

What it Means to be Born Again



Understanding
God's Plan of Salvation

Find Out:

If God is good, why is this world so messed up?

Are men basically evil or good?

Does man have a spirit and soul as well as a body?

Is Mankind eternal - Does he survive physical death?

What does it mean to have a change of heart?

What makes Jesus Christ so special?

Can one make it to Heaven without Jesus Christ?

Was Jesus Christ *Born Again*?

Can anyone really know for sure if he is going to Heaven?

Is there a personal Devil?

How do I get the Devil off my back?

Can bad habits really be changed?

Isn't God living inside everyone?

How does one become a child of God?

Is a blood sacrifice really necessary for me to be saved?

Is anyone good enough to go to Heaven?

Why do I need God in my life?

How to make God an inside experience.

What will God require of me when I become His child?

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By

Evangelist Rev. David A. Hupp

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This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun! And all of this is a gift from God, who brought us back to Himself through Christ.

– 2 Corinthians 5:17-18 NLT

Merriam-Webster Dictionary: metamorphosis

Main Entry:meta*mor*pho*sis

Pronunciation:*me-t*-m*r-f*-s*s

Function:noun

Inflected Form:plural -pho*ses \-s*z\

1 : a change of physical form, structure, or substance especially by supernatural means; also : a striking alteration (as in appearance or character)

2 : a fundamental change in form and often habits of an animal accompanying the transformation of a larva into an adult

–meta*mor*phose \-f*z, -f*s\ verb

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What's This "Born Again" Business? (Understanding God's Plan of Salvation)

While living with and working for my parents on their ranch (about 1981), I felt inspired to write something on the Scriptural Background behind the concept of "getting saved". Thirty pages flowed out of me and I feel I should share it here, with a few additions or improvements. As an Evangelist, I have been praying for a "revelation of Jesus Christ" or divine revelation regarding God's plan of Salvation for mankind from eternity past to eternity future. What I write here is not that revelation, but is a Bible based study I pray will be helpful in doing a better job of reaching the lost soul. This paper became a sermon topic at public locations where I was asked to preach. Keep in mind that the statistics I quote were taken in the early 1980's.

Here's an interesting topic – interesting because some sixty million Americans are involved in it. In the early 1980's the Gallup Company took a poll and found 60 million Adult Americans (one half of the U.S. population) claimed they've had a *born again* experience. A poll taken a couple of years before that had said 50 million. This is a growing phenomenon. It's happening to people from all walks of life, and it's changing the hell out of the most unlikely people – characters like former communist and Black Panther Eldritch Cleaver, who now emphatically states that an individual personal encounter with Jesus Christ is the best way to change or reform the world for good. I heard Eldrich give his testimony – it's really touching; yet, when I mention this, some insist that he hasn't or couldn't have changed. Then we have Chuck Colson, a Richard Nixon "hatchet man", a prisoner turned preacher to prisoners. He wrote a book, a best seller, I believe it was titled, *Born Again*. This brings to mind Charles Tex Watson of the Charles Manson Cult – the one responsible for the brutal murder of Sharon Tate. Now Watson is assistant chaplain at the prison where he is serving time. Perhaps the most dramatic case I can remember is that of Jim Tucker, a bank robber, weight lifter, Hell's Angel, American Nazi Party member, and Satanist who tried to shoot and kill his school teacher during class at age eight. Jim is now a man of the cloth!

This *born again* group now includes singer Bob Dylan and notable movie stars such as Pat Boone, Cheryl Ladd, of the TV series *Charlie's Angels*, Dean Jones, Jane Fonda, and the late Steve McQueen, along with then president Ronald Reagan, according to a March '81 article in *The Ladies Home Journal* titled, *Going Back to God in Godless Hollywood*. Movie stars have all had all the popularity, sex, drugs, riches, you or I could want, and they're still not satisfied, still searching for true happiness—that's why they're taking another look, a closer look at the God of their childhood, the subject of a song by Rev. Kenneth Copeland, "I have returned, to the God of my childhood, to the same simple faith, that as a child I once knew...and the God I outgrew."

On the other hand, this *born again* experience is happening to some of the world's most religious people, such as the Maharajah from India, who authored the book *Death of a Guru*. Although one might rightly say the majority of *born again* people are religious; believe it or not, religion (being religious or of a certain church denomination or affiliation, having Christian parents, or being raised in a Christian home)—all this is not a prerequisite to being *born again*. You'll see why as we discuss this further. My relatives, on my mother's side of the family, are devout Christians. My grandmother prayed over me and dedicated me to the Lord when I was born, and although I began attending a church of their same denomination and had been going there a year with my sister, I was not yet *born again*.

Well, if 60 million Americans are testifying that spiritually, being *born again*, is the best way to go—"the only way to fly", we ought to know about it—we need to find out what's gotten into these people or what this *born again* business is all about. For sure, pollsters show us this group has been growing in numbers. Some of us may not like it, but it's something we're going to have to learn to like or to live with. In the case of the "Galloping gourmet" cook Graham Kerr, for example, he found out it had happened to his wife, and her influence lead him to the Lord.

The fourth largest USA television network, CBN, is promoting this phenomenon. As you can see, it is dramatically revolutionizing for the good, people from all walks of life—especially people like yourself—so how can you knock it! It's coming your way, so let's be informed and be prepared. "What is this Born Again Business?"

I went through a year of Bible College and two years of Theology School, to find out.

Here's the scoop as I see it and have experienced it. I've been *born again* over fifty-one years now, but didn't find out what all happened to me until twenty years later. It is obvious that *something* happened. There had been such a change in me that my formerly agnostic and still scientific Dad figured those religious fanatics, on my mother's side, had done something to me during my occasional visits to the farm in South Dakota. When I went to Georgia to work with a seasoned Evangelist, the family began to think I needed to be deprogrammed, as they had my Aunt travel an additional 90 miles from her company meeting in Atlanta to check on me.

Born again is a familiar term in some circles; but, all too often theology students, like myself, develop this religious Bible lingo or jargon and we fail to communicate when talking to those outside our line of study. We assume others know what we're (what I'm) talking about. It reminds me of the two black men speaking *jive* in the film *Airplane*. Movie goers couldn't figure out what the two were talking about, even though it was the English language, because we didn't know the lingo. As an example, examine the word I just used a moment ago (theology). It can be divided or broken down into the two Greek words *Theos* (God), and *ology* (the study of). *Theology*, then, is the study of God. Other unfamiliar words I might use are: *Propitiation*, *Salvation*, *Righteousness*, *Justification*, *Sanctification*, and *Redemption*, to name a few. Take the word *Redemption*, for example; or, *Salvation*. We know about the Salvation Army or, for those of you who are a little older, the location of the nearest Blue Chip stamp *redemption* store; but this is probably the limited extent of our understanding of such terms. You walk down the street in downtown Los Angeles. Someone hands you a tract and says, "Are you saved?" You might well reply, "Saved, what's that? Saved from what?" You, at some time in your life, have possibly been to a Church, or an Evangelist Crusade, such as a Billy Graham Crusade. You have probably heard sermons on the subject of being or getting *saved*. Oops, there's one of those theological words again! Just the same, I will not assume that you've understood all the religious or Biblical nomenclature that's come from pulpits all across our land.

I was told by other ministers that I don't break terms down enough for new Christians or non-Christians to understand. I checked this out and found out they were right! At a nearby boys camp chapel service we sang that old familiar hymn, *Amazing Grace*. I asked if anyone knew what the word *grace* meant. One young man raised his hand and exclaimed "I always thought that *grace* is what you say before meals." On this topic, being *born again*, I've endeavored to explain things as clearly and as simply as I know how. The word *born again* was coined by Jesus Christ when a leader of the Jews named Nicodemus came to see Jesus at night. Nick must have sensed that something was lacking in his life, something Jesus either had or knew about. Nick, and other Jewish leaders like him, had been anticipating the arrival of the promised Jewish Messiah or Anointed One, and he wondered if Jesus was the One. This is substantiated by the following Bible references:

Daniel 9:25 KJV Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince *shall be* seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.

Luke 3:15 KJV And as the people were in expectation, and all men mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ, or not.

John 4:25 KJV The woman saith unto him, I know that Messiahs cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things.

Although Nick was a spiritual leader of his people and outwardly very religious, Jesus knew that no man or woman could be right with God without an inward change of heart, a change in his spiritual nature or spirit, what the Apostle Paul called the *inward man*. (**2 Corinthians 4:16**), the *inner man* (**Ephesians 3:16**); or, *the hidden man of the heart* as the Apostle Peter called it (**1 Peter 3:4**).

2 Corinthians 4:16 NKJV For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward *man* is renewed day by day.

Ephesians 3:16-17a NKJV That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man. ^{17a} That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith.

1 Peter 3:3-4 Whose adorning let it not be that outward *adorning* of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel. ⁴ "But *let it be* the hidden man of the heart, in that which is

not corruptible, *even the ornament* of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.

We can only understand this if we understand that man, in his makeup, is a three part being—spirit, soul, and body. The real you is a *spirit* being who lives in your body, through which you express various emotions; the *soul* being the seat of the emotions, will, and mind. Modern medical science is enabling doctors, like cardiologist Maurice Rawlings, MD, to revive clinically dead patients, who in the past, never came back. As Reader's Digest put it, "Today, medical advances have allowed doctors to resuscitate people who in earlier times would have been irretrievably dead. In effect, medical intervention has pushed back the boundaries of what we call death." (August 2003, page 124) People are dying as usual, but now, through modern medical resuscitation methods, such as CPR and AED machines, some are returning to life and talk about a very real existence beyond this life, a *Life After Life* as one researcher titled his book.

Dr. Rawlings wrote two books, *Beyond Death's Door*, published by Bantam House, and *To Hell and Back*. In his first book he tells of a postal worker in his office having a cardiac arrest and collapsing while taking a treadmill test. Dr. Rawlings began administering CPR. He says the first thing a patient usually says when they come to life again is, "Get off of me, you're hurting me!" But this man said, "Don't stop! Don't stop! Don't you know that every time you stop I die and go to Hell!?" Dr. Rawlings his patient to shut up and keep his *Hell* to himself until he got a pacemaker installed. The patient cried out, "What do I have to do so I don't die and go to Hell!" The doctor replied, "I guess it's like we learned in Sunday school when we were children. Ask Jesus into your heart and you will go to Heaven when you die. If you live, you're on the hook forever." The doctor, not personally sure of any of this, found himself leading the patient in the prayer of salvation to ask Jesus to come into his heart, right there on the floor in his office. The patient stabilized and became a sincere Christian after that. Dr. Rawlings made an interesting discovery when he writes, "I found out it may not be safe to die!"

One time my Dad told my Mom and me, "When I die, have me cremated, scatter my ashes, and forget about me, I'm gone!" Having been raised in a Christian Pentecostal family, my Mom had

replied, “Can you be so sure?” More recently my Father got cancer and then had a minor heart attack. He called me on my cell phone and asked me to come by and pray for him after work. He really wanted to get healed and live longer, even though he was 87. I told him something I had come up with the week before. “Dad, it’s not your time to go because, #1, you don’t know for sure where you’re going; and #2, you don’t know how you’re going to get there. After explaining about the need to pray and ask Jesus into his heart, making Jesus his personal Lord and Savior, I took his hand and led him in the prayer of salvation.

Reader’s Digest magazine published two articles on The Evidence for Life after Death. In the first article, professor of Psychiatry, Dr. Ian Stevenson, after having researched NDEs (near death experiences), and OBEs (out of body experiences) for twenty years, told Reader’s Digest, “I think it prudent to prepare for the eventuality.” The second article *New Evidence: Life After Death* (August 2003), tells the true story of Pam Reynolds who, in 1991, learned she had a life-threatening bulge in an artery in her brain. Neurosurgeon Robert Spetzler, director of the Barrow Neurological Institute in Phoenix, AZ, told the 35 year old mother of three, in order to operate, her heart would have to be stopped, her brain function would cease, and by all clinical measures she would be dead for up to an hour. During the operation, “Spetzler gave the order to bring Reynolds to ‘standstill’—draining the blood from her body. By every reading of every instrument, life left Reynolds’ body.” Just before that Reynolds felt herself *pop* out of her body, where she briefly observed part of the operation (which she described in detail afterwards, even though her eyes had been taped shut). Then she found herself traveling down a tunnel toward a light where she saw her long-dead grandmother, relatives and friends, until a deceased uncle led her back to her body and instructed her to return. After she came to, she told the doctor all she had seen and experienced. At the writing of the article, twelve years later, the doctor still didn’t know what to make if it all.

What these doctors are proving is that it is this *human spirit* part of a man that lives a very real existence beyond physical death and the grave. Dr. William Mayo, co-founder and chief of staff at the famous Mayo Clinic at Rochester, Minnesota said, “The keen blade of my scalpel may never uncover the soul as a tangible part of the

mystery called man, but I know it is there. I am as confident of its presence as I am of the most elemental truth to which my own medical science adheres.” In the Bible, the Apostle Paul wrote:

2 Corinthians 5:1 KJV For we know that if our earthly house of *this* tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

2 Corinthians 5:8 KJV We are confident, *I say*, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.

An Old Testament passage confirms this:

Zechariah 12:1 KJV The burden of the word of the LORD for Israel, saith the LORD, which stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth, and formeth the spirit of man within him.

Getting back to our story of Jesus and Nicodemus, Jesus emphasizes that the *spirit* of a man must undergo a change if man is to live a truly happy life. He gets right to the root of Nicodemus’s need. Jesus tells him, “Except a man be born again” (or, born a second time, “born from above” as some translations have it), he cannot see or enter into the Kingdom of God—this rule of God on earth was what the Jews were looking for. In other words, unless the *spirit man* is somehow born a second time, a man cannot take part in the blessings of God’s rule and Kingdom. Using similar language, Jesus said, in a different setting on a different occasion:

Matthew 18:3 KJV And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

The Apostle Peter, in one of his first public sermons said:

Acts 3:19 KJV Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.

There is a neat riddle I used to have on a hand held multi-page sign “Born once, die twice, born twice, die once.” Nicodemus tried to figure this out on a mere physical level of meaning without seeing the *spiritual* meaning because the Jews, at the time, were under the Romans or The Great Roman Empire and were very interested in being liberated from pagan Rome with their pantheon of idol gods. The Jews were monotheistic, or believing in only one God. They looked for this deliverance to come through the

promised Messiah (Anointed One) of Old Testament prophecy, who they figured would throw off their Roman oppressors and set up a Kingdom of God on Earth centered at Jerusalem, Israel.

Act 1:6 KJV When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?

You can see, then, why Nick was so interested in Jesus' use of the phrase *Kingdom of Heaven*. Trying to figure out what Jesus meant by the term *born again* in the kingdom statement Jesus had just made.

John 3:4 KJV Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?

Jesus begins to straighten things out a bit for Nick, and for us, by building on the idea Nick just put out—a physical birth.

