of dealings since the Exodus from Egypt, almost all of them ended up as captive slaves. But God then began to deal with Gentile nations through His prophets to show that He has control over all of them and all of humanity and sets up rulers or brings down whomever He wishes. This was made abundantly clear through Daniel the prophet to King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon.

***Prophecies about Major Empires on Earth***

A remarkable prophecy recorded by Daniel is his interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream in chapter 2 of his book. In the second year of his reign the Babylonian king had a dream that troubled him greatly which none of his counselors, wise men, magicians or astrologers could explain. But Nebuchadnezzar was convinced that his dream was of great importance (Daniel 2:1-3).

The *Expositor's Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, pp. 39, 46 says his dream gives us a "disclosure of God's plan for the ages till the final triumph of Christ" and "presents the foreordained succession of world powers that are to dominate the Near East till the final victory of the Messiah in the last days".

Daniel records the event in Chapter 2 of his book as follows (NKJV):

“1 Now in the second year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; and his spirit was so troubled that his sleep left him. 2 Then the king gave the command to call the magicians, the astrologers, the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans to tell the king his dreams. So they came and stood before the king. 3 And the king said to them, "I have had a dream, and my spirit is anxious to know the dream."

“4 Then the Chaldeans spoke to the king in Aramaic, "O king, live forever! Tell your servants the dream, and we will give the interpretation." 5 The king answered and said to the Chaldeans, "My decision is firm: if you do not make known the dream to me, and its interpretation, you shall be cut in pieces, and your houses shall be made an ash heap. 6 However, if you tell the dream and its interpretation, you shall receive from me gifts, rewards, and great honor. Therefore tell me the dream and its interpretation." 7 They answered again and said, "Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will give its interpretation." 8 The king answered and said, "I know for certain that you would gain time, because you see that my decision is firm: 9 if you do not make known the dream to me, there is only one decree for you! For you have agreed to speak lying and corrupt words before me till the time has changed. Therefore tell me the dream, and I shall know that you can give me its interpretation." 10The Chaldeans answered the king, and said, "There is not a man on earth who can tell the king's matter; therefore no king, lord, or ruler has ever asked such things of any magician, astrologer, or Chaldean. 11 It is a difficult thing that the king requests, and there is no other who can tell it to the king except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh."

“12 For this reason the king was angry and very furious, and gave a command to destroy all the wise men of Babylon. 13 So the decree went out, and they began killing the wise men; and they sought Daniel and his companions, to kill them. 14 Then with counsel and wisdom Daniel answered Arioch, the captain of the king's guard, who had gone out to kill the wise men of Babylon; 15 he answered and said to Arioch the king's captain, "Why is the decree from the king so urgent?" Then Arioch made the decision known to Daniel. 16 So Daniel went in and asked the king to give him time, that he might tell the king the interpretation. 17 Then Daniel went to his house, and made the decision known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions,18 that they might seek mercies from the God of heaven concerning this secret, so that Daniel and his companions might not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon. 19 Then the secret was revealed to Daniel in a night vision. So Daniel blessed the God of heaven.”

After God had revealed the dream to Daniel, he was taken to the king by Arioch the King’s captain to explain the details of the dream: Daniel 2 continues in verse 27:

“27 Daniel answered in the presence of the king, and said…28…there is a God in heaven who reveals secrets, and He has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days. Your dream, and the visions of your head upon your bed, were these…31 "You, O king, were watching; and behold, a great image! This great image, whose splendor was excellent, stood before you; and its form was awesome. 32 This image's head was of fine gold, its chest and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze, 33 its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay. 34 You watched while a stone was cut out without hands, which struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces. 35 Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were crushed together, and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; the wind carried them away so that no trace of them was found. And the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth. 36 "This is the dream. Now we will tell the interpretation of it before the king.

“37 You, O king, are a king of kings. For the God of heaven has given you a kingdom, power, strength, and glory; 38 and wherever the children of men dwell, or the beasts of the field and the birds of the heaven, He has given them into your hand, and has made you ruler over them all--you are this head of gold. 39 But after you shall arise another kingdom inferior to yours; then another, a third kingdom of bronze, which shall rule over all the earth. 40 And the fourth kingdom shall be as strong as iron, inasmuch as iron breaks in pieces and shatters everything; and like iron that crushes, that kingdom will break in pieces and crush all the others.

“41 Whereas you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; yet the strength of the iron shall be in it, just as you saw the iron mixed with ceramic clay. 42 And as the toes of the feet were partly of iron and partly of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly fragile. 43 As you saw iron mixed with ceramic clay, they will mingle with the seed of men; but they will not adhere to one another, just as iron does not mix with clay. 44 And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever. 45 Inasmuch as you saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold--the great God has made known to the king what will come to pass after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation is sure."

Daniel told Nebuchadnezzar that his Babylonian Empire was represented by the head of gold (verses 37-38). The silver, bronze, and iron and clay parts of the image represented three powerful empires that would follow Babylon (verses 39-40).

Nebuchadnezzar’s dream occurred around 600 B.C. Daniel’s interpretation of the dream provided an astonishing preview of the great empires that would dominate history of the civilized world from the time of Nebuchadnezzar right down to the return of Jesus Christ to earth in our time. This was history of the next more than 2,600 years foretold in advance.

Daniel’s interpretation of the dream was that the Babylonian empire was to be followed by another empire, represented by the chest and arms of silver. Two arms of silver would represent the two divisions of the empire. History shows that the Babylonian empire was succeeded by the empire of the Medes and Persians founded by Cyrus the Great when he conquered Babylon in 539 BCE. Its two divisions were the Median and Persian arms of the empire. It ruled over all the territory of the Babylonian empire and more, and held sway in the Near and Middle East for about two centuries.

The Medo-Persian Empire was succeeded by the Greco-Macedonian Empire of Alexander the Great and his successors. It swallowed up all the territory of the Medo-Persian Empire and conquered more. It was represented by the belly and thighs of bronze in Nebuchadnezzar’s image. It lasted for about 265 to 300 years, until it was conquered by the Roman Empire. The belly represented the empire when it was united under Alexander and the thighs represented its two dominant divisions later, the northern division based in Syria, Babylonia and territory up to India (the Seleucids), and the southern division based in Egypt (the Ptolemies).

The Roman Empire that succeeded the Greco-Macedonian Empire was tough and ruthless as iron is tough. It ruled all the territory of the Greco-Macedonian Empire in the Middle East, and is represented by the legs of iron, and feet partly of iron and partly of clay in Nebuchadnezzar’s image. The two legs of the empire represented its two divisions with their capitals at Rome (the western leg) and Constantinople (the eastern leg).

The Roman Empire was crushed in 476 A.D. But Daniel’s prophecy mentioned in verse 44 that “…in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed.” This part of the prophecy says that Jesus Christ will set up God’s kingdom in the days of the kings represented by the ten toes. This means that though the Roman Empire was crushed in 476 A.D., there would be later resurrections.

The details of these resurrections are provided in other prophecies revealed to Daniel. In fact, the Roman Empire is also represented by the fourth beast in the prophecy in Daniel 7 (NKJV) which states:

“1 In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon, Daniel had a dream and visions of his head while on his bed. Then he wrote down the dream, telling the main facts. 2 Daniel spoke, saying, "I saw in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the Great Sea. 3 And four great beasts came up from the sea, each different from the other. 4 The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings. I watched till its wings were plucked off; and it was lifted up from the earth and made to stand on two feet like a man, and a man's heart was given to it.”

Students of prophecy have long understood from history the empires that these beasts represented. The lion represented the Babylonian empire, corresponding to the head of gold in Nebuchadnezzar’s image. The wings being plucked off and then lifted up from earth and made to stand on two feet like a man is talking about King Nebuchadnezzar’s ordeal mentioned in Daniel 4 when a beast’s heart was given to him and he ate grass like an ox for 7 years because he boasted that by his mighty power he had won the kingdom and made Babylon great.

Daniel continues: “5 And suddenly another beast, a second, like a bear. It was raised up on one side, and had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth. And they said thus to it: 'Arise, devour much flesh!'

The bear represented the Medo-Persian Empire, which in Nebuchadnezzar’s image was represented by the chest and arms of silver.

Daniel 7 continues: “6 After this I looked, and there was another, like a leopard, which had on its back four wings of a bird. The beast also had four heads, and dominion was given to it.”

The leopard represented the Greek Empire of Alexander and his successors, corresponding to the belly and thighs of bronze of Nebuchadnezzar’s image.

Then verse 7 continues: “7After this I saw in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, exceedingly strong. It had huge iron teeth; it was devouring, breaking in pieces, and trampling the residue with its feet. It was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns. 8 I was considering the horns, and there was another horn, a little one, coming up among them, before whom three of the first horns were plucked out by the roots. And there, in this horn, were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking pompous words. 9 "I watched till thrones were put in place, And the Ancient of Days was seated…11 "I watched then because of the sound of the pompous words which the horn was speaking; I watched till the beast was slain, and its body destroyed and given to the burning flame…13 "I was watching in the night visions, And behold, One like the Son of Man, Coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him. 14 Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom the one which shall not be destroyed. 15 "I, Daniel, was grieved in my spirit within my body, and the visions of my head troubled me.

“16 I came near to one of those who stood by, and asked him the truth of all this. So he told me and made known to me the interpretation of these things: 17 'Those great beasts, which are four, are four kings which arise out of the earth. 18 But the saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever.' 19 Then I wished to know the truth about the fourth beast, which was different from all the others, exceedingly dreadful, with its teeth of iron and its nails of bronze, which devoured, broke in pieces, and trampled the residue with its feet; 20 and the ten horns that were on its head, and the other horn which came up, before which three fell, namely, that horn which had eyes and a mouth which spoke pompous words, whose appearance was greater than his fellows. 21 I was watching; and the same horn was making war against the saints, and prevailing against them, 22 until the Ancient of Days came, and a judgment was made in favor of the saints of the Most High, and the time came for the saints to possess the kingdom.

“23 "Thus he said: 'The fourth beast shall be a fourth kingdom on earth, which shall be different from all other kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, trample it and break it in pieces. 24 The ten horns are ten kings who shall arise from this kingdom. And another shall rise after them; He shall be different from the first ones, and shall subdue three kings. 25 He shall speak pompous words against the Most High, Shall persecute the saints of the Most High, and shall intend to change times and law. Then the saints shall be given into his hand for a time and times and half a time. 26 'But the court shall be seated, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and destroy it forever. 27 Then the kingdom and dominion, And the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, Shall be given to the people, the saints of the Most High. His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him.'28 "This is the end of the account…”

The ten horns of the fourth beast in this prophecy indicate that after the Roman Empire was destroyed in 476 A.D., there would be ten resurrections of the Empire right down to the return of Jesus Christ to earth. Then another little horn came up among the ten horns with a mouth speaking pompous words against the Most High, meaning God, before whom the first three horns were plucked up by the roots. Verse 25 says: 25 He shall speak pompous words against the Most High, Shall persecute the saints of the Most High, and shall intend to change times and law.”

A horn in prophecy represents a king or ruler, and one speaking against the Most High means it is a false religious power. There has been only one religious power in the territory of the Roman Empire whose head wears a crown, which has persecuted God’s true Church through the centuries, and has actually changed times and laws; and that is the head of the false Church based in Rome.

This false Church has persecuted God’s true Church through centuries, martyring hundreds of thousands. It has also changed times. It has given the world a different calendar from God’s calendar, the Gregorian calendar. It has changed the beginning of a day from sunset to the middle of the night, beginning of the year from spring to the dead of winter, the beginning of the week from Sunday to Monday. It has changed God’s laws, the Ten Commandments and holy days by doing away with the seventh day Sabbath, instead worshipping on Sunday, the day of sun worship of the pagans; deleting the second commandment that prohibits worshipping images or idols; doing away with God’s seven annual holy days and foisting pagan holidays such as Christmas and Easter dressed in Christian garb on Christianity. So history clearly points out who the prophesied little horn is!

Now notice how this little horn fulfilled Daniel’s prophecies.

The first three resurrections of the Roman Empire after 476 A.D. were those of the Vandals, the Heruli and the Ostrogoths. These three horns or kingdoms were uprooted at the behest of the pope (the little horn of Daniel 7:8) as prophesied in Daniel 7:8. The reason the pope encouraged rulers and generals to drive these kingdoms out of Rome was that they held beliefs different from those of the Roman Church. The word uprooted is also significant. These barbarian peoples were completely driven out of Rome. Hence they were not allowed to take root in the Roman lands.

After the three successive kingdoms ended, the next seven resurrections would be called the Holy Roman Empire. The reason was that the pope of the Roman Church would crown the emperors of these kingdoms as holy Roman emperors and protectors of the False Church. In 554 A.D. Emperor Justinian began the first resurrection. This was followed by that of Charlemagne who was crowned Holy Roman Emperor in 800 A.D.

The 3rd resurrection was that of Otto the Great who was crowned in 962 A.D. The 4th resurrection was that of Charles V of the Hapsburg Dynasty, crowned Holy Roman Emperor in 1530 A.D. The 5th resurrection was that of Napoleon from 1804-1814 A.D., and the 6th resurrection occurred when Garibaldi united the little kingdoms in Italy by 1870 and then Mussolini signed a secret concordat with the pope and declared his rule as the Holy Roman Empire, including the African territories of Eritrea and Somaliland as parts of his kingdom. The Hitler-Mussolini Axis was part of the sixth resurrection of the Holy Roman Empire.

The seventh and final resurrection of the Holy Roman Empire, which is also the 10th resurrection of the Roman Empire, is yet in the near future and is represented by the tenth horn of Daniel’s fourth beast and feet and ten toes of Nebuchadnezzar’s image. This indicates an alliance of ten rulers. In the days of these kings Jesus Christ will return, smash this kingdom and set up God’s kingdom which shall never be destroyed, as indicated by the words in Nebuchadnezzar’s dream, and also in Daniel 7:13-14, 26-27.

Further prophecies in Daniel 8:1-21 provide more details about these empires and identify the Medo-Persian and Greek empires by name.

Thus we see that God prophesied the succession of great empires ruling the Near and Middle East, and brought it to pass exactly as prophesied. The odds of any human being foreseeing these events on his own and predicting them correctly defy reason. Daniel said: “…There is a God in heaven who reveals secrets, and He has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days” (Daniel 2:28). But remember, we today are and will soon be witnesses to the fulfillment of this prophecy when ten rulers will unite in Europe to set up the tenth resurrection of the Roman Empire, which is the seventh resurrection of the Holy Roman Empire. It calls itself the Holy Roman Empire because the great false Roman Church will be involved in its resurrection.

***New Testament Prophecies Already Fulfilled***

Just as many of the prophecies written by Daniel have already been fulfilled, the prophecies written by John the apostle in the Book of Revelation have already been fulfilled. The two prophetic books complement each other.

When Daniel wrote his prophetic book, all the empires prophesied were still to come in the future. But when John wrote the book of Revelation, the Babylonian, Medo-Persian and the Greco-Macedonian empires had passed from history. Jesus and the apostles were living in the Roman Empire, the fourth Empire of Daniel 7. So the prophecies in Revelation 13 and Revelation 17 in the form of beasts refer entirely to the Roman Empire and its ten resurrections. (For detailed explanation, please refer to the booklet titled “*The Beast of Revelation: Myth, Metaphor or Soon-Coming Reality*?” by John H. Ogwyn, available free of charge from the Living Church of God at www.lcg.org).

The nature and history of the great false Church based in Rome was prophesied as the little horn of Daniel 7:8, but also as the other beast of Revelation 13:11-18 and the Great Whore of Revelation 17. The ten resurrections of the Roman Empire were prophesied as the 10 horns of the fourth beast of Daniel 7, but also as the 10 horns of the beast of Revelation 13. These ten horns were on the seventh head of the beast of Revelation 13. The last 7 horns of the 10 horns on the 7th head of the beast of Revelation 13 corresponded to the 7 heads of the beast of Revelation 17. These 7 heads of the beast of Revelation 17 were the seven resurrections of the Holy Roman Empire ridden by the great Whore which is identified as the great false church based in Rome. The ten horns on the seventh head of the beast of Revelation 17 also corresponded to the ten toes of Nebuchadnezzar’s image of Daniel 2. Six resurrections of the Holy Roman Empire have already been fulfilled, and the seventh is soon to take place. The ten horns on the seventh head signify that it will be a combination of ten rulers in league with the false Church. Fulfillment of these prophecies in the Book of Revelation thus provides further proof that the New Testament like the Old Testament is backed by the power of Almighty God. Hence it is the true word of God.

***God Even names King Cyrus Century and a Half in Advance***

God through Isaiah the prophet prophesied about the coming of a Persian king named Cyrus century and a half in advance who would let the Jewish captives go free and rebuild Jerusalem.

Isaiah 44:28 (NKJV), “28 Who says of Cyrus, 'He is My shepherd, And he shall perform all My pleasure, Saying to Jerusalem, "You shall be built," And to the temple, "Your foundation shall be laid." '

Isaiah 45:1, 13, “1 Thus says the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have held, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut…13 I have raised him up in righteousness, and I will direct all his ways: he shall build my city, and he shall let go my captives, not for price nor reward, says the Lord of hosts.”

In this remarkable prophecy God named the ruler a century and a half in advance and what he would do. The British Museum contains the cylinder of King Cyrus of Persia, dated to 538 B.C. which records a description of his conquest of Babylon and his policy of tolerance for the religions of his subject peoples. The Bible records Cyrus’ decree allowing the Jews taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar to return to their land and rebuild Jerusalem and the Temple. Through the fulfillment of this prophecy God of the Bible again demonstrates His total control over the lives of people and affairs of mankind.

***God of the Bible is Sovereign over the Entire Earth***

In the astonishingly accurate fulfillment of these detailed prophecies, the God of the Bible demonstrates His Almighty power, and proves that the gods of all other religions are false gods. In fact they are no gods at all. He has declared ‘…from ancient times things that are not yet done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand…" as stated in Isaiah 46:10, and has brought it to pass.

The God of the Bible rules not only in Israel, but He is Sovereign over all the kingdoms of men, and appoints over them whomever He wills. When King Nebuchadnezzar’s heart was lifted up with pride because of the greatness and might of the Babylonian kingdom he had built, he was abased by his mind being turned into a beast for 7 years. Daniel thus describes the lessons he learnt to his successor Belteshezzar in Daniel 5:18-21(NKJV):

“18 O king, the most high God gave Nebuchadnezzar your father a kingdom, and majesty, and glory, and honor: 19 And for the majesty that he gave him, all people, nations, and languages, trembled and feared before him: whom he would he slew; and whom he would he kept alive; and whom he would he set up; and whom he would he put down. 20 But when his heart was lifted up, and his mind hardened in pride , he was deposed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him: 21 And he was driven from the sons of men; and his heart was made like the beasts, and his dwelling was with the wild asses: they fed him with grass like oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven; till he knew that the most high God ruled in the kingdom of men, and that he appoints over it whomsoever he will.”

**Chapter 13**

**God Controls Daily Affairs of Humans**

God of the Bible prophesied about great empires and has demonstrated His almighty power to bring them to pass. Some might argue that God could fulfill prophecies about great empires, but He cannot control the day to day workings of those empires, or the lives of kings and individuals. To convince such skeptics God gave remarkably detailed prophecies in Daniel 11 which have been fulfilled precisely. Let’s look at these prophecies verse by verse and see how God assured that they were brought to pass. The verses are quoted from the NKJV:

***Incredible Prophecies in Daniel 11***

Daniel 11, **Verse 1**: “Also in the first year of Darius the Mede, I, even I, stood up to confirm and strengthen him.”

The first year of Darius was 539 BC. The ‘I’ referred to here is God’s angel.

**Verse 2**: “And now I will tell you the truth: Behold, three more kings will arise in Persia and the fourth shall be far richer than them all; by his strength, through his riches, he shall stir up all against the realm of Greece.”

Daniel received this vision in the third year of Cyrus the Great (Daniel 10:1). God said that four more kings would reign after Cyrus. Actually there were at least 12 more Persian kings after Cyrus, but the first four were the important ones.

The “three more kings” were Cambyses (530-522 BC), the elder son of Cyrus, who secretly killed his younger brother Smerdis after inheriting the throne, Pseudo-Smerdis (522 BC) an imposter who passed himself off as Cyrus’ younger son, and Darius I (522-486 BC). After the imposter was discovered, the Persian nobles rejected Pseudo-Smerdis in favor of Darius I.

The fourth king Xerxes (the husband of Esther) who was the strongest and richest of them all invaded Greece. He reigned from 486-465 BC.

**Verses 3-4**: “Then a mighty king shall arise, who shall rule with great dominion, and do according to his will. And when he has arisen, his kingdom shall be broken up and divided toward the four winds of heaven, but not among his posterity nor according to his dominion with which he ruled; for his kingdom shall be uprooted, even for others besides these.”

This verse introduces King Alexander the Great. Alexander’s father, King Philip of Mecedonia planned a great invasion to conquer the Persian Empire with an army mainly of Greeks. But he died before the plans could be completed. His son Alexander took over his plans and invaded the Persian Empire. He defeated the Persian army at the Battle of Issus in 333 B.C. (Daniel 8:2, 5-6). Then he swept down into Egypt. Then in a final battle at Arbella (331 B.C.) he crushed the Persian Empire. From there Alexander marched on a conquest all the way to India, sweeping all rulers before him. Alexander certainly “ruled with great dominion and did according to his will” as prophesied.

Here is how Daniel 8:4-8 (NKJV)provide details about the rise of the Persian Empire represented by a ram, and its crushing by Alexander, represented by a he-goat:

“3 Then I lifted my eyes and saw, and there, standing beside the river, was a ram which had two horns, and the two horns were high; but one was higher than the other, and the higher one came up last. 4 I saw the ram pushing westward, northward, and southward, so that no animal could withstand him; nor was there any that could deliver from his hand, but he did according to his will and became great.

“5 And as I was considering, suddenly a male goat came from the west, across the surface of the whole earth, without touching the ground; and the goat had a notable horn between his eyes. 6 Then he came to the ram that had two horns, which I had seen standing beside the river, and ran at him in the fury of his power. 7 And I saw him confronting the ram; he was moved with rage against him, attacked the ram, and broke his two horns. There was no power in the ram to withstand him, but he cast him down to the ground and trampled him; and there was no one that could deliver the ram from his hand. 8 Therefore the male goat grew very great; but when he became strong, the large horn was broken, and in place of it four notable ones came up toward the four winds of heaven.”

Both Daniel 11 and Daniel 8 indicate that Alexander’s kingdom would be broken up and divided into 4 divisions, but not to his posterity. Now see how this verse was fulfilled.

*A Manual of Ancient History* (Student Series) by Rawlinson says: "Cut off unexpectedly in the vigor of early manhood [in his 33rd year, June, 323 B.C.], he [Alexander] left no inheritor, either of his power or of his projects" (p. 237). Alexander’s infant son was murdered in 310 and an illegitimate brother assassinated in 317. Thus Alexander had no descendants or blood relatives to succeed him.

Then an attempt was made to hold the empire together jointly in the name of Alexander’s nephew and unborn son. But that attempt failed. Then Antigonus, one of Alexander’s generals, made a bid for power. But he was unable to consolidate his position. In the Battle of Ipsus in 301 BCE, the coalition of Seleucus, Lysimachus and Ptolemy defeated him and he died in that battle. That is the meaning of the phrase “for his kingdom shall be uprooted, even for others besides these.”

By 301 B.C. four divisions emerged out of the Kingdom, each ruled by one of Alexander’s generals, just as prophesied. They were:

1. Ptolemy (Soter), ruling Egypt, part of Syria and Judea.

2. Seleucus (Nicator), ruling Syria, Babylonia and territory east to India.

3. Lysimachus, ruling Asia Minor.

4. Cassander, ruling Greece and Macedonia.”

Cassander and Lysimachus were the two weaker of the four generals.

The other two, however, ruling in Syria and Egypt respectively expanded their rule and territory and engaged in two centuries of conflict and struggle in the Middle East. It is these two kingdoms, one north of Jerusalem (The Seleucid empire in Syria), the other south (the Ptolemies of Egypt) that Daniel 11 primarily focuses on in the next several verses.

**Verse 5**: “Also the king of the South shall become strong, as well as one of his princes; and he shall gain power over him and have dominion. His dominion shall be a great dominion.”

The king of the South mentioned here was Ptolemy I. The phrase “one of his princes” refers to Seleucus Nicator, who originally served as a general under Ptolemy. While Ptolemy was tied up in war after Alexander’s death, Seleucus gained control in the north, and founded the Seleucid dynasty. And, as verse 5 says, this dynasty actually wielded more power than the king of the south. Seleucus ended up with Alexander’s far-eastern territory, all the way to India. His western boundary included the region known as Syria today. He also ruled the areas known anciently as Assyria and Babylon.

From this point on in the prophecy, the angel focuses on Egypt under the Ptolemies, known as the ‘King of the South’ and Greater Syria under the Seleucids, known as the “King of the North.

**Verse 6**: “And at the end of some years they shall join forces, for the daughter of the king of the South shall go to the king of the North to make an agreement; but she shall not retain the power of her authority, and neither he nor his authority shall stand; but she shall be given up, with those who brought her, and with him who begot her, and with him who strengthened her in those times.”

Both kingdoms remained hostile to one another. In 285 BCE Ptolemy I died. Meanwhile Antiochus II (called Theos) came to the throne in Syria. In 260 he initiated a war with the King of the South. The war was terminated in 252 when the two powers attempted an agreement whereby the daughter (Bernice) of the King of the South, Ptolemy (II) Philadelphus, was to marry the King of the North. Antiochus II divorced his wife Laodice. (George Rawlinson, *A Manual of Ancient History*, pp. 251-252.) But neither Antiochus Theos nor Bernice could retain that power. After Ptolemy Philadelphus died in 247 BC, Antiochus II promptly gave up Bernice and retook Laodice as his wife. But still angry from being banished years earlier, Laodice stayed with Theos long enough to conceive and then had her husband poisoned, thus securing the throne for his and her son, Seleucus II. She then tracked down Bernice and had her assassinated as well, squelching any hope of the Ptolemies to have a descendent on the Seleucid throne in the north. Fulfillment of these detailed prophecies indicates that God can raise any human beings to fulfill any purpose He wishes.

**Verses 7-9**: “But from a branch of her roots [meaning from Bernice’s parents, or a sibling] one shall arise in his place, who shall come with an army, enter the fortress of the king of the North, and deal with them and prevail. And he shall also carry their gods captive to Egypt, with their princes and their precious articles of silver and gold; and he shall continue more years than the king of the North. Then the king of the North shall come to the kingdom of the king of the South, but shall return to his own land.”

Soon after Laodice killed his sister Bernice, Ptolemy III sought to avenge his sister’s death. Rawlinson says: "Ptolemy Euergetes [the III, eldest son of Philadelphus (p. 272) and therefore Bernice's brother, a branch of her roots] invaded Syria, B.C. 245, to avenge the murder of his sister, Bernice...In the war which followed, he carried everything before him" (Rawlinson, *ibid*., p. 252).

Ptolemy III attacked the king of the North [Seleucus II] and captured the capital city of Antioch. He carried back with him immense wealth and many idols and vessels that Persian Emperor Cambyses had taken from Egypt in 526 BC.

Ptolemy III continued to rule till his death in 221 BC, nearly six years after the death of Seleucus II in 226 BC, thus fulfilling the words “he shall continue more years than the king of the North”. Seleucus II had attempted an attack on Ptolemy III, but returned to Syria when his attempt failed, thus fulfilling the prophetic words “Then the king of the North shall come to the kingdom of the king of the South, but shall return to his own land.”

**Verses 10-12**: “However, his sons shall stir up strife, and assemble a multitude of great forces; and one shall certainly come and overwhelm and pass through; then he shall return to his fortress and stir up strife. And the king of the South shall be moved with rage, and go out and fight with him, with the king of the North, who shall muster a great multitude; but the multitude shall be given into the hand of his enemy. When he has taken away the multitude, his heart shall be lifted up; and he will cast down tens of thousands, but he will not prevail.”

After their father’s death, the sons of Seleucus II (Seleucus III and Antiochus III the Great) assembled great forces and attacked the king of the South to recover their Port and fortress Seleucia. Seleucus III reigned for only 3 years because he was poisoned. But Antiochus III did “overwhelm and pass through,” recovering his fortress Seleucia and conquering Judea. But he gained control of Judea only for a short time.

Antiochus III returned to his fortress, but his taking Judea stirred up strife. It enraged Ptolemy IV, the king of the South. He retaliated and defeated the much larger army of Antiochus III at the battle of Raphia. He killed tens of thousands of Syrian troops and retook Judea to Egypt.

Even though Ptolemy IV won the battle, he did not consolidate the victory for Egypt, thus fulfilling the words ‘he will not prevail’. He made a hasty peace with Antiochus III and returned to debauched living in Egypt.

**Verses 13-16**: “For the king of the North will return and muster a multitude greater than the former, and shall certainly come at the end of some years with a great army and much equipment. And in those times many shall rise up against the king of the South; also certain violent men of your people shall exalt themselves in fulfillment of the vision, but they shall fall. So the king of the North shall come and build a siege mound, and take a fortified city; and the forces of the South shall not withstand him. Even his choice troops shall have no strength to resist. But he who comes against him shall do according to his own will, and no one shall stand against him. He shall stand in the Glorious Land with destruction in his power.”

Ptolemy IV died in 204 BC, and his infant son, Ptolemy (V) Epiphanes came to the throne. The Egyptian provinces were in turmoil because of the terrible rule of Ptolemy IV. So Antiochus III formed a coalition, assembled a great army and attacked Egypt in 201 BC. He made an alliance with Philip (V) of Macedonia and others; and according to Josephus, many Jews sympathetic to him joined him against the king of the South. That was in fulfillment of the phrase “certain violent men of your [Daniel’s] people shall exalt themselves in fulfillment of the vision.” But the Egyptian general Scopus crushed this rebellion (v. 14).

Then the king of the North (Antiochus III) responded with another invasion. He captured the fortified city of Sidon in 198 BC, where Scopus surrendered. After capturing Sidon, Antiochus defeated Egypt at Mount Panium in 198 BC and took complete control of Judea (the “Glorious Land”).

**Verse 17**: A clearer and better translation of this verse is provided in the Revised English Bible: “He [the king of the North, Antiochus III] will resolve to advance with the full might of his kingdom; and, when he has agreed terms with the king of the south, he will give his young daughter in marriage to him, with a view to the destruction of the kingdom; but the treaty will not last nor will it be his purpose which is served.”

After having defeated Scopus, Antiochus III wanted to control all of Egypt. With this goal in mind, he gave his daughter Cleopatra (not the Egyptian queen of 31 BCE) to Ptolemy V in marriage. Rawlinson says on page 254, "Coele-Syria and Palestine promised as a dowry, but not delivered." He hoped that she would act in his interests. But she sided instead with her husband, frustrating her father’s purpose and thus fulfilling the words “nor will it be his purpose which is served.”

**Verses 18-19**: “After this he shall turn his face to the coastlands, and shall take many. But a ruler shall bring the reproach against them to an end; and with the reproach removed, he shall turn back on him. Then he shall turn his face toward the fortress of his own land; but he shall stumble and fall, and not be found.”

When Antiochus III realized that his purpose in Egypt was frustrated, he began a campaign against islands and cities of Asia Minor and the Aegean. He also gave asylum to Hannibal of Carthage, the enemy of Rome. Hannibal assists Antiochus in landing in Greece, bringing him into conflict with Rome. The ruler who brings the reproach of defeat in Asia Minor and the Aegean coasts to an end is the young Roman general Scipio who defeated Antiochus at the Battle of Magnesia in 190 BC. The Romans deprived him of much of his territory, and took several hostages to Rome, including Antiochus’ son. In addition, Rome imposed heavy tribute upon him.

Antiochus returned to his fortress Antioch in disgrace. Unable to pay the heavy tribute demanded by the Romans, Antiochus tried to plunder the Temple of Belus in Elymais within his own kingdom. This enraged the people so much that the local forces killed him, thus fulfilling the words “Then he shall turn his face toward the fortress of his own land; but he shall stumble and fall, and not be found.”

**Verse 20**: “There shall arise in his place one who imposes taxes on the glorious kingdom; but within a few days he shall be destroyed, but not in anger or in battle.”

After Antiochus III’s death, his son Seleucus (IV) Philopater was also unable to pay the taxes to Rome (apocryphal book 2 *Maccabees* 3:7-40). He sent Heliodorus, a Jew, to plunder the temple at Jerusalem. But Heliodorus obtained nothing. Seleucus later poisoned by Heliodorus was thus killed ‘but not in anger or in battle.’ Heliodorus then assumed control with the support of other Syrian officials who were tired of the excesses of the Seleucid rulers.

**Verse 21**: “And in his place shall arise a vile person, to whom they shall not give the honor of royalty; but he shall come in peaceably, and seize the kingdom by intrigue.”

In the place of Seleucus IV, his younger brother, the infamous Antiochus (IV) Ephphanes arose to whom the Syrian officials supporting Heliodorus would not give the honor of royalty. Antiochus Epiphanes had earlier been taken as hostage to Rome. But by flattery he enlisted the aid of neighboring king Eumenes II of Pergamum and officials at home in forcing out Heliodorus and obtained the throne (ruling from 175-164 BC.) “He astonishes his subjects by an affectation of Roman manners” and “good natured profuseness” [flattery] (Rawlinson, *Manual of Ancient History*, p. 255).

**Verse 22**: “With the force of a flood they shall be swept away from before him and be broken, and also the prince of the covenant.”

Those who opposed Antiochus Epiphanes, including Heliodorus were swept away by him. The prince of the covenant referred to here is the Jewish high priest. Verse 22 is saying that Antiochus would even go so far as to murder the Jewish high priest. History confirms that Onias III was high priest in Judea at the time, and that Antiochus put him to death in 172 B.C. According to Rawlinson (*Manual of Ancient History*, p. 255), Jews “were driven to desperation by the mad project of this self-willed monarch.” Antiochus IV appointed a Hellenistic Jew who changed his name to the Greek Jason as the replacement high priest. But only after 3 years he was replaced by another Hellenizing apostate named Menelaus.

**Verses 23-24**: “And after the league is made with him he shall act deceitfully, for he shall come up and become strong with a small number of people. He shall enter peaceably, even into the richest places of the province; and he shall do what his fathers have not done, nor his forefathers: he shall disperse among them the plunder, spoil, and riches; and he shall devise his plans against the strongholds, but only for a time.”

After the Jews made a treaty with him, Antiochus Epiphanes acted deceitfully with them. Even though he had only a small number of supporters in the beginning, he eventually gained a large following through deceit and flatteries and became strong. He entered Galilee peaceably. Then only as a temporary ploy to gain support among the masses, Antiochus took from the rich and gave to the poor. Then he did what his fathers or forefathers had not done. Rulers before him had typically treated the Jews well. But Antiochus IV far exceeded his fathers in his ruthlessness and cruelty toward the Jews. He also imposed unbearable taxes on the Jews. Much of this struggle between the Jews and the Syrian kingdom is recorded in the apocryphal book of *Maccabees* (in the Hebrew Bible).

**Verses 25-27**: “He shall stir up his power and his courage against the king of the South with a great army. And the king of the South shall be stirred up to battle with a very great and mighty army; but he shall not stand, for they shall devise plans against him. Yes, those who eat of the portion of his delicacies shall destroy him; his army shall be swept away, and many shall fall down slain. Both these kings’ hearts shall be bent on evil, and they shall speak lies at the same table; but it shall not prosper, for the end will still be at the appointed time.”

In this case, Antiochus IV was stirred up to war with Egypt by his nephew Ptolemy VI, the son of Ptolemy V and Antiochus IV’s sister Cleopatra. Rawlinson, pages 255-256, says, "Threatened with war by the ministers of Ptolemy Philometor [now king of the south], who claim Coele-Syria and Palestine as the dowry of Cleopatra, the late queen-mother, Antiochus marches against Egypt...B.C. 171" (pp. 277-278). But he was met by his nephew leading another immense army from Egypt.

But Ptolemy VI did not stand, for his own trusted officers plotted against him. Antiochus IV was victorious at Pelusium. Continuing in Rawlinson, p. 278: "After his victory at Pelusium, Antiochus advanced to Memphis, and having obtained possession of the young king's person [Ptolemy Philometor, king of the south], endeavored to use him as a tool for effecting the entire reduction of the country." In 174 BCE, both these kings sat at a banquet. Antiochus pretended to ally himself with the young Ptolemy, against his brother, Euergetes II, but each was trying to deceive the other. Their lies did not prosper and the outcome would be as God predetermined it.

**Verse 28**: “While returning to his own land with great riches, his heart shall be moved against the holy covenant; so he shall do damage and return to his own land.”

Antiochus while returning to Syria in 168 BCE with great plunder from Egypt, encountered another Maccabean insurrection. Verse 28 says his heart was moved against the “holy covenant,” meaning the Jewish worship system. “He shall do damage” means Antiochus looted the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem of many golden vessels and massacred many Jews. Greek historian Polybius mentioned that he “despoiled most sanctuaries.”

**Verses 29-30**: “At the appointed time he shall return and go toward the south; but it shall not be like the former or the latter. For ships from Cyprus [the actual word used is Kittim, which is Hebrew for “western lands,” here meaning Rome] shall come against him; therefore he shall be grieved, and return in rage against the holy covenant, and do damage. So he shall return and show regard for those who forsake the holy covenant.”

In verse 29, God prophesied of a third campaign by Antiochus into Egypt. But this one did not fair well for him like the previous two successful ones. He was cut off by a Roman fleet from Cyprus. Popillius, the commander of the Roman fleet forced Antiochus IV to accept surrender terms in which he had to end his campaign against Egypt and restore the island of Cyprus to Egyptian rule. On returning home through Judea, Antiochus IV vented his frustration and anger on the Jews. He plotted with leaders inside the temple, showing favor to those who rejected the Jewish religion and adopted the pagan Greek (Hellenistic) customs, but persecuting those who remained loyal.

Antiochus did his utmost to destroy the Jewish religion, by passing laws that forbade its practice. He forced some to violate Jewish laws, and murdered them if they refused. For example, Eleazar, an aged scribe was forced to open his mouth to eat swine’s flesh. He refused, and himself went to the rack and was flogged to death. In another case, two women who had circumcised their children were publicly paraded around the city and then hurled down headlong from the wall. Others who had gathered together in a cave to keep the Sabbath day secretly were betrayed and all burned together. A mother and her seven sons were tortured one after the other and killed in the presence of the governor for refusing to eat swine’s flesh.

**Verse 31**: “And forces shall be mustered by him, and they shall defile the sanctuary fortress; then they shall take away the daily sacrifices, and place there the abomination of desolation.”

This verse refers to the horrid events of 168 BC which are described in 2 Maccabees 5:11-15. Antiochus Epiphanes thought Judea was in a revolt. So he mustered his armed forces and entered Jerusalem and killed 80,000 men, women and children. He then defiled the Temple by setting up a statue of the Greek god Zeus (Rawlinson, ibid. p. 255) [the “abomination of desolation”] in the holy of holies – the holiest inner most place in the Temple - and sacrificed a pig on the temple altar. He stopped the daily sacrifice and tried to stamp out the Jewish religion completely.

**Verses 32-35**: “Those who do wickedly against the covenant he shall corrupt with flattery; but the people who know their God shall be strong, and carry out great exploits. And those of the people who understand shall instruct many; yet for many days they shall fall by sword and flame, by captivity and plundering. Now when they shall fall, they shall be aided with a little help; but many shall join with them by intrigue. And some of those of understanding shall fall, to refine them, purge them, and make them white, until the time of the end; because it is still for the appointed time.”

Antiochus IV corrupted the apostate Jews with flattery and rewards for forsaking their religion and adopting Hellenistic culture. Many Jews succumbed to his persecution and rewards for apostasy.

But the time frame of the prophecy changes in verse 32 and has a dual aspect. It refers to people who knew their God at that time, the Maccabees, [who were the patriotic followers of Judas Maccabeus of the Hasmonian priestly dynasty and were determined to continue to keep God’s law] and later the Christians.

The Maccabees resisted Antiochus Epiphanes and his successors. When an officer of Antiochus came to the city of Modein to enforce Antiochus’ decree concerning idolatrous worship, Mattathias, the leading priest slew him. Then Mattathias fled to the hills and led a band of guerrillas. Thus began the Maccabees revolt against Antiochus

Mattathias was helped in his cause by his five sons, particularly Judas, nick-named Maqqaba (Aramaic for hammer, from which the name Maccabees is derived). Many of these patriots died for the cause. But their heroism ultimately drove the Syrians out of the country.

In their dual aspect, these verses also refer to the true Christians and the Church, prophesying their coming mighty works of instructing many and converting them to Christianity, and their persecution by sword, flame, captivity and plundering. When they are persecuted, God would help them with a little help (which would include God’s holy spirit, giving them tremendous strength to remain faithful even when faced with martyrdom), but would allow many to be martyred to test and try them and purge them. Others would infiltrate the Churches by intrigue. Some of the true Christians would be martyred, to purge them, refine their character and make them spiritually white or pure. This would go on till the time of the end, meaning the return of Jesus Christ.

Verse 35 refers to the “time of the end.” This means that the previous verses were prophecies that applied to the contests between the Seleucid and Egyptian dynasties, and later to the Seleucids and the Jewish patriots, the Maccabees. Thus we have seen that these verses have been precisely fulfilled in history, from the rule of Cyrus the Great to the time of the Maccabees.

**Verse 36**: “Then the king shall do according to his own will: he shall exalt and magnify himself above every god, shall speak blasphemies against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the wrath has been accomplished; for what has been determined shall be done.”

