



Some Thoughts On ...

**Jesus
The Bible
Christianity**

by Lee T. Sowers

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www.JesusCanHelp.us

Yes ... Jesus Does Exist

Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, who came down from Heaven and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, was crucified under Pontius Pilate, suffered death, was buried and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into Heaven and sits at the right hand of God and He will come again to judge the living and the dead. This is the essence of the Creed that many Christians say every week at Services.

We should all believe in Jesus Christ. To me, believing is not an option. Jesus was a reality. To claim that He never existed, or was a mere prophet, or that He is simply a myth or legend, or a figment of people's imagination, is to ignore reality. Do people believe that Julius Caesar, or Plato or Alexander the Great existed? There are thousands more surviving documents testifying to Jesus' existence, His life and His works than there are for Caesar, Plato, Alexander or any other "historical" person from antiquity. Certainly, no massive conspiracy could have created such a widespread and enduring myth or legend as Jesus.

I know that Jesus exists. How can I know that? Do you love your mother and your father? If they have passed away and gone to Heaven, don't you still love them? Of course you do. You loved them while they were here on earth and you still love them now that they are in Heaven. But answer this, do you love Mickey Mouse, Superman or Spiderman? Of course not. You may like these fictional characters, but you can only love that which is real. Like your parents. And that's how I know Jesus exists. Because I love Him. Even though he is not here on earth, I love him just like I love my parents who are now in Heaven with Him.

Apostle Peter said; *"although you have not seen him you love him; even though you do not see him now yet believe in him, you rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy,"* (1 Peter 1:8)

I know I loved my parents and I know they loved me. There is no gauge, no digital readout, no dipstick to let you measure and quantify that love, but I know that it was real. True, you could look for evidence of that love by the way we treated and took care of each other, but you could not grab hold of it and measure it. We can see the same evidence of our love for Jesus and His love for us. Those who can look at the world and not see evidence of Jesus' love are truly blind. Those that look and can see only the pain and suffering are missing the point. My parents would be disappointed with me when I let them down and punish me if I deserved it. Likewise, we can disappoint and be punished by Jesus. But their love was there and so is Jesus'. To know that Jesus is real and not myth, you only have to know His Love.

Questions (And Answers) of Faith

Many ask, if Jesus loves us, why does God permit hunger, sickness and war in the world? I ask why do we bring these unto ourselves? We have it in our power to end all the wars, feed the hungry, and cure most of the sick. When someone like my father dies of lung cancer, was it because God had forsaken him? Or because he smoked 3 packs of poisonous cigarettes a

day? How much of the bad things in our lives do we bring upon ourselves? How much of the killing, starvation, privation and devastation has the world brought on itself? The fact that mankind made a mess of things for the last 2000 years doesn't in the least bit shake my Faith. Had we kept the Faith, things would be different.

Perhaps it doesn't shake my Faith because I don't believe these horrors exist because Jesus has failed us, but because we have failed Jesus. We have failed to follow Jesus' teachings. The world has had two thousand years from the time of Christ to get it right and follow Jesus' footsteps, but even counting all Christians less than half the world follows Jesus today. No wonder the world is a mess!

And the fault lies mostly with us Roman Catholics. Jesus intended us to be more than just Sunday Church Goers. An hour a week, \$20 in the collection basket, a prayer before bedtime. Salvation here I come. *Do you honestly believe that?* Really? I don't believe that. And if you believe that you are kidding yourself and risking your eternal Salvation. There's more to Salvation than Sunday Mass.

And that's assuming you are a practicing Catholic. Many, many Catholics do not even go to Mass every week, give nothing to the Church and pray infrequently. I've talked to many experiencing a "*lapse of faith*", and they almost always blame it on some life event, a death in the family, a divorce, the loss of a job. Times when they felt that Jesus Christ or The Church did not come to their rescue.

Jesus never said: "follow me and you'll have an easy life". How many Apostles were Martyred?

All through Scripture we see where it is precisely those who follow Jesus through good times and bad, through happiness and sadness, through "thick and thin", that reap the rewards of Faith, Salvation and Happiness in Heaven. Not riches and wealth on earth. *Do you recall Jesus' words about a rich man entering Heaven?* If you think Jesus has abandoned you, then *try practicing a little more Faith.*

That's right, I said *try practicing a little more Faith.* Try adding a few minutes (*or a few more minutes*) of prayer each day. Not for you, but for the sick and hungry and the homeless in this world. Put one more can of food into the Charity Collection at your Church on Sunday. Wear your Cross outside of your shirt instead of hidden inside it. Afraid that's not "politically correct", then shame on you! If you stopped going to Mass, start again. Now. This Sunday. If you go to Mass, take a non-practicing Catholic friend by the hand and bring them to Mass with you. *Why not try going to Mass every day?*

There are over 1 billion Catholics in the world today. If each of us billion Catholics started to actually live as Jesus wanted us to and to spread the Word and His Teachings as he instructed us to do over 2000 years ago, then we would see a new world filled with peace and love *just as Jesus had intended.*

We need active not passive Catholics. We must be more active and aggressive in spreading The Word as Jesus told us. We must be more visible in our good works and healing for all of

mankind to see. If we Catholics lead by example the rest of the world will follow. *Time to start living as Jesus intended!*

Did Jesus Teach Law Or Lifestyle?

For those that accept the Bible, or The Scriptures, as the sole depository of the Divine Teachings of Christ (often called the doctrine of *Sola Scriptura*), I have a few thought provoking questions.

First did Jesus teach us new laws or a new way of living, i.e. a Lifestyle. Laws are written. A way of life is learned. Let's compare the occupations of Carpenter and Pharisee. To become a Carpenter one practiced as an apprentice and learned from a master how to craft a desired item. To become a Pharisee one studied the written Law of Moses and learned how to apply The Law to daily life in an attempt to live by The Law. Carpenters crafted. Pharisees debated, interpreted and judged.

Under the apprentice method one focused on using learning to produce a desired outcome. Under the law, fulfilling the law was itself the desired outcome. A classic case of substance versus form.

If you read the Bible closely, you will find that God gave Moses the Ten Commandments but the rest of The Law was written by man. And as written law it became subject to revision, expansion, interpretation and debate over the Millenia. There can be no debate over the skills and works of a Carpenter. You either do it right and achieve the desired outcome or don't and fail in your attempt.

Interesting that God chose his Son to be raised by a Carpenter and not a Pharisee. Was that because God values substance over form? A way of life over merely obeying the letter of man-made laws?

If Jesus wanted to provide us with a new List of Laws why did he not write them down? Certainly, Scripture tells us He was learned in The Law. Even if we assume that neither Jesus nor His Apostles could write, certainly He could have chosen a follower to chronicle His Teachings and Sermons, His New Law. Yet many scholars today acknowledge that Jesus' Teachings were not written down until years later and then not by the Apostles themselves but by their followers who never met Jesus in person. Even Paul, one of the most prolific writers of doctrine and laws in what we today call the New Testament, was not one of the original 12 Apostles who followed Jesus.

In fact, The Bible we know today didn't exist for hundreds of years after Jesus walked the earth. How did Christianity survive for those first tumultuous centuries? It survived because the teachings of Jesus were passed along as a way of life, the Christian way of life, not simply as written laws.

To those who say the Bible is the sole depository of Jesus' Teachings, I say that if God had wanted to give us New Law to replace the Law of Moses, He would have had Jesus write a

book. No. God wanted us to follow His Son's example like an apprentice follows a master and adopt a way of life. We call it Christianity.

Which Bible?

For those who would use the Bible alone as God's Word, there is a problem. Recall that Catholics believe that you must study the Sacred Scriptures in conjunction with Sacred Traditions to understand God's divine revelations and the Mysteries of Faith. My example of the teacher and the textbook. If you would use the Bible alone, the question becomes which Bible, in which language, and what translation? If you are bi-lingual and speak two languages, you know that there are difficulties in precise translations of concepts between languages. If you don't speak two languages, take my word for it, or ask a friend who does.