John 3:5-6 KJV Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. ⁶ That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

Jesus here distinguishes the birth He is talking about, saying that it is a *spiritual* one whose agent (that which causes it to happen) is the Holy Spirit of God. This is a supernatural experience involving supernatural power. One version of Peter's epistle states "born, not of human origin, but of God". The birth here is a second birth or rebirth of the human spirit, not the body, but your spirit—the real you that lives inside that body of yours—that part of you the doctors have found to live on after you physically die.

I heard the testimony of a *born again* minister who worked with the late healing evangelist Oral Roberts. He had a heart attack and died in ICU—the hospital's Intensive Care Unit. When his heart stopped, he (the human spirit), checked out of his body and was in another world walking along a green country path toward the great City of God in Heaven. Meanwhile, when the heart monitoring machine first sounded its alarm, a medical assistant began jumping on the man's body to get his heart going again. When the heart started beating, the *human spirit* returned. The assistant asked, "Didn't that hurt you, my beating on your chest?" The man replied, "How could it hurt me when I wasn't here?"

Even the news media understands this. When someone is murdered and the police find out about it, the news report goes something like this: “Police detectives discovered the body of John Doe.” They recognize that John Doe, the spirit man, is no longer associated with his body because, at death, John Doe checked out. When was the last time you looked at an epitaph or tomb stone or grave marker to find it reads, “Here lies the body of...” The *human spirit* is the most important aspect of our beings, as it is the part which lives forever. Thus, making sure our spirit is *born again* is of utmost importance. Jesus said:

Matthew 16:26 KJV For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

I hope you understand now what I mean when I use the term *the human spirit*, or man’s *spiritual nature*.

By using the term *born again*, then, I paraphrase Jesus as saying, “Nick, being right with God is more than a matter of being physically born once (a man’s first birth) into a Jewish family, the Jews being God’s chosen people. A right relationship with God transcends physical ties. You’re having a right and satisfying relationship with God, your creator, transcends physical relationships or requirements. Your having a right and satisfying relationship with God in His Kingdom requires this second birth I’m talking about—a rebirth of the *human spirit*—the spiritual side of man—that which was originally made in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:26). Since God is a *spirit being* (John 4:24), He relates to man as a spirit being.”

Saint Peter is the only other person in the Bible to use the term *born again*. His usage of the word shows us this term cannot be a reference to physical birth.

1 Peter 1:23-24a KJV Being *born again*, not of corruptible seed [i.e., earthly parents], but of incorruptible, by the word of God which liveth and abideth forever. For all flesh is a grass [an analogy to the word “corruptible” just used]...”

As I mentioned earlier, one translation reads “born, not of human origin”. The NASB translation reads, “having been born again” (past tense), showing us this is a present experience, and not a future happening as advocated by the late Herbert W. Armstrong in his

Plain Truth magazine. Saint John uses a similar phrase, “born of God”, which sheds further light on the fact that this is a supernatural experience which occurs or takes place inside a man, in his heart or *human spirit*. A sample of the Apostle John’s usage of this term here is I John 5:1a, “Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ [i.e., the Anointed One of God] is born of God.”

We can draw two conclusions to what Jesus is saying to Nicodemus in the third chapter of the Book of John. If a man’s *spirit* needs to be reborn to be in God’s Kingdom—in right relationship and harmony with God—then something has gone wrong somewhere because, as originally created, man was at one time in harmony with God and in right standing with God; but, for some reason, man is not there now. We can deduce or conclude that the man who hasn’t been *born again* is out of kilter, or out of harmony with God.

If the *inner man* or *spirit* of a man needs to be reborn, then somewhere along the span of man’s existence, or spiritually speaking, man died as a spirit. We know man continued to exist (because we’re all still standing here today). Man continued to exist, but alienated somehow from God—somehow fallen from the image and likeness in which he (man) was created according to Genesis 1:26.

Genesis 1:26-27 KJV And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. ²⁷ So God created man in his *own* image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

When did this happen, and what does this term *spiritual death* or *died spiritually* mean? And, in what way does being *born again* resolve this whole broken relationship between God and mankind? What is this *born again business*, anyway? As I said, I spent five years in college getting a Bachelor of Theology degree (a study of God, degree) to find out; and now I believe I understand it, and can help you to understand it with me.

At the Biblical creation of man, by God in the Garden of Eden, God’s enemy, the fallen angel Lucifer, appeared disguised as a snake or serpent and told the first woman, Eve, that God was wrong when He told them they would die if they ate of the fruit of

the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Being the father of lies, Satan deceived Eve into thinking God was withholding something good from mankind that could make him like God. (Her husband Adam sinned also, but was not deceived in what he was doing, according to I Timothy 2:4) Willfully, following the advice of Satan over God's clear command, man disobeyed God. This made Satan man's authority figure. Man sold out to Satan, committing an act of high treason against God, and then indirectly blamed God for it by saying, "The woman *whom thou gavest to be with me* she gave me of the tree and I did eat." (Genesis 3:12). Adam and Eve [mankind] lost their place as God's under rulers on the earth.

Genesis 1:28 KJV ...have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

The Apostle Paul tells us the result of this event is the Devil, God's arch enemy, became "the god of this world" (2 Corinthians 4:4). In his relationship with God, Adam died as a spiritual being—he fell out of harmony and fellowship with a Holy and Just God, his creator. Although created to live forever, men began to die physically, living increasingly shorter lives as a result of spiritual death and the disease of sin, which is disobedience to God's commands. Further disobedience, starting with Adam's son Cain murdering his brother Abel, led to men progressively taking on more of the nature of Satan. By Genesis Chapter six, right before the universal flood, the Bible reveals God's viewpoint on the moral status of man.

Genesis 6:5-6 NLT The LORD observed the extent of human wickedness on the earth, and He saw that everything they thought or imagined was consistently and totally evil. So the LORD was sorry He had ever made them and put them on the earth. It broke His heart.

When Jesus arrived, he told the most religious people of his day, the Pharisees:

John 8:44 KJV Ye are of *your* father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.

God wouldn't let mankind live forever in a fallen condition—that's why Adam and Eve were put out of the Garden of Eden—so they

wouldn't eat of the Tree of Life and live forever physically, in their fallen spiritual state.

Genesis 3:22 -24 KJV And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever: ²³ Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. ²⁴ So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubim, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.

God had warned Adam from the start, "In the day that thou eatest of it [the forbidden fruit] thou shalt surely die." (Genesis 2:17). Yet Adam didn't die physically for 930 years after that. Looking back to the time before men were *born again*, the Apostle Paul helps us understand things when he writes:

Ephesians 2:1-3 KJV And you *hath he quickened*, who were dead in trespasses and sins; ² Where-in in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: ³ Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

The people (Ephesians) who Paul was writing to were alive, yet Paul says they *were* dead. He has to be talking about a spiritual death rather than a physical death. Jesus told a man who wanted to follow him after burying his father, "Let the dead bury their dead." (Luke 9:60). Adam and Eve were acutely aware of this when they became embarrassed about their physical nakedness before God and tried to make coverings for themselves out of fig leaves (Genesis 3:7). God then killed an animal to make clothes of skin for man. This showed the high cost of sin—the only acceptable covering for man's sin is the taking of the life of another in exchange for our life, and the shedding of that other's *blood* which represents life. In the Book of Leviticus, God says:

Leviticus 17:11 KJV For the life of the flesh *is* in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it *is* the blood *that* maketh an atonement for the soul.

This is the reason only the blood or life of Jesus Christ applied to our sins is acceptable to God, and why God will not accept any religion or cult that does not involve Jesus' blood sacrifice. This is why the Mormons, Jehovah's witnesses, Christian Scientists, Eastern Religions, and other groups who deny the need of Jesus' blood sacrifice to be forgiven by God, are not acceptable to God, because they won't meet God on His terms—they won't accept His plan for making men right with God.

Romans 10:2-4 KJV For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. ³ For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. ⁴ For Christ *is* the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

God called Adam and Eve's act of rebellion (eating the forbidden fruit and following Satan's advice) *sin*. Sin is defined elsewhere in the Bible as the transgression of, or disobedience to, God's laws or commandments (more specifically, the Ten Commandments—Exodus chapter 20) for peace and harmony on earth.

1 John 3:4 KJV Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.

1 John 5:17 KJV All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death.

Romans 5:12 KJV Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.

Romans 6:23 KJV For the wages of sin *is* death.

Ezekiel 18:20 KJV The soul that sinneth, it shall die.

It should be noted here that the terms *death* and *die*, do not mean what the Jehovah's witnesses call *soul sleep*, or ceasing to exist. Although the physical body dies and decays, the Bible says God will someday, somehow resurrect it to stand before Him on a Judgment Day, but on a spiritual plane, one never ceases to exist. Jesus said:

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

W.E. Vine, in his *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, comments that the Greek word for *destroy* used here is “not absence of being, but of well being”. Defining the Greek word for death, *thanatos*, he writes under definition (b), this word is used in Scripture [i.e., the Bible] of: “the separation of man from God; Adam died on the day he disobeyed God, Genesis 2:17, and hence all mankind are born in the same spiritual condition, Romans 5:12, Romans 5:14, Romans 5:17, Romans 5:21, from which, however, those who believe in Christ are delivered, John 5:24; I John 3:14. ‘Death’ is the opposite of life; it never denotes nonexistence. As spiritual life is ‘conscious existence in communion with God,’ so spiritual ‘death’ is ‘conscious existence in separation from God.’”

Romans 6:23 is telling us when we sin we earn wages or earnings, and these earnings are death—eternal separation from God for all eternity. When the Bible speaks of unrepentant sinners suffering in a burning Hell, it also states, in at least three places, this is a conscious ongoing torment, after the physical life has ended.

Mark 9:43-48 KJV And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: ⁴⁴ Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. ⁴⁵ And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: ⁴⁶ Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. ⁴⁷ And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire: ⁴⁸ Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

Revelations 14:11 KJV And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.

I believe it was Albert Einstein who stated, “once matter has been created, it cannot be destroyed” As men continued to sin by yielding to Satan’s dominion and following Satan’s perverted advice, they, as I mentioned earlier (John 8:44), took on Satan’s nature or character. Here is an additional reference from the Apostle Paul:

Ephesians 2:1-3 NLT Once you were dead because of your disobedience and your many sins. You used to live in sin, just like the rest of the world, obeying the devil—the commander of the powers in the unseen world. He is the spirit at work in the hearts of those who refuse to obey God. All of us used to live that way, following the passionate desires and inclinations of our sinful nature. By our very nature we were subject to God's anger, just like everyone else.

Look again at John 8:44 where Jesus told the religious leaders they were of their father the Devil, doing the lusts of that father. In essence, He was saying no amount of human effort, good works (good deeds) or religious acts, can get a man out from under Satan's spiritual and physical domination in this earth, partly because such deeds don't and can't change a man's intrinsic nature, which is sinful. If you will look around you will see this world is in a mess because men, by nature, are doing things Satan's way, following Satan's lusts—playing into his hand, rather than following God's way.

Isaiah 55:6-9 KJV Seek the LORD while he may be found; call upon Him while he is near; ⁷ let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the LORD, that he may have compassion on him, and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon. ⁸ For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD. ⁹ For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

Although men can't change their evil nature or please God, the situation isn't hopeless because God can and wants to change our natures or our hearts.

Romans 5:5-6 KJV And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. ⁶ For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.

In the Old Testament, God foretold how He would accomplish this:

Ezekiel 11:19-21 KJV And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh: ²⁰ That they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances, and do them: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God.

It's like the drug addict or gambler who eventually comes to the realization that he seems hopelessly addicted. And so it is with the alcoholic, the occultist or Satanist, the Boston Strangler, the freeway killer, etc. We have unknowingly yielded to the Devil until there is no way out except the Lord rescuing us when we call on Him.

Joel 2:32 KJV And it shall come to pass, *that* whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the LORD hath said, and in the remnant whom the LORD shall call.

Romans 10:13 KJV For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

The Reader's Digest had a featured story in their March '81 publication, titled *To Catch a Killer*. Theodore R. Bundy was a college graduate and was studying to be a lawyer, but he had a fantasy about single young women. He acted upon his sinful thoughts and eventually found his name on the FBI's list of the ten most wanted fugitives. After his final arrest, Bundy admitted to picking up, molesting, and killing over 100 women. Bundy exclaimed, "I'm one of the most cold-hearted SOBs you'll ever meet!" You see, it's the Devil, not God that has tried to destroy this world ever since he (the Devil) usurped or took over Adam's God given dominion, or under rule, on earth. Jesus stated:

John 10:9-10 NKJV I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. ¹⁰ The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have *it* more abundantly.

The Apostle Paul's calling the Devil "the God of this world" who "has blinded the minds of them that believe not" (2 Corinthians 4:4), is confirmed by Jesus temptation by the Devil in the wilderness.

Luke 4:5-7 KJV And the devil, taking him up into an high mountain, shewed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. ⁶ And the devil said unto him, **All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it.** ⁷ If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine.

Fallen man needs three things.

1. Spiritual life—a reconnection with God and a new spiritual nature—in place of spiritual death (Satan's nature), for the Bible says, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." (Ezekiel 18:4, 20).
2. Righteousness—right standing with God—the restoration of a sin free fellowship between God and man. The Bible says, "There is none righteous, no not one; there is not a just man upon the earth that doeth good and sinneth not." (Romans 3:10; Ecclesiastes 7:20). At one time or another we've all blown it—we've all broken at least one of God's commandments on occasion.
3. Liberation—from the bondage of Satan's dominion of poverty, addictions, sickness, disease, insatiable lusts, and fears—the curses of the broken law (Deuteronomy chapter 27, second half of chapter 28).

The Bible tells us God knew when the world was created that all this would happen, and way back then, before the world began, He had a plan to straighten things out. Revelation 13:8, a most unusual verse, speaks of Jesus Christ as "the Lamb slain *from the foundation of the world*". God in His love and mercy looked down on suffering humanity. God came to earth in the Person of Jesus Christ to solve these problems by providing *Himself*, the perfect blood sacrifice for sin that He required. There was no other way because of man's sin heritage from Adam (Romans 5:12).

The Patriarch Abraham foresaw this when God asked him to sacrifice his only son Isaac, on Mount Mariah (the same place where years later Jesus would be sacrificed). Isaac asked, "Where is the sacrifice?" Abraham replied (Genesis 22:8), "God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering," and God indeed provided a ram which was in the thicket. For mankind, God provided *Himself*, fulfilled through Jesus, whose very Name means *Savior*, when He came from Heaven through a virgin birth (a young woman who had never had sex with a man), by the impregnating of the Spirit of God.

Luke 1:34-35 KJV Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? ³⁵ And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.

Evidently, the blood type of a child comes from the father. Since Jesus had God as his Father, He had a unique blood type free from the sin passed down from Adam. I watched a video by an amateur archaeologist excavating the area of the crucifixion of Jesus, the place where Abraham had told his son that the Lord would provide the necessary sacrifice. In the Book of the Maccabees—in the Catholic Bible—it states that the Prophet Jeremiah took the Ark of the Covenant, upon which the blood of animal blood sacrifices were annually sprinkled by the high priest as a foreshadow of the coming perfect, “once for all” sacrifice of God Himself in the person of Jesus Christ, and hid it in a cave in the side of a hill.