The prophecy now shifts to New Testament times. In 65 BCE Rome took possession of Syria [hence Judea as well] which became a Roman province. The Roman emperor now became the king of the North. Verse 36 is an apt description of Roman emperors who did according to their will, instituting emperor worship, thus exalting themselves above God. The phrase “shall prosper till the wrath has been accomplished” means that the Roman Empire will persist in some form or another right till the very end, when Jesus Christ shall return and God’s wrath on the Roman Empire will be completed.

**Verse 37**: “He shall regard neither the God [correct rendering is ‘gods’] of his fathers nor the desire of women, nor regard any god; for he shall magnify himself above them all.”

The Roman emperors did not regard their old Roman gods. The phrase they also did not have “a desire for women” indicates that the emperors were either homosexuals (14 of the first 15 emperors were actually homosexuals), or exalted themselves above the Babylonian god Tammuz for whom women wept. Roman emperors did not regard any of these gods because they instituted emperor worship and magnified themselves above all these gods.

**Verses 38-39**: “But in their place he shall honor a god of fortresses [or forces, KJV]; and a god which his fathers did not know he shall honor with gold and silver, with precious stones and pleasant things. Thus he shall act against the strongest fortresses with a foreign god, which he shall acknowledge, and advance its glory; and he shall cause them to rule over many, and divide the land for gain.”

The Roman emperors demanded worship of the emperor as well as the empire itself because of its strength. Standards were idolatrous emblems of empire/emperor worship. In addition, enormous defense expenditures made Rome the strongest military power the world had ever seen till that time, thus fulfilling the prophecy “he shall honor the god of forces”.

But then, beginning with Constantine the Great in 313 AD, Roman emperors began to honor a god, the pope of the false Church based in Rome, that his fathers did not know, with gold, silver, precious stones and other pleasant things.

Later Roman emperors, and after that rulers of later resurrections of the Roman Empire began to act against the strongest enemy states and religious institutions on behalf of the foreign god [the papacy, which was of Babylonian origin, the original Babylonian Mystery Religion]. They acknowledged the papacy as a god and worked to advance its glory. They caused the popes to rule over many peoples, and divided the land for the benefit of both church and state. The pope calls himself the Vicar of Christ, meaning “in place of Christ.” Thus the pope calls himself a ‘god’ in place of Christ.

Verses 36-39 covered the centuries from the beginning of Christianity in the early Roman Empire to the origin of the Catholic Church and the Catholic-dominated Holy Roman Empire with its seven resurrections right down to our modern times. The seventh resurrection is yet in the near future.

Thus we see a demonstration of God’s Almighty power in first prophesying these events and then fulfilling them unerringly. Individual kings, queens and generals are mentioned and what each would do. All these prophecies have been fulfilled. All this is ancient history. It would serve no purpose in our time to record all this other than to convince the skeptic beyond a shadow of doubt that God of the Bible has total and complete control in the affairs of men. God can raise men and women, foretell what they would do centuries in advance, and bring it to pass unerringly demonstrating His total control over the lives of individuals, including kings. Besides being a demonstration of God’s Almighty power, fulfillment of such intricate and detailed prophecies is also proof that the Bible is the true inspired word of God. Each and every word in it is God inspired and can be relied upon. Book of no other religion dares to prophesy like this the fulfillment of which can be proven by history.

Now the remaining verses of Daniel 11 move to the time frame called “the time of the end”, yet in the future, to the time of the seventh resurrection of the Holy Roman Empire.

**Verses 40-45**: “40 And at the time of the end shall the king of the south [which from other prophecies will be an alliance headed by an Islamic power] push at him: and the king of the north [which since the time of the Roman Empire has always been the Roman Empire or the Holy Roman Empire] shall come against him like a whirlwind , with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over. 41 He shall enter also into the glorious land, and many countries shall be overthrown: but these shall escape out of his hand, even Edom, and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon. 42 He shall stretch forth his hand also upon the countries: and the land of Egypt shall not escape. 43 But he shall have power over the treasures of gold and of silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt: and the Libyans and the Ethiopians shall be at his steps. 44 But tidings out of the east and out of the north shall trouble him: therefore he shall go forth with great fury to destroy, and utterly to make away many. 45 And he shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him.”

These verses describe yet a future war between the King of the North, a European alliance headed by a military dictator, in all likelihood a German, and the King of the South, an Islamic alliance. The King of the North defeats the King of the South. He will then likely set up his regional headquarters in the holy land, but mobilization of the Kings of the East will trouble him. He will go forth in his fury to destroy them. But God prophecies that he shall come to his end at the second coming of Jesus Christ, and no one will help him.

**Chapter 14**

**Has the Bible Been Altered**

We have seen from fulfillment of numerous prophesied events in both the Old and New Testaments of the Bible that its words are backed by the power of Almighty God. But does it mean that all its words are the true words of God so that we can believe what it offers us as salvation, and we can safely follow all its instructions on how to live our lives?

The scriptures of other religions do not mention the Bible or Christianity, but the scripture of one of them boldly dares to state that the words of the Bible were altered and the version we now have is not the original inspired word. And that religion is Islam and their holy book the Koran. But we have already proved that the so-called holy books of all religions except the Bible are not backed by the power of Almighty God, because they fail our test of foretelling of numerous great events in human affairs and bringing them to pass in precise detail. So the holy books of all other religions are mere philosophies of men or they are outright lies inspired by wicked spirits.

What else can we expect from a religion that is based on lies? Simply more lies to cast doubts in the minds of the gullible about the true religion and the true holy book. Just as Hinduism, Sikhism, and all the other isms are philosophies of men, Islam is a colossal lie. But it is the worst of all lies because it dares to directly attack the Bible which we have proved to be backed by the power of Almighty God. Since the Koran was revealed to Mohammad by a spirit being, that spirit being is a liar. Later we will identify that spirit being. Only a diabolical lying spirit would seek with all his cunning craftiness to discredit the Bible to turn humanity away from the Almighty God and His truth.

***General Muslim Views and Disagreements with Christianity***

Islam has certain beliefs about their prophet Mohammad and the Koran. They also have certain beliefs about God, Jesus Christ, the Trinity, other prophets in the Bible, Christianity, Judaism and the Bible itself. Some of these major beliefs include:

1) Muslims regard the Bible as a holy scripture. But they believe that the Bible as we have it today has been corrupted, but not completely. So it still contains some truth. Muslims are willing to accept parts of the Bible that do not contradict the Koran. They reject all other parts of the Bible that contradict the Koran.

2) Islam believes that there is only one God, the Creator and Sustainer of the universe. Islam also holds the view that Christianity believes in a Triune God that exists as the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, which Islam rejects. God’s Church rejects both these views.

3) Since Islam believes there is only one God, therefore Jesus Christ cannot be divine, meaning that Jesus Christ was not God. Islam believes that Jesus Christ was a mere human being though a great one, and miraculously born to Mary without a human father as Adam and Eve were miraculously created directly by God. But the divinity of Jesus Christ is central to Christianity, because He could not have been the Savior of the world if He was not divine.

4) Islam believes that Jesus did not die on the cross, but God made it appear that way to people. Furthermore, since Jesus did not die on the cross, He was not resurrected. The Koran instead says that Jesus ascended to Heaven and did not die on the cross.

But fundamental to Christianity is the belief that Jesus was crucified and died on the cross to bear the sins of all of humanity, but was resurrected. Mainstream Christianity believes that Jesus died on the cross on Friday late afternoon, was placed in the tomb but was resurrected on Sunday morning at sunrise. Islam finds that this view contradicts the Bible as Jesus said He would be 3 days and 3 nights in the tomb. Three days and three nights cannot be fitted between a Friday crucifixion and death and Sunday resurrection at sunrise. Islam is right on this one. But mainstream Christianity’s belief in a Friday afternoon crucifixion and Sunday morning resurrection is not based on the Bible but has been incorporated into Christianity from pagan customs and traditions foisted on Christianity by the false Roman Church.

5) Islam believes that God sent prophets of the Old Testament in the Bible, and Jesus Christ and the prophet Mohammad. But Christianity rejects Mohammad as a prophet of God. Since we have proved that the words of the Koran are not backed by the power of Almighty God as it has utterly failed to provide proof of many prophetic predictions in the affairs of mankind and then bringing them to pass, Mohammad therefore cannot be a prophet of God. He was simply a deceived human being, deceived by a demon masquerading around as the archangel Gabriel.

Prophets also either foretell the future or interpret prophecies of the future. Mohammad did no such thing. That’s why Christians and Jews are right in rejecting Mohammad as a prophet of the true God.

Muslim writers provide evidence for their beliefs about Christianity and the Bible by taking a scripture here and there (often out of context) to prove a point while totally ignoring all other scriptures related to that topic

Scriptures taken in isolation, out of their context can be used to prove many different things. But that is not truth as that belief would directly contradict many other plain scriptures. And citing the writings of so-called Christian writers is not necessarily proof because such authorities may not believe true Christianity. Rather they may be believers in the lies and paganism originated and propagated by the great false Church based in Rome and its protesting daughters.

The correct way to research a topic is to study all the scriptures on the topic and then form one’s belief that is compatible with all the scriptures. We would counsel Muslims to do a diligent study of various subjects rather than simply accepting conclusions that a writer may have drawn based on twisting of select scriptures considered in isolation. A seeker after the truth must prove all things, for these are issues that concern his or her eternal life. Keep an open mind and ask the only true God to guide your understanding to enable you to prove all things for yourself.

Let’s now examine each of the beliefs that Muslims hold about Christianity, Judaism and the Bible.

***Was the Bible Altered***

The Koran states that the Jews altered the scriptures.

[2.75]: Do you then hope that they [the Jews] would believe in you, and a party from among them indeed used to hear the Word of Allah, then altered it after they had understood it, and they know (this).

[3.78]: Most surely there is a party amongst those who distort the Book with their tongue that you may consider it to be (a part) of the Book, and they say, It is from Allah, while it is not from Allah, and they tell a lie against Allah whilst they know.

Both verses allude to the Jews having altered the Scriptures, and many in Islam interpret these verses this way to justify their beliefs that are contrary to the Bible.

Again, why should we believe these verses in the Koran? We have proved that the words of the Koran have not been inspired or backed by the power of Almighty God. Since the salvation offered by Islam differs from the salvation offered in the Bible, and we have proved the words of the Bible to be backed by the power of Almighty God, the words in the Koran therefore stand proved as lies. The charge that the Jews altered their scriptures is just another pack of lies written in the Koran. The lies in Koran are designed to turn Islamic nations into enemies of Israelite nations of America, British Commonwealth nations and the Jews by portraying them as inferior liars.

How can we prove that the entire Bible as we have it today is indeed inspired by the great Creator God? Whose words can we accept as truth? Certainly we can accept the words of the true prophets of God which Islam acknowledges as prophets. Islam acknowledges Jesus Christ as a true prophet of God. We should certainly be able to accept the words of Jesus Christ about the Old Testament as truth.

***Opinion of Jesus, Prophets and Apostles about the Bible***

So before getting into specific proofs that the Bible is the inspired word of God which has not been corrupted, let us first understand the opinion of Jesus Christ, the prophets and the apostles, and even God’s loyal angels on the Bible. Jesus said in John 17:17: “…your word is truth.” So Jesus emphatically said that God’s word, the Old Testament in the Bible (which is what was available as scripture when Jesus Christ was alive) is the truth.

Jesus also said in Matthew 5:17-18: “Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily [or assuredly] I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle [the equivalent of a fullstop or a coma as punctuation marks] shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.” Here Jesus was saying that everything written in the Old Testament, including punctuation marks, will be fulfilled. Therefore it is the truth backed by Almighty God.

Jesus also said in John 10:35: “If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken.” Here Jesus was saying that the scriptures cannot be broken, meaning that the scriptures are infallible. Certainly Muslims do not believe that Jesus Christ would lie. By the time of Jesus, the Old Testament scriptures had been written and preserved for a time period varying from more than 1450 years when Moses delivered his first 5 books of the Bible to about 450 years since Malachi the prophet wrote his book. Jesus thus confirmed that the Old Testament had been faithfully preserved by the Jews till His time.

Here is what the prophet Daniel thought of the scriptures: “But I will show you that which is noted in the scripture of truth…” (Daniel 10:21). This was probably the archangel Gabriel talking to Daniel, and Daniel recorded what was revealed to him, because he knew it was the truth. Thus even the archangels of God call the scriptures truth. Certainly Muslims cannot accuse the archangel Gabriel of lying. The archangel confirmed that the Old Testament scriptures written up to that time were the truth

The angels of God also keep the sayings of the Bible. The angel that was revealing parts of chapters 21 and 22 of the book of Revelation to the Apostle John said in Revelation 22:6-9: “6 And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to show unto his servants the things which must shortly be done . 7 Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keeps the sayings of the prophecy of this book. 8 And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which showed me these things. 9 Then says he unto me, See you do it not: for I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God.”

When the prophecies in the Book of Revelation were revealed to John, all other books of the Bible had already been written and the final compilation already done by John the Apostle. So when the angel said that he was a fellow servant like the prophets and kept the sayings of this book, he also signified that the canonization of books that John had done were also scripture. So the angel signified that the New Testament of the Bible had been completed, and he as an angel of God kept the sayings of the entire Bible as they were faithful and true. As the angel had signified to Daniel the prophet that the Old Testament scriptures were the truth, the angel was now signifying to John the apostle that the New Testament that he had finally canonized with the book of Revelation was the truth and even he as an angel of God lived by its words. Besides Jesus Christ, what greater testimony can we have than that of God’s angels that the entire Bible is the true word of God?

The apostle Paul told Timothy in 2 Timothy 3:16-17: “All scripture [meaning the Old Testament and the New Testament, as we will see how the Bible was canonized] is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” The literal translation in place of ‘inspiration of God’ is “God-breathed.” So according to Paul, the entire Bible is God breathed, or inspired by God.

In Romans 1:2 Paul calls the scriptures ‘holy.’

Peter the apostle shows in 2 Peter 1:20-21 that God had an active hand in the writing of the Bible. He said that “No prophecy [which means ‘inspired speaking or writing’] of Scripture ever came by the will of man. Instead, holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.”

Thus from the words of Jesus, the prophets, the apostles and even God’s angels, the scriptures, the entire Holy Bible is the true, inspired and infallible word of God.

***How Was the Bible Written and Preserved***

Another important question for us to consider is: How was the Bible written and preserved for us through thousands of years?

Romans 3:1-2 states: “1 What advantage then has the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? 2 Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.”

These verses say that God gave the Jews the responsibility of preserving the oracles of God. Oracles means “all the written utterances of God through the Old Testament writers.” Note that God said the Jews were responsible for the preservation of the Bible, not the interpretation of it. In the New Testament, Christ often rejected the Jews’ interpretations. After His death, the elders met together and used God’s Holy Spirit to make judgments as described in the apostles conference in Acts 15 to discuss the circumcision question.

Did the Jews faithfully preserve the Old Testament? Matthew 5:18 says so. It says: “For verily [or truly] I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.” Jesus said even the equivalent of every comma and fullstop in the Bible shall stand. That means the Jews did faithfully preserve the Old Testament.

The Jewish scribes were extremely careful and reverent in preserving the Bible. If they found even one error in a copy from the original, the copy was burnt rather than corrections being made to it. They also kept statistics such as identifying the total number of words in various books, the middle words, and the total words in the whole Old Testament and the middle words etc. so as to provide another way to verify no changes crept in from the original text.

*Old Testament Canonization*

Now let us take a brief look at how the Old Testament of the Bible was canonized.

Moses wrote the first five books, called the Law in Deuteronomy 31:9. 24-26. Kings of Israel and Judah were to write personal copies of the law as stated in Deuteronomy 17:14, 18. So kings were involved in the preservation of the Scriptures.

Prophets, including Samuel, Nathan, and Gad also wrote parts of the Old Testament, as I Samuel 10:25 and I Chronicles 29:29 mention. King David wrote many of the psalms, specially the first 72 of them. King Solomon wrote the Book of Ecclesiastes (Ecclesiastes 1:1), the Song of Solomon (1.1) and most of the book of Proverbs (1.1; Ecclesiastes 12:9-11). King Hezekiah appears to have overseen the collection and preservation of some of the books as Proverbs 25:1states.

Jeremiah wrote the Book of Lamentations on the death of Josiah as 2 Chronicles 35:24-25 mentions.

Ezra and Nehemiah probably did the final editing, adding observations such as Deuteronomy 34:10 which says that a prophet like Moses had not arisen in Israel. Names of towns and cities change over time. So more modern names were used by the editors than what the original authors wrote.

*New Testament Canonization*

In Matthew 24:35 Jesus Christ said, “My words will by no means pass away.” If Jesus Christ’s words were not to pass away, how could they be preserved? There are limitations to passing His words on orally. They get distorted. The best way to preserve Jesus’ words was to write them down.

Matthew 28:19-20 says converts to Christianity were to be taught to observe ALL THINGS Jesus had commanded. Some say that Paul’s doctrine superseded all other apostles’ doctrine. But Acts 2:42 refutes this idea. It says the Church “continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship. The apostles here includes the 12 disciples of Jesus Christ who became apostles

The gospels were written in the mid-60s, but were already considered scripture by Paul. For proof, see Luke 10:7. It states: “And in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give: for the laborer is worthy of his hire.” Now compare with I Timothy 5:18: “For the scripture says, You shall not muzzle the ox that treads out the corn. And, the laborer is worthy of his hire [or reward.] The phrase ‘the laborer is worthy of his hire’ is not written in the Old Testament. It is found in Luke 10:7, but Paul is already considering and quoting the gospel of Luke in I Timothy 5:18 as scripture. This proves that the gospels were considered scripture.

In 2 Peter 1:12, 15, Peter said he wrote his epistles so that people would have a “reminder” of things after his death. He knew that he was writing scripture and that it would be preserved as such for all Christians afterwards. The reminder of things comes to us from Peter’s writings.

2 Peter 3:15-16 says people twisted Paul’s writings as they did the rest of the scriptures. Here Peter is already equating Paul’s writings with Scripture.

In 2 Timothy 4:11-13 Paul asked timothy to bring the “books”, especially the “parchments”, indicating that he was compiling Scripture. So Paul and Peter were involved in writing the Scriptures and Paul compiled, or canonized them. The final book of the Bible was written by the apostle John. So the final canonization of the New Testament was done by the apostle John. The canonization of the Old and New Testaments was not done by committees of scholars as critics claim.

The final editing of the Old Testament was done by Ezra and Nehemiah. Compilation of the New Testament was done by the Apostle Paul, with the final compilation being done by the apostle John.

God’s true Church does not recognize the Apocrypha as part of the canon for the following reasons. Firstly, Jesus and the writers of the New Testament never quoted from any of these books, but did from almost all the other Old Testament books. Secondly, the Jewish historian Josephus who lived from about 30 A.D. to 100 A.D. explicitly excludes them and says there were 22 books in the Old Testament. In the Jewish Old Testament count of 22 books all minor prophets are included as one book and the books of Samuel and Kings are included as one book. Thirdly, Jewish scholars of Jamnia in 90 A.D. did not recognize the Apocrypha. Finally it wasn’t until A.D. 1546, in a polemical action at the Counter Reformation Council of Trent, that these books received full canonical status by the Catholic Church. Again this was in 1546 A.D. Jesus and the original apostles did not recognize the Apocrypha as scripture.

God’s Church also does not consider any additional books such as the Koran or the Book of Mormon to be Scripture and equal with the Bible because: First, 2 Timothy 3:16-17 says that the Scriptures given by God in the bible are sufficient that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work. Secondly, Revelation 22:18 says, “…If any man shall add to these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book.’ And finally, the books of Genesis and Revelation seem to be bookends for the rest of the Bible. According to the Companion Bible Appendix # 3, there are 30 parallels between these two books showing that the Bible is a whole, complete book.

In summary then according to Sidney Collett’s “*All About the Bible*”, 20th Edition, p. 11, “Altogether about 40 persons, in all stations of life, were engaged in the writing of these oracles, the work of which was spread over a period of about 1,600 years.” In spite of all these writers over hundreds of years, the Bible has a consistent plan throughout.

Many have written against the Bible as God’s word. These types of arguments usually falsely claim that the Bible contradicts itself, that the people in the Bible didn’t really exist, and that the Jews wrote the book to enhance their national reputation.

Josh McDowell’s *Evidence that Demands a Verdict* has some quotes refuting this kind of thinking:

On p. 55-56 he says that 40 different kings are listed in correct order in the Old Testament. He says that the odds of that being right are incredible if the Bible were fraudulent. The chances are I in 75 followed by 22 zeros.

On page 58 he talks about the Dead Sea Scrolls. In these scrolls the Book of the prophet Isaiah is intact and dates to 125 B.C. Out of the 166 words in Isaiah 53, only 3 letters (one word) differ from the Massoretic text of A.D. 916. And he says on page 141 that Messianic prophecies in the Old Testament number in the 100s, showing the great need for a New Testament.

***Reliability of the Old Testament - importance of the Dead Sea Scrolls***

The Dead Sea Scrolls provide a glimpse of the amazing accuracy of the transmission of the text of the Old Testament through the millennia. The Dead Sea Scrolls are collectively composed of some 900 documents that contain, besides other religious literature, sections of the entire Hebrew Bible except for the book of Esther. The scrolls range in date from the third century B.C. to the first century A.D.

When these manuscripts were discovered in various caves of the northwestern region of the Dead Sea close to Qumran, a site most archaeologists believe was a community of Essene Jews, scholars wondered how many discrepancies would be found between them and the Old Testament text used for the translation of our modern Bibles, a text whose oldest copies date to the 10th century A.D. More than 1,000 years elapsed between the two versions. How well would they conform?

Incredibly, when the two versions were compared, researchers found that they uncannily matched—virtually word for word. For example, the Dead Sea Scroll containing the entire book of Isaiah, some 26 feet long, was compared to the 10th-century version of the Masoretic Text, which is the basis for our modern Old Testament. The researchers found it to match in virtually every instance.

Notes Bible scholar Gleason Archer: "Even though the two copies of Isaiah discovered in Qumran Cave 1 near the Dead Sea in 1947 were a thousand years earlier than the oldest dated manuscript previously known (A.D. 980), they proved to be word for word identical with our standard Hebrew Bible in more than 95 percent of the text. The 5 percent of variation consisted chiefly of obvious slips on the pen and variations in spelling…They do not affect the message of revelation in the slightest" (*A Survey of Old Testament Introduction*, 1974, p. 25).

This is the greatest contribution the Dead Sea Scrolls have made to biblical scholarship. They have confirmed the reliability of the Old Testament text we now possess in our Bibles. "Critical scholars," states Garry Brantley, "questioned the accuracy of the MT [Masoretic Text], which formed the basis of our English versions of the Old Testament, since there was such a large chronological gap between it and the autographs [original documents]. Because of this uncertainty, scholars often 'corrected' the text with considerable freedom.

"Qumran, however, has provided remains of an early Masoretic edition predating the Christian era on which the traditional MT [Masoretic Text] is based. A comparison of the [Masoretic Text] to this earlier text revealed the remarkable accuracy with which scribes copied the sacred texts. Accordingly, the integrity of the Hebrew Bible was confirmed, which generally has heightened its respect among scholars and drastically reduced textual alteration" ("The Dead Sea Scrolls and Biblical Integrity," *Reason & Revelation online journal*, April 1995, ApologeticsPress.org).

In fact, the Masoretic Text we possess today has been found to be more carefully transmitted than the Dead Sea Scrolls version! When compared, the largest Isaiah Dead Sea Scroll was found to have more spelling errors—and this is generally the case when comparing the Masoretic Text and the Dead Sea Scrolls.

***Reliability of the New Testament***

What about the New Testament text? How accurate is it?

First consider the number of New Testament manuscripts available today in whole or in part as compared to the number of manuscripts of the classical Greek and Roman writers. The late F. F. Bruce, professor of theology at the University of Manchester, stated about the number of manuscripts available for ancient historical works:

For Caesar’s Gallic War (composed between 58 and 50 BC) there are several extant MSS [manuscripts], but only nine or ten are good, and the oldest is some 900 years later than Caesar’s day. Of the 142 books of the Roman History of Livy (59 BC – AD 17) only thirty-five survive, these are known to us from not more than twenty MSS of any consequence, only one of which, and that containing fragments of Books iii-vi, is as old as the fourth century. Of the fourteen books of the Histories of Tacitus (c. AD 100) only four and a half survive; of the sixteen books of his Annals, ten survive in full and two in part. The text of these extant portions of his two great historical works depend entirely on two MSS, one of the ninth century and one of the eleventh. The extant MSS of his minor works Dialogus de Oratoribus, Agricola, Germania all descend from a codex of the tenth century. The History of Thucydides (c. 460-400 BC) is known to us from eight MSS, the earliest belonging to AD 900, and a few papyrus scraps, belonging to about the beginning of the Christian era. The same is true of the History of Herodotus (c. 480-425 BC).

We are talking here about no more than 2 to 20 manuscripts surviving today of all these classical works, the earliest being dated more than 1,300 years after the original manuscripts were penned. Yet no classical scholar would listen to an argument that the authenticity of Herodotus or Thucydides is in doubt because the earliest MSS of their works which are of any use to us are over 1,300 years later than the originals (1960, 15-17).

Compare the number of manuscripts of these classical works surviving to the available surviving manuscripts, whole or in fragments of the New Testament. More than 5,300 Greek manuscripts survive today. Some of these ancient manuscripts date from a just decades or just a century from the end of the New Testament canon by John the Apostle in the early to mid-90s A.D. Then besides the 5,300 Greek manuscripts there are tens of thousands of manuscripts of the earliest translations of the Bible. With all this mountain of evidence for the New Testament writings, in the words of Professor F.F. Bruce: “…if the New Testament were a collection of secular writings, their authenticity would generally be regarded as beyond all doubt.”

But there has been no book or writing whose authenticity has been more questioned and critically examined than the Bible. With the mountain of evidence supporting the authenticity of the New Testament as compared to the classical ancient Greek and Roman works, secular historians, not theologians, but historians have been much more willing to accept the authenticity of the New Testament. Most of those less ready to accept the authenticity of the New Testament have been theologians. That should give us a clue. These theologians have an agenda, which is to turn people away from the only true God and His instructional manual for mankind, the Holy Bible. That is their main business: to endlessly invent arguments in order to deceive people into believing that the Bible is inaccurate, and hence not God’s word; just as the theory of evolution has been beaten to dust, but its advocates still continue to spew forth trash on a daily basis in order to deceive humans.

Because of the never-ending criticism of these masquerading theologians, genuine Bible scholars have been forced to examine the evidence for the authenticity of the New Testament over the past century or so. They have done a stellar job of nailing the lies and accusations of these masquerading theologians. In the process our understanding of God’s word and the mind of God have been immensely enriched.

Here then is the opinion of genuine honest scholars of the New Testament. From the thousands of ancient copies or portions of copies known, 98 percent of the New Testament texts agree. The variations that do exist are mostly spelling errors or scribal additions that are easily discarded.

Here is how Wayne Jackson writing for the *Christian Courier* summarizes this evidence:

“The accumulation of manuscript evidence has been so vast and the work of the scientific textual critic so precise, that we may express complete confidence in the reliability of the New Testament text. While it is true that some minor manuscript variations exist, they are negligible.

“Westcott and Hort felt that the significantly debatable portions of the New Testament text could hardly amount to more than a thousandth part of the whole—the equivalent of a little more than half a page in the Greek New Testament (as stated in Henry C. Thiessen in *Introduction to the New Testament*; 1955, 77).

“Let me emphasize how impressive this fact really is. The New Testament documents have been in existence almost nineteen hundred years. For fifteen of these centuries they were replicated solely by hand. In spite of this, there are only some twelve to twenty significant textual variations in the entire New Testament, and none of these affect an important doctrinal matter.

“On the other hand, consider the works of William Shakespeare. These writings have existed less than four centuries (and since the invention of the printing press) and yet: [I]n every one of Shakespeare’s thirty-seven plays there are probably a hundred readings still in dispute, a large number of which materially affect the meaning of the passages in which they occur” (H.L. Hastings in *The Corruption of the New Testament. A Square Talk About the Inspiration of the Bible*. Boston, MA: H. L. Hastings, 1890, 13).

As the great text scholar Sir Frederic Kenyon noted after examining both the Old and New Testament texts (and it holds true even more so today), "The Christian can take the whole Bible in his hand and say without fear or hesitation that he holds in it the true word of God, handed down without essential loss from generation to generation throughout the centuries" (*Our Bible and Ancient Manuscripts*, 1939, p. 23).

*Two Types of Errors*

Two types or errors in transmission of texts can occur. One is the errors of transmission in the original languages; and the second is the errors in translations. The errors in translations can be easily examined and discarded by referring to the reliable texts in the original languages. One example of such an error is in Acts 12:4: “4 And when he [Herod] had apprehended him [Peter], he put him in prison, and delivered him to four quaternions of soldiers to keep him; intending after Easter to bring him forth to the people.” In this verse the word translated Easter is pascha, which no scholar disputes that it should be translated Passover. So “Easter” is a mistranslation. Genuine scholars can easily identify such errors from the original Greek texts and discard them. Many modern translations have already corrected this error.

Second type of error is variations in the transmission of the text through the centuries in scribal errors or spelling mistakes. We have examined the evidence for these types of errors and the evidence shows that there are no material errors that affect doctrine. Spelling errors can be easily discarded.

One such error is found in 1 John 5:7-8: “7 For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. 8 And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.” These verses are often cited in support of the Trinity doctrine.

The words “in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. 8 And there are three that bear witness in earth…” are a spurious addition to the inspired text.

Here is what Dr. Norman Geisler and Thomas Howe state about these verses in *The Big Book of Bible Difficulties* (2008, pp.540-541): "This verse has virtually no support among the early Greek manuscripts…Its appearance in late Greek manuscripts is based on the fact that Erasmus was placed under ecclesiastical pressure to include it in his Greek NT of 1522, having omitted it in his two earlier editions of 1516 and 1519 because he could not find any Greek manuscripts which contained it."

Theology professors Anthony and Richard Hanson, in their book *Reasonable Belief: A Survey of the Christian Faith*, explain the unwarranted addition to the text this way: "It was added by some enterprising person or persons in the ancient Church who felt that the New Testament was sadly deficient in direct witness to the kind of doctrine of the Trinity which he favored and who determined to remedy that defect…It is a waste of time to attempt to read Trinitarian doctrine directly off the pages of the New Testament" (1980, p. 171).

The inspired words of 1 John 5:7-8 in hundreds of the oldest Greek texts and now correct in many modern translations should read: "In fact there are three witnesses, the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three are in agreement" (Revised English Bible). These words refers to the witness of Jesus Christ being the Son of God and salvation possibly only through water baptism, acceptance of the sacrifice and blood of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of one’s sins, and then receiving the gift of God’s holy spirit to live a Christian life of overcoming sin.

So what is the lesson in all this for humanity! The masquerading theologians with all their Satan inspired diabolical cunning have questioned the authenticity of the Bible in every possible way. Genuine theologians have been led as a result to critically examine every aspect of the Bible themselves. They have compared the transmission of the Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek texts, and have critically examined the translated texts.

They have determined that most of the errors are obvious spelling errors and other slips of the pen which can be easily discarded. The remaining minor variations in the Old Testament texts do not affect the message at all. In the New Testament, after spelling and other obvious errors are discarded, the variations in question in the original Greek Texts amount to no more than half a page in the entire Bible. And these variations do not affect any doctrine at all. These mistranslations and spurious additions have been identified, critically examined and commented on. That is why genuine Bible scholars have concluded time and time again as quoted earlier: “The Christian can take the whole Bible in his hand and say without fear or hesitation that he holds in it the true word of God, handed down without essential loss from generation to generation throughout the centuries."

The authenticity of the Bible has been questioned in many other ways. Here are other ways the critics have been proven wrong.

***Bible and Archaeology***

Many critics questioned the existence of empires and individuals mentioned in the Bible. But the spade of archaeology has proved the accuracy of the Bible and its historical details. Archaeology proved the existence of the mighty Assyrian Empire and its capital Nineveh, existence of ancient Israel and its interactions with Egypt, existence of Bible personalities like Kings David, Ahab, Hezekiah, Manasseh, Jehu, Omri, Josiah, Uzziah, Zedekiah, many other kings and officials of Judah, Israel, ancient Assyria, Babylon and Persia. In addition, the existence of many New Testament personalities such as Anna the high priest, Caiaphas the high priest, Pontius Pilate, Herod the Great, Sergius Paulus and emperors of Rome has also been confirmed by archaeology.

The only conclusion we can draw can be stated in the words of archaeologist Nelson Glueck: "It may be stated categorically that no archaeological discovery has ever controverted a Biblical reference. Scores of archaeological findings have been made which confirm in clear outline or in exact detail historical statements in the Bible. And, by the same token, proper valuation of Biblical descriptions has often led to amazing discoveries" (*Rivers in the Desert: A History of the Negev*, 1959, p. 31).

***Bible and Astronomy***

A further proof of divine inspiration of the Bible is that it is in perfect harmony with the observations of astronomy. Theologians had endorsed the treatise by the sixth-century monk Cosmas...who...held that the world was a flat, rectangular plane... (William Manchester, *A World Lit Only by Fire*, 1993, p. 89"). But through observations and the use of mathematical tables, Polish astronomer Nicolaus Copernicus concluded that the earth is not a disk about which the sun rotates; rather it is a sphere revolving around the sun.

But the Bible had given an accurate description of the earth thousands of years before Copernicus’ discovery. In the oldest book in the Bible, about 3,600 – 3,700 years ago Job wrote: “He [meaning God] hangs the earth on nothing.” This was written thousands of years before astronomer and physicist Isaac Newton discovered the invisible laws of gravity that showed the earth truly is suspended "on nothing." Job knew this more than 3,600 years ago.

Some accuse biblical authors of believing in a flat earth because of the references to the "four corners" of the earth in Isaiah 11:12 and Revelation 20:8. But this is an expression that simply designates the four points of the compass. When we use the expression “four corners of the earth” today, we DO mean going north, south, east and west to gather information or search for something.

About 2,700 years ago, the prophet Isaiah wrote in Isaiah 40:22 that God "sits above the circle of the earth," showing that the earth was round. So by using the expression “four corners of the earth” in Isaiah 11:12, the prophet was not implying that the earth is a flat rectangular plane.

***Bible and Medicine***

Further proof of the divine inspiration of the Bible has been that it is thousands of years ahead of modern medicine. Research conducted by doctors of medicine and nutrition has provided many examples from instructions on prevention of disease and controlling infection, written by Moses more than 3,500 years ago, which if obeyed would have saved millions of lives from dread plagues.

During the time of Moses, Egyptian medical practices such as applying a salve of worm blood and donkey dung resulted in a gruesome death from lockjaw, rather than curing the wound. Egyptians believed that illness was caused by evil spirits. So they often used “magical” cures to treat illness. Moses was familiar with all this ‘wisdom’ of the Egyptians but included none of such cures in the Bible. Instead God through Moses provided instructions for preventing and stopping epidemics through cleanliness and hygiene.

For example, cholera spreads through the fecal matter of cholera victims. But God instructed Israelites in Deuteronomy 23:12-13 to bury or dispose off raw human sewage in order to prevent humans and animals from direct contact with it. This could have prevented all the cholera pandemics of the early 1800s. In addition, avoiding the practice of throwing garbage and sewage in the streets would have prevented the bubonic, pneumonic and septicemic plagues or the Black Death which destroyed one fourth of Europe’s population. The Jewish population avoided contracting these dread diseases because they practiced cleanliness as instructed in the Bible.

The simple instruction in Numbers 19:12-13 to not come into contact with another human being for 7 days after touching a corpse and to bathe at least twice in that period would have prevented all the deaths among pregnant women in 19th century Vienna. The simple example of the Good Samaritan in applying wine and olive oil to wounds would have prevented more than 50% of the deaths of soldiers in the American Civil wars. The reason is that the mixture of wine and oil acts as a disinfectant.

Doctors of medicine and medical researchers have also concluded that the dietary laws in Leviticus 11-15 protected Israel from bad diet, dangerous germs and vermin, and communicable diseases.

Only in the past 50 years has medicine discovered that animal fat is not good for us. Also blood of the animal carries all the germs in the body. But the Bible prohibited eating animal blood more than 4,300 years ago in Genesis 9:4 and animal fat about 3,500 years ago through Moses in Leviticus 3:17.

Doctors of medicine and nutritionists have also commented on the lists of clean and unclean meats in Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14. United Church of God booklet titled “*Is the Bible true*?” notes:

“Dr. Russell asks, "What is so good about 'clean' meats, and what is so bad about 'unclean' meats?" He explains that "the flesh of clean animals such as beef, and fish that have scales and fins, is ideal for the health of humans—just as we would expect from the hand of a loving Creator ... Many land animals God designed for food provide an additional benefit in that they generally eat grasses and grains that were also designed for food" (Russell, *What the Bible Says About Healthy Living*, 1999, pp. 73-74).

“In contrast, David Meinz summarizes the potential health risk of eating creatures the Bible classifies as unclean. "Almost all of the creatures on the unclean list are scavengers," he notes. "In many cases they don't hunt for their own food; they eat the dead and decaying matter of our environment. A catfish does that at the bottom of a pond; lobsters and shrimp do it in the ocean. A pig will eat anything. Vultures, almost by definition, are known for their scavenger habits" (Meinz, *Eating by the Book*, 1999 p. 225).

Dr. Russell notes that "the differences between clean and unclean animals appear to be related to their primary food source and to their digestive systems. Scavengers that eat anything and everything are not suitable for food, according to the Bible. Animals described as clean, and therefore good for food, primarily eat grasses and grains.

"... [But] note that an animal doesn't have to be a scavenger to be unclean. Horses and rabbits, for example, are unclean because they do not have split hooves. Although they are considered to be good food in some countries, studies have shown that horse meat often contains viruses and parasites. Rabbits, as innocent as they appear, are the cause of tularemia (an infectious disease) in humans.

"One reason for God's rule forbidding pork is that the digestive system of a pig is completely different from that of a cow. It is similar to ours, in that the stomach is very acidic. Pigs are gluttonous, never knowing when to stop eating. Their stomach acids become diluted because of the volume of food, allowing all kinds of vermin to pass through this protective barrier. Parasites, bacteria, viruses and toxins can pass into the pig's flesh because of over-eating. These toxins and infectious agents can be passed on to humans when they eat a pig's flesh" (Russell, pp. 76-77).

Don Colbert, M.D., adds: "Besides being gluttons, swine are also extremely filthy animals. They will eat garbage, feces, and even decaying flesh. All that is eaten usually becomes part of the pig's own flesh ... Aside from the diseases routinely carried by swine, pork is also a very fatty meat. The toxins in pork are held especially in the fat, which is not isolated from the meat as can be the case in lean beef, but rather, it is dispersed throughout the meat" ( *What Would Jesus Eat?* 2002, pp. 49-50).

The Bible contains many instructions on sexual purity. If sex was restricted to monogamous relationships always within the context of marriage as the Bible instructs, humanity would avoid all the scourges of Sexually Transmissible Diseases (STDs) and prolonged emotional pain and suffering. Children as innocent victims of broken marriages and relationships would also be spared the suffering.

The Bible also declares the virtues of a positive attitude in many places and that “a merry heart [meaning laughter] does good like medicine.” Researchers have confirmed that laughter reduces the risk of cardiovascular disease, and that depression increases the risk of dying from heart failure.

Do the health laws of the Bible have a foundation in medical fact? Rex Russell, M.D., writes: "As we look at modern science and nutrition, we will find that...there is an amazing overlap between God's original laws of clean and unclean and solid hygienic principles...Scripture and medical research agree that modern lifestyles lived without reference to God's laws and design shorten life and hasten death" (*What the Bible Says About Healthy Living*, 1999, pp. 14, 16).

All these discoveries of science were written in the Bible as sound advice for human health and well-being more than 2,000 to 4,300 years ago. So science has only proved that the Bible is scientifically accurate and has been thousands of years ahead of our time as a reliable guide for human living. Science, archaeology and observations of astronomy only confirm what fulfilled prophecy has proved that the words of the Bible are inspired by the only true Creator God.

To research this subject thoroughly, please refer to the United Church of God booklet titled “*Is the Bible True*?” available free of charge at www.ucg.org.

The Bible truly stands unique among scriptures of all religions. Many critical scholars have tried to refute its authenticity and put forward all kinds of arguments. Search the internet and you will find enough articles or writings attacking its authenticity. It costs very little to put out trash on the Internet.The devil has plenty of agents whose primary business is to deceive people in order to turn them away from God. It does not take much intelligence to figure out that questioning the authenticity of God’s word would be one of their top priorities. But all their arguments have been proved to be without merit. Bible has been proved to be more accurately preserved and transmitted throughout the centuries than any other book, religious or otherwise.

We have proved that the Koran, the Hindu Scriptures and the Sikh scriptures are not the words of God, because they are not backed by the power of God. But the Bible has provided irrefutable proof in terms of numerous prophecies fulfilled that it is inspired by the Almighty God. When the Koran claims that the Old Testament was corrupted by the Jews and the New Testament was corrupted by the Christians it is a diabolical lie told to Mohammad by the demon who was masquerading around as the archangel Gabriel. Muslims should examine the evidence that shows how carefully the Old Testament and the New Testament have been transmitted and preserved over thousands of years, rather than believe the lies told in the Koran.

Coming from Sikhism, just as the author rejoiced when he found the true word of God, all people, including Muslims, should rejoice that it exists and they may use it as a completely reliable instruction manual to live and order their lives.

**Chapter 15**

**Is There Only One God**

The Koran states and Muslims believe that the Jews altered the Old Testament whereas Christians altered the New Testament. We have proved these to be lies.

