

The Curse
The Promise
The Blood
Covenant

The Gospel of Jesus Christ
No One Told You

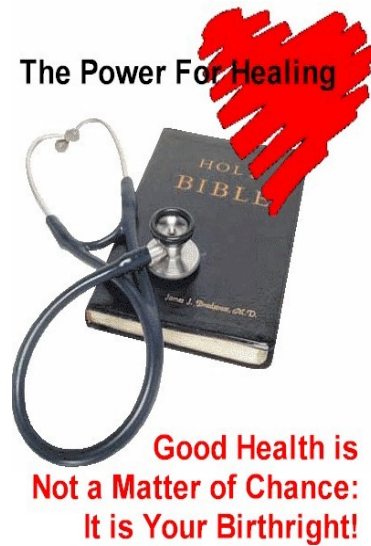
by Jim Lynn

For God's Healing Word Ministry

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**The Curse, The Promise, The Blood Covenant:
The Gospel of Jesus Christ No One Told You**

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Why the Title The Gospel of Jesus Christ No One Told You

The story of the Gospel of Jesus Christ (as told in the Bible) is not widely known, even among Christians. How can this be? Of all the possible reasons, and there are many, one remains above all others. People don't know the Gospel, because they don't read or study the Bible. They do not know the Bible well enough to know what the Bible says about the Gospel. Oh, they can tell you what they believe, alright. But when you delve into the source of where they learned what they believe, it usually comes from a denominational doctrine or teaching, not the Bible.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ, once a mystery known only to God, now belongs to the Church to be administered and made known to the world (Ephesians 3:7-10). However, therein lies a problem. For unless the Church teaches the Gospel of Jesus Christ as taught by the Word of God, The Gospel becomes whatever good intentioned followers of Christ make it out to be.

The Bible declares the Gospel as the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes it. (Romans 1:16). Pretty important, right? But before you can believe the Gospel, you have to first know what the Word of God says it is. That's the way it works. Our faith is based on hearing the message, and the message is heard through the Word of God (Romans 10:17).

God is not the author of confusion (I Corinthians 14:33). So if there is confusion about what the Gospel is, it comes from man, not God. So what is the Gospel of Jesus Christ? The answer is laid out in this book. But for now let me tell you what the Gospel of Jesus Christ is not.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ is not the teachings of Jesus. It is not the Bible. It is not hermeneutics; how various denominations interpret the Bible. Neither is it saying the believer's prayer. The Gospel is none of these things. The Gospel is a very specific form of teaching the Holy Spirit gave to the Apostles (Romans 6:17).

You may have already noticed the spiritual claims I make here are backed with Bible references. Why so? Allow me to let the Bible answer that question for you.

All scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. - II Timothy 3:16-17

The words of the Lord are flawless, like silver refined in a furnace of clay, purified seven times. - Psalm 12:6

In a nutshell, the Bible holds God's answer to, "What must I do to be saved? Unless we can back up spiritual truth to that question with a "thus sayeth the Lord," we are accomplishing nothing more than whistling Dixie past the graveyard of lies and falsehoods.

Those who teach God's Word will be judged more strictly (James 3:1), for they are messengers of the Lord Almighty (Malachi 2:7). By their teaching, they can either cause men to stumble, or

walk upright in the light of God's Word (Malachi 2:8). So it behooves those who teach to speak God's truth, and God's truth alone. Where teachers of God's Word get into the weeds with questions of faith is when Church doctrine preempts God's Word.

Let me cite a few examples of how Church Doctrine can interfere with God's Word. There is a Christian sect that teaches before one can become a saint they must:

- Performed at least two miracles
- Lead an exemplary life of goodness and virtue worthy of imitation
- Be designated as a “Saint” by the head of their sect.

By contrast, the Bible teaches all those “in Christ” are already saints.
(Philippians 1:1, II Corinthians 1:1)

Now the Bible also teaches us that there is but one mediator between God and man, and that man is Jesus Christ (I Timothy 2:5). But the Christian sect mentioned above believes church members can approach God through their canonized “saints” by petitioning their prayers through them. Nothing about this teaching is biblical.