Hebrews 1:3 KJV Who being the brightness of *his* glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.

This archeologist, James Wyatt, shows where he was digging and says he found the Ark of The Covenant and the Ten Commandments. Even more astounding, the Ark was located directly beneath Golgotha, the place where Jesus was crucified. He said, when the earthquake occurred at Jesus crucifixion, as recorded in the Bible, some of Jesus unique type blood went down a crack and dripped on the mercy seat of the Ark to make the perfect sacrifice. Wyatt took blood samples and had them analyzed, and this was indeed a different type of blood! It sounds impossible to have happened that way, but I believe it did. The Bible also says that Jesus took some of His blood to the Temple in Heaven, and purged that also.

Hebrews 9:11-14 KJV But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; ¹² Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption *for us*. ¹³ For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: ¹⁴ How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

I was told the story of an unsaved farmer, whose wife had been trying to win him to the Lord. One Sunday morning, in the cold of

winter, when she had gone to church and he was home alone, he watched a bird hitting against the window trying to get into the house where it was warm. “If I could just tell that bird to go into the barn”, he thought, “He could keep warm.” He then realized, in order to relate that message to the bird, he would have to be a bird himself. It was at that moment the Gospel Message became real to him. Jesus had come from Heaven to show us the way.

The angel had told Joseph, Jesus’ earthy guardian, “Thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins.” (Matthew 1:21). Verse 23 recalls an Old Testament prophecy which reads, “They shall call his name Emanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.” As I stated, by the virgin birth, with God as his father, and a divine blood type, Jesus escaped the tarnish of sin handed down through Adam’s bloodline, and was free from Satan’s nature and bondage. This is evident in Jesus’ statement regarding Satan, “The prince of this world [the Devil] cometh, and hath nothing in me.” (John 14:30). Thus, Jesus Christ was the only one who could free others from sin and its consequences—from unrighteousness (lack of right standing with God), from spiritual death (separation from God for time and eternity), and from Satan’s dominion and nature.

It was like a rematch between Adam and Lucifer (the Devil), alias the serpent. Jesus is sometimes called the *last Adam* in the Bible (for example, I Corinthians 15:22). The difference is this time Jesus won, after being severely tempted, “in all points like as we are, yet without sin” (Hebrews 4:15). Jesus knows what we go through, yet He never gave in to Satan’s pranks—Satan’s delusions. As I pointed out, the Devil tempted Jesus with giving Him all the kingdoms of the world (Matthew 4:8, 9). “...for they have been given to me, and they are mine to give to whosoever I will”, he had said. You see, Satan had received all this from Adam. You know that God’s not going to even give His enemy the Devil, the time of day, let alone anything else. If the Devil had been lying as usual, Jesus would have known it, and this wouldn’t be called a temptation. This is why I say Adam committed high treason against God and let his dominion over the earth slip into the Devil’s hands, resulting in Satan becoming “the god of this world” (2 Corinthians 4:4); or, “the prince of this world” (John 14:30); or, “the prince of the power of the air” (Ephesians 2:2)—resulting in man’s need to be

free from Satan's dominion if he is to be saved from his deplorable condition—saved through a *born from above* experience.

In not sinning or giving in to Satan, not succumbing to the Devil's evil lordship, Jesus perfectly obeyed God's commands and met all of God's requirements for being righteous or in right standing with God, free from the consequences of sin and spiritual death. In other words, Jesus is the only man who ever lived who was, in Himself, perfectly righteous in God's sight according to the God given Jewish laws or Ten Commandments.

Hebrews 4:15 KJV For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as *we are*, yet without sin.

1 Peter 2:22 KJV Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth.

Now, how could Jesus' righteousness be transferred over to sinful man's account and satisfy sinful man's need for righteousness, spiritual life, and freedom from Satan? The answer is a thousand dollar theological phrase, *vicarious atonement*—one man's life voluntarily given in exchange for the life of another, in such a manner that God's justice and punishment for sin would be fully satisfied and man declared "not guilty!" In God's eyes, according to His master plan to save the world, Jesus' righteousness—and no one else's—qualified for an equal exchange for man's unrighteousness.

2 Corinthians 5:21 KJV For he hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

I call it the Great Exchange, when we look to Jesus to save us, God, 2000 years ago takes our junk, what the Bible calls the "handwriting of ordinances against us," and then, as a free gift, gives us the goodness of Jesus in its place.

Colossians 2:13 KJV And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses.

Colossians 2:14-15 KJV Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; ¹⁵ *And* having spoiled

principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.

Romans 5:12 KJV Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.

Romans 5:15-19 KJV But not as the offence, so also *is* the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, *which is* by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. ¹⁶ And not as *it was* by one that sinned, *so is* the gift: for the judgment *was* by one to condemnation, but the free gift *is* of many offences unto justification. ¹⁷ For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.) ¹⁸ Therefore as by the offence of one *judgment came* upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one *the free gift came* upon all men unto justification of life. ¹⁹ For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

The Amplified translation says that those who have received the gift of righteousness, shall reign as kings in life by the one, Jesus Christ. Another passage says “overwhelming victory is ours!” The Lord told Rev. Kenneth Copeland “A twice born man [Jesus] defeated Satan in his [Satan’s] own domain.” We are a copy [of Jesus].

Colossians 1:13-15 KJV Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated *us* into the kingdom of his dear Son: ¹⁴ In whom we have redemption through his blood, *even* the forgiveness of sins: ¹⁵ Who is the image of the invisible God, the **firstborn** of every creature:

Romans 8:28-32 KJV And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose. ²⁹ For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate *to be* conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the **firstborn** among many brethren. ³⁰ Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. ³¹ What shall we then say to these things? If God *be* for us, who *can be*

against us? ³² He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

The Greek word for *firstborn* used here is *prototokos* from which we get our word prototype. As an added benefit to a changed heart we have the overcoming power of the Spirit of God and Jesus Christ living within us, who is God's down payment for us toward the future day, when the Holy Spirit will make alive or "quicken" our physical bodies, making them immortal. God, the Holy Spirit, already did this with Jesus when He raised Him from the dead. This will occur when Jesus returns to earth to punish the wicked, reward the faithful, and set up his Millennial Kingdom. At last the scales of justice qualified for an equal exchange for man's unrighteousness, harmony and fellowship between God and man could be balanced. But how?

John 15:13 KJV Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

Romans 8:9-11 KJV But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. ¹⁰ And if Christ *be* in you, the body *is* dead because of sin; but the Spirit *is* life because of righteousness. ¹¹ But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

Hello Good Friday! Hello, Easter Sunday! Jesus was falsely arrested, tried and convicted by the ruling Jews who were envious and jealous of the attention He was getting from the people, so they had set out to capture and kill Him. At the insistence of these Jews, the Romans crucified the very Messiah these Jews had hoped would throw off the Romans. Yet God was ultimately in control, and it was in His plan and timing.

Isaiah 53:4-6 KJV "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. ⁵ But he *was* wounded for our transgressions, *he was* bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace *was* upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. ⁶ All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."

Isaiah 53:10-11 Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put *him* to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he

shall see *his* seed, he shall prolong *his* days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. ¹¹ He shall see of the travail of his soul, *and* shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.

Nailed to the cross, Jesus took upon Himself the sins of the world and suffered the consequences of sin—God’s wrath, alienation from God, and banishment to Hell for what might have been a godless eternity. Many ministers will deny that Jesus went this far in identifying with fallen man. What does it mean when the Bible states:

1 Peter 2:24-25 KJV Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed. ²⁵ For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.

2 Corinthians 5:19 KJV To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.

Perhaps the most memorized verse in the Bible is John 3:16, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only Begotten Son...” But how much did He give? Amazingly, the verse before this, John 3:15 compares Jesus’ death on the cross to the serpent God had told Moses to make and put on a pole in the wilderness, so when people looked upon that serpent, the plague in their bodies stopped and they were healed/delivered. (See Numbers 21:4-9). How could Jesus be likened to a serpent when, in the Garden of Eden, the deceiver, the Devil, God’s arch enemy was the serpent?

John 3:14-15 KJV And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: ¹⁵ That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

It wasn’t for nothing that the dying Jesus cried out, “My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me!” (Matthew 27:46). The Living Bible paraphrase states, regarding Jesus’ sweating blood ordeal in the garden of Gethsemane, “He shrank back in terror at the thought of being separated from the Father’s bright presence.” While Jesus was on the cross, Holy God the Father could not look on His sin laden Son. For the first time in His existence, Jesus personally experienced what mankind had known all along—the loneliness and emptiness of a life without (separated from, or

estranged from) God—a separation brought on by sin or disobedience to God's laws.

Isaiah 59:1-2 KJV Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: ² But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid *his* face from you, that he will not hear.

How could God do such a thing—turn His back on His only Son—the Son of His love, His beloved Son, about whom He had spoken from Heaven, that He was well pleased with? (Matthew 3:17; 17:5; Mark 1:11; 2Peter 1:17). Jesus had been made sin, and God cannot allow sin in His presence. Here we see God's love and desire in freeing mankind—His love for a lost and dying world. This is why John 3:16 Jesus states:

John 3:16KJV For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

As I indirectly pointed out, this great love of God for you and me is further manifested in Isaiah 53:10 which strangely declares, "It pleased the Lord to bruise Him." The letters to the Hebrews, and the Romans add:

Hebrews 12:2 NKJV Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of *our* faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Romans 5:6-10 KJV For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷ For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. ⁸ But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. ⁹ Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. ¹⁰ For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.

John 15:13 KJV Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

With great expense and force, atomic particles are separated in a cyclotron generator. Even greater, the Trinity of God was temporarily split by God's great love for you. On the cross, Jesus

shed His divine blood for us, the very life of God, because, as scientists admit, the blood is the source of one's physical life. As I already mentioned, God, in the Bible, pointed this out centuries before Jesus came to Earth.

Leviticus 17:11 KJV For the life of the flesh *is* in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it *is* the blood *that* maketh an atonement for the soul.

Jesus gave his life by shedding His blood because the Bible says that without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin.

Hebrews 9:22 KJV And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.

This is why there is no *born again* experience in bloodless religions. Such religions are manmade, made by men because men are naturally religious—man was created that way—created with a hunger to know God. Saint Augustine said, “Thou hast made us for thyself, O God, and the heart of man is ever restless, until it finds its rest in Thee.” Time Magazine published an article saying there may be a gene in man's makeup which causes him to search for God. The many religions created by men are a result of this. But, however much they satisfy men, or even the Devil (as a diversion from the truth that is in Jesus—Ephesians 4:21); they don't satisfy God's requirement for right standing with Himself, namely, the shedding of blood, a *vicarious atonement*, a sinless life for a sinful life.

This shows the high cost of sin—it cost God His only Son. We must not skirt around the real Biblical reasons Jesus came:

Hebrews 9:26-28 KJV For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. ²⁷ And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: ²⁸ So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

1 John 4:10 AMP In this is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son *to be* the propitiation [the atoning sacrifice] for our sins.

1 John 3:8 KJV He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.

The Apostle Paul, who was personally taught by Jesus in the wilderness of Arabia (Galatians 1:12,17), tells us, "For He (God) hath made Him (Jesus) to be sin for us (on our behalf), who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." (Corinthians 5:21). On the cross, Jesus was "made to be sin" that we might be made right with God through Jesus' death on our behalf, or, in our place. This phrase, "was made to be sin", can only mean Jesus took upon himself all the diseases, distress, and sickness the Devil had been putting on us as a result of our disobedience or sin.

1 Peter 2:24 KJV Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.

Matthew 8:16-17 KJV When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with *his* word, and healed all that were sick: ¹⁷ that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare *our* sicknesses.

The prophet Isaiah foresaw this when he wrote of the coming Messiah or Anointed One, "He bare the sins the sin of many. (Isaiah 53:12). Thou [speaking of the Lord] shall make his soul an offering for sin" (verse 10) – a vicarious or substitutionary sacrifice for our sins. Earlier in this 53rd chapter, Isaiah, by divine inspiration, wrote (verses 4-6) "Surely he hath borne our griefs [or 'pains' – see Matthew 8:17], and carried our sorrows [or sicknesses], yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted. But he was wounded ['tormented' as the margin reads] for our transgressions [our sins, disobedience to God], he was bruised for our iniquities [wickedness]: the chastisement [punishment for] our peace [peace with God] was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray [away from God and His commands given for our good and welfare]. We have turned everyone to his own way [each of us has done his own selfish thing]; and the Lord hath laid on him [Jesus] the iniquity [wickedness] of us all."

As I pointed out earlier, in John 3:14-15, Jesus identifies Himself with a serpent that represented man's sin. Jesus was made to be sin on our behalf (2 Corinthians 5:21). Here we find Jesus on the cross and at the whipping post, suffering in our place the death

sentence we, before God, deserve—that we have earned by sinning.

Romans 6:23a KJV For the wages of sin is death.

Jesus then physically died (his human spirit separated from his body).

James 2:26 For as the body without the spirit is dead,

Luke 23:46 And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost.

Now, as a living, but spiritually dead or separated from God human spirit, Jesus had to do something more while His body spent three days and three nights in the tomb just like Jonah spent three days and three nights in the belly of the whale. W.E. Vine wrote, under the word 'death', in his *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*: 'Death...is always, in Scripture, viewed as the penal consequence of sin, and since sinners alone are subject to death, Romans 5:12, it was as the Bearer of sin that the Lord Jesus submitted thereto on the Cross, I Peter 2:24. And while the physical death of the Lord Jesus was of the essence of His sacrifice, it was not the whole. The darkness symbolized, and His cry expressed [i.e., "My God, my God, why hath Thou forsaken me?"]', the fact that He was left alone in the Universe, He was 'forsaken;' cf. Matthew 27:45-46."

The Apostle Paul, through a divine revelation, was personally taught by Jesus Christ. He says we don't cease to exist when we physically die.

Matthew 12:40 For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

2 Corinthians 5:1 For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

Jonah wrote of his ordeal:

Jonah 2:1-7 Then Jonah prayed unto the LORD his God out of the fish's belly, ² And said, I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the LORD, and he heard me; out of the belly of hell cried I, and thou heardest my voice. ³ For thou hadst cast me into the deep, in the midst of the seas; and the floods compassed me about: all thy

billows and thy waves passed over me. ⁴ Then I said, I am cast out of thy sight; yet I will look again toward thy holy temple. ⁵ The waters compassed me about, even to the soul: the depth closed me round about, the weeds were wrapped about my head. ⁶ I went down to the bottoms of the mountains; the earth with her bars was about me forever: yet hast thou brought up my life from corruption, O LORD my God. ⁷ When my soul fainted within me I remembered the LORD: and my prayer came in unto thee, into thine holy temple.