Islam also believes that there is only one God, the Creator and Sustainer of the universe. Therefore they argue that Jesus Christ cannot also be God. Islam believes that Jesus Christ was a mere human being though a great one, and miraculously born to Mary without a human father as Adam and Eve were miraculously created directly by God. But the divinity of Jesus Christ is central to Christianity, because He could not have been the Savior of the world if He was not divine.

Islam also holds the view that mainstream Christianity believes in a Triune God (also called the Holy Trinity) that exists as the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, which Islam rejects. God’s Church agrees with Islam’s view in this regard. We will also prove from the pages of the Bible that God is not a Trinity.

***Who are God the Father and Jesus Christ According to the Koran***

The Koran in [2.163] clearly says: “And your God is one God! there is no god but He; He is the Beneficent, the Merciful.”

[2.255] “Allah is He besides Whom there is no god, the Everliving, the Self-subsisting by Whom all subsist; slumber does not overtake Him nor sleep; whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is His…”

[3.18] “Allah bears witness that there is no god but He, and (so do) the angels and those possessed of knowledge, maintaining His creation with justice; there is no god but He, the Mighty, the Wise.”

The Koran quite clearly states the Islamic belief in many passages that there is only one God. In other verses it warns not to associate others equal to the one God. And it leaves no doubt about its belief that Jesus was just another human being but born miraculously, just like Adam was created directly by God. And the proof it offers is that He was sustained by physical food. Here are passages in the Koran that state this. These passages will also show how they are directed to attack the Jews and Christians.

[3.64] “O people of the Book (meaning Christians and Jews)! Come to a word that is just between us and you: that we shall worship none but God, and that we shall associate no partners with Him, and that none of us shall take others as lords beside God.”

Here the Koran makes it’s teaching clear that humans are to worship none other than the one God and not to make anyone else a God or Lord associated with the one God. Then the Koran addresses the status of Jesus Christ.

[3.59-61] “Surely the likeness of Isa [Isa is the Arabic name for Jesus Christ] is with Allah as the likeness of Adam; He created him from dust, then said to him, Be, and he was. 60 (This is) the truth from your Lord, so be not of the disputers. 61 But whoever disputes with you in this matter after what has come to you of knowledge, then say: Come let us call our sons and your sons and our women and your women and our near people and your near people, then let us be earnest in prayer, and pray for the curse of Allah on the liars.”

Here the Koran states that Allah directly created Jesus Christ from dust just like Adam and declares that as the truth and asks to pray for a curse from Allah on those who dispute this. Then,

[5.75] The Messiah, son of Marium [Marium is the Arabic name for Mary the mother of Jesus Christ] is but an apostle; apostles before him have indeed passed away; and his mother was a truthful woman; they both used to eat food. See how We make the communications clear to them, then behold, how they are turned away.

Here the Koran states that Jesus the son of Mary was a mere apostle, meaning merely human and cites as evidence the fact that they both ate food to sustain themselves. It further states:

[5.72-74] Certainly they disbelieve who say: Surely Allah, He is the Messiah, son of Marium; and the Messiah said: O Children of Israel! serve Allah, my Lord and your Lord. Surely whoever associates (others) with Allah, then Allah has forbidden to him the garden, and his abode is the fire; and there shall be no helpers for the unjust. 73 Certainly they disbelieve who say: Surely Allah is the third (person) of the three; and there is no god but the one God, and if they desist not from what they say, a painful chastisement shall befall those among them who disbelieve.”

Here the Koran states that those who say that Jesus the son of Mary is Allah or God are unbelievers to whom the reward of paradise will be forbidden. And those who say that Allah is the third person in the Trinity [which mainstream Christianity believes] are also unbelievers and will suffer painful chastisement, meaning in hellfire unless they desist from saying so. The Koran also says that Jesus Himself preached that the children of Israel should serve Allah, his Lord and their Lord.

[9:30-31] The Jews call 'Uzair [which scholars believe refers to Ezra the scribe] a son of Allah, and the Christians call Christ the son of Allah. That is a saying from their mouth; (in this) they but imitate what the unbelievers of old used to say. Allah's curse be on them: how they are deluded away from the Truth! They take their priests and their anchorites to be their lords in derogation of Allah, and (they take as their Lord) Christ the son of Mary; yet they were commanded to worship but One Allah: there is no god but He. Praise and glory to Him: (Far is Allah) from having the partners they associate (with Him).

Here the Koran attacks Jews who supposedly believed Ezra the scribe to be the son of God who did not die. The Bible does not even hint at any such thing about Ezra the scribe and is called the son of Seraiah. Then it attacks Roman Catholicism about its deifying monks such as Saint Anthony and Saint Patrick, whereas they were enjoined to serve only one God, because there is no other God than He.

Then in Sura 19 verses 30-33 the Koran supposedly quotes Jesus Christ concerning Himself:

[19.30] He said: Surely I am a servant of Allah; He has given me the Book and made me a prophet; 31 And He has made me blessed wherever I may be, and He has enjoined on me prayer and poor-rate so long as I live; 32 And dutiful to my mother, and He has not made me insolent, unblessed; 33 And peace on me on the day I was born, and on the day I die, and on the day I am raised to life.”

Here Jesus supposedly preached that He is a servant of Allah to whom Allah has revealed the New Testament and made Him a prophet. Then the Koran in verses 34-36 declares that it is not seemly that the one God should take a son to Himself.

[19.34] Such is Isa [or Jesus], son of Marium; (this is) the saying of truth about which they dispute. 35 It beseems not Allah that He should take to Himself a son, glory be to Him; when He has decreed a matter He only says to it "Be," and it is. 36 And surely Allah is my Lord and your Lord, therefore serve Him; this is the right path.”

Then the Koran makes further statements about placing other gods besides Allah in Sura 21 verses 19-29:

[21.19] And whoever is in the heavens and the earth is His; and those who are with Him are not proud to serve Him, nor do they grow weary. 20 They glorify (Him) by night and day; they are never languid. 21 Or have they taken gods from the earth who raise (the dead). 22 If there had been in them any gods except Allah, they would both have certainly been in a state of disorder; therefore glory be to Allah, the Lord of the dominion, above what they attribute (to Him). 23 He cannot be questioned concerning what He does and they shall be questioned.”

Here the Koran cites evidence for its statement that there are no gods besides Allah. It says that if there were other gods besides Allah, the universe would have been in chaos and disorder. But Allah cannot be questioned about what He does while others shall be questioned about what they do. The Koran continues in verses 24-29:

[21.24] Or have they taken gods besides Him? Say: Bring your proof; this is the reminder of those with me and the reminder of those before me. Nay! most of them do not know the truth, so they turn aside. 25 And We did not send before you any apostle but We revealed to him that there is no god but Me, therefore serve Me. 26 And they say: The Beneficent God has taken to Himself a son. Glory be to Him. Nay! they are honored servants. 27 They do not precede Him in speech and (only) according to His commandment do they act. 28 He knows what is before them and what is behind them, and they do not intercede except for him whom He approves and for fear of Him they tremble. 29 And whoever of them should say: Surely I am a god besides Him, such a one do We recompense with hell; thus do, We recompense the unjust.”

In these verses the Koran quotes Allah as saying that he sent apostles who all declared that there is no other God but Allah and derides those who say that God has taken to Himself a Son, meaning Jesus Christ as the Son of God. But the Koran states that they were mere honored servants of God who acted according to His commandments. It pronounces the sentence of hell on anyone who claims to be a god besides Allah.

The Koran thus makes the Islamic belief quite clear that there is only one God, and that God does not exist as the Trinity of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit, and that Jesus is not the son of God but only a prophet and apostle who though was created miraculously .

But what does the Bible say who God the Father, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit are?

***Who are God the Father, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit***

Understanding who God is is of critical importance to worshipping Him, for how can we properly worship a Being if we don’t know who and what He is. Without understanding who God really is, it is difficult to give Him the deep and proper reverence, respect, honor and the worship He deserves, and requires from human beings because it makes them respect His laws and commandments and obey them with their whole heart for their own good. Those who don’t have a deep reverence for God do not obey God’s laws. And any disobedience to God’s laws without fail results in pain and suffering automatically. So God requires that we worship Him because it leads to obedience to Him and His laws for our own good.

Here is what God’s Church understands about who God the Father, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit are from its booklet titled *“Fundamental Beliefs of the United Church of God*”:

“We believe in one God, the Father, eternally existing, who is a Spirit, a personal Being of supreme intelligence, knowledge, love, justice, power and authority. He, through Jesus Christ, is the Creator of the heavens and the earth and all that is in them. He is the Source of life and the One for whom human life exists. We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ of Nazareth, who is the Word and who has eternally existed. We believe that He is the Messiah, the Christ, the divine Son of the living God, conceived of the Holy Spirit, born in human flesh of the virgin Mary. We believe that it is by Him that God created all things, and that without Him was not anything made that was made. We believe in the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of God and of Christ. The Holy Spirit is the power of God and the Spirit of life eternal (2 Timothy 1:7; Ephesians 4:6; 1 Corinthians 8:6; John 1:1-4; Colossians 1:16).”

According to our beliefs, God the Father is the original source of all life, who is a spirit Being of supreme intelligence; and all knowledge, love; and all power and energy in the entire universe are His. He is without beginning and has always existed. All power and authority in the universe belong to Him.

This Supreme Being, now known as God the Father originally created one Being, originally known as the Word, or spokesman of the God Family. The fact that Jesus Christ is a created being is proved by Colossians 1:15: “15 Who [that is, Jesus Christ] is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature:” The NKJV renders this verse this way: “15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.”

If Jesus Christ before His human birth was the image of God the Father, it implies that God the Father must have existed before Him and the Word became His image.

Revelation 3:14 (NKJV) further proves that Jesus Christ was originally created by God the Father. It states: “14 And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things says the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God.” This verse states that Jesus Christ was the beginning of God’s creation, meaning that He was the first Being created by God the Father.

Jesus Christ said in John 14:28: “…my Father is greater than I.” So there is no doubt that God the Father is the undisputed Head of the God Family. Jesus further stated in John 5:26 (NKJV): “26 For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself.” If it was God the Father who gave life inherent to Jesus Christ so that He became the Self-Existent one, it means that God the Father gave life to Jesus Christ in the first place, long before anything else was created.

Jesus also said in John 8:28 (NKJV): “28 Then Jesus said to them, "…I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father taught Me, I speak these things. This is a clear statement that God the Father taught the Word everything before the Word created anything else. All these verses mean that Jesus Christ has not always existed with God the Father, but was created by Him.

This naturally raises an important question: “If God the Father is the Supreme God, then how can Jesus Christ be God? How can there be two Gods, one Supreme God and then another little God?”

***Is Jesus God?***

To answer this important question, we first need to prove from the pages of the Bible that Jesus is God. The fact is that Jesus was both God and man. When Islamic writers try to prove from the Bible that Jesus was a mere man, they are quoting verses in which Jesus Christ talked about Himself as a man on His time on earth. But they totally ignore all other verses in which Jesus and the apostles talked about His nature as God. They merely take a scripture here and there to prove a point while totally ignoring all other scriptures related to that topic.

Scriptures taken in isolation, out of their context can be used to prove many different things. But that is not truth as that belief would directly contradict many other plain scriptures. The correct way to research a topic is to study all the scriptures on the topic and then form one’s belief that is compatible with all the scriptures.

When Jesus came to earth, He gave up all His power, but not His divine nature and came as a physical man. So He was a mere man when He came to earth as Jesus Christ, but retained His divine nature. He retained His divine nature because God the Father gave Him the holy spirit without measure as stated by John in John 3:34 (NKJV): “For he whom God has sent speaks the words of God: for God gives not the Spirit by measure unto him.” God’s holy spirit is what imparts God’s divine nature to any being.

In Luke 18:19 Jesus said: “19 And Jesus said unto him, Why call you me good? None is good, save one, that is, God.”

Jesus in this statement told a ruler that no man is good. Only God is good. In this statement Jesus also implied that He was a man, which was a statement of fact that He was a man. In many scriptures He called Himself the “Son of Man.” Examples include Matthew 11:19: “The Son of man came eating and drinking…”; Matthew 12:8: “For the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath day”, and above 80 other times in the New Testament.

When we put these two facts together, that Jesus was a man, and that He told the ruler that man cannot be good and that only God is good, we may deduce that Jesus was a mere man and not God. That is precisely what Islam cites as evidence that Jesus was a mere man and not God.

But Jesus’ other statements and the writings of the apostles leave no doubt that Jesus was also God. Jesus boldest claim is recorded in John 8:58: “Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was I Am.” Jesus here was revealing His identity as the actual One whom the Jews knew as God of the Old Testament. He was saying that He existed before Abraham and that He was the same Being as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Who told Moses in Exodus 3:13-14 that His name was “I AM WHO I AM.” That’s why the Jews tried to stone Him for blasphemy.

Dr. Norman Geisler, in his book *Christian Apologetics*, concludes: "In view of the fact that the Jehovah of the Jewish Old Testament would not give his name, honor, or glory to another, it is little wonder that the words and deeds of Jesus of Nazareth drew stones and cries of 'blasphemy' from first-century Jews. The very things that the Jehovah of the Old Testament claimed for himself Jesus of Nazareth also claimed" (2002, p. 331).

Dr. Geisler goes on to list some of the ways Jesus equated Himself with YHWH of the Old Testament. Let's notice some of these.

Jesus said of Himself, "I am the good shepherd" (John 10:11). David, in the first verse of the famous 23rd Psalm, declared that "The Lord [YHWH] is my shepherd." Jesus claimed to be judge of all men and nations (John 5:22, 27). Yet Joel 3:12 says the Lord [YHWH] "will sit to judge all ...nations."

Jesus said, "I am the light of the world" (John 8:12). Isaiah 60:19 says, "The Lord will be to you an everlasting light, and your God your glory." Also, David says in Psalm 27:1, "The Lord (YHWH) is my light."

Jesus asked in prayer that the Father would share His eternal glory with Him: "O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was" (John 17:5 - NKJV). Yet Isaiah 42:8 (NKJV) says, "I am the Lord, that is My name; and My glory I will not give to another."

Jesus spoke of Himself as the coming bridegroom (Matthew 25:1), which is how YHWH is characterized in Isaiah 62:5 and Hosea 2:16.

In Revelation 1:17 Jesus says He is the first and the last, which is identical to what YHWH says of Himself in Isaiah 44:6: "I am the First and I am the Last."

There is no question, therefore, that Jesus understood Himself to be the LORD (YHWH) of the Old Testament.

***Miracles Testimony to Jesus’ Divinity***

Jesus adds, "The works that I do in My Father's name, they bear witness of Me" (John 10:25 - NKJV). The works He did were miracles that only God could do. His miracles are the most powerful testimony that He was God. No other man or founder of any other religion has done the kind of miracles that Jesus performed. But the Islamic writers say that Jesus Christ did these miracles by the power of God and also quote Jesus in John 5:30 where He states: “I can of mine own self do nothing…” So He could not be God. But they ignore the fact that Jesus Himself cited miracles as evidence that He was the Messiah or Savior of the world that was prophesied to come. They also ignore verse 28 of John 10: 28 And I give unto them [that is His disciples] eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.” Only God can give eternal life, proving that Jesus Christ was divine.

Then Jesus made another statement that incensed the Jews: "I and My Father are one" (John 10:30). That is, the Father and Jesus were both divine. Again, there was no mistaking the intent of what He said, because "then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him" (verse 31).

Jesus countered, "Many good works I have shown you from My Father. For which of those works do you stone Me?" The Jews responded, "For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy, and because You, being a Man, make Yourself God" (verses 32-33).

The Jews understood perfectly well what Jesus meant. He was telling them plainly that He was divine or a God being.

The Gospel of John records yet another instance in which Jesus infuriated the Jews with His claims of divinity. It happened just after Jesus had healed a crippled man at the pool of Bethesda on the Sabbath. The Jews sought to kill Him because He did this on the Sabbath, a day on which the law of God had stated no work was to be done (which they misinterpreted to include what Jesus was doing).

Jesus then made a statement that the Jews could take in only one way: "My Father has been working until now, and I have been working." And what was their response to His words? "Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath [according to their interpretation of it], but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God" (John 5:16-18). Yes, Jesus claimed Himself to be a divine Being, meaning God.

***Jesus claimed authority to forgive sins***

Jesus claimed to be divine or God of the Old Testament in various other ways.

When Jesus healed one paralyzed man, He also said to him, "Son, your sins are forgiven you" (Mark 2:5 - NKJV). The scribes who heard this reasoned He was blaspheming, because, as they rightly understood and asked, "Who can forgive sins but God alone?" (verses 6-7).

Responding to the scribes, Jesus said: "Why do you raise such questions in your hearts?...But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"—He said to the paralytic—"I say to you, stand up, take your mat and go to your home" (verses 8-11, NRSV).

The scribes knew Jesus was claiming an authority to forgive sins that belonged to God only. Again, the Lord (YHWH) is the One pictured in the Old Testament who forgives sin (Jeremiah 31:34).

***Christ claimed power to raise the dead***

Jesus claimed yet another power that God alone possessed—to raise and judge the dead. Notice His statements in John 5:25-29 (NKJV):

"Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live...All who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation."

There was no doubt about what He meant. He added in verse 21,"For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to them, even so the Son gives life to whom He will." When Jesus resurrected Lazarus from the dead, He said to Lazarus' sister, Martha, "I am the resurrection and the life" (John 11:25).

Compare this to 1 Samuel 2:6 (NKJV), which tells us that "the Lord [YHWH] kills and makes alive; He brings down to the grave and brings up." So Jesus made it quite clear that just like God the Father He can resurrect human beings to eternal life. Thus He made many statements claiming that He was God.

***Opinion of the Apostles***

Now look at the opinion of the disciples about Jesus’ Nature! They understood Jesus to be the Creator, Hence God!!!

Hebrews 1:1-3 states (NIV): “1 In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, 2 but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe. 3 The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word.”

Thus the book of Hebrews tells us that the Son or Jesus Christ is the Being through whom God created the worlds and who "sustains all things by his powerful word" (verse 3, NRSV). Only God could be the Creator of the universe and all things in it and also possess the power to continue to sustain it.

John confirms in John 1:1-3, 14 (NKJV) that Jesus was the divine Word through whom God created the universe. He writes: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made…And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth."

Paul states plainly in Ephesians 3:9 (NKJV) that "God ...created all things through Jesus Christ." He writes of Jesus in Colossians 1:16 (NKJV): "For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him."

The Old Testament presents God alone as Creator of the universe (Genesis 1:1; Isaiah 40:25-26, 28). When Christ’s disciples said that Jesus is the One through whom all things were created, they were clearly saying that Jesus is God.

Jesus claimed to be all that God is, and the disciples believed and taught it. They understood that Jesus was "the express [exact] image of His [God's] person" (Hebrews 1:3) and "the image of the invisible God" (Colossians 1:15), and that "in Him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily" (Colossians 2:9, NRSV).

They understood precisely who He was and still is from His own words and actions. There was no question in their minds. They had seen Him prove it time and time again. They would go to their martyrdom firm in this conviction.

Those who personally knew and were taught by Jesus, and who then wrote most of the New Testament, are thoroughly consistent with Jesus' statements about Himself. His disciples were monotheistic Jews. For them to agree that Jesus was God, and then to give their lives for this belief, tells us that they had come to see for themselves that the claims Jesus made about Himself were so convincing as to leave no doubt in their minds.

Matthew the apostle opens his gospel with the story of the virgin birth of Jesus quoting from Isaiah 7:14, "'Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,' which is translated, 'God with us'" (Matthew 1:23). Matthew is making it clear that he understands that this child is God—"God with us."

John is likewise explicit in the prologue to his Gospel. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God...And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:1, 14).

Some of them called Him God directly. When Thomas saw Jesus’ wounds, he exclaimed, "My Lord and my God!" (John 20:28). Paul refers to Jesus in Titus 1:3 and 2:10 as "God our Savior."

The book of Hebrews is most emphatic that Jesus is God. Hebrews 1:8, applying Psalm 45:6 to Jesus Christ, states: "But to the Son He says: 'Your throne, O God, is forever and ever.'" Other parts of this book explain that Jesus is higher than the angels (1:4-8, 13), superior to Moses (3:1-6), and greater than the high priests (4:14-5:10). He is greater than all these because He is God.

***Jesus accepted honor and worship***

Jesus demonstrated His divinity when He said in John 5:23 (NKJV): "All should honor the Son just as they honor the Father." Over and over, Jesus told His disciples to believe in Him as they would believe in God. He said in John 14:1: "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me."

In fact, Jesus allowed people to worship Him on many occasions without forbidding such acts, further proving that He was God, hence worthy of worship. A leper worshipped Him (Matthew 8:2). A ruler worshipped Him with his plea to raise his daughter from the dead (Matthew 9:18). When Jesus had stilled the storm, those in the boat worshipped Him as the Son of God. Matthew 14:33 (NKJV) states: “Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped Him saying, of a truth you are the Son of God.”

A Canaanite woman worshipped Him (Matthew 15:25). When Jesus met the women who came to His tomb after His resurrection, they worshipped Him, as did His apostles (Matthew 28:9, 17). The demon-possessed man of the Gadarenes, "when He saw Jesus from afar...ran and worshiped Him" (Mark 5:6). The blind man whom Jesus healed in John 9 worshipped Him (verse 38).

The First and the Second of the Ten Commandments forbid worship of anyone or anything other than God (Exodus 20:2-5). Barnabas and Paul were very disturbed when the people of Lystra tried to worship them after their healing of a crippled man (Acts 14:13-15). In Revelation 22:8-9, when John the apostle fell down to worship the angel, the angel refused to accept worship, saying, "You must not do that!...Worship God!" (Revelation 22:8-9, NRSV). Yet Jesus accepted worship and did not rebuke those who chose to kneel before Him and worship. This proves that He was also God in addition to being man.

Muslims should do their own research to prove that Jesus Christ is God rather than believing their scholars who quote a few scriptures to prove that He is not while ignoring numerous others that prove that He is and was the God of the Old Testament.

Jesus really left us no middle ground!!!

The renowned Christian writer C.S. Lewis observes: "You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God: or else a madman or something worse. You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to." (*Mere Christianity*, 1996, p. 56).

***How can a Little God like Jesus also be God?***

Now let’s get back to the question: “How can a little God like Jesus also be God?” The monotheistic faiths, Judaism, mainstream Christianity [which believes in the Trinity, according to which the one God exists as three God Beings, God the Father, Jesus Christ the Son and the Holy Spirit, which to them is a mystery they don’t fully understand], Islam and Sikhism believe that there can be only one God, who is supreme.

We should understand that the creator will always be superior to what he can create. Jesus Himself said that His Father was greater than Him. But here is how you can get over the notion Jesus is a little God by knowing how truly awesome a God Jesus Christ is.

You can do that by imagining that originally there was only one God, and that God was Jesus Christ. In fact, for about 4,000 years of man’s history that is what the world thought, except for a few prophets of God. Moses wrote in Genesis 1:26: "Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness…"

Throughout the first chapter of Genesis the Hebrew word translated "God" is Elohim, a plural noun denoting more than one being. So Moses knew that there was more than one God Being?

King David was a prophet of Israel and was inspired by God’s holy spirit as stated in 2 Samuel 23:2. He wrote in Psalm 110:1: "The Lord said unto my Lord, 'Sit at my right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool.'" David here is talking about two Beings being his Lords, showing the existence of two God Beings. He confirms the same in Psalm 2:7-12: "I will declare the decree; The Lord has said to Me, 'You are My Son, today I have begotten You. Ask of Me, and I will give you the nations for your inheritance, and the ends of the earth for your possession...Now therefore, be wise, O kings; be instructed, you judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and you perish in the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are they who put their trust in Him."

One can put one’s trust only in God and be blessed.

Daniel the prophet also talked about two God Beings. He wrote in 7:13-14 (NKJV): "I was watching in the night visions, and behold, One like the Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven! He [the Son of Man] came to the Ancient of Days [God the Father], and they [the angelic host] brought Him near before Him." Time and time again in the New Testament, Jesus called Himself "the Son of Man. “Then to Him was given dominion [rulership] and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom the one which shall not be destroyed."

Only God can have an everlasting dominion and a kingdom that can never be destroyed.

So though a few prophets knew of the existence of two God Beings about 2000 years after the creation of man, the Israelite population knew of the existence of only one God Being, their God of the Old Testament. And that God later came to earth as the God and Man Jesus Christ.

Did the Israelites have the notion that their God was anything less than an awesome God? They and the world around them which had experienced the incredible miracles God did for ancient Israel believed Him to be an all-powerful God worthy of all worship. They did not know that another God Being existed. In fact, Jesus Christ Himself said that He came to reveal the existence of the other God Being, God the Father in Luke 10:22 (NKJV): “…no man knows who the Son is, but the Father, and who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son wills to reveal Him.”

The God of the Old Testament was worthy of all awe and honor and worship. The Israelites knew that their God has existed for a time period which we can describe only as past eternity. So He possesses all the wisdom of the ages of man and spirit beings.

We know that all the spirit and material universe were created by the God of the Old Testament, whom we today know as Jesus Christ. Before beginning creation, He planned out the creation of spirit beings as well as the material universe.

He first planned out the creation of spirit beings. He possesses all the spirit or energy with which He could create the spirit world and the material universe. He possesses all the wisdom to conceive of the laws that would govern the spirit world and the universe, and the power or energy to sustain those laws.

Then He created the first spirit beings called the 24 elders in Revelation 4, 7 and 14. He planned out what these elders would look like, what attributes each would have and with what spirit essence they would be created. These elders are pictured wearing crowns of gold. No angel is pictured wearing a crown of gold. This means that the 24 elders have qualified to be called righteous and receive crowns of gold. They therefore must have existed before the angels and had been tested and tried. They must have existed for a very very very long time [perhaps billions, or may be trillions, or even greater number of years] to have qualified to receive crowns of gold.

Then Jesus Christ carried out the next phase of creation with His own power and energy: the creation of hundreds of millions, or possibly billions of angels.

Then Jesus Christ with His own power and energy created the material universe, which may be a few billion years old. He developed the laws of mathematics, physics, chemistry and biology to set in motion to govern the material universe. Laws of physics tell us that energy can be converted into matter and vice versa. All the matter in the universe has been created from energy. Jesus Christ as God possesses that kind of awesome energy. He possesses such an amount of energy that He converted a tiny fraction of it into mass contained in all the planets, stars and billions of galaxies. I hope you get a glimpse of how awesome a God Jesus Christ really is.

Jesus Christ then created humanity and the animal and plant kingdoms. Since He created humanity, He will always be greater than all of humanity put together, no matter even when tens of billions of human beings qualify to receive eternal life and power greater than any angel. Jesus Christ possesses all this power, abilities and wisdom to have created all these things.

And don’t forget. All the spirit and material creation is governed by laws which are sustained by Jesus Christ according to Hebrews 1:3 quoted earlier. And that too requires power. Jesus Christ possesses that kind of power to sustain the entire spirit and material creation.

What else distinguishes God from His creation? God has never sinned in thought or action. He has never violated His laws. Only two Beings in the entire universe can make that claim and probably no one else, possibly even including the 24 elders, will ever be able to make that claim. And those two Beings are God the Father and Jesus Christ.

Ultimately God the Father and Jesus Christ are going to make human beings who receive eternal life incapable of sinning because of the character they will have developed, the power and abilities they will be endowed with, but they will never be able to claim that they have never sinned, for every human being as a human being would have sinned. Angels have sinned. But God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ have never sinned. That is how awesome a God Jesus Christ is.

Here is how you can further understand how truly awesome the God Jesus Christ is. The general view is that all spirit beings, that is the twenty four elders of Revelation 4, and the angels have immortal life, that is, life-inherent in them. They never die. They are immortal. If that is so, then why did Jesus make the statement in John 5:26: "For as the Father has life in himself, so has he given to the Son to have life in himself."

Does this statement imply that though spirit beings like the angels have life that is not dependent on any kind of spirit food for sustenance and can potentially live forever, it can nevertheless be taken away from them by God and Jesus Christ? Or in other words, the spirit beings besides God the Father and Jesus Christ do not have life-inherent in themselves. They do not have life that can never be taken away from them. God the Father obviously is that kind of life. But God the Father has also given that kind of life-inherent to Jesus Christ. He is self-existent. There is not an iota of mistrust or even its possibility between them. Because of perfect harmony and oneness between them, God the Father has chosen to give that kind of life to Jesus Christ.

This also means that only God the Father and Jesus Christ can set creation in motion, either by creating matter, or supplying the spirit [or energy] that can be used to create matter. The 24 elders and the angels are never mentioned creating in that way. But there is the strong possibility that the twenty four elders and human beings made immortal, and perhaps God’s holy angels may one day in future eternity qualify to receive life inherent in themselves as Jesus Christ did.

There is one more characteristic that distinguishes Jesus Christ from His spirit or physical creation. He is truly one with God the Father in thoughts, actions and attitude. There is not an iota of mistrust between them. Jesus Christ as the Created One is in total submission to His Father. The Father can trust Jesus Christ completely so that He has granted only Jesus Christ in the universe to have life inherent in Himself. Jesus Christ prays to the Father that we all may become one with Him and the Father as He is one with the Father. This is mentioned in John 10:30 and 17:11. We are far from being there yet. That is how awesome a God is Jesus Christ. He is at one with the Father.

We hope you can understand how truly awesome Jesus Christ is in power, might and wisdom. He is not a little God, but a truly awesome God whose powers we cannot even imagine. But we will have an eternity to understand His mind and His powers as we learn to work with His material creation. As the Creator, He is and always will be greater than all His creation put together. That is why His life was worth more than all the creation put together, and why His death paid the penalty for the sins of all His creation. Thus we see that Jesus Christ has all the attributes that we can imagine a God should have, except that only God the Father is greater than Him.

**Chapter 16**

**Answering Muslim Scholars on Divinity of Jesus**

In the last chapter we have proved what Jesus Christ’s opinion was about His divinity and the apostles certainly thought He was God. But certain Muslim scholars take pre-selected Bible verses and try to refute the divinity of Jesus Christ. We will try to address their arguments and show that they are choosing a few scriptures to prove their point while ignoring many others that prove exactly the opposite.

From the website www.Islam-Guide.com here are some of Islam’s beliefs about God, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. The web site contains an article titled “*The Bible Denies the Divinity of Jesus Christ*.” The website states: This article has been taken from the web site of Br. Shabir Ally, *Islam Answers Back*, with some editing. It contains the following seven arguments which prove that the Bible denies the divinity of Jesus:

1) None of the Bible’s Writers Believed That Jesus is God

2) Evidence From the Acts of the Apostles

3) Jesus is Not All-Powerful, and Not All-Knowing

4) The Greatest Commandment in the Bible and the Quran

5) Paul Believed That Jesus is not God

6) Evidence from the Gospel of John

7) God and Jesus Are Two Separate Beings

Let’s address each of these arguments and show that this article takes quotations from Jesus and the apostles in isolation while ignoring all the other scriptures on the subject.

***1) None of the Bible’s Writers Believed that Jesus is God***

Here is what the Islam-Guide.com website says: “Christians and Muslims both believe in Jesus, love him, and honor him. They are, however, divided over the question of his divinity.”

The website continues: “Fortunately, this difference can be resolved if we refer the question to both the Bible and the Quran, because, both the Bible and the Quran teach that Jesus is not God.

“…many people misunderstand the Bible; they feel that the belief in Jesus as God is so widespread that it must have come from the Bible. This article shows quite conclusively that the Bible does not teach that. The Bible clearly teaches that Jesus is not God. In the Bible God is always someone else other than Jesus…the disciples never came to the conclusion that Jesus is God. And those are people who lived and walked with Jesus and thus knew firsthand what he said and did…If Jesus is God, surely they should know it. But they did not. They kept worshipping the one true God who was worshipped by Abraham, Moses, and Jesus (see Acts 3:13).”

Acts 3:13 states: “13 The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified His Servant [KJV translates it as Son] Jesus, whom you delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let Him go.”

“All of the writers of the Bible believed that God was not Jesus. The idea that Jesus is God did not become part of Christian belief until after the Bible was written, and took many centuries to become part of the faith of Christians.

“Matthew, Mark, and Luke, authors of the first three Gospels, believed that Jesus was not God. Mark 10:18 and Matthew 19:17 say: “18 So Jesus said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God.” The article continues: They [that is the gospel writers] believed that he was the son of God in the sense of a righteous person…

“Paul, believed to be the author of some thirteen or fourteen letters in the Bible, also believed that Jesus is not God. For Paul, God first created Jesus, then used Jesus as the agent by which to create the rest of creation…

The Muslim writer quotes Colossians 1:15, which reads: “15 Who [that is Jesus Christ] is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: 16 For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: 17 And he is before all things, and by him all things consist…”

The Muslim writer is right here. What this verse is saying is that Jesus Christ is the image of God and the firstborn of every creature. Someone who became the image of another being obviously means that the other being existed before him.

The writer continues: “Similar ideas are found in the letter to the Hebrews, and also in the Gospel and Letters of John composed some seventy years after Jesus. In all of these writings, however, Jesus is still a creature of God and is therefore forever subservient to God.” He refers to 1 Corinthians 15:28 which states: “28 Now when all things are made subject to Him [that is Jesus Christ], then the Son Himself will also be subject to Him [That is the Father] who put all things under Him, that God may be all in all.”

The writer continues: “Now, because Paul, John, and the author of Hebrews believed that Jesus was God’s first creature, some of what they wrote clearly shows that Jesus was a pre-existent powerful being. This is often misunderstood to mean that he must have been God. But to say that Jesus was God is to go against what these very authors wrote. Although these authors had this later belief that Jesus is greater than all creatures, they also believed that he was still lesser than God. In fact, John quotes Jesus as saying: “...the Father is greater than I.” (John 14:28). And Paul declares that the head of every woman is her husband, the head of every man is Christ, and the head of Christ is God (see 1 Corinthians 11:3).

“Therefore, to find something in these writings and claim that these teach that Jesus is God is to misuse and misquote what those authors are saying. What they wrote must be understood in the context of their belief that Jesus is a creature of God as they have already clearly said.

“So we see then, that some of the later writers had a higher view of Jesus, but none of the writers of the Bible believed that Jesus is God. The Bible clearly teaches that there is only one true God, the one whom Jesus worshipped (see John 17: 3).”

This writer agrees with the author that Jesus Christ was originally a created Being, the first one created by God the Father. He also agrees that all things were then created by God the Father through Jesus Christ, meaning that Jesus Christ did the further creating. We both agree that God the Father and Jesus Christ are two separate Beings and not part of one Godhead or one God Being existing as the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit or as a Trinity. We both agree that God the Father is greater than Jesus Christ as the Creator is always greater than his creation.

Where we disagree is our belief that Jesus is God also, meaning He is divine. As quoted earlier the Muslim writer wrote, “Matthew, Mark, and Luke, authors of the first three Gospels, believed that Jesus was not God.”

Why did the Muslim writer leave out John’s gospel here, which is part of the Bible? Because it clearly states that Jesus was God. Read it for yourself. He confirms in John 1:1-3, 14 that Jesus was the divine Word through whom God created the universe. He writes: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. [Did you catch that? John says ‘the Word was God.’ He continues to describe the Word further…]. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made…And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth."

This is what we are talking about when we say Muslim writers pick a scripture here and there to seemingly provide evidence for their belief, but blindly ignore all the other scriptures that are also in the Bible which directly contradict their belief. This is not an honest search for the truth.

One of the 7 proofs the Muslim author cites to deny the divinity of Jesus Christ is even titled “Evidence from John’s Gospel” that Jesus Christ is not God. But in all the scriptures cited from John’s gospel, the writer completely excludes the very first verse that says “the Word was God.” Please don’t allow dishonest Muslim or other authors to deceive you about the divinity of Jesus Christ.

The second proof the Muslim writer offers as proof that Jesus Christ was not a divine being is titled: “Evidence from the Acts of the Apostles.” The writer is referring to the Book of Acts here. But the actual deeds and the beliefs of the twelve original apostles are also described in the four gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John as well. Here is an incident concerning the twelve disciples described in John 20:24-28: “24 But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. 25 The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe. 26 And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. 27 Then says he to Thomas, Reach here your finger, and behold my hands; and reach here your hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing. 28 And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God.”

Did you catch that? Thomas, one of the original 12 disciples, in the presence of the other disciples called the resurrected Jesus Christ as his Lord, meaning Master, and his God. Thomas called Jesus God and Jesus did not rebuke him for it. Jesus did not need to correct him. The Muslim writer ignores this very relevant scripture in the proofs he offers that Jesus was not divine or God.

***2) Evidence from the Acts of the Apostles***

To prove that Jesus was not God, the Muslim writer titles the second proof as “Evidence from the Acts of the Apostles.” He writes:

“The Acts of the Apostles [meaning the Book of Acts] in the Bible details the activity of the disciples over a period of thirty years after Jesus was lifted up to heaven. Throughout this period they never refer to Jesus as God. They continually and consistently use the title God to refer to someone else other than Jesus.”

We have already refuted this so called evidence. Two of the 12 apostles, John and Thomas called Jesus “God” directly as quoted earlier from John 1:1 and John 20:28.

The writer further states: “In fact, the way Peter refers to God and to Jesus makes it clear that Jesus is not God. For he always turns the title God away from Jesus. Take the following references for example:

“God has raised this Jesus...” (Acts 2:32)

“God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.” (Acts 2:36)

“In both passages, the title God is turned away from Jesus. So why did he do this, if Jesus was God?”

We don’t dispute the fact that the Bible refers to God the Father and Jesus Christ as two separate Beings. But the Bible refers to both Beings as God Beings. John 1:1 clearly states: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”

John then continues in verses 2-3, 14: “The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made…And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth."

Why do Muslims find it so difficult to reconcile these passages in their minds? The reason simply is that the Koran says not to equate any other creature with Allah, and because Muslims blindly ignore the very first verse of John 1 that says “the Word was God.”

They find it difficult to reconcile in their mind the existence of two God Beings in the very beginning, before the creation of the Spirit and the physical worlds, one being a greater God and the other a lesser God.

Some Muslim writers claim that John wrote his gospel last and added things such as Jesus being God that the other gospel writers had not believed. It is true that John wrote his gospel last. His intention in writing his gospel last was to cover items that the other gospel writers had not covered. He was also the final one who canonized the New Testament and implied that nothing further should be added to the gospel accounts that he canonized and nothing more should be added as prophecy.

He stated in John 21:24-25 (NKJV): “24 This is the disciple who testifies to these things and who wrote them down. We know that his testimony is true. 25 Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written.”

John here emphasized that his testimony is true, and said that endless books could be written about the acts of Jesus Christ, but implying that there was no need to add further gospel accounts than the 4 canonized by him.

Then he stated in the book of Revelation 22:18-19 (NKJV): “18 For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; 19 and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.”

Muslims can claim that John added things about Jesus Christ that the other gospel writers did not believe, but the fulfillment of prophecies in the Book of Revelation is proof of the divine inspiration of what John the apostle wrote. Fulfillment of prophecy is proof that the words of those books are backed by the power of Almighty God. God thus backs up the truthfulness of what John the Apostle wrote.

The Book of Revelation is the last book John wrote. He had already written his gospel account earlier. God would not have used John the apostle if he was not writing what was the absolute truth in his gospel account. God provided His seal of approval for what John wrote by revealing prophecies in the Book of Revelation through him, and then backing up those words for the past more than 1900 years with His Almighty power by fulfilling the prophecies.

***3) Jesus is Not All-Powerful, and Not All-Knowing***

The Muslim writer titles his 3rd proof that Jesus Christ was not God as “Jesus is Not All-Powerful, and Not All-Knowing”. He writes:

“Christians and Muslims agree that God is all-powerful and all-knowing. The Gospels show that Jesus was not all-powerful, and not all-knowing, since he had some limitations.

“Mark tells us in his gospel that Jesus was unable to do any powerful work in his hometown except few things: “He could not do any miracles there, except lay his hands on a few sick people and heal them.” (Mark 6:5 - NKJV). Mark also tells us that when Jesus tried to heal a certain blind man, the man was not healed after the first attempt, and Jesus had to try a second time (see Mark 8:22-26).

“Therefore, although we hold a great love and respect for Jesus, we need to understand that he is not the all-powerful God.

“Mark’s Gospel also reveals that Jesus had limitations in his knowledge. In Mark 13:32, Jesus declared that he himself does not know when the last day will occur, but the Father alone knows that (see also Matthew 24:36).”

The Muslim writer is missing the mark here. When Jesus came to earth, He had emptied Himself of His divinity and all power and came as a mere flesh and blood human being. Paul the apostle states this in Philippians 2:5-7 (NRSV): “5 Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, 6 who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, 7 but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, 8 he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death— even death on a cross.”

This is what Jesus Christ was on earth as a human being. He had human limitations. When Muslim writers deny the divinity of Jesus Christ, they cite verses that describe the actions of Jesus Christ as a human being. But Paul states that before becoming a human being Jesus was in the form of God, meaning He was God, but emptied Himself of His divinity and took the form of a servant or slave and humbled Himself to die for the sins of mankind.

But then Paul describes what Jesus Christ became after His resurrection in verses 9-11 of Philippians 2: “9 Wherefore God also has highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: 10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; 11 And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

Paul is saying here that after His resurrection, Jesus Christ has again become the God Being He was before He became a human being and that every creature should bow before Him in worship as their Creator and only God is worthy of worship. This proves that after His resurrection Jesus became God again.

***4) The Greatest Commandment in the Bible and the Quran:***

The Muslim writer Shabir Ally titles his 4th proof that Jesus was not God as “The Greatest Commandment in the Bible and the Quran.” He then quotes Mark 12:28-32 when a teacher of the Law of Moses asked Jesus: “‘Of all the commandments, which is the most important?’ ‘The most important one’ answered Jesus, ‘is this: Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’” (Mark 12:28-30).

