

“O God Who Are You?”

Acknowledgments:

“The life is in the seed, not in the sower!”

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All of the above are God’s blessings to me. To God belongs all the glory!

This booklet is designed for those who are for the first time seeking to know God, or who are not satisfied with what they think they know about God.

The material is designed to present the Christian faith, and the God Christians know, in the simplest of ways.

The writer has tried to be as basic in his sharing as one can be who has known the Christian faith since he was a child.

Please be patient with the author if you feel that not all your questions are answered here. He too is still growing in the vastness and beauty of this faith.

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“O GOD WHO ARE YOU?”

Introduction

What follows in this book is not a great theological treatise, nor was it written by a great theologian. It is a story of what the Lord has given me to understand about the Christian faith.

All understanding of God must come from Him; He is the only source. God uses people to communicate with people. He does not use people as though they were robots or computers, but He uses them in a very special way.

Jesus' disciple, Peter, was a fisherman. He spoke and wrote like a fisherman, yet God spoke through him. Jesus' disciple, Luke, was a medical doctor. He spoke and wrote like a doctor, yet God spoke through him. Each disciple spoke and wrote from his own background, yet God spoke through each of them.

I believe God still speaks to us today through the Bible. From this source He speaks to people, through people. To God alone belongs all the glory and the credit.

This writer has been a clerk in a grocery store, an electrician, a GI in the United States Air Force, a door-to-door salesperson, an unofficial chaplain to the Illinois Youth Commission, a Missionary at Large, a Parish Pastor, and an Evangelist.

(In this booklet I try to share the God I know in the simplest way I know! It is written for you with my fervent prayer for blessings; please take a moment right now—before you read another sentence—add a prayer to mine that as you read you will be blessed. Pastor Erv Rasmussen)

THE WAY WE LEARN

We humans learn almost everything by comparing the unknown with something we already know. If we have never seen a Zebra, we can imagine one when someone compares it to a horse or to a donkey and tells us the shape is almost the same but the animal has black and white stripes. We then have a mental picture until we can see one for ourselves. This learning by comparing is used throughout our lives.

When we try to use this same process to know and understand God, we find it impossible; there is only one God. He can't be compared to anyone, because there is no one like Him!

So how can we learn about God? Only one way works.

For us to get a glimpse of what God is like, He has to tell us about Himself. He does just that. Christians believe, through the Holy Bible, He tells us things about Himself that are beyond our total understanding. Christians have many questions, but there is no real way to know God completely or to dispute what He says of Himself, for we can compare Him to no one.

To receive what Jesus tells us about Himself takes a special power that God alone can give. He calls that power faith, *it is* an invisible hand that grasps Jesus as Lord and Savior, and rests securely in His hold.

If we humans try to know Him with our limited mind power, we soon make the mistake of trying to use the old method of comparing Him to ourselves. Then we throw up our hands in frustration and cry, "He can't do that" or "He can't be like that!" *The point is that, He is what He is and we need to let God be God!*

INTRODUCTION TO THE HOLY BIBLE

Christians believe that the Holy Bible is the tool God has used through the centuries to make Himself known to the people of earth. The word Bible simply means book. Christians call it the *Holy Book or God's Word*.

The Bible has two main parts called *testaments*. The first part, called the *Old Testament (Jewish Scriptures)* was written before the birth of Jesus Christ. The second part, the *New Testament*, was written during the first 100 years after the birth of Jesus Christ.

The Old Testament was written by people the Bible called prophets or preachers. Moved by God they wrote truths He placed into their minds to make Himself known to His people. The prophets were not robots blindly taking dictation from God. He used their individual vocabularies to express His thoughts.

The 39 separate writings of the Old Testament are commonly called books of the Bible. They begin with the story of how God made the world (creation), and how humans spoiled a perfect love relationship between themselves and God. The Old Testament continues throughout its books to point to the coming of a *Savior or Messiah* who would free people from everything that

separates them from God. Throughout its pages are assurances that all who trusted in God and His promises were fully and freely forgiven by the works this Savior would do. The 39 books were probably written on scrolls of animal skins sewn together and rolled around wood dowels. Handed down from generation to generation of God's people, the teachings were the foundation of the Jewish faith.

About 400 years after the last book of the Old Testament, Malachi, was written. God kept his long-awaited promise of a Savior. Through a miracle, a boy child was born to Mary, a virgin living in Palestine. At the direction of God, the boy was given the name *Jesus*, which means Savior in the Jewish language. Jesus is the true Son of God and at His birth, He also became a true man. Through Jesus' life, suffering, death, and resurrection from the dead, God kept the promises made to His people hundreds of years before.

To share what He did with future generations, Jesus chose 12 men to be his *Apostles* (personally chosen followers or students). In speaking and writing, these men shared the life and teachings of Jesus Christ with all the world for all time. They put down 27 writings, a collection we call the New Testament. The first four of these writings or books are called the *Gospels*, which means **good news**. They tell of the life and ministry of Jesus as each of four writers saw and experienced it. The next book is called Acts of the Apostles; it gives the early history of the Christian church. The final 22 writings, or letters, apply Jesus Christ's teachings to the reader's personal life. (From this point on, for brevity, we will refer from time to time to the Old Testament as O.T. and the New Testament as N.T.)

There are several fine translations of the Bible available today. They put the original O.T., which was written in the Hebrew language, and the N.T., which was written in the Greek language, into English and other contemporary languages. In English the New International Version is one of the best of these translations.

Lists of the O.T. and N.T. books are found in the table of contents in the front of most Bibles. Some also list the abbreviations for the names of the books, i.e., Matthew—Matt., John—Jn., Genesis—Gen.

Each book of the Bible is divided into chapters, and the chapters into verses. This division is done to make it easy to find your way around when you want to study a particular story or teaching. For instance, you might be asked in a Bible study class to look up Matt. 25:30. If you have not used the Bible before, find the location of the Matthew book in the table of contents and turn to it. Then find chapter 25 and move to verse 30. If the reference was to Matt. 25:14-30, you would read verse 14 through 30. (Go ahead; try this now.)