In the Bible, the problem is compounded by the fact that Jesus and his followers most probably spoke Aramaic, while Hebrew was the language of the Jewish peoples, Greek the language of scholars, and Latin the language of the Roman Empire. The original writings that comprised the Bible were all done in these ancient languages where terminology, concepts and meanings differed significantly from those in use today. For example in Aramaic, there are words for mother and father, brother and sister, but none for aunt, uncle, niece or nephew. That's why we find so many references to Jesus' "brothers and sisters" in the Bible. And why Catholics believe the Bible needs to be studied in keeping with the teachings and traditions of the *Deposit of Faith* as handed down by the Apostles.

Today there are dozens of widely used Bible translations of which billions of copies have been produced in thousands of languages. And these translations differ. Consider the following two quotes from John 3:3 [*Jesus speaking to the Pharisee named Nicodemus*] as translated in two different Bibles;

Catholic: St. Joseph's edition, New American Bible: "Jesus answered and said to him, 'Amen, Amen, I say to you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above'."

Protestant: King James Bible: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

The notes in the Catholic Bible (which incorporate the teachings and traditions from the *Deposit of Faith*) go on to clearly explain how Nicodemus misunderstood Jesus to have said "born again", so Jesus continued on to explain what he really meant by "born from above".

Whole Protestant Religious movements have been founded on this concept of Born Again. But is that what Jesus really meant? So I restate the question concerning Martin Luther's teachings, if you are going to use the Bible alone as your only source of studying and understanding of God's divine revelations, which Bible do you use? Roman Catholics do not face that question because we combine our Sacred Traditions with Sacred Scripture.

Some Thoughts On Living Christian ...

When You Work Seven Days A Week To Feed Your Family

Sadly, our society has lost all respect for the Sabbath. I can remember days in my childhood when many establishments were closed on Sunday to honor the Sabbath and allow time for their employees and families to attend Services.

Today, with few exceptions, everything is open and many people are forced to work on Sundays to support their families. Indeed, today many parents must work two or more jobs to feed their families. In Christ's time many slaves did not even work on the Sabbath. A sad but true sign of our times.

Here are some things you can do with your family to Live Christian and Honor the Sabbath even when you work seven days a week or on Sundays to provide for them. Always remember that feeding their spiritual needs is as important as putting food on the table.

If you must work on Sunday, make another day your family's Sabbath Day. Many Churches have started holding Saturday Mass for those people who must work on Sunday. I find it amusing that Christians changed the Sabbath to Sunday to honor The Resurrection, but now offer Saturday Services.

When you go to Service on Saturday make that your Sabbath Day and practice Living Christian all day not just making a one hour stop by Church for Service. In addition to Service take some time to pray with your family. Take a few minutes and read a Bible passage together. Even better, share a meal together whether at midday or supper, and talk about your Faith and the Bible, not current events.

Many of us freely donate money to our Church. But how many of us also donate our time? In our time pressed society it doesn't need to be a full morning or afternoon. Even an hour makes a difference. Ask your Church and you may be surprised at the opportunities. Perhaps you can help during Service. Or carry The Word or Communion to the sick and homebound after Services. Donate an hour to your Church and Community Charities. Help at your food bank. Lead a Bible Study after Services are done.

You'd be amazed at the huge difference a small amount of time praying with your family and helping others on your Sabbath can make. And now that you have some ideas on Living Christian on the Sabbath, try extending your behavior to the other days of the week. Live Christian All Seven Days.

If everyone did that what a better place our world would soon be.

Enjoy the Sabbath and God Bless!

Random Acts of Christianity

We all know how you can lift someone's spirits and "make their day" with a simple Random Act of Kindness. As part of our new series Living Christian, think how much people could benefit from Random Acts of Christianity. Below are some thoughts, I'm sure you have more.

- ❖ **Pray.** We could all pray more. We often just pray for ourselves and our family's needs. Try including others, even as a group such as Seniors in Nursing Homes or Single Parents.
- ❖ **Donate To Your Food Pantry.** So many need so much. Just a few extra cans of food or packed goods will go such a long way to help those in hunger. When was the last time you stopped by your Church's Food Pantry and donated a bag of food for the hungry?
- ❖ **Just \$5 More.** That's the cost of a couple of Latte's or a beer at the bar. But if we all put just \$5 more in the Collection Basket at Service on Sunday think how many we could help. The United States has the largest Christian population in the World with over 280 million Christians. What if we all put just ONE more dollar in the collection every week?
- ❖ **Wear The Cross.** I receive many comments on the cross I wear and each is an opportunity to have a conversation, however short, about Christ. You'd be surprised how many have seen my Cross and said they would make it a point to start going to Services again. So many have pushed Jesus into the background, time to let Him shine!
- ❖ **Give A Cross As A Gift.** Get some Crosses and ask your Priest or Minister to Bless them. Then give them out to people who need His help in their lives. The same holds true for medals, rosaries and other items you can find in your local Christian Bookstore. Don't have one, why not ask your Pastor if you can set up a table after Sunday Service and them, and any excess earned after costs could be donated to your Parish or Congregation.
- ❖ **Give A Mass.** Most Parishes will let you dedicate a Mass or Service for a small donation. If you know someone, or a family in great need, dedicate a Mass or Service for them.
- ❖ **Give A Prayer Card.** Many of the ideas above do take money, and for some of us money is very short. When I go to my Catholic bookstore, named the Carpenter's Shop in honor of St. Joseph, if I have some extra change I pick up a couple of the small laminated Prayer Cards for 99 cents. I keep a few in my pocket and give them

to those that need prayers. *Note: I will be posting a free downloadable series of prayer cards that you are free to use.*

I am sure that with some thought you can come up with many more Random Acts of Christianity.

Can You Spare A Dollar?

Today there are more than 70 million Catholics in the United States. Sadly, many do not go to Mass on Sunday. Tragically, even more do not give to help the Poor, the Homeless and the Forgotten. While Mass attendance is down, Mass collections are down even more. True, many of us are experiencing tough times, *but couldn't you spare just ONE extra dollar this week?* That's just a cup of coffee, or can of soda, or several cigarettes. *Have one less soda so someone can eat.*

If every Catholic put just one extra dollar in the collection this Sunday, there would be an extra \$70,000,000 to feed clothe and shelter the Poor and Homeless. We could feed a Million People for the coming week with that money. Think of the difference that would make to the Hungry and Homeless. According to some sources, over 1 million are homeless, while 13 million Children and over 5 million Seniors face hunger. *Children and Seniors are two of our most vulnerable groups.*

If for some reason you cannot attend Mass at your Parish, for example perhaps you are ill or infirm and Homebound, many Parishes today have a way to make online donations. And even if your Parish doesn't offer online giving, give a friend your gift when they come to visit and have them donate it for you when they go to Church. Do your small part to help. *Can you spare a dollar?*

There are ways of giving in addition to donating money. We all know how you can lift someone's spirits and "*make their day*" with a simple Random Act of Kindness. How many people could benefit from a *Random Acts of Christianity*. Below are some thoughts, I'm sure you have more.

- ❖ **Donate To Your Food Pantry.** So many need so much. Just a few extra cans of food or packed goods will go such a long way to help those in hunger. When was the last time you stopped by your Parish's Food Pantry and donated a bag of food for the hungry?
- ❖ **Give A Cross As A Gift.** Buy some small Crosses and ask your Priest or Minister to Bless them. Then give them out to people who need Jesus' help in their lives. The same holds true for medals, rosaries and other items you can find in your local Christian Bookstore. Don't have one, *why not ask your Pastor if you can set up a table after Sunday Service and sell them, any monies earned after costs would be donated to your Parish or Congregation.*

- ❖ **Give A Mass.** Most Parishes will let you dedicate a Mass or Service for a small donation. If you know someone, or a family, in great need, dedicate a Mass or Service for them.
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I'm sure with a little thought you can come up with more *Random Acts of Christianity*.

Does God Grade On A Curve?