“Notice that Jesus was quoting the first commandment from the book of Deuteronomy 6:4-5. Jesus confirmed not only that this commandment is still valid, but also that it is the most important of all the commandments. If Jesus thought that he himself is God, why did not he say so? Instead, he stressed that God is one. The man who questioned Jesus understood this, and what the man says next makes it clear that God is not Jesus, for he said to Jesus: “‘Well said, teacher,’ the man replied. ‘You are right in saying that God is one and there is no other but him.’” (Mark 12:32).

“Now if Jesus was God, he would have told the man so. Instead, he let the man refer to God as someone other than Jesus.”

Again the Muslim writer is using one set of scriptures to show that Jesus referred to another Being as God and did not refer to Himself as God. And He also said that God is one. But this ignores the apostles John and Thomas referring to Jesus as God. The question of how God is one will be addressed later.

***5) Paul Believed That Jesus is not God***

The fifth proof offered for denying the divinity of Jesus Christ is titled “Paul believed that Jesus is not God.”

The Muslim writer then states: “In his first letter to Timothy, Paul wrote: “I charge you, in the sight of God and Christ Jesus and the elect angels, to keep these instructions...” (1 Timothy 5:21).

“It is clear from this that the title God applies not to Christ Jesus, but to someone else. What is more important, however, is to notice what Paul said about God in the following passage, which clearly shows that Jesus is not God: “God, the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see. To him be honor and might forever.” (1 Timothy 6:15-16).

“Paul said that God alone is immortal. Immortal means he does not die. Now, anyone who believes that Jesus died cannot believe that Jesus is God. Such a belief would contradict what Paul said here. Furthermore, to say that God died is a blasphemy against God. Who would run the world if God died? Paul believed that God does not die.

“Paul also said in that passage that God dwells in unapproachable light — that no one has seen God or can see him. Paul knew that many thousands of people had seen Jesus. Yet Paul said that no one has seen God, because Paul was sure that Jesus is not God. This is why Paul went on teaching that Jesus was not God, but that he was the Christ (see Acts 9:22 and 18:5).”

In making these statements the Muslim writer has completely missed an understanding of the very basis of Christianity. First of all there is no quarrel that Jesus Christ and God are two separate Beings. One is known as God the Father and usually referred to as God in the New Testament and Jesus Christ is referred to as Jesus Christ or Lord, but again the apostles John and Thomas called Jesus God. The Muslim writer also ignored what Paul wrote in Philippians 2:6 quoted earlier that states that Jesus Christ was in the form of God before He became a human being. Thus Paul believed that Jesus Christ was God before He became a human Being.

In fact Paul went further and identified the God of the Old Testament as Jesus Christ. He wrote in 1 Corinthians 10:1-4 (NIV): “1 For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers, that our forefathers were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea. 2 They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. 3 They all ate the same spiritual food 4 and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ.”

Yes the spiritual Rock or God that accompanied the ancient children of Israel was none other than Jesus Christ. Paul was not in any doubt that Jesus Christ was the God of the Old Testament.

David referred to the God of the Old Testament as Rock in psalms 8, 28, 31, 42, 62, 71, 89, 92, 94.

It is true that no one, meaning no human, has seen God the Father. Indeed except for a few prophets of the Old Testament such as Moses, Daniel and David, people of the Old Testament did not know the existence of God the Father. They knew of only one God of the Old Testament, and that God later came in the form of the human being Jesus Christ. In fact, Jesus Christ Himself said that He came to reveal the existence of God the Father to the rest of humanity. He said in Luke 10:22: “…no man knows who the Son is, but the Father, and who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal Him.”

The whole basis of Christianity is the death of Jesus Christ for the sins of humanity so that forgiveness of sin becomes possible. Only the sacrifice of the Creator could pay for the sins of all His creation. If Jesus Christ was a mere human being and not a divine being, meaning not God, then His sacrifice could at best be substituted for the life of one human being. But if He were God and the Creator of everything, then His sacrifice could substitute for the life of each and every creature. That is the very basis of Christianity which Muslims completely miss.

***6) Evidence from the Gospel of John***

The 6th proof offered by the Muslim writer is titled “Evidence from the Gospel of John.” The writer continues:

“The Gospel of John, the fourth Gospel, was completed to its present form some seventy years after Jesus was raised up to heaven. This Gospel in its final form says one more thing about Jesus that was unknown from the previous three Gospels — that Jesus was the Word of God. John means that Jesus was God’s agent through whom God created everything else. This is often misunderstood to mean that Jesus was God Himself. But John was saying, as Paul had already said, that Jesus was God’s first creature. In the Book of Revelation in the Bible, we find that Jesus is: “the beginning of God’s creation” (Revelation 3:14, also see 1 Corinthians 8:6 and Colossians 1:15).

Here again the Muslim writer is reading into scripture his own interpretation and not quoting John’s plain statement in John 1:1 that “the Word was God.”

The Muslim writer continues:

“Anyone who says that the Word of God is a person distinct from God must also admit that the Word was created, for the Word speaks in the Bible saying: “The Lord brought me forth as the first of his works...”(Proverbs 8:22).

The author has no quarrel with the Muslim writer about this interpretation of Proverbs 8:22 though chapter 8 appears to be a personification of wisdom rather than discussing the Word.

The writer continues: “This Gospel, nevertheless, clearly teaches that Jesus is not God. [Again, the writer completely ignores John 1:1 that says “the Word was God”]. If it did not continue this teaching, then it would contradict the other three Gospels and also the letters of Paul from which it is clearly established that Jesus is not God.”

Again, we have established from the writings of Paul which the Muslim writer ignored that Paul believed that Jesus Christ was the God of the Old Testament.

The Muslim writer continues: “We find here that Jesus was not co-equal with the Father, for Jesus said: “...the Father is greater than I.”(John 14:28). John tells us that Jesus cannot do anything by his own when he quotes Jesus as saying: “By myself I can do nothing...” (John 5:30).

Here again there is no dispute that the Creator will always be greater than His creation. So Jesus Christ will always be greater than all His creation put together and God the Father who originally created Jesus Christ will always be greater than Jesus Christ. But as far as Jesus Christ not being able to do anything of Himself was a statement that applied when He was a human being. But that does not mean that Jesus Christ is not God now, or that He was not God before He became Jesus Christ.

What we see here then is that the Muslim writer is simply picking scriptures that provide evidence for his one-sided statements about Jesus Christ mainly when He was a human being on earth, when He had emptied Himself of His divinity, while completely ignoring statements from the Bible that state Jesus is God.

***7) God and Jesus Are Two Separate Beings***

The 7th proof offered by the Muslim writer is titled “God and Jesus are Two Separate Beings.”

We in God’s Church are in complete agreement with this statement. But this does not mean that Jesus Christ is not also God. We have showed that the apostles John and Thomas directly called Jesus God. John identified Jesus Christ as the Creator of everything. Paul the apostle also did the same quite clearly in Ephesians 3:9 that "God ...created all things through Jesus Christ." He writes of Jesus in Colossians 1:16: "For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him." Paul along with the other apostles also identified Jesus Christ as God and the God of the Old Testament as already proved.

In the last chapter we conclusively proved that Jesus called Himself the Son of Man, because as Jesus Christ He was a flesh and blood human being. Because of humility, many times He spoke about Himself in His condition as a human being rather than as God. But other statements of Jesus Christ and His other actions left no doubt about His claim that He was the God of the Old Testament. We also proved that though Jesus Christ is a lesser God than God the Father, nevertheless He is an awesome God and has all the powers that we believe God should have.

*Crux of the Matter*

The Muslim writer has clearly been proved wrong when he says the Bible denies the divinity of Jesus. He leaves out passages that clearly stated the firm belief of the apostles John, Thomas and Paul that Jesus is God, and was the God of the Old Testament. He also leaves out Jesus’ own claim that He was the God of the Old Testament and quotes passages in which Jesus made statements in His condition as the flesh and blood human being Jesus Christ.

What then is the crux of the matter that prevents Muslims from believing the statements of the apostles and Jesus Himself about His divinity? First of all the Koran denies the divinity of Jesus Christ. Since they believe the Koran to be the truth, their minds are prejudiced against anything that contradicts the Koran. That’s why in their reading of the Bible they are only seeking statements that seem to agree with the Koran but ignore all other plain statements that contradict it, even though an explanation has been provided why the Muslim interpretation of those statements is wrong. They are merely quoting statements when Jesus in His humility referred to Himself as the Son of Man to describe His condition as a human being. They are ignoring His statements that described Him as the God of the Old Testament.

Prejudiced by the statements in the Koran that there is only one supreme God, Allah, the other mental barrier the Muslims are not able to cross is that there can be more than one God Being. As we proved in the last chapter, there are two God Beings. But one is the supreme God Being, God the Father, the original source of all life. But that God Being created another God Being, the Word who later came to earth as Jesus Christ.

What characteristics do we associate with God? First is the ability to create everything out of His own resources. The Bible reveals that the Word did that with His own spirit. Next is the ability to sustain the creation, including all the laws that govern the spirit as well as material creation. We have proved that the Word or Jesus Christ in fact does that. And finally, God keeps His laws perfectly. This means that God can never sin. Jesus Christ did that as a human being. That is why His sacrifice could pay the death penalty on behalf of His creation. He certainly did that as the Word before that. So Jesus Christ fulfills all the criteria we associate with God, again proving that He is God.

The Muslims thus need to cross the mental barrier that the Koran has put in their minds that there can be only one God. Yes there is only one supreme God. But there can be another awesome God who fulfills all the criteria we associate with the word God.

We have proved that the words of the Koran are not backed up by God Almighty as it has miserably failed our test of any past prophecies that have come true. But the Bible has passed that test with irrefutable evidence from secular history of fulfillment of past prophecies. So if you are searching for the truth, you cannot use the Koran for proof, and only the Bible must be used as proof. If the god Allah cannot give us proof that he is the Almighty and makes statements to contradict the Bible, then he is a liar, charlatan, counterfeiter and a diabolical deceiver.

Muslims should understand what the god Allah’s game is here. He is contradicting the Bible and accusing the Jews and Christians of having altered it to put doubts about its veracity. This way he is trying to prejudice the Muslims against the Jews and Christians. Then he advocates Jihad against them to convert them to Islam by force. So Allah’s diabolical game is to turn the Muslims into enemies of the Jews and Christians so that they fight and destroy each other. We will later reveal the true identity of the one who is masquerading around as ‘Allah.”

*How do we Reconcile Seeming Contradictions*

So how do we reconcile all these seeming contradictions: The existence of two God Beings; Jesus Christ being God, and yet a lesser being than God the Father when there can be only one Almighty God; and other Bible statements that God is one [Deuteronomy 6:4, “Hear, Israel! ADONAI our God, ADONAI is one God (Complete Jewish Bible). Other translations translate this verse this way: “"Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one! (NKJV); “4 Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD” (KJV); “4 Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.” (NIV)].

The key to reconciling all these seeming contradictions is Jesus’ statement in John 10:30: “I and my Father are one.” One can ask how God the Father and Jesus Christ can be one when they are two separate Beings? How can two beings or many beings become one? The answer can be found in other examples of oneness described in the Bible.

***How God the Father and Jesus Christ are One***

The very first example of oneness in the Bible is the union of a man and a woman in marriage. When God created the institution of marriage He said in Genesis 2:24: “: "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh."

In marriage two beings become one flesh. They still exist as two separate beings, but they have joined together to form one unit. They have become one family. They also become one as they produce children, adding to the family. For example, George Jones marries Sally Smith and become the one Jones family, but still two separate beings, Mr. George Jones and Mrs. Sally Jones. They then have children John Jones, Sara Jones, David Jones and Jennifer Jones. They are all separate human beings but all part of the Jones family. So now many have become one.

A human family is the clue to understanding how God the Father and Jesus Christ are one, though separate Beings. The word translated God in the book of Genesis in almost all places is the word Elohim. Genesis 1:26 states: “26 And God said, Let us make man in our image…” Here God is using the pronoun “us” to describe Himself instead of the pronoun “me”. This means the word God is a uniplural noun like the word family which includes more than one person. The English word God then does not imply just one Being, but more than one Being shares that common name as the family name Jones is shared by many in our example.

So God is a family name which at present is shared by two members. We identify these two members separately as God the Father, and the other member as Jesus Christ. Now John makes perfect sense when he said in John 1:1: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” That is how Jesus Christ and the Father are One. To make it easier to understand with our example of the Jones family, we could call God the Father as Father God and Jesus Christ as Jesus God, if we apply God as their last name. That is what Muslims and the Koran and other religions fail to understand, but is very clear when one studies the Bible very carefully.

The Bible provides other examples of oneness, the Church being one. The Catholic Church is one Church but has more than a billion members. In the same way a denomination of a Baptist Church is one Church with many members and the Church of God is one Church with many members.

Paul the apostle compared the Church to the different individual parts of one human body in 1 Corinthians 12:12-13 (NKJV). He writes: "For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit."

Paul here describes many individual members become one in a Church when they are baptized into the Church and receive God’s holy spirit.

Not only does the New Testament provide an example of oneness in the Church, but the Old Testament also provides an example of oneness in the ancient nation of Israel. Judges 20:1, 8-11 (NKJV) state: "So all the children of Israel came out, from Dan to Beersheba, as well as from the land of Gilead, and the congregation gathered together as one man before the Lord at Mizpah…So all the people arose as one man ... So all the men of Israel were gathered against the city, united together as one man." Here the entire nation of Israel came together as “one man” in unity and purpose to deal with a villainous act committed by men of the tribe of Benjamin. All these men were individual citizens of the nation of Israel. But they became one in unity and common purpose.

So these examples of oneness in the Bible and the uniplural noun Elohim teach us that the word God, like the words family, Church and nation, is a word for a single entity with two or many members. And that entity can add members and still remain one entity. So God in the Bible means the Family of God at present composed of only two members; Father God and Jesus God. But this family can and is destined to expand, as a human family can expand by reproduction.

The Biblical truth is that God is reproducing Himself through human beings to add many sons to His family. John the apostle described man’s potential to become sons of God like Jesus Christ in 1 John 3:1-3: “1Behold, what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knows us not, because it knew him not. 2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it does not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he [that is Jesus Christ] shall appear, we shall be like him [with a body composed of the same spirit]; for we shall see him as he is.”

John could not have made the potential of man clearer. Man’s potential is to become literal immortal sons of God as Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And when we become Sons of God, we shall be like Jesus Christ, meaning have a spirit body and powers like those of Jesus Christ. But before we can realize that potential, we must become one among ourselves and one with God as Jesus Christ is one with God, totally united in love, faith, direction, thinking, attitude and purpose.

In John 17 Jesus Christ prayed to the Father to accomplish this in God’s Church with the power of His holy spirit. Verses 20-23 (NKJV) state: “20 "I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; 21 that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. 22 And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: 23 I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.”

Yes, the purpose of all members of God’s Church is to become one with one another in unity, purpose, faith, direction and love, and then become one with God the Father and Jesus Christ as They themselves are one. That is how God’s family will have many sons or children, all united as one close knit family. And all of God’s family will bear the name God just as all members of the Jones family bear the name Jones. Man’s incredible potential is to become literal gods, as sons of God just as Jesus is God, and also Son of God. ***Son of man is a man. Therefore a son of God must be a God***.

Jesus Himself confirmed that He was divine and that is man’s potential as well. He said in John 10:32-35: “32 Jesus answered them, Many good works have I showed you from my Father; for which of those works do you stone me? 33 The Jews answered him, saying, for a good work we do not stone you; but for blasphemy; and because that you, being a man, make yourself God. 34 Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, You are gods? 35 If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken 36 Say you of him, whom the Father has sanctified, and sent into the world, You blaspheme; because I said, I am the Son of God?”

Jesus here quoted Psalm 82:6 to show that man’s potential is to be called gods, or become gods as children of God and affirmed that this scripture is the infallible truth and cannot be broken. Here Jesus also plainly said He is the Son of God. A Son of God has to be God.

We hope Muslims can now understand how God is one. It does not mean that there is only one God, but that more than one God Beings are one because they are one in love, unity, purpose and direction.

**Chapter 17**

**The Trinity is a False Doctrine**

Since man’s potential is to become Sons of God and divine members of God’s family, one can understand why the doctrine of Trinity is an invention of the Devil, because it limits the family of God to just 3 persons and denies that man’s potential is to become members of God’s family. This doctrine teaches that the one Triune God exists in three distinct Persons – Father, Son and Holy Spirit (sometimes referred to as “Holy Ghost”). But Trinity is a word that does not appear in the Bible. So this doctrine is not based on God’s word, but on human reasoning.

When Islamic writers find fault with Christianity based on this doctrine, their criticism is not of the Bible because it is not a doctrine based on the Bible. They are merely criticizing a doctrine invented by human beings by borrowing from the ancient paganism of Nimrod and Semiramis, and foisted upon mainstream Christianity by the great false Roman Church. God’s Church here agrees with Islam in refuting the Trinity doctrine.

We will not provide history of the Trinity doctrine and detailed proofs that this doctrine is false because the United Church of God publishes a comprehensive booklet titled “*Is God a Trinity?*” which is available free of charge at the Church’s web site www.ucg.org.

There are conflicts between what the Bible says and the Trinity doctrine. For example, when Christ died, the Trinity ceased to exist. Supposedly, only God the Father and the Holy Spirit existed. This is inconsistent with the coeternal concept of the Trinity.

Jesus Christ prayed to God the Father before His crucifixion. If God is just one Triune Being, then Jesus Christ was praying to Himself.

In Matthew 1:20 we read that Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit. And if the Holy Spirit is indeed a person, Jesus Christ should have been called the Son of the Holy Spirit. However, Jesus continually prayed to and addressed God the Father as His Father and not the Holy Spirit (Matthew 10:32-33; 11:25-27; 12:50). In the Bible Jesus is never called the Son of the Holy Spirit but the Son of the Father. This is clear evidence that the Holy Spirit is not a separate entity but was the agency or power through which the Father begot Jesus as His Son.

Because no one can adequately explain these problems, or how three distinct individuals can be one Being, the Trinity is called a holy mystery to make it appear credible.

***What is the Holy Spirit***

What then does the Bible reveal about the holy spirit?

In the Bible, the Holy Spirit is most often referred to as God’s divine power. In the Old Testament, Jewish scholars have never considered the Holy Spirit to be anything other than God’s power. For example:

Zechariah 4:6: “…Not by might, nor by power, but my spirit, says the Lord of hosts.”

Micah 3:8: “But truly I am full of power by the Spirit of the Lord…”

Even in the New Testament, the Holy Spirit is most often referred to as God’s divine power. For example:

2 Timothy 1:7: “For God has not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.” Here is how the angel told Mary how Jesus would be supernaturally conceived in her womb (NKJV): "The Holy Spirit will come upon you…and the power of the Highest," which "will overshadow you" (Luke 1:35).

Jesus began His ministry "in the power of the Spirit" (Luke 4:14). This was the same power that enabled Christ to perform many mighty miracles during His ministry. He told His followers, "You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you" (Acts 1:8 - NKJV). Thus in many places the Bible depicts the Holy Spirit as the power of God.

*Other attributes of the Holy Spirit*

The Bible describes the Holy Spirit in many other ways that demonstrate that it is not a divine person. The UCG booklet “Is God a Trinity” states on pp 55-56:

“The Holy Spirit is spoken of in many ways that demonstrate that it is not a divine person. For example, it is referred to as a gift (Acts:10:45; 1 Timothy:4:14) that God gives without limit (John:3:34, NIV). We are told that the Holy Spirit can be quenched (1 Thessalonians:5:19), that it can be poured out on people (Acts:2:17, 33), and that we are baptized with it (Matthew:3:11).

“People can drink of it (John:7:37-39), partake of it (Hebrews:6:4) and be filled with it (Acts:2:4; Ephesians:5:18). The Holy Spirit also renews us (Titus:3:5) and must be stirred up within us (2 Timothy:1:6). These impersonal characteristics are certainly not attributes of a person or personal being!

“The Spirit is also described by other designations—"the Holy Spirit of promise," "the guarantee of our inheritance" and "the spirit of wisdom and revelation" (Ephesians:1:13-14, 17)—that show it is not a person.

“In contrast to God the Father and Jesus Christ, who are consistently compared to human beings in Their form and shape, the Holy Spirit is consistently represented, by various symbols and manifestations, in a completely different manner—such as breath (John:20:22), wind (Acts:2:2), fire (verse 3), water (John:4:14; 7:37-39), oil (Psalm:45:7; compare Acts:10:38; Matthew:25:1-10), a dove (Matthew:3:16) and an "earnest," or down payment, on eternal life (2 Corinthians:1:22; 5:5; Ephesians:1:13-14, KJV).

“To say the least, these depictions are difficult to understand if the Holy Spirit is a person!

“In Matthew:1:20 we find further proof that the Holy Spirit is not a distinct entity, but God's divine power. Here we read that Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit. However, Jesus continually prayed to and addressed God the Father as His Father and not the Holy Spirit (Matthew:10:32-33; 11:25-27; 12:50). He never represented the Holy Spirit as His Father! Clearly, the Holy Spirit was the agency or power through which the Father begot Jesus as His Son—not a separate person or being altogether.”

*Teaching of the Apostles about the Holy Spirit*

 Even the writings of the apostles Paul and Peter do not show the holy spirit to be a person. Paul's standard greeting in his letters to the churches is "Grace to you and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." In each of his greetings he never mentions the Holy Spirit. Peter also does not include the holy spirit in greetings in both his epistles. This would be an astonishing oversight if the holy spirit was indeed a person or entity coequal with God the Father and Christ.

Paul states that "there is one God, the Father… and one Lord Jesus Christ …" (1 Corinthians 8:6). He makes no mention of the Holy Spirit as a divine person.

1 John 1:3 tells us, "truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ." Thus the apostle John also does not mention the Holy Spirit in our fellowship with God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ.

Jesus also never spoke of the Holy Spirit as a divine third person. He spoke only of the relationship between God the Father and Himself as in Matthew 26:39 where He prayed to the Father: “O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me: nevertheless not as I will, but as You will.” Other verses that describe their relationship are Mark 13:32; 15:34; John 5:18, 22; etc. The Holy Spirit as a person is conspicuously absent from Christ's relationship with God.

We should also consider that, in visions of God's throne recorded in the Bible, although the Father and Christ are seen, the Holy Spirit is never seen (Acts 7:55-56; Daniel 7:9-14; Revelation 4-5; 7:10). Jesus is repeatedly mentioned as being at the right hand of God, but no one is mentioned as being at the Father's left hand. Nowhere are three divine persons pictured together in the Scriptures.

Even in the final book of the Bible (and the last to be written), the Holy Spirit as a divine person is absent from its pages. The book describes "a new heaven and new earth" (Revelation 21:1) wherein "the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them" (verse 3). Christ, the Lamb of God, is also present (verse 22). The Holy Spirit, however, is again absent—another oversight that cannot be explained if this Spirit is the third person of a triune God.

Those who adhere to the trinity doctrine use two small passages in support of this doctrine. One is I John 5:7. It reads: “For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.” These words are a spurious addition to the Latin Vulgate translation of the Bible in the early fourth century, during the heat of the controversy between the Roman Catholic Church and a Dr. Arius of Alexandria. They do not appear in any of the older Greek manuscripts or in other modern English translations. Bible commentaries explain that these words were never written by the apostle John.

The second passage used in support of the Trinity doctrine is Matthew 28:19 (NKJV), “19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in [the Greek word used here is *eis* which means into] the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit…”

*Jamieson Fauset Brown* commentary states: “baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost--It should be, "into the name"; as in 1 Corinthians 10:2, "And were all baptized unto (or rather 'into') Moses"; and Galatians 3:27, "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ."

This passage is not a description of the nature of God, existing as 3 named persons. It is a comment on the process of becoming disciples by baptism after conversion. And three names are involved in the process. The three do not have to be names of persons and are not. Buildings, mountains, hills etc are named but are not persons.

The process of becoming disciples was described by Peter in Acts 2:38 (NKJV), “38 Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

Therefore Matthew 28:19 is stating that 3 named entities are involved in making disciples which process is completed by baptism. At baptism we enter into a covenant relationship with God (that is God the Father and Jesus Christ). We enter into that relationship by first repenting of our sins, and it is the goodness of God (God the Father and Jesus Christ) that leads us to repentance (Romans 2:4). After we are led to repentance and have decided to enter into a covenant relationship with God by being baptized, our sins must first be forgiven. That is possible only through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. After our sins have been forgiven which is symbolized by burial of our old self in a ‘watery grave’ at baptism by immersion in water, we are resurrected to a new life when we come out of the watery grave. But baptism itself does not impart us God’s divine nature. God’s divine nature comes only by God’s holy spirit. God gives it to us after the laying on of the hands of a God’s true minister and prayer for us to receive the holy spirit. God imparts to us the seed of His divine nature by giving us an earnest or down payment of His holy spirit. Then that seed must grow in us through spiritual development until Christ is fully formed in us (Galatians 4:19 (NIV), “19 My dear children, for whom I am again in the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you.” )

Thus Matthew 28:19 is not providing us 3 names of God Beings existing as a Trinity (or a Triune God) but is describing the process of becoming Jesus’ disciples in which God the Father, Jesus Christ and the holy spirit are fully involved. At baptism we are begotten children of God through the holy spirit and will be born as literal children after we have fully grown (Ephesians4:13, “13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.”) through spiritual development.

Clearly, the holy spirit, from the evidence found in the Bible, is not a person in a supposed Trinity. Unfortunately, this unbiblical doctrine obscures the biblical truth that God is a family—a family which is the ultimate destiny of every human being unless they disqualify themselves! Man’s ultimate potential is to become members of God’s family as His literal, immortal Sons, inherit and rule the universe with Him.

**Chapter 18**

**Why God Created Mankind**

So far we have answered 3 main beliefs of Islam about Christianity:

1) Muslims regard the Bible as holy scripture. But they believe that the Bible as we have it today has been altered, hence corrupted, but not completely.

2) Islam believes that there is only one God, the Creator and Sustainer of the universe. Islam also holds the view that Christianity believes in a Triune God that exists as the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, which Islam rejects.

3) Since Islam believes there is only one God, therefore Jesus Christ cannot be divine, meaning that Jesus Christ was not God. But the divinity of Jesus Christ is central to Christianity, because He could not have been the Savior of the world if He was not divine.

The fourth widely held Muslim belief is that Jesus did not die on the cross, but God made it appear that way to people. Furthermore, since Jesus did not die on the cross, He was not resurrected. The Quran instead says that Jesus ascended to Heaven and did not die on the cross.

But fundamental to Christianity is the belief that Jesus was crucified and died on the cross to bear the sins of all of humanity, but was resurrected and now as High Priest is human beings’ advocate with the Father.

***God’s Purpose in Creating Mankind***

To understand why the crucifixion, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ are crucial to God’s plan for man, we must first understand briefly what God’s purpose in creating humanity was. We will appreciate God’s purpose if we understand the history of the universe before man’s creation.

**HISTORY OF THE UNIVERSE BEFORE MAN’S CREATION**

[This history is described in the author’s book titled “*Satan vs God: From the Beginning to the Flood*” Volume 1. The Bible is the basis for this history].

In the very beginning of everything only one Supreme God Being existed. That God Being we know as God the Father. This is one Being who has always existed. All power in the universe literally belongs to Him. And literally everything has come from His body if we can put it that way.

God the Father originally thought through everything and planned all creation. He chose first to create just one Being with incredible powers like His own. That Being was originally known as the Word, but later came to earth as Jesus Christ. Then the honor of creating everything was given to the Word.

*How God and the Word Lived*

God the Father determined that the only way He could have a loving relationship with other beings would be to create intelligent beings similar to Himself. It was absolutely essential for Him to give them “free will” or ‘free moral agency.’ They could choose to live according to His way of life, or choose to live any other way they wished.

Without ‘free will’ God’s creatures would be mere robots, programmed to behave in a particular way. The kind of deeply satisfying, happy and joyful relationship human beings can have with their own children or other human beings is not possible with any other creatures made of matter, be they trees, birds, fish or any kind of animals such as dogs or cats, no matter how loving or loyal the animal might be. Relationship between animals is an animal plane relationship. It is not a human level relationship, or a God plane relationship.

Humans have animal-like bodies, but a human spirit imparted to them by God which gives them human intellect or intelligence, which is the power to think, the “mind power,” which animals don’t possess. Paul explains that “spirit in man” in 1 Corinthians 2:9-12.

Human intellect, similar to God’s intellect makes a personal relationship possible among human beings as well as between God and man, which is a much higher plane relationship than the animal level relationship.

So God planned to create intelligent beings that would love Him of their own free will and choose to obey Him.

To truly know God, one must know what His character is! The character of both God the Father and Jesus Christ the Son is that of spiritual holiness, righteousness and absolute perfection, which can be summed by one word: LOVE, which is defined as outgoing concern for the welfare of others. It can also be called the way of “giving” instead of “getting”, the way of sharing, helping and serving. God’s nature includes the attributes of PEACE, HARMONY, JUSTICE, MERCY, COMPASSION, HAPPINESS AND JOY towards all those He has created. It is a way devoid of coveting, lust, greed, vanity, selfishness, envy, jealousy, resentment, bitterness, hatred, competition, strife, violence and destruction.

God the Father and the Word lived this way of life of LOVE, with total agreement with one another ever since the Word was created for practically the past eternity. But it is also a principle of God’s way that when two walk together, one has to be the head and in control for there to be harmony and peace in the relationship. One has to be the leader. God the Father was the head.

The results of living this way for eternity were perfect cooperation, peace, harmony, joy, happiness and most important of all, tremendous accomplishment. They made this way of life a LAW, a code of conduct or relationship between God the Father and the Word.

*God’s Next Phase of Creation*

When God’s small project of creation, that of the Word, proved to be perfect and a total success, He and the Word then proceeded with the next phase of Their creation.

Their next phase of creation was probably the creation of 24 elders mentioned in Revelation 4:1-4, 6-11. These verses show that the twenty four elders wear crowns and sit on thrones. Jesus Christ also is pictured in Revelation 19:12 as wearing many crowns. And God the Father and Jesus Christ sit on thrones.

No angels are pictured as wearing crowns, or sitting on thrones, except for Lucifer who was given a crown and a throne to sit on as ruler over the earth. If the twenty four elders were created at the same time as the angels, it is difficult to imagine that the twenty four elders qualified to sit on thrones and wear crowns, but none of the angels (except Lucifer), including the archangels Gabriel and Michael, qualified to wear crowns and sit on thrones. This indicates that the twenty four elders were likely created before the angels were created.

After the twenty four elders were created, they were taught God’s way of life and His laws. Of their own free will, they learnt to love, respect and honor their Creators, God the Father and the Word. Living that way of life produced perfect harmony, peace and abundant joy for the Creators and the twenty four elders. They also learnt about God’s method of government.

*Creation of Angels*

After the 24 elders proved to God that they had thoroughly learnt His way of life and His laws, were convinced that it was the best way to live a happy, peaceful and joyous life, and would always live the way of love, God the Father and the Word decided to proceed with the next phase of their creation plan. They decided to create many more beings: hundreds of millions, or perhaps billions of angels.

In this phase of creation, God for the first time decided to create variety, for all angels don’t look alike and they are not created equal. Some angels have higher rank than others with differing responsibilities.

*The Material Creation*

The angels also went through the same learning process as the 24 elders. When God and the Word were convinced that the angels were perfectly trained in God’s way of life of Love, His laws, and His government, they began sharing their future creation plan with the angels. They then implemented the plan, which was the creation of the material universe. That is what is described in Genesis 1:1: “In the beginning God created the heaven[s] and the earth.”

When the angels saw the beauty of the earth, they were incredibly thrilled and shouted for joy as stated in Job 38:4.

Then God chose a pioneering party of one-third of all the angels to rule the earth with Lucifer, an angel of the highest rank to be ruler over them to administer God’s government on earth. Lucifer had proved himself thoroughly capable of administering God’s government through his training and testing at God’s universe ruling headquarters.

Here now was an opportunity for the angels to own something and work with it for eternity. In heaven, they lived under God’s government. But now they could plan out their own creation and rule over it, just as God the Father and the Word had done as a pattern for them to follow. With this opportunity the angels could prove themselves and qualify to become creators and rulers in the entire universe on their own.

Archaeologists, geologists and paleontologists have unearthed fossils that give us an idea of what appears to be the plant and animal world created by the angels under Lucifer’s rule. That is the world we know as the dinosaur world.

That world was not created in a few short years. According to the U.S. Geological Survey the earth is approximately 4.54 billion years old. This means that the Dinosaur world could have been the result of billions of years of learning and creating by the angels under Lucifer’s rule.

For perhaps billions of years Lucifer and the angels lived God’s way of life and Lucifer administered God’s government on earth. But at some point in time Lucifer began to entertain thoughts of doing things his own way; ways that were different from God’s way of LOVE, the way of outgoing concern for the welfare of others equal to one’s own welfare, the way of sharing, caring and cooperation. He felt the way of competition would be better as it would be an incentive to excel for greater accomplishment. He thought it would be better to serve the SELF to maximize one’s own pleasure.

Ezekiel 28:15-17 states: “You [Satan] were perfect in your ways from the day that you were created, till iniquity was found in you.” [This verse makes it clear that rebellion of the angels did not originate with the other angels, but with Lucifer himself.] Continue in verses 17: “Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty, you have corrupted your wisdom by reason of your brightness…”

These verses reveal that Lucifer’s heart was lifted up with pride, and because of his incredible beauty, brightness, talents and wisdom vanity seized him. He began to think he could do things better than God. This led to wrong reasoning which corrupted his wisdom.

Such thoughts were violations of God’s law of LOVE for their Creator and fellow-brings. This iniquity began to manifest itself in what Lucifer and the angels with him began to create: carnivores that would devour other creatures and for their entire creation ‘survival of the fittest’ would be a way of life.

*Satan’s Rebellion*

God allowed Lucifer and the angels with him to continue their experiments in creation and govern it the way they liked and show God their alternate way of life.

With time Lucifer’s thinking became more and more perverted, until ultimately he decided to rebel against God, depose Him, take over His throne and become ruler of the universe himself as stated in Isaiah 14:12-14.

When all the angels under Lucifer were aboard the decision to rebel against God the Father and the Word, they rose up from the earth and stormed heaven. This is indicated by Jude 6: “And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation…”

However, Lucifer and his angels were unsuccessful in their rebellion. While they fought in heaven, some of them probably went on a rampage throughout the universe in fits of rage and frustration. We see the evidence in craters over the surfaces of all planets and astral bodies we can see around the universe. That is how Lucifer – son of the morning, the light bringer – became Satan the devil and the angels with him became demons.

Then God decided to put an end to this rampage by Satan and the demons. He blasted Satan and the rebelling angels back to earth from heaven, or wherever they were in the universe. This is indicated in Luke 10:18: “And he [Jesus Christ] said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.”

The result of Satan’s rebellion on the earth is described in Genesis 1:2: “And the earth was [better translation is ‘became’] without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep.”

*God’s Plan for the Creation of Man*

When God saw the debacle caused by Satan’s rebellion, He realized that the angels could not be relied upon to always obey His laws and live according to His way of life under all circumstances. A super being, created by God, had rebelled against Him, transgressed His laws and sinned, for ‘sin is the transgression of the law’ (I John 3:4.) That left only God the Father Himself, and the Word (who also was God, as a second member of the God family) who would not and cannot sin. Only they could be absolutely relied upon to never sin. So the only way God could fulfill His purpose for the entire universe was to reproduce Himself. God and the Word had already devised a plan to do exactly that.

What Satan and the demons demonstrated by their rebellion is that they had not learnt the lesson that only God’s way of LOVE works for the welfare of every creature, and it requires godly character to live that way of LOVE. God and the Word saw that Satan and the demons lacked god’s holy righteous character. That is one quality that even God with His creative powers cannot create instantly by fiat because it requires the free choice and decision of the separate entity in whom it is to be created to allow God to create it.

Mr. Armstrong writes in his book *Mystery of the Ages*: “Prefect, holy and righteous character is the ability in such separate entity to come to discern the true and right way from the false, to make voluntarily a full and unconditional surrender to God and his perfect way – to yield to be conquered by God – to determine even against temptation or self-desire, to live and to do the right. And even then such holy character is the gift of God. It comes by yielding to God to instill HIS LAW (God’s right way of life) within the entity who so decides and wills.”

Since free choice of the being in whom godly character is to be developed is required, it means that God cannot create His perfect character by fiat or decree. It must be developed over a period of time by God working with the intelligent being, with the free choice and agreement of the intelligent being to let God work with him.

In their next phase of creation, God and the Word’s plan would include the development of godly character like their own in the intelligent creatures they would create. Godly character would ensure that these intelligent creatures would obey Their laws, and live Their way of life of LOVE for God and love and outgoing concern for their fellow intelligent beings, and would never rebel against Their rule. Their new creatures needed to learn some vital lessons, and God and the Word devised a plan to teach them those lessons.

The first lesson God wanted His new creatures to learn was that they would always be totally dependent upon Him. Jesus Christ is the only Being who is self-existent, that is with life-inherent in Himself (John 5:26). And that gift was granted to Him after practically a past eternity of developing total and complete faith and trust in God the Father. The new creatures (or man) needed to learn that God gives them everything that sustains their lives. Lucifer and the angels with him had not learnt that lesson. They did not need any kind of food, spirit energy or anything else for their existence. So they thought they could live independently of God. The way God planned to impart this lesson to humans was to create them as vulnerable physical beings rather than spirit beings. They would be dependent on food, water and air to sustain them.

Human beings in growing up are subject to the same type of vanity that manifested itself in Lucifer. But they eventually learn the lesson through old age that the cause of their vanity, good looks, superior intelligence, success and material possessions or anything else, eventually fades away. In old age they are barely able to exercise much control over their own bodies and then they die. Material possessions are no longer of any value to them. They eventually learn the lesson in humility and realize how vulnerable and totally dependent they really are on God.

The second lesson God wanted His new creature to learn was that rebellion against Him would always be futile, and end in utter and total defeat. That lesson will be brought home to man by extinguishing the lives of the rebellious forever in the lake of fire, if they refuse to repent. That way the living will learn the lesson for eternity that God is Almighty and can always solve the problem of rebellion by extinguishing the lives of the rebellious forever.

Thirdly, God wanted to develop godly, holy and righteous character in man. God saw that all the angels that followed Satan in the rebellion lacked godly character as did Lucifer.

Before Satan’s rebellion, the entire universe was governed according to God’s way of love, cooperation and concern for the welfare of others. In such a perfect environment, there was no opportunity to test the character of the 24 elders or individual angels to resist sin against pressure, threat to life or pain and suffering through torture for an indefinite period of time.

After Satan’s rebellion two-thirds of the angels still serving God in heaven have been tried and tested in a limited way because they have to face Satan’s accusation against them before God as indicated in Revelation 12:7-10, 12.

In addition, God’s angels are assigned specific duties on earth. Angels function as God’s messengers on earth. In these assignments they often have to battle Satan and his powerful demons, who have been appointed as princes over kingdoms of the earth by Satan as described in Daniel 10:12-13, 20-21. These battles are trials for God’s angels and tests of their character. So God’s angels are being tested to prove their love and desire for God’s work on the earth, for this is the battleground.

However, to develop godly, holy and righteous character in human beings, God’s plan included leaving Satan and his demons still rulers of the earth, but severely curtailing their powers, and still fully under His control . God would create man, but allow him to be influenced by Satan and his demons. He would also teach them His way. Then human beings can decide for themselves whether they would obey God’s laws and live according to His ways or choose to live in ways of their own devising as influenced by Satan. They would experience the results of Satan’s ways in the first 6,000 years of man’s history, and then experience the fruits of God’s Kingdom in the 1,000 years following. Humanity would then be able to compare and contrast the two ways.

God knew that Satan and his demons would persecute human beings loyal to Him. God knew that Satan will threaten His people to forsake His ways, and persecute them by inflicting pain and suffering and even painful death. But that would be a supreme test of character for God’s people to determine if they will always remain faithful to His way despite all that Satan and his demons can throw at them. God promises to help His people as He chooses, but they must have faith in Him and rely on Him completely. They would have to be willing to sacrifice their physical lives, if necessary, to never compromise with God’s laws and His ways. Some will violently lose their physical lives, but they will attain immortal life and a glorious eternal future. The tests, trials and persecutions inflicted on them by Satan and his human agents will develop godly, holy and righteous character in His people. God devised this perfect plan to test man like no other intelligent creature God has created has ever been tested and develop His holy, righteous character in him.

After holy and righteous character is developed in humans, God will then give them spirit bodies with power and abilities multiplied trillions of times, making them perfect and incapable of sinning, like Himself and the Word. That is what human beings are called to as stated in Matthew 5:48: “Be you therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.”

Fourth lesson God wants to impart to man is to learn how to love God and each other. Not all angels had been able to learn that vital lesson. We can visualize the feelings of angels for God by imagining the feelings of children. They are born into the world and are totally dependent on their parents in childhood and youth. As they grow up they long to be independent of their parents’ control. They cannot fully realize how deeply their parents love them until they have children of their own. They know how precious their children are to them, and how deeply they love them. Then they realize how much their own parents loved them, and did everything that was only in their best interests. In the same way the angels perhaps could not perceive how deeply God the Father and the Word loved them, because they had not experienced similar love for ‘children’ of their own or their own creation.