Whether you read the Bible for leisure or for study, go through each chapter slowly, then return and read the chapter again. Ask God to open the meaning to you as you read. Work out your own method for general Bible reading. It isn't a good method to start at Genesis 1 and read to the end of the Bible. That would be like getting out an encyclopedia and beginning to read all the volumes from A to Z. Although this isn't wrong, it is a poor method and could be very confusing because the Bible has 66 books by many authors assembled into one volume.

John 3: 16-18

16: “For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. 17. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him. 18. Whoever believes in Him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son.

Ephesians 2: 8-10

8. For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—9. not by works, so that no one can boast. 10. For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

THE BIBLE OPENS THE DOOR TO GOD

This short course in Christian basics is not deeply detailed. But these few pages should encourage you to hunger for His Word so that you will continue to study it all the days of your life. To help you get started, we will most often rely on the brief Bible passages written out for you here and let you read the quotes in context in your home reading.

These quotes are taken with permission from the New International Version translation of the Bible into English.

The Bible Shows Us *Only One* God

God gave His people basic Commandments through His Prophet Moses. Following His giving of these Commandments, God told His people, “*You were shown these things so that you might know that the Lord is God; besides Him there is no other.*” --Deuteronomy 4:35. He also said to His people through Moses, “*Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.*”—Deuteronomy 6:4.

When Jesus was asked, “Of all the commandments, which is the most important?” –The most important one, 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 12:28b-30

The Bible Shows Us A Mystery

The One God is Three Persons. In our human reasoning and arithmetic, one plus one, plus one equals three. IN God’s makeup, in His being, there are three persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Yet there is only one entity, only one God. Be careful here that you don’t let the human mind rebel and say, “No, that can’t be.”

The Relationship of God to the Name *Trinity*

The term Trinity is the name Christians have invented to describe, in one word, the one God we believe in. It is He who makes Himself known in the Bible. Although some religions outside of Christianity (Judaism, Muslim, and others) teach that Christians believe in three Gods, this is not true. Christians see God as He shows Himself in the Bible: three distinct persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, yet one God. To describe this Bible teaching about the one God, Christians use the terms Three-in-One, Triune God, or the Trinity.

In the Hebrew Scriptures (our Old Testament) the plural is used when speaking of God, “Let **Us** make man in **Our** image...”—Genesis 1:26 and “**Holy, Holy, Holy** is the Lord Almighty...”—Isaiah 6:3. All three persons were present at the Baptism of Jesus—he Father speaking from heaven, the Holy Spirit appearing like a dove, and the Son being baptized. We are told “...Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John. As Jesus was coming up out of the water, He saw the heavens being torn open and the Spirit descending on Him like a dove. And a voice from heaven: ‘You are My Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.’” -- Mark 1:9-11.

When God told Aaron to give a blessing to God’s people, it was threefold: “The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn His face toward you and give you peace.” Numbers 6:22-27.

When Isaiah the Prophet saw a vision of heaven, the angels were singing threefold praise to God, “*Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of His glory.*” Isaiah 6:3

When Jesus sent His disciples into the world to work for Him, this was His commission: “...go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teach them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” Matthew 28:19-20.

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GOD IS LIKE

“God is a spirit, and His worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth.” John 4:24

“With God all things are possible.” Matthew 19:26.

“God is love.” 1 John 4:8

“Lord, You have been our dwelling place throughout all generations. Before the mountains were born or You brought forth the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting You are God.” Psalm 90:1-2,

The Relationship of the Three Persons to Each Other

When the Bible speaks of the Triune God, the first person is addressed as Father, or simply as God. When the Bible speaks of the second person, He is called the son, the Son of God or the Son of Man. John, in his Gospel, speaks of this second person also as “The Word.” When the third person of the Trinity is spoken of, He is addressed as the Holy Spirit or the Spirit of God or the Comforter. All three persons of the Trinity are equal in every possible way; as we explain later.

The Relationship of the Father to Creation

The Father does not try to convince us that He created the world, that is, that He made it from nothing. He simply treats it as a fact: “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” Genesis 1:1.

The Bible says that God has no limitations. His Word was all that was needed to create everything from nothing. He created a mature world, with adult trees, birds, people, everything. All through the story of the beginning in Genesis, God simply says, “Let there be...and there was.”

The first article of the Apostles’ Creed, the common confession of many Christians, summarizes our faith concerning the Father.

“I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.” This brief statement can be expanded and explained: “I believe that God has made me and all creatures, that He has given and still preserves to me my body and soul, eyes, ears, and all my physical person, my reason and all my senses; as well as all the resources I need, such as my family members, clothing, food, drink, a house and home, and all my worldly possessions, that He richly and daily provides me with all I need for my body and life, protects me from all danger, guards and keeps me from all evil; and all this completely out of His fatherly and divine goodness and mercy, without anything in me that merits this love; because of this I am obligated in love to thank and praise, serve, and obey Him. This is without a doubt true.” (“The Catechism” written by Dr. Martin Luther).

Many scientists believe everything in the world came about by accident after a “big bang” millions and millions of years ago. In their theory, time has been substituted for God. We will only say that scientists agree that, if their primary premise is incorrect, their evolutionary theory is in error. If, in fact, and world began as an adult world created by God and not developed by accident over millions of years, then all of this theory must be incorrect.

The story of God’s creation is found in the first and second chapters of Genesis. Here we see that God in six successive days: (1) created light and separated it from darkness; (2) made the sky; (3) divided the dry land from the waters and covered it with plant life; (4) set the sun, moon, and stars in their places; (5) made fish and birds; (6) made the land animals and, as His final act, created humans to be the rulers of the earth, under Him; and (7) on the seventh day God rested or ceased His work. He blessed the seventh day and made it holy (a special day).

THE RELATIONSHIP OF HUMANS TO THE REST OF CREATION

It is clear that God the Father wanted humans to rule the world and to be second only to Him in this new creation. To this end, He created man in His own image. The Bible records God saying, “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. So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.” Genesis 1:26-27.