Current day practices and teachings of so many churches have strayed so far from what the Bible actually says that many have put the man-made rules of their various religions above the rules Jesus gave us for Salvation. I felt called and compelled by my years of study and writing to revisit what Our Savior Jesus actually said about Salvation. Since faith is a matter of personal belief, I will simply present facts and pose questions that the reader ultimately must answer for themselves.

On Judgement Day we will each stand alone before the Lord and account for our actions, or lack of action, as well as for our thoughts and beliefs. There will be no attorney or arbiter to plead our case. Our fate rests in how we as individuals will have followed The Word of God.

The New Testament must of course be interpreted in context with the Old Testament. For example, there are the Ten Commandments. And Jesus gave additional Commandments such as "*love thy neighbor as thyself*" and also spoke about the Law of Moses from the Old Testament. Therefore, while focusing on the New Testament, of necessity we will also look at the entire Bible.

Why should you be interested in understanding the right interpretation of Jesus Teachings?

Let me pose this question ... what is the passing score needed to get to heaven? 100%? Or will 80% or 90% do? Does God grade on a curve? On Judgement Day will you say "*I got it 70% right and in school that was passing, so God, please let me into the Kingdom of Heaven.*" ... Really?

Let's use tithing as an oft debated example. Some churches maintain that we should give according to our ability. Those with less give less and those with more should give more.

Other churches strictly adhere to the 10% of your “gross income” as mandatory. Other churches fall somewhere in between, perhaps requiring only 10% of your take home pay.

Now I submit that there is only one correct answer according to Gods Will for this and many other questions. You had better know the right answer because I am not sure God grades on the curve.

For example, let's say you are affluent and could have given much more than 10% but did not. When standing Judgement will you say; *but God I gave my 10%*. Or perhaps you are poor but gave your 10% despite causing suffering and hardship to your family. Will you say; *but God I sent my children to bed hungry to follow you rules?* It's important to make sure we following God's will and not man's will. Because I'm not sure how many points we get for following man's will.

I think it's necessary to study the Bible. To understand what Jesus taught and what God requires of us. This must be a personal quest based on our faith. And not simply succumbing to what others would lead us to believe for their own interests. We must get it right. Our Salvation depends on it.

Because I don't think God grades on a curve. *What do you think?*

Who Can Define & Forgive Sin?

This week's thought provoking questions. Who can define Sin? Who can forgive Sin?

According to the Gospel, Jesus granted His Apostles the power to bind and loose which many Christians interpret to include the ability to forgive sin and some believe also includes the power to define sin. Who can define and forgive sin? Priests? Pastors? Bishops? Cardinals? The Pope?

Some clergy today run the real risk of setting themselves up as modern day Pharisees making and administering their own self-serving set of “laws”. God intended for the followers of Christ to spread His Word and His Rules. Not so sure He wanted everyone making up new Sins using His Name.

A perfect case in point is this Lenten Season's conflict between not eating meat on Friday and St. Patrick's Day, the traditional Corned Beef and Cabbage Day for millions of Irish Catholics in the USA was on Friday this year. (*It's odd but in Ireland they don't typically eat Corned Beef and Cabbage on St. Patrick's Day*). So how did the Catholic Church handle this conundrum? They had some Bishops granting dispensations meaning it was ok and not a sin, others saying you needed to check with your local Priest and still others saying No Way it's a sin. You can't eat your Corned Beef.

Now I always thought sin was sin. Period. I didn't know what was a sin in one town was OK several miles away. Which is exactly what happened last Friday as different Bishops is various diocese ruled differently on whether Catholics could or could not eat their Corned

Beef on Friday. So, where you lived determined what was sin and what was not. What's next? Will some Bishops be declaring abortion is really ok? That Priests can be married? That divorce is no longer a sin? After all, for years I was taught that if we Catholics ate meat on Friday we would go to hell when we died. Then all of the sudden the Catholic Church changes the rules and its OK. So were all of the people condemned to hell over the centuries for eating meat on Friday suddenly raised up to Heaven?

The problem is Church Law vs. Gods Law. What does the power to “bind and loose” really mean? We see much the same sort of thing in the Old Testament where The Law prohibited eating pork. So, is eating pork a sin or not? Can man really define sin? Or is God the only one who can define sin? God’s Laws serve God and all of mankind. Who do the Church Laws serve? Can man define sin?

When the Church tries to hold up its Laws as sin, it's proclaiming itself as equal to God just like the Pharisees that Jesus despised did. Another good example is celibacy of the clergy. Many portions of the Bible are used to justify this Church Rule but nowhere is it actually found in the Bible. In fact celibacy is a Catholic Church Rule dating from the Dark Ages of feudalism to prevent church lands, cathedrals and riches from being claimed through right of heredity by both legitimate and bastard offspring of the clergy. Don't buy that? Simply do a little online research. I was introduced to this history by a Franciscan Friar. Many Christian Churches do permit marriage. Whether it's eating meat on Friday, or eating pork, or ministers being married, I believe that in Gods eyes it's either a sin or it's not a sin. It shouldn't matter what town you live in or what church you attend services at.

Sin is Sin.

The Recipe For Gaining Salvation & Getting To Heaven

There is no "cookbook recipe" for getting to heaven.

This is one major area that man has misunderstood in the Bible. For 20 Centuries man has tried to turn the Teachings of Jesus into a recipe for Salvation. This is understandable. We always seek a map to find the treasure. While Jesus did in fact present us with a Pathway to Salvation He did not give us a recipe. What is the difference. A recipe is a set of instructions where you follow a defined set of steps to achieve a specific result. Jesus gave us a Pathway that you must follow with each step you take every day of your life. A Pathway to Salvation.

Churches, regardless of denomination, have perpetuated this quest for a cookbook recipe to get to Heaven with the myriad of rules and regulations they have promulgated over the last 2000 years. The Church recipe for getting to heaven goes something like this ... Go to Mass. Go to Confession. If you sin you are OK God forgives you just so long as you Tithe to your Church. Keep the High Holy Days Holy. Remember to go to Church and give generously.

Follow these rules, the Church Recipe for Salvation and getting to Heaven, and you're good.

Really?

The problem is Jesus never said getting to Heaven was like baking a cake. There is no recipe. Take a bushel basket of Masses, combine with a 1/2 cup of Confession, add a tablespoon of Tithing and season to taste with Prayer as you can find time for it. And you're in. Really?

This totally misses the meaning of what Jesus taught. And it causes conflicts within us about the True Path to pursue. So, I ate meat on Friday. Or missed a Mass. Or didn't Tithe a full 10%. Or my job made me work on a Sunday. Does that mean I will surely go to hell?

Many Churches say no. Simply ask for forgiveness. Roman Catholics say go to Confession. Others say it doesn't matter what you do just ask Jesus to be saved. And some even say send them money and they will make things right with God for you. No worries. Really?

How many self-serving rules do Church make that Jesus never taught us as His Path. And then of course The Church proclaims itself as the only entity that can forgive you for breaking the rules and laws they created. Truth or just job security for priests and ministers?

Jesus intended for us to follow The Path that He set for us to gain Salvation. We all may stray from His Path on occasion. Jesus will forgive us and help guide us back onto His Path if we ask Him. Nobody else can do that for us. WE MUST ASK JESUS. And then let Him lead us.

What is The Path Jesus has set for us? Read your Bible. Study your Bible. The more often the better! Don't let others tell you what Jesus wants you to do. Discover The Path to Salvation for yourself. Find out for yourself what man has missed in Jesus' Message to us.

Follow His Path to Salvation. It's not a cake recipe. It's a way of life. Let Jesus guide you.

More Thoughts On How To Get To Heaven

I'm not going to be so presumptuous as to tell you I know the secret that will get you into Heaven.

I am going to tell you how you can discover that secret for yourselves. The secret of getting to Heaven is not a recipe like baking a cake. Follow the Ten Commandments, go to Mass and Communion once a week, tithe to your Church, and pray before meals. Season with Confession as needed. For a little extra insurance attend Mass during the week when you can. Presto! You're in!