Humans have been deceived into believing that God hates His creation and is ready to pounce on humans and blot out their existence at the slightest sin. So far more important than humans learning to love God and fellow man was to learn how deeply God loves them. The best way for them to learn that lesson would be for them to reproduce and experience love for their own offspring. In addition to parent-child relationships, God also planned to create other relationships for experiencing love. He created the marriage relationship for them to experience the love the Word has for them. As a result of family, humans would also experience brother and sister relationships. Thus God wanted His new creatures to experience love in many possible ways. Their physical bodies would also enable them to experience love in close bonds through loving physical contact. God also planned to create all humanity from one man, Adam. From Adam He would create the woman Eve. Then through that one man and one woman, all of humanity would spring forth. Hence all of humanity would be related. This way God would knit His entire creation closely together. The angels would also learn by observing and caring for humanity how God the Father and the Word love them.

It is clear from Job 38:7 that the angels had the concept of fathers and sons. They knew that they were sons of God by creation. But the depth of closeness that the father-son bond should have produced in them for God the Father and the Word was not present because they had not experienced the same closeness from the point of view of parents.

Reproduction in the dinosaur world before man’s creation was through laying of eggs and hatching them. But in the mammalian world method of reproduction was changed to producing young from their own bodies and nourishing them from their own bodies. This develops a closer bond between parent and offspring.

God also wanted man to learn to love all living things. Satan and the demons created the dinosaur world. They had no love for those creatures, because they thought absolutely nothing of destroying them in their rebellion. To teach man to love all creatures, God created cattle and other animals on which man would be dependent in many ways. He would be dependent on them for food, clothing and to bear his burdens. The animals would represent wealth for him. Even his practice of sustained agriculture would depend on animals to maintain the fertility of the soil. In short, man’s well-being would depend a great deal on taking care of animals. Indeed his long-term survival would depend on them. He would have to kill them for food, clothing and other needs, but that does not have to be done with torture, pain and suffering. They could be killed humanely. Man would learn the need to preserve the animals because each plays an important part in the ecological system. This way he would learn to love all of God’s creation.

Fifth, God wanted to demonstrate to His creation how He loves them with the kind of love that surpasses human understanding. At the same time He wanted to demonstrate to them that He is always just and fair, because Satan and his demons accuse Him of being unfair. God and the Word chose to demonstrate their love by the Word agreeing to empty Himself of all His divinity and power, coming to the earth as a human being, living a sinless life and dying for the sins of humanity. God the Father was also willing to sacrifice His begotten Son in an excruciatingly painful death. With His sacrifice, the Word would redeem His creation from death, by paying the death penalty on its behalf.

God would also prove His fairness by demonstrating that He and the Word are very strict about their law of love. Unfairness violates that law of love. The penalty for violating that law is death. All human beings have earned the death penalty by sinning. That penalty had to be paid. There was no compromise with that. And Jesus Christ paid it on their behalf. God the Father and Jesus Christ never compromise with their law, and never sin themselves. They are very strict about keeping their law. Therefore, there is no question of them being unfair and unjust.

Sixth, God wanted to demonstrate to His new creatures that He always knows and does what is best for them in the long-run. They must, therefore, learn to trust Him completely. He knows every creature that has ever been created and is intimately familiar with all the details of their life experiences and all their thoughts. He has all the power, and He sees things that the creature itself cannot see or perceive. And He has the benefit of knowing the experiences of all creatures that have ever lived. Therefore, He is in the best position to judge what is in the best interest of the creature, even far more than the creature itself knows. And He has all the power to affect the outcomes of all actions. Therefore, He wanted His new creatures to learn to put their complete faith and trust in Him.

The way God would choose to instill that lesson in men would be to require them to praise and worship Him. By praising, worshipping and meditating on Him, they would never lose sight of His awesome power and greatness, the wonders and miracles He has performed for those who love Him, and always keep in mind how weak and totally dependent they are in comparison.

Seventh, God wanted to drive pride and vanity out of man forever. One way He would drive vanity out of the angels would be to set man in authority over them. That would also be a warning to man for all eternity. If they ever became vain and arrogant against Him, He could always create new creatures and set them over man. God never wants pride and vanity to be the cause of rebellion against Him, or of oppression of fellow beings as happened in the case of Satan. None of us have any cause for boasting because whatever talents, abilities and strengths we possess we have received from God (1 Corinthians 4:7 – NKJV – “7 For who makes you differ from another? And what do you have that you did not receive? Now if you did indeed receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?”

Eighth important lesson God wanted His creation to learn is that it is His prerogative to create a being as He chooses. The angels were created with different looks, talents and rank. Satan may have used these created differences to sow discontent, dissatisfaction, a false sense of discrimination and unfairness, resentment, bitterness and hatred among the angels towards God. God must have thought through all these ideas in the minds of the angels, but concluded that there was no alternative to creating variety, and creatures with different talents and abilities for the good of society. God thought through the future of man for eternity ahead and concluded that there was no alternative to creating a hierarchical structure. Possible reason is that billions of beings created equal in rank would lead to anarchy. Therefore some would have higher authority than others. God decided that He would create differences in His new creature. That is why He created people with different looks and talents. This would be an incentive for humans to cooperate with one another for only those who cooperate with others will get farthest ahead in life and realize greater happiness and joy. God would also demonstrate that He is capable of providing for all so that they all can live happy, abundant, productive and joyful lives.

But also remember that human beings will be rewarded according to how they use their talents and abilities as the parable of the talents in Matthew 25 shows. God is always fair.

The ninth vital lesson God wanted man to learn is that violation of His laws, which is sin, always produces pain, suffering and anguish in the long run. He wanted to demonstrate to man that His laws are living laws which always exact a penalty when transgressed. Man would be created as a weak creature. As a result all would sin because of their imperfect knowledge, and due to Satan’s influence. All would, therefore, suffer the consequences in pain and suffering. They would therefore, learn to avoid sin as a result of these experiences. When they are resurrected as immortal spirit beings with powers multiplied billions or trillions of times, they will become perfect and incapable of sinning. They will become literal sons of God.

The tenth consideration for God in creating man was that He did not want them to suffer forever. He planned to give man temporary physical existence. To those that developed His holy, righteous character such that He could depend on them to be completely faithful to Him and His way of life forever under all circumstances, He would give eternal life. Those who failed to repent and did not develop godly character would have their lives extinguished forever in a lake of fire. This would forever stop the pain and suffering they were causing themselves and others because of their sins.

The eleventh element of God’s plan for man would be to give eternal life only to those who really want it. When God opens the understanding of an individual to what He has planned for humanity, the individual may be really excited about his potential and work passionately to learn and live according to God’s laws and way of life. He may diligently apply himself to root sin out of his life, and exercise love towards God and fellow man. Such a person will be granted eternal life as God’s literal son and will rule with Jesus Christ in His kingdom.

On the other hand, another individual called into God’s Church may understand the incredible potential God is offering him, but be lazy, lukewarm and not passionate about overcoming sin and growing in knowledge and love of God. Such a person, who does not bear sufficient fruit to perfection, will lose his life in the lake of fire. He will have demonstrated in his physical life that he is not really excited and passionate about living for eternity. This is indicated by the parable of the talents in Matthew 25:14-30, and the parable of the pounds in Luke 19:12-26.

The twelfth element of God’s plan for creation of man was to make him joint heir of all things with Jesus Christ, if he developed holy and righteous character. According to God’s plan, no intelligent being created by God would be tested quite like man, and the firstfruits among men more so. The firstfruits, those called into God’s Church during the first 6,000 years of man’s history, would be required to be willing to die to keep God’s laws and commandments to prove their total commitment to His way of life. As a reward God planned to make them heirs of all things, as indicated in Hebrews 2:8. “All things” means the entire universe. Romans 8:16-17 declares that we shall be joint-heirs with Jesus Christ.

By analyzing man’s attributes and physical environment, one can understand some of God’s other purposes for creating man the way He has. Herbert W. Armstrong in his book “*Mystery of the Ages*” describes some of his experiences with demons: “I have had a number of personal experiences with demons through a few demon-possessed people. I have cast out demons through the name of Christ and power of the Holy Spirit. Some demons are silly, like spoiled children. Some are crafty, sharp, shrewd, subtile. Some are belligerent, some are sassy, some are sullen and morose. But all are perverted, warped, twisted” (p. 93).

From Mr. Armstrong’s description, it seems some demons are not as passionate about work. To inculcate the habit of work, and to derive joy and satisfaction from a sense of accomplishment through hard work, God made man dependent on food to sustain his life. To procure food, man must work. This would build the habit of work in man. The angels on the other hand are not dependent on food to live.

Lucifer may have had to contend with this attitude among some of the angels under his rule who were merely existing and not working diligently. As a reaction he probably developed the philosophy of ‘success through competition’ rather than through cooperation. He has imparted that same philosophy, attitude and mind-set to humanity.

God also wants man to maintain His creation well, and to finish its beautification. For this purpose man has to learn to be clean and maintain things in order. Apparently some of the angels before they rebelled did not have enthusiasm in maintaining the earth in a state of cleanliness, beauty and order. To teach man that lesson, God decided to tie length of man’s life to keeping clean. He created germs that would thrive in unclean environments, and cause disease in humans. If man persisted in keeping his environment dirty, it could literally kill him prematurely with disease.

God also wanted man to learn self-control and temperance. It is one of the fruits of God’s holy spirit (Galatians 5:23). Apparently some of the angels with Lucifer did not exhibit this character trait. To teach man this lesson, God created human bodies in such a way that if abused through lack of moderation in food and drink, man would get sick. The more he abused his body, the greater pain he would suffer, and the earlier he would die. Man would also develop a higher level of self-control by having to change his eating and drinking habits as he grew older.

Apparently all angels did not learn to fully cooperate with one another. Man would learn that lesson by being created weak, not possessing all talents and thus never completely self-reliant. Every human depends on services from other human beings for living. He cannot himself produce all he needs. Then in old age he often cannot take care of even his basic needs and needs the services of others. This way man learns the lesson of interdependence, and the need to cooperate with others.

Some of the angels with Lucifer must also have wondered why God created so many hundreds of millions or even billions of them. However, God would create billions of human beings to demonstrate to the angels that numbers are no constraint for Him. He has created many more planets in the universe than there will ever be human beings born. He can provide for all His creation with sustenance and fulfilling work and activities for all eternity.

So after Satan’s rebellion, God planned out another creation, that of man! And He planned to develop His godly, holy and righteous character in man, found so utterly lacking in Satan and his demons. In effect, God planned to reproduce Himself. Man would learn all these vital lessons so that there would never ever be rebellion against His authority and government. Mankind would learn these crucial lessons through trial and error, sin, and the resulting pain and suffering, and these experiences would be recorded as history to be kept in remembrance for all eternity. God’s Word, the Holy Bible is that history book.

Not only did God plan to reproduce Himself through man, He also planned to restore His government on earth, which was taken away by Satan’s rebellion. Presently, Satan and his demons rule the earth, and that is why we experience so much pain and suffering. Though Satan can do only what God allows, God gives him enough freedom to rule the earth so that it is not the way government would function in God’s kingdom. That kingdom will soon be set up on earth when Jesus Christ returns as King of kings with the immortal saints, and deposes Satan and his demons. Then humans will be able to compare and contrast the two ways of life and choose the way they would live.

After Satan’s rebellion, God and the Word therefore planned to create intelligent creatures in such a way that they would learn what love is, feel it, experience it and would have a deep desire to live that way for eternity. God’s holy and righteous character inculcated in them would ensure that they would never depart from that way of life. Most importantly they would learn that God loves them as His own dear children just as they learn to learn their own children.

That is the reason why God created mankind the way He did, flesh and blood creatures subject to death, male and female with the institution of marriage and family to experience close deep love in many possible ways, the ability to reproduce to teach them the vital lesson that He loves them with godly agape’ love that surpasses human understanding, and to learn how to love Him and fellow man.

**Chapter 19**

**Need for the Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ**

Since the creation of man, all of God’s intelligent creatures have experienced the concept of a close-knit family and experienced the love a family has or should have for each of its members. By creating man, God is trying to show all His intelligent creatures (including the angels) that He and Jesus Christ are a family, and He is inviting all humanity to become His family, as His literal spirit born immortal sons. The angels are Sons of God by creation.

But God WILL NOT have a dysfunctional family, with members bickering and fighting with each other. He wants a perfect family with members that love Him with all their heart, soul, mind and strength and love each other as themselves. The only way God can ensure that He will have such a family is by all His children having His holy righteous character instilled in them?

***Satan the Adversary***

After Lucifer rebelled against God, his name was changed to Satan, meaning adversary of God. He is also called the devil which comes from the Greek root word *diabolos* from which we also get the English word diabolical. Other names of Satan mean destroyer. Therefore, after his rebellion against God, Lucifer became the adversary of God and is engaged in diabolical plots to destroy God’s creation. And who would be his primary target? Humanity of course!

After Satan’s rebellion against God, the Bible says in Genesis 1:2 the earth became deformed and empty of physical life. All that Satan and the demons had created on earth was destroyed. Then God created humanity and the creatures we now see on earth. Satan and the demons are still rulers over the earth. But they are not absolute rulers because they can do only what God allows them to do.

Man’s incredible potential is to literally become eternal sons of God and become part of His family. At present there are only two members in the God family at the God plane level; God the Father and Jesus Christ. God is inviting humanity to become part of His family. This is made absolutely crystal clear by John the apostle in 1 John 3:1-2: “1 Behold, what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knows us not, because it knew him not. 2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it does not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.”

Yes, those human beings who by their own free will and choice let God develop His holy and righteous character in them will qualify to become members of God’s family as His literal immortal sons, just as Jesus Christ today is God’s immortal Son. John says we shall also look like Jesus Christ with the same body as He has. That is God’s purpose in creating humanity and man’s potential. God is reproducing Himself through humanity. Human beings and all other physical creatures can reproduce themselves as flesh and blood creatures. But we cannot reproduce spirit born creatures with godly character. Only God can perform that reproductive process in us.

Despite such scriptures reassuring us, we still cannot comprehend that we shall become gods like Jesus Christ, literal immortal children of God the Father. Our argument against this belief is that Jesus Christ was a God Being before He became flesh, but we were created mere flesh and blood. If God wanted to create us as His literal sons and daughters, He could have simply created us like Jesus Christ. Because we are created as flesh and blood beings like animals, we cannot therefore ever become equal to Jesus Christ as God’s literal sons and daughters.

But we have forgotten that God did in fact create sons composed of spirit before humanity was created. Those spirit beings are the 24 elders and the angelic world. A part of those sons created with spirit bodies rebelled against God. God could not create His holy righteous character in them by fiat because they were created with free will and it requires their exercise of that free will in acquiescing to allow God to create His holy righteous character in them. God has created humans so that they can first allow Him to develop His holy righteous character in themselves before God will give them eternal life.

In believing that by virtue of being created flesh and blood like animals we will always be an inferior creation as compared to the spirit world, we seem to have forgotten that Jesus Christ was also created a flesh and blood human being. To prove to humans that He will convert them to spirit beings God the Father resurrected Jesus Christ from the dead. Jesus Christ will resurrect us in exactly the same way as spirit beings, to become His immortal sons and daughters.

The reality of the resurrection energized Jesus disciples so that they were willing to die for their belief. They knew that their potential was to become God’s literal sons and daughters like Jesus Christ. That’s why John the apostle wrote about it.

We may still think that we cannot be equal to God because God had no direct hand in creating us. We were born as a result of our parents actions, and not directly created like Jesus Christ was created by God the Father. So we cannot be equal with Jesus Christ. But we are forgetting that we would not have fully experienced the love of a parent for a child if God had a direct hand in our creation and not through the human reproductive process. We also do not realize that the chance of a human sperm fertilizing a human egg by mere chance is almost negligible. This means that God has a direct hand in the conception of a human being, making the near impossible possible. But when a human child is born, its parents know that the child has come entirely from their own bodies. So they deeply love that child. If God had a direct hand in creating flesh and blood human children without human reproduction, we would not have experienced the same level of love for our children. God has allowed us to reproduce without His direct hand in it so that we can feel and experience love for our own children and thus learn how deeply God loves us.

By being equal to Jesus Christ does not mean equal in power, strength and abilities as all human beings are not equal in power, strength and abilities. But they are equal in the sense that they are all human beings.

The Bible leaves no doubt about what the potential of human beings is. It is to become God’s literal sons and daughters with spirit bodies just like that of Jesus Christ. But we had to be created flesh and blood like animals to learn other godly righteous character building lessons. We should not limit God’s creative powers in our thinking. If He could create the Word He certainly can convert flesh and blood human beings into spirit beings with the same spirit composition as Jesus Christ.

Now try to imagine what God’s adversary would do? His aim would be to thwart God’s purposes as best he can. Satan as God’s adversary tries to do precisely that. And what exactly would he try to do?

Look at God’s plan of salvation for humanity again. God’s purpose in creating humans is to have them eventually become part of His family as His immortal, divine sons and daughters. And the only way they can become His literal sons and daughters is to first develop His holy, righteous, godly character in them. Human beings do that by learning to completely surrender to God and obeying His Law. Obeying God’s law means to not sin, because John describes sin in 1 John 3:4. He writes: “4 Whosoever commits sin transgresses also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.” The NKJV translates this verse as: “4 Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness.”

Thus to become members of God’s family, human beings must eventually become sinless as God the Father and Jesus Christ are sinless. We can never become sinless as physical human beings because our mental and physical capacities are severely limited. Only Jesus Christ remained sinless as a human being because God gave Him His holy spirit without measure (John 3:34). In contrast God has given us only a type of down payment (earnest) of His holy spirit at present (2 Corinthians 1:22, 5:5). But when we have demonstrated by our attitudes and actions that we want to develop holy and righteous character in ourselves, we will have qualified to become God’s spirit born immortal sons. Then at the resurrection God will change our composition to spirit beings with a full measure of His holy spirit. Then we will have the mental capacity as well as other powers multiplied trillions of times to enable us to remain sinless.

*Why Sinlessness?*

But you may ask why God has such an emphasis on sinlessness? The answer is quite simple. Any transgression of God’s law, or any form of lawlessness always brings pain and suffering without fail. We cannot have perfect love, peace, joy and happiness when there is any form of sin present in us.

As long as there is even an iota of sin present in any of God’s sons, God’s family cannot live the kind of life God prophesied in Revelation 21:3-4: “3 "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. 4 And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away."

That is the kind of family God is purposing and is working to create. He wants a family that does not experience tears, pain, suffering and sorrow which the rebellion of Satan and the demons brought into the universe. And becoming part of God’s family involves our free choice. Each and every human being has to choose to become a part of God’s family when God sends that human being His invitation by calling him. Those who choose not to by rebelling against God and His law will not become a part of His family.

*Why Does Not God Simply Forgive Sin?*

Many Muslim scholars have questioned the need for the sacrifice of Jesus Christ to forgive our sins. They have said that God can simply forgive sin if He chooses to. Jesus Christ’s sacrifice is not needed for that purpose.

Can you imagine God simply forgiving a murderer, or a thief for his murder and theft. He can commit another murder or theft and God can simply forgive him again. Can you imagine such a sinner being granted eternal life as God’s son and free to continue in his behavior with God continually forgiving his sin every time? How about the victims? Would their tears, pain, suffering and sorrow ever cease? I hope the Muslim scholars realize how foolish this argument is.

A law is designed to deter contrary behavior. Until there is a penalty for violation of the law, the law cannot act as a deterrent to sinful behavior. God cannot have a perfectly sinless family as long as sin remains. That is why He has prescribed the death penalty for any violation of His Law. Either human beings choose to become sinless with God’s help, or the death penalty will be applied to their violations of the Law. Their lives will be permanently extinguished in the Lake of Fire.

The death penalty has to be paid for all our sins. Otherwise what good is a law if penalty for its violation is not enforced? Each and every human being has sinned. As a result each and every human being has incurred the death penalty. And that penalty could be paid for all only by their Creator whose life was of more value than all His creation put together.

If God simply forgives the sins of each and every human being, He will not have the perfect family He has planned. ***Without the death penalty for sin, humans will not have the need for avoiding sin indelibly impressed on their minds.*** Therefore, to make His purposes stand, He and His son planned the sacrifice of His son Jesus Christ.

*How would Satan Try to Thwart God’s Purposes?*

Now let’s come back to the question we asked earlier. How would Satan the adversary of God try to thwart God’s purpose of creating His family that is free of tears, pain, suffering and sorrow?

Satan’s first tactic would be to try to convince humanity that God does not have any such purpose as reproducing Himself and have many more sons and daughters added to His family. To do so, he first denies that God is a family.

See the Koran. It is the only religion that in its scriptures addresses the writings of the Jews and Christians in the Bible as well as some of their beliefs. The fact that the Koran directly contradicts what is written in the Bible means that if the writings of the Koran are inspired by the true God, then the writings of the Bible are not inspired by God but inspired by Satan. On the other hand, if the Bible is inspired and backed up by the power of Almighty God, then the Koran is inspired by Satan directly.

But we have earlier proved that the Bible is inspired and backed up by the power of Almighty God. This then means that the Koran is inspired by Satan because it specifically attacks the Bible. It directly attacks the Bible by saying such things as the Bible was altered, when there is no such evidence. What is in dispute in what has been transmitted down to our time constitutes only about half a page in nearly 1,500 pages, and does not alter the meaning or interpretation of any doctrine at all.

So Satan inspired the Koran to contradict the Bible to try to deceive humanity into believing that God has no such purpose as reproducing Himself through humanity to become His sons and daughters and joint heirs of the universe with His Son Jesus Christ. Satan knows that God created humanity to replace him and the demons as rulers over the earth first and then the universe after that. By claiming that the Bible has been corrupted he is trying to deceive humanity into throwing away God’s instruction manual so that man would not learn God’s purpose for him.

How else would Satan try to convince humanity that God’s purpose is not to add human beings as members of His family? He tries to deny that God is a family. He has done this by saying in the Koran that God is one God, and it is beneath Him to have sons. That is why He denies that Jesus Christ is God’s son. That is why he tries to deny that Jesus Christ is also God. Because if Jesus Christ is not God, then He is not a member of the God family!

These are the lies Satan propagates through the Koran to try to thwart God’s purpose in adding more sons and daughters to His family. Because if human beings don’t understand God’s purpose in creating them, then they will not choose to give their cooperation and surrender to Him in letting Him create His perfect, holy righteous character in them.

To fulfill God’s purpose, humanity has to ultimately become perfect and sinless as God the Father and Jesus Christ are perfect and sinless. But to accomplish that human beings must have their sins forgiven. To have their sins forgiven, the penalty for sin had to be paid. Only a Being greater than all of humanity could pay the death penalty on behalf of all humans. And that Being, Jesus Christ, the God of the Old Testament, Creator of the spirit world, the entire material universe and humanity, paid the death penalty on behalf of His creation. That is why the crucifixion, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ are crucial to Christianity.

Perhaps now you can understand why God’s adversary would concoct lies to try to convince humanity that Jesus Christ did not die on the cross or was resurrected.

We only have the Koran’s words that Jesus Christ did not die on the cross but was called to heaven by God. However we have amply proved that the words of the Koran are not backed by the power of Almighty God. Now we can understand what Satan’s motive was to cunningly craft such lies in the Koran. He is trying to convince humanity that Jesus Christ did not die on the cross. So there is no such thing as the penalty for humanity’s sins being paid on its behalf. This means that God can simply forgive humanity’s sins, since the Koran in many places calls Allah the merciful, forgiving and beneficent.

If God simply forgives sins, then human beings will continue sinning and expecting their sins will be forgiven. Without the death penalty it was impossible to impress on human beings the deep need to stop committing sin. Without impressing on human beings that the penalty for any violation of God’s laws is death, human beings would not fully understand how abhorrent sin is to God and should be to us and that we must end sin in our lives with God’s help. Those who end it will become sons of God. Those who do not deeply understand the need to end it and continue in sin will have the death penalty ultimately applied to them.

We hope you now understand why there was a need for the death of Jesus Christ, and why the adversary of God tries to convince humanity otherwise in his cunningly crafted lies in the Koran.

But after death, why was the resurrection of Jesus Christ necessary?

***Why Jesus Christ’s resurrection was Necessary***

The foremost reason for Jesus Christ’s resurrection is the faith and trust for God it develops in us. If God the Father had not resurrected Jesus Christ how could we trust a God who let His Son die without giving Him life again? Jesus Christ’s resurrection assures us that God the Father cares for us and has Almighty power to kill and make alive (Deuteronomy 32:39), and resurrect weak human beings, as Jesus Christ was when He came to earth as a human being, into powerful beings as Jesus Christ is now, as His literal immortal sons. So the foremost reason for the resurrection is that we can totally and completely trust in God to fulfill His promises and have faith that He has the power to perform them.

The second reason for Jesus Christ’s resurrection is that He can now live His life in us through his power, the holy spirit. Jesus Christ has experienced life as a human being. So He knows our frame and our frailties and temptations. He knows what it will take for each of us to overcome sin. He literally lives His life through us with the power of His holy spirit to enable us to put on His mind, overcome sin and become more like Him to eventually become the sons of God.

The third reason for the resurrection is that Jesus Christ functions as our faithful High Priest and advocate for us with the Father. He intercedes for us with the Father to forgive us our sins so that we can continue living and overcoming sin and developing godly character. He knows how weak our frame is. When He pleads with God the Father to give us another chance to overcome a particular sin, God the Father listens and grants Jesus’ wish because He has experienced similar temptations in His life as a human being. That’s why He can be a faithful advocate with the Father for us.

John states in 1John 2:1: “1 My little children, these things write I unto you, that you sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:”

Hebrews 2:17-18 (NIV) states: “17 For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. 18 Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.”

And fourth, because Jesus Christ lived life as a human being and is also God, God the Father has committed all judgment about our qualification to receive eternal life into the hands of Jesus Christ. And it is Jesus Christ who will grant us eternal life as well. God the Father has given this honor also to Jesus Christ. This is stated in John 5:21-22 (NKJV): “21 For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to them, even so the Son gives life to whom He will. 22 For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son.”

Finally, one of the most important reasons for the resurrection of Jesus Christ and its timing is that God’s offer of salvation to human beings through a resurrection to eternal life has become real to them. It energized Jesus’ disciples. Islam says that salvation means going to paradise. But there is no proof that any such paradise exists. Hindus says salvation is to stop the cycle of birth and death to finally merge with the great soul it calls God. But there is no proof that any of the dead has achieved this salvation. However the resurrection of Jesus Christ provides us proof of the salvation that God offers to human beings. It is proof that God will turn physical human beings into His own immortal sons as spirit beings through a resurrection and has the power to do so. We can therefore trust Him to deliver on the salvation He offers to human beings.

Thus we see that both the death and then the resurrection of Jesus Christ are crucial to God’s plan of salvation for mankind. That’s why God’s adversary works diligently to deny the death and resurrection through outright lies.

**Chapter 20**

**Islam’s Theories on the Death and Resurrection of Jesus**

Here are the verses in the Koran that appear to deny the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The following quotes are from the translation by M.H. Shakir:

[3.55] “And when Allah said: O Isa [Jesus’ Arabic name], I am going to terminate the period of your stay (on earth) and cause you to ascend unto Me and purify you of those who disbelieve and make those who follow you above those who disbelieve to the day of resurrection; then to Me shall be your return, so l will decide between you concerning that in which you differed.

Translation of this verse by Abdullah Yusuf Ali reads this way:

“Behold! Allah said: "O Jesus! I will take thee and raise thee to Myself and clear thee (of the falsehoods) of those who blaspheme; I will make those who follow thee superior to those who reject faith, to the Day of Resurrection: Then shall ye all return unto me, and I will judge between you of the matters wherein ye dispute.”

The Muslims interpret this passage to mean that Jesus did not die but ascended to God. This interpretation is made when this verse is read in conjunction with other verses.

[19.33] And peace on me on the day I was born, and on the day I die, and on the day I am raised to life.

The sequence of events mentioned in the life of Jesus in this verse is His birth, then death and then His resurrection; exactly as the sequence in the Bible. This verse does not mention the return of Jesus Christ to earth as mentioned in the Bible. Muslims claim that the sequence in Jesus’ life will be birth, then ascension, then return to earth and then death? This passage in the Koran is also speaking of the resurrection of Jesus and not His ascension to God without first dying as claimed by Muslims. Thus this verse is contrary to the prevailing Muslim view

With these verses, the Koran seems to say similar things to the Bible. But next look at Sura 4:157-158:

[4.157-158] “And their saying [meaning the Jews’ saying]: Surely we have killed the Messiah, Isa son of Marium [Mary’s Arabic name], the apostle of Allah; and they did not kill him nor did they crucify him, but it appeared to them so (like Isa) and most surely those who differ therein are only in a doubt about it; they have no knowledge respecting it, but only follow a conjecture, and they killed him not for sure. 158 Nay! Allah took him up to Himself; and Allah is Mighty, Wise.”

Here in verse 157 the Koran is saying that the Jews boast that they killed Jesus the Messiah, but denies that they killed Him or crucified Him; it just appeared to them to be so. The Koran then flatly denies that they killed Him, but that Allah took Him up to himself.

The same two verses are translated in the translation by the King Fahd Complex for the printing of the Koran in Madinah, SA with commentary in this way:

[4.157-158] And because of their saying (in boast), “We killed Messiah Isa (Jesus), son of Maryam (Mary), the Messenger of Allah” – but they killed him not, nor crucified him, but the resemblance of Isa (Jesus) was put over another man (and they killed that man) and those who differ therein are full of doubts. They have no certain knowledge, they follow nothing but conjecture. For surely they killed him not [i.e Isa (Jesus)] son of Maryam (Mary)]. 158 But Allah raised him [Isa (Jesus)] up (with his body and soul) unto Himself (and he is in the heavens). And Allah is ever All-powerful, All-wise.”

The words in verse 157, “but the resemblance of Isa (Jesus) was put over another man (and they killed that man)” are not a literal translation but added as a commentary based on a Hadith [which are the sayings of the companions of Mohammad based on what Mohammed said or did] narrated by Ibn Abbas mentioning that Mohammed told about the last day of prophet Isa on Earth that he gathered his pupils in a house and asked them "who among you shall be given my appearance to be crucified in my place and be my companion in Paradise?" The youngest among them stood up and said: "I"”

This may be the reason for the Muslim belief that another disciple who looked like Him was substituted for Jesus to be crucified to die on the cross, but the people thought it was Jesus who was crucified and died.

When we consider these verses that discuss Jesus Christ’s death or ascension to God, we see that the Koran does not give us its own detailed version of what actually happened at the crucifixion, or death or resurrection of Jesus Christ. It just seeks to discredit the detailed version of events contained in the Bible. The Koran does not give us a clear picture of the events surrounding those 4-5 days of the crucifixion, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

While these verses in the Koran are open to alternate interpretations, the Muslims interpret them to believe that in essence Jesus was not crucified and did not die on the cross but ascended to Allah in heaven. Since He did not die, there was no need for Him to be resurrected from death. Thus the Koran denies the crucifixion, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. But according to the Bible these are a central part of God’s Plan of salvation for mankind in Christianity.

Since these verses in the Koran can be interpreted in different ways, it has led to many theories among the Muslims to try and explain the actual event of the crucifixion, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ as described in the gospels in the Bible.

These theories include:

1) Jesus didn’t actually die, He simply swooned or went into a coma and appeared to be dead, but woke up after 3 days and was claimed to have been resurrected.

2) Jesus did actually die, but his disciples stole the body. This saying was actually reported among the Jews and is mentioned in the Bible. But it contradicts Sura 4:157 in the Koran which asserts that Jesus did not die.

3) There was a person who was crucified and died, but that was another person who was substituted for the real Jesus. So it wasn’t Jesus who actually died. Since He did not die, He could be claimed to have been resurrected the third day. This theory as mentioned earlier is not in the Koran but based on a Hadith, which could be just conjecture on the part of the one to whom the Hadith is attributed.

4) Muslims also say that there was no need for another man to die for the sins of other men. That is unfair. So they question the story of the death of Jesus Christ for the sins of mankind. That is why they do not believe the story of the crucifixion and death of Jesus Christ.

5) The whole resurrection story is a myth.

6) Some even go so far as to say that Jesus is a myth.

You can see that these theories to try and discredit the Biblical account of the crucifixion, death and resurrection of Jesus by first accepting what the Koran claims is the truth about Jesus are contradictory among themselves. Some of these theories claim that Jesus died whereas others claim He did not.

Even the account in the Koran itself about the event is contradictory. Sura 4:157 says Jesus was not killed whereas Sura 19:33 says Jesus died or will die and be resurrected. To reconcile these two verses Muslims have invented the sequence in the life of Jesus to be the life, ascension to God, return to earth and then death of Jesus Christ. But this sequence contradicts the sequence in Sura 19:33 which says: “And peace on me on the day I was born, and on the day I die, and on the day I am raised to life.”

Muslims could explain this contradiction by stating that Jesus lived, ascended to God, will return to earth, then die and then be resurrected to life again at the Muslim idea of the Resurrection, by which they mean physical resurrection of all of humanity and being judged and then offered the eternal rewards of either paradise or hell. There are more details to these Muslim rewards for the faithful which we will not address.

***How Would a Liar Try to Discredit a True Story***

Have you wondered how a liar would try to discredit a true story that is the very essence, the very centrality of God’s plan of salvation for mankind?

Soon after the start of God’s Church in 31 A.D., God’s adversary, the devil first made assaults on various aspects of the true religion. These assaults were on keeping the Sabbath, God’s Passover and the other 6 of the seven annual holy days that picture God’s plan of salvation for mankind, and substituting pagan festivals in their place such as Sunday worship, Easter, Christmas and the like. Ultimately such falsehoods became the dominant religion headquartered in Rome, the capital of the greatest empire on earth at that time. But the centrality of God’s message that led to the birth of Christianity, the fact of the birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ remained unchanged. Christianity continued to gain adherents and accept the fact of the birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ as the Messiah for the next 580 years.

Though a vast majority of the adherents were being gained for false Christianity, the new adherents nevertheless accepted the fact of the birth, life, crucifixion, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Ultimately, some of these who had the means and could gain access to the Bible would then be exposed to the truth from its pages rather than blindly accept the paganism of the false Roman Church. And that is how God’s Church gained adherents over the centuries.

So what do you think the adversary of God, and an originator of lies would try to do to counter the spread of the central message of the Bible: Salvation for humanity through the life, crucifixion, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ? Why obviously, he would try to discredit that message. He would try to spread lies that the message of the crucifixion, death and resurrection was lies and pure fiction. And that is exactly what the master liar and deceiver set out to do about 580 years after the start of Christianity, when he saw that the religion continued to spread. For 580 years nobody had seriously questioned the fact of the birth, life, crucifixion, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. But the adversary of God with his cohorts planned out a strategy to try to change that.

Satan set out to try to discredit the truthfulness of every aspect of the message.

He would first try to discredit the message by saying that the message itself has been corrupted. So what we today have is not the truth. He would try to say that the Old Testament and the New Testament have been corrupted so that the account we have of the life, crucifixion, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ in the Bible is not correct. It has been altered. Next the liar would then give his own version of events about the crucifixion, death and the resurrection. Then the liar would form his own religion, and propagate it with all his vigor and cunning so that the spread of the message of truth would be halted, and instead his religion based on his lies would spread, and hope to challenge the truth by force whenever possible. He would try to convert Christians to his religion by force.

That is exactly what Satan did about 580 years after the birth of Christianity. He used the man Mohammed as his agent to spread his lies to discredit the truth. For 580 years humanity had not questioned the true central message. But then 580 years later comes Mohammed questioning the very central message, armed with lies of the master deceiver of mankind, Satan the devil.

Satan did not use Mohammed to cast doubts about the fact of the birth and existence of Jesus Christ. In fact, he confirmed the existence of Jesus Christ and the prophets mentioned in the Bible. But he used Mohammed to discredit the facts about the life of Jesus Christ. Mohammed may have been a very sincere man. But he was a thoroughly deceived man, deceived by Satan’s lies, with which he deceives more than a billion people on earth.

About 1400 years after Mohammed came on the world scene, nobody questions that Mohammed existed. But Satan uses others to question the existence of Jesus Christ on earth around 2000 years ago. If the existence of Islam is proof that Mohammed existed, then the existence of Christianity should be proof that Jesus Christ existed and is not a myth.

*How can we Prove the Resurrection*

Human beings have great difficulty believing in miraculous events. Miracles (such as healings) in the lives of human beings involve miraculous intervention. After receiving those miracles the human beings still remain physical human beings. But the resurrection of Jesus Christ is a unique event in the history of mankind so far. A physical human being died and was resurrected into a spirit being. That is why human beings find it so difficult to imagine, comprehend and hence believe. That is why they do not accept it and explain it away as best as they can. That is why Muslims want to believe the Koran when it says Jesus Christ did not die and hence was not resurrected.

Even Jesus Christ’s disciples could not imagine the event when Jesus Christ told them in Luke 18:31-34 (NKJV): “31 Then He took the twelve aside and said to them, "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of Man will be accomplished. 32 For He will be delivered to the Gentiles and will be mocked and insulted and spit upon. 33 They will scourge Him and kill Him. And the third day He will rise again." 34 But they understood none of these things; this saying was hidden from them, and they did not know the things which were spoken.”

The disciples could not imagine a human being dying and then being resurrected into a spirit being. This is the human tendency at work when Muslims are able to easily discredit the version of events in the Bible in their minds and accept what the Koran says. Satan has tried to exploit this human tendency to the hilt in his attempts to deceive mankind.

How then can we prove that the crucifixion, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ are a fact? We cannot see the resurrected Jesus Christ today. The event occurred more than 1980 years ago. To find proof for the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ we must examine the account in the Bible to verify that it is consistent with reality of human life and how humans behave under circumstances surrounding such events. We will look at 3 kinds of proofs:

1) To prove that a version of events is the truth, we must first look at the source. That means we must first prove that the Bible is the source of truth and the Koran is a source of lies or vice versa. We have already done that.

The God of the Bible demonstrated that He is the Almighty by giving numerous prophecies which continue to be fulfilled even in our time. This also means that the words of the Bible even today are backed by the power of God. That means we can rely on the version of events surrounding the birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This then means that the Koran is inspired by a liar, and/or an adversary of God because it contradicts the Biblical account surrounding the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

2) After proving the truthfulness and reliability of the source for our description of events, we must then find incontrovertible proof that the events actually happened. If the source is completely reliable and truthful, we should be able to believe its version of events without further proof. But critics will still question or contradict the version of events. Then we must offer incontrovertible believable proof that the events surrounding the crucifixion and death of Jesus Christ really took place.

In the case of Jesus Christ, His crucifixion and death was a publicly witnessed event carried out with typical Roman thoroughness. He had powerful enemies in the Jewish leadership hierarchy who wanted Him dead, and the Romans had condemned Him to death. Both sides wanted to make sure He was dead. And they made sure He was crucified and was dead. A Roman soldier knew when a man was dead, especially when one of them had driven a spear into His side when He was on the cross to kill Him. Roman soldiers certainly knew when a man was dead. We will look at all these proofs from the Bible and see that there is incontrovertible proof that Jesus Christ was crucified and died on the cross.

3) After proving that Jesus Christ was dead, we must then provide incontrovertible proof that Jesus Christ was resurrected back to life as a spirit being. One of the proofs was that the tomb in which Jesus Christ was laid was found to be empty. No dead body was ever found or produced by anyone. Of course the critics can argue that Jesus Christ did not die. That’s why there was no dead body. But if we can find incontrovertible proof that Jesus Christ died, then the empty tomb is proof that He was resurrected because no dead body was found.

Can you imagine the huge impact a unique event like the resurrection would have on those who were witnesses to it. It would transform their lives. We would expect the resurrection to transform the lives of Jesus Christ’s disciples. We will see how the transformed lives of the disciples of Jesus Christ are proof of His resurrection.

**Chapter 21**

**Proofs of the Crucifixion and Death of Jesus**

Muslims claim that either Jesus Christ survived the crucifixion, or someone in His place was crucified. We will see from the biblical account that the man who was crucified was Jesus Christ and He indeed died. The account will show that Jesus Christ could not have survived all that He went through. We will look at the following six proofs that Jesus Christ actually died on the cross and did not survive it.

1) Crucifixion was an agonizing, excruciatingly painful experience.

2) According to the biblical account, besides being crucified, Jesus Christ was actually killed by a spear to His side.

3) Death at the hands of Roman torturers and executioners was certain. They knew how to kill a man, and that was the task assigned to them. They made sure He was dead.

4) One of Jesus Christ’s disciples and many women were eye-witnesses of His death. They knew He was dead. They knew that it was Jesus Christ who was crucified and was dead. Eye-witnesses also included the chief priests and other Jewish leaders. He was even buried by a prominent one among them, who was a member of the Sanhedrin.

5) Jesus’ disciples, women knew that He was laid in a tomb and where the tomb was, and that the tomb was guarded by Roman soldiers.

6) And finally, God prophesied the coming and death of Jesus Christ in many Old Testament prophecies. God the Father assured that Jesus Christ died for the sins of mankind, and Jesus Christ knew that was the very reason He came to earth.

Let’s look at each of these proofs.

***1) The Crucifixion***

*The Beatings and Scourging Before the Crucifixion*

Jesus Christ’s crucifixion and death was a public event witnessed by the Jewish leaders who wanted Him dead, Roman soldiers and officers whose job it was to ensure that He was dead, common Jewish folk, women among Jesus Christ’s family and friends and even one of the twelve witnessed that He died on the cross and knew where He was laid in a tomb. It was not done secretly in a corner. Even before Jesus Christ was crucified, He went through a trial by the Jews, then by the Roman governor Pilate, then by King Herod who happened to be in Jerusalem at that time. He was severely beaten during these trials and finally scourged, before being crucified. Let’s look at a description of these events in the Bible.