Christians don’t know exactly all that the term image of God implied. We do know that speech and intellect are a part of this image. But we know they were not programmed as the rest of God’s creation. They were not flesh-and-blood robots.

Humankind’s original will was in perfect harmony with the holy will of God. Man’s will was inclined to do the will of God, and man was perfectly good and holy.

God placed humans above all of the rest of His creation. He gave them “free will”—the ability to make their own decisions. The most important decision He wanted them to make was to freely choose always to do what God wanted them to do, not because they had to, but because they wanted to do so. To obey or not to obey, this was the most important choice of all.

In order to give them this important choice, He gave them just one “No” command, “don’t eat from the tree in the middle of the garden.” Without at least one “No” command there could be no choices.—The thing to remember is that they could always say “Yes,” if they wanted to do so. But God warned them, if you disobey you will lose the perfect relationship we have with each other and death will enter the world!

The Bible relates the sad fact that they did disobey. They used their free will, but in a way God the Father did not want them to. The result was separation. They lost the perfect relationship they had with God. They could no longer say “Yes” to God and please Him perfectly.

The Origin of Evil

Where did evil come from? The Bible does not go into great detail about this subject, but does speak of fallen rebellious angels, chief of whom is satan, sometimes called Lucifer or simply the devil. It was he who lured the first humans to disobey God and to break the original perfect relationship between God and mankind.

The Bible tells us “...God did not spare the angels when they sinned, but sent them to hell, putting them in gloomy dungeons to be held for judgment...” 2 Peter 2:4. The Bible also warns, “Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith...” 1 Peter 5:8-9.

It really isn't necessary for us to know the origin of evil or of the devil, since Christians know how God the Father dealt with the devil through the life, death, and resurrection of His Son Jesus Christ. One does not have to know the source of a deadly disease if the perfect cure for that disease is known.

The Perfect Cure

For some reason known only to God Himself, He still loved His fallen race and gave all humans another chance. He promised a Savior, a Messiah who would make things right again between God and the people of earth. Speaking to the devil, who had appeared as a snake to tempt the first humans to rebel against God, He said, "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; He will crush your head, and you will strike His heel...." Genesis 3:15. (Please read the whole chapter).

The offspring of the woman was Jesus. He completely defeated the devil, crushing his head, a death blow. While Satan bruised Jesus' heel (i.e., the pain of His suffering and death), Jesus triumphantly returned from the dead. We'll discuss more on this later in this study.

(For your personal Bible reading see: Matthew 12:24-26; Ephesians 2:2; 1 Peter 5:8-9; Hebrews 2: 14; Matthew 13:19 and 28; Matthew 25:41).

JESUS RELATIONSHIP TO GOD THE FATHER

The Bible says, "When the time had fully come, God sent His son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under the law, that we might receive the full rights of sons." Galatians 4:4-5. This was accomplished when God had a young virgin woman, Mary; act as His instrument in bringing His Son into our rebellious world. She was told by a messenger from God (an angel) of this fantastic event, this miracle that was to happen: "Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. You will be with child and give birth to a Son, and you are to give Him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David, and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever; His kingdom will never end." Luke 1:30-33.

It is important to see the fact that Mary was a virgin, because through her, God and man became one in the person of Jesus. He is the one and only link between the human race and God. He is the only tie between mortal and immortal, between time and eternity. If it had been an ordinary birth, through the sexual relationship of a man and woman, Jesus could have been a "good man" but not what He was, the "God-Man" shown to us in the Bible.

It cannot be over emphasized: through the virgin birth, Jesus became the only bridge between humans and God and the only way we can get right with God. The second person of the trinity, the Son, who existed with the Father and the Holy Spirit before there was such a thing as time,

came into the world through Mary and took into Himself our human nature, He became one of us!! From that moment in history, Jesus Christ was and is 100% man and 100% God.

If Jesus was only human, even though He had kept the law of God perfectly, He could perhaps take the place of one person who was imperfect, but surely not all human beings! Because He was also God, His death had limitless value; it paid the price for every human's total bankruptcy!

If a person denies the virgin birth, he denies the whole wonderful true story of Jesus Christ as our Savior, our Messiah, and the One who made us right with God!

Jesus Himself Claimed to be God

Some say Jesus never claimed to be God. Nothing could be further from the truth. Why some may claim this, if they are not in-depth Bible students can be easily understood. When Jesus came into the world, He subjected Himself to the law the Father placed on all humans. He voluntarily put away the use of His powers as God to a great extent. Through the Apostle Paul, God tells us, "Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus; who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made Himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted Him to the highest place and gave Him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth, and under the earth and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Philippians 2:5-11.

Jesus often made remarks confirming the fact that He functioned as a true human being, placing Himself under the same limitations saying, "...My Father who has given them to me, is greater than all." He also clearly stated, "I and the Father are One!" John 10:25-30.

We humans again face the mystery of God in Christ. We cannot compare what happened in and through Him with any other event in all human history. As 100% man He experienced everything humans experience today, but unlike us, He was like the first man (Adam). He could obey God in all things. He could also disobey God, but unlike Adam or us, He never did disobey!

That He was a true man there is no doubt. He ate; He drank; He slept; He cried, He died. Secular history records that He lived and died. Even the calendar most people use today measures the years by His birth!

That He was also 100% God, the Bible clearly shows, for it records the words only God could speak and the miracles that only God could do, including the spectacular miracle of rising from the dead on the first Easter Sunday.

With His own statements Jesus proclaimed He was God. Confronted by His enemies, Jesus said that the prophets of old had proclaimed His coming as the Messiah. Then Jesus said, "Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing My day; he saw it was and glad." "You are not

yet fifty years old, the Jews said to Him and You have seen Abraham?” “I tell you the truth,” Jesus answered, “Before Abraham was born, I AM.” At this they picked up stones to stone Him, but Jesus hid Himself, slipping away from the temple ground.” John 8:56-59.