While your priest or pastor might like to sell you this recipe as the way to get to Heaven, don't count on it. Getting to Heaven is not a recipe, *it's a way of life*. There is a Pathway to Salvation.

First, let me say that priests and pastors are not wrong. We should be going to Mass and Confession and receiving Holy Communion on a regular basis. But it's not enough. You need to live like a Christian every hour of every day, not just for an hour a week during Mass. When you leave Church, take it with you. Let Jesus' Path to Salvation guide your thoughts and actions every day.

So what is Jesus' Path to Salvation? You can get the directions to finding and following that path in the Holy Bible. If you know where to look. I'm going to tell you where to look to find The Path.

To start, you'll need your Bible and a paper or online Concordance would also be of great value. I like to use the online Bible Gateway - you can find a link on the Bible Study & Prayer Resources page. But a Google search for online Bible Concordance will also turn up several free options.

The first thing to note in your search is that Heaven appears often in the Old Testament especially in the books of Genesis or Exodus in the context of "*the heavens*" or *skies above*. In the New Testament we find references to the *Kingdom of God* and the *Path to Salvation* when Jesus talks about getting to what we today refer to as Heaven. The important point here is that to find The Path to Heaven in the Bible you must look for all instances where Jesus refers to what we call Heaven by any of a wide variety of other names such as *My Father's Kingdom*. In the coming articles in this series How To Get To Heaven we will explore Jesus' Path to Salvation in detail.

For today, start by getting your Bible and reading just one passage on getting to *The Kingdom of God*. Dwell on its meaning until you understand the true message of Jesus. Take that first step.

You Can't Get To Heaven With Hate In Your Heart

Before you can go to Heaven after your death, you must forgive those who have trespassed against you during your life. God tells us that every time we pray the Lord's Prayer. *But how many of us have actually forgiven those who have in some way, physically, mentally or emotionally, hurt us?*

How many of us tell God we forgive them? How many of us Pray for them? Or do we still harbor hate in our hearts? And do we still hope that God will give each of them "*what they deserve*"?

One of the most important Bible passages about forgiveness can be found in Matthew 18: 21-35. This is where Peter asks Jesus how many times he must forgive someone and Jesus replies 70 times 7 (*some Bible translations list this as 77 times*) and relates the Parable of servant who owed a sum that was impossible to repay, but was forgiven his debts by his master. In the eyes of God, even those who have lived what we consider to be the most devout life, we owe

Him more debt for our transgressions and trespasses than we can repay. But God in his mercy will forgive us all.

Like the debtor servant all we need do is ask. But unlike the servant we must also forgive others.

Also consider the Parable of the Daily Wage in Matthew 20: 1-16. Here the master pays his vineyard workers the same whether they had worked the full day or just the last hour. Consider people who have lived a full life of devout Christianity and those who strayed early in life, made abundant mistakes, and have only “come home” to God in the final hours of their lives. Indeed are we not all fortunate that God rewards us based on His Mercy and not what we “really deserve”?

As God extends His Mercy to us, we must extend it to others. We must not only pray for those we forgive that have trespassed against us, but for all those in need as well. Here is a Prayer for you.

Prayer For The Wisdom To Help Others

So many need so much. How can I help? My funds are few and my time is taken with providing for my family and loved ones. The magnitude of the suffering is so far beyond the capability of my meager resources that I do not see how I can make a difference. I am willing to sacrifice, but the greatest of my sacrifices seems so small as to be trivial in the face of the needs of so many. Lord, how shall I help them? Send the Holy Spirit to inspire me with the ways in which I can make a difference. Show me how to live more frugally that I may have more to give, Bless me with success in my work that I may have a larger bounty to share. Let my Faith shine forth that I may be a model for others to follow. Inspire me with the courage to not be discouraged and to understand that it matters not how much I can give as long as I give as much as I can. Lord God, please help me help those in need and forgive those that have trespassed again me. Amen.

Whether by Natual Disaster or Natural Causes Everyone Will Face The End of Days

Preparing for the End of Days

No I'm not another psycho claiming psychic knowledge of when the world will end. I am saying that if you believe in the bible and the book of revelations many of the signs of the end of time are visible today. The hand writing is on the wall.

No the end of days could be weeks, months, years or even decades away. But what about our own personal end of days? Shouldn't we be preparing for that as well.

We breeze through our twenties and thirties with nary a thought or care. In our forties and fifties the occasional unexpected death of a friend or relative may cause us to briefly consider

our own mortality. But by our sixties and into our seventies the end of our days has become a distinct and disturbing reality. We all face death.

We do not know when our personal judgement day will arrive. Young, middle age or elderly it could come any day at any time. And often without any warning.

So why not spiritually live every day as if it were your last? Be sure you are right with God and in the good graces of Jesus. Then you are ready and don't need to worry over the end of days.

How?

Confession. Prayer. Avoid sin. Use Gods gifts. Know that you are right with the Lord and you can rest peacefully whenever your personal judgement day arrives. I hope and pray that is many years in the future. But live every day as if it were your last. Because it never hurts to be ready.

The Life & Times Of Jesus - What Did Jesus Eat?

If you believe my prior post that Jesus did eat and drink, then this post will shed some light on what He ate and drank. There are few instances in the Gospels that state specifically what He ate and drank. I encourage you to use the Bible Gateway on this site to research those passages.

Jesus most probably ate and drank a diet that was common to His place and time. The diet was largely vegetarian and certainly included wine. Christ's diet probably closely resembled the so-called modern day Mediterranean Diet which upon reflection is a no-brainer due to the location of Israel. Jesus' Diet likely included; Olives, Figs, Dates, Grapes, Raisons, Lentils, Melons, Nuts, Cheeses, Fish, Lamb, and various spices, herbs and condiments such as Honey, Olive Oil, Vinegar, Mint, Onions and Garlic. And of course Bread. Bread in Biblical Times was not modern day bread as we know it, it was made from barley as well as wheat flour and most of it was flatbread which was "broken" not cut with a knife. Hence the term "breaking bread". Of course there would not have been any pork or other foods prohibited in the Old Testament.

While many would choose to interpret the Bible that Jesus only drank Grape Juice not fermented or "intoxicating wine", the historical record is very clear that in Biblical Times wine did contain approximately 10% alcohol. Modern day wine has a higher alcohol content due to modern fermentation techniques that archaeologists and historians agree we're not used in the time of Christ. However, drinking enough of wine with a 10% alcohol content can certainly get you buzzed, hence the passages against drunkenness in the Gospels.

It is likely that the wine was often flavored with various fruits and since it was stored and transported in casks or skins, it had ample opportunity to take on flavors imparted by the vessel used. Grape Juice and Vinegar were also used as drink, but it is generally agreed that

hard liquor akin to modern day liquors with a 40% or more alcohol content were not consumed because the fermentation processes used did not permit distilling such a high “proof” drink. Wine with its alcohol content was almost certainly safer to drink than the water of the day when purification was unknown.

It is interesting to note that while they had no modern medicine, the Mediterranean Diet is almost universally acknowledged to be very healthy and if people today consumed less red meat and hard liquor, but more fish and wine and more fruits and vegetables, we would undoubtedly be healthier. While following the teaching of Jesus will make your spirit healthier following His diet would also make your life a healthier and happier as well! Food for thought.

What Did Jesus Wear? And Why We Should Care?

The short answer is we don't really know but we should care. Why?

This essay may surprise you because it is not going to delve into speculation on the exact pieces of clothing or their color that Jesus wore. Nor are we going to speculate whether they were adorned with tassels and fringes as dictated by Jewish Law and custom. You can often tell a lot about a person by what they wear, or do not wear, and we are going to look toward the more important question ... *what does what Jesus wore tell us about Him?*

We don't know exactly what Jesus wore because there are few mentions of Jesus' clothing in the Gospels. It is mentioned that He wore sandals and that His garments were divided up after He died on the Cross. It even mentions that His undergarment was woven in one piece, which for the time indicates high quality, and that is why they cast lots for it and didn't cut it up.

