

FROSTY THE SNOWMAN AND EVOLUTION

This winter has given us a few good snows to build snowmen with. One bright afternoon, the conditions were ideal. The sun had given the snow the perfect stickiness. My children and I rolled huge balls in the snow, as we left a path of greenish brown grass behind us. Our bottom ball was so huge that I had to run as fast as I could and lunge against it to move it up and over a small hill in the backyard. When I hit the snowball it only moved an inch forward and I had to quickly use my slight leverage to roll it just a little further. Finally, with persistence, we had the huge ball and two others at our destination in the front yard. The second ball was so heavy that I barely could lift it to its position on top of the huge bottom ball. The third ball went on rather easily to raise the snowman to my height- six feet tall!

Now came the task of turning these three balls of snow into a man. I traced a mouth on the head and the snowman said, "The temperature is a little warm out here, don't you think!" Then I placed a big nose in the middle of his face. The snowman breathed deeply and responded, "Nothing like the smell of wood burning in a fireplace to make a body feel good!"

Next I spaced two eyes across from each other, one on each side of the face. "How beau-

tiful the snow looks on the evergreen trees!", the snowman exclaimed, as he admired the view. I then finished my work on his head by forming two ears from snow and placing one on each side. Soon my snowman again spoke excitedly, "The song of the redbird is simply thrilling!"

By now you are wondering if I've lost my mind. Perhaps you're thinking that I watched the reruns of "Frosty the Snowman" too many times. But consider this. As creative as you and I might be in making snowmen, we cannot make mouths that talk, noses that smell, eyes that see, and ears that hear. Can't we see that Someone greater than ourselves must have given us mouths that talk, noses that smell, eyes that see, and ears that hear. Our marvelous bodies that are fearfully and wonderfully made (Ps 139:14) are all the evidence we need that we have a Divine Creator.

God made men who talk, smell, see, and hear, not from snow, but from dust (Gen 2:7). This we can believe. That we became the men we are today by evolution and chance is no more believable than "Frosty the Snowman". It is nothing but a fairy tale. Let this thought cross your mind every time that you see a snowman, "There is a God, He is alive, in Him we live and we survive; From dust our God created man, He is our God, the great I AM."

BRICKS TO BUILD YOUR FAITH WITH

The Bible records that the Egyptians made slaves of the Israelites, putting them to hard labor in mortar and bricks. One of the projects they were forced to do was the construction of the cities of Pithom and Rameses (Ex. 1:11,14).

In ancient times, people made bricks by putting mud into wooden forms and letting the sun bake them. Straw was added to the mud to keep the bricks from cracking.

When the Israelites began their brick-making work, the Egyptians gave them straw (Ex 5:7). But, when Moses requested that the Israelites be given time off from work to go into the wilderness to worship, their supply of straw was cut off. They were told to gather their own straw and yet still keep up with their expected quota of bricks. The Israelites scattered throughout Egypt and gathered stubble for straw (Ex 5:12). When the Israelite foreman complained that they could not gather the straw and make the quota, they were told that they would be given no straw, but must still meet the demands (5:18)

In 1883, Professor Naville uncovered the ruins of Pithom. Its name was written on its great gateway. Professor Kyle examined the ruins of the city in 1908 and wrote these comments concerning its construction, "The lower courses, in at least some of the store-chamber work, are laid with brick filled with good chopped straw; the upper courses made of brick having in them no binding material whatever, and the middle courses are made of brick *filled with stubble pulled up by the roots*. The impress of the roots is as plainly marked in the brick as though by an engraver's tools".

Time after time archaeologists have been able to demonstrate the truthfulness of the Bible, even in its smallest details. They have silenced skeptics who have charged that the Bible cannot be the Word of God because it is inaccurate. The fact that the Bible is a true book does not prove it is from God, but it certainly leaves the door open to that possibility. May the bricks the Israelites made for building Pithom some 3500 years ago be building blocks for your faith in the Bible today.

THE LOWER LIGHTS

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"Brightly beams our Father's mercy
from the lighthouse evermore;
But to us He gives the keeping
of the lights along the shore."

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MAKING "CHRISTIANS" IN ANTIOCH

Several years ago I was starting a Bible study group in a prison. The Bible study group met at a time when the inmates were counted so it was called a "count-letter". The prison asked us to name our "count-letter". I suggested that we call the "count-letter" the "Christian count-letter", as those of us coming in for the study were simply "Christians" and we were encouraging the inmates to be the same. But the prison rejected the name "Christian count-letter" saying the name "Christian" was too "generic". How unfortunate it is that the name "Christian" has come to mean so many things that it means nothing.

What does it mean to be a "Christian"? How can I become a "Christian"? How can I live as a "Christian"? The New Testament still contains the answers to these important questions. Let us go beyond the confusion caused by denominationalism and see the simple answers to these questions given to us in the account of how the gospel of Christ came to the city of Antioch of Syria (Acts 11:19-26).

PREACHING THE LORD

When the disciples scattered from Jerusalem after Stephen was stoned to death for his preaching, they took the good news of Jesus with them wherever they went. Some of those who fled came to Antioch of Syria. When they arrived in Antioch they preached "*the Lord Jesus*" (11:20). They did not use any gimmicks or worldly attractions to get folks to "join their church". They did not preach a creed handed down from "church headquarters" that

their listeners must learn and accept in order to join their group.

The disciples told the people of Antioch that Jesus died on a cross for their sins and for the sins of the world and then was raised from the dead and ascended to God's right hand where He reigns as "Lord". By His obedient sacrifice He became the author of eternal salvation to those who obey Him (Heb 5:8-9).

TURNING TO THE LORD

A large number of those in Antioch who heard the message about Jesus being Lord believed it. Since they believed that He is Lord they "*turned to the Lord*" (11:21). What did this involve? Other N.T. passages explain.

When those in Antioch "*turned to the Lord*" they determined that they would not live their lives the way they wanted to any more, but they would live the rest of their lives according to the will of God (1 Pet 4:2). They were crucified with Christ- it was no longer they who lived, but Christ lived in them (Gal 2:20).

When those in Antioch "*turned to the Lord*", they were buried like Jesus was buried. They buried the old man of sin in baptism. Like Jesus rose from the dead, they also arose from the water of baptism, free of sin, raised to walk in newness of life- to serve the Lord and righteousness, rather than self and sin (Rom 6:1-6, 13, 17-18).