In connection with the above, look at two important facts:

- (1) When the Prophet Moses was confronted by God, He told him he was going to be the man to lead the Jewish nation out of slavery in Egypt, Moses asked God, “Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is His name?’ Then what shall I tell them?” God said to Moses, “I am who I am. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: ‘I AM has sent me to you...’” The name God called Himself here is clearly “I AM” (the ever existing One).
- (2) When Jesus made the statement, “Before Abraham was born, I AM!”...John 8:58. His enemies understood very clearly that He was saying, “I am God!” How can we be sure His enemies understood this? By the fact they wished to stone Him after He made this statement. Stoning—throwing stones at a person until he died—was the method the Jewish people used to execute only those who committed adultery or blasphemy. i.e., making yourself God. Adultery certainly was not the reason in the above story. They clearly understood Jesus was saying He was God.

There are no two ways about it. Either He was what He said He was or He is the greatest liar and deceiver that ever lived.

When Jesus asked His disciples, “Who do you say that I am?” Peter, speaking for all of them said, “The Christ, (Messiah) of God.” Luke 9:20. Jesus, on trial before the religious leaders of His day, was asked by the high priest. “Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?” “I AM”, SAID Jesus. “And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven.” Matthew 26:63-64.

Sooner or later, every person who is confronted by Jesus Christ through His word must answer the same question as did the disciples. Jesus asks you, “Who do you say that I am?”

The Relationship of the Holy Spirit, the third Person of the Holy Trinity to the Father and to Jesus

The Bible teaches that the Holy Spirit (sometimes called the Holy Ghost or Comforter) is equal in all ways to the Father and the Son. He is a person and not just a “power.” A story recorded in the early history of the church points this out. It shows two people, a husband and a wife, who tried to cheat on God. The man was asked by Peter, “Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land?...You have not lied to men but to God.” Acts 5:1-11.

The Holy Spirit, the Son, and the Father are distinct persons, not just different forms of the One God. This is clearly seen, as we noted before: all three were present at the Baptism of Jesus. Matthew 3:13-17. All three are also involved in Christ’s command to His followers, “God and

make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the son and of the Holy Spirit..." Matthew 28: 18-19.

The Holy Spirit is depicted as the source of the human being's ability to come to a saving faith in Jesus. The Bible says, "...no one can say 'Jesus is Lord', except by the Holy Spirit," 1 Corinthians 12:3. The Holy Spirit does not force faith onto anyone. He can be resisted. Humans still have the power to say "no" to God! The first Christian martyr, Stephen, accused the enemies of Jesus Christ, "You always resist the Holy Spirit!" Acts 7:51. (Read Stephen's whole sermon in Acts 7:1-60).

The Holy Spirit is also the source of the Christian's power to do good works (i.e., deeds pleasing to God), as the Bible says, "The fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Against such things there is no law." Galatians 5:22-23.

The Holy Spirit, the Christian's Source of Power for Prayer

The Christian's prayer life (i.e., his ongoing conversation with God) has its source of power in the Holy Spirit. In fact, the Bible says when Christians don't know what or how to ask in prayer, "...the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray, but the spirit Himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. And He who searches our hearts knows the mind of the spirit, because the spirit intercedes for the saints (Christians) in accordance with God's will." Romans 8:26-27.

THE KEY TO BECOMING A CHRISTIAN

As seen before, God must be the mover in bringing us to faith in Jesus for "...no one can say, 'Jesus is Lord,' except by the Holy Spirit." 1 Corinthians 12:3. God does this through two methods (1) He uses His Word, the Holy Bible. "Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ." Romans 10:17; and (2) He uses Holy Baptism.

Before we come to faith in Jesus the Bible says we "were dead in our transgressions and sin." Ephesians 2:1-10. The Holy Spirit calls and empowers a person through the Word of God to believe and become a Christian. This booklet, because it contains God's Word, can open the door in your life to Jesus and through Him to life everlasting.

When we come to faith as adults through the spoken or written Word, God commands us to be baptized. This means to have water applied to us in some way (by pouring, by immersing, or by sprinkling) and having these empowering words, commanded by Jesus spoken, "I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." (See Matthew 28:18-20).

By giving this command to us humans, God clearly demonstrates that Baptism is His action toward us, not ours toward Him and that it makes us part of His eternal family through Jesus. For an adult, Baptism is a second and confirming step into this relationship. Where Christmas

may perhaps doubt that we have faith, by Baptism, we are assured that at a certain point in time God touched us with the eternal-life-giving water of Baptism connected with His promise that we are His. God has never gone back on a promise—NEVER!!

Faith is backed up by the fact of our Baptism. Jesus clearly says, “You did not choose Me, but I chose you...” John 15:16. The remembrance of our Baptism and His words chases away all our doubts and fears.

At one time Jesus was asked by His disciples, “Who then can be saved?” He answered, “With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God.” Mark 10:27.

WHAT ABOUT BAPTIZING BABIES? Infant Baptism is a Family Affair

Most Christian churches throughout the world baptize children. This practice may be very baffling to the non-Christian and even be misunderstood among Christians themselves.

Jesus doesn't say to His followers, “Round up all the babies you can find and baptize them and they will go to heaven.”

On the other hand, neither does Jesus anywhere exclude infants from Baptism.

Because all humans are of equal value in the sight of Jesus, surely infants are not excluded!

In fact when Jesus' disciples were arguing about who is greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven, the Bible tells us that Jesus set an infant in their midst and said, “I tell you the truth unless you change and become like little children you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.” Matthew 18:3-5.

He was not saying you must be “childish,” but “child-like.”

It is clearly stated in the Bible that when adult families come to faith, God gives the special gift of Baptism to the whole family, babies included! The best example of this is when the Apostle Paul shared the story of Jesus' life with a jailer and when this man came to faith, “he and his family were baptized.” Acts 16:21-34.

“O.K.,” some reply, “How can a baby have a relationship with God? The baby can't hear and understand the Good News message of Jesus and decide to believe! Can He?” The statement is true, but remember, we don't establish a loving relationship with God, **He establishes it with us!**

One night, a man by the name of Nicodemus came to Jesus to seek answers. Jesus told him, “You must be born from above!” John 3:3-8. As Jesus most often did, He compares something in everyday life with eternal truths. Here He compared coming into a loving relationship with God (faith) to being born physically.