So then, what did Jesus, the human spirit who had lived in His body, but was now separated from it due to His death on the cross, do during these next three days? I believe the demons, Satan's agents, took Him to a literal burning Hell where He suffered spiritual death in our place. The late Rev. E.W. Kenyon, a forerunner of Kenneth E. Hagin, says the literal translation of the original Hebrew language of Isaiah 53:9 uses the word *deaths* in the plural and reads:

Isaiah 53:9 And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his deaths.

Jesus had been *made sin*. In the book *Visions Beyond the Veil* by Baker, orphan children in China, in the early 1900's, experienced a revival and were able to see, by the Holy Spirit upon them, into the spiritual realm around us. They observed, that, when an unsaved sinner dies, demons are there at the bedside and put spiritual shackles and chains on the person and drag them forcibly, against his will, down to Hell for eternity, to suffer and be tormented there. Thus, Jesus also suffered a *spiritual death*, the eternal consequences of sin. I was quite unsure about this teaching as I hadn't heard it before and I didn't want to spread any false doctrine. I believed the Lord to give me a confirmation of the truth of this. I went with my spiritual parents to hear a guest speaker, Evangelist Dave Roberson, who was speaking in Templeton, California. When I got there, he said he felt led to speak on something different than what he had planned and spoke on the extent of the expression of God's love for us. He said God had shown him a vision of Jesus suffering in torment in the lowest pit of Hell, and gave these Biblical references from Psalm 88 for it:

Psalm 88:6-18 KJV Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit, in darkness, in the deeps. ⁷ Thy wrath lieth hard upon me, and thou hast afflicted *me* with all thy waves. Selah. ⁸ Thou hast put away

mine acquaintance far from me; thou hast made me an abomination unto them: *I am* shut up, and I cannot come forth. ⁹ Mine eye mourneth by reason of affliction: LORD, I have called daily upon thee, I have stretched out my hands unto thee. ¹⁰ Wilt thou shew wonders to the dead? shall the dead arise *and* praise thee? Selah. ¹¹ Shall thy lovingkindness be declared in the grave? *or* thy faithfulness in destruction? ¹² Shall thy wonders be known in the dark? and thy righteousness in the land of forgetfulness? ¹³ But unto thee have I cried, O LORD; and in the morning shall my prayer prevent thee. ¹⁴ LORD, why castest thou off my soul? *why* hidest thou thy face from me? ¹⁵ *I am* afflicted and ready to die from *my* youth up: *while* I suffer thy terrors I am distracted. ¹⁶ Thy fierce wrath goeth over me; thy terrors have cut me off. ¹⁷ They came round about me daily like water; they compassed me about together. ¹⁸ Lover and friend hast thou put far from me, *and* mine acquaintance into darkness.

These would be the *pains of death* spoken about in Acts 2:24.

Acts 2:24-27 KJV Whom God hath raised up, having loosed **the pains of death**: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it. ²⁵ For David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved: ²⁶ Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope: ²⁷ Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

The word *torment* in the margin of Isaiah 53:5 (i.e., the alternate reading, “he was tormented for our transgressions”) may be what Jesus was referring to in this parable:

Matthew 18:34-35 And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him. ³⁵ So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not everyone his brother their trespasses.

Recalling Psalm 16:8, Saint Peter applied it to Jesus, saying, “Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption”. The NASB translation says, “undergo decay”. (Acts 2:27). In his first letter to *born again* Christians scattered throughout the Roman Empire, he states when Jesus died and His spirit left His body, He descended into “*the lower*

parts of the earth” (Ephesians 4:9), and preached a *born again* message to lost sinners in prison there, being incarcerated by Satan:

1 Peter 3:18-20 For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: ¹⁹By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; ²⁰ Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.

1 Peter 4:6 For for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.

2 Peter 2:4 For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast *them* down to hell, and delivered *them* into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment.

Isaiah 14:12,17 says that Lucifer “opened not the house of his prisoners.” You see, God in His love and mercy even gave dead sinners before Jesus’ death an opportunity to be saved or *born again*. These were those who, beating on the door of Noah’s Ark to get in after God had shut the door, cried for help. Though it was too late for physical survival then, they were now being given the opportunity, through Jesus, to live forever with God. Those who received that message preached by Jesus in Hell were taken out of there along with Jesus after He had been dead three days and three nights. Strangely, the Bible tells us, that after Jesus death, some graves were opened and some people came back to life. He also led a train of captives out of Hell. Evidently, according to what the Lord showed Mary Katherine Baxter in her bestselling book *A Divine Revelation of Hell*, Jesus took *Abraham’s Bosom*, a holding tank within the earth for Heaven bound Old Testament people waiting for Jesus’ yet to come resurrection (Luke 16:22), and transferred it to Heaven, and that vacated area was taken over by Hell which the Bible says “enlarged itself” (Isaiah 5:14)

Matthew 27:50 Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. ⁵¹ And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; ⁵² And the graves were opened; and many bodies of

the saints which slept arose, ⁵³ And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.

Ephesians 4:8-10 KJV Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.” [Psalm 68:18]

⁹ Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? ¹⁰ He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.

Maybe Luke 4:18 applies here where Jesus says the Spirit of the Lord is upon Him, having anointed him “to proclaim release to captives”.

We need to realize that Jesus didn't go to Hell just to preach to others who were lost. It wouldn't take 72 hours (three days and three nights) to do that. He had been made sin for us (2 Corinthians 5:21; John 3:14; Numbers 21:9; Galatians 3:13).

Numbers 21:7-9 Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD, and against thee; pray unto the LORD, that he take away the serpents from us. And Moses prayed for the people. ⁸ And the LORD said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live. ⁹ And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived.

Galatians 3:13-14 KJV Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed *is* every one that hangeth on a tree: ¹⁴ That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

All the sins we ever committed were transferred to Jesus account and He was suffering “the pains of death” (Acts 2:24) in Hell as He paid or settled mankind's account. Hebrews 2:9 tells us Jesus tasted death for every man. We know this by a most unusual Bible reference to this event of Jesus being resurrected, raised from the dead, or brought back to life by His heavenly Father (Acts 13:33), Himself (John 2:19,20), and the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:11). Acts 13:33 reads [the Heavenly Father speaking] “Thou art my Son, this day [NASB reads ‘today’] have I begotten thee.” Jesus previously

existed with God in a form the Bible calls “the Word” (John 1:1). He became the Son of God when He became human through the Virgin Mary being impregnated by the Holy Spirit. Jesus asked his disciples who they thought He was. Peter gave the correct answer when he said, “Thou art the Christ [Anointed One] the Son of the living God” (Matthew 16:16). We see that Jesus was the Son of God, but on the day of His resurrection, His Heavenly Father says He was made to be God’s Son, “Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.” (Psalm 2:7; Acts 13:33; Hebrews 1:5). The Bible doesn’t contradict itself, so we conclude that on the day of His resurrection, Jesus was spiritually reborn a second time or *born again*. As I already mentioned, Saint Paul describes this Jesus as “the beginning, the firstborn from the dead” (Colossians 1:18; and, “the firstborn of all creation” (Colossians 1:15). If Jesus needed to be *born again*, then He, like the rest of humanity, must have been spiritually dead (separated from God) during His stay in Hell—dead because He had been made sin on our behalf and had taken upon Himself the sins of all mankind—separated because God will not fellowship with sin—suffering spiritual punishment because God, being just, must punish sin as it is written in Romans 6:23a “The wages of sin is death”, and “The soul that sinneth, it shall die” (Ezekiel 18:20). Psalm 22, a Psalm ordinarily accepted as Messianic or referring to the coming Messiah shows this spiritual separation of Jesus from His Father during the time the wrath of God against sin was being poured out on His Only Son.

Psalm 22:1 KJV To the chief Musician upon Aijeleth Shahar, A Psalm of David. “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? *why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring?* ² O my God, I cry in the daytime, but thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent. ³ But thou *art* holy, *O thou* that inhabitest the praises of Israel.

Psalm 22:6-8 KJV But I *am* a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people. ⁷ All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, *saying*, ⁸ He trusted on the LORD *that* he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him.

Psalm 22:11-21a KJV Be not far from me; for trouble *is* near; for *there is* none to help. ¹² Many bulls have compassed me: strong *bulls* of Bashan have beset me round. ¹³ They gaped upon me *with* their

mouths, *as* a ravening and a roaring lion. ¹⁴ I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels. ¹⁵ My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death. ¹⁶ For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have enclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet. ¹⁷ I may tell all my bones: they look *and* stare upon me. ¹⁸ They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture. ⁹ But be not thou far from me, O LORD: O my strength, haste thee to help me. ²⁰ Deliver my soul from the sword; my darling from the power of the dog. ^{21a} Save me from the lion's mouth:

1 Peter 5:8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the Devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.

I think Ephesians 2:1 and Colossians 2:13-15 may fit in here:

Ephesians 2:1 KJV “And you *hath he quickened*, who were dead in trespasses and sins.”

Colossians 2:13-15 KJV And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses. ¹⁴ Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; ¹⁵ And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.

Thus, Jesus suffered the Hell we each deserved for our sins and now we don't have to go to Hell—nobody has to go—they may chose to go there, but they are doing so with their sins having been paid for about 2000 years ago. You have to receive what has been paid for by accepting Jesus as your personal Lord and Savior. Someone once said, “God gives us the freedom to choose; but He doesn't give us the freedom to choose the consequences of our choices.”

2 Corinthians 5:17-21 Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. ¹⁸ And all things *are* of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; ¹⁹ To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. ²⁰ Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech *you* by us:

we pray *you* in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.²¹ For he hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

This belief is further established by the fact that Saint Peter, in his writings, looks back on the cross (crucifixion of Jesus) and writes:

1 Peter 2:24-25 KJV “Who his own self bare [past tense] our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins [separated from a sin dominated life], might live unto righteousness [do what is right in God’s sight—do what He says is best for us, by His indwelling ability and presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives]. By whose stripes ye *were healed*. For ye *were* as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.” (1 Peter 2:24-25).

“Were healed” is past tense. Earlier we read in Isaiah “with his stripes we *are* healed.” (Isaiah 53:5). Peter used *were* to show our sins which alienated us from God and brought us under Satan’s bondage or “domain of darkness” (Colossians 1:13) were dealt with 2000 years ago in Jesus Christ, who in His death, totally identified with fallen man.

We can see that all of mankind’s varied troubles (sickness, disease, premature death, poverty, etc) stem from our disobedience to God’s commands. This opens the door for Satan to attack, afflict, and torment us with these various troubles. In the Old Testament of the Bible all these troubles are summed up in one phrase “the curse of the law”. In Galatians 3:13, the Apostle Paul states that Jesus, in His crucifixion, took upon Himself this *curse of the broken Law*, setting us free from its harm so that we can now live under God’s blessings.

Galatians 3:13-14 Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed *is* every one that hangeth on a tree: ¹⁴ That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

Proverbs 10:22 KJV The blessing of the LORD, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it.

In that deplorable condition, suffering in Hell, God considered our account with Satan legally paid in full and, by the power of the Holy Spirit, yanked Jesus up out of there along with those who believed

His *born again* message He preached there (Ephesians 4:8-9; I Peter 4:18-22)

I am well aware as I stated earlier, that the idea of Jesus suffering in Hell is completely foreign to the teachings of most ministers today, and probably even considered a heresy by some, which is why I have been reluctant to mention it in the public sermons I have done. I was wary, that if I were to preach this in most churches, I would be branded a promulgator of false doctrine, booted out, and never invited back. As I told you, I prayed that God would confirm the truth of this usual view of the *born again* experience, as it was new and strange to me, also. When the minister shared his vision of how he had seen Jesus suffering in the lowest pit of Hell being tormented by worms, it was within two weeks after I had prayed. The gist of the minister's message is if Jesus could go through that on our behalf, out of love for us, then He can relate to anything we are going through. At the meeting I attended, traveling about 100 miles to get there, Roberson began, in detail, to expound upon the very points that I had prayed about. He told how he had himself questioned Jesus' going to Hell until God showed him the various scriptures I've already quoted, along with Psalm 88, and the vision of Jesus being tormented by worms.

Mark 9:44-46 KJV Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. ⁴⁵ And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched:

⁴⁶ Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

Mark 9:48 KJV Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

I quoted Psalm 88 earlier:

"I am counted with them that go down into the pit: I am as a man that hath no strength: ...Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit, in darkness, in the deeps. Thy wrath lieth hard upon me, and thou has afflicted me with all thy waves. Selah. I am shut up, and I cannot come forth. Mine eye mourneth by reason of affliction: ...Lord, why casteth thou off my soul? Why hideth thou thy face from me?"

The astonishing spiritual agony of this cursed separation from God was depicted by the Prophet Isaiah:

Isaiah 52:14 TLB See, my Servant shall prosper; he shall be highly exalted. Yet many shall be amazed when they see him—yes, even

far-off foreign nations and their kings; they shall stand dumbfounded, speechless in his presence. For they shall see and understand what they had not been told before. They shall see my Servant beaten and bloodied, so disfigured one would scarcely know it was a person standing there. So shall he cleanse many nations.

This is why Jesus sweat, as it were, *great drops of blood* [there is actually a medical term for this phenomenon] when he prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Luke 22:41-44 AMP And He withdrew from them about a stone's throw and knelt down and prayed,⁴² Saying, "Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but [*always*] Yours be done."⁴³ And there appeared to Him an angel from heaven, strengthening Him in spirit.⁴⁴ And being in an agony [*of mind*], He prayed [*all the*] more earnestly and intently, and His sweat became like great clots of blood dropping down upon the ground.

In His human nature, Jesus did not want to go through this. The Living Bible reads, "He shrank back in terror at the thought of being separated from the Father's bright presence". He had learned from the Scriptures what Hell is like, had taught on the subject, and now he had to yield to God the Father's will that He [Jesus] would be separated from God's wonderful presence for the first time in his life (existence) to be tormented in a *burning Hell*. An interesting verse that fits in here is Peter's statement:

Acts 2:24 NLT But God released Him from the horrors of death and raised Him back to life, for death could not keep Him in its grip.

If death is cessation of existence, or *soul sleep* as some Christian Cults teach, how was Jesus' being dead for three days and nights in a tomb, an experience of *horrors*? What would motivate a person to voluntarily go through that, let alone being cut off from constant communion with God for a period in his life? Answer—love for you and me.

John 15:13 AMP No one has greater love [*no one has shown stronger affection*] than to lay down (give up) his own life for his friends.

Jesus went beyond this to lay down His life for His *enemies*!

Romans 5:8-11 AMP But God shows and clearly proves His [*own*] love for us by the fact that while we were still sinners, Christ (the Messiah, the Anointed One) died for us. ⁹ Therefore, since we are now justified (acquitted, made righteous, and brought into right relationship with God) by Christ's blood, how much more [*certain is it that*] we shall be saved by Him from the indignation and wrath of God.¹⁰ For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, it is much more [*certain*], now that we are reconciled, that we shall be saved (daily delivered from sin's dominion) through His [*resurrection*] life. ¹¹ Not only so, but we also rejoice and exultingly glory in God [*in His love and perfection*] through our Lord Jesus Christ, through Whom we have now received and enjoy [*our*] reconciliation. [*Jer. 9:24.*]

Who would want to go through that! Nevertheless, even in this, Jesus, in His love for God and fallen men and women, submitted totally to His Father's will and master plan when He exclaimed. "Not my will, but Thine be done." (Luke 22:42). Thank God, when we have a question about a difficult subject, we can go to Him and get a clear, satisfying answer.