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MAKING “CHRISTIANS” IN ANTIOCH (CONTINUED)

REMAINING TRUE TO THE LORD

When those in Antioch “turned to the Lord” by repentance and baptism they began a relationship with the Lord that was to last more than a lifetime- it was to last forever. But, if it was to last, these new disciples needed help. The church at Jerusalem heard of their conversion to the Lord and they sent Barnabas to help them (Acts 11:22).

Barnabas encouraged the new converts “with resolute heart to remain true to the Lord.” (11:23). Barnabas called for commitment. Their service to the Lord was not to be “on again, off again”, something decided by the day or even by the moment, but it was to be purposeful. “*To remain true to the Lord*” was to be the guiding purpose that was to affect and to control their every thought, word, and action.

Not only did the new converts at Antioch need encouragement to remain true to the Lord, they needed teaching so that they knew how to remain true to Him. Jesus indicated that the process of spreading His gospel included making disciples, baptizing them, and then teaching them further (Mt 28:18-20). When those at Antioch became Jesus’ disciples, they made a lifetime commitment to learn His will and to strive to obey it. The need for additional teaching at Antioch was so great that Barnabas temporarily left to find Saul in Tarsus. After locating Saul, Barnabas

brought him back to Antioch and the two of them “for an entire year met with the church and taught considerable numbers.” (11:25)

THEY WERE CALLED CHRISTIANS

Is it any wonder that those in Antioch who had heard the “*Lord Jesus*” preached, who had “*turned to the Lord*”, and who had been exhorted to “*remain true to the Lord*” were called “*Christians*”? (11:26). They belonged to and were obedient to Christ, the Lord. Only by doing the same can we rightly call ourselves “Christians.”

Our goal at the Palmer Road church of Christ is to be “Christians” in the true sense of the word. We preach the Lord Jesus. We encourage others to believe in the Lord Jesus and to turn to Him and then to be true to Him from that time on. We offer no gimmicks to entice you to be a “church member”. We have no denominational doctrine we want to persuade you to embrace.

If we could help you to be a truly a “Christian” as defined by the New Testament, give us a call at (734) 942-7956 or email us at our website www.prchurchofchrist.org . Let us preach to you “the Lord Jesus” that you may become and remain a “Christian” to your soul’s eternal salvation.

IS IT WORTH IT TO SERVE GOD?

The Brown family serves God every day. Mr. and Mrs. Brown live godly and have an excellent reputation in the community. They have been faithful to their marriage vows for 20 years. Every Sunday morning, without fail, the Brown family can be seen, Bibles in hand, getting into their car to go to church.

The Greens, who are neighbors of the Browns, live day to day without thought of God. The present "Mrs. Green" is Mr. Green's fourth wife in 20 years as he easily forgets his vows when he finds someone "younger and prettier". The neighbors all know that Mr. and Mrs. Green spend every Saturday night at bars and swingers' clubs. On Sundays, they get up late, eat brunch and read the paper.

The Browns live in a small ranch house, while the Greens live in a spacious two story house. The Browns drive an old Chevy Impala. The Greens cruise through the neighborhood in a new Rolls Royce. Mr. Brown works at a machine shop. Mr. Green is president of the local bank. The Browns struggle to pay their children's frequent hospital bills. The Green's children are exceptionally healthy.

The Browns wonder, "If godliness pays, why do the wicked prosper?" The Greens ask, "We are getting along better than those who are Christians. Why do we need God?" Let's turn to Psalms 73 to answer their questions.

A Waste of Time?

Asaph was a man wholly devoted to God. David appointed him to be the chief of the musicians who played before the ark of God (1 Chron. 16:5,7,37). Not only did Asaph play music, but as a prophet, he wrote inspired songs (2 Chron 29:30; see Psalms 50, 73-83). However, this righteous man almost slipped away from God. Psalms 73 records his mental anguish as he viewed the world around him. His understanding of God was that He was good to the pure in heart (vs. 1). But, he observed the wicked prospering and he wondered if this was really true.

It seemed to Asaph that the wicked did not have the problems of the righteous. Since they were not plagued, they just sinned more. They even defied God, saying, "How does God know what we are doing?" All the while, it appeared to Asaph that they "have more than heart could wish." (vs. 4-12)

As Asaph meditated on what he saw, he had serious doubts about where his godly life was getting him. He thought, "If the wicked prosper, righteousness is a waste of time. Why am I keeping my heart pure and my hands clean? Why am I restricting myself by God's laws? My devotion to God is all in vain." (vs. 13-14).

It Is Good to Draw Near

After painfully wresting with his doubts for some time, Asaph finally discovered the answer to his problem. He was troubled until he came into the sanctuary of God (vs. 16-17). He finally realized that life must be viewed from the standpoint of God and eternity rather than the standpoint of man and time.

When Asaph went to the sanctuary of God and looked at the wicked through God's eyes, he saw a far different scene. Through human eyes, the prosperity of the wicked seemed endless. But, their prosperity only lasted for a blink of an eye in the sight of an eternal God.

Those with no regard for God live on "slippery places" with one foot in hell and the other on a banana peel. They are ready to be cast down to destruction and become a desolation in a moment. It is as if the Lord is taking a short nap. When He "wakes up" the wicked will receive their just desserts (vs. 18-20).

Once Asaph saw life from God's perspective, he was grieved that he had ever doubted the value of serving God. He realized the great blessings that come from serving God-guidance in this life and then glory in the one to come. He asked, "Whom have I in heaven but Thee? And besides Thee, I desire nothing on earth." God was his strength and his portion (vs. 21-27).

Through the resolving of his doubts, Asaph's faith became stronger. He ended his psalm by reaffirming the truth that he understood before he wavered, "It is good for me to draw near to God." (vs 28)

Living Like the Browns or the Greens?

Unfortunately, in our land of abundant blessings, more and more families are living like the Greens. Is your family one of them? Do you have any regard for his moral law? Do you set aside any time to study His Word and worship Him? Or are you deceived by your material prosperity, thinking all is well, feeling no need for God, satisfied with life without Him? You may think that you are prospering without God. But, your brief pleasure here will be but a dim memory in an eternal hell.

You need to live like the Browns. You need to live the life of a Christian. Your life may be full of problems. But, even so, the guidance God will give you through His Word will make your life happier than you've ever dreamed. And then afterward, God will receive you into glory. Believe it, my friend, God will reward those who seek Him (Heb 11:6). Won't you and your family draw near to God?

HAVE YOU THOUGHT ABOUT YOUR SOUL?