He said, “That which is born of flesh is flesh and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit!”

.Let's look at this comparison: You and I didn't decide to be born physically, God decided that. None of us become a child of our earthly father and mother only after we recognize them and understand the relationship with our mind. We were their child from conception!

This is also true of spiritual birth. God's Word says, "No one can say Jesus is Lord, except through the Holy Spirit." 1 Corinthians 12:3 and "You must be born from above." John 3:3-8. Through God's move, a baby can be His before there is head knowledge!

Of all the babies born on earth, the most fragile, the most helpless is the human baby. The human baby will die if not cared for soon after birth. From birth on it must be cared for, fed, and educated more than most, if not all, creatures of earth.

Since God has supplied families so that human children can survive physically, he also does the same in the case of spiritual birth through Christian Baptism. **Infant Baptism is God's gift only to Christian families!!**

In our society families are not always what we used to call "traditional." Sometimes, because of death or divorce we have a one parent family. In some cases, the only active family the child has are grandparents, uncles, and aunts, or other variations. Whatever Christian family exists, if it takes seriously the physical raising of the child and will also take seriously the Christian raising of the child, God will work through that family in Infant Baptism.

Going on with the comparison of physical and spiritual birth and relationships, we all know there are parents and families who neglect their children physically, sometimes to the point of death. They abandon their God-given responsibilities. This can happen also after spiritual birth in Baptism. Families can neglect their children's spiritual needs and a much more serious death may follow!

When children feel grown up physically, they may choose to abandon their families and will have nothing to do with them. As a result, they lose the blessings of that relationship and the inheritance that goes with it.

However, no matter what parents try to do for their children, no matter how hard they try to be a blessing, both in earthly and heavenly needs, the children have the power to reject their parents, just as they can reject Jesus, and lose the relationship He gave them in Baptism.

The above being true, it is also true that Jesus always had a door open for the child who strays from the Family of Christ. He always forgives those who are sorry and welcomes back those He has called. Read the story in the Bible of the "Prodigal Son". Luke 15:11-32.

GOD'S KISS OF FORGIVENESS

When my children were quite young, I tended to be a strict disciplinarian. I remember one incident in particular; I had just spanked one of my four children. The child with tears said, "Daddy will you forgive me?" I said, "Honey of course I forgive you!" The next thing I knew, with outstretched arms the child ran to me and I gave a big hug and kiss to seal the forgiveness.

It's a human trait, I guess, to want more than just a spoken word of forgiveness. We seem to need a personal physical contact. We need the "Kiss of Forgiveness!"

Look at what took place in the "Upper Room" the night Jesus was betrayed by His enemies. Christians call this event the "Lord's Supper, "Holy Communion," or the "Eucharist." Jesus took the simple elements of bread and wine from the table in front of Him, and after blessing them, said of the bread, "Take and eat it, this is My body." He gave them the wine and said, "Drink of it all of you, this is My blood." He said very clearly that through these elements, He touches us and gives us forgiveness. Matthew 26:26-28.

Later as this special happening was repeated often, as Jesus had commanded His followers to do, they were warned. "Whoever eats this bread or drinks of this cup in an unworthy manner is guilty of profaning the body and blood of the Lord."

The basic facts are that He took bread and wine (note they are called bread and wine before and after the special meal) and gave it to them to share. Jesus also clearly states that when they are taken, in this special event, they are His "Body" and His "Blood." In this special event bread and wine are connected with His body and blood through the power of His Word.

Now why did Jesus give His people this special meal and tell us to repeat the event **often**?

I believe it is to fill the very human need of God's children, the need for personal, one-on-one contact. It is GOD'S KISS OF FORGIVENESS!

In the Christian worship service there is a place where God's people confess their many sins (all the things that they have done or not done) which displease God. Then they hear the pastor speak the words of forgiveness that comes from God, "I forgive you all, your sins, in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit." It is what Christians call the general absolution or forgiveness of all God's people, as a group, won for them by the life, suffering and death of Jesus. It was sealed by His rising from the dead on Easter Sunday.

In a way, this was like my saying to my child, "Honey of course I forgive you!" But Jesus also makes available an extra "**kiss of forgiveness** in the "Lord's Supper." In it He reaches out to us and makes personal contact.

All too often our world today treats the kiss very lightly. IN fact, at times it is used to take advantage of or degrade a person. Like all beautiful things in this world, when they are misused they become "dirty." Christians don't want that to ever happen to "God's Kiss!"

“God’s Kiss of Forgiveness” is a very intimate act. It is an act of personal love from God, who “Is Love.” It demands a relationship with God as our Father, through Jesus our Brother by faith, who saved us from eternal death to give us eternal life. It is an act that Jesus makes possible only through His Family, the Christian Church, when we are in a relationship with it.

WE CAN TALK TO GOD (It’s called Prayer)

Prayer—What is It?

There seems to be a universal opinion that all human beings are capable of praying to a “supreme being” whether or not they have a religion. A common saying in war is, “There are no atheists in foxholes!” Whatever tragedy strikes, everyone says they pray.

But is this emergency calling out to a power beyond this world, really prayer at all? Christians do not believe calling out in desperation to the “great unknown one” is what God considers prayer.

Does God hear such outcries? Of course He does, God has no limitations: **He is all powerful, He has all knowledge, He is in all places at all times.** Does He respond? Always! If the request is in His overall plan, He gives a “Yes” answer, if not, He says, “No” and sometimes He says “Wait”.

You may ask, “Isn’t this the same as Christian prayer?” No, there is a vast difference. It is a difference of relationship between the one praying and God. There is only one prayer that was taught to people by God himself. We call it “The Lord’s Prayer.” It is used as the model upon which all Christian prayers are fashioned.

Before Jesus taught His disciples to pray He gave them a warning. “When you pray do not keep babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words.” (See Matthew 6:5-8). Prayer must come from the heart as well as the mind and you must know where it is going.

What is the “Master Key” to all Christian prayer? The “Master Key” is given right at the very beginning of the prayer Jesus taught His followers. He taught them to begin like this, “Our Father” who art in heaven.” He put Christians together with Himself in an intimate relationship to God the Father.