Before His scourging by Roman soldiers, Jesus Christ had suffered beatings and savage treatment at the hands of the Jews. He was first tried before the Jewish Sanhedrin. After the Jewish High Priest pronounced Him worthy of death because He admitted that He was the Christ, His treatment at the hands of Jews at the trial is described in Matthew 26:67-68 (NKJV): “67 Then they spat in His face and beat Him; and others struck Him with the palms of their hands [meaning slapped Him on His face as hard as they could], 68 saying, "Prophesy to us, Christ! Who is the one who struck You?"

The extent of this beating is indicated in the prophecy of Isaiah 50:6: "I offered my back to those who beat me, my cheeks to those who pulled out my beard; I did not hide my face from mocking and spitting" (NIV).

The Sanhedrin then turned over Jesus to the Romans to be tried because the Jewish leaders could not pass the death sentence on any one. After His trial before Pilate, Jesus Christ was given over to Roman soldiers to be scourged before being crucified.

Here is a description of the Roman scourging from the United Church of God (UCG) booklet titled “*Jesus Christ: the Real Story*”:

“Death at the hands of Roman torturers and executioners was certain and could come from several causes. Journalist Lee Strobel, in an interview with Dr. Alexander Metherell, describes the death of Jesus from a medical point of view (*The Case for Christ*, 1998, pp. 193-200).

“Jesus had been beaten repeatedly and lashed with a Roman scourge before His crucifixion (Matthew 27:26). The leather scourge, a type of whip, was designed to inflict maximum pain and damage on the victim. It was braided with pieces of bone and metal woven into the ends that tore into the flesh with each stroke. The scourge would rip into the underlying muscles and produce strips of quivering, bleeding flesh.

“Eusebius, a third-century historian, reports that "the sufferer's veins were laid bare, and the very muscles, sinews, and bowels of the victim were open to exposure" (quoted by Strobel, p. 193). Many victims would die from the scourging before they could be crucified.

“The extreme pain, coupled with loss of blood, would often cause the victim to go into shock—his blood pressure would drop and cause fainting, collapse and intense thirst. The Gospels record that Jesus experienced these symptoms on His way to Golgotha. Weakened to the point of collapse, He couldn't bear the weight of the beam He was carrying and a bystander, Simon of Cyrene, was forced to carry it part of the way for Him (Mark 15:21). When He was crucified, He said, "I thirst" (John 19:28).

God prophesied this type of treatment of the Christ in Isaiah 52:14 (*Revised English Bible*): "His form, disfigured, lost all human likeness; his appearance so changed he no longer looked like a man." What this tells us is that He was so badly beaten, so bloodied and maimed, that He was scarcely recognizable as a human being.”

“Pilate appears to have thought that when he had Jesus brought out to the crowd after the beatings and scourging, He would present such a pitiable spectacle that it would satiate His accusers' thirst for blood (John 19:1, 4-6). But their hatred of the bloodied man from Nazareth would not be satisfied. They insisted He be crucified.”

Pilate then handed Jesus Christ over to the Roman soldiers to be crucified. The Roman soldiers then further treated Jesus Christ brutally because He was now a man condemned to die. That brutal treatment is described in Matthew 27:27-31 (NIV): “27 Then the governor's soldiers took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole company of soldiers around him. 28 They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, 29 and then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on his head. They put a staff in his right hand and knelt in front of him and mocked him. "Hail, king of the Jews!" they said. 30 They spit on him, and took the staff and struck him on the head again and again. 31 After they had mocked him, they took off the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him.”

*The Agony of the Crucifixion*

According to Dr. Alexander Metherell, a medical doctor quoted by Lee Strobel in his book “*A Case for Christ*”, p. 196, (as quoted in the UCG booklet) “Because of the terrible effects of these beatings and the scourging, from a medical standpoint Jesus would have already been in serious to critical condition even before He was taken away to be crucified.

“In a crucifixion, the Romans typically used iron nails, five to seven inches long and about three eighths of an inch square, driven into the victim's wrists and feet to fasten him to the wooden members.” Nails were driven into the wrists, between the arm bones, because the hands themselves could not support the weight of the body.

“The nails pounded through the wrists would have crushed the median nerve, the largest nerve going to the hand, causing indescribable pain. "The pain was absolutely unbearable," says Dr. Metherell. "In fact, it was literally beyond words to describe; they had to invent a new word: excruciating. Literally, excruciating means 'out of the cross…' Nails driven through the feet would have brought similar pain.

“Because of body weight and the stress produced on the body from being hung by His arms, Jesus Christ’s arms would have stretched several inches and both His shoulders dislocated.

“The prophecy of Christ's suffering in Psalm 22:14 refers to this exact condition: "I am poured out like water, and all My bones are out of joint; My heart is like wax; it has melted within me."

“Dr. Metherell continues with a description of the agonies Jesus endured: "Once a person is hanging in the vertical position...crucifixion is essentially an agonizingly slow death by asphyxiation (which means dying due to inability to breathe normally). The reason is that the stresses on the muscles and diaphragm put the chest into the inhaled position; basically, in order to exhale, the individual must push up on his feet so the tension on the muscles would be eased for a moment. In doing so, the nail would tear through the foot, eventually locking up against the tarsal bones.

"After managing to exhale, the person would then be able to relax down and take another breath in. Again he'd have to push himself up to exhale, scraping his bloodied back against the coarse wood of the cross. This would go on and on until complete exhaustion would take over, and the person wouldn't be able to push up and breathe anymore" (Strobel, pp. 265-266).

That is how excruciating a death by crucifixion is. So after the beating, the brutal scourging by Roman soldiers that sometimes killed the victims, Jesus was so exhausted and weakened that He was even unable to carry His cross the full way. The Roman soldiers forced Simon of Cyrene to carry the cross part of the way. Then Jesus was crucified around 9.00 a.m. to begin suffering further agony. He was on the cross for about 6 hours and died around 3.00 p.m. But crucifixion is not what finally killed Jesus Christ on the cross.

***2) The Cause of Jesus' Death***

As was common for the victims, many died from the trauma of the crucifixion or eventually suffocated because of inability to breathe normally. Many people assume that is how Jesus died on the cross. But that is not what eventually killed Him.

As with many other aspects of Jesus’ life, God had prophesied many details of His crucifixion and death which will be covered in detail later. God had also prophesied how Jesus would die on the cross. Zechariah the prophet talking about the people of Jerusalem wrote in Zechariah 12:10: "They will look on me, the one they have pierced" (NIV).

The Bible speaks of the great importance of Jesus Christ's shed blood. In Acts 20:28, Paul warns the Church pastors to shepherd the ‘Church of God which Jesus has purchased with His own blood.” Peter the apostle says in 1 Peter 1:18-19 (NKJV): “18 knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, 19 but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.”

Jesus Himself said that the wine of the New Testament Passover represented "my blood...which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins" (Matthew 26:28, NIV). Clearly pouring out of Jesus’ blood for the sins of humanity was the central focus of Christ's sacrifice.

This is how John describes how Jesus died in John 19:30-37 (NKJV): “30 So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit. 31 Therefore, because it was the Preparation Day, that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. 32 Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who was crucified with Him. 33 But when they came to Jesus and saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs. 34 But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out. 35 And he who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you may believe. 36 For these things were done that the Scripture should be fulfilled, "Not one of His bones shall be broken." 37 And again another Scripture says, "They shall look on Him whom they pierced."

John’s description of the event makes it appear that Jesus died on the cross and then later was stabbed by one of the Roman soldiers, "bringing a sudden flow of blood and water" (verse 34, NIV). But the problem with this interpretation of events is that once the heart has stopped its pumping action after death, dead bodies no longer bleed like that. So Jesus’s blood could not have been poured out. The explanation is provided in the UCG booklet “*Jesus Christ: The Real Story*” p.38-39:

“This problem is resolved when we consider many older manuscripts of Matthew's Gospel, which contain words that appear in a few Bible translations but were left out of most modern versions. These missing words tell us the proper sequence of events.

“The *Twentieth Century New Testament*, which includes these words, reads: "And about three [o'clock in the afternoon] Jesus called out loudly: 'Eloi, Eloi, lama sabacthani'—that is to say, 'O my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' Some of those standing by heard this, and said [mistakenly]: 'The man is calling for Elijah!'

"One of them immediately ran and took a sponge, and, filling it with common wine, put it on the end of a rod, and offered it to him to drink. But the rest said: 'Wait and let us see if Elijah is coming to save him.' However another man took a spear, and pierced his side; and water and blood flowed from it. But Jesus, uttering another loud cry, gave up his spirit" (Matthew 27:46-50).

“The words missing in the modern translations are “However another man took a spear, and pierced his side; and water and blood flowed from it.” These words show the correct sequence of events: that Jesus was stabbed in the side with a spear, uttered a loud cry and then died. Other versions that contain the missing words include the Moffatt Translation and the Rotherham Emphasized Bible, and various other Bible versions include a footnote or marginal reference noting the omitted words.

“So does Matthew's account conflict with John's? No. Both describe the same events, but from different perspectives.

“Matthew jumps immediately from Jesus' death to a description of the temple veil being torn in half, while John focuses on the fact that, in contrast to the two criminals crucified with Jesus, not one of His bones was broken. John then explains parenthetically how Jesus had already died so that His bones did not need to be broken in fulfillment of the prophecy in Psalm 34:20 and the symbolism of the Passover lambs, which were to be slain and not have a single bone broken, because His side had been pierced with a spear in fulfillment of the prophecy in Zechariah 12:10.”

The Passover lambs that had their blood shed to save the Israelites (Exodus 12:6-7, 13) pictured Jesus as, "the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29).

*The Final Fatal Blow*

What was this final, fatal thrust like that ended Jesus' life? The UCG booklet “*Jesus Christ: The Real Story*” continues:

“John Lyle Cameron, M.D., explains: "The soldier was a Roman: he would be well trained, proficient, and would know his duty. He would know which part of the body to pierce in order that he might obtain a speedily fatal result or ensure that the victim was undeniably dead...

"The soldier, standing below our crucified Lord as He hung on the cross, would thrust upwards under the left ribs. The broad, clean cutting, two-edged spearhead would enter the left side of the upper abdomen, would open the...stomach, would pierce the diaphragm, would cut, wide open, the heart and great blood vessels, arteries and veins..., and would lacerate the lung.

"The wound would be large enough to permit the open hand to be thrust into it [compare John 20:24-27]. Blood...together with water from the...stomach, would flow forth in abundance. The whole event as described by St. John must, indeed, have happened, for no writer could have presented in such coherent detail so recognizable an event, unless he or someone had actually witnessed its occurrence" (quoted by R.V.G. Tasker, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries*: John, 2000, pp. 212-213).

The idea that Jesus didn't really die, that He fainted or was drugged and was later resuscitated as Muslims try to theorize, has no basis in fact when you consider the clear statements that He died. The apostle John had been an eyewitness to that death, having been right there with others as these events unfolded (John 19:25-27, 35).

As quoted earlier John said in John 19:35: “35 And he who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you may believe.”

John was the disciple Jesus loved (John 21:20). He certainly would have known that the man who died on the cross was Jesus Christ, not someone substituted in His place.

So far we have seen that the crucifixion itself was an excruciating experience, which in Jesus’s case was preceded by brutal beatings and Roman scourging that many times killed its victims. Then Jesus was actually killed with the thrust of a spear, the mode of death which God had prophesied.

For the next proof let’s see how Roman soldiers made sure that Jesus was dead.

***3) The Roman Execution***

After the scourging when the Roman Governor Pilate had brought Jesus before the people, he wanted to release Him, but the people cried out for Him to be crucified. Then John 19:16 says: “16 Then he delivered Him to them to be crucified.”

Being crucified meant Jesus was condemned to die by crucifixion. A Roman centurion was put in charge of the execution with Roman soldiers to assist him. Romans were very thorough with their executions because Roman law required the death penalty for a soldier failing to carry out the sentence. The Roman centurion and his soldiers were putting their own lives at risk if they failed to carry out the execution of Jesus Christ.

Severity of Roman discipline for failing to carry out the task assigned is illustrated in an example in the Bible. Acts 12 describes an incident in which king Herod had put Peter in prison. But at night an angel came and brought Peter out of jail. Then the next morning the people wondered what had become of Peter, Acts 12:18-19 (NKJV) then describes what happened: “18 Then, as soon as it was day, there was no small stir among the soldiers about what had become of Peter. 19 But when Herod had searched for him and not found him, he examined the guards and commanded that they should be put to death.”

Herod had the entire guard executed because they had let one prisoner escape. Another incident took place in the life of Paul, described in Acts 16:22-28 (NKJV), when Paul and Silas were put in prison “22 Then the multitude rose up together against them [that is Paul and Silas]; and the magistrates tore off their clothes and commanded them to be beaten with rods. 23 And when they had laid many stripes on them, they threw them into prison, commanding the jailer to keep them securely. 24 Having received such a charge, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks. 25 But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. 26 Suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were loosed. 27 And the keeper of the prison, awaking from sleep and seeing the prison doors open, supposing the prisoners had fled, drew his sword and was about to kill himself. 28 But Paul called with a loud voice, saying, "Do yourself no harm, for we are all here."

Here we see the reaction of the jailor when he thought the prisoners had escaped. He knew the sentence for him was death if the prisoners had escaped. So he thought he was better off dead by his own hand rather than be put to death by Roman soldiers.

Therefore, one should not doubt that the centurion and the soldiers charged with the execution of Jesus would have made sure that He did not survive the crucifixion. That was made sure in many ways.

Jesus was crucified around 9 am. Then from 12 noon to 3 pm there had been an earthquake and there was darkness over the land. The Jewish holy day feast, the first Day of Unleavened Bread was approaching at sunset. So the Jewish authorities who were witnessing the crucifixion wanted the three being crucified to die quickly because they and the people wanted to hasten home to keep the Feast.

John states in 19:30-23 (NKJV): “31 Therefore, because it was the Preparation Day, that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. 32 Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who was crucified with Him. 33 But when they came to Jesus and saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs.”

Thus because of the darkness in the land, and the approaching holy day, the Jews obtained permission from Pilate to break the legs of the three being crucified to speed up their death. The Roman soldiers broke the legs of the two robbers crucified with Jesus, but Jesus was already dead. The reason was that in the darkness, one of the Roman soldiers had already pierced Jesus’s side with his spear. So when the soldiers came to break the legs of the three men, they found Jesus to be already dead. Roman soldiers knew when a man was dead. They knew He was not breathing. Labored breathing would be visible on the cross. So when the man was not breathing he would be still. The Roman soldiers made sure that Jesus was dead. The Roman executioners were experts who knew when a man was dead.

Some have claimed that the Roman soldiers were actually trying to save Jesus’ life by not breaking His legs. Why would the Roman centurion and the soldiers with him try to do that because they knew that in doing so they would be signing their own death warrants? Moreover, Jesus was perceived as a threat to the Roman Empire, because if He gained a following, the Romans would have the fear that he would lead an insurrection against Roman rule as others had done in the past. You can be sure the Roman soldiers charged with executing Him wanted Him dead and they made sure of that. The Roman soldier who pierced His side with a spear was also making doubly sure of that.

After Jesus was dead, Joseph of Arimathea went to Pilate and begged him to give Jesus’ body to him. Mark 15:42- 45 (NKJV) describes Pilate’s reaction and what happened: “42 Now when evening had come, because it was the Preparation Day, that is, the day before the Sabbath, 43 Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent council member, who was himself waiting for the kingdom of God, coming and taking courage, went in to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. 44 Pilate marveled that He was already dead; and summoning the centurion, he asked him if He had been dead for some time. 45 So when he found out from the centurion, he granted the body to Joseph.”

On hearing the request from Joseph of Arimathea, Pilate was somewhat surprised that Christ was already dead. To make sure that He was dead, he called the centurion charged with His execution to confirm it. The Centurion who witnessed the execution would have confirmed it earlier with the soldiers that Jesus was dead for sure. Only after Pilate confirmed that Jesus had been dead for sometime did he give permission to Joseph of Arimathea to take the body. Joseph of Arimathea, a very rich and prominent member of the Sanhedrin certainly knew who Jesus was, that He was dead, and knew that he had laid the dead body of Jesus in his own tomb.

***4) Eye-Witnesses to Jesus’ Death***

The next proof that Jesus died on the cross is that there were numerous eye-witnesses of His death from all walks of life. These eye-witnesses included Romans, top Jewish leaders, many common Jewish folk who walked by throughout the time He was on the cross, many women who were His relatives and among those who ministered to Him during His three and a half year ministry, Jesus’ own mother, and even John the apostle, one of His twelve disciples.

The Jews were not allowed to sentence a man to death. That is why the Jewish leaders had to take Jesus to Pilate, the Roman governor, to have Him sentenced to death by crucifixion. To carry out the death sentence a Roman Centurion was put in charge with Roman soldiers. They had to make sure that the sentence was carried out and Jesus indeed died on the wooden cross or beam. Here is the account from the Bible that the centurion witnessed the crucifixion and death.

Matthew 27:54: “54 Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done , they feared greatly, saying , Truly this was the Son of God.”

The parallel account in Mark 15:39 (NKJV) states: “39 So when the centurion, who stood opposite Him, saw that He cried out like this and breathed His last, he said, "Truly this Man was the Son of God!"

The centurion did see and make sure that Jesus had breathed His last on the cross. Matthew also mentions there were others with the centurion, which obviously means Roman soldiers who were charged with carrying out the execution. Here are the other references to soldiers witnessing the crucifixion and death.

Luke 23:36-37 (NKJV): “36 The soldiers also mocked Him, coming and offering Him sour wine, 37 and saying, "If You are the King of the Jews, save Yourself."

John the apostle provides more details in John 19:23-24 (NKJV): “23 Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took His garments and made four parts, to each soldier a part, and also the tunic. Now the tunic was without seam, woven from the top in one piece. 24 They said therefore among themselves, "Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be," that the Scripture might be fulfilled which says: "They divided My garments among them, And for My clothing they cast lots." Therefore the soldiers did these things.”

Matthew 27:35-36 (NKJV) adds: “35 Then they crucified Him, and divided His garments, casting lots, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet: "They divided My garments among them, And for My clothing they cast lots." 36 Sitting down, they kept watch over Him there.”

These accounts tell us that the Roman soldiers were keeping watch to make sure that no one rescued Jesus Christ from the cross and that He died on it. They also taunted Him occasionally and divided His garments but cast lots for His top garment. John even mentions that the number of soldiers was four, in addition to the centurion.

Then Jesus Christ’ eye-witnesses included Jewish leaders, even the chief priests. Matthew 27:41-43 (NKJV) states: “41 Likewise also the chief priests mocking him, with the scribes and elders, said, 42 He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. 43 He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God.”

Notice again, among the crowd that witnessed His crucifixion and death were the chief priests, the scribes and elders [which would have included members of the Sanhedrin, the highest Jewish court of justice]. They wanted Jesus dead and watched Him die on the cross.

Besides the Jewish leaders, a great many of the common folk also followed Jesus witnessed the crucifixion. Luke writes in Luke 23:27, 35 NKJV): “27 And a great multitude of the people followed Him, and women who also mourned and lamented Him, Verse 35: “And the people stood looking on.”

In addition to the multitudes Luke 23:49 states: “49 And all his acquaintance, and the women that followed him from Galilee, stood afar off, beholding these things.” This means that many of Jesus’ acquaintances and relatives witnessed these events. They certainly would have known that it was Jesus who was crucified and died on the cross.

The number of the common people who witnessed the crucifixion may have numbered in the thousands, and hundreds could have stayed right till the very end till Jesus died. Remember this was the time of the feast of the Passover and the feast of Unleavened Bread. Huge crowds would have been gathered in Jerusalem from all over the land and even from other nations for the Feasts. And they knew Jesus because of the many miracles He had done throughout the land. That’s why the number of witnesses to the crucifixion would have numbered in the thousands.

Many of Jesus’ acquaintances, family and close relatives, including His own mother and aunt witnessed the crucifixion till His death. All the gospels mention this fact. John says in John 19: 25-27 (NKJV): “25 Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. 26 When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to His mother, "Woman, behold your son!" 27 Then He said to the disciple, "Behold your mother!" And from that hour that disciple took her to his own home.”

Mark provides slightly different details in Mark 15:40-41 (NKJV): “40 There were also women looking on from afar, among whom were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the Less and of Joses, and Salome, 41 who also followed Him and ministered to Him when He was in Galilee, and many other women who came up with Him to Jerusalem.” And Matthew states in Matthew 27:55-56 (NKJV): “55 And many women who followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to Him, were there looking on from afar, 56 among whom were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee's sons.”

Again, remember this was the time of the feast of the Passover and the feast of Unleavened Bread. Many women had come to Jerusalem from Galilee to keep these feasts with Jesus. They all witnessed His crucifixion and certainly stayed till His death. That is proved by the fact that they even followed to see where He was laid in the tomb. Matthew states this in verses 27:59-60 (NKJV): “59 When Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, 60 and laid it in his new tomb which he had hewn out of the rock; and he rolled a large stone against the door of the tomb, and departed. 61 And Mary Magdalene was there, and the other Mary [Mark identifies her as the mother of Joses], sitting opposite the tomb.”

Luke writes in 23:55 (NKJV), “And the women who had come with Him from Galilee followed after, and they observed the tomb and how His body was laid.”

So Jesus’ mother, her sister His aunt and other women saw His crucifixion and stayed till He died on the cross. At least two of these women followed when Joseph of Arimathea took His body and laid it in his own tomb so that they could come later to anoint it with spices. All these relatives and friends would have been certain that it was Jesus who died on the cross, not a substitute. All these people would have had to conspire to lie if another man had been substituted for Jesus on the cross. That is so far-fetched.

Joseph of Arimathea, probably the richest member of the Sanhedrin, and thus one of its most prominent members knew Jesus was dead. That is why He begged Pilate for Jesus’s body. He along with Nicodemus, another member of the Sanhedrin had bought spices to bury the body of Jesus. They both knew He had died on the cross. They handled His dead body, carried it to be laid in Joseph’s own tomb. John describes this in John 19:38-40: “ 38 And after this Joseph of Arimathaea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus: and Pilate gave him leave. He came therefore, and took the body of Jesus. 39 And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight. 40 Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury.”

This process could have taken more than an hour. So these two members of the Sanhedrin handled Jesus’ dead body for more than an hour. They certainly knew it was Jesus they were handling and that He was dead.

Finally, John, one of the twelve apostles also observed Jesus’s crucifixion and death till the end. As quoted earlier, John wrote in 19:25-27 that Jesus gave charge to the disciple He loved to take care of His mother after He died. Then in John 21:20, 24 (NKJV) he writes “20 Then Peter, turning around, saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following, who also had leaned on His breast at the supper…Then in verse 24 he writes: “24 This is the disciple who testifies of these things, and wrote these things; and we know that his testimony is true.”

John thus clearly identifies himself as the disciple whom Jesus loved, and charged him to take care of His mother after His death and who wrote this account in the gospel. John was there at the cross when Jesus gave him that charge. He witnessed the crucifixion and His death.

To summarize then Jesus’s crucifixion and death took place at the time of the Feast of the Passover and Unleavened Bread when Jerusalem was crowded with pilgrims from all over the land and even foreign countries. Jesus was an extremely popular figure because of the many miracles He had done all over the land. Literally many would have watched His public trial and many thousands were eye witnesses to the public crucifixion and hundreds, if not thousands would have stayed on till His death on the cross.

The Romans had condemned Him to death and were put in charge of the execution. They witnessed the whole event till the very end to make sure He was dead. Pilate made sure He was dead before He gave permission to Joseph of Arimathea to take the body. Luke says all of Jesus’s acquaintance witnessed the event as did many of His relatives and many women who had come to Jerusalem from Galilee to keep the Feasts. The chief priests, scribes, Pharisees elders who would have included members of the Sanhedrin were at the crucifixion and would have stayed till He was dead on the cross. Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, members of the Sanhedrin handled His dead body and laid it in Joseph’s own tomb. At least two of the women followed the dead body and saw where the dead body was laid in the tomb.

With so many eye-witnesses from all walks of life to the crucifixion and death of Jesus on the cross, we can be certain that He indeed died and was laid in the tomb. So many people would not have been fooled into believing that He was dead if He had not actually been crucified and died on the cross. The entire event was held publicly from the time Jesus Christ was arrested for the trial. Nobody would have fooled any one by substituting another man for Jesus on the cross. Those who handled His dead body knew it was Jesus’ body.

***5) Jesus Was Laid in a Tomb***

Sura 4:157-158 in the Koran says, “…they did not kill him nor did they crucify him, but it appeared to them so they killed him not for sure. 158 Nay! Allah took him up to Himself”.

This means that if Allah took Him up to Himself, His body was no longer on the cross. That is one of the ways Muslims interpret this verse. This means that if Jesus’s body was no longer to be found, then it could not have been laid in a tomb. So the fifth proof that Jesus died is that He was laid in a tomb. One does not put a live person in a tomb but a dead one.

Can you imagine the sensation it would have caused if a live man hanging on a cross or beam suddenly vanished into thin air. But there is no mention of any such thing happening. For 580 years all the world accepted the events as described in the Bible, till Mohammed came along with his account contradicting them. But the account surrounding the crucifixion, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ that Mohammed brought to the world is totally inconsistent with reality. To try and justify the lie he brought, he had to tell another lie that the account in the Bible was altered. Another mere statement without any proof! On the contrary we have provided a mountain of evidence to prove that the entire Bible has been very carefully preserved and the version we have in the original languages is indeed the inspired word of God.

We have already mentioned the Bible verses about Jesus being laid in the tomb. Members of the Sanhedrin were prominent men among the Jews. And Joseph of Arimathea was a prominent member even among these well-known leaders. He was probably the richest among them. He laid Jesus in his own tomb with his own hands, assisted by Nicodemus, another member of the Sanhedrin. They knew Jesus was dead. That is why they laid Him in a tomb. Women saw where Jesus was laid in the tomb. They had watched Him die on the cross and had followed His body till He was laid in the tomb. They rolled a massive stone to cover the entrance to the tomb because they knew Jesus was dead.

People in Jerusalem would have known where Joseph’s tomb was because he was a famous man. The disciples certainly knew about it because Peter and John visited the tomb after 3 days and 3 nights.

The Jewish leaders, the chief priests and the Pharisees also knew where the tomb was in which Jesus had been laid. They too knew He was dead because they had witnessed Him die on the cross. They knew of the sign Jesus had given to them that He was the Messiah. And the sign was that He would lie in the tomb 3 days and 3 nights and then be resurrected. They wanted to make sure that no hoax was perpetrated by His disciples to make that claim. Matthew describes in 27:62-66 (NIV) the measures they took to prevent that:

“62 The next day, the one after Preparation Day, the chief priests and the Pharisees went to Pilate. 63 "Sir," they said, "we remember that while he was still alive that deceiver said, 'After three days I will rise again.' 64 So give the order for the tomb to be made secure until the third day. Otherwise, his disciples may come and steal the body and tell the people that he has been raised from the dead. This last deception will be worse than the first." 65 "Take a guard," Pilate answered. "Go, make the tomb as secure as you know how." 66 So they went and made the tomb secure by putting a seal on the stone and posting the guard.”

Thus we see there were many eye-witnesses to the fact that Jesus had died and had been laid in a tomb. Only dead men are laid in tombs. The tomb belonged to one of the most prominent and probably the richest one among the Sanhedrin and the leaders knew its location. They knew that Jesus’ dead body had been laid in a specific tomb. They even posted guards to guard it. All of them were absolutely sure that Jesus died on the cross.

Thus Sura 4:157 in the Koran when it says, “…they did not kill him nor did they crucify him, but it appeared to them so they killed him not for sure” is a blatant lie of the arch deceiver, told to Mohammed, faithfully transmitted by him to his followers. The words are mere statements without any proof whatsoever. We have already proved that the Koran provides no shred of evidence that its words are backed by the power of Almighty God.

***6) God Foretold Jesus’ Death in Many Prophecies***

The sixth and final proof that Jesus did indeed die on the cross is that God the Father made sure that He died on the cross. God the Father and Jesus Himself foretold His death in many Old Testament prophecies. If Jesus did not die, then all these prophecies have been unfulfilled. Literally proof of God’s truthfulness and His Almighty Power are at stake. But as God and Jesus Christ fulfilled all their prophecies about ancient empires and nations, they certainly would have made sure to fulfill their prophecies about the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. So let’s look at specific Old Testament prophecies that foretold the death of the Messiah which Jesus fulfilled.

Peter told the crowd of Jews in Acts 3:18: “18 But those things which God foretold by the mouth of all His prophets, that the Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled.”

The UCG booklet: “*Jesus Christ: The Real Story*” states on p. 16:

“To claim that you are God is one thing—but to convince people that you are indeed what you say you are is quite another. So how did Jesus' closest followers come to be so convinced that they would lay down their lives for that belief?

“Many Old Testament prophecies of the Messiah were fulfilled in precise detail by Jesus of Nazareth. Neither the Jews nor the disciples of Jesus understood at the time that Jesus was fulfilling the messianic prophecies of the Old Testament—even though at times He told them this was the case (Luke 18:31; Matthew 26: 56).

“After Jesus was resurrected, He began to help His disciples understand the Scriptures, and the disciples were inspired to declare that Jesus was indeed the Messiah. The proof they offered was the very Scriptures [or prophecies] they had not previously understood.”

Then on p 18:

“The New Testament writers cite messianic prophecies from the Old Testament more than 130 times. By some estimates the Old Testament contains 300 prophetic passages that describe who the Messiah is and what He will do. Of these, 60 are major prophecies. What are the chances of these prophecies being fulfilled in one person?

“…the mathematical odds that all of these prophecies could have converged by chance in the events of the life of Jesus are staggeringly minute—to the point of eliminating any such possibility.

“Astronomer and mathematician Peter Stoner, in his book Science Speaks, offers a mathematical analysis showing that it is impossible that the precise statements about the One to come could be fulfilled in a single person by mere coincidence.

“The chance of only eight of these dozens of prophecies being fulfilled in the life of one man has been estimated at 1 in 10 to the 17th power. That would be 1 chance in 100,000,000,000,000,000.

“How can we put this in terms we can comprehend? Dr. Stoner illustrates the odds with this scenario: "Take 1017 silver dollars and lay them on the face of Texas [with its approximate land area of 262,000 square miles]. They will cover all of the state two feet deep. Now mark one of these silver dollars and stir the whole mass thoroughly, all over the state. Blindfold a man and tell him that he can travel as far as he wishes, but he must pick up one silver dollar and say that this is the right one.

"What chance would he have of getting the right one? Just the same chance that the prophets would have had of writing these eight prophecies and having them all come true in any one man."

“But that is only eight of the dozens of prophecies of the Messiah. Using the science of probability, the chance of as many as 48 of these prophecies coming to pass in one person is 1 in 10 to the 157th power—a 1 followed by 157 zeros (1963, pp. 100-109).

“One or two fulfillments in Jesus' life could be dismissed as coincidental. But when the instances of fulfilled prophecies are counted up, the law of probability quickly reaches the point where mere probability becomes certainty. This is one of the proofs Jesus was the promised Messiah—the messianic prophecies were accurately and precisely fulfilled in Him.”

Virtually every aspect of Jesus' suffering and death was spelled out in considerable detail centuries before it actually happened.

Here then are the scriptures that prophesied Jesus’s crucifixion and death:

First of all, the Old Testament sacrifice of lambs at the Passover was a prophecy that Jesus Christ would be the sacrificial Lamb of God who would be sacrificed for the sins of mankind.

John 1:29 tells us, “29 The next day John sees Jesus coming unto him, and says , Behold the Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world.” In contrast the Jews expected the Messiah (which means Deliverer) to be a King who would deliver them from the hated Roman rule. They never imagined that the Messiah would first come to deliver them from the bondage of sin by dying for the sins of humanity.

Hebrews 10:4 (NKJV) tells us: “4 For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins.” Then verse 12 says: "But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God."

Only the shed blood of the Creator could pay the death penalty for the sins of all His creation. Thus the Lambs sacrificed at the Passover were a prophecy of the sacrifice of the coming Messiah.

*Prophecies Concerning His betrayal, suffering and death*

Jesus fulfilled many prophecies in the 24 hours before He died. These include:

• *Messiah would be betrayed by a familiar friend*. This was prophesied in Psalm 41:9, "Even my own familiar friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted up his heel against me." This prophecy was fulfilled by Judas Iscariot in John 13.

• *Messiah would be forsaken by His followers* was prophesied in Zechariah 13:7: "Strike the Shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered." This was fulfilled when all His disciples forsook Him and fled when He was arrested (Mark 14:50).

• *The price of His betrayal would be 30 pieces of silver*. This was prophesied in Zechariah 11:12-13: "…so they weighed out for my wages thirty pieces of silver. 13 And the Lord said to me, "Throw it to the potter"--that princely price they set on me.” This was fulfilled when Judas Iscariot covenanted for 30 pieces of silver with the chief priests to betray Jesus (Matthew 26:14-15).

• *That Messiah would be put to death with criminals* was prophesied in Isaiah 53:12: "And He was numbered with the transgressors." This was fulfilled when "two robbers were crucified with Him, one on the right and another on the left" (Matthew 27:38).

• *Messiah would be crucified*. This was prophesied in Psalm 22:16: "They pierced My hands and My feet." Remarkably, this prophecy described a form of execution, the crucifixion, which would not come into practice for some 800 years after it was written.

• *Messiah’s body would be pierced*. This was prophesied in (Zechariah 12:10): "They will look on Me whom they pierced". In fulfillment John tells us in John 19:34 that "One of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out."

• *Messiah would be offered vinegar and gall*. This was prophesied in Psalm 69:21: "They also gave me gall for my food, and for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink. This was fulfilled when Jesus was offered vinegar with gall to drink as stated in Matthew 27:34, “34 They gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall.”

• *None of His bones would be broken* was prophesied in Psalm 34:20: "He guards all his bones; not one of them is broken." When the Jews came to break the legs of the 3 crucified men, they did not break Jesus’ legs because He had already died on the cross when the Roman soldier pierced His side with a spear, as described in John 19:32-34.

• *People would cast lots for His clothing*. This was prophesied in Psalm 22:18: "They divide My garments among them, and for My clothing they cast lots". John confirms in John 19:23-24 that this prophecy was fulfilled.

• *Messiah would not retaliate* was prophesied in Isaiah 53:7 (NKJV): "He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth." Its fulfillment is described in Matthew 27:12-14: “12 And while He was being accused by the chief priests and elders, He answered nothing. 13 Then Pilate said to Him, "Do You not hear how many things they testify against You?" 14 But He answered him not one word, so that the governor marveled greatly.”

• *Messiah would pray for those who would have Him put to death*. This was prophesied in Isaiah 53:12: "He... made intercession for the transgressors." This was fulfilled when Jesus prayed on the cross, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do." (Luke 23:34).

Thus we see that the God of the Bible prophesied in detail the manner of the death of the Messiah and all the prophecies were fulfilled in precise detail in the crucifixion and death of Jesus Christ. Probabilistically it is impossible for a particular one man to fulfill all the prophecies by mere coincidence. Therefore we can be certain that Jesus was the prophesied Messiah and He died as God foretold.

God of the Bible is also a truthful God. Paul the apostle tells us in 1 Titus 1:2 that God cannot lie! He simply does not lie. We have also proved that the Bible is God’s inspired word. It is the truth. God predicted the crucifixion and death of the Messiah, Jesus Christ and brought it to pass in precise detail. Thus we can be sure that Jesus was indeed crucified and died on the cross. Prophecies of the Old Testament and their fulfillment are thus the strongest proof that Jesus indeed died on the cross.

In contrast to the God of the Bible, compare the Allah of Islam. In Sura 4:157-158 in the Koran Allah of Islam said: “…they did not kill him nor did they crucify him, but it appeared to them so they killed him not for sure. 158 Nay! Allah took him up to Himself”.

Yusuf Ali’s translation renders the words “but it appeared to them so” as “so it was made to appear to them.” This is also how Muslims interpret this passage. They say that Allah made it appear to the Jews and others who witnessed the event that Jesus was crucified and died on the cross. But He was not actually crucified and did not die because Allah made Him ascend to himself.

Why would Allah feel the need to deceive the Jews into seeing Jesus crucified and dying on the cross, but actually take Him off to ascend to himself? Why would Allah need to deceive anybody? The Koran in this verse thus states that Allah is a deceiver. That actually is the truth. In contrast to the God of the Bible who cannot lie, the Allah of Islam actually states in Sura 4:157-158 that he deceived the Jews into believing that Jesus was crucified and died on the cross when he actually made Him ascend to himself. So the Allah of Islam stands exposed as a deceiver. In truth he is deceiving his Muslim followers with his lies in the Koran.

It is tragic that Muslims are willing to accept one mere statement in the Koran in Sura 4:157-158 that Jesus was not crucified and did not die on the cross. They need to critically examine the evidence for the crucifixion and death of Jesus Christ and reject the lies in the Koran as told to Mohammed by a lying demon masquerading as the archangel Gabriel. The one who masquerades around as the Allah of Islam is none other than Satan the devil.

**Chapter 22**

**Proofs of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ**

Since we have proved that Jesus was crucified and died on the cross, now let’s look at the proofs that Jesus indeed was resurrected from the dead. We will examine the following seven proofs.

1) The first proof again is the reliability of the source for description of events. The Bible describes the resurrection in great detail. The only religious book that denies the resurrection is the Koran. So we will look at the reliability of events surrounding the resurrection as described in the Bible vs. its description in the Koran.

2) The second proof of the resurrection is the empty tomb.

3) The third proof is the large number of witnesses of the resurrected Jesus.

4) The fourth proof is the transformation of Jesus’ disciples from cowards into men of courage who were willing to suffer and die for their conviction that Jesus Christ was crucified, died and was resurrected, and belief that they too would be resurrected if they remained faithful to God till the very end.

5) The fifth proof of the resurrection is the transformation of possibly all 3 of Jesus’ brothers mentioned in the Bible from skeptics into believers, including at least James and Jude who wrote the epistles that bear their names.

6) Sixth proof of the resurrection is the conversion of Paul the apostle, and

7) The seventh proof of the resurrection is the martyrdom of eleven of the 12 apostles, of many early Christians who believed and fellowshipped with the 12 disciples and of many tens of thousands of others over the centuries, and the existence of the Church.

The Christian religion would not exist without the resurrection because it provides the strongest proof of the salvation that the God of the Bible has promised to believers who endure to the end in the faith. The salvation the God of the Bible offers is eternal life through a resurrection as His literal immortal sons by changing our physical bodies to spirit bodies as He changed the physical body of Jesus Christ to a spirit body through His resurrection.

Witnessing the resurrection of Jesus Christ transformed the lives of the apostles, and belief in the resurrection is the pivotal event that led to the birth of Christianity.

So let’s begin examining these proofs of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

***1) The Reliability of the Source***

Again, the first proof of whether the Biblical or the Koranic version of events surrounding the birth, life, crucifixion, death and resurrection of Jesus Chris is the true one is reliability of the source. We have already proved that the words of the Bible are backed by Almighty God.

The God of the Bible gave numerous prophesies about the general course of the earth and the curses on it, general future of the 3 broad races, prophesied about the future of individuals such as Cain; predicted the Flood in Noah’s days and brought it to pass; predicted the rise and fall of great empires such as the Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Greco-Macedonian and Roman Empires and ten resurrections of the Roman Empire and has brought them to pass. God even predicted the rise of the Arab and Ottoman Empires. God promised incredible blessings to Abraham and his descendants Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Judah and David and fulfilled His promises by blessing the American and British peoples and in the British monarchy that still occupies King David’s throne. God has fulfilled all these prophecies and promises in precise detail, and many of them continue to be fulfilled to this very day.

Similar proof of the might and power of Allah of Islam is completely lacking in the Koran, and the might and power of Krishna is totally lacking in the Mahabharata and Gita of the Hindus. The scriptures of the Muslims and the Hindus make tall claims and make lofty statements without offering a shred of proof of their truthfulness. Thus the god(s) who inspired the Koran and the Mahabharata stand exposed as frauds, charlatans, liars deceivers. The Bible even calls that god the ‘god of this world’ whose identity you may have guessed but we will reveal soon.

Thus when we evaluate the reliability of the two sources for the account of events surrounding the crucifixion, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, we must accept the account in the Bible and reject the lies in the Koran. Since the fact that the Bible is the truth stands proved also means that the description of the resurrection of Jesus Christ in the Bible stands proved and is the truth.

***2) The Empty Tomb***

The second proof, and one of the strongest ones of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, is the empty tomb.

We saw in the proofs of the death of Jesus Christ that Jesus’ dead body was placed in the tomb of a man famous in Israel, a prominent and probably the richest member of the 70 person Sanhedrin, Joseph of Arimathea. Women followed the body of Jesus Christ and knew in which tomb it was laid. There was a huge stone rolled to seal the entrance to the tomb so that people could not easily break into the tomb and steal the body. Then the Jewish High priests and other leaders of the Pharisees made sure that the tomb was guarded by Roman soldiers. But at the end of 3 days and 3 nights, on that Sunday morning the tomb was discovered to be empty, first by women and then by the disciples.

The UCG booklet “*Jesus Christ: The Real Story*” describes what happened when the tomb was discovered empty on pp 43-44:

“Mark…records for us the detail that three women—Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome—approached the tomb before sunrise to anoint the body of Jesus with spices. Finding the heavy stone rolled away, they entered the tomb and were shocked and afraid when they saw "a young man clothed in a long white robe sitting on the right side." The man told the women, "He is risen!" and instructed them to go and tell Jesus' other disciples (Mark 16:1-8).

“In the society of the day, the testimony of women was held in such low regard that they were not even permitted to serve as witnesses in a court of law. How remarkable it is, then, that women were the acknowledged discoverers of Jesus' empty tomb!