Do you realize that what you see in the mirror is not really you? You are only looking at the tent for the invisible you (2 Cor 4:16; 5:1). You will continue to exist after you put off your body in death. Men may kill your body, but they cannot kill the invisible you, your soul (Mt 10:28). When you die, while your body goes to the grave to corrupt, your soul will go to Hades (Acts 2:31). At the resurrection, your soul will be clothed with a changed, immortal body (1 Cor 15:50-57, 2 Cor 5:2-4). You will then be judged by the deeds you did while you lived in the tent you see in the mirror and you will receive either the sentence of eternal life or eternal condemnation (2 Cor 5:10; Jn 5:28-29; Mt 25:46).

You give so much thought and care to the man or woman that you see in the mirror. You wash and groom it, you put lotions and perfumes on it, you feed it, you exercise it, you give it rest, you give it medicine to help it to get well and to take away its pain. You give so much thought to the needs of the tent that will soon perish, but how much thought have you given to needs of the real you inside that will live forever?

What does your soul need? Your soul needs to be saved. Saved from what? Saved from your sin and the consequences of your sin. Saved from the wrath of God and eternal punishment because of what you have done against Him. Sin has ruined your relationship with God. God is perfectly holy and without sin and cannot have a relationship with those who have sinned. And, what can you do to make amends, to restore your relationship with God, to escape His wrath? Nothing. Have you thought about your soul? You need to recognize its desperate condition. When you do, you will find yourself filled with guilt, sadness, and fear.

But, the good news is that God reconciled you to Himself through the death of His Son Jesus on the cross. Jesus, who knew no sin, was punished for your sins. Now that a satisfactory price (what a high price it was!) was paid for your sins, God is willing to forgive you and no longer count your sins against you (2 Cor 5:18-21).

To you, and to all who are worn out because of sin, who bear daily the burden of a guilty conscience, who anguish over their lost relationship with God, and who shudder in fear at the thought of His judgment, Jesus says, "Come unto Me, all who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light." (Mt 11:28-30) Look beyond the tent in the mirror. See the need of the real and invisible you. Let Jesus meet that need...

HAVE YOU PURIFIED YOUR SOUL?

Your soul needs cleansing. There is power in Jesus' blood to cleanse your soul (Heb. 9:13-14). How and when can you be cleansed by Jesus' blood? Peter wrote that men's souls are purified by "obedience to the truth" (1 Pet 1:22).

In Acts 2, Peter preached the good news of salvation in Jesus for the first time. When men believed this good news, they saw their souls' lost condition. Feeling the pain of guilt, they cried out, "What must we do?" (2:37) Peter told those who desperately wanted to do something about the need of their soul, "Repent and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins..." (2:38) Those who gladly received his word were baptized, some 3000 in number. (2:41) These purified their souls with Jesus' blood when they "obeyed the truth", that is, when they repented (made the commitment to turn from their sinful past to follow Jesus) and were baptized (were immersed in water, cp. Acts 8:36-38; 22:16).

Have you obeyed the truth? Have you, upon believing in Jesus, repented and been baptized? Have you purified your soul?

THE NATURE OF TRUTH

Imagine the following scene: Johnny, a first grader has just received his math paper back from his teacher. He has done very well, missing just one problem, $2+2=?$. Johnny answered "5". After glancing at his paper, Johnny rushes up to his teacher's desk and begins to plead with the teacher, "Mrs. Brown, I believe with all my heart that $2+2=5$. Won't you count my answer right?!!!"

What would Mrs. Brown say? Would she say, "O.K., Johnny, since you believe your answer is right, it is right. So, I will count it right." Or, would Mrs. Brown say, "No, Johnny, $2+2=4$. No matter how strongly you feel that $2+2=5$, you are wrong. I cannot accept your answer."

This simple story illustrates to us that truth is by nature *objective*, that is based on facts that are observable to all and not subjective, that is based on each person's feelings or opinions. God's Word is truth (Jn 17:17). Therefore the words of the Bible, observable to all, are the fixed standard of what is right and what is wrong. What you or I or anyone else may feel or believe does not establish truth.

Jesus said that everyone who is of the truth hears His voice (Jn 18:37). Many claim to be Jesus' disciples and call on Him as "Lord", but sadly, they are not of the truth because they do not hear His voice. At the Judgment, they will be like Johnny and try to justify themselves, but no matter how sincere, devoted and committed they were to their beliefs, they will be turned away from heaven. They will argue that they have done many wonderful works in His name. But, He will tell them to depart from Him. For Jesus said, "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter" (Mt 7:21-23).

Out of all the countless numbers in the world, only one answers Johnny's math problem $2+2=?$ Four is the only right answer. Truth is *narrow*. It is amazing that what we see so clearly in math cannot be seen in religion. Today's religious thought is that truth is broad- "Whatever you want to believe and practice in service to God is acceptable to Him." The parallel in math would be Mrs. Brown having the attitude, "Whatever number you want to put as the answer to $2+2=?$ is acceptable, as long as you answer the question." This would work, if truth was subjective. My answer that $2+2=5$ would be as good as your answer that $2+2=6$. But truth, as we have seen, is objective and therefore not just any answer will do. In spiritual matters, anything believed or practiced that is not in accordance with the Word of God is false. It is error.

In his writings, John shows the connection between "love" and "truth", emphasizing that love is shown by obedience to truth (e.g. Jn 14:15). To those who would not walk in truth, John left this solemn warning, "Anyone who goes too far and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God; the one who abides in the teaching, he has both the Father and the Son." (2 Jn 9) Does this sound like God's attitude is, "Any answer will do, as long as you fill in the blank?" Why do men say that this is so?...

What would Mrs. Brown say if Johnny announced to her that there had been a world council on math and that it had been decided that $2+2=5$. Therefore his answer of "5" should be counted right. Believable? Why not? Truth is *unchangeable*. Yesterday, $2+2=4$. Today, $2+2=4$. and tomorrow, $2+2=4$. No world council on math has the power to change this truth.

God's truth is as unchangeable as $2+2=4$! Paul warned the Galatians in no uncertain terms, "But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed. As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you received, he is to be accursed." (Gal 1:8-9).

In view of this, one wonders, why do the councils of denominations meet together to decide how the members of their denomination should live and worship? Can they decide these matters any more than a council on math could render a decision on $2+2=?$ Of course they can't! But they claim they can and they have changed the "truth" about how men should live and worship so many times as the result of their meetings. Men should ignore and forsake the creeds they have drawn up and look only to the unchanging gospel of Christ.