But other than that, there are a few clues in the Bible. This gets back to my starting point for this series ... *considering what is not mentioned* is often more important than what is. Based on the fact that nothing remarkable was mentioned about Jesus attire we are left to assume that it would most likely have been the *normal simple attire* for a Jewish male of that time.

Which brings us to the second part of the question *why should we care?* It's not so much the exact pieces of clothing that Jesus wore, but in lacking any specific mention in the Gospels, He most likely wore normal clothes. Considering Jesus' teachings on riches and his affinity for helping the sick and poor, simple garb is very fitting. In fact, it would have been totally out of place if Jesus had to strolled about adorned in garb befitting Pharisees, royalty or the wealthy.

Wearing the clothes of the wealthy would've been totally counter to Jesus message. And in that we can infer precisely because His wearing of wealthy attire is not mentioned in the Gospels that he likely dressed as a simple man of the times. That is critical to our

understanding of Jesus and to His messages to us. And is totally in keeping with the image of Jesus portrayed in the Gospels. *Could our image of Christ be the same if he had been adorned in rich attire?*

Jesus, both God and man, but a man in simple attire going about doing the work of His Father. Our Savior was distinguishable from the other men of his time not by His attire, but by His Works and His Message. And the messages for you is that you must be sure that, like Jesus, you are distinguished from the other people of *our time* not by fancy adornments nor fancy attire, but by your works and your message as you go about helping others and spreading *The Word*.

What Did Jesus Look Like?

Previous weekly thoughts have covered what Jesus ate and what Jesus most likely wore. Now we are going to tackle what Jesus looked like. And my answer may surprise you. Or at least hopefully provoke you into some serious thought. After all that's the purpose of these essays.

I believe Jesus looked exactly like the image on the Shroud of Turin. Many maintain that the Shroud is genuine. Others, including most scientists, have claimed that it is not. The Church has not yet weighed in with an answer. So until the Pope makes a definitive proclamation one way or the other, we are left to form our own personal beliefs about the Shroud.

To the scientists and other skeptics, I say God is infallible. Science is not. Can science explain the Virgin Birth. Miracles. The Resurrection. Then why should a scientific dating of the Shroud, which was subjected to spiritual forces far beyond our understanding, be taken as "gospel"?

Exactly how many other pieces of fabric that covered the Body of Christ has science evaluated to prove that carbon dating and other so called "scientific" methods hold true when subjected to the Resurrection of the Son of God? If the question sounds absurd that's precisely the point.

God made the laws of nature. We often mistakenly assume that God, or His works, are bound by the laws of nature. In that assumption lies the absurdity. Does not every miracle in fact contradict what we think we know of the "laws" of nature, medicine and science?

God wrote the laws of nature, the rules of physics and everything else that scientists think they know about scientific "facts". God wrote them and He can change them any time He wants.

With God all things are possible!

So stop looking to science to validate the Shroud of Turin. Look to your faith for the answer.

My faith tells me that God left us this priceless image of His Son Jesus that we may find faith, comfort and spiritual sustenance from it. The complete story of The Passion lies in the Shroud.

Google the Shroud of Turin and gaze into the face of Christ. That's what Jesus looked like.

The next few pages are part of my series covering what man may have missed in The Holy Bible. They are meant to raise thought provoking questions about what man missed, misinterpreted or misunderstood about The Message of Jesus. For fifty years I have researched and studied history. I'm sharing the results with you. Share with your loved ones.

What Man Has Missed In Jesus' Message

The next few pages are a series of thoughts with the theme "*What Man Has Missed In Jesus' Message In The New Testament*". Perhaps we should add "*misunderstood*" as well as missed. I was inspired to write this new series of Weekly Thoughts by a special show I watched on cable presented by one of those TV Ministries. You know, the ones that beg for money in God's Name. They, their sponsors and patrons have certainly "*missed the message*" of Jesus.

You can't buy Salvation. Jesus certainly didn't intend to foster all the fake churches, con artists and ministries using His Name to raise money for themselves. The pitch ("promise") of the TV ministry I watched, which I have paraphrased here, went like this: pay them money to show you love God and He will bless you with the answer to your prayers, or Salvation or whatever you are seeking. Send them money, plant the "seeds" of faith and something good will happen. Send them \$60 and something good will happen within 60 days.

Really?

Most of us will have at least one good thing happen within 60 days regardless of what we do. And if we are down and out and desperate, like most TV ministry viewers, any little thing that helps us may seem like the promised miracle. Now God may have in fact reached out to help you and you may have even experienced a real miracle. But it was due to your prayer and personal relationship with God and not the \$60 you sent to some scammers on some TV show. Next time just put the money under your pillow or bury it under a rock.

No man nor any church can sell you God's Favors or Salvation. Let's think about the logical absurdity of the premise of Selling Slavation. You could have put \$60 under your pillow or buried it under a rock in your yard and still have had something good happen within 60 days. How many of us go two months, 60 days, without something good happening? The next time you are tempted to gain God's favor or earn Salvation by con artists and scammers, put your credit card away and just bury the money under a rock in your yard.

God saves the deepest recesses of hell for those who profit by making false promises in His Name. The same goes for those who would Sell Salvation. The same scamming ministires will

often encourage you to buy and read their book which gives you the Secrets to Salvation. They say; *"buy my book and be saved"*. The price charged for the book is often 50 to 100 times the cost and earns them huge profits on every purchase.

We already have the Secret of Salvation. It's called the Holy Bible. The Word of God. The Good News.

Man can't Sell Salvation. The Catholic Church tried that during the Middle Ages which was one of the factors that precipitated the Protestant Reformation during the Renaissance. I actually heard one of these con artists say; *"sure you may not know where you're going to get that \$60 right now, but have faith and trust in the Lord and it will be returned to you many times over."* Ask how can they dare promise that in His Name.

Now the Lord may choose to relieve your financial, physical or spiritual suffering, but not because you aided and abetted a criminal con artist. These charlatans that would take money from desperate parents and food out of the mouths of hungry children simply to line their own pockets are despicable beyond description. So the next time someone tells you to give money or buy their book to gain God's Favor or Salvation, **THINK**.

Think about how the answers you seek are in His Book. The Holy Bible. Read yours today. Food for thought.

More Of What Man May Have Missed In Jesus' Message

One of the key things many modern-day Christians have missed is that for the first several hundred years after Christ was crucified there was no Bible. The teachings of Jesus were passed along orally from generation to generation. The Catholic Church calls these oral histories "Traditions". So, when Catholics talk of the Traditions of the Church, they are actually referring to the oral history of the teachings of Jesus.

The Gospels are central to the New Testament and Jesus's Teachings. The earliest copies of the Gospels found so far date from 30-40 years after Christ. Surprising to most Christians is the fact that they were not written by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John but by followers of the Apostles who put to paper the oral stories "Traditions" told by them. That's why we say the Gospel "according to" rather than "written by".

Most historians and scholars agree that the authors of the Gospels were not eye witnesses to the ministry of Jesus but rather relied on the oral Traditions passed down from those Apostles who had experienced direct personal contact with Jesus. There may exist a so called "Q" Source which predates the known Gospels, and there are Gospel fragments, notably those discovered near Naq Hammadi, that may have been written by Peter and Mary Magdalene, but the Church has rejected these Gospels. Therefore, to date man has not discovered any Gospels written by someone who actually knew or met Jesus in person.

And the Gospels are just four of the many books comprising the Bible. In fact, the various Christian Religions can't even agree on how many separate books make up the Bible. The books comprising the Bible also include books from the Old Testament, plus the Acts and Letters of the Apostles. Protestant Bibles generally contain 66 Books, Catholic Bibles 73, while the Ethiopian Orthodox Bible has 81 books.

Along with the different numbers of books, there exist many different translations. Many agree that Jesus most likely spoke and taught in Aramaic. Scholars believe when the "oral traditions" of the New Testament were finally written down they were most likely written in Greek. The Old Testament was written in Hebrew. These versions were translated into Latin by the 4th century which was called the Vulgate. The Wycliffe Bible is a translation from Vulgate to English, which wasn't available until the 14th Century. For centuries, until printed Bibles became widely available during the Renaissance, most Christians could only rely on "Tradition" as taught by their priest or pastor. It is a modern luxury to have a Bible by your bedside.