“Had someone fabricated the story at a later date, as many critics assume to have been the case, the plot surely would have made male disciples such as Peter and John the discoverers of the empty tomb. That it was women who were the chief witnesses to the fact of the empty tomb is best explained by the straightforward truth that the women named were indeed the actual discoverers.

“The Gospel writers faithfully recorded what for them was an awkward and potentially embarrassing detail.

“What was the reaction of Jesus' enemies to the disciples' stunning declaration that Jesus was alive again after having been publicly executed?

“Their reaction is very revealing. Did they respond that the disciples were lying, that Jesus' body still lay in the rock-hewn tomb? No. Did they claim that the disciples were hallucinating? No. Instead, they bribed the Roman soldiers responsible for guarding the sealed tomb to spread what they knew was a lie. They told them to spread a cover story, to claim that Jesus' disciples had come and stolen His body while they slept, and that they would cover for the soldiers if they got in trouble with the Roman governor.

Jesus' enemies thus acknowledged that the tomb was empty.

The actual resurrection event and what happened to the Roman soldiers guarding the tomb is described by Matthew 28 in verses 1-10 (NIV): “1 After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb. 2 There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord [Luke says there were actually two angels] came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it. 3 His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. 4 The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men.

“5 The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. 6 He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. 7 Then go quickly and tell his disciples: 'He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.' Now I have told you." 8 So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples. 9 Suddenly Jesus met them. "Greetings," he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshiped him. 10 Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me."

The women then went to inform the disciples. When the guards recovered from their fear of the angel whose face shone like lightening and discovered that the stone had been rolled away and that the tomb was empty, the events are then described in Matthew 28:11-15 (NKJV):

“11 Now while they were going, behold, some of the guard came into the city and reported to the chief priests all the things that had happened. [They reported to the chief priests that though they were guarding the tomb and no one had broken into it for the 3 days and 3 nights, but then there was a great earthquake and two beings whose faces shone like lightening came and rolled away the stone. But they were afraid of the earthquake and could not look at the faces of the angel and fell down on their faces because they were so afraid. But after the beings with the shining faces went away they investigated the tomb and found it empty. These are the events the Roman soldiers reported to the Chief Priests and the elders.]

Matthew continues with the elders’ reaction: “12 When they had assembled with the elders and consulted together, they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers, 13 saying, "Tell them, 'His disciples came at night and stole Him away while we slept.' 14 And if this comes to the governor's ears, we will appease him and make you secure." 15 So they took the money and did as they were instructed; and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.”

We should realize that the Jews would have no motive to themselves steal Jesus’ body. They wanted it to rot away. They wanted Him dead and eventually forgotten. The Romans had no motive to steal the body either. Stealing the body by either of them would only have fueled more rumors that He had been resurrected.

If the tomb had not been empty, the Jews and the Romans could simply have produced Jesus’ dead body to nip the stories in the bud that He had been resurrected. But they could not produce His dead body.

Roman soldiers with changing guards were guarding the tomb and they would have made sure that no one broke into the tomb to steal the body of Jesus. In addition the disciples had proved themselves to be too cowardly [having forsaken Jesus and fled] to have gone past the Roman guards to steal the body. The women could certainly not have done it.

Then John 20:3-7 (NKJV) describes what John and Peter saw: “3 Peter therefore went out, and the other disciple, and were going to the tomb. 4 So they both ran together, and the other disciple outran Peter and came to the tomb first. 5 And he, stooping down and looking in, saw the linen cloths lying there; yet he did not go in. 6 Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb; and he saw the linen cloths lying there, 7 and the handkerchief that had been around His head, not lying with the linen cloths, but folded together in a place by itself.”

The linen clothes and the head scarf neatly folded together is hardly the scene that those who wanted to hurriedly steal Jesus’ body would have left behind.

Thus we see that after 3 days and 3 nights, the body of Jesus Christ was no longer in the tomb. The tomb was empty. The Jewish leaders or the Roman authorities could not produce Jesus’ body to refute the stories of His resurrection. The best response to the stories of His resurrection they could come up with is that His body was stolen by His disciples. But the disciples were too cowardly to have done so. They would have had to fight the Roman guards to steal the body. But no such story has ever been told.

Thus the empty tomb is one of the strongest proofs of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

***3) Large Number of Witnesses to the Resurrected Jesus***

The third proof of the resurrection of Jesus Christ is that there were a large number of witnesses who had seen the resurrected Jesus.

We have already described in the last proof what happened when women first went to the tomb to anoint Jesus’ body with spices. They found the stone rolled away, were shocked to see two angels with an appearance like lightning who informed them that He is risen as He said He would.

After the women found the tomb empty and the two angels informed them that ‘Jesus had risen,’ they went to the eleven disciples to inform them of the event. Then John records in John 20:1-10 (NKJV): “1 Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene went to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. 2 Then she ran and came to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved [which is how John describes himself], and said to them, "They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him." 3 Peter therefore went out, and the other disciple, and were going to the tomb. 4 So they both ran together, and the other disciple outran Peter and came to the tomb first. 5 And he, stooping down and looking in, saw the linen cloths lying there; yet he did not go in.

“6 Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb; and he saw the linen cloths lying there, 7 and the handkerchief that had been around His head, not lying with the linen cloths, but folded together in a place by itself. 8 Then the other disciple, who came to the tomb first, went in also; and he saw and believed. 9 For as yet they did not know the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead [meaning that even at this stage the disciples and the women did not understand the scripture that Jesus would die and rise from the dead after 3 days and 3 nights. It was impossible for human beings to even imagine because such an event had never happened in the history of mankind]. 10 Then the disciples went away again to their own homes.”

Till now the women and Peter and John had only seen the empty tomb and the women had heard the angels tell them that Jesus had risen from the dead. But no one had seen the risen Christ.

Then John records how Mary Magdalene who still lingered near the tomb after Peter and John had gone to their homes first saw the risen Jesus. John continues in John 20:11-18 (NKJV): “11 But Mary stood outside by the tomb weeping, and as she wept she stooped down and looked into the tomb. 12 And she saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. 13 Then they said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him." 14 Now when she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, and did not know that it was Jesus.

“15 Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?" She, supposing Him to be the gardener, said to Him, "Sir, if You have carried Him away, tell me where You have laid Him, and I will take Him away." 16 Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to Him, "Rabboni!" (which is to say, Teacher). 17 Jesus said to her, "Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, 'I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God.' [Jesus said this because He had not yet risen to God the Father’s throne in heaven to present Himself and be accepted as the offering for the sins of mankind. This needed to be fulfilled because the waive sheaf offering during the days of Unleavened Bread was a prophecy that He would be the first of the firstfruits.] Then John continues: "18 Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that He had spoken these things to her.”

While Mary went to inform the disciples that she had seen the risen Jesus Christ, Jesus met two other disciples. Luke tells that part of the story in great detail in Luke 24:13-32 (NKJV): “13 Now behold, two of them were traveling that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was seven miles from Jerusalem. 14 And they talked together of all these things which had happened. 15 So it was, while they conversed and reasoned, that Jesus Himself drew near and went with them. 16 But their eyes were restrained, so that they did not know Him.

“17 And He said to them, "What kind of conversation is this that you have with one another as you walk and are sad?" 18 Then the one whose name was Cleopas answered and said to Him, "Are You the only stranger in Jerusalem, and have You not known the things which happened there in these days?" 19 And He said to them, "What things?" So they said to Him, "The things concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a Prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, 20 and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to be condemned to death, and crucified Him. 21 But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel. Indeed, besides all this, today is the third day since these things happened. 22 Yes, and certain women of our company, who arrived at the tomb early, astonished us. 23 When they did not find His body, they came saying that they had also seen a vision of angels who said He was alive. 24 And certain of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but Him they did not see."

“25 Then He said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! 26 Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?" 27 And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself. 28 Then they drew near to the village where they were going, and He indicated that He would have gone farther. 29 But they constrained Him, saying, "Abide with us, for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent." And He went in to stay with them. 30 Now it came to pass, as He sat at the table with them, that He took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. 31 Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him; and He vanished from their sight. 32 And they said to one another, "Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?"

After being seen by these two disciples, they went and told the 11 disciples. Luke continues in verse 33:

“33 So they rose up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together, 34 saying, "The Lord is risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!" 35 And they told about the things that had happened on the road, and how He was known to them in the breaking of bread.”

Luke continues with the rest of the story, but John also records it in John 20:18-31 (NKJV): “18 Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that He had spoken these things to her. 19 Then, the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews [Did you notice that the disciples had the doors shut because of their fear of the Jews. This is after they had found the tomb empty. These men certainly would not have had the courage to fight armed Roman guards to steal the body of Jesus], Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, "Peace be with you." 20 When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. 21 So Jesus said to them again, "Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you." 22 And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. 23 If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

“24 Now Thomas, called the Twin [other translations have Didymus], one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. 25 The other disciples therefore said to him, "We have seen the Lord." So he said to them, "Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe." 26 And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, "Peace to you!" 27 Then He said to Thomas, "Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing." 28 And Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!" 29 Jesus said to him, "Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." 30 And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; 31 but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.”

When the disciples first saw the risen Jesus, they were frightened thinking they had seen a ghost or spirit. But Jesus reassured them that it was Him. Luke records what happened in Luke 24:36-48 (NKJV):

“36 Now as they said these things, Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them, and said to them, "Peace to you." 37 But they were terrified and frightened, and supposed they had seen a spirit. 38 And He said to them, "Why are you troubled? And why do doubts arise in your hearts? 39 Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have." 40 When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet. 41 But while they still did not believe for joy, and marveled, He said to them, "Have you any food here?" 42 So they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish and some honeycomb. 43 And He took it and ate in their presence. 44 Then He said to them, "These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me." 45 And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures. 46 Then He said to them, "Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, 47 and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. 48 And you are witnesses of these things.”

Then John records the third time that the disciples saw Jesus in John 21:1-14 (NKJV):

“1 After these things Jesus showed Himself again to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias [or Sea of Galilee], and in this way He showed Himself: 2 Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of His disciples were together. 3 Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing." They said to him, "We are going with you also." They went out and immediately got into the boat, and that night they caught nothing. 4 But when the morning had now come, Jesus stood on the shore; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. 5 Then Jesus said to them, "Children, have you any food?" They answered Him, "No." 6 And He said to them, "Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some." So they cast, and now they were not able to draw it in because of the multitude of fish.

“7 Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his outer garment (for he had removed it), and plunged into the sea. 8 But the other disciples came in the little boat (for they were not far from land, but about two hundred cubits), dragging the net with fish. 9 Then, as soon as they had come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid on it, and bread. 10 Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish which you have just caught." 11 Simon Peter went up and dragged the net to land, full of large fish, one hundred and fifty-three; and although there were so many, the net was not broken. 12 Jesus said to them, "Come and eat breakfast." Yet none of the disciples dared ask Him, "Who are You?"--knowing that it was the Lord. 13 Jesus then came and took the bread and gave it to them, and likewise the fish. 14 This is now the third time Jesus showed Himself to His disciples after He was raised from the dead.”

Besides being seen by Mary Magdalene, then two disciples, then by all the eleven disciples, Paul the apostle describes other incidents of people witnessing the risen Christ to the Corinthian Church in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8 (NKJV): “3 For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, 5 and that He was seen by Cephas [Peter], then by the twelve. 6 After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep. 7 After that He was seen by James [the half-brother of Jesus], then by all the apostles. 8 Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time.”

How did Paul have this information? Because he had met many of those who had seen the risen Jesus Christ, and had heard the account from their own mouths! When he wrote his epistle to the Corinthians, many were still alive and what he was writing could be verified from these eye-witnesses.

There were likely many other times Jesus appeared to one or more of His disciples than what is mentioned in the gospels because Luke states in Acts 1:3: “"He showed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days". Thus for forty days He was seen alive after His resurrection by many women and disciples.

Then later Stephen the martyr saw Him alive at the right hand of God the Father. Then He was seen by Paul the apostle as stated in Acts 9:38 and 1 Corinthians 15:8. And finally He was once again seen by John the apostle as described in Revelation 1:12-18 when he received the prophecies contained in the book of Revelation.

Muslims and others claim that the disciples could be hallucinating when they saw these appearances of Jesus after He was dead. But this nonsense does not account for the fact that these appearances were in different places, different times in front of different people, over 40 days, in different ways including showing many signs as recorded in John 20:31. All these eye-witnesses could not be hallucinating in all these different times and at different places. These appearances were convincing to all His disciples, leaving no doubts in their minds that they were seeing the risen Jesus and not a vision.

Such a large number of eye-witnesses to the risen Jesus Christ is proof that He was indeed resurrected.

Before they saw the risen Jesus these men were hiding in fear from the Jewish authorities behind closed doors as described in John 20:19. Ten of the 11 disciples had run away when Jesus was crucified. But these men were transformed from cowards into men of courage after they saw the risen Jesus and were willing to suffer and die for their conviction that Jesus Christ was crucified, died and was resurrected. That is the fourth proof that Jesus Christ was indeed resurrected which we will cover next.

Question naturally arises: If God really wanted to convince the world that He had raised Jesus from the dead, why did He not let the risen Christ be seen by many many more witnesses around the world? Peter says in Acts 10:39-41 (NKJV): “39 And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree: 40 Him God raised up the third day, and showed him openly; 41 Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead.”

Why only around 500 people witnessed the risen Christ and not many many more? The answer has to do with God’s plan of salvation for mankind. God is allowing one chance for salvation for every human ever born or will ever be born. If tens of millions had seen the risen Christ and had been converted, they like the true Christians would have faced persecution from, the unconverted. Most would have given in and compromised with God’s way of life under threats of persecution. They would have lost their one and only chance for salvation and would have eternally perished. God plans to give the vast majority of mankind their chance of salvation in His kingdom when Satan will no longer be around to deceive and persecute mankind. Vast majority of mankind will then qualify to receive eternal life. If tens of millions had received their chance for salvation with Satan and the demons still around to influence them, vast majority would have perished. That is why God in His mercy is offering the chance for salvation only to a relatively few firstfruits in this age of man during the first 6,000 years of mankind’s history.

It is more difficult to make it into God’s kingdom at this time. In fact the parable of the ten virgins indicates that only about 50% of those called in the age of man when subjected to persecution will qualify to receive eternal life. But their reward will also be greater as the first resurrection to eternal life is called the better resurrection. That is why only a limited witnesses chosen before of God saw the risen Jesus Christ and not much of mankind living at that time. Mankind still has eternal lessons to learn from human experience under the influence of Satan and his cohort of demons.

***4) Transformed Lives of the Disciples***

Whatever one’s opinion about Jesus may be, one thing is certain. In just three and a half years of preaching He electrified the world and led to the birth of the largest religion on earth. Birth of Islam took place over 22 years of Mohammed’s life from age 40 when he received his first revelation till his death. Hinduism evolved over hundreds of years. Budhism was formed and spread over 45 years of Gautam Budha’s life from the time of his enlightenment to his death. Sikhism developed over 200 years from the beginning of preaching by Guru Nanak around 1496 A.D. to the death of the tenth Guru in 1708 A.D. In contrast only three and a half years of preaching by Jesus Christ electrified and transformed much of the world. The singular event responsible for this sudden transformation was the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

During His life almost no one understood who He was or the message He was trying to convey. Not His followers, family or friends, not His enemies or the Jewish and Roman authorities and not the general population understood Him.

He once asked His disciples “Who do men say that I, the Son of Man am?” (Matt 16:13). Some thought He was John the Baptist who had returned from the dead; some thought He was Elijah the prophet, or Jeremiah or one of the other prophets. But Peter answered “You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God.”

Even though this truth was revealed to Peter, He did not fully understand what that meant or what Christ’s mission was. He lapsed into thinking that Jesus was a physical Messiah, a descendant of King David, who had come to deliver the Jewish nation from Roman rule and lead it to glory.

Thus Jesus’s death was an unexpected total shock for them despite the fact that He had plainly told them that He was going to die and rise again after the third day. He said to them in Mark 9:31-32: “The Son of Man is being delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill Him. And after He is killed, He will rise the third day. But they did not understand this saying, and were afraid to ask Him.”

The disciples were greatly bothered by Jesus’ talk of being tortured and killed. One time Peter grabbed Jesus and said, “This shall not happen to You! (Matthew 16.22).

Jesus was a mystery to the masses. They asked Him in John 10:24: “How long do You keep us in doubt? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly.” Some thought He was not completely sane. Some said “He has a demon and is mad. Why do you listen to Him? (John 10:20 - NKJV). Even His physical family was concerned about His sanity as Mark 3:21 (NKJV) states: “When His own people heard about this, they went out to lay hold of Him, for they said, ‘He is out of His mind.’”

But still Jesus attracted vast crowds of people. He had healed many, performed many miracles among them. He was a charismatic leader and the common people hung on to His words so that the Jewish religious leaders complained in John 12:19 (NKJV): “Look, the world has gone after Him!”

Jesus was a very interesting speaker, speaking to them in parables using graphic stories from common everyday life events to illustrate His points. The stories sounded very good, but He did not explain their spiritual meaning to the masses. However, He expounded them to His inner circle of disciples. And that is what caused confusion among the general public. So some said He was a good man. Others said He was a religious fraud deceiving His followers (John 7:12). Others said He was demon possessed and some others also claimed that He was a drunkard and a gluttonous man (Matthew 11:19).

Though the common people hung on to His words, they were confused about who He was and about what He said. Matthew 7:28-29 (NKJV) records: “…people were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.” Many would say, “We have seen strange things today,” (Luke 5:26).

The religious authorities and the educated of His day did not view Jesus as an intellectual or a noted political leader. John 9:29 (NKJV) quotes them as mockingly saying, “We know that God spoke to Moses. As for this fellow, we do not know where He is from.” But He stunned the educated with the depth of His learning and understanding, for John 7:15 (NKJV) quotes them as saying, “How does this Man know letters, having never studied?”

Religious leaders and other members of high society were repelled by the company He kept. A woman of ill repute and a sinner in the city once poured oil over His feet, wiped them with her hair and even kissed His feet. The Pharisees were appalled at the sight and at Him for allowing it for they said in Luke 7:36-39 (NKJV): “This man, if He were a prophet, would know who and what manner of woman this is who is touching Him.”

The religious leaders accused Him of breaking God’s law. They thought He was trying to throw out the basic 1500 year old constitution of the nation, the Old Testament. They accused Him of breaking the Sabbath when He healed people on the Sabbath, despite His telling them in Matthew 5:17 (NKJV): “Do not think I came to destroy the Law or the prophets, I did not come to destroy but to fulfill.”

But there was one way Jesus was totally different from any other prophet or founder of any other religion before or since He came. He made an astounding claim about Himself that none of the others made about themselves. Founders of all religions claimed to be mere human beings. But Jesus claimed that He was more than a human being which is what incensed the religious leaders of His day so much that they tried to kill Him. John 5:18 says they tried to kill Him because He “said that God was His Father, making himself equal with God.” They thought this was blasphemy and tried to stone Him saying: “Because You, being a Man, make Yourself God” (John 10:33 - NKJV).

People were sometimes shocked by what Jesus said. John 6:35, 38-41 (NKJV) states: “35 And Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst…38 For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. 39 This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. 40 And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day." 41 The Jews then complained about Him, because He said, "I am the bread which came down from heaven."

Then Jesus shocked them even further that whoever eats His flesh and drinks His blood will have eternal life.

John continues in Verse 47: “47 Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me has everlasting life. 48 I am the bread of life. 49 Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and are dead. 50 This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die. 51 I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world." 52 The Jews therefore quarreled among themselves, saying, "How can this Man give us His flesh to eat?" 53 Then Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. 54 Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. 55 For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. 56 He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. 57 As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me. 58 This is the bread which came down from heaven--not as your fathers ate the manna, and are dead. He who eats this bread will live forever."

“59 These things He said in the synagogue as He taught in Capernaum. 60 Therefore many of His disciples, when they heard this, said, "This is a hard saying; who can understand it?" 61 When Jesus knew in Himself that His disciples complained about this, He said to them, "Does this offend you?...The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life. 66 From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more.”

Thus hearing such strange things from Jesus’ mouth, many of Jesus’ followers simply quit following Him.

Consider this: ***Would anyone die for such a misunderstood and maligned man?***

When most of Jesus’ disciples quit following Him, eleven of the twelve had different ideas. John states in verses John 6:67-69 (NKJV): “67 Then Jesus said to the twelve, "Do you also want to go away?" 68 But Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. 69 Also we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

They believed that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the Living God. But as stated earlier, they thought that Jesus was a physical Messiah, a descendant of King David, who had come to deliver the Jewish nation from Roman rule and lead it to glory.

Even after Jesus was executed, all His disciples thought the same thing and said in Luke 24:21 (NKJV), “We were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel.” As stated earlier, Jesus death was a shock to all His disciples including the eleven.

They had seen Jesus heal the sick, turn water into wine, walk on water, calm a raging storm, feed thousands with a few loaves of bread and fish, and perform many other miracles. Their leader seemed to be invincible to them. They had dared to dream of glory for the Jewish nation and for themselves.

But then they had seen their invincible leader being arrested without a struggle, suffer unbelievable humiliation through trials by the Jewish authorities, the Roman authorities and Herod, and then suffer the shameful and disgraceful public execution through crucifixion. This was a crushing blow for the disciples. The Jewish authorities had triumphed over the man who had sometimes put them down with His words. They would believe that they had been right all along and the man Jesus was a religious fraud and got what He deserved. Now the disciples if not themselves executed would be laughed to scorn by everybody. People would point fingers at them saying these men gave up everything to follow a fraud, a charlatan, a fake Messiah.

In the night before Jesus was crucified, Peter had followed Jesus after His arrest. Onlookers asked Peter if He was a disciple of the half-naked, bruised, beaten, tired and weak man Jesus? Peter cursed and swore and shouted in Mark 14:71 (NKJV): “I do not know this Man of whom you speak!” In Matthew 26:70, 74 (NKJV) Peter is stated to have said: “I do not know what you are saying…I do not know the Man!”

Then when the rooster crowed and Jesus looked at Peter, He ran away in fear and humiliation. The rest of the disciples also ran away. One young man, probably the gospel writer Mark was so frightened that He ran away naked, leaving his clothes in the hands of those who tried to grab him (Mark 14:51).

In fact, after His crucifixion and death, the disciples thought they were going to be next. They thought the Jewish authorities were now going to come after all those who had been Jesus’ followers and have them executed. John states in John 20:19 (NKJV): “19 Then, the same day at evening, being the first day of the week [this was the 4th day after Jesus had died], when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews…”

Here we see on the fourth day after Jesus was crucified and died, the disciples were hiding behind closed doors for fear that they would be recognized as having been with Jesus and will be arrested and executed. These were very frightened men.

But then there was a sudden transformation in the attitude and behavior of these men. What shocking event had they witnessed? They had seen Jesus killed and laid in a tomb. They knew He was dead. But then they see the resurrected Jesus and finally knew that He was the Son of the living God, and that He was alive. They saw Him alive over 40 days, talked with Him, and He taught them and gave them understanding of the Scriptures.

They had heard Jesus tell them that He would be killed but would rise and live again after 3 days. He had told them that they would be sorrowful at His death, but their sorrow would be turned into joy. They had seen both events happen. He had died and then seen Him alive again as a spirit Being. Nothing like this had happened before in the history of mankind. But the disciples had experienced it. There was no denying the fact for them that Jesus died and is alive again as a spirit Being.

The disciples now understood the very important reasons for Jesus’ life and death, and then His resurrection. They understood that Jesus came to die for the sins of mankind so that man could be forgiven on repentance and then be reconciled to his Creator. Jesus had told the disciples during His time with them in John 11:25 (NKJV): “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live.” This meant nothing to them when they heard it. But then they had seen Jesus die and live again. Now they understood their potential and that they too would die but live again through a resurrection as the sons of God.

We human beings have not seen a dead Jesus alive again. We may think the disciples perhaps fabricated a tale as Muslims and others claim. But consider what this would mean. If the resurrection did not take place, the disciples would have known it. Would they have been willing to die for a tale they knew to be a lie. Does it make sense?

We might be deceived about a belief and give our money, time and even life for it as many do for their religious beliefs. But can you imagine anyone suffering torture, humiliation, beatings, loss of everything and then die for something they knew to be a lie? What purpose would it serve?

We can reach only one conclusion. The disciples experienced the most unbelievable event of all: they had seen a man die and then live again as a spirit Being. They are our witnesses that the event actually happened.

Peter said in 2 Peter 1:16 (NKJV): “For we did not follow cunningly devised fables…but were eyewitnesses of His majesty.” John wrote decades later about the event in 1 John 1:2 (NKJV): “We have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested to us.”

Jesus Himself charged His disciples to spread the word about His life, death and resurrection. Before His death He told them in John 15:27 (NKJV): “And you also will bear witness, because you have been with Me from the beginning.” Then after His resurrection Jesus told them in Acts 1:8 (NKJV): “And you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and to all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

On the day of Pentecost, after the disciples received the holy spirit, they proceeded to do precisely that. There was a sudden transformation in the attitude and behavior of these men. They were no longer afraid of the religious authorities and openly and boldly preached the resurrection of Jesus Christ and remission of sins right at the Temple where the public could hear them. Peter preached his first sermon to all those gathered in Jerusalem from many countries to celebrate the feast of Pentecost. Thousands were immediately convicted and converted.

The preaching brought immediate persecution from the authorities. But the transformation of the apostles is evident in how they now reacted in the face of persecution.

When they had healed a cripple; Acts 4:1-4 states (NKJV): “1 Now as they spoke to the people, the priests, the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees came upon them, 2 being greatly disturbed that they taught the people and preached in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. 3 And they laid hands on them, and put them in custody until the next day, for it was already evening. 4 However, many of those who heard the word believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand.

“5 And it came to pass, on the next day, that their rulers, elders, and scribes, 6 as well as Annas the high priest, Caiaphas, John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the family of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem. 7 And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, "By what power or by what name have you done this?" 8 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers of the people and elders of Israel: 9 If we this day are judged for a good deed done to a helpless man, by what means he has been made well, 10 let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole. 11 This is the 'stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.' 12 Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

“13 Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus. 14 And seeing the man who had been healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it. 15 But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves, 16 saying, "What shall we do to these men? For, indeed, that a notable miracle has been done through them is evident to all who dwell in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it. 17 But so that it spreads no further among the people, let us severely threaten them, that from now on they speak to no man in this name." 18 And they called them and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. 19 But Peter and John answered and said to them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge. 20 For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." 21 So when they had further threatened them, they let them go…”

Then later the disciples were beaten, and their reaction is stated in Acts 5:17-42 (NKJV):

 “17 Then the high priest rose up, and all those who were with him (which is the sect of the Sadducees), and they were filled with indignation, 18 and laid their hands on the apostles and put them in the common prison. 19 But at night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought them out, and said, 20 "Go, stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this life." 21 And when they heard that, they entered the temple early in the morning and taught. But the high priest and those with him came and called the council together, with all the elders of the children of Israel, and sent to the prison to have them brought. 22 But when the officers came and did not find them in the prison, they returned and reported, 23 saying, "Indeed we found the prison shut securely, and the guards standing outside before the doors; but when we opened them, we found no one inside!"

“24 Now when the high priest, the captain of the temple, and the chief priests heard these things, they wondered what the outcome would be. 25 So one came and told them, saying, "Look, the men whom you put in prison are standing in the temple and teaching the people!" 26 Then the captain went with the officers and brought them without violence, for they feared the people, lest they should be stoned. 27 And when they had brought them, they set them before the council. And the high priest asked them, 28 saying, "Did we not strictly command you not to teach in this name? And look, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this Man's blood on us!" 29 But Peter and the other apostles answered and said: "We ought to obey God rather than men. 30 The God of our fathers raised up Jesus whom you murdered by hanging on a tree. 31 Him God has exalted to His right hand to be Prince and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. 32 And we are His witnesses to these things, and so also is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him."

“33 When they heard this, they were furious and plotted to kill them. 34 Then one in the council stood up, a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law held in respect by all the people, and commanded them to put the apostles outside for a little while. 35 And he said to them: "Men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what you intend to do regarding these men. 36 For some time ago Theudas rose up, claiming to be somebody. A number of men, about four hundred, joined him. He was slain, and all who obeyed him were scattered and came to nothing. 37 After this man, Judas of Galilee rose up in the days of the census, and drew away many people after him. He also perished, and all who obeyed him were dispersed. 38 And now I say to you, keep away from these men and let them alone; for if this plan or this work is of men, it will come to nothing; 39 but if it is of God, you cannot overthrow it--lest you even be found to fight against God." 40 And they agreed with him, and when they had called for the apostles and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. 41 So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name. 42 And daily in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.”

Such is the transformation that took place in the lives of men who had been cowards 4 days after Jesus’ death, before they witnessed His resurrection. The apostles would continue to preach the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, forgiveness of sins leading to eternal life and the gospel of the establishment of the kingdom of God throughout the rest of their lives leading to growth of Christianity to become the largest religion in the world. Eleven of them would be martyred for this cause. According to tradition even John was thrown in a boiling cauldron of oil, but climbed out of it alive. After witnessing this intervention from God, the ruler who had sentenced him to death let him go.

The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ is the central event directly responsible for the growth and endurance of Christianity. Transformed lives of the apostles is one of the strongest proofs of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

 ***5. Transformation of Jesus’ Brothers from Skeptics into Believers.***

 Now let’s look at the fifth proof of the resurrection of Jesus, which is the transformation of Jesus’ brothers from skeptics into believers.

We know Jesus’ family did not believe in Him and were concerned about His sanity as Mark 3:20-21 (NKJV) states: “20 Then the multitude came together again, so that they could not so much as eat bread. 21 But when His own people heard about this, they went out to lay hold of Him, for they said, "He is out of His mind."

John plainly states in John 7:5 that: “5 …even His brothers did not believe in Him.”

Further proof that Jesus’ brothers did not believe He was the Son of God is that when Jesus was about to die on the cross, He asked John to take care of His mother Mary as his own mother after His death. John records in John 19:26-27 (NKJV): “26 When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to His mother, "Woman, behold your son!" 27 Then He said to the disciple, "Behold your mother!" And from that hour that disciple took her to his own home.”

Why would Jesus charge John the apostle to look after His mother after His death rather than one of His half-brothers and Mary’s own sons? The reason is obvious. They did not believe that Jesus was the Son of God.

But then James saw the risen Christ as Paul mentions in 1 Corinthians 15:7. Knowing that his brother died, but then seeing Him alive again transformed James. Now he knew that His half-brother Jesus was truly the Son of God. Now he knew that his brother preached the truth and that the potential of man is to become eternal sons of God through a resurrection.

Not only was James converted but possibly all his other 3 brothers named in the gospels, Jude, Simon and Joses, were also converted. After the eleven apostles had seen Jesus for the last time and ascend to heaven from the Mount of Olives, they returned to Jerusalem and Luke records in Acts 1:13-14: “13 And when they had entered [that is Jerusalem], they went up into the upper room where they were staying: Peter, James, John, and Andrew; Philip and Thomas; Bartholomew and Matthew; James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot; and Judas the son of James. 14 These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and *with His brothers*.”

These verses imply that at least two of Jesus’ half-brothers, possibly all 4 of them continued in prayer together with the 11 apostles till the day of Pentecost when all of them received God’s holy spirit. We know for certain that at least two of Jesus’ brothers were converted and were in the ministry. James wrote the epistle of James and his brother Jude wrote the epistle in the Bible that bears his name.

James was later the head of the headquarters Church of God in Jerusalem and was stoned to death for his belief that his brother was the Son of God and was resurrected after His death. James had lived perhaps 30 years of his life with his brother. After his conversion he then knew that his brother had lived a sinless life and was the spotless Lamb of God who became the perfect sacrifice for the sins of mankind. If James had seen sins in his brother’s life, he would not have become a convert because if Jesus had sinned, He would not have been the Son of God.

J.P. Moreland describes events in James’ life in his book *Scaling the Secular City*, 1987, pp 178-179:

“Why did these men change? Why did they undergo hardship, persecution, pressure and martyrdom? Consider James the brother of Jesus. Josephus, the first century Jewish historian, tells us that he died a martyr’s death for his faith in his brother. Yet the gospels tell us that during Jesus’ life, he was an unbeliever and opposed Jesus.

“Why did he change? What could cause a Jew to believe that his own brother was the very Son of God and to be willing to die for such a belief? [The Jews believed that there was only one God. That is why the Jews tried to kill Jesus when He claimed He was the Son of God.] It certainly was not a set of lovely teachings from a carpenter from Nazareth. Only the appearance of Jesus to James can explain his transformation.”

***6) Conversion of Paul the Apostle***

The sixth proof of the resurrection of Jesus Christ is the conversion of Paul the apostle. Paul, a young Rabbi and a strict Pharisee was a rising star of Judaism. He did not believe that Jesus was resurrected and considered the new religion about Jesus a heresy. He hated it so much that he was convinced it deserved to be stamped out by any means possible. He made it his personal mission and zealously persecuted the Church of God that had been formed.

He considered the story of the resurrection of Jesus Christ a pure fabrication and the new movement that had been built around it contrary to every belief and tradition he held sacred. So he imprisoned the followers of Jesus and caused some to be killed.

Luke records in Acts 8:1-3 (NKJV): “1 Now Saul was consenting to his [Stephen’s] death. At that time a great persecution arose against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. 2 And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him. 3 As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering every house, and dragging off men and women, committing them to prison.”

After making havoc of the Church in Jerusalem, Paul wanted to do the same in other cities. Luke continues in Acts 9:1-2 (NKJV): “1 Then Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest 2 and asked letters from him to the synagogues of Damascus, so that if he found any who were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.”

But as Paul was journeying from Jerusalem to Damascus, something happened. Luke continues: “3 As he journeyed he came near Damascus, and suddenly a light shone around him from heaven. 4 Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" 5 And he said, "Who are You, Lord?" Then the Lord said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the goads." 6 So he, trembling and astonished, said, "Lord, what do You want me to do?" Then the Lord said to him, "Arise and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do."

That experience changed Paul’s life. He had now seen the resurrected Jesus himself as he stated in 1 Corinthians 9:1: “Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord”, and in 1 Corinthians 15: 8-9 (NKJV): “8 Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time. 9 For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.”

Seeing the resurrected Jesus Christ transformed Paul and changed his beliefs. He threw away everything that he had strived for all his life. He states in Philippians 3:7-8 (NKJV):” 7 But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. 8 Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ.”

Paul’s overriding aim in life now was “10 that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, 11 if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.”

Why would Paul be willing to throw to the dogs everything he had striven for in his life if Jesus was simply a dead man who had died a shameful death by crucifixion? It does not make sense at all.

Jesus had charged His disciples in Acts 1:8: “And you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” After his conversion, for Paul this preaching of the gospel or good news centered around the meaning of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It was proof that humans will receive eternal life through a resurrection from the dead.

Paul stated in 1 Corinthians 15:1, 3-4 (NKJV): “1 Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you… 3 For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.”

Paul literally staked his life on the resurrection of Jesus Christ. He was shocked to hear that in the city of Corinth some believers doubted the resurrection of Jesus. He then logically explained how the dead rise again to life in verses 12-20: “12 Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? 13 But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: 14 And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. 15 Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. 16 For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: 17 And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. 18 Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. 19 If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. 20 But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.”

Consider: Would Paul have wasted his life if the resurrection of Jesus Christ was a lie? Would he have given up his successful life as a Pharisee for a lie? The UCG booklet “*Jesus Christ: The Real Stor*y” states on page 50:

“Paul was not a man given to vivid imaginations of superstitious people. He was a levelheaded intellectual. Yet he later was prepared to defend his zeal for Christ before hostile mobs as well as governors, kings and other rulers. He was prepared to endure suffering for his beliefs as he describes in 2 Corinthians 11:23-27: “23 Are they ministers of Christ?--I speak as a fool--I am more: in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often. 24 From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one. 25 Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep; 26 in journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; 27 in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness…”

In the end Paul was beheaded for his belief that Jesus died, was resurrected and was the Messiah who is now alive and well at the right hand of God the Father. The testimony of Paul and his transformed life is proof of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

***7) Martyrdom of Christians and Existence of the Church over the Centuries***

The seventh and final proof of the resurrection of Jesus Christ is the martyrdom of the original apostles, thousands of early Christians and the birth and existence of the Church.

Traditions tell us that out of the eleven original apostles, ten of them were martyred for their beliefs. Even John the apostle was cast into a cauldron of boiling oil, but climbed out of it alive through God’s intervention. He was then perhaps banished to the island of Patmos by the ruler. James the half-brother of Jesus and Paul the apostle were also martyred. Then thousands of early Christians died in the Roman arenas and prisons for their belief that Jesus Christ died for the sins of mankind and rose from the dead and is alive to give them also eternal life through a resurrection.

We know Mohammed is not a myth. He was a real person and the main events attributed to him were true because the existence of Islam is proof of that. In the same way existence of Christianity is proof of the main event of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ on which it is based. The original apostles and thousands of Christians who believed because of their preaching would not have willingly suffered martyrdom if they knew that the resurrection of Jesus was a lie.

God’s true Church has always existed since its founding in 31 A.D. Over the past more than 1980 years, tens of thousands of Christians have been willing to lay down their lives for their belief that Jesus Christ lived, died for the sins of mankind and was resurrected. Ever since 31 A.D. as each succeeding generation of Christians saw the martyrdom of Christians of the previous generation, they believed the truth of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and many have been willing to be martyred for their faith as well if called upon to do so.

Thus the existence of Christianity and the martyrdom of the original apostles and Christians who believed through their preaching, and then the preaching of the first generation of Christians to the next generation and their willingness to be martyred and so on for succeeding generations is proof that the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ was a true event.

**Chapter 23**

**Revealing the Other god(s)**

In chapter 1 we discussed the existence of God and wondered whether there is only one supreme God, or there are multiple gods competing against each other, or there is one supreme God and there are other gods under His authority.

We find the universe in harmony, perfectly obeying the laws of physics, mathematics, chemistry and astronomy. This is evidence that there is one supreme God in control of all creation. He appears to be the Creator of everything and has total control over it all, including possessing all the power to sustain His physical laws of the universe. If these laws were not sustained celestial bodies would collide with one another putting the universe in chaos and on a course of destruction.

If there are multiple gods in competition with one another who have created their own different universe, then there would likely be constant war in order to take over or destroy the creation of other gods with each trying to become the supreme ruler of all the universes. At least that’s how we humans imagine this cosmic competition to be like.

The earth follows a precise orbit in our solar system. Even a tiny variation in its orbit would make conditions too cold or too hot and all life would end on earth.

Evidence of the universe in harmony that we know of seems to prove the existence of one Supreme Creator God. But astronomers and scientists have observed that the surfaces of all planets and moons in our solar system are cratered. And the asteroid and Kuiper belts appear to be wreckages of a monumental cosmic war waged in space. The earth appears to have been part of this war. This points to the existence of at least two god beings in competition with each other.

Other evidence from earth shows that the competing gods are not in control of their own universes but are in fact competing only on earth. The universe as we know it is presently in perfect harmony, though there was a cosmic war in the past. This evidence is provided by the existence of different religions that differ from each other as we have proved. They promise different salvation to their adherents, and as we will see later that the way of life they advocate to their adherents is also different.

Can we identify who these gods who are competing with each other are? We have identified one of these Gods, the supreme God whom we know as God the Father from the Bible, the original source of life.

We have also proved the existence of two God Beings: God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ, formerly known as the Word. But these two God Beings are not in competition with each other. They are in perfect harmony with each other with Jesus Christ being in total subjection to and under the complete authority of God the Father.

Can we identify who the other god is or gods are that are in competition with God the Father and Jesus Christ?

You may have guessed the identity of the competing god, but let’s formally identify who he is. Can the source that identifies this competing god also tell us if there is one competing god or there are multiple gods that are competing with God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ? The answer is Yes!

We have proved beyond a shadow of doubt that the words of the entire Bible are backed by the power of the Supreme Almighty God. We have also proved that the words in the so-called holy books of other religions do not prove that they are backed by the Almighty. Since these holy books claim that their religion is inspired by the Creator, they are lying. They have simply not demonstrated that the words of these holy books are backed by the power of the supreme God.

The Hindu and Sikh scriptures allude to the existence of multiple gods. But since we have proved these scriptures to be either mere philosophies of men or at worst diabolical lies, there is no reason to believe the existence of multiple gods as mentioned in these books. The only reliable source of truth is the Bible. So we must look into the Bible to see if we can identify this other god(s) that compete with the true supreme God.

***God of this World***

The Bible in fact does identify this other god and calls him the ‘god of this world.’

2 Corinthians 4:3-4 states, “3 But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost [or perishing in NIV]: 4 In whom the god of this world has blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.”

Here the Bible identifies another god who is blinding the minds of those who do not believe the good news of Jesus Christ, which is the remission of sins through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, offer of salvation which is being born as immortal sons of God, and the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth.

As we would expect, the god who is competing with the supreme God would try to thwart His purposes and try to deceive as many as he can about the good news of the salvation the supreme God is offering.

Before we further identify this competing god, let’s understand what the supreme God says about Himself in the Bible. Speaking through Isaiah, God declares in Isaiah 46:9-10 (NKJV), “9 Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, 10 Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure:”

Here the God of the Bible declares that there is no other God beside Him, that is, there is no other God besides the God of the Bible. He says He has declared the end of His plan for humanity from the very beginning and brought it to pass. He says His counsel shall stand and He will do whatever pleases Him.

God Himself says that prophecy is a proof of the true God. The gods of all other religions are mere idols, incapable of predicting the future and bringing it to pass. The God of the Bible throws the gods of all other religions a challenge through Isaiah the prophet in Isaiah 41:22-23 (REB): "Let these idols come forward and foretell the future for us. Let them declare the meaning of these past events that we may reflect on it; let them predict the future to us that we may know what it holds. Declare what is yet to happen; then we shall know you are gods."