Remember these lessons from the nature of truth. Do not think that truth is determined by your feelings or "think-sos, however sincere you may be. Do not be deceived by those who preach that the way of truth is broad. And, do not submit to any religious council of men and their creeds. (Stop doing so, if you have already!!) The standard of truth is the unchangeable will of God, not the ever-changing will of men.

The Palmer Road church of Christ is not the standard of truth. We do not claim to have found all truth or to even practice perfectly what we have found. But, we are searching for the truth and seeking to apply it to ourselves as a congregation and as individual disciples, with the belief that the truth of God is objective, narrow, and unchangeable. We encourage you to follow the same course. If we can help you, we would be glad for the opportunity. Please write, call or email.

SHOULD FUN AND GAMES BRING YOU TO CHURCH?

I received an invitation from an area church last Fall that is so typical of the approach many churches are using to bring people to church. The invitation begins with what surely is a sad, but true fact, "Let's face it...many people aren't active in church these days." Along with the invitation to church services, there were several brochures offering recreational and social activities to the community in an effort to bring them out to church.

Everyone was invited to a Pumpkin Festival that was to include a 3 on 3- basketball tournament and a roller blade hockey tournament. In addition the Festival featured games, face painting, fun prizes, a straw fight and free refreshments. And, surely a delight for the little ones would have been a ride on "Pumpky's train".

The church advertised many ongoing groups. A Kid's Club was promoted as having upbeat music, games and crafts. A Youth Group offered Cedar Point, concerts, camp, paintball, and lock-ins. Everyone was invited to a monthly Craft Night. And, a ladies group, "Fellowship" pro-mised "a warm atmosphere to connect with women from your area and form lasting friendships" and their activities include "shopping retreats".

Jesus said, "And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself." John explains, "But He was saying this to indicate the kind of death by which He was to die." (Jn 12: 32-33) Jesus says that what would draw men to Him was His horrible death by crucifixion. The message of "Christ and Him crucified" was the message the first Christians took around the world in effort to make disciples (1 Cor 2:1-5). As one reads the books of Acts, the history of the early church, there is no mention of the use of fun and games to lure men into worshipping and following Jesus. From city to city they told of Jesus' suffering and death, as well as His resurrection from the dead, explaining that these events fulfilled O.T. prophecy and show that He is the Christ (King) whom men should worship and serve (i.e. Acts 17:1-4).

Surely many churches today have **cheapened** the process of bringing people to Jesus. Which do you think should draw men to church, "Pumpky's train" or "Jesus' cross"? If Jesus' cross won't move men to worship and serve Jesus, what can a worldly promotion like "Pumpky's train" hope to accomplish? But, in our world, which will interest more people, "Pumpky's train" or "Jesus' Cross"? Sadly, "Pumpky's train". People are more desirous of entertainment than they are salvation. Recreational and social promotions will "bring people to church", but they will not and cannot make them disciples of Jesus and save their souls.

The Palmer Road church of Christ doesn't seek just to "bring you to church". If we did, we would offer fun and games like most churches. We preach Jesus Christ and Him crucified. If this interests you, we hope you will come. If not, we have nothing else and certainly nothing better to offer.

THE MAGNET OF THE CROSS

Why aren't more people drawn to Jesus by the magnet of His Cross? The problem is not in the magnet, but in those who fail to be attracted. Wood and plastic are not attracted to a magnet. The drawing power is there. The problem is in the nature of the materials. Many people are not attracted to the message of Jesus and Him crucified because they see no need for salvation. The Cross means nothing to the person who does not understand the problem of sin and its consequences.

Paul's letter to the Romans explains in great detail the message of the cross. The first three chapters are spent proving one point, "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom 3:23). How sad it is that so few people today stop to think about and apply the truths in Romans 1-3:

God is man's Creator. His creation shows His existence and greatness. Man has no excuse if He does not thank and worship God. Man must obey God's moral requirements. Man is accountable to God for the way that he lives and will face God's judgment of his actions. All men have failed to obey God's moral requirements and so face the prospects of eternal separation from Him.

Failure to meditate on these truths has caused men to be like wood and plastic to the magnet of Jesus' Cross. When men realize these truths, they become like iron, drawn irresistibly to the Cross, the Answer to their deepest need.

In the Cross, God redeemed (delivered) man from sin. He justified (counted innocent) men who were condemned. How? His Son was the propitiation (the atonement) for our sins. Jesus paid the penalty for sin for us by His death, so that we could be forgiven and our relationship with God could be restored. No longer do we have to face His wrath at the Day of Judgment. (Rom 3:24-26; 5:6-11).

Paul, in Philippians 2:6-8, sums up well what Jesus did to draw all men to Himself:

"Who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bondservant, and being made in the likeness of men, being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross."

If you are iron, you cannot help but be drawn by such humility and love to be a disciple of Jesus. If the Cross does not move you, we pray that soon you will realize your sinfulness in the sight of God and no longer be wood or plastic, but iron that is attracted without resistance to the magnet of the Cross.

"THE END"

There is much speculation about "the end." Many books, movies, and sermons interpret today's events as signs that "the end" is near. But, what does the Bible say about "the end"?

In "the end", the Lord Jesus Christ will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels (1 Cor 1:7-8; 2 Thess 1:6-7). Jesus' coming is said to be at "the end" because His coming will bring this world to an end. The universe as we know it will be destroyed. (2 Pet 3:3-12). How can we be sure? In the days of Noah, God promised to destroy the world by water. He kept that promise. By that same word, the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire. In that fire, even the elements that make up this world will melt with fervent heat. Some wonder if man will blow the world up with an atomic bomb, but the fire God uses to melt the elements will make the atomic bomb look like a firecracker!

At Jesus' coming or at "the end", all will be made alive. Cemeteries will be emptied, as men will be raised with imperishable bodies. Those who are alive will have their bodies made imperishable as well. Jesus will put death, the last enemy, under His feet. Having put all things in subjection to Himself, He will turn the kingdom (rule or reign) back to the Father who gave it to Him. (1 Cor 15:20-27; 50-53) (What a point of contrast we find when we compare the Bible teaching about "the end" with the popular teaching of today. The Bible says that Jesus' reign will end when He comes, while theories of men have Jesus reigning for 1000 years after He comes!)