So we see that the “Master Key” to Christian prayer is the relationship we have with God through His only eternal Son, Jesus. Since by faith Jesus made us brothers and sisters to Himself, we can actually call God, “Father!” We have access to Him as dear children to a Father.

Because of this Father-child relationship, God now acts on what is best for Christians in His overall plan for us. If what we ask fits His plan for His children, He says, “Yes”, if it doesn’t, He says, “No”; if its time is not right, He says, “Wait.” But He always answers.

As we said above, “The Lord’s Prayer” is the Christian’s model for all prayer. Actually, the prayer was not His prayer. It was the prayer He gave us in answer to His disciples’ request, “Teach us how to pray.”

TAKE A LOOK AT EACH PETITION - EACH REQUEST OF THIS PRAYER

(1) **Hallowed Be Thy Name**” What does “Hallowed” mean? It means “holy,” “set apart,” “very special”; it means “something that belongs to God alone.”

God’s name is holy! This is always true, so why are Christians to make this request? The answer is quite simple. Christians carry His name with them wherever they go. Whatever they say or do reflects on Him, for they call themselves Christians (Christ’s man or woman).

We as Christians are asking that our lives always reflect praise to His name and person. We want to use His name only in positive and pleasing ways. We want our lives to be lives of doing good, not only to those who love us, but also to those who may hate us. It is our desire to follow His example, for He tells, us, “Love as I have loved you.” Our prayer is for God’s power to do this and to have all of the following requests answered.

(3) **“Thy Kingdom Come”** – The Jewish people were waiting for a Messiah who would return the power and grandeur of their kingdom as it was under the rule of King David. This was not the kind of political savior that Jesus had come to be. Jesus said, “My Kingdom is not of this world.” (See John 18:36). His Kingdom is spiritual and eternal; it blossoms within when a person comes to faith in Him as Savior and Lord.

A Christian does not have to wait till he or she dies to become a part of that Kingdom; it happens immediately with faith in Jesus. The Christian has dual citizenship. He or she is a citizen of a country here on earth and a citizen of the eternal Kingdom of God, Heaven.

Why has Jesus taught Christians to pray this request if the Kingdom is already ours? God could come directly to a person and give him or her faith as He did with the Apostle Paul, but most often He has given Christians the privilege and honor of being His instruments to bring His love to others. Since “faith comes from hearing the Word of God,” by sharing His Word, Christians can bring others to saving faith. We can be involved with God to make His Kingdom grow.

(3) **“Thy Will be Done on Earth, As It Is In Heaven”** - This request is the Christian’s complete surrender to God’s will. It is no easy thing that Christians ask for here.

To everything we ask from our Father in prayer Christians add, “Not my will but Yours be done.” We have a perfect example of this surrender toward the end of Jesus’ mission on earth. Ahead was the cross and death with its physical and spiritual total abandonment by God His Father, the torments of hell itself. Yet Jesus knew what was ahead of Him was His Father’s will. He knew it had to be done to complete His Father’s plan of salvation. Christians say, as He said in prayer, “Not My will but Yours be done!” Matthew 26:39. He surrendered to the Father’s will, and He won for us!! He rose from the dead. He conquered death itself for us!

It goes against our human nature and reason to believe that we can win only when we surrender to our Heavenly Father. We pray in this petition that we would be given the faith to surrender and to believe what He says: “All things work together for good to those who love God!” Romans 8:28. No matter what happens in life, no matter what we think is good or bad, we want faith to surrender to His will. Faith tells us we will win.

- (4) **“Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread”** – “Daily Bread” here represents all our needs. The two words cover all of our material needs: food, clothes, shelter, etc.

Without doubt, God supplies here on this earth everything to make human life possible. He does this for all humans, those who are His children through faith in Jesus Christ, as well as those who are not.

If all our needs are supplied, why does Jesus teach Christians to ask for “daily bread” in this prayer? He wants to remind us continually of the One from whom all blessings come. Just as parents teach their children to ask for things and then to say thanks when they receive them, so Jesus teaches us to ask and then to say thanks for material gifts, and for listening to our requests.

Just as good parents do not always say “Yes” to every request, so God’s children learn that “No” and “Wait” are loving replies as well as “Yes.” He wisely puts together the third petition next to this one! Every request for material blessing when followed by “Thy will be done,” receives a “Yes!” answer when it is connected to the third petition.

- (5) **“Forgive Us Our Sins As We Forgive Those Who Sin Against Us”** - To forgive a person is a choice. God chose to introduce a new element into the world when sin entered through the disobedience of the first humans. That new element was forgiveness through faith in the Messiah who was to come, for Christians, the Messiah, Jesus has already come.

In no uncertain terms Jesus expects Christians to follow His example. As He forgave us and even those who stood below the cross where He was dying, so He wants us to forgive all who sin against us, even our enemies. To forgive a person is a choice, through the power of faith which He gives us He wants us to forgive as we have been forgiven by Him.

Jesus communicates the fact of His forgiveness to us through the words of forgiveness, called the absolution, spoken in Christian worship services and also, as we have seen, through Holy Communion and Baptism. He communicates that forgiveness through us, as we forgive those who sin against us. It is our reflection of His forgiveness to us.

- (6) **“Lead Us Not Into Temptation”** – in our present language terminology “temptation” is an “bad word.” It denotes someone trying to make a person sin. Now we know that God does not try to make someone go against what He wants them to do. So we must go into the original use and meaning of this word in the Greek language in which the New Testament was written. What did the word mean then? It means “to test.”

No one really likes to be tested. We would rather go through life without having to be tested in any way—not in school and not in life itself. It’s natural for us as humans to want to be spared trials and testings, yet we know that they are inevitable. Jesus promises us as Christians that we will never be pushed beyond our strength to pass the test.

Even though we know Jesus’ promise, we still don’t like to be tested, and we are given the privilege of asking that we may escape, if it is His will (we again surrender to His judgment). Jesus Himself prayed in this manner as He faced the cross and death. He said to His Father, “If there is some other way to fulfill My ministry as Messiah, give Me that path, but “Not My will, but Yours be done.” Matthew 26:39.