This is the challenge to the gods of Islam, Hinduism and Sikhism. But as we have already seen, all the gods in these religions have miserably failed this test. The holy books of none of these religions contain any events foretold in advance that came true.

Then in many other verses the God of the Bible declares that there is no other God beside Him.

Isaiah 43:9-11: “9 Let all the nations be gathered together, and let the people be assembled: who among them can declare this, and show us former things? let them bring forth their witnesses, that they may be justified: or let them hear, and say, It is truth. 10 You are my witnesses, says the Lord, and my servant whom I have chosen: that you may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. 11 I, even I, am the Lord; and beside me there is no Savior.”

God of the Bible declares that there was no God before Him. He thus is the original source of all life. He says there is no Savior beside Him. He is basically declaring that the gods of other religions who claim to be saviors are liars.

Isaiah 45:5-7, “5 I am the Lord, and there is none else, there is no God beside me…6 That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside me. I am the Lord, and there is none else.”

Isaiah 45: 21-23 (NKJV), “21 Tell and bring forth your case; Yes, let them take counsel together. Who has declared this from ancient time? Who has told it from that time? Have not I, the Lord? And there is no other God besides Me, a just God and a Savior; There is none besides Me. 22 "Look to Me, and be saved, all you ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other. 23 I have sworn by Myself; the word has gone out of My mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that to Me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall take an oath [or swear].”

Thus the God of the Bible emphatically declares that He is the true God and there is none other. And He has provided us ample proof by foretelling many things and bringing them to pass. This means that the other god that the Bible calls the ‘god of this world’ is not a true god.

The Bible also shows that there are no multiple gods competing with the true supreme God. There is only one competing god the Bible calls the ‘god of this world.’

The Bible gives us further details about this ‘god of this world.’ As we have seen in 2 Corinthians 4:3-4 quoted earlier, this god is engaged in deceiving the world so that the light of the gospel [good news] of Christ does not shine on those who do not believe the truth. The book of Revelation identifies this god.

Revelation 12:9, “9 So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who *deceives the whole world*; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.”

This other ‘god of this world’ now stands exposed. He is identified as Satan the devil, the one who deceives the whole world. So he and the ‘god of this world’ are one and the same being, because the ‘god of this world’ is also engaged in deceiving the whole world about the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ. And he is identified as the serpent of old that deceived Eve in the Garden of Eden into eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Satan is a Hebrew noun meaning "adversary"—the enemy, opponent, antagonist, or foe. The verb forms of the noun mean to "accuse," "slander" and "be an adversary" (*Anchor Bible Dictionary*, Vol. 5, 1992, "Satan," p. 985).

Devil is the other name for Satan. Devil is translated from the Greek word diabolos, the root from which we get such words as diabolic and diabolical, used to describe something wicked or sinister. Diabolos means "an accuser, a slanderer" (W.E. Vine, *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, 1985, "Devil, Devilish").

The Bible reveals much about Satan’s nature. Jesus Christ said in John 8:44 (NKJV), “…He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.”

Peter the apostle shed further light on his murderous nature in 1 Peter 5:8-9 (NKJV): “8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. 9 Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world.”

Peter thus declares that the devil is like a roaring lion seeking any human being he can devour, and that he is the cause of our suffering.

Ephesians 2:2-4 says he works in all the children of disobedience to God, “2 Wherein in time past you walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air [Satan being called the prince of the power of the air means he broadcasts his thoughts, moods, ideas, feelings and attitudes to all humans], the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience: 3 Among whom also we all had our conversation [conduct] in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath…”

Satan’s evil influence is so pervasive that he "deceives the whole world" (Revelation 12:9). And he achieves this influence on mankind through his lies and deception. Founding different religions with false promises of salvation based on cunningly crafted lies has been one of Satan’s prime strategies to try to devour mankind.

Before we discuss how destructive his influence has been on mankind through religion, let’s look at Satan’s brief history as revealed in the Bible.

***Brief History of Satan***

Satan’s history was partly covered in chapter 18 under “*History of the Universe Before Man’s Creation*.” Here are additional details.

God did not create Satan. He has not always existed. The Bible explains how he came into being.

God originally created a brilliant, highly talented archangel called Lucifer when He created hundreds of millions or perhaps billions of other angels. Ezekiel the prophet describes this brilliant being in Ezekiel 28:12-17, “12…Thus says the Lord GOD; You seal up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. 13 You have been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was your covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of your tabrets and of your pipes was prepared in you in the day that you were created.

“14 You are the anointed cherub that covers; and I have set you so: you were upon the holy mountain of God; you have walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. 15 You were perfect in your ways from the day that you were created, till iniquity was found in you. 16 By the multitude of your merchandise they have filled the midst of you with violence, and you have sinned: therefore I will cast you as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy you, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. 17 Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty, You have corrupted your wisdom by reason of your brightness…”

This is a brilliant being full of wisdom and beauty that God created. He is called the "cherub who covers," indicating that once he had been one of the two archangels that covered God’s throne. This was depicted in the model of God's throne in the form of the mercy seat and the two cherubim covering it that Moses made to be placed in the Tabernacle and later in Solomon’s Temple. God gave these angels the awesome distinction of covering His very throne and serving. Thus he had the best opportunity to learn God’s way of life and His method of government at His very throne. He thus held the highest position of honor and responsibility in the angelic realm.

Then this brilliant being sinned and was cast out from God’s throne as a profane being. Isaiah the prophet identifies the cause that led to sin in Isaiah 14:12-14 (NKJV): "How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, you who weakened the nations! For you have said in your heart: 'I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars [angels] of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High'”

Ezekiel reveals that because of his incredible beauty and talents vanity seized Lucifer. He let it corrupt his wisdom so that he thought he could do things better than God. He then plotted to take over the rulership of the universe from the Creator God and shared his plans with one-third of all the angels under his command (Revelation 12:4, “4 His [Satan’s] tail drew a third of the stars [symbol for angels] of heaven and threw them to the earth.”) They joined him in his plans and they mounted up to heaven and attacked God’s throne. But angels loyal to God fought with Lucifer and the angels with him. Lucifer and the angels with him were defeated and cast back to earth.

Rebellion changed Lucifer’s nature and he became an adversary of God from then on. That is why he is appropriately named Satan. The nature of the angels with him also changed. They became known as demons. Thus though there is only one other competing ‘god’ on earth competing against the true God, he is helped by hundreds of millions of demons. However they are all under his command. Satan’s kingdom on earth is not divided. When Jesus cast demons out of people the Pharisees accused Him of doing so by using the power of Satan. But Jesus answered in Matthew 12:24-26, “ 25 But Jesus knew their thoughts, and said to them: "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand. 26 If Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand?” Then Jesus clarified that He casts out demons by the spirit of God.

After Satan’s rebellion, God chose to create humanity to qualify to replace Satan and the demons as rulers of the earth. Later humans will fulfill the potential that Lucifer and the angels with him failed to qualify to fulfill: rulership of the universe with God the Father and Jesus Christ.

Satan was in the Garden of Eden when Adam and Eve were created as revealed by Ezekiel the prophet. He is the old serpent referred to in Revelation 12:9 who deceived Eve into eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil (Genesis 3:1-6).

Satan deceived Eve by lying to her that she had an immortal soul and that she would not die if she ate of the forbidden fruit. He implied that God was lying to Eve by telling her that she would die, and that the fruit of the tree was good for her to make her wise. Later Eve acknowledged that she was deceived by the serpent. By deceiving Eve into eating of the forbidden fruit, Satan in effect murdered Eve and Adam. He did not kill them directly. But he knew that if he could seduce them to sin by disobeying God, they would eventually die. That’s why Jesus called him a murderer from the very beginning of humanity and father of lies in John 8:44 as quoted earlier.

Satan knows that God has created humanity to eventually qualify to replace him and the demons as rulers of the earth. That’s why he hates humanity with his whole being and like a roaring lion seeks to devour as many as he can as revealed in 1 Peter 5:8 quoted earlier.

Ever since the Garden of Eden Satan and the demons have been deceiving humanity. And his greatest deception has been in the area of religion. United Church of God booklet titled “*Is There Really a Devil*?” (Available free of charge at www.ucg.org) explains on p.26:

“As a master of persuasion, Satan easily deceives mankind into focusing on anything but God. Through the theory of evolution, for example, he has convinced millions that God doesn't exist…

“Through hundreds of corrupt religions he has over the ages convinced billions of people to worship the sun, moon and stars, animals, nature, deceased ancestors, imaginary gods and goddesses, and a bewildering variety of other things—or nothing at all. Even among the many varieties of traditional Christianity, we find people divided and bickering over who and what God is, over His purpose for us, and over how He wants us to worship Him and how we should live. The devil has done an effective job of confusing people as to what the Bible really says.

“Satan doesn't care which of these groups people fall into. Whether they believe in no God at all, accept and worship a false god or are deceived into a false view of the true God and His plan for us, Satan still has them where he wants them—"alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart" (Ephesians:4:18).

“Perhaps this helps us better understand what God means when He tells us that the devil "deceives the whole world" (Revelation:12:9). Paul explains that "the god of this age" has blinded those "who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them" (2 Corinthians:4:4).

“In one of His parables Jesus explains that, as soon as some people hear God's truth, "the devil comes and takes away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved" (Luke:8:12). Satan will stop at nothing to keep people blinded to the fullness of God's truth. The result, as Jesus explained, is that "the gate is wide and the road is easy that leads to destruction, and there are many who take it," and "the gate is narrow and the road is hard that leads to life, and there are few who find it" (Matthew:7:13-14, NRSV).

*Satan’s Deception Through Religion*

Man’s ancient history has already been told in chapter 9. Here we will mention only parts of that history that relate to Satan’s influence over religion.

After deceiving Eve into eating the forbidden fruit, Satan continued to deceive all of humanity. But it was difficult for him to completely deceive Adam about the true religion. He started working with Cain. Cain started hating God after his offering was rejected and his brother Abel’s offering was accepted by God. So Cain murdered his brother. As a result Cain was separated from Adam’s other children.

Cain now under Satan’s influence began to develop his own way of life and religion. Cain was led to deify himself which led to ancestor worship among his descendants. After Cain passed away Satan worked with Lamech (Genesis 4:18-24) and his descendants. Lamech and his descendants deified themselves. This was different from ancestor worship. Lamech and his descendants called themselves gods and demanded that they be worshipped by the common people. To make it easy for the people to worship them they made idols of themselves and had them installed in temples for the people to worship. Thus idol worship was introduced in the world.

Not only did Satan lead Lamech and his descendants to introduce idol worship, they also persecuted those who obeyed the true God. It seems Lamech had Enoch murdered and later persecuted Noah and sought to murder him. Noah had to flee with his family to save themselves. Eventually due to persecution by Lamech and his descendants everyone except Noah turned away from the true God. And the world was saturated with violence and everyone’s thoughts were only evil continually. As a result God drowned that world in a global Flood.

After the Flood Noah taught all his family God’s way of life. But rebellion against Noah and God’s way was led by Cush the son of Naamah the daughter of Lamech who had survived the Flood as the wife of Ham. Satan then led Cush, his illegitimate son Nimrod and illegitimate wife Semiramis to develop a false god and a false worship system to compete against the religion of the true God. As part of the worship system Nimrod later introduced live human and infant sacrifices. Nimrod also began to enforce his religion on the world by force.

God had to again intervene to stop Nimrod from forcing his religion on all of humanity. Because of his many crimes he was executed by Shem. For fear of being executed the pagan religion then went underground. What came to be known as the Babylonian Mystery religion was then developed by Semiramis. Earlier she had deified herself and her son Nimrod. She came to be worshipped as Ishtar or Astarte of the Bible. Nimrod came to be worshipped under many names including Baal. Instead of worshipping Semiramis and Nimrod directly, in these mysteries the people began to worship the tree and cow as representation of Semiramis and a bull or calf as representation of Nimrod. Later people simply forgot why they were worshipping cows, bulls and trees. Thus worship of animals, trees and nature was introduced into the world.

In about 400 years after the Flood all the world turned to paganism that originated with Semiramis. But God found one man He could work with, and that man was Abraham. God decided to create a model nation from the descendants of Abraham. God gave this model nation a written constitution in the form of the first five books of Moses called the Law which included the Ten Commandments.

Semiramis’ Babylonian Mystery religion has come down to us with many later innovations in the form of Hinduism, Greek, Roman and Egyptian gods.

As God worked with the nation of Israel Satan continued to try to seduce the Israelites away from God’s way of life. Ancient Israelites kept falling back into Baal worship and forsaking worship of the true God. The result was that God withheld from them the promised material blessings.

Since ancient Israel kept sliding away from the true God, after about 2,000 years of working with them since the call of Abraham, God began raising another model nation; this time a spiritual nation known as spiritual Israel or the Church of God. But within a few years Satan began working on developing a competing counterfeit Church to persecute the true Church of God.

Soon after the start of God’s Church in 31 A.D., God’s adversary, the devil first made assaults on various aspects of the true religion. These assaults were on keeping the Sabbath, God’s Passover and the other 6 of the seven annual holy days that picture God’s plan of salvation for mankind, and substituting pagan festivals in their place such as Sunday worship, Easter, Christmas and the like. The pagan festivals introduced were merely the festivals and practices of the Babylonian Mystery religion of Semiramis dressed in Christian garb by attaching concocted Christian significance to them. Thus Satan literally counterfeited Christianity. Ultimately such falsehoods became the dominant religion headquartered in Rome, the capital of the greatest empire on earth at that time.

Because of persecution early in its history, Satan’s counterfeit Church sought to distinguish itself from Judaism, which was the reason for substituting Sunday for the Sabbath. Then to gain more adherents among the pagans the false Church adopted festivals of the pagans [originally started by Semiramis] by merely attaching some false Christian significance to them.

The counterfeit Church has persecuted the Church of God since about 325 A.D. when the religion of the Roman Church became the state religion of the Roman Empire. As a result God’s true Church has always been a little flock (Luke 12:32) whereas the counterfeit Church is the largest religion in the world today.

Religions of the East such as Budhism, Shintoism. Taoism. Confucianism etc which are not based on the existence of God were developed in reaction to the oppressive practices of Hinduism and the Babylonian Mystery religion as practiced among those peoples with its pantheon of gods. Hinduism was also based on Semiramis’ Babylonian Mystery religion that originated more than 2,000 years before the birth of Jesus Christ. Later in India Sikhism developed in reaction to the worship of numerous gods in Hinduism and excesses of the Hindu priests and the caste system.

Satan was the influence behind the Babylonian Mystery religion of Semiramis that we see being practiced in the counterfeit Church of Rome. The Protestant Churches also keep many of same festivals and holidays of the counterfeit Roman Church and are therefore also practicing the Babylonian Mystery religion and not the pure religion brought by Jesus Christ.

But Satan was not satisfied by merely counterfeiting Christianity. The reason was that even counterfeit Christianity was centered on the crucifixion, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Though a vast majority of the adherents were being gained for false Christianity, the new adherents nevertheless accepted the centrality of God’s message that led to the birth of Christianity: the fact of the birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ for the purpose of forgiving mankind’s sins, making salvation possible for humanity. Christianity continued to gain adherents and accept this message for the next 580 years. But Satan saw that some of these adherents who had the means and could gain access to the Bible would then be exposed to the truth from its pages rather than blindly accept the paganism of the false Roman Church. In reaction Satan led the false Church to force its adherents to not read the Bible but get their instructions from the priests. Those who read the Bible were often put to death if discovered.

But Satan was still not satisfied. So what do you think the adversary of God, and a father of lies would try to do to counter the spread of the central message of the Bible: Salvation for humanity through the life, crucifixion, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ? Why obviously, he would try to discredit that message. He would try to spread lies that the message of the crucifixion, death and resurrection was lies and pure fiction. And that is exactly what the master liar and deceiver set out to do about 580 years after the start of Christianity, when he saw that the religion continued to spread. For 580 years nobody had seriously questioned the fact of the birth, life, crucifixion, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. But the adversary of God with his cohorts planned out a strategy to try to change that.

Satan set out to try to discredit the truthfulness of every aspect of the message.

He would first try to discredit the message by saying that the message itself has been corrupted. So what we today have is not the truth. He would try to say that the Old Testament and the New Testament have been corrupted so that the account we have of the life, crucifixion, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ in the Bible is not correct. It has been altered. Next the liar would then give his own version of events about the crucifixion, death and the resurrection. Then the liar would form his own religion, and propagate it with all his vigor and cunning so that the spread of the message of truth would be halted, and instead his religion based on his lies would spread, and hope to challenge the truth by force whenever possible. He would try to convert Christians to his religion by force.

That is exactly what Satan did about 580 years after the birth of Christianity. He used the man Mohammed as his agent to spread his lies to discredit the truth. For 580 years humanity had not questioned the true central message. But then 580 years later comes Mohammed questioning the very central message, armed with lies of the master deceiver of mankind, Satan the devil.

**Conclusion**

From the pages of the Bible we have seen that there are at present two Gods on earth in complete harmony with each other: the supreme God known as God the Father and then Jesus Christ. But there is also one, and only one, competing god, known as the ‘god of this world’, also known as Satan and the devil. He is at present ruler of the earth, but totally under the control of the supreme God. He is assisted by hundreds of millions of former fallen angels now known as demons.

The ‘god of this world’ was originally created by Jesus Christ when He was known as the Word. And a created being will always be inferior to his creator.

The Bible also reveals that the ‘god of this world’ is an adversary of God, always trying to work against God’s purposes and thwart all His projects. But the supreme God allows him to do so so that in the process of resisting Satan He can develop His holy righteous character in human beings.

We have proved that the words of the Bible are backed by the power of the supreme God and can be relied upon. The words of all other religions are not backed by the power of the supreme God. Since the salvation they offer is different from that offered in the Bible, they are nothing more than the cunningly crafted deceptive lies of the ‘god of this world’ in an attempt to deceive all of mankind into not developing a relationship with the true God. That is the only way the supreme God can make humans His children by a resurrection from the dead. Satan tries to thwart this purpose of God by preaching lies in the form of other religions.

Now we can understand the true import of God’s testimony in Revelation 12:9 that Satan,”…deceives the whole world.” He does that through the theory of evolution and myriads of different religions and denominations within them. All religions of the world except the true religion based on the Bible are the creation of the master deceiver, the diabolical, cunning and crafty Satan the devil.

We have so far seen Satan as the father of lies as revealed by Jesus Christ in John 8:44. But Jesus also called him a murderer from the beginning. In addition Peter told us in 1 Peter 5:8 that the “devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.” This means Satan’s primary purpose is to hurt or destroy humanity by inflicting as much pain and suffering as he can. One way he can do that is by giving instructions on how to live that will harm rather than benefit the followers. We will next analyze instructions on living life provided by various religions.

**Chapter 24**

**Instructions on Living in Various Religions**

Since the Bible is inspired by the supreme Creator God, we would expect it to be a complete instruction manual for mankind. We should find detailed instructions for humanity on how to live. And that is exactly what we find.

About one third of the Bible is history. Another one third contains instructions on how to live for individuals as well as laws for orderly governing of society within nations. It basically contains a constitution by which a nation should be governed. Then about another one third of the Bible contains prophecy.

Prophecy enabled us to prove that the Bible is indeed the true inspired word of the Creator. It also has foretold the immediate future as a warning for all humans to repent of their sins if they want to escape the soon coming catastrophic events alive with God’s help.

The Bible has precise, compact and yet comprehensive instructions in the form of the Ten Commandments on how individuals should live. No other religion has such precise instructions. One has to read through hundreds of pages of other religions to develop one’s own instructions on how the god of that religion wants its adherents to live. In addition the Bible contains statutes and judgments on how the Law should be applied and justice done within the nation. Other religions contain no such statutes and judgments.

Without such clear instructions one is not able to decide what is good and what is evil. That is why one sees more lawlessness among adherents of other religions than nations that follow Christianity. There is more rule of law among Christian nations than other nations. Only recently the existence of the hostile nation consisting of German masqueraders in Christian nations has changed that because these masqueraders under Satan’s guidance have tried their best to seduce Christian nations away from the rule of Law.

Bible covers about 1,500 years of detailed history of the nation of Israel, though it also contains a very brief history of the ancient world as well since the creation of Adam and Eve. This length of history enables us to evaluate how following God’s instructions benefits individuals and nations, and how disobeying God’s instructions hurts them. No other religion contains such length of history. So we are unable to evaluate whether following the instructions in those religions help or hurt individuals or nations.

Details of the lives of great heroes of the Bible in its history portion and God’s words through the prophets give us examples on how to apply God’s instructions in our lives. We can find many precedents in the Bible on how we should act when faced with certain circumstances. Other religions do contain similar information, but not in as comprehensive a manner as does the Bible. Thus we see that the Bible is a much superior and complete instruction manual than the holy books of any other religion.

However, we have concluded that the words in the holy books of all other religions are inspired by the diabolically evil Satan the devil. Therefore we should find not beneficial but harmful instructions in them on how to live. We will not go into a detailed analysis of all the instructions contained in the holy books of other religions on how to live. It is not necessary since they are all religions originated by the devil in order to deceive humanity. There is no point in wasting time to critically analyze each of the instructions to learn whether they are beneficial or harmful. But a few of the damaging instructions will now be pointed out for illustrative purposes.

***Reason to Reject False Religions***

Only one religion is the true religion which has to be the one based on the Bible because only the God of the Bible has given us proof through fulfilled prophecy that He is the Almighty. All other religions have failed the test. They are all works of the ‘god of this world’ which is Satan the devil. So they offer a false salvation. It is pure fiction. Such salvation is a lie. It does not exist.

With the salvation all these religions also provide a path to this salvation. Since the salvation does not exist means that the path to salvation offered by them leads to destruction, and not salvation. That is why all the false religions of the world should be rejected.

The devil’s nature has been explained earlier. He is a diabolical, scheming, cunning crafty evil liar. He does everything to deceive in order to destroy. One of the ways he seeks to destroy humanity is by causing divisions, and religion is one of the chief ways he uses to divide humanity. It has been said that more wars have been fought in the name of religion than any other cause. That is why Satan has spawned so many different religions. More religions divide humanity more and more. He is the cause behind all the multiple denominations even within religions. This causes more fighting and war among and within religions. Witness the Sunni and Shia divide in Islam, Catholic and Protestant divide in Christianity.

As long as Satan is around humanity will never have unity in religion. But we should at least be able to agree on which holy book is the inspired word of God. Only the Bible has given us that proof. So we should be able to agree that only a religion based on the Bible can be the true religion.

For this reason we should also be able to reject mainstream Christianity in the form of Catholic and Protestant denominations because all their beliefs and practices are not entirely based on the Bible. The Trinity, Christmas, Easter, Halloween are words not found in the Bible. But those are some of mainstream Christianity’s main beliefs. Only God’s true Church uses the Bible as sole authority for basing all its doctrines, beliefs and practices. We know that humanity at large will not accept this conclusion. But God’s Church is declaring to the world through the word of prophecy that Jesus Christ is soon returning to earth to lift the veil that Satan has put on the eyes of mankind so that they will be able to see which the true religion is.

Now for illustrative purposes let’s see various harmful instructions in various religions to show that these religions are the works of the devil.

***Islam***

There are several glaring problems with Islam as a religion. It promises salvation in the form of a paradise, but only for male adherents. The Koran is completely silent on salvation for women. Thus half of humanity in Islam has no hope for salvation.

Status of women is lower class in Islam and is well known. Hadiths (sayings or acts attributed to Mohammad by his companions) have horrible things to say about women. We will not quote them because of their doubtful origins. But here is what the Koran has to say about treatment to be meted when the man or woman fear rebelliousness in their mate:

[4.34] Men are the maintainers of women because Allah has made some of them to excel others and because they spend out of their property; the good women are therefore obedient, guarding the unseen as Allah has guarded; and (as to) those on whose part you fear desertion, admonish them, and leave them alone in the sleeping-places [desert them sexually] and beat them; then if they obey you, do not seek a way against them; surely Allah is High, Great.

[4.128] And if a woman fears ill usage or desertion on the part of her husband, there is no blame on them, if they effect a reconciliation between them, and reconciliation is better…”

Here the Koran prescribes beating and sexual desertion if a man detects rebelliousness in his wife. On the other hand if a man mistreats a wife or she fears desertion, then they are advocated to reconcile. How impractical this advice is in real life. If a man is inclined to mistreat or desert his wife he would make it as hard as possible for his wife to be reconciled with him. The woman really has no recourse. The Bible on the other hand allows temporary mutual separation to allow time to pass before attempting reconciliation.

Verse 4:34 allows men to desert their wives sexually when they detect rebelliousness in them, but women are not permitted to do so if they are mistreated or fear desertion. The following verses are so interpreted by the Muslim scholars.

[26.165] What! do you [meaning women] come to the males from among the creatures 166 And leave what your Lord has created for you of your wives? Nay, you are a people exceeding limits.”

Then verse [30.21]: “And one of His signs is that He created mates for you from yourselves that you may find rest in them…” is interpreted to mean that women were created for men’s sake and they must yield whenever the husband desires his wife. If she does not do so then she is an oppressor.

The Bible has quite a different view of the status of women in marriage. They are equal in all respects as concerns sexual matters. Thus if Islam had its way, half of humanity would be condemned to a frustrating lower class status for life.

The sharia law in Islam permits horrible punishment for minor crimes such as cutting off of hands for theft.

[5.38] And (as for) the man who steals and the woman who steals, cut off their hands as a punishment for what they have earned, an exemplary punishment from Allah; and Allah is Mighty, Wise.”

Do the religious leaders who advocate bodily harm for thefts realize what the thief will have to go through for the rest of his life? Just imagine the hardship you will go through if one or both your hands were cut off. The Bible on the other hand never prescribes bodily harm for property theft. It requires compensation of property with property though the thief must as punishment compensate with more property than the worth of what he stole. This is described in Exodus 22:1-5:

“1 If a man shall steal an ox, or a sheep, and kill it, or sell it; he shall restore five oxen for an ox, and four sheep for a sheep. 2 If a thief be found breaking up, and be smitten that he die, there shall no blood be shed for him. 3 If the sun be risen upon him, there shall be blood shed for him; for he should make full restitution; if he have nothing, then he shall be sold for his theft. 4 If the theft be certainly found in his hand alive, whether it be ox, or ass, or sheep; he shall restore double. 5 If a man shall cause a field or vineyard to be eaten, and shall put in his beast, and shall feed in another man's field; of the best of his own field, and of the best of his own vineyard, shall he make restitution.”

God of the Bible certainly knows the worth of the hand for the man or woman whereas the ‘god of this world’ only seeks to inflict as much pain and suffering as he can on humans through cruelty practiced in the sharia law of Islam.

Islam is also the most violent religion in the world, except perhaps for the religion of the Germans. Islam advocates ‘holy Jihad’ which is converting adherents of other religions to Islam by force. If they refuse then they are to be murdered.

It is the existence of such instructions in Islam that make it a violent religion. And most of the victims of Muslim violence are other Muslims because of the mindset created by the instructions in Islam on how to live. We see Islam in practice in the conflict in Syria, Iraq, Libya, creation of the Islamic State and other places around the world.

The author believes that Satan has already revealed to the Germans that the Koran is his cunningly crafted lie. But they will not openly reveal to the adherents of Islam. But they don’t need to rely on the Germans to learn this truth. It has been convincingly proved in this book.

***Hinduism***

In Hinduism salvation is being freed from the cycle of birth death and rebirth to have one’s immortal soul merged with the supreme Soul. Here is the path advocated by Lord Krishna to attain that goal:

Chapter 12 p. 34: “But they who thus fix their attention on the Absolute and Impersonal encounter greater hardships, for it is difficult for those who possess a body to realise Me as without one. Verily, those who surrender their actions to Me, who muse on Me, worship Me and meditate on Me alone, with no thought save of Me, O Arjuna! I rescue them from the ocean of life and death, for their minds are fixed on Me. Then let thy mind cling only to Me, let thy intellect abide in Me; and without doubt thou shalt live hereafter in Me alone.

“But if thou canst not fix thy mind firmly on Me, then, My beloved friend, try to do so by

constant practice. And if thou are not strong enough to practice concentration, then devote thyself to My service, do all thine acts for My sake, and thou shalt still attain the goal. And if thou art too weak even for this, then seek refuge in union with Me, and with perfect self-control renounce the fruit of thy action. Knowledge is superior to blind action, meditation to mere knowledge, renunciation of the fruit of action to meditation, and where there is renunciation peace will follow.”

Chapter 8, p.22 contains some more instructions on meditation to achieve salvation: “Whoso meditates on the Omniscient, the Ancient...He who leaves the body with mind unmoved and filled with devotion, by the power of his meditation gathering between his eyebrows his whole vital energy, attains the Supreme.

“Now I will speak briefly of the imperishable goal, proclaimed by those versed in the

scriptures, which the mystic attains when free from passion, and for which he is content to undergo the vow of continence. Closing the gates of the body, drawing the forces of his mind into the heart and by the power of meditation concentrating his vital energy in the brain; Repeating Om, the Symbol of Eternity, holding Me always in remembrance, he who thus leaves his body and goes forth reaches the Spirit Supreme.”

Chapter 13, p.36: “Renunciation of the delights of sense, absence of pride, right understanding of the painful problem of birth and death, of age and sickness;

Indifference, non-attachment to sex, progeny or home, equanimity in good fortune and in bad; Unswerving devotion to Me, by concentration on Me and Me alone, a love for solitude, indifference to social life; Constant yearning for the knowledge of Self, and pondering over the lessons of the great Truth – this is Wisdom, all else ignorance.”

Chapter 6, p.17: “O Arjuna! Renunciation is in fact what is called Right Action. No one can become spiritual who has not renounced all desire…When a man renounces even the thought of initiating action, when he is not interested in sense objects or any results which may flow from his acts, then in truth he understands spirituality…

“The Self of him who is self-controlled, and has attained peace is equally unmoved by heat or cold, pleasure or pain, honour or dishonour. He who desires nothing but wisdom and spiritual insight, who has conquered his senses and who looks with the same eye upon a lump of earth, a stone or fine gold, is a real saint. He looks impartially on all – lover, friend or foe; indifferent or hostile; alien or relative; virtuous or sinful.”

It is fortunate that in India only a few follow such silly nonsense. Most Indians are attached to their wives, children, families and friends. That’s why society keeps functioning. There are only a few half-naked fakirs on the banks of the Ganges River in Benares who practice such asceticism or austerities [such as sitting in front of burning fire or hot coals during the hottest part of summer] and renounce everything and meditate most of the time. They have to survive by begging or the handouts of the common people. The Mahabharata and the Ramayana contain stories of such fakirs gaining boons from the gods to use to punish others and seek vengeance on them. They are even able to use the boons to curse gods and drive them to fear. Of course there has never been any proof of anyone gaining such boons or powers. Such tales exist only the fantasies of the writers of these books.

Another destructive bit of instructions in Hinduism is the caste system and the four-fold division of professions.

Chapter 18, p.50: “O Arjuna! The duties of spiritual teachers, the soldiers, the traders and the servants have all been fixed according to the dominant Quality in their nature.

Serenity, self-restraint, austerity, purity, forgiveness, as well as uprightness, knowledge,

wisdom and faith in God – these constitute the duty of a spiritual Teacher. Valour, glory, firmness, skill, generosity, steadiness in battle and ability to rule – these

constitute the duty of a soldier. They flow from his own nature. Agriculture, protection of the cow and trade are the duty of a trader, again in accordance with his nature. The duty of a servant is to serve, and that too agrees with his nature.

“Perfection is attained when each attends diligently to his duty. Listen and I will tell you

how it is attained by him who always minds his own duty. Man reaches perfection by dedicating his actions to God, Who is the source of all being, and fills everything.

It is better to do one’s own duty, however defective it may be, than to follow the duty of

another, however well one may perform it. He who does his duty as his own nature

reveals it, never sins. The duty that of itself falls to one’s lot should not be abandoned, though it may have its defects. All acts are marred by defects, as fire is obscured by smoke.”

It was probably in reaction to this nonsense that condemned people for all generations into the caste and profession they happened to be assigned to by Cush and Nimrod [who is worshipped as Krishna] or born into that Budhism was born. Later Sikhism also was formed partly in reaction to such oppression and excesses of Hinduism. Can you imagine you and all your future generations being condemned to be cleaners, or cobblers forever? That’s why India did not change for millennia. Fortunately a lot has changed in India over the past 50 years in this regard because of modernization of the economy. British rule helped to break some of this oppression so that a vast majority of Hindus no longer believe in this nonsense. But they still continue to believe in the salvation offered by Krishna. They should realize that Krishna has made tall claims but has not given us a shred of proof that he is the Almighty. His destructive instructions on life that would lead to inaction rather than a vigorous productive life can have come from only the devil and not from the true God.

***Sikhism***

Sikhism has similar defects as Hinduism because it has borrowed most of its beliefs related to salvation from Hinduism. Its path to salvation is similar. In addition to constant meditation on God and non-attachment to worldly things [a destructive philosophy that leads one to inaction or at least a less than vigorous life], it advocates constantly praising God [which it calls Naam] to attain salvation. It lays a lot of emphasis on recitation from the Guru Granth, their holy book.

Repeating the same words, phrases or standard prayers over and over again are actually condemned in the Bible because they accomplish nothing with God. Matthew 6:7 (NKJV) says, “7 And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words.”

Another destructive philosophy mentioned in Sikhism is that of pre-ordination, meaning that whatever one does in one’s life is pre-ordained by God. It defeats God’s very purpose in creating humans superior to animals (hence God-plane beings) because they possess mind power with free moral choice. They are not created as robots or with animal instinct. They can choose to do good or evil. This philosophy also leads some to not try their hardest to overcome obstacles in their lives. This is stated in the Guru Granth on p.15: “As it is pre-ordained, people speak their words. As it is pre-ordained, they consume their food. As it is pre-ordained, they walk along the way. As it is pre-ordained, they see and hear. As it is pre-ordained, they draw their breath.”

Clearly when the goal, the salvation offered is wrong and does not exist, the prescribed paths to it can lead only to destruction. That is true of Sikhism as well as Hinduism and Islam.

***Judaism***

The only thing that can be said about Judaism is that they have not recognized their true God. They have not realized that the God of the Old Testament they worship is none other than Jesus Christ. They just need to read Old Testament prophecies that Jesus fulfilled to realize that He was indeed the prophesied Messiah who came to take away the sins of the world. But He will soon return as they expect the Messiah to come, in power and great glory to restore Israel to greatness.

Jews have a hazy concept of salvation because it is based only on the Old Testament. But their concept of salvation is not true because it does not explain many of the Old Testament scriptures. Again Satan has cast a veil over the minds of those Jews who do not accept Jesus as the Messiah [Savior].

The Jews, however, have one advantage in that they understand they are required to keep the Law of Moses to the best of their ability. It leads them to become better persons. But they still need to learn to practice the Law with its spiritual intent in addition to the letter of the Law, and apply it with mercy and forgiveness which Jesus brought to mankind. But by virtue of having the right holy book, though only in part, they still have advantages over other religions which are the deception and lies of the ‘god of this world’ in their entirety.

***Christianity***

Christianity has the most advantages of all religions because it has the true holy book which is inspired by the Almighty God Himself. Therefore they can rely on its every word.

But the great false Church based in Rome has foisted paganism on mainstream Christianity which God condemns in the Bible. Though mainstream Christianity benefits to the extent that it obeys the instruction in the Bible in how to live, it is far from attaining salvation because salvation requires obedience to God. Worshipping God on Sunday when He requires Sabbath observance; keeping pagan festivals that honor pagan gods instead of God’s festivals that picture His plan of salvation for mankind is rebellion against the Creator God. God will not offer salvation to those who are in rebellion against Him. So as far as salvation is concerned, mainstream Christianity is no better off than any of the other religions. The ‘god of this world’ has deceived mainstream Christianity as he has deceived all the other religions.

One of the greatest deception that mainstream Christianity has suffered is that since Christ's sacrifice forgives all sin, we are no longer required to keep the Law, the Ten Commandments. And that belief is the source of so much perversion and sin in Christianity.

The Roman Church is also an instrument of the devil to persecute true Christians. The world has had a taste of this persecution through the past 6 resurrections of the “Holy Roman Empire.” The world will soon get its worst taste in the seventh resurrection of the Holy Roman Empire.”

Revelation 13:11 states: “11 And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spoke as a dragon.” The dragon is none other than Satan. This beast in prophecy has been identified as the Roman Church. This verse clearly identifies the Roman Church as an instrument of the devil. That’s why it has shed so much blood in its history. It is about to cause the worst bloodshed ever in the history of mankind in the next few years.

***There is Hope for Mankind***

From the state of the religions of the world that we have discussed, hope for salvation for mankind appears to be bleak. One may be tempted to conclude that the ‘god of this world’ is a very powerful competitor to the supreme God. But that is far far from the truth.

The great news is that God has a perfect plan to make salvation available to all of humanity, and most will qualify to receive it. There is one power that the ‘god of this world’, Satan the devil does not possess, that only the true God possesses. And that is the power to kill and then to make alive.

God says in Deuteronomy 39, “See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god with me: I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal: neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand.”

God’s great plan of salvation for all mankind is pictured in His seven annual holy days (all mentioned in Leviticus 23) which only the true Church of God keeps and understands. Mainstream Christianity is completely blinded to this plan. Here is what the seven annual Holy Days picture:

Passover pictures the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of all of humanity’s sins. Feast of Unleavened Bread pictures the putting away of leaven, a type of sin, completely out of our lives. It means striving to become sinless. This is necessary before we can receive salvation. The feast of Pentecost or firstfruits shows that God is calling only the firstfruits, a relatively small number of people into His Church in the first 6,000 years of human history to offer them salvation. God is allowing Satan to blind the rest of humanity to the knowledge of salvation for the time being. (That’s why Paul said in 2 Corinthians 4:4, “4 In whom the god of this world has blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.”).

The feast of Trumpets pictures the return of Jesus Christ to earth to set up God’s kingdom, and the resurrection of the firstfruits to eternal life to then assist Jesus Christ to rule in His Kingdom. The Day of Atonement pictures the putting away of Satan and the demons so that they can deceive the nations no more. The Feast of Tabernacles pictures God’s kingdom on earth for 1,000 years. Then the seventh festival called the Last Great Day pictures the resurrection of all humans who were ever born and died without knowing God’s plan of salvation and receiving their chance to qualify for it. They will be taught God’s way of life and His plan of salvation. The Bible indicates that vast majority of human beings will gladly accept God’s plan of salvation, repent of their sins and be forgiven through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. They will then qualify to be born as literal immortal sons and daughters of God.

All of humanity can rejoice in this hope. The true God has a foolproof plan to change human beings into His immortal sons. Satan cannot thwart that plan though at present he appears to be succeeding in doing so. God’s purposes will stand.

To understand the meaning of God’s plan of salvation for mankind as pictured in His seven annual holy days, you may order your free copy of the United Church of God booklet titled “God's Holy Day Plan: The Promise of Hope for All Mankind” available at its web site www.ucg.org.

The search for the truth in religion is never an easy experience. It may even be a gut-wrenching one for many because vast majority of humanity will be wrong in its faith. Most will discover that they have been following myths and very diligently chasing false dreams of salvation.

The author went through a very humbling experience in his search for the true religion. He lived and practiced Sikhism because his father was a Sikh. One is emotionally attached to one’s religion. Each step in the discovery process was humiliating when he realized that he had been wrong in his beliefs. But he started his search with the firm determination that he would follow the true religion whichever one he discovered it to be. Even after discovering the truth his attachment to his old religion lingered. Finally he had to let truth prevail in his beliefs and practices.

The author empathizes with all who want to embark on the journey to search for the true religion. It is very humiliating to learn that one has followed cunningly devised fables. But of what value is falsehood compared to the truth? Leaving one’s false religion is a small price to pay. Knowing that one has the true religion leads to priceless peace of mind. Hope you realize that peace of mind!

**Suggested Reading**

All the following publications are available free of charge and without any obligation.

1. “*Does God Exist*”, By Herbert W. Armstrong, available at www.pcog.org.

2. “*Does God Exist*”, by David C. Pack, Published by the Restored Church of God, available at www.rcg.org.

3. “*The Real God: Proofs and Promises*” by Douglas S. Winnail, published by the Living Church of God, available at www.lcg.org.

4. “*The Beast of Revelation: Myth, Metaphor or Soon-Coming Reality*?” by John H. Ogwyn, available free of charge from the Living Church of God at www.lcg.org)

5. “*America and Britain in Prophecy*”, by David C. Pack; published by the Restored Church of God, available at www.rcg.org.

6. *The United States and Great Britain in Prophecy*; published by the Living Church of God, available at www.lcg.org.

7. *The United States and Britain in Prophecy*; by Herbert W. Armstrong, available from the Philadelphia Church of God at www.pcog.org.

The following publications are available free of charge from the United Church of God at its website www.ucg.org.

8. “*Does God Exist*”

9. “*Heaven & Hell: What Does the Bible Really Teach?”*

10. “*God’s Holy Day Plan: Promise of Hope for all Mankind”*

11. “*The United States and Britain in Bible Prophecy*”

12. “*The Throne of Britain: Its Biblical Origin and Future,*” an eBook .

13. “*Is the Bible true*?”

14. *“Fundamental Beliefs of the United Church of God*”

15. “*Is God a Trinity?*”

16. “*Jesus Christ: The Real Story*”

17. “*Is There Really A Devil?*”

There is also other vast amount of material available for reading and research for answers to all of life's great questions at the web sites of the various Churches of God. The web sites are: ucg.org; pcog.org; rcg.org and lcg.org.