Here's another example. The word “Reverend” appears but one time in the entire Bible, and then only to describe the fearfulness of God and His holiness (Psalm 111:9). Yet in some Church traditions, men give themselves this title. Are these men somehow more holy than you or I? Titles are fine, but for a man to be called Reverend is to place him on ground equal with God. This is a direct insult to millions of Christians, and God. The use of “Reverend” as a title is intimidating to those who do not know better. These are but a few examples of many intended to illustrate how teachers of God's Word can cause men to stumble; to lose sight of God's truth.

In conclusion, listen to those who teach and instruct you in your church. But also, look for a thus sayeth the Lord as confirmation of their teaching. Ask them where their claims and teaching is found in the Bible. If they cannot back up their claims with scripture, avoid them. Do not be deceived. Only the Bible is “God-breathed.” Only the Bible holds the answer to the question, “What must I do to be saved.?”

Chapter One



Ever Wonder Why God Created The Universe?

Seriously, think about it. Why did God create the universe? Better yet, why would He? What purpose could He possibly have had in mind? The answer is utterly amazing and intensely personal once you know. Anything come to mind?

As you think through that question, consider your own life.

How is it you are here on earth to begin with? Did you have control in deciding to be born at this time and place. Did you have some say in the matter? Why is it you weren't born 200 or 2,000 years ago? Why now?

Now as if I haven't already given you enough to think about, take a moment to consider the wonder of creation. From the largest, most distant star down to the smallest microbe, lose yourself in the wonder of it all. Beautiful isn't it?

From a tiny seed that can grow into a giant Redwood, to massive oceans, mountains and plains, there is design, order and purpose. But more, there is incredible beauty down to the smallest detail. Now remind yourself.

God created all of this! From the rhythm of the four seasons, the ebb and flow of the ocean tide to the annual migration of millions of birds and insects, God created and placed all these things in motion.

So now with all this in mind, why did God create the universe?

God Created The Universe For You



Yeah, I know. There are 7 plus billion people on the planet. Never mind them for now. God created the universe for you, YOU! Before the foundations of the Earth were laid, God was thinking of YOU! And when the time was right, He created you. Yes, your mother and father brought you into the world, but it is God who created you.

For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be. - Psalm 139:13-16

Wow! I told you you'd be amazed. God loves you above all creation. He knew you from eternity, and ordained a time when you would be born. Everything God created was created for YOU. Can you grasp how great God's love is for you? But that's not all.

You are unique. No one else on earth is like you. Everything about you, your body, spirit and soul, is yours and yours alone. Think of it. From your fingerprints down to your DNA, you are unique among the 7 billion other people alive on earth. No one else has your spirit, no one else has your body or soul. God loves you that much and more. You ARE the reason God created the universe. He loves you with a love that is beyond our human understanding of love.

So God was thinking about YOU when He created the universe, but not just you alone. For God had a big family in mind both before and after creation. In the process He created the perfect environment for His family to live in. It's called Earth!

The Bible tells us that “God is love” (I John 4:16). God is love means love is what God is. Said another way, whatever love there is in this world emanates from God. He is the source of love, called Agape love. Agape is love given without preconditions or expectations. God wants us to agape (love) Him in return, but we are free not to do so if we so choose. This is what is meant by no precondition and expectation.

Besides, if God had created us without the ability to reject His love, our love for God would be contrived and robotic. How would that feel? God wants to feel real, honest love, just as you and I do. So Agape love is love given freely without precondition or expectation.

Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, in our likeness...”
- Genesis 1:26

So God created man in His own image, which includes our innate ability to freely glorify and love God in return, or not. This attribute of God's love and our freedom is part and parcel of who we are as human beings.

Now here's another question for you. To whom was God speaking when He said, “Let us make man in our own image?” To whom was God speaking who could already be in our own image? More on this later, but right now just know He was speaking to another human being. Sound impossible? Keep reading.