Jeremiah 33:3 NLT Ask Me and I will tell you remarkable secrets you do not know about things to come.

Being raised from spiritual death, or, spiritually *reborn*, Jesus Christ became the first man to be *born again*. The Bible says what God desires here is that Jesus' release from sin and Satan might be a pattern for us—that Jesus might be "the firstborn among many brethren" (Romans 8:19). The Word of God also states when Jesus was raised up out of Hell, He took from Satan the keys—the governing authority over—spiritual death, Hell, and the realm of the dead.

Revelations 1:18 NLT I am the living One. I died, but look—I am alive forever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and the grave.

You can read more about this by going on the internet and reading the book on the vision of Marietta Davis. On a computer, type this information into the browser's address bar, then press the *Enter* key:

http://www.archive.org/stream/scenesbeyondgrav00davi/scenesbeyondgrav00davi_djvu.txt

The Lord enabled Ms. Davis to be a personal witness to every stage of Jesus arrest, trial, death, and resurrection.

What Jesus is saying in this verse is if we look to Jesus Christ and acknowledge Him as our Lord, Master, and Savior, rather than Satan, God will yank spiritual death and Satan's nature out of us just like He delivered Jesus out of Hell. Rev. Kenneth Copeland stated that a *born again* man [i.e., Jesus Christ], defeated Satan. When we are *born again*, we too can walk in freedom from the Devil's dominion, and demonic powers. The moment we make the free will confession with our mouth that Jesus Christ is now our newly elected Lord, and that Satan is no longer our master, God brings all the power of Heaven on the scene to deliver us and give us a new divine spiritual nature—God coming to dwell in us by His omnipresent (present everywhere) Holy Spirit.

Let's look at three key verses here. First, **Romans 10:13 KJV** which is a quote of Joel 2:32, "And it shall come to pass that *whosoever* shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be delivered [saved]."

Second, showing our transfer of ownership from Satan to God, Paul's letter to the Colossians states:

Colossians 1:13 NLT For He has rescued us from the kingdom of darkness and transferred us into the Kingdom of His dear Son.

A connecting verse here is:

John 1:12-13 NLT But to all who believed Him and accepted Him, He gave the right to become children of God. ¹³ They are reborn—not with a physical birth resulting from human passion or plan, but a birth that comes from God.

A fellow minister and I were ministering to a homeless man in the local park where we were holding meetings. He needed some Vaseline for his cracked lips, so I went to the 7-11 convenience store and bought him some. We wanted him to say the prayer to invite Jesus into his heart, but he couldn't say the name Jesus in the prayer, so we prayed and rebuked the Devil or demons hindering him, and he was then able to say it!

Third, the following two verses show when we confess Jesus to be our personal Lord and Savior we become a child of God, renewed and shaped into the image and likeness of Jesus Christ.

Romans 8:29 NLT For God knew His people in advance, and He chose them to become like His Son, so that His Son would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.

Galatians 3:26 KJV For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

Renewed in His likeness, God takes spiritual death and Satan's nature out of us, and gives us a divine nature, making us a new kind of creature.

2 Colossians 5:17 AMP Therefore if any person is [*ingrafted*] in Christ (the Messiah) he is a new creation (a new creature altogether); the old [*previous moral and spiritual condition*] has passed away. Behold, the fresh and new has come!

The original Greek word used here is *metamorphosis*, the dramatic change the caterpillar makes when he becomes a beautiful butterfly.

This explanation of the *born again* experience shows why the lives of the most unlikely people—people like Charles Tex Watson, a former member of the Charles Manson cult—are so drastically changed when they acknowledge Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior and are *born again*. Although such people were evil and undoubtedly on the road to Hell, we must realize that anyone who hasn't been *born again* is lost, not because of what he or she does, but because he or she is spiritually dead inside (separated from God), needing life from the Source of all life, Jesus Christ:

Revelations 21:6 And he said unto me, "It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely."

John 14:6 Jesus saith unto him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."

Revelations 2:10b Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

2 Timothy 1:10 But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel:

Colossians 3:4 When Christ, *who is* our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

Hebrews 5:9 And, [*His completed experience*] making Him perfectly [*equipped*], He became the Author and Source of eternal salvation to all those who give heed and obey Him, [*Isa. 45:17.*]

John 1:3 All things were made and came into existence through Him; and without Him was not even one thing made that has come into being.

John 1:4 In Him was Life, and the Life was the Light of men.

In Mark 7:20-23 Amplified Translation, Jesus tells us that a man is evil or lost because of heart trouble – Satan's nature in his human spirit or inner man.

Mark 7:20-23 AMP And He said, 'What comes out of a man is what makes a man unclean and renders [*him*] unhallowed. ²¹ For from within, [*that is*] out of the hearts of men, come base and wicked thoughts, sexual immorality, stealing, murder, adultery, ²²Coveting (a greedy desire to have more wealth), dangerous and destructive wickedness, deceit; unrestrained (indecent) conduct; an evil eye (envy), slander (evil speaking, malicious misrepresentation, abusiveness), pride (the sin of an uplifted heart against God and man), foolishness (folly, lack of sense, recklessness, thoughtlessness). ²³ All these evil [*purposes and desires*] come from within, and they make the man unclean and render him unhallowed."

Ephesians 2:1-3 NLT Once you were dead because of your disobedience and your many sins. You used to live in sin, just like the rest of the world, obeying the devil—the commander of the powers in the unseen world. He is the spirit at work in the hearts of those who refuse to obey God. All of us used to live that way, following the passionate desires and inclinations of our sinful nature. By our very nature we were subject to God's anger, just like everyone else.

1 John 3:8 NLT But when people keep on sinning, it shows that they belong to the devil, who has been sinning since the beginning. But the Son of God came to destroy the works of the devil.

We see then, people don't go to Hell or miss Heaven just because they are sinners by practice, but because they are sinners by nature—in their hearts or spirits.

1 John 3:8 AMP [*But*] he who commits sin [*who practices evildoing*] is of the devil [*takes his character from the evil one*], for the devil has sinned (violated the divine law) from the beginning.

The reason the Son of God was made manifest (visible) was to undo (destroy, loosen, and dissolve) the works the devil [*has done*].

These people have spiritual death in their hearts. They need spiritual life, eternal life (God's life and nature) in their human spirits or innermost beings. However many good or bad deeds they do, their nature remains the same – dead in spiritual darkness.

Ephesians 5:8 NLT For once you were full of darkness, but now you have light from the Lord. So live as people of light!

You can dress a dead man in his Sunday best clothes and try to put a smile on his face, but he's still dead! The Bible says that death started with Adam's first sin and spread to each of us because we've all sinned.

Romans 5:12-14 NLT When Adam sinned, sin entered the world. Adam's sin brought death, so death spread to everyone, for everyone sinned. 13 Yes, people sinned even before the law was given. But it was not counted as sin because there was not yet any law to break. 14 Still, everyone died—from the time of Adam to the time of Moses—even those who did not disobey an explicit commandment of God, as Adam did. Now Adam is a symbol, a representation of Christ, who was yet to come.

Man then, needs not a change of action, but a change of heart. Doing good deeds in and of itself cannot put one on the road to Heaven. Deciding to *turn over a new leaf* each New Year's Day will never do, even if we follow through on such resolutions. Good works are meaningful to God *after* one is *born again* and on the road to Heaven, but not before. Once on Heaven's road they help determine our rate of Christian growth and maturity, and our earthly and eternal rewards, and they keep the door closed to the Devil. This is why, as I mentioned earlier, Jesus says:

Matthew 18:3 AMP I say to you, unless you repent (change, turn about) and become like little children [*trusting, lowly, loving, forgiving*], you can never enter the kingdom of heaven [*at all*].

This is where Eastern Religions and Philosophies fall short. They attempt, by physical disciplines and meditation to mentally change the heart—a job that only the Spirit of God can do. “That which is born *of the Spirit* is spirit” (John 3:6b).

John 6:63a NLT (Jesus speaking) The Spirit alone gives eternal life. Human effort accomplishes nothing.

Here are some related verses showing man is, by nature, spiritually dead (separated from God), and Satan bound in his spirit or heart. The extent of bondage varies with the individual, depending on the degree to which he knowingly or unknowingly yields to Satan's desires (sinning), and the type of sins he commits.

Ephesians 4:27 Neither give place to the devil.

1 Peter 5:8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.

2 Timothy 2:26 And *that* they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.

Ephesians 2:1-3 KJV And you *hath he quickened*, who were dead in trespasses and sins; ² Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: ³ Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and **were by nature the children of wrath**, even as others.

The first part of Ephesians 2:1 states that Jesus had *quickened* them, or, made them alive. Paul's letter to the Romans states:

Romans 5:10 NLT For since our friendship with God was restored by the death of His Son while we were still His enemies, **we will certainly be saved through the life of His Son.**

In John 5:24, Jesus describes this *born again* experience, this spiritual *quickening* (making alive), or receiving of eternal life as a passing *from death unto life* that takes place the moment we hear the *born again* message and appropriate it (apply it) to our lives. God is the Source of all life. The Apostle Peter called Jesus "the Author of life" (Acts 3:15). Saint John tells us (John 5:26) He (God) gave this life to His Son Jesus so Jesus can now give this *divine life* to those of us who will receive it through the *born again* experience. This is why Jesus calls Himself, "the Way, the Truth, and the Life" in John 14:6. Jesus Christ also says in this verse that He is His Father's only appointed connection between us and God. "No man cometh unto the Father but by me". Saint Peter, in the Book of Acts, confirms this.

Acts 4:12 NLT There is salvation in no one else! God has given no other name under heaven by which we must be saved.

Jesus Christ is the only way or channel God has provided for us to receive the *divine life and nature of God* we so desperately need. Eastern religions may claim to be one of the many ways to God, but such are not God's chosen way. Therefore they are not acceptable to God and cannot bring us this *divine life* because they do not deal with the problem of spiritual death and man's need for a change of nature (heart), rather than just a change of outward actions, exercise, or diet. If there had been another less costly way God could have reconciled or restored the world to right standing with Himself other than by His sacrificing the most precious thing He had, His Only Son, don't you think He would have utilized it? Advocating that Jesus is but one of many *savior christs* or there are many roads to God is like a slap in God's face, an implication that He didn't make the best choice or know what He was doing. Jesus, Himself, stated in John 10:9-10, He is the *door* to salvation or spiritual life—the *born again* experience, the rebirth of the human spirit (entry into God's sheepfold). In this same passage (John 10:1) He tells us the person who tries to "*climb up some other way is a thief and a robber*".

John 10:9 I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved.

Jesus here proclaims Himself as God's only passage, gate, or door of escape from spiritual death, Satan's nature and bondage, as well as their inevitable result, Hell for eternity. In John 11:25-26, Jesus also presents Himself as *our only door* to receiving this God given divine life (John 5:26), made available to us on a believing, receiving basis.

John 11:25-26 NLT Jesus told her [Martha], "I am the resurrection and the life. Anyone who believes in Me will live, even after dying. ²⁶ Everyone who lives in Me and believes in Me will never ever die."

John 11:25-26 AMP Jesus said to her, "I am [*Myself*] the Resurrection and the Life. Whoever believes in (adheres to, trusts in, and relies on) Me, although he may die, yet he shall live; ²⁶ And whoever continues to live and believes in (has faith in, cleaves to, and relies on) Me shall never [*actually*] die at all. Do you believe this?"

I might add here, in addition to giving us a new spiritual nature, God has given us the promise when Jesus comes to earth again, to set up His physical Kingdom, our physical bodies will be changed

and perfected (made immortal) to live forever, just like the body Jesus had when He was resurrected or raised from the dead. The immortal physical body Jesus received when He was raised from the dead is a *prototype* (Greek word *protokos*) of the bodies His followers will also be given. This will be the final putting away of physical death.

Romans 8:29 NLT For God knew His people in advance, and He chose them to become like His Son, so that His Son would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.

Colossians 1:18 NLT Christ is also the head of the church, which is His body. He is the beginning, supreme over all who rise from the dead. So He is first in everything.

1 Corinthians 15:51-54 AMP Take notice! I tell you a mystery (a secret truth, an event decreed by the hidden purpose or counsel of God). We shall not all fall asleep [*in death*], but we shall all be changed (transformed)⁵² In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the [*sound of the*] last trumpet call. For a trumpet will sound, and the dead [*in Christ*] will be raised imperishable (free and immune from decay), and we shall be changed (transformed).⁵³ For this perishable [*part of us*] must put on the imperishable [*nature*], and this mortal [*part of us, this nature that is capable of dying*] must put on immortality (freedom from death).⁵⁴ And when this perishable puts on the imperishable and this that was capable of dying puts on freedom from death, then shall be fulfilled the Scripture that says, Death is swallowed up (utterly vanquished forever) in and unto victory. [*Isaiah 25:8.*]

In Revelation 2:7, Jesus tells us resurrected, *born again* Christians, having God's divine life and nature, will regain the immortality Adam and Eve lost through sin and spiritual death. These *believers in Jesus* will once again be able to eat the fruit of the *Tree of Life* in the middle of the *Paradise of God*.

Revelations 2:7 NLT Anyone with ears to hear must listen to the Spirit and understand what He is saying to the churches. To everyone who is victorious I will give fruit from the tree of life in the paradise of God.

Friends, we've learned that mankind was separated from God by sin—he died spiritually. In other words, man fell from the spiritual image and likeness of God in which he was created (Genesis 1:26-

27). In his fallen state, he continued to disobey God and progressively took on Satan's nature or likeness, as he chose to obey Satan rather than God. Man had lost God and God (with a few exceptions like Enoch and Elijah) had lost man as a source of mutual fellowship and communion like He had had with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, before the fall (Genesis 3:8). The result is there's a God shaped void in the heart of every man, woman, boy, or girl who hasn't been *born again*—a void or emptiness only God can fill. The French physicist San Pasqual said, "There is a God shaped void in every person that only Jesus Christ can fill." People's attempts to fill this void lead them down the road of drugs, sex, booze, education, getting rich, religion, etc. Putting it another way, the former 'party person', Saint Augustine, wrote, "Thou hast made us for thyself, O Lord, and the heart of man is ever restless, until it finds its rest in Thee." This is why people, like the movie stars in the *Ladies Home Journal* article, who have tried everything but being *born again*, have come to the end of the road—they've run out of things to try and, have either committed suicide; or come full circle and returned to the God of their childhood by asking Jesus Christ into their hearts. Time magazine went so far as to write an article stating man's need for God might be a part of his genetic makeup.