We tend to think of the Bible as "One Book" containing The Word of God which has been with us since the time of Christ. In fact, The Bible is many books which have been translated many times and its contents differ even among Christian Religions. Is it not possible that man may have missed part of Jesus' Message?

Still More Of What Man Has Missed In The Bible

God presented Moses with Ten Commandments. Jesus told His followers to "Love thy neighbor as thyself" and presented parables like the Good Samaritan as examples of how we Christians should behave. He commanded His Apostles to spread His Teachings to men of all nations and to forgive their sins. His Word was simple but many missed the meaning.

So many churches and denominations are so busy making their own laws for their own self-serving interests that many have missed the real meaning of His Teachings. What Jesus really meant. Don't eat meat on Friday, well at least not this Friday, depending on where you live. If you are a Priest you must remain celibate. Sort of. Depending on what type of Christian you claim to be. Funny, I can't find any passage in the Bible that says different groups of Jesus' Followers should follow different rules, laws or Commandments. I also couldn't find where Jesus said don't eat meat on Friday or that Priests could not be married. Some of His Apostles were in fact married with families.

Has man missed something here? Have we perhaps lost the true meaning of His Teachings?

In fact, eating, or not eating, meat on Friday and Priests being celibate are Church rules made by various denominations which don't even apply across all Christians. Certainly, Christ never taught that there should be different "Laws" or "Commandments" for different people. Quite the opposite, everything I read in the Bible says that Jesus intended for there to be "one Church" and "one Body". And thus by extension of that "oneness" only one set of rules for all mankind to live by.

Much of this “let’s make up our own rules” stems back to the passages where Jesus declared Peter the Rock upon which he would build His Church and conferred the power to His Apostles to “bind and to loose”. Jesus also gave the power to forgive sins, as is found stated in other places in the Bible as well. This makes sense. When Jesus returned to His Father, someone on earth had to have power to forgive sin. However, Jesus didn’t confer the power to add Commandments or define new sins.

Part of the problem is that one must understand how the phrase “to bind and loose” was used in the time of Jesus. You must also understand the context in which Jesus used it. The history of the Bible as we know it today sheds some light on the problems of mistranslation and misinterpretation that have occurred over the last 2000 years. Problems which lead to different sins for different people.

For a very simplified history, the teachings of Jesus were most probably *spoken* in Aramaic to His Apostles. Jesus’ teachings were likely first *written* in Greek, the language of the learned at that time. Then translated into Latin. Later they were translated into other languages, the first mass produced Bibles were printed in German then translated into English. Now there are literally dozens of translations being printed in hundreds of languages. And they are not all the same. They differ.

Take for example the Sixth Commandment; *Thou Shalt Not Kill ... or Slay ... or Murder?* One word. Huge difference. Many use “Kill” to include not only humans but animals and God’s other creatures. Slay obviously applies only to man. Murder is different. Killing to defend yourself is not Murder. There are hundreds of men and women serving in the military because defending your country is not considered Murder. Still others believe that all killing is sin and become conscientious objectors.

The “translation” makes a huge difference in what we define as “sin”. But what did Jesus really mean?

I believe Jesus intended one set of “Laws” for all mankind. It’s your job to study The Scriptures and understand what Jesus really meant. Because too often man missed what Jesus meant in The Bible.

In The Eternal Battle of Good vs. Evil Can You Afford To Be Neutral?

This thought is about the Biblical Battle of Good vs. Evil. God vs. Satan. It was inspired by stories of various groups suing towns, parks and people to remove crosses and other religious symbols from their property. Many, including a frightening number of supposedly impartial local, state and federal judges, have started to interpret our cherished Constitutional Right of Religious Freedom as a guarantee *against* religious expression of any kind, in public or private. It seems in today’s upside-down world that flag burning, pornography, and violent

political rhetoric are tolerated under our Constitution's right to Freedom of Speech. *Just don't dare pray in public.*

No American has been burned at the stake for praying in public, yet. But Christians claim they have been arrested for praying. Not in some Third World Country. Right here in the US of A. Scary stuff. Others have been fined and arrested for not performing acts against their religious beliefs.

Which brings up the point of this week's thought. Can you be Neutral in this Great Struggle? Can you be Neutral in the fight of Good vs. Evil? God vs. Satan? If you're not on the side of Good and God then aren't you supporting evil and the devil? This is not a debate about the way you worship God. Regardless of what denomination you are, if you are for Good and God then you must stand against evil. Romans 12:21 says: *"be not overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good"*.

So, make no mistake. Those who would free us from God are actually actively working to turn us over to the evil deeds of the devil. This is a message that man cannot afford to miss in the Bible.

Christians jailed for praying and practicing their faith. Law enforcement officers fired or killed for trying to enforce the law. Teachers suspended or fired or driven off campuses for teaching that we should prefer and do Good over evil. Yes, evil has established a firm foothold in America. We can no longer afford to be Neutral in the eternal Battle of Good vs Evil. Time to make a stand.

We must make a stand.

The Devil's greatest success has been to convince people he doesn't exist. And he could seal his victory of evil over Good if he can now convince the world that God does not exist. Let's prove him wrong! Stand up for God and your rights to proclaim Him. Pray to Him. And worship Him.

In public and in private. God Bless!

Please do me a favor! Forward the URL of this site to friends in need. Even if they are not in dire straits with desperate needs, we all have some situations that praying could help with. This site contains not only links to resources, but links for prayers, Bible study and even TV Shows. Please share our URL with all of your friends ...

What Man Missed In Jesus' Message – Ten Commandments – Keep The Sabbath Holy

Perhaps there is no better place to resume our study of What Man Missed in Jesus' Message and The Bible with the Ten Commandments. And what better commandment to start with than keeping the Sabbath Holy. Notice I did not say which of the Commandments this was.

That's because the number differs on whether you are reading a Catholic or Lutheran (3rd) or Protestant (4th) Bible. It differs because there are *17 verses* in *Exodus 20* that various Christian religions divide differently into the Ten Commandments. If you practice *Sola Scriptura* it again raises the question which Bible and translation do you use that represents the "*sole infallible Word of God*"?

Before exploring What Man Missed about keeping the Sabbath Holy It is interesting to note that in the Old Testament and for early Christians the Sabbath was Saturday, the last day of the week, the "*Seventh Day*". Modern Christians celebrate the Sabbath on Sunday, the first day of the week.

I can find no passage in the Bible where Jesus changed the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday, but that is another topic for another day. For today let's consider that keeping the Sabbath Holy also included a prohibition against doing any work. The Pharisees went to great lengths to make laws detailing exactly what constituted "work" and was therefore prohibited on the Sabbath. Then Jesus came along and showed them just how much they had missed about the Commandments.

Recall how Jesus had His Disciples gather food and how He had cured the afflicted on the Sabbath, causing great consternation among the Pharisees. Jesus had to teach them that "*doing work*" was no prohibition against "*doing good*", showing them, and us, the dangers of making our own laws for our own purposes "*in the name of God*". For complete Bible passage see *Matthew 12*.

Herein lies one of the great problems with man's misunderstanding of the Bible. Man feels the need to "*make more laws*" to describe in detailed minutia what should be obvious to true followers of Christ. Jesus upheld that we should keep the Sabbath Holy, but many Churches have "*made laws*" changing that to an "obligation" to attend their hour-long Sunday Service. Carried to its logical absurdity we have millions today who take an hour to attend service, whether on Sunday or Saturday (*to fulfill your Sunday "obligation"*) and then go about business as usual. Do you really believe that is what God meant by keeping the Sabbath Holy? Do you see the logical absurdity in allowing you to go to service on Saturday, the true Sabbath, to fulfill your obligation for Sunday Service? Do you see here where *Man Missed Jesus' Message* about the Sabbath?