Jesus is coming with His angels, not only to raise every man, but also to repay every man according to his deeds (Mt 16:27). While all men are raised with imperishable bodies, their eternal destiny will depend on how they lived before God while they were in their earthly bodies. (2 Cor 5:10). Those who did good deeds will come forth to a resurrection of life, while those who committed evil deeds will come forth to a resurrection of condemnation. (Jn 5:28-29)

All nations will be gathered before Jesus and all men (whether dead or alive at His coming- 2 Tim 4:1) will be separated as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. (Mt 25:31-33). The Lord will bring to light things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of men's hearts (1 Cor 4:5). He will hand out two sentences, one of eternal life (eternal fellowship with Him) or eternal punishment (eternal separation away from His presence). (Mt 25:46) Yes, the "last day" will be a day of judgment. (Jn 12:48; Acts 17:31)

Don't be fooled by the "pseudo-scholars" with their wild and fanciful theories about "the end". Read your Bible for yourself. Believe and act according to these simple truths about "the end". Do not follow after men who twist the more difficult passages of the Scripture to make them say something far different than the simple passages above. Know for certain that when they excite people by comparing their perverted view of Scripture to current events in their books, movies, sermons, they do so to their own destruction. (2 Pet 3:16)

ARE YOU READY FOR "THE END"?

The focus of the New Testament teaching about "the end" is not about when "the end" will come, but on being prepared for "the end". As to when "the end" will come, the Scriptures tell us "the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night. While they are saying, 'Peace and safety!' then destruction will come upon them suddenly like labor pains upon a woman with child, and they will not escape." (1 Thess 5:2-3). Thieves give no warning before they break in. The onset of a woman's labor pains is sudden and unpredictable. Don't be fooled by all those who say, "the end is near". There will

be no signs and those who predict the end today will be found to be wrong tomorrow just as all such false prophets before them.

In view of the sudden manner of the Lord's coming, the exhortation of Paul is to be alert and sober, living in the light and not the darkness (1 Thess 5:4-11). After speaking of the earth's destruction, Peter asks, "Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the day of God?" (2 Pet 3:11). John admonishes, "Abide in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming." (1 Jn 2:28)

Paul preached a lesson about "the end" that caused the governor Felix to tremble (Acts 24:24-25). In this sermon, Paul applied spiritual CPR to a spiritually dead man. In preaching righteousness, he made him Conscious of the fact that God expected certain conduct of him. In preaching self-control, he then Pricked Felix's heart with guilt as he convicted him of his sin. Finally, in preaching the judgment, Paul urged the governor to be Ready to meet God in the day of judgment when his eternal sentence would be handed out. Sadly, though Felix saw where he stood with God enough to be scared, he put Paul off until later and did nothing to prepare for "the end". Paul's effort to bring him to life failed. He remained in his sins, spiritually dead and headed for hell, the second death, the lake of fire (Rev 20:14-15)

Let thoughts of "the end" move you to obey the gospel of Christ. While the earth stands, before Jesus comes, and before you stand before Him in judgment, believe in Jesus and confess this belief with your mouth (Rom 10:9-10), repent of your sins, and be baptized (Acts 2:38) so that your sins will be forgiven. The blood that Jesus shed on the cross for you will save you from God's wrath (Rom 5:9). Instead, you will have "life", a relationship with God that begins now and lasts forever. After your baptism, be on the alert, live godly, always prepared for Jesus' coming and for "the end" that will come suddenly and unexpectedly.

If we can help you to make preparations for "the end", please write, call, or email today!

YOU CANNOT LIVE WITHOUT GOD

Our society has become largely “secular”. So many people live from day to day with no thought of God. Apparently, they do not see that they need Him. They see everything that makes life possible and enjoyable as the fruit of their own labor and not as a blessing from God. So they take no thought before a meal or at any time throughout the day to thank Him, much less do they have any interest in taking the time to assemble with others to worship and praise Him.

What about you, do you realize that you cannot live without God any more than a baby can live without the assistance of his/her parents? When a baby is born into this world, he/she needs the constant care of his/her parents 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Babies are totally dependent on their parents for life itself. Do babies recognize that they have such a desperate need for their parents? No. Do they appreciate what is being done for them and thank their parents for taking care of them? No. How do children come to understand their need for their parents enough to say, “Thank you.”? As they grow up, they learn about their need and are moved to express their appreciation.

All men need the constant care of God 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. All men are totally dependent on God for life itself. Do all men recognize that they need God? No. So, do all men appreciate what is being done for them and thank God for taking care of them? No. Why is it that some men understand and appreciate their need for God enough to say, “Thank you.”? They have “grown up” spiritually as they have studied the Scriptures. They have come to understand their total dependence on God and have been moved to express their appreciation.

God “gives to all life and breath and all things.” In Him, men “live, move and exist” (Acts 17:25, 28). He provides evidence of His existence to men who do not recognize Him as the Source of life and all of its blessings and who return no thanksgiving to Him for them. He blesses them with rains from heaven and fruitful seasons. He not only meets their needs, but in doing so gives them satisfaction and gladness (Acts 14:14-17). His love for all mankind is seen in that He “causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.” (Mt 5:45).

You cannot live without the “Father of lights”, that is, the One who made the Sun, the moon, and the stars. The One who created the heavenly lights is the giver of every good and perfect gift (Js 1:17). He richly supplies you with all things to enjoy (1 Tim 6:16).

If you have been living your life in just a “secular” way, with no thought of God and your need for Him, please realize that you need Him as desperately as babies need their parents and begin expressing your appreciation to him by your own private thanksgiving and by taking the time to gather with others for public assemblies of praise:

“Enter His gates with thanksgiving, and His courts with praise. Give thanks to Him, bless His name.” (Ps 100:4).

YOU NEED GOD TO TURN TO FOR HELP

As we continue to read the Scriptures, we find out that, not only does God provide us with life, He knows us very well and is interested in our welfare. He watches over His creation so closely that He even notices if a sparrow falls to the ground. How well does He know you and I? He even knows the number of hairs on our head. (Mt 10:29-31) To think that God thinks of you- that God thinks of me- Wow!!

So, as we go through the troubles and trials of life, where can we turn to for help? Is there any help beyond that of our family and friends- any help beyond the help of those who have feet of clay like us, who are overwhelmed themselves at times with the struggles of life? The songwriter J.B. Coats said it well in the familiar hymn, “Neighbors are kind, I love them every one, We get along in sweet accord; But when my soul needs manna from above, Where could I go but to the Lord?”