God's Problem With Man

God placed Adam and Eve in a special Garden located east of Eden. They were naked, yet did not know they were naked (Genesis 2:25). We have a real problem today comprehending how someone could not know they are naked without clothing. The only explanation is Adam and Eve had yet to have sin open their eyes to the reality of their nakedness. In a word, they were still innocent beings (Genesis 3:7).

While they lived in the garden of Eden, God walked and talked with Adam and Eve. Imagine! Husband and wife in fellowship with God: Fellowship in the sense of being one with the other. There was love, peace and harmony between all three parties. Adam and Eve lived under the care and protection of God. Nothing existed in the world that could corrupt that relationship, except through choice.

Then sin entered the world changing everything (Genesis 3)

Man sinned against God!

Adam and Eve were tempted, and disobeyed God by eating from the “tree of the knowledge of good and evil” (Genesis 2:17). In doing so, they instantly recognized their nakedness (Genesis 3:7), and became afraid. They feared God, and tried to hide their nakedness from Him (Genesis 3:10). When God asked Adam if he had eaten the fruit from the one tree he was forbidden to eat, Adam admitted he had and blamed Eve. Then Eve admitted she had and blamed the Serpent.

Seems like nothing has changed in all those years that have passed. For isn't it just like man today to point the finger of blame at someone else, all the while disowning personal responsibility?

Giving in to that one temptation, was all Satan needed to introduce sin into the world. The world, which was once without corruption, was now corrupted.

Before sin entered into the world, there was no pain, suffering, hunger, sickness, aging or death. After corruption entered the world, all of these things became our reality. Most importantly, before sin entered the world, there was no separation between God and man. Now there was!

Before we can understand sin, we must know God. God is Holy. He is incapable of sin. He cannot co-exist with sin. God created man to be holy and live free of sin. But He also created man to have freedom of thought, and to act according to his own desire (James 1:14-15). So long as man lived free of sin, man had fellowship with God. But when sin entered into the world, man lost fellowship with God. Our souls became destined to death and destruction.



Sin separates us from God. Of course, Satan knows this. Here's the thing. Satan could care less about you. His only interest lies in separating all of us from God and our earthly family. Physical death destroys us as human beings, terminating our existence with one another and God.

When Adam and Eve chose to disregard God's law by eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, Satan literally pinned mankind to the ground in death. So you understand sin and it's consequence, you must know God's law of sin and death.

The Law of Sin and Death

“The soul who sins is the one who will die...”
- Ezekiel 18:20

“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”
- Romans 3:23

“...from dust you are, and to dust you will return.”

- Genesis 3:19

From the moment sin entered into the world, man lost his God-given dignity, honor, glory, and eternal life. Man fell from his glorious state of innocence into a state of sin, becoming subject to Satan and God's law of sin and death. That law says the one who sins is the one who dies (Ezekiel 18:20).

How many sins does it take to die? Well, how many times does it take to break the law before you can be found guilty? Just once, right? God's law of sin and death demands the penalty of death for even one violation.

Now suppose you live your life as a good and moral upright person. You help widows and orphans, give to the poor, and obey the laws of the land. On the day of judgment the Great Judge asks you why you should be allowed to enter into heaven. In reply you quickly point to your life and all the good things you have done. But the Judge's voice rings out back to you, “What about your sin?”

Friend, this is where Satan yells out, “Gotchya!”

This is the reason why no man can hope to stand before God in the day of judgment and argue his case on his own merits. For no man is free of sin (Romans 3:23). And no matter how many good deeds you can stack on top of one another, there can never be enough of them for you to stand on top of the stack to look into God's face, eyeball-to-eyeball, as a righteous man. On his own, man stands condemned by God's law of sin and death.

Once loosed, sin forever changed the world and our lives (Genesis 3:17-24). A child is born deformed. A family is killed in a violent car crash while on vacation. Drive-by shootings kill innocent bystanders. Violent storms kill thousands every year—and on and on. The truth is that we live in a world corrupted by sin. Violence, suffering, and death are common everyday occurrences because of sin. There is no safe harbor to avoid this corruption. All of this is the result of one man and woman turning their faith away from God for no longer than the time it takes to take one bite (Genesis 3:1-7).