We learned, since his fall by sin or disobedience to God, man by following the Devil's suggestions rather than God's commands, has been suffering along with all God's creation (Romans 8:22) under the "god of this world" (2 Corinthians 4:4), Satan, who will not open the "house of his prisoners" (Isaiah 14:17). Outside of Jesus Christ, serving Satan is a one-way, no return street to Hell for all eternity. Fallen man, then needs spiritual life (God's life and nature), His righteousness—right standing with God, and freedom from sin's present power and eternal punishment. Thus, a fourth thing fallen man needs is freedom from Satan's yoke of misery and bondage. God personally solved this crisis by becoming a man like us who "was in all ways tempted as we are" so He totally identified with us, except for the fact, He never sinned (Hebrews 2:17-18; 4:15).

You've probably heard the name *Immanuel* used in reference to Jesus? It means "God with us". Jesus died in our place as God's perfect sacrifice for mankind's sins, restoring perfect harmony and peace between God and men by taking upon Himself all that

relates to our sin (disobedience), namely our lack of peace, poverty, sickness, anguish of soul, loneliness, etc. In Jesus Christ (the Savior—the Anointed One of God) God potentially solved all four of the aforementioned needs or problems of mankind—spiritual death, unrighteousness, sinfulness in conduct and nature, and the lordship of Satan. In other words, Jesus broke the sin barrier (between God and man) 2000 years ago according to 2 Corinthians 5:19 KJV which reads, “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.” The words “not imputing” mean God no longer charges or holds our sins against us. Isaiah 53:11 says, “He [God] shall see the travail [agony] of his [Jesus’] soul, and shall be satisfied.” God’s justice in dealing with and punishing our sins was fully satisfied in the sacrifice [death] of His Son Jesus for us.

To put it yet another way, the main issue today between the person who isn’t *born again* and God, is not every single sin or act of disobedience they (you and I) ever committed. Rather, it is only one sin, rejecting the sin cure, Jesus Christ. In Church, you don’t have to fear going down to the altar and telling everyone every embarrassing thing you ever remember doing wrong. Just be sorry for your and accept Jesus’ payment (His shed blood) as your sin cure.

What is this *one* sin that bars man from Heaven and fellowship with God? In John 16:8,9 Jesus says when He dies He will send the Spirit of God to earth to carry on His work, and the Holy Spirit will convince, convict, or reprove the world of sin “*because they believe not on me [on Jesus Christ]*”. In other words, God’s not mad at you, but loves you. John 3:17-18 says almost the same thing:

John 3:17-18 God sent His Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through Him. ¹⁸ There is no judgment against anyone who believes in Him. But anyone who does not believe in Him has already been judged for not believing in God’s one and only Son.

Revelations 21:8 KJV But the fearful, and **unbelieving**, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

These verses are telling us the real issue between God and us is a failure on our part to believe on Jesus Christ—to recognize and accept Jesus as God’s only sin solution, remedy, or cure. Jehovah Rapha, the Great Physician, has a cure for all your ills. Won’t you take it? Have you taken it? How sad that people are going to Hell with their sins paid for. It’s kind of like the world’s food and medicine, and clean water shortage, especially in Africa where one third of the population doesn’t get enough to eat. Food is being produced elsewhere, but needy people can’t reach it. In the case of eternal life or salvation, Jesus states:

Revelations 22:17 KJV And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

The letter to the Romans, citing Deuteronomy 30:14, shows everyone is one heartfelt confession away from salvation.

Romans 10:8-9 AMP But what does it say? The Word (God’s message in Christ) is near you, on your lips and in your heart; that is, the Word (the message, the basis and object) of faith which we preach. [Deut. 30:14.] ⁹ Because if you acknowledge and confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and in your heart believe (adhere to, trust in, and rely on the truth) that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

We must understand there are two masters and two spiritual kingdoms—the Kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the kingdom of “the god of this world” (2 Corinthians 4:4), Satan. Saint John, in I John 3:10, uses the term “the children of God...and the children of the Devil.” Of Jesus Kingdom the prophet Isaiah tells us, “of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end.” (Isaiah 9:6-7). On the other hand, Satan’s (Devil’s) kingdom is destined for complete destruction when the Devil is cast into the Lake of Fire, along with death and Hell, for all eternity:

Revelations 20:10-15 And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet *are*, and shall be tormented day and night forever and ever. ¹¹ And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. ¹² And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened,

which is *the book of life*: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. ¹³ And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. ¹⁴ And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. ¹⁵ And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

As we've seen, the Bible tells us, because of sin every man born on earth, by nature is in Satan's kingdom already. Jesus so identified with our sin and Satan's bondage, that when God told Satan, "That's enough, hold it right there!" and raised Jesus out of Satan's kingdom, God made, in Jesus, a way out for us, also. The Bible says God raised Jesus to the right hand of the throne of God, a position of authority far above all principalities, powers, might and dominion (I Peter 3:22) where He intercedes between God and men (Hebrews 7:25). The Apostle Paul says we are, metaphorically speaking, seated with Jesus, in this position of authority (Ephesians 1:16–2:7).

Now fallen man is no longer hopelessly doomed to spend eternity in Hell. Hell was created for the Devil and fallen angels, not for us (Matthew 25:41). Nevertheless, people in Satan's kingdom will go there when they physically die. As mentioned earlier, in the Book by Baker, *Visions Beyond the Veil*, boys in an orphan home in China saw visions of what happens to unsaved people when they physically die. The reason these people go to Hell, is when they die, demon spirits, Satan's servants, drag them forcibly in shackles and chains, down to Hell. I met a man named William who told me he was lying on a gurney in the hospital after a drug overdose, waiting and hoping to die when he saw demons coming toward him. "Oh, no! I'm not going with you!" He had said. Now he is a *born again* Christian with Jesus living in his heart. It is possible when Jesus died, because He had been made sin and forsaken by God, He too was also dragged down to Hell by the demons, even though he cried out in a loud voice from the cross, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." (Luke 23:46 KJV)

Man is no longer hopelessly doomed though, because after Jesus defeated Satan in his (Satan's) own domain (Hebrews 2:14), God re-established man's free will in the matter. Now people go to Hell only because they choose to, not because God sends them there.

We can choose not to go there by choosing not to remain any longer in Satan's kingdom, under Satan's cruel bondage and dominion. We do this by acknowledging Jesus Christ to be the Lord of our lives, and renouncing Satan's lordship. When we do this, all the power of God that delivered Jesus from Hell comes on the scene and delivers us also, transferring us to Jesus' Kingdom and giving us just as much power (authority) over the Devil, as Jesus has. Then, when we die as *born again* Christians (the same orphan boys also saw this), the angels of God come and escort us to Heaven. You choose Heaven or Hell, to be a winner or loser, depending on which spiritual kingdom you choose to be in. If you fail to choose or keep putting off the decision to enter Jesus' Kingdom of Heaven—the one Nicodemus was looking and hoping for, you remain in Satan's kingdom and choose Hell by default—by failing to make a decision **not** to go there.

John 3:18 NLT There is no judgment against anyone who believes in Him. But anyone who does not believe in Him has already been judged for not believing in God's one and only Son.

Jesus regained the dominion over the earth that Adam lost to Satan, and it will not be lost a second time because Jesus, the Last Adam (I Corinthians 15:45) is holding it. Jesus invites you to share this dominion with Him—to “reign in life as kings” (Romans 5:17 Amplified Translation), and to be “more than conquerors” through Him (Romans 8:37) through God's indwelling presence and power in the life of a believer in Jesus. Galatians 6:15 NLT states, “What counts is whether we have been transformed into a new-creation.”

Now, like Adam, God has given us the ability to choose our eternal destiny—to choose once again who will be the lord of our lives—Jesus Christ or Satan. Each of us individually must face up or own up to the ugly fact, if we haven't been *born again*—if we haven't acknowledged Jesus Christ as our personal Lord and Savior, then we are right now under Satan's dominion as “the god of this world” who blinds the minds of unbelievers from seeing the good news of freedom through faith in Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 4:4). Let us again examine Ephesians 2:1-6 NLT where the Apostle Paul addresses *born again* Christians, looking back to that time in their lives before they had a *born again* experience—before they had individually accepted, acknowledged, or confessed Jesus as Lord of their lives.

Ephesians 2:1-6 NLT Once you were dead because of your disobedience and your many sins. ² You used to live in sin, just like the rest of the world, obeying the devil—the commander of the powers in the unseen world. He is the spirit at work in the hearts of those who refuse to obey God. ³ All of us used to live that way, following the passionate desires and inclinations of our sinful nature. By our very nature we were subject to God's anger, just like everyone else. ⁴ But God is so rich in mercy, and He loved us so much, ⁵that even though we were dead because of our sins, He gave us life when He raised Christ from the dead. (It is only by God's grace that you have been saved!) ⁶ For He raised us from the dead along with Christ and seated us with Him in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ Jesus.

Thank God, in His love and mercy, He has provided for us a way of escape through His Son Jesus Christ who said, "I am the way" (John 14:6a). I included verse 6 above to show when we were spiritually dead in sins, God made us alive—He gave us spiritual life just like He did for Jesus when He was in Hell. In the *born again* experience, God raises us up out of a sin serving, sin dominated existence, to a spiritual position of victory with Christ, over Satan and sin.

Romans 6:20-23 NLT When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the obligation to do right. ²¹ And what was the result? You are now ashamed of the things you used to do, things that end in eternal doom. ²² But now you are free from the power of sin and have become slaves of God. Now you do those things that lead to holiness and result in eternal life. ²³ For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord.

God meets us at our level—at the point of our need when we're in a fix and can't get out by ourselves; and, God saves us there, the moment we turn our lives over to Him. Ephesians 2:8-9 tells us, outside of Jesus Christ, no amount of effort or good works on our part can get us out—out of our bondage to sin and Satan. If you like cartoons, in a fix, Felix the Cat has his *bag of tricks*. Popeye, his can of spinach; but in the real world, outside of Jesus Christ the *Deliverer* (Romans 11:26; Isaiah 59:20-21), fallen man resorts to using recovery programs, like Alcoholics Anonymous which seem to offer only a degree of self control. Realizing this, we call on

Jesus as our Lord; and God, in His mercy, reaches out and lifts us to safety.

Ephesians 2:8-9 AMP For it is by free grace (God's unmerited favor) that you are saved (delivered from judgment and made partakers of Christ's salvation) through [*your*] faith. And this [*salvation*] is not of yourselves [*of your own doing, it came not through your own striving*], but it is the gift of God; ⁹ Not because of works [*not the fulfillment of the Law's demands*], lest any man should boast. [*It is not the result of what anyone can possibly do, so no one can pride himself in it or take glory to himself.*]

God has provided only one Way of escape from the spiritual dilemma of fallen man—Jesus Christ. Man, in his quest for God, has provided many ways (the many religions of the world) by which he hopes to find God. But God, in His search for man, has provided only one way that He will accept and really works. In the Book of Acts, Dr. Luke records this statement from one of Saint Peter's first sermons:

Acts 4:12 AMP And there is salvation in and through no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by and in which we must be saved.

Saint Peter told us "You must be saved!" Jesus tells us, in His meeting with Nicodemus, "Ye must be *born again!*" This is because, "Except a man be *born again...*" he cannot see or enter into God's present and eternal kingdom. Jesus also put it another way, "Except ye be converted...ye shall all likewise perish." (Matthew 18:3). In other words, as we have seen verified by so many Bible writers and references, Jesus Christ is our only hope of Heaven, and He is God's only means of transferring us from Satan's kingdom to God's Kingdom; because, of all men throughout history, only Jesus successfully whipped Satan. The Author of the letter to the Hebrews writes, of Jesus:

Hebrews 2:14-15 AMP Since, therefore, [*these His*] children share in flesh and blood [*in the physical nature of human beings*], He [*Himself*] in a similar manner partook of the same [*nature*], that by [*going through*] death He might bring to naught and make of no effect him who **had** the power of death--that is, the devil.¹⁵ And also that He might deliver and completely set free all those who through

the [*haunting*] fear of death were held in bondage throughout the whole course of their lives.

Only Jesus can bring you safely home to God. Only He can give you, in exchange for your sinfulness, the righteousness you need to be restored to right standing before God; for the Bible says:

Isaiah 64:6 AMP For we have all become like one who is unclean [*ceremonially, like a leper*], and all our righteousness (our best deeds of rightness and justice) is like filthy rags or a polluted garment; we all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away [*far from God's favor, hurrying us toward destruction*]. [*Lev. 13:45, 46.*]

Only Jesus can bring us to a saving knowledge of God. You may know *about* God through your weekly participation in Mass or Church liturgy (i.e., attending church services); but do you know God on a personal basis through Jesus Christ? 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9 tells us “those who do not **know** God...will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord.”

Many will miss Heaven by 18”—the distance between heart and mind. They have an intellectual understanding of God’s Plan of Salvation, but have never made a heartfelt acceptance or out loud confession of it with their mouths, making it their very own (Romans 10). Kenneth E. Hagin told the story of being a guest speaker for a group of men at a weekly Church Bible Study. One man told Hagin he had been coming there for twenty years, and he knew the other men there were saved, but he wasn’t. Rev. Hagin told him he was half-way there. He had done the first half (come to believe the historical facts about Jesus, that He died for our sins and that God raised Him from the dead), but he had never done the other half, the confession of Jesus as one’s own personal Lord and Savior with one’s mouth in a public setting (the two parts of Romans 10:9 -10). He then led the man in confessing aloud, before the group, that Jesus is his Lord and Savior, and the man was saved! He was now *born again*.

Only Jesus can give you the divine spiritual life resulting in a *born again* experience, a rebirth of the human spirit, the real you living in that body of yours, the only experience that makes you a new creation like Adam and Eve before they ever sinned. Jesus Said, “I am...the life.” (John 14:6c) “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me shall never die [never spend an endless eternity

separated from God and His love in a burning Lake of Fire and Brimstone – Hell!]" (John 11:25-26; Revelation 21:8)

In Acts 26:28 the Apostle Paul describes his God given mission as follows [Jesus speaking]:

Acts 26:18 AMP To open their eyes, *and* to turn *them* from darkness to light, and *from* the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.

This is the heart of the Bible message. This is the *born again* experience which has transformed multiplied millions of lives from hopeless wretched sinners to loving saints, doing what no rehabilitation program could ever do. Men get into such deplorable condition because they are searching for something or someone to fill that *God shaped* void San Pasqual talked about, that is in the heart of every man. Jesus perfectly fills that void, bringing us to God and washing away the guilt and hang-ups of our searching past. Saint Paul tells us in his first letter to Timothy (2:5 – 6 Living Bible) “God is on one side and all the people on the other side, and Christ Jesus, Himself man, is between them to bring them together, by giving His life for all mankind.” I Peter 3:18 states, “Christ died for sins once for all...to bring you to God.” The author of the Book of Hebrews writes (9:26b) “But now once in the end of the world hath He [i.e., Jesus Christ] appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.”