David wrote, “Our help is in the name of the Lord who made the heaven and earth.” (Ps 124:8). Who else has that kind of power? What an awesome thought that the power of the One who created the universe is ours to rely on when our own strength fails in the middle of trying circumstances. David said of his trust in God, “My soul wait in silence for God only, for my hope is from Him. He only is my rock and my salvation, My stronghold; I shall not be shaken. On

God my salvation and my glory rest; The rock of my strength, my refuge is in God. Trust in Him at all times, O people; pour out your heart before Him; God is a refuge for us." (Ps 62:5-8).

Especially comforting to us is the fact that there is One in heaven who can sympathize with our problems because He lived here on earth Himself- Jesus. He understands and cares about whatever we are going through. He tells us to "draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need." (Heb 4:14-16)

But, the help of God and of His Son Jesus cannot be requested by just anyone. Once again we quote from David, "The Lord is near to all who call upon Him, to all who call upon Him *in truth*. He will fulfill the desire of those who *fear* Him; He will also hear their cry and He will save them. The Lord keeps all who *love* Him, but all the wicked He will destroy." (Ps 145:18-20). Men must live in a way that shows respect for God and pleases Him in order to expect His help.

You need the help of God. The troubles of life are too great for you to endure by yourself or to endure with only the help of your human companions. You need to study the Scriptures to see how that you can put yourself in a good relationship with God so that you can appeal in prayer to your All-Powerful, Ever-Caring, Creator. If we can help you establish this relationship, please get in touch with us.

YOU NEED A SHEPHERD

Sheep are one of the most helpless animals. They must have constant attention and care from a shepherd to survive. In no way is this more evident than in their need of leadership. Sheep are notorious creatures of habit. They have no sense of what is best for them. If left to themselves, they will go back and forth on the same trails until they are muddy ruts. They will graze the same hills until they have totally consumed the green grass, even gnawing its very roots. The well-worn areas then become fertile breeding grounds for parasites that attack the sheep. Sheep must be led from pasture to pasture or the land will be ruined and the sheep will become thin and sickly and die.

It is no wonder that the creature that men are compared to in the Scriptures is the sheep. When Jesus saw men, He saw them as sheep without a shepherd (Mk 6:34). He saw men who did not know how to direct their own steps (Jer 10:23). He saw men who had no sense of what was best for them. They were walking in the same destructive habits of attitude, speech, and actions until their paths were nothing but muddy ruts. If we are honest, we too, will admit "all of us like sheep have gone astray," (Isa 53:6) to the ruin of our lives on earth and, worse yet, to the ruin of our relationship with God. "There is a way which seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death (separation from God)." (Prov 14:12).

Evidence of man's need for guidance is abundant in our own lives, as well as in the society we live in. Philip Keller, a shepherd and the author of A Shepherd Looks At Psalms 23, put it so well, "Broken homes, broken hearts, derelict lives and twisted personalities remind us everywhere of men and women who have gone their own way. We have a sick society, struggling to survive on beleaguered land. The greed and selfishness of mankind has left behind a legacy of ruin and remorse."

When Jesus saw men as sheep without a shepherd, He began to teach them many things (Mk 6:34). God would lead us, if we would but let Him instruct us. As He taught the Israelites when He led them in the wilderness, "Man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord" (Dt 8:3). "All Scripture is inspired by God (that is, "breathed out of His mouth") and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work." (2 Tim 3:16-17). As the Psalmist said, "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path" (Ps 119:105).

Do you want to love life? Do you want to see good days? Let God's Word guide you so that you "turn away from evil and do good" ((1 Pet 3:9-11). Then you will rejoice as David to say, "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside quiet waters. He restores my soul; He guides me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake... Surely goodness and loving-kindness will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever." (Ps 23:1-3,6)

YOU NEED A SAVIOR

Man needs God for his very life, for help through life's difficulties, and for guidance in how to live, but his deepest need of God is his need of salvation. "All of us like sheep have gone astray" (Isa 53:6). When we left the path that God would have us to walk, we sinned against Him and fell short of His glory (Rom 3:23). A pure, holy, and righteous God could no longer have fellowship and friendship with us. We became spiritually "dead" or separated from God after our sin, as Adam and Eve did after their sin in the Garden of Eden (Gen 2:17). We became God's enemy (Rom 5:10) and can expect nothing but His wrath (Eph 2:3) and the painful punishment of hell (Mk 9:43-48), "eternal destruction, away from the Lord and from the glory of His power" (2 Thess 1:9).

But, though as sheep, "each of us has turned to his own way", "the Lord has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him", that is on Jesus, who fulfilled Isaiah 53:6. Our Good Shepherd is also our Savior, as He was willing to lay down His life for the sheep (Jn 10:11). Jesus "Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross" so that by His wounds we can be healed (1 Pet 2:24). In His agonizing death the penalty for man's sins was paid and God found a way to be just and merciful at the same time (Rom 3:26). He no longer must count our sins against us (2 Cor 5:19). Therefore our relationship with Him can be restored and He can view us as "holy and blameless and beyond reproach" (Col 1:21-22). Justified by the blood of His Son, we can be saved from His wrath (Rom 5:9) and have the hope of an eternal relationship with Him in heaven (1 Pet 1:3-4).

Please meditate on the Scriptures above, as well as the song below. Be moved to respond to God in obedient faith. Realize that if you do not obey Jesus' gospel and let Him pay for your sins now with His blood, you will receive God's wrath and pay for them in hell for all eternity.

"Soul, a Savior thou art needing, Soul a Savior waits for thee! Hear His words of tender pleading, Hear His gracious 'Come to Me.' He has died for thy transgressions, If thou wilt, thou canst be free; Soul, He waits for thy confession, 'Savior, I will go to Thee.' Do not linger till the morrow, Let thy loving answer be, 'Savior, in my joy or sorrow, I will ever go to Thee.' He is calling, softly calling, on thine ear His voice is falling; He is calling, softly calling, 'Come to Me and be at rest.'" -- Jesse Brown Pounds

TERRIFYING NEWS!!

Imagine for a moment that you've gone to see your doctor for a routine examination. You feel fine. But when the doctor finishes his exam, he sadly gives you the terrifying news. You have cancer, and if this cancer is untreated you only have a few months to live.