Man has totally missed the meaning of doing no work to keep the Sabbath Holy and Honor God. For by honoring God we honor ourselves. The sabbath day of rest and religious reflection is a way to give rebirth to our souls and recharge our spirits so that for the next six days we may be more successful at doing both God's Work and our work to support ourselves and our families.

What man has missed is by placing so much emphasis on our material comforts and excesses we have no time left for our spiritual needs and souls. We have pushed God away so that most people think that finding a *single hour* for Him each week fulfills the Commandment of keeping the Sabbath Holy. Many will say: *I need to work on Sunday to support my family. My family needs me to take them to soccer, baseball, the beach. You name it. What you're*

really saying is that you are so busy you have no time for God. And if you can't find time for God you have truly missed what God meant in his Commandment to keep the Sabbath Holy. If you must work to feed your family (*even the Disciples gathered food*), then set aside time before or after work. But find time.

Find time for God. Keep the Sabbath Holy. And God will Bless you for it.

Why You Must Go To Mass

You must go to Mass.

People have many misconceptions about why they must go to Mass, so many have stopped going. Many disapprove of some Church teachings or Church actions. Going to Mass is not an approval of everything the Church has said or done, it is your demonstration of Faith in Jesus and God.

It's your opportunity to give your Gifts, whether that be money in the collection basket or food to the food pantry, for the hungry and homeless. It's your opportunity to spend time in the hallowed presence of God. And it's your opportunity to ask for God's help for your friends and family.

Many are so driven by money and riches today that we expect a ROI, "Return On Investment" for time spent going to Mass. Don't think that by going to Mass God will grant your wish this week. Instead attend Mass to praise God and celebrate the sacrifice His Son made for you and the world.

Don't go to Mass expecting to hear a stunning sermon. Not every Priest is a celebrated orator. Instead feast on The Word of God and reflect on how His Message can help you live like a Christian and help others in your daily life. Don't go to Mass just to fulfill your weekly obligation to the Church. *Instead go to fulfill your obligation to your relationship with God.*

Many People say they "*don't get anything out of going to Mass*", so they ask why should they go to Mass? Well let's take an inventory of all the things you can get out of attending Mass:

1. Receive Holy Communion. There is no greater reward than receiving the Body of Christ.
2. Renew your Faith. Put aside the hectic pace of daily life and take time to renew your faith.
3. Relive and Honor Christ's Sacrifice. Attending Mass is like saying Thank You to Jesus.
4. Refresh your knowledge of Scripture. Then let God's Word help guide your daily life.
5. Rejoice in God. Take time to commune with God in His peaceful and hallowed sanctuary.
6. Renounce your Sins. Use the penitential portion of the Mass to ask forgiveness for sins.
7. Request God's Blessing. Ask and you shall receive, for you, friends, family and the world.

So, get up, go out, and attend Mass this week. Renew your personal relationship with God.

What Man Missed In Jesus' Message – Ten Commandments – To Bind And To Loose

This week we continue to explore what *Man Missed in Jesus Message* focusing on the Ten Commandments. Many have questions. Keep the Sabbath Holy. But is it a sin if I go play golf? Thou shalt not kill. But can I shoot someone in self-defense? I am sure you have many questions.

Jesus gave us additional Commandments. Love thy neighbor as thyself. Render unto Caesar that which is Caesars and unto God what is Gods. Turn the other cheek. Many people pondered these questions back in the days of the national drafts during WWII and the Vietnam War. If the nation drafted you to fight in a war did you *render unto Caesar*, join the army and go fight, or keep the Commandment not to kill and be a conscientious objector? Difficult and deep decisions to make.

This is where many Churches step in. Regardless of your Denomination many Churches will tell you that you are not equipped to handle these questions, that's why you must rely on them to "*interpret*" Gods meaning for you. And this interpretation many times takes the form of countless more "*rules*" and "*interpretations*" of what God really meant. That's why you can go to Services on Saturday to fulfill your Sunday "*obligation*" to keep the Sabbath Holy. *But wait ... wasn't the Sabbath supposed to be on Saturday in the first place?* Sort of silly isn't it? God never said you can simply attend Service for an hour on Sunday (or Saturday) to fulfill your "*obligation*" to keep the Sabbath Holy, then spend the other 23 hours doing whatever you wanted. *So who said that?*

Therein lies the problem of most of Church "*laws*", they either mitigate or expand Gods original Commandments to suit their purposes. The same thing the Pharisees had done which was why they objected to Jesus healing on the Sabbath because as "*work*" it violated the Law of Moses that one should perform no "*work*" on the Sabbath. Jesus set them straight on that thinking! See Matthew Chapter 12. It was in this context that Jesus gave us the true purpose of the Sabbath.

"The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath," He said (Mark 2:27). The Pharisees had reversed the priorities of the law of God. They added so many regulations and traditions to the Sabbath Commandment that trying to keep it as required had become a heavy burden on people rather than the blessing that God had intended it to be (Isaiah 58:13-14).

Many Churches will site Matthew 16:19 where Jesus gave His Apostles the power to Bind and Loose as the basis of their authority to make new laws or mitigate the Ten Commandments. But did Jesus really give them power to make many *new* laws in God's name or did He confer the responsibility of making sure God's *existing* laws were followed by His Followers here on earth?

Below are two translations from the *Online Bible Gateway*: <https://www.biblegateway.com>

Matthew 16:19 International Standard Version (ISV). *I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven. Whatever you prohibit on earth will have been prohibited in heaven, and whatever you permit on earth will have been permitted in heaven.*”

Matthew 16:19 King James Version (KJV). *And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.*

Different denominations interpret this passage as granting the power to make the many laws of minutia like the Pharisees did. Others say Bind and Loose applies only to sin, or to the power to excommunicate. I can't give you the answer. Remember it is not our purpose here to answer all questions for you, but rather to get you to *think about the answers and study The Bible with your family*. The answers are in Gods Word. And in the Spirit. Remember, when you stand before Jesus on Judgement Day you, *and not your Priest or Pastor*, will have to justify your actions to Him.

Study The Bible yourself so that you understand and follow the Commandments as God intended you to. Make sure you aren't one of the men or woman that *Missed Jesus' Message. God Bless!*

Footnote: this article is intended to be thought provoking but it is not in any way intended to speak against any Church or Denomination. Rather it is about the personal decisions we must make to uphold Jesus Teachings. In my personal case I believe that the Sabbath was Saturday and so I have attended Mass on Saturdays to fulfill the Catholic Churches "obligation" for Sunday Service while following Gods Laws and Jesus' Teachings. In the same way we must all believe in our Spirit and Soul that we follow Jesus' Teachings. Love Thy Neighbor. Render Unto Caesar. Do Not Kill.

What Man Missed In Jesus' Message - Beware of False Prophets

This Weekly Thought is part of our continuing series covering what man may have missed in The Holy Bible. These weekly articles are meant to raise thought provoking questions about what man may have missed, misinterpreted or misunderstood about The Message of Jesus, The Christ. For over fifty years I have researched and studied history and I am sharing the results with you.

Let us now consider some of the reasons people give for not following Jesus, for not believing that they are Born Catholic. These fall into two groups. In one group are those religions, such as Islam and Judaism, which at worst believe Jesus himself was a “false” prophet, and at best believe that while He may have been a prophet, He was not the Son of God. The second group is comprised of all those who consider themselves to be Christians, but not Catholics due to differences in beliefs and objections against the Catholic Church's doctrines, teachings and traditions. Scripture warns us against false prophets and false teachers. (Matthew 7:15-16). *“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but underneath are ravenous wolves. By their fruits you will know them.”*

Looking first at the argument of Jesus being a “false prophet”, let us examine the “fruits” of the Christians and Catholics. According to generally available data, the number of Christians, i.e. those claiming to believe in Jesus Christ and his teachings, in the world today is over 2 billion. They represent a third of the world’s population and are the largest single religious group of mankind. And Roman Catholics comprise the largest single group of Christians. The Roman Catholic Church is the largest religious group in the United States with over 77 million members belonging to its 20,000 churches across the country.