Now, let’s get to the conclusion of this whole matter—how it relates to you and me as twenty-first century individuals—and how we can appropriate or apply this to our lives. We know, based on the testimonies of millions in our society today, people like TV’s FBI star, Ephraim Zimbalist Jr., that man’s deepest needs are met only when his broken relationship with God or right standing before God is restored through a spiritual rebirth of the human spirit from spiritual death to spiritual life for time and eternity. Jesus called this second spiritual birth being *born again*. Jesus Christ is the only way God has provided for this restoration or new birth to be accomplished.

We get the term *new birth* from 2 Corinthians 5:17 where the Apostle Paul tells us “if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature [a metamorphosis – caterpillar to butterfly change]; old things are passed away, behold, all things are become new.” This involves our

being separated or severed from the lordship or ruler ship of Satan over us as “the god of this world” – a transfer of ownership from Satan’s spiritual kingdom to the kingdom of God. By “kingdom of God”, I mean the rule and the reign of God in the hearts and lives of men.

The Bible tells us, and millions have testified to the fact, that this *born again* experience occurs or takes place the moment we confess Jesus Christ to be our Lord and Savior (the Master of our lives) according to Romans 10:8–10—the key to the *born again* experience. “This is the word of faith which we preach” [this is the crux, the main theme or objective of a preacher’s mission or duty—to reunite fallen men and women with God for time and eternity]. Now here’s how or when it happens in two parts—**believing** and **confessing**. Verse 9, “That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus [or, Jesus as your Lord], and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.” To *believe* means accepting as true the historic facts concerning Jesus Christ and what He came to do for you – specifically, how he died, was buried, and was raised from death after three days (I Corinthians 15:1–8). Verse 10 of Romans chapter ten reads “For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness [resulting in right standing with God]; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” [or, resulting in salvation].

Salvation is a term synonymous with *born again* and means a divine deliverance or work of God in your life which frees you from your enemies, specifically Satan’s and spiritual death’s hold over you, be it mental illness, sickness, disease, drug addictions, a need for eternal life, etc. The root Greek word translated *saved* here, is transliterated to *sodzo* and means to be made whole in every sense of the word. Look at these examples:

Matthews 24:21-22 For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. ²² And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened.

Luke 18:40-43 KJV And Jesus stood, and commanded him to be brought unto him: and when he was come near, he asked him, ⁴¹ Saying, What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee? And he said, Lord, that I may receive my sight. ⁴² And Jesus said unto him, “Receive thy sight: thy faith hath saved thee.” ⁴³ And immediately he received

his sight, and followed him, glorifying God: and all the people, when they saw *it*, gave praise unto God.

Romans 5:8-10 KJV But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. ⁹ Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. ¹⁰ For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.

Mark 4:37-39 NLT But soon a fierce storm came up. High waves were breaking into the boat, and it began to fill with water. ³⁸ Jesus was sleeping at the back of the boat with His head on a cushion. The disciples woke Him up, shouting, "Teacher, don't You care that we're going to drown?" ³⁹ When Jesus woke up, He rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Silence! Be still!" Suddenly the wind stopped, and there was a great calm.

Verse thirteen of this tenth chapter of Romans goes on to say, "For whosoever [that means anyone--YOU!] shall call upon the name of the Lord [call on Jesus Christ invoking Him as his Lord and Savior] shall be *saved* [i.e., *made whole*]". In the Old Testament of the Bible, where this verse originated in the vision of Joel, the prophet, it reads (Joel 2:32), "shall be delivered."

Friend, the Lord God of the universe is a very present help in trouble (Psalm 46:1). He's here right now to meet your needs if you'll let Him; if you will surrender your whole life and not just your individual problems (not just your bad habits) to Him, acknowledging Jesus Christ to be your Savior and Lord—the Lord of your life. While various community social programs and health clinics want you to pay them to help you control your problems—your drinking, gambling, overeating, drug addiction, anger, smoking, anxiety, fears, etc. God has made us an offer that one in his right mind will not refuse. Others offer you a way of life, but Jesus Christ offers you life itself, in all its fullness (John 10:10). God offers you the perfect (James 1:17) and free (Ephesians 2:8–9) gifts of salvation, eternal life Romans 6:23b), living water (John 4:10, 13 – 14), right standing with God (Romans 5:15–17), the indwelling presence and power of the Comforter, The God the Holy Spirit (John 14:6) to abide with you *forever*; and, a divine supernatural and total permanent deliverance from these problems (not just a miserable lifetime of trying to control your habits). A

guest speaker at a Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship meeting, a former alcoholic, stated "You could give me a bath in alcohol, and it wouldn't phase me!" It has been the Devil that led you into these habits so he could gain complete control over you, to destroy you so you'd spend eternity with him—*misery loves company* you know!

How is it that one is prompted or moved to be *born again*? Why does it happen to some of the most unlikely people? The Bible states the Heavenly Father loves you so much that He draws you into a satisfying relationship with Himself by the conviction of the His Holy Spirit (John 6:44; 16:7–11; Ephesians 2:18). Let's say you're in a most unusual Church meeting. God is moving—supernatural miracles of healing and deliverance are taking place. God gets hold of you on the inside, tugging at your heart or human spirit and you know, as never before, that you need God. The path you've been traveling turned out to be a one-way street leading you straight to Hell; and Jesus (God) is your only hope. Then, as the preacher shows everyone how, you take these verses in the Book of Romans, and you make a prayer out of them (the Prayer of Salvation or *Sinner's Prayer*, as many call it). You say this prayer with your mouth, out loud, and believe it in your heart or spirit, and something wonderful happens—you're *born again*! You experience an inner peace and calm that you've never known before (John 14:27). You don't feel guilty or apprehensive about being in Church because you feel like a million bucks! You feel like a ton of bricks has been lifted from your shoulders—Satan's shackles have dropped off.

Since Jesus Came Into My Heart

Words: Rufus H. McDaniel, 1914.

Music: Charles H. Gabriel, 1914

What a wonderful change in my life
has been wrought,
Since Jesus came into my heart!
I have light in my soul for which long
I had sought,

Since Jesus came into my heart!

Refrain

Since Jesus came into my heart,
Since Jesus came into my heart,
Floods of joy o'er my soul
Like the sea billows roll,
Since Jesus came into my heart.

Refrain

I have ceased from my wandering
and going astray,
Since Jesus came into my heart!
And my sins, which were many,
are all washed away,

Since Jesus came into my heart!

Refrain

I'm possessed of a hope that is
Steadfast and sure,
Since Jesus came into my heart!
And no dark clouds of doubt now
my pathway obscure,
Since Jesus came into my heart!

Refrain

There's a light in the valley of death
now for me,
Since Jesus came into my heart!
And the gates of the City beyond
I can see,
Since Jesus came into my heart!

Refrain

I shall go there to dwell in that City,
I know,
Since Jesus came into my heart!
And I'm happy, so happy,
as onward I go,
Since Jesus came into my heart!

But, how can this be—what has happened? God tells us when we meant business with God and prayed this prayer, He “delivered us from the domain [authority] of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son [Jesus Christ].” (Colossians 1:13. John 1:12 reads “But as many as received Him [Jesus as Lord of their lives], to them gave he [God] the right [power] to become the children of God, even to them that believe in his name.”

Friend, as we’ve seen, God, through Jesus Christ, triumphed over Satan and death, leaving you with a free will choice in the matter of your spiritual and eternal destiny. All you have to do is to acknowledge Jesus as Lord of your life, and be willing, with His indwelling help and power, to do things God’s way. In doing this you’re saying “Satan, I’ve had it with you! You’ve done me no good. I’ve had enough of your rule in my life. I renounce you Satan, in Jesus’ mighty name. From this moment on I acknowledge Jesus Christ to be the Lord of my life.” At that moment, all the power of Heaven goes to work to make good what you just declared with your mouth—to make effective for you God’s written Bible promise of eternal life. The Bible tells us, “I create the fruit of the lips” (Isaiah 57:19), and God watches over His Word to perform it (Jeremiah 1:12; Isaiah 44:26, 55:11). God yanks the Devil and his demons off of you, forgives you and forgets all of your past sins, casting into the sea of His forgetfulness (Micah 7:9), separating them from you as far as the East is from the West (Psalm 103:12). God then comes to abide within you by the Holy Spirit as He transfers you into His Kingdom, making you a child of God, and giving you the inward assurance of (and the Bible promise of) eternal life (Romans 8:16; I John 5:10 – 13).

Friend, God’s not mad at you. God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life! God longs to reveal Himself to you—to relate to you as an individual. God wants you to prosper and be in health—spiritually, physically, mentally, and emotionally (3 John 2; John 10:10b). Remember, Jesus said, “I came that they might have life, and might have it abundantly” (John 10:10b). The Bible also says:

3 John 2 KJV Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospers.”

Are you God’s beloved—are you His child—have you been *born again*? Have you personally asked Jesus Christ to come into your

life (spirit, soul, and body), and be the Lord of your life? Have you renounced the Devil's lordship over you and been set free—are you willing to admit that the Devil is at the bottom of all your troubles?

I invite you to pray right now this simple, World's Most Important Prayer (Prayer of Salvation), aloud, and from your heart. This is how you can be *born again*. This is how to receive Jesus as your Lord and Savior—as your sin solution. This is how you become a child of God and an heir—a recipient of God's blessings. This is how you receive the free gift of eternal life God has for you. As an act of humility and surrender, please get down on your knees if you can and raise your hands to God, surrendering your life to God. Pray this prayer now:

God, I come before you just as I am. I've sinned against You by going my own way. I'm sorry Lord. I now renounce all sin in my life—any bitterness, unforgiveness, hatred, or evil thoughts I am holding toward anyone, including myself. I forgive myself. I receive Your forgiveness. I know now that Jesus Christ is my only hope. I now turn my life over to Your control, Lord, as best I know how. I now confess Jesus to be my Savior and Lord. I now renounce the lordship of Satan over my life. I renounce all involvement in the occult. I call upon You, Lord Jesus, as my Deliverer—set me free as You said in Your Word You would. Save me now! Wash me in the shed blood of Jesus, Lord. Fill me with your promised Holy Spirit so I can serve and obey You. Give me Your free gift of eternal life and the assurance that I am Your child. Write my name in Your Book of Life. I thank You, Lord for hearing and answering my prayer—for making me right with You, as You promised You would. I ask this all in Jesus' name, Amen.

A shorter version prayer was given to Dr. Esther Mallett by a divine revelation from God. She told me God spoke to her in an audible voice, giving her instructions for the tract titled *How To Live Forever – There Is Only One Way*, which includes the following prayer:

Dear Jesus, Come into my heart, Forgive all my sins, Wash me in Your blood, Write my name in the Book of Life, Fill me with the Holy Spirit, In Jesus' Name, Amen.

When you prayed, God made you His own special child of love. **John 1:12 KJV** “But as many as received Him [Jesus as Lord of

their lives], to them He [God] gave the right to become children of God.”

When you prayed, God gave you the everlasting life (here and hereafter in Heaven) as a free gift—no more spiritual death, no more Hell, no more fear of dying! I John 5:13 reads, “These things have I written to you who believe in the Name of the Son of God, in order that you may **know** that you have eternal life.” Also, I John 2:25 “And this is the promise that He has promised us, even eternal life.”

When you prayed, God forgave all your sins and washed them from His remembrance as He cast them into the sea of His forgetfulness and love (Micah 7:19). “He will have compassion on us. Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.” Psalm 103:10, 12 says “He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities [wickedness]. As far as the East is from the West, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.”

When you prayed, God gave you His divine peace (John 14:27, Jesus speaking) “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”

When you prayed, God gave you righteousness (right standing with Himself) as a free gift, and enabled you, through your Lord Jesus Christ, to now reign as a king in this life by His indwelling presence and power. The Amplified Translation of Romans 5:17 reads, “They which receive abundance of grace [God’s unmerited favor and blessing – God’s riches at Jesus’ expense] and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign as kings in life, by one, Jesus Christ.”

The Amplified Translation of Romans 5:10 reads, “For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to [restored to harmony with] God through the death of His Son, it is much more (certain), now that we are reconciled [are God’s friends] that we shall be saved (daily delivered from sin’s dominion) through His (resurrection) life.” Freed from Satan’s sin nature, you can now live above sin and not be dominated by it. If we do sin, we ask God’s forgiveness, and Jesus blood keeps on washing away the sins we commit after being *born again*. I John 1:9—“If we confess our sins, He [God] is

faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

When you die physically, (Jesus will someday eliminate this death, also—I Corinthians 5:25), the angels of God will escort you to Heaven—God’s home. The Apostle Paul, who had a vision of Heaven (supernatural insight into the supernatural realm or world around us), assured us that “to be absent from the body [to die and leave your body behind in the grave], is to be present with the Lord.” (2 Corinthians 5:8) In I Timothy 2:5 he said, “For I know in whom I have believed, and am persuaded, that he is able, to keep that which I’ve committed, unto Him against that day.”

The Bible also assures you, and all other *born again* Christians living at this time, that Jesus will return to Earth to rule over it. From the signs of the times, it looks like it will be soon. The Bible says that the normal flesh and blood of fallen man inherited from Adam and Eve’s sin must be changed before our physical bodies can see Heaven.

1Co 15:50-51 NLT What I am saying, dear brothers and sisters, is that our physical bodies cannot inherit the Kingdom of God. These dying bodies cannot inherit what will last forever. But let me reveal to you a wonderful secret. We will not all die, but we will all be transformed!

Thus, those of us still living here on planet Earth at that time, who have been *born again*, will be resurrected—physically changed like Jesus was when He was raised from the dead. Our bodies (along with Christians who have died) will be made perfect and immortal like the bodies that Adam and Eve had in the Garden of Eden before they sinned and spiritually died. These *incorruptible* bodies (I Corinthians chapter 15) will never again know sickness, sorrow, or pain:

Isaiah 25:8-9 He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the LORD hath spoken *it*. ⁹ And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this *is* our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this *is* the LORD; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.

When Jesus returns, we’ll share in the blessings of His benevolent worldwide rule, free from Satan’s presence and power,

for Satan will be bound in a pit for a thousand years! (Revelation 20:1-3).

When you prayed and were *born again*, God sent his omnipresent (present everywhere) Holy Spirit to dwell inside you—to assure you that you are right with God (Romans 8:16)—to empower you to live an overcoming life of victory and success (Acts 1:8)—to lead and guide you to success in your new found walk with God (John 16:13), and to enable you to understand the Bible. Consider the following Bible verses or promises along these lines:

Romans 8:16 KJV The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.

Acts 1:8a KJV But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you.

John 16:13-15 KJV Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, *that* shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. ¹⁴ He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew *it* unto you. ¹⁵ All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew *it* unto you.

Phillip 4:13 KJV I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

Congratulations! You're *born again*! Welcome to the family of God! The Bible says the angels of Heaven are rejoicing over your decision.

Luke 15:10 KJV Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.

What does God require of me now that I am a child of God?