In the book of Acts, we find the account of a man named Felix who received some terrifying news, not concerning his physical health, but concerning his spiritual health. Paul examined his heart by the preaching of the gospel. His spiritual condition was revealed. He trembled when he saw it! (Acts 24:24-25) Examine your own heart by applying the same message that he heard to your own life. Paul discussed:

1) "Righteousness"- Paul spoke of the need to be right in God's sight. Man cannot live as he pleases and be right in God's sight. God has a fixed, objective standard of righteousness, His Word, which man must live by in order to have a relationship with Him, a Righteous God. Felix was terrified because he realized that he, like all men, had sinned by not obeying God, and so was "unrighteous" and therefore, spiritually "dead" or separated from a Righteous God (see Rom 3:9-10,23; 6:23). Have you sinned? Do you understand what your sin has done to your relationship with God? Can you think about this without trembling?

2) "Self-control"- Paul made a specific application from God's standard of righteousness. It was widely known that Felix was a greedy man who would stop at nothing to get what he wanted. He even hired assassins to eliminate those who stood in the way of his desires. When Paul told Felix that God expects men to live with self-control, he was terrified because he knew that he was not living this way. A lack of self-control is seen in so many ways- when men let the emotions of hatred, ill-will, jealousy, greed, and anger rule them, filling their lives with sinful speech and actions - when men's unbridled lust leads to sexual relationships outside of marriage- and when men's minds are controlled by substances that also de-stroy the body (e.g. alcohol, tobacco, and recreational drugs). Have you exercised self-control? Do you understand what a lack of self-control has done to your relationship with God? Can you think about this without trembling?

3) "The Judgment to Come"- Paul told Felix that one day he, like all men, would face God's judgment for all that he had done in his life (2 Cor 5:10; Heb 9:27). At the Judgment, He would receive either the sentence of eternal life (an eternal relationship with God in His presence in heaven) or the sentence of eternal punishment (eternal separation from God in the torment of hell) (Mt 25:46, Mk 9:43-48). Felix knew where he stood in regard to "righteousness" and "self-control". Therefore, he knew at the Judgment, he was hell-bound! He was terrified! You may ignore God's standard of righteousness including His requirement of self-control all you please. Live like you want and fulfill every desire. But, know this, God's judgment is coming! Are you living in sin? Are you hell-bound? Shouldn't you be terrified?!!

WAITING FOR A CONVENIENT SEASON

Imagine for a moment that you've gone to see your doctor for a routine examination. You feel fine. But when the doctor finishes his exam, he sadly gives you the terrifying news. You have cancer, and if this cancer is untreated you only have a few months to live. But, there is good news! Your cancer is treatable and curable. The doctor urges immediate treatment. But, you respond, "This is not a good time. It's fall. We'll be spending a lot of time up north at our cottage enjoying the beautiful leaves. We'll call you to arrange treatment when it is convenient."

We could not imagine postponing life-saving treatment for our physical health. But, perhaps we are as foolish as Felix and let our separation from God linger, though a remedy is available. In speaking about "faith in Christ Jesus" (Acts 24:24), Paul would have told Felix the good news of the cure for his sin. God gave Jesus to die on the cross for his sins so that he could be forgiven and reconciled to Him. Jesus' wounds could heal him. (2 Cor 5:20-21, 1 Pet 2:24). If he believed in Jesus and confessed Him (Rom 10:9-10) and repented and was baptized (Acts 2:38), he would receive the cure of Jesus' blood.

Felix was terrified that his sin separated him from God and that God would send him to hell at the Judgment. But he said, "Go thy way for this time: when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee." (Acts 24:25, KJV) That convenient season never came for Felix. He continued to call for Paul from time to time, but only to look for a bribe so that he could set him free. (Acts 24:26-27). His terror was short-lived. Man is not made to live day after day in such terror. Either he will obey Jesus to receive forgiveness and let his terror be replaced by peace or he will let his terror fade away by putting his soul's condition on "the back-burner" until it does not trouble him any more.

Do you realize that your soul is separated from God because of your sin and that, if the Judgment were today, you would be sent to hell? Why not partake immediately in the cure of Christ's blood? If you knew you had cancer, you would seek treatment immediately if a cure was available. You would "drop everything" and not delay until a more "convenient season". Why jeopardize something far greater than your physical life- your soul. Don't let your concern and your terror fade away. And remember, life is short and uncertain. Tomorrow may be too late! (Js 4:13-15)

"Today, O friend may be the last, Stop now and count the cost; You stand condemned before the throne- Your soul forever lost.

Lost! Lost! O what a cry from souls along the shore; In darkness to go, In sorrow and woe, And be lost, lost evermore!"

-- Tillit S. Teddlie

WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO YOU AFTER YOU DIE?

Tomorrow you will carry out the plans you made today. Or will you? You make plans as if there will be a tomorrow to accomplish them, but one day tomorrow will not come. You will die. You will leave behind an unfinished "to do" list. As the Psalmist wrote, "What man can live and not see death?" (Ps 89:48) A cemetery spot awaits you and I as all who have gone before us.

James spoke of the folly of making certain plans for an uncertain life. He wrote, "Come now, you who say, 'Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit.' Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away. Indeed, you ought to say, 'If the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or that.'" (Js 4:13-15)

You plan for life, which is uncertain. But, do you plan for death, which is certain? After you die, what then?

YOUR LIFE WILL GO ON

Job, thousands of years ago, asked a question relevant to you in the 21st century, "If a man die, shall he live again?" (Job 14:14) Jesus answered the question of Job, "Yes!"

Jesus debated the Sadducees, a Jewish sect who did not believe in life beyond the grave. The Lord quoted from the Scripture that recounts God speaking to Moses at the burning bush. God said to Moses, "I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." At the time that God spoke to Moses; Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had been dead for many years. Yet, God said "I am their God", not "I was their God". So, Jesus stated the obvious implication of the passage, "He is not the God of the dead but of the living." Though Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were not living on the earth, they were still living. (Mt 22:23-33)

According to Jesus, man is made up of both body and soul. After the body dies, the soul lives on. He warned His disciples not to be afraid of men who could only kill the body, but to be afraid of God, "who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" Mt 10:28). After your body dies, where will your soul live?

In His story of the rich man and Lazarus, Jesus gave us a glimpse of precisely what life is like immediately after death (Lk 16:19-31). He called the name of the place where both men went "Hades" (vs. 23). Hades, according to Jesus, is divided into two sections, a place where the righteous are comforted and a place where the wicked are tormented. A great gulf is fixed so that the wicked cannot go to the place of comfort and the righteous cannot go to the place of torment (vs. 26). When a man dies, his destiny is fixed.

How are you living? If you died today, in what section of Hades would you live on?..