- (7) **“Deliver Us From the Evil One”** - Evil in this world had its origin in the person and acts of Satan. He is the source and strength behind sin and all evil in this world. There is only one power, only one strength greater than his. That is the power and strength of our Lord Jesus.

“The evil one,” Satan brings with him the darkness of misunderstanding God and all that is good and right. But God shows Himself as a God of goodness and love. He shows us Himself in the person of Jesus, who shines as the perfect light of God’s love. Light always overcomes darkness!

We need this petition, for Satan works with one purpose on this earth to get us away from faith in Jesus and the relationship that brings us citizenship in heaven and eternal life. Though the final battle was won by Jesus through His resurrection, the battle still goes on as Satan tries to make us doubt this Good News and fall away from faith in our Savior, Jesus. We pray don’t let that happen!!

THE PRAYER IS CLOSED WITH A SONG OF PRAISE

This ending is called a “doxology,” **“For Thine Is The Kingdom and the Power and the Glory Forever and Ever”** This beautiful sentence cries from the heart of the Christian, “There is nothing you can’t do, Lord Jesus!” Fantastic!! What joy this brings! Every petition, every request in this prayer or any other prayer with faith in Jesus will be answered by Him. You can do anything. There isn’t anything You can’t do Lord Jesus.

This “guarantee” is not limited. There is no small print.

The “Amen” simply is a declaration in faith, that I believe these words, I agree with these words and if someone is leading a group prayer, it is a declaration that, **Yes, Yes, I agree with what was prayed!**

GOD’S ROAD MAP FOR OUR LIVES

As we have seen, when God finished creating the world He saw that it was “very good.” This was more than “very good” as we use the word today; it meant the world was perfect, without flaw.

God's descriptive word "good" was also true of the crowning jewel of His creation, i.e., humankind. This perfection carried with it perfect understanding. Obviously God the Creator understood man perfectly, but at the beginning man also understood God perfectly.

Man understood what God wanted him to do and not do. As we have seen earlier in this booklet, God gave man only one command that was negative—don't eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If you do, death will enter the picture and perfect understanding on your part will cease. Genesis 2:16-17.

The capacity to exercise choice is what made man different from all the other creatures; but, when man used this gift to disobey God, he lost the ability to obey God perfectly in anything. If God had not given man a savior and through that Savior forgiveness, eternal death would have been the result for all mankind.

As time went on after the fall into sin, not only did man's ability to obey the will of God perfectly fail, his very knowledge of what God wanted man to do with his life and actions also failed. Man's actions toward God and toward the people around him became so distorted, so evil that God's anger boiled over. Man could not get back to that perfect relationship by keeping God's laws; worse, he no longer knew what those laws were!

Finally God would not tolerate this situation any longer. He had the Prophet Moses go up Sinai Mountain, where Moses was given commandments written in stone. (Read Exodus 20:1-17). These commandments were meant to show men how God wanted them to act as they lived their lives.

GOD'S COMMANDS RELATING TO HIMSELF AND US **God is to be the Most Important Person in Our Life**

The first of the commandments given on Mt. Sinai was that God is to be "Number One and nothing and no one is to be more important in our lives than God. He demands perfect obedience, frequent worship, and honor. No object of creation, no object made by man, is to be put in God's place of honor.

God is jealous of His position in our lives. Since there is no other God, anything that people put in His place robs us of a true relationship with Him. This displacement of God brings with it eternal death and separation from Him. God wants no idols or images in His place and no person or thing more important to us than He is!

God's Name Is Not To Be Misused

God's name is also very important to Him, and it is his command that it is not to be used lightly or in ways that are counter to His will. The use of names was introduced into the world when God had Adam name the creatures around him. There were many different kinds of creatures and many names were needed to identify each. But God did not have to be named by man.

There is only one God and His name was not needed to separate Him from anyone, for there is no one like Him!

Because the name God fits only One, He commands us to use it with great reverence in worship, in prayer, and in blessing. He forbids us to use it in cursing, unnecessary swearing, and in thoughtless ways. God severely warns all people “Do not misuse My Name!”

God gave a number of commands to His people before and after those given from Sinai Mountain. These commands were given to the people of God in Israel. Most of these laws were given only to them and in their “time frame of history.” The commands from Sinai Mountain, however, apply to all people and at all times, with one exception.

Only God Can Change His Laws

The commands from Sinai Mountain are sometimes called the “Moral Law.” They were given for all humans to follow and cannot be changed by man; they can only be changed by the Giver, God Himself. This Jesus did. He changed just one command, “Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy.”

Jesus clearly stated that this seventh day of each week, which was to be a day of complete rest for His people (the Jews), was a symbol, a “shadow of what would come” and that the perfect internal rest would come when we are right with God through Jesus Christ, the Messiah. When Jesus fulfilled was promised by the symbol of the Sabbath law, the symbol was no longer needed because the Christian has perfect internal rest by faith in Jesus. Jesus, who is God, replaced the outward symbol with an inward peace! (See Colossians 2:16-19 and Mark 2:23-28)

Because Jesus wanted His followers to worship on a regular basis, with the freedom He gave them, they chose to worship on the first day of the week. This would be a weekly reminder that on the first Easter Sunday Jesus rose from the dead, confirming all that He said and taught and reminding us of His promise, “Because I live you shall live also!” John 14:19. Christians made this choice, not because they had to, but because they wanted to.

GOD’S COMMANDS REGARDING RELATIONS BETWEEN HUMANS

After God gave man His commands about the way He wanted them to act toward Him and His name, He gave a number of commands that dealt with man’s relations with other human beings.

Our Relationship to Our Parents

The first of these commands was that we are to “Honor our father and our mother.” These two people were God’s instruments in bringing us physical life. If they are living as God’s servants, they represent God; they serve God by serving us, loving us and supplying all that we need for our spiritual upbringing as well as all our bodily needs. Of all the people in our lives, father and mother are to be given great honor and love as God’s gifts to us. God promises a blessing to the children if this command is followed.