When loved ones are suddenly taken from us in death, that is Satan's work, not God's. Yet, who gets blamed most of the time, God or Satan? Remember, Satan is the father of lies (John 8:44-45). So if he can get you to blame God for the death of a loved one, who suffers the most? It's time we wake up to truth.

No one wants death. But death is 100% certain, all thanks to our own sins. This chapter can be summed up in one short sentence. Man is lost in sin, and doomed to destruction. God is righteous. He cannot simply ignore or overlook our trespasses against Him. So unless God can find a righteous way to redeem man from the grave, He will have lost all of mankind. This is the story of the Bible, God's letter to you!

Chapter Two



From the moment Adam and Eve ate the fruit from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, mankind changed. Sin became part and parcel of who and what we are today: Sinful beings!

Most people have a difficult time relating to a life without sin (holiness). Our conception and understanding of holiness is so mired down by our own sinfulness, God's holiness seems far off. And though we may dedicate ourselves to live free of sin, the stain of sins we once committed stay with us like white on rice. King David knew this well. He wrote:

Because of your wrath there is no health in my body; my bones have no soundness because of my sin. My guilt has overwhelmed me like a burden too heavy to bear. My wounds fester and are loathsome because of my sinful folly. - Psalm 38:3-5

Imagine, if you can, what it must have been like for Adam and Eve to be standing before God after they sinned. With eyes now opened to sin, they realized they were naked and felt guilt for the first time ever. When they heard God walking in the garden toward them, they hid in fear and covered their nakedness with fig leaves. When God asked them if they had eaten from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, they confessed their sin (Genesis 3:7-11).

Now put yourself in God's shoes for a moment to understand what He was faced with. God created man in His own image. Think what that means. God created man free of sin. He imbued man with free will, dignity and honor, and gave him sovereignty. When you ask yourself why God gave us these attributes, there is but one answer. God created man in His own image and gave him these attributes, so He could have fellowship with someone like Himself.

In the previous chapter, I asked the question, “To whom was God speaking when He said, “**Let us make man in our own image?**” (Genesis 1:26). Obviously he was speaking to someone who looks like you and I, but who is that person? That's an important question as the Gospel of Jesus Christ unfolds. When you learn the answer and come to understand its meaning to you personally, your heart will soar. So keep reading.

God is Holy, and the sovereign creator of life (Psalm 24:1, Hebrews 6:18). Satan is the father of lies (John 8:44). Just as God cannot fellowship with Satan, neither can God fellowship with sinful man. For sin only produces corruption, suffering and death (Psalm 38:3-5, Ezekiel 18:20).

God's heart must have been heartbroken to know the very beings He created in His own image rebelled against Him. He knew the relationship He shared with man in the Garden of Eden was over. And most importantly, God knew His righteousness required payment from man for his sin.

Of course, Satan knew all this as well. From his viewpoint, the day had gone well. Not only had he successfully corrupted humankind, he destroyed the fellowship, the one-on-one relationship between God and man...or so he thought.

The Curse, The Prophecy and Blood Sacrifice

In holy anger for what Satan had done, God cursed Satan , and issued a prophecy. To Satan, God declared:

I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head and you will strike his heel. - Genesis 3:15

This is the first prophecy in the Bible that foretells of a man destroying the power of Satan over man. From that day forward, Satan set about trying to learn who that person would be so he could kill him and remove the threat. Notice this person would come from the seed of a woman, and not the seed of a man. So here is the first passage in scripture foretelling us of a virgin birth.

Why a virgin birth?

The defeat of Satan, and man's redemption from the grave had to come by and through a man. This is important to understand. God's holiness and righteousness required it. Remember that God created us with free will. Were God to somehow engineer a victory over Satan without man, God's righteousness and justice would not be served. For man would still be stained with sin. So the sin problem had to be overcome through a man, and a way found for reconciliation to happen between God and man.

But no man conceived by a man and woman could ever defeat Satan, because every son of man would be under the authority of Satan through sin (Romans 3:23). Redemption of sin could only come through the blood sacrifice of a man who had no sin to become sin on our behalf. It would require a man who is both one and at the same time the son of man and the Son of God.