YOU WILL BE RAISED AND JUDGED

Jesus is coming to judge "the living and the dead" (2 Tim 4:1). If you die before His return, you and all who are in the tombs will hear His voice and will come out (Jn 5:28). In this resurrection, you and all the souls of those in Hades will be given new, changed, imperishable bodies. (1 Cor 15:52). In the same twinkling of an eye, the bodies of the living will become imperishable as well (1 Cor 15:51-53).

You, along with all men, will stand before the judgment seat of Christ. He will judge you by comparing what you have done in your earthly body with His gospel (2 Cor 5:10; Rev 20:12-13; Rom 2:16).

Those who have been raised from the dead (as well as those living at Jesus' return) will be given either the sentence of eternal life or eternal condemnation (Jn 5:29; Mt 25:46). For the righteous who died, the comfort they received in Hades will have been the appetizer before the main course of heaven (1 Pet 1:3-4). But, for the wicked who died, the torment they received in Hades will have been like the punishment in the county jail before sentencing, now to be continued at the state prison of hell. But, the sentence of hell will never be suspended by clemency or parole, nor can it ever be served, for it is described as "the unquenchable fire" (Mk 9:43-48).

Which sentence do you expect to receive?

LIVING IN VIEW OF THE BOTTOM LINE?

Imagine yourself stretched out in a casket at the funeral home, as you will be, unless the Lord comes first. What will those who grieve be talking about?

Perhaps your family will be telling how wonderful you were as a grandfather/grandmother, father/mother, son/daughter, brother/sister, etc. Perhaps your fellow-workers will be praising your work and the kindnesses you show to them over the years. Perhaps your neighbors will be reminiscing about all the good works you did for them and others. Perhaps your friends will be speaking about why you were so special to them. Perhaps all will be marveling at the material prosperity you had or will be discussing the long life you were fortunate to live.

But, at your death, only one topic of conversation really matters, "How did you live in respect to the gospel of Christ?" and therefore, "Where will you live on?" and "Following judgment, where will you live for eternity?". These questions will be decided not by those who attend your funeral- not even by the preacher- but by Jesus Himself.

Are you living in view of life's bottom line? You plan for life, which is uncertain. But, do you plan for death, which is certain? Are you getting ready for life after death?

ISAIAH 53: EVIDENCE FOR FAITH IN GOD, THE BIBLE AND JESUS

Why should you become a disciple of Jesus? Should you become a Christian just because someone tells you to “accept Jesus as your personal Savior”? No. It wouldn’t make sense for you to stop living your life the way that you want to live it in order to do everything that Jesus wants you to do without any reason- without good reason! Many people have the mistaken idea that faith in Jesus is just blind acceptance- a leap that doesn’t make sense, but should be and must be taken anyway. But, Christianity is based on objective evidence that you may consider and reach a conclusion about- evidence that can persuade you to believe.

Before you become a Christian, you should be convinced of three things: 1) There is a God, 2) The Bible is the Word of God, and 3) Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. These three considerations follow in a logical order, for if there is no God, the Bible cannot be the Word of God, and obviously Jesus is not His Son. If there is a God, but the Bible is not the Word of God, there is no reason to believe Jesus is the Son of God because all of the evidence to consider about Jesus is found in the Bible. Notice the building blocks below that illustrate the three-step process of coming to faith in Jesus:

ISAIAH 53: EVIDENCE FOR FAITH (CON’T)

ISAIAH WROTE ABOUT THE “CHRIST”

He would be despised, forsaken of men, a man of sorrows (53:1-3)

He would be pierced, crushed, chastened, and scourged for man’s sins so that man could be healed (53:4-6)

He would not open His mouth while He was oppressed and afflicted; He would be as a lamb led to the slaughter or a sheep silent before its shearers (53:7)

His grave would be assigned with wicked men (53:9)

He would be with a rich man in His death (53:9)

He would prolong His days after He gave Himself as a sin offering (53:10-11)

He would receive a reward from God because He poured Himself out to death to bear man’s sins and to intercede for Him (53:12)

GOSPEL WROTE ABOUT JESUS

Jesus was despised, forsaken of men; a man of sorrows (Jn 1:11; Mk 15:29-32; Lk 19:41-42)

Jesus bore man’s sins in His body on the cross; by His wounds man is healed (1 Pet 2:24)

Jesus did not open His mouth to defend Himself when unjustly accused at His trial; He went to His death quietly, without protest (Mt 26:62-63; 27:12-14)

Jesus was crucified between two robbers (Mk 15:27-28)

Jesus was buried by a rich man (Mt 27:57-61)

Jesus was raised from the dead as many witnesses testified (Acts 10:40-41; 1 Cor 15:1-8)

Jesus was highly exalted by God because of His death on the cross for man's sins (Phil 2:8-11)

Study the above chart carefully, comparing the predictions of Isaiah to the gospel account of Jesus' life. Read all of the passages of Scripture for yourself. You will see Jesus fulfilled everything that Isaiah predicted about the Christ. Therefore, you have reason to believe that there is a God, that the Bible is the Word of God, and that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. If this evidence persuades you to believe, why won't you do as those who first were persuaded- repent of your sins and be baptized that your sins might be forgiven- become a Christian, a disciple of Jesus (Acts 2:36-38,41). You have reason to believe that He is the King- reason to let Him rule your life!

There is one way, however, to streamline this three-step process into one step, one step where faith in God, in the Bible, and in Jesus can be considered at the same time. This can be done by the consideration of predictions made concerning the coming "Christ" or King in the Old Testament. If it can be shown that Jesus fulfilled the predictions in the Old Testament, three points will be established at once, 1) There must be a God, for man cannot predict the future, 2) The Bible could not have come purely from the mind of men, but must be as it claims, the Word of God and 3) Jesus is the "Christ" the prophets wrote would come.

Isaiah wrote His predictions about the Christ about 700 B.C., according to the dating of the reigns of the kings who were living during the time of his writing (Isa 1:1). Even setting aside the dating from the book of Isaiah itself, it is clear that Isaiah wrote before the time of Jesus as a complete manuscript of Isaiah was found among the Dead Sea scrolls that has been dated from 100 years B.C. What man, without Divine guidance, can correctly predict events 700 years before they happen- or even 100 years?

Please give careful consideration to the predictions Isaiah made in chapter 53 and the fulfillment of his predictions by Jesus. Study the chart on the back page that compares Isaiah's predictions with the life of Jesus as told in the gospel. See for yourself if there is indeed evidence to believe in God, the Bible, and Jesus- evidence that would persuade you to become a Christian.