Our Respect for Human Life

Since God is the giver of life, human life at any stage from beginning to end is most precious to Him, and He demands that it be every bit as precious to us also. Of all the crimes against a fellow human being, murder is the only one for which God prescribes the punishment—a murderer shall have his life forfeited, not in revenge, but at the hands of the government. God's command is short, "You shall not murder."

Our Commitment in Marriage

It is God's will that the marriage of one man and one woman be a life-long commitment on the part of both. Marriage was commanded by God and blessed by Him as His means of continuing the human race. Love is to be the basis for this commitment. For either person in this relationship to have sexual intercourse outside of this relationship is adultery, which breaks the bond of one to the other. In the sight of God this breaks the marriage. He commands, "You shall not commit adultery!"

The guilty person in adultery breaks the marriage. It can only be restored if the innocent person is willing to re-establish this union with a repentant former partner. If there is no repentance, the innocent person is free to establish another marriage partnership with a believer.

1 Corinthians 7:39. The marriage can also be broken if one person abandons the other by distance or by not continuing a sexual relationship even though living together. Again, the innocent party is free to seek another mate.

Our Respect of Ownership

God gives people the right to have ownership of material things. He gives each individual the talents, the abilities, the opportunities to earn a living and to own the fruits of his labor. God is the Giver of material blessings as well as spiritual ones. To take away from a person what God has given to him goes against God's will and against God's command: "You shall not steal!"

Our Relationship with Lying

Although a lie or lies about another person may not harm that person physically, even one lie can do great damage by harming a person's reputation. Lies are a product of the devil for he is the father of lies. A liar has no place in the company of God's people. God says, "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor!"

Our Relationship with Coveting

Finally, God forbids the invisible sin called coveting. It is a sin of the heart and mind; it is a sin of greed. Coveting is to desire with an intensity that often goes beyond reason for something that a person should not have or that is beyond the person's ability or grasp. Here are some examples of the sin of coveting: to desire another's husband or wife; to desire a person's property when the owner will not sell it because it is a family inheritance; to desire great amounts of money

which are beyond your earning capacity. This should not be confused with ambition because ambition is striving for an attainable goal and is a healthy drive.

Coveting, when it is full-grown, leads to many sins against people and property. It can lead to adultery, murder, theft, robbery, false witness and worse. It is the sin that breeds many results that threaten eternal life with God.

Summing Up the Commands of God

God demands not merely that people are to be **good**; but they are to keep His commandments **perfectly**. If the commands of God could be kept perfectly, their keeping would give us perfection and make us right with God. The fact is that we cannot keep even one of God's commands perfectly. Ecclesiastes 7:20, Romans 3:12. But Jesus goes even deeper than just the apparent outward keeping of the commands. He says, "If you even have a desire in your mind to do evil you break God's commandments." Matthew 5:27-28.

The Purpose of God's Commands

Why did God give us these commands if we can't keep them perfectly? There are three reasons:

- (1) Faced with God's demands, we see clearly that there is no way a human can fulfill them and achieve perfection. We can get right with God only if someone fulfills all the commands for us and pays for our many sins against God and man. God uses the commands as a **mirror** to show us the absolute need for our Savior Jesus Christ.
- (2) Though Christians cannot keep God's commands perfectly, they show us how He wants us to be, how He wants us all to act. They give us a **road map** to guide us in thoughts and actions that show our thanks for Jesus' love. They guide Christians in striving to live a full and rich life as we await going home to heaven, which is already prepared for us by our Lord Jesus.
- (3) The portion of the commands that deal with man's actions toward man has become the basis for the laws of all societies, whether ruled by Christians or non-Christians. God's moral law is universal moral LAW! Without this law there would be no **curb** to violence and crime, and therefore no possibility for any form of peace in society.

Jesus summarized all the commands of God: "Love God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and your neighbor as yourself." Matthew 22:37, "Love as I have loved you!" John 15:12.

O GOD WHO ARE YOU?

This is the most important question a human being can ask and is a question to which only God Himself can give us the answer. He alone is eternal. He existed before time, during time, and will exist after time ceases. He told humans through the Prophet Moses that His name is "I AM". As we have pointed out, Jesus also used this name of Himself.

Let's Take a Review of What God Says of Himself

He has no limit to His power. He created our world with a "Word of Command." He said, "Let there be and it was." It was a perfect adult world.

God tells us that He is a person, not just an impersonal power.

He tells us that He knows us personally. He even knows the number of hairs on our heads. Matthew 10:30.

He tells us that He is always just, never lies, and always keeps His promises.

God tells us that He loves us and that He sent His only Son Jesus to pay our debt of sin to reconcile us to Himself.

God tells us that Jesus took our punishment so that His justice would be fulfilled for us through Jesus.

The Only Personally Link Between God and Humans is Jesus Christ

The only person in all of earth's history that could bridge the gap between humans and God is Jesus. Through the miracle of the virgin birth, Jesus is both a 100% man and a 100% God in one being.

As true man, Jesus faced the same temptations, the same struggles that all of us humans face. Jesus was the Second Adam. Like the first Adam, Jesus had perfect free will. He could obey or disobey. Unlike the first Adam, Jesus chose to always obey. He is mankind's second chance.

Because Jesus was also 100% God, His perfect life had enough value to pay the debt for all people Jesus is our substitute. He is our Champion! At the end of His ministry here on earth He conquered death, our final enemy, and by rising from the grave on Easter morning He promised us, "Because I live you will live also." Through faith in Jesus, "I'm just a traveler here—heaven is my home!! John 14:19.

I Can Be Sure That I'm Saved

The devil uses fear and doubt as two of his strongest weapons. He will try to make you question, "Am I really saved! Do I really have faith in Jesus as my Savior?"

God promises us a sure guarantee that we are His and that we have saving faith. He tells us through His disciple Paul, "God...set His seal of ownership upon us, and put His Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come." 2 Corinthians 1:21-22.

Faith and love are very similar. What color is love? How much does it weigh? What does it smell like? What does it taste like? You say, those are foolish questions, love is invisible. Well