Why a Blood Sacrifice?

In a word: Atonement.

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

The law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, **and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.** – Hebrews 9:22

Seen through the eyes of sinful man, the taking of another human being's life as payment for sin is hard to comprehend. We ask, “If God is love as the Bible tells us, why then would God demand the taking of a human life and blood for atonement of our sins?”

First, blood is not only the symbol of life, it is life; it is what keeps a person alive. Your soul resides in your blood (Leviticus 17:11). So the sacrificial shedding of blood reminds us of the severity of sin, its cost and the cost of redemption: We cannot escape the grave because of sin. This is God's righteous judgment (Ezekiel 18:4). Blood (your soul) is the key element to life.

Secondly, a blood sacrifice is required to seal covenants made between God and man. God requires a blood covenant and a way to remember it, in order for man to have a relationship with Him. No covenant, no relationship. Without a blood sacrifice, there can be no covenant, or forgiveness of sin (Hebrews 9:22).

So every covenant God has made with man includes a blood sacrifice. The sacrifice acts as a seal, a sign of good faith made between two parties. When God made His covenant with the Israelite people, the covenant was sealed by killing oxen and sprinkling blood on the people.

Then he (Moses) sent young Israelite men, and they offered burnt offerings and sacrificed young bulls as fellowship offerings to the Lord. Moses took half of the blood and put it in bowls, and the other half he sprinkled on the alter. Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read it to the people. They responded, “We will do everything the Lord has said: We will obey.”

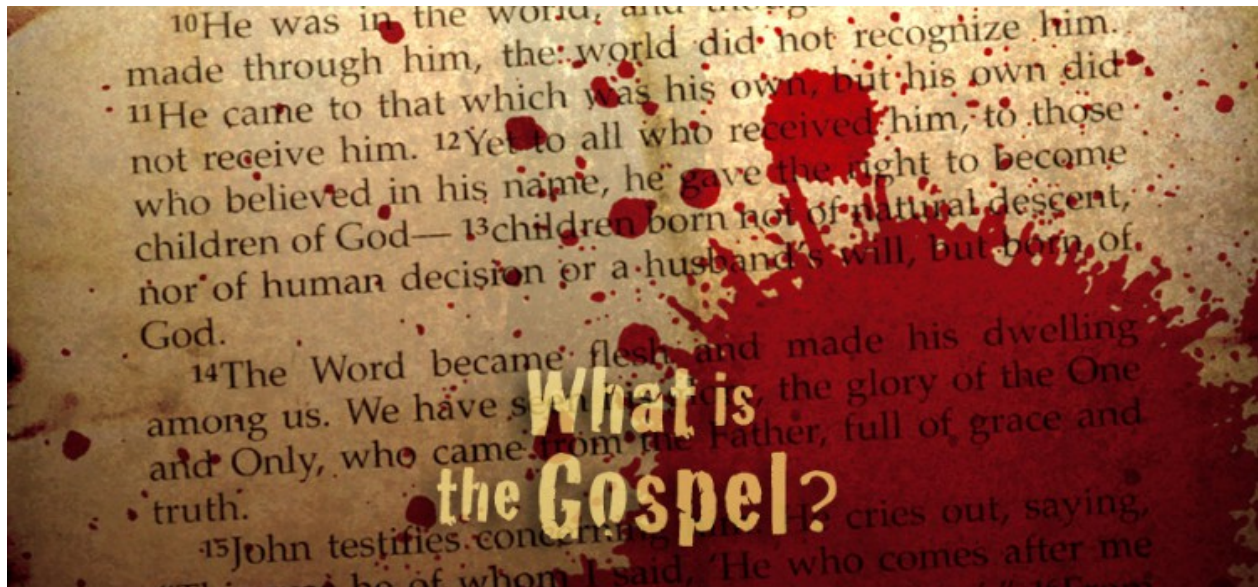
Moses then took the blood, sprinkled it on the people and said, **“This is the blood of the covenant that the Lord has made with you in accordance with all these words.”** - Exodus 24:5-8

What we do not understand so much today is the seriousness of a covenant being sealed with blood. Now-a-days we just sign our names to a piece of paper to seal a covenant. Never-the-less, sealing a covenant with God in blood remains to this day a necessary, very sacred (holy) act. After all, a life was taken in order for the covenant to have meaning. The blood of the covenant symbolizes life and death.