Catholic Schools educate over 2 million students every year at their own expense with a savings to the taxpayers of over 18 billion dollars annually and with a higher graduation and college acceptance rate than most public school systems have. Over 200 Catholic Colleges and Universities have an enrollment of more than 700,000 students. Some 600 hospitals in the Catholic non-profit hospital system treat one in five hospital patients in the United States, not just Catholics, they come from all faiths and walks of life. And the Catholic Church feeds, clothes and houses millions of people, one in five indigents in America is cared for by the Church, without regard to their race, religion or beliefs.

Does that sound like the fruits of a false prophet? I challenge anyone to produce facts and figures that show where any other religion, or religious group, has done as much for its members, *and for mankind in general, including peoples of all races, creeds and colors, who were not its members*, as the Catholics have done over the last two millennia. If God had not intended it, could the Catholic Church have born so much “fruit”? If Jesus were a “false” prophet, surely God would have intervened and the Catholic Church would not still exist.

Christianity In Crisis

An ISIS faction in the Philippines has threatened the Vatican and the Pope in Rome. The Crisis is now worldwide in scope. Actually, it has been worldwide in scope and increasing in intensity for decades. Now it’s getting to the point where it makes the daily news so we can’t ignore it any longer. It’s not just over there. It’s happening here in the US where we thought we had Freedom.

Consider these news stories from the USA. A coach is disciplined for kneeling and offering a prayer after winning a football game. But NFL players are praised for taking a knee in disrespect during our national anthem. Churches are made to remove statues of Saints because they are offensive. And now even statues of famous Americans are being torn down. Where does it stop?

It’s politically correct to disrespect our flag and country. To rewrite our history so we don’t offend anyone. But we are willing to punish those who would practice their religious beliefs. They are now even willing to compel people to violate their beliefs, to commit sins by

performing actions against their Faith. *Our Constitution guarantees freedom of Religion, not freedom from Religion.*

Unless we stand up and fight them, it will not stop until all Christians are in jails or concentration camps. This is how a Holocaust starts. Little by little. Law by law. It never happens overnight. It happens slowly so that normal people are willing to overlook each succeeding transgression as they grow in number and scope. Until finally, one day you wake up with a knock at your door and are hauled off to jail ... *or worse*. But by then it's too late. It's time for Christians to make a stand.

That knock on your door may be sooner than you think. They have already legalized murder under the name of abortion. The unborn are no longer safe. Who is next? The elderly? The handicapped? We no longer have the right of freedom to worship. That fundamental right of our society has fallen by the wayside. We enjoy freedom of speech only as long as it is politically correct and not religious. You can protest in public but you can't pray. You can speak evil, but can't say a prayer.

The faithful can be forced to commit sins and can be punished for praying because it is "*The Law of The Land*". It's time we all stood up for our rights and made sure we can still enjoy the freedoms our Founding Fathers fought for. And died for. You know, the ones whose statues they want to tear down, disgrace and discard. Just like they want to discard our rights. The first step to a freedomless future is to erase the history of how we fought and earned those precious freedoms.

Don't let them take any more of our freedoms away. Especially our rights to pray and practice our faith. It's gotten to the point where we can't ignore it anymore. It's time for us to make a stand!

Because if it can happen here to Christians, it can happen to people of any faith. Judaism. Islam. Anyone. So make a stand. Before you wake up to that knock on your door and the trip to a cell. Or worse. Talk with your fellow Christians, your Priests and Pastors, and plan to make your stand.

Christians!

Time To STANDD

Stand Together Against Needless Death & Destruction

Just read or watch the NEWS on any given day and you realize that it is time for Christians To STANDD and be counted. Death and destruction come in many forms and impact not only Christians but peoples of all faiths across the world. As the world's largest religion with over 2 Billion followers of Christ, Christians are in a unique position to change the world

and end death and destruction. We must make a STANDD. Together we literally speak with the voice of Billions.

Consider the facts for 2015. Staggering. Can Christ really be proud of our World 2,000 years later?

- **More than 28,000 men, women and children died in worldwide Terrorist Attacks.**
- **Another 180,000 died in the more than 40 “local” wars raging around the world.**
- **Over 3 million children died from “poor nutrition”, i.e. they were starved to death.**
- **In the world 30 million people are involved in “human trafficking”, they’re slaves.**
- **An estimated 100 million plus Homeless live exposed to the weather and elements.**
- **Almost 800 million people without enough food live hungry and malnourished.**

And tens of millions die from easily prevented or cured diseases simply because they cannot get medical care. Whatever the cause, isn’t it time to Stand Against Needless Death & Destruction?

I have been inspired to help make the voice of Christians heard. To make a STANDD. If you are interested in joining The Movement, please go to the Contact Us page and send me your name.

Meanwhile, even if you don’t want to be part of the STANDD movement, do your part. Ask what your congregation is doing about it. Email or write your local political representatives. Attend civic meetings and speak up. Join an existing group. How ever you do it, make your voice heard.

If two Billion Christians stood with ONE VOICE and said STOP IT, we could no longer be ignored.

Make a STANDD.

God Bless!

The Joy of Music In Prayer

Today's thought is on the Joy of Music in our daily lives. Especially our Spiritual Lives. Many of those wiser than I have said that when you sing God's Praises you are actually praying twice. Sing once. Pray Twice.

Through song Jesus Can Help uplift your spirits, overcome your fears and relieve your anxieties. You benefit when you incorporate music and prayer during your daily worship. That's why I have added links to various sites on this page. There is no attempt to circumvent creative contents or copyrighted material, indeed many links are to the artists' own websites. Rather it is my attempt to provide viewers and visitors with an additional religious resource.

The "NEW" links on this page are to sites ranging from The Joy of Music exploring famous Cathedrals and Organs hosted by composer Diane Bish to a site listing the top Female Gospel Singers. Did you know there were so many? The Gospel music genre seems to have made a big comeback in recent years.

Please visit these sites, listen and enjoy. And as always feel free to forward to your friends and relatives who could also benefit from The Joy of Music.

God Bless!

Need A Miracle? Then Make A Miracle Possible!

We often ask for God's help. In other words a Miracle. Face it, we seldom ask for His help when we think we have the answer. When the solution is simple and straightforward. We only ask when we feel helpless and the situation seems hopeless. We ask when we need a Miracle.

If you need a Miracle from God, then make a Miracle possible. You're without a job and you suddenly feel inspired to answer that ad for a position you normally wouldn't apply to. And you get the job. You're lonely and depressed and suddenly a dear friend from the past reaches out to you. You have a serious illness and try a new treatment which cures you. Miracles!

Because you took action that helped solve your situation in no way means it wasn't a Miracle. God wants us to help ourselves. God works His ways through others and seemingly random events. There are no coincidences. God helps those who work with Him and help themselves. So If you need a Miracle then take action and work with God to make that Miracle possible.

Often we have trouble finding meaning for seemingly random events in our lives. They are part of God's Plan. Did you ever have an interesting occurrence such as running into an old friend you hadn't seen in years and you found they needed something special you could help them with? You took a different route home from work and came across a stranded motorist. Your company is hiring, suddenly you were inspired to call a friend only to find out they were just laid off. You sat next to a person on the bus and in talking found they needed special medical care, and you just happen to know a specialist in that field. God does not do random. At that time and place, you were the Miracle that these people needed. It's not all always about you.

If you need a Miracle, pray and open your mind, heart and spirit to Our Lord. If you need a job send out three time as many resumes this week. If you have lost a loved one find another and end the sadness and loneliness in two people's lives. If you need a cure, talk to another doctor, and keep asking until you find one that can offer hope. Most of all, NEVER quit. Let Him help.

If you need a Miracle help God make your Miracle possible.

And if He asks you be someone else's Miracle ... say YES.

Please do me a favor! Forward the URL of this site to friends in need. Even if they are not in dire straits with desperate needs, we all have some situations that praying could help with. This site contains not only links to resources, but links for prayers, Bible study and even TV Shows. Please share our URL with all your friends ...

www.JesusCanHelp.us