For you to realize your full potential as a *born again Christian*—for you to grow up in the knowledge of what or who you are in God’s family—and what’s available to you in the way of blessings, and to help others to also find God, you need to start doing what the Bible says—to start doing things God’s way as outlined in the Bible, realizing His way is the best possible way you can live—a blueprint or instruction manual:

2 Timothy 3:15-17 NLT You have been taught the holy Scriptures from childhood, and they have given you the wisdom to receive the salvation that comes by trusting in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶ All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. ¹⁷ God uses it to prepare and equip His people to do every good work.

As the late Rev. Dick Mills pointed out, There are some 7,700 promises or blessings in the Bible that can be yours if you put handles on them with your faith—if you walk with God—knowing and doing what God wants as revealed in the Bible, and by the leading of the Holy Spirit who now dwells inside you. Walking with God can be condensed into four main activities or categories—**first** *prayer life*; **second**, studying *the Bible* (meditating in God’s Word)—God’s road map or, owner’s manual; **Third**, *fellowshipping with other born again Christians*; and **Fourth**, *witnessing* (telling others about Jesus and why He came and what He offers, and how to receive it).

First, is your private and public prayer life. This is a two-way conversation with God—between you and God. In His epistle (letter) to the Ephesians (6:18), the Apostle Paul admonishes Christians to be “Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit [as the indwelling Holy Spirit leads you to pray], and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.” In Philippians 4:6-7, Paul writes, “Be careful [anxious] for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Jesus Christ.”

Secondly, another main activity in your walking with God is your daily study of the Bible—God’s plan and road map for your life.

Read it as if it were written to you personally, because it was! Pray that the Holy Spirit will reveal its meaning—meditate on it until He does just that. I suggest, using the internet—type the following URL or link into a computer Browser, and listen to the free audio teaching series by Rev. Dave Roberson, *The Laws That Govern Meditation of His Word*:

<http://www.daveroberson.org/Media/410/819-01-The%20Laws%20That%20Govern%20the%20Meditation%20of%20His%20Word.mp3>

As mentioned earlier, Psalm 1:2,3 states, when one meditates in God’s word day and night “whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.” Joshua 1:8 tells us when we are careful to do according to all God wants us to do as revealed in God’s Law—the Bible—then we will make our way prosperous and we will have good success.

2 Timothy 2:15 tells us we find God’s approval as we study the Bible—God’s words of truth.

Psalm 1:1-3 NLT Oh, the joys of those who do not follow the advice of the wicked, or stand around with sinners, or join in with mockers. ² But they delight in the law of the LORD, meditating on it day and night. ³ They are like trees planted along the riverbank, bearing fruit each season. Their leaves never wither, and they prosper in all they do.

Thirdly, we must stay in fellowship with other believers in Jesus. When one removes a single log from the burning fire, it doesn’t burn very well by itself. So we need the help, encouragement, teaching, and prayers of others.

Proverbs 27:17 NLT As iron sharpens iron, so a friend sharpens a friend.

We usually find this fellowship in going to a local Church (gathering of believers in Jesus. A true church believes Jesus is the Son of God, and the Bible is the inspired Word of God. Neighborhood home prayer and Bible study groups where everyone participates with his or her God given spiritual gift or talent, are exciting too! The verse here is Hebrews 10:25, “And let us not forsake the assembling of ourselves together.”

Our **fourth** main category of activity for a successful or fruitful and joyous Christian life is witnessing—telling others what Jesus has done for us and leading them to a *born again* experience with

the Savior. The Devil, through fears, will try and stop us in this because witnessing and soul winning take away his subjects; but we must persevere to victory. Proverbs 11:30b says, “He that winneth souls is wise.” Daniel 12:3 says, “And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever.”

In our final journey to Heaven, all we can take with us is other souls. This is why Jesus told His disciples to use their financial resources to convert souls who will someday, when they die and get to Heaven before we do, welcome us into the eternal kingdom (Luke 16:9). By witnessing, I mean what the phone company means when they use the catchy phrase “reach out and touch someone!” We need to reach out and let God help others through us—telling others what God has done for you, as Jesus told the delivered demoniac, “Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee.” (Mark 5:19). Tell what God’s Word, the Bible, says will do for them.

You can see by all that has been written on the subject of being *born again*, salvation is the world’s greatest need—it changes the world from the inside out by changing men’s hearts (human spirits) and attitudes which improves their conduct and gives them something to live for. I was reading a book, *God’s War on Terror* by a former PLO Islamic terrorist who, through the influence of his Christian wife, became *born again* and made an about face! Therefore, everything we do for God or our fellow man is geared to bringing others into this *born again* relationship with our Heavenly Father. God has chosen to use us to do this. Jesus said to His core group of disciples, before going to sit on the right hand of God in Heaven, “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations [make disciples of them]...teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” (Matthew 28:18-20). Saint Mark tells us as we go out witnessing, fulfilling this *Great Commission*, God will confirm our witness and preaching by miracles that God works through us.

Mark 16:20 KJV And they went forth and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following.”

The principle of God reaching people through people is found in Colossians 1:27 “Christ in you, the hope of glory.” We need to be *God inside minded*. The Bible says that “All things are possible with God.” (Matthew 19:26) and that “All things are possible to him that believeth.” (Mark 9:23). 1 Corinthians 6:16 states “For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.” I John 4:4 reads, “Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.” These verses are telling us when we are *born again*, Satan is no longer the dominating force in us. God comes to live inside us and carries out His will and plan He began in Jesus, through us. Using the authority of the name of Jesus, we make His enemies His footstool (Psalm 110:1). As mentioned previously, Jesus told the apostle Paul our mission in winning souls.

Act 26:18 NLT ...to open their eyes, so they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God. Then they will receive forgiveness for their sins and be given a place among God's people, who are set apart by faith in Me.

Jesus said (John 14:12) “He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do, because I go unto my Father”. The extent to which God so uses us depends on:

1. Our understanding of His indwelling presence—our knowledge and faith that God will do what He said.
2. Our yielding to, and cooperating with God the Holy Spirit within us.

How much God can trust us to use His power wisely.

3. Our willingness to maintain a right attitude and *walk in love* (Ephesians 5:2)

Benediction

Philip 4:7 KJV And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Colossians 1:9-12 For this cause we also, since the day we heard *it*, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; ¹⁰ That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; ¹¹ Strengthened with all might, according to his

glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness;
¹² Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.

In closing, I offer this word of warning. By many Bible promises, God assures us, when we ask Jesus into our hearts and lives as Savior and Lord/Master, we have become children of God and received eternal life as a free gift, complements of Jesus Christ having given His life giving blood on the cross as payment to God for our sins. We are to put God's promises above our feelings which can change from day to day. If we go through a period where we don't feel God's presence or feel like we are saved, this doesn't change the fact of God's Word. The Devil, through doubt, will come and try to steal the Word of God that has been sown as seed in our hearts. (See Jesus' parable of *The Seed and the Sower* —Matthew 13:3-23, especially verse 19). It is our job to resist such doubt, telling the Devil, "I am a child of God because He said so! My eternal destiny rests on God's ability to keep to keep His word, and Jesus said, although Heaven and Earth might pass away, His Word never will."

A Song: **I Know in Whom I have believed** (2 Timothy 2:12)

Words: Daniel W. Whittle, in Gospel Hymns No. 4, 1883. Music: James McGranahan

*I know not why God's wondrous grace
To me He hath made known,
Nor why, unworthy, Christ in love
Redeemed me for His own.*

Refrain

*But I know Whom I have believed,
And am persuaded that He is able
To keep that which I've committed
Unto Him against that day.
I know not how this saving faith
To me He did impart,
Nor how believing in His Word
Wrought peace within my heart.*

Refrain

*I know not how the Spirit moves,
Convincing us of sin,*

*Revealing Jesus through the Word,
Creating faith in Him.*

Refrain

*I know not what of good or ill
May be reserved for me,
Of weary ways or golden days,
Before His face I see.*

Refrain

*I know not when my Lord may come,
At night or noonday fair,
Nor if I walk the vale with Him,
Or meet Him in the air.*

Refrain

My Confession of Faith

I have prayed to God my Heavenly Father, in Jesus' name, asking Him to forgive all my sins, and cleanse me by the blood of Jesus. I have confessed Jesus Christ to be my personal Lord and Savior. I have renounced the Devil and all his evil works. I am now a child of God. I repent of my sins, and with the help of the Holy Spirit within me, I will follow the Lord's instructions in the Bible. I choose to walk in step with the leading of the Holy Spirit. I will pray daily, and read the Bible. I will seek to develop a close walk with the Lord. I will seek to fellowship with other believers in Jesus. With God's help, I will tell others how they too, can have their own personal relationship with God.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Becoming Christ-like

1 John 2:3-6 And we can be sure that we know Him if we obey His commandments. If someone claims, "I know God," but doesn't obey God's commandments, that person is a liar and is not living in the truth. But those who obey God's word truly show how completely they love Him. That is how we know we are living in Him. **Those who say they live in God should live their lives as Jesus did.**

1 Thessalonians 4:1,3a - Finally, dear brothers and sisters, we urge you in the name of the Lord Jesus to live in a way that pleases God, as we have taught you... God's will is for you to be holy.

As we cooperate with God in fulfilling His plan for our lives, we mature (grow spiritually) and become Christ-like. Since God the Holy Spirit has come to live within us, He gives us the power to make this transformation. We have repented of our former (displeasing to God) way of living. We are ashamed of such past behavior that put Jesus Christ on the cross as payment to God for our sins. Now that we know we are forgiven, we are on a new path of living to please God, following the Bible as His blueprint (instruction manual) for a blessed and happy life. Through the God the Holy Spirit living within us, we walk in victory.

Psalm 119:9,11 NLT How can a young person stay pure? By obeying Your word. I have hidden Your word in my heart, that I might not sin against You.

Romans 8:11,13-14 NLT The Spirit of God, who raised Jesus from the dead, lives in you...Therefore, dear brothers and sisters, you have no obligation to do what your sinful nature urges you to do. For if you live by its dictates, you will die. But **if through the power of the Spirit you put to death the deeds of your sinful nature**, you will live. For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God.

In the Bible (NLT), God tells us through the Apostle Paul:

Romans 5:18 Yes, Adam's one sin brings condemnation for everyone, but Christ's one act of righteousness brings a right relationship with God and new life for everyone.

Romans 5:20-21 God's law was given so that all people could see how sinful they were. But as people sinned more and more, God's wonderful grace became more abundant. So just as sin ruled over all people and brought them to death, now God's wonderful grace rules instead, giving us right standing with God and resulting in eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Romans 6:1-2 **Well then, should we keep on sinning so that God can show us more and more of His wonderful grace? Of course not! Since we have died to sin, how can we continue to live in it?**

Romans 6:7 For when we died with Christ we were set free from the power of sin.

Romans 6:10-23 When He died, He died once to break the power of sin. But now that He lives, He lives for the glory of God. So you also should consider yourselves to be dead to the power of sin and alive to God through Christ Jesus. **Do not let sin control the way you live; do not give in to sinful desires. Do not let any part of your body become an instrument of evil to serve sin. Instead, give yourselves completely to God, for you were dead, but now you have new life. So use your whole body as an instrument to do what is right for the glory of**

God. Sin is no longer your master, for you no longer live under the requirements of the law. Instead, you live under the freedom of God's grace. Well then, **since God's grace has set us free from the law, does that mean we can go on sinning? Of course not!** Don't you realize that you become the slave of whatever you choose to obey? You can be a slave to sin, which leads to death, or you can choose to obey God, which leads to righteous living. Thank God! Once you were slaves of sin, but now you wholeheartedly obey this teaching we have given you. Now you are free from your slavery to sin, and you have become slaves to righteous living. Because of the weakness of your human nature, I am using the illustration of slavery to help you understand all this. **Previously, you let yourselves be slaves to impurity and lawlessness, which led ever deeper into sin. Now you must give yourselves to be slaves to righteous living so that you will become holy.** When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the obligation to do right. And what was the result? **You are now ashamed of the things**

you used to do, things that end in eternal doom. But now you are free from the power of sin and have become slaves of God.

Now you do those things that lead to holiness and result in eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord.

King Solomon, the wisest man who ever lived, sums up the book of Ecclesiastes with these words:

Ecc 11:9;12:13-14 NLT Young people, it's wonderful to be young! Enjoy every minute of it. Do everything you want to do; take it all in. But remember that you must give an account to God for everything you do. Here now is my final conclusion: Fear God and obey His commands, for this is everyone's duty. God will judge us for everything we do, including every secret thing, whether good or bad.

Making heaven our eternal home may be an unearned free gift to us complements of Jesus Christ, but we will still give an account to God for the way we conducted ourselves during our earthly lives. In the New Testament of the Bible, the Books of Hebrews & Corinthians state:

Heb 9:27 ...each person is destined to die once and after that comes judgment,

2 Co 5:9b-10 NLT ...our goal is to please Him. For we must all stand before Christ to be judged. We will each receive whatever we deserve for the good or evil we have done in this earthly body.

We are living in troubled times that indicate that the return of Jesus Christ to set up His earthly kingdom may be approaching. The Apostle Peter admonishes believers like us:

2 Pet 3:7,9-14 NLT ...the present heavens and earth have been stored up for fire. They are being kept for the day of judgment, when ungodly people will be destroyed... The Lord isn't really being slow about His promise, as some people think. No, He is being patient for your sake. He does not want anyone to be destroyed, but wants everyone to repent. But the day of the Lord will come as unexpectedly as a thief. Then the heavens will pass away with a terrible noise, and the very elements themselves will disappear in fire, and the earth and everything on it will be found to deserve judgment. Since everything around us is going to be destroyed like this, what holy and godly lives you should live, looking forward to the day of God and hurrying it along. On that day, He will set the heavens on fire, and the elements will melt away in the flames. But we are looking forward to the new heavens and new earth He has promised, a world filled with God's righteousness. **And so, dear friends, while you are waiting for these things to happen, make every effort to be found living peaceful lives that are pure and blameless in His sight.**

A Prayer of Consecration

"Lord, Father God, I thank you for forgiving me of every sin that would have disqualified me from spending eternity with You. I choose to repent (turn from) my past sinful and selfish life. You want to make a new person out of me, shaped and molded into the image and likeness of my role model Jesus Christ. I trust You to work by the power of God the Holy Spirit who now lives in me, to do your will and walk in your ways. Sustain me with a willing spirit as you have your blessed way with my life. I ask that you mature that which concerns me, that I grow up in all things unto Christ. Wash me, cleanse me, and purify me, and make me holy. Make me the kind of person you want me to be. Bring me into a close fellowship with You as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen."

Have Thine Own Way Lord

written by Pollard, Stebbins, R. Williams.

Have Thine own way Lord

Have Thine own way

Thou art the potter I am the clay

Mold me and make me after Thy will

While I am waiting yielded and still

Have Thine own way Lord

Have Thine own way
Search me and try me Master today
Whiter than snow Lord wash me just now
As in Thy presence humbly I bow
Have Thine own way Lord
Have Thine own way
Hold over my being absolute sway
Filled with Thy spirit till all can see
Christ only always living in me