But the blood covenant God made with Israel was only temporary at best. For the blood of innocent bulls and goats cannot wash away the sins of mankind (Hebrews 10:1-3). Only the blood (life) of an innocent human being could do that (Isaiah 53, John 1:29).

This brings us to the “good news,” the Gospel of Jesus Christ. For it includes a blood covenant that not only represents life and death, it represents new life and life eternal born of God's love, grace and mercy (Romans 1:16-17).

Chapter Three



The Good News

The Good News is God loves you. I mean He really, really loves you. In fact, He loves you so very much, He sacrificed His One and Only Son to die on a cross to pay for your sins. Now I don't know about you, but in my book that's mind boggling! God did this so that by believing in Jesus and His resurrection from the grave, you should not perish, but have life eternal (John 3:16). This is The Gospel of Jesus Christ: His death, His burial, His resurrection from the grave.

The Gospel is all important to our salvation. The Apostle Paul wrote,

I am not ashamed of **the gospel**, because it is **the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes**; first for the Jew, then the Gentile. **For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed**, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: “The righteous will live by faith.” - Romans 1:16-17

In him we have **redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins**, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding. - Ephesians 1:7

Think of all the advances mankind has made since those words were first penned. You'd think if there were some way for man, himself, to find forgiveness of sins with God, we'd have found it by now. But no. There is nothing we can do on our own to undo our own sins against God. On our own we are doomed to death and eternal separation from God. Salvation can only come to us through The Gospel of Jesus Christ (Romans 1:16-17)

When you read the Book of Acts and all the New Testament letters the Apostle Paul wrote, you will learn the one constant message preached throughout is the Gospel message: The death, burial

and resurrection of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins. Paul dedicated his life to sharing that message. He traveled far and wide to spread the Gospel. To Christians located in Corinth, Greece, he wrote:

Now brothers, **I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you have received and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved**, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain.

For what I received **I passed on to you as of first importance**; that **Christ died for our sins** according to the scriptures, that **he was buried, that he was raised** on the third day according to the scriptures, and that he appeared to Peter, and then the Twelve. After that he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time...and last of all he appeared to me also...**This is what we preach**, and this is what you believed - I Corinthians 15:1-12

Paul understood the Gospel was a matter of first importance. Whatever else was preached. Whatever else was done came after people had heard the Gospel message. And so that there could be no doubt what that Gospel message is, Paul reminded them that the Gospel is the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ from the grave (read the above verses).

A Matter of Life And Death

As a matter of first importance, the Gospel of Jesus Christ also contains a message of life and death. In other words, a warning. Ours is the choice to receive or reject the Gospel. To that end we need to understand the consequences of ignoring it. Here's what that warning says:

He (The Lord Jesus) **will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus**. They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power. - II Thessalonians 1:8-9

I think we all pretty well understand matters of life and death. Just as if someone yelled, "Get out. Your house is on fire," so too, do we understand, "**He will punish those who do not obey the Gospel.**" Both declarations are warnings of life and death.

But the Gospel is a historical event, a matter of both public and private record. **How does one obey a historical event?** No one wants to be nailed to a cross, so how did the Apostles teach their generation to obey the Gospel? They taught a specific form or pattern to obey the Gospel (Romans 6:17). So what form of teaching was it?

Jesus said we will die in our sins if we do not believe He is who He claims to be (John 8:24), And John wrote whoever believes on Him may not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16). Is believing in Jesus what God means about obeying the Gospel?

Most modern Bibles translate John 3:16 from the Greek to read, Shall not perish. However the original Greek text does not say “shall not perish,” but “should not perish.”

Some will say it doesn't matter what you believe as long as you are sincere, but is that right? Many people once believed the product Tylenol was safe until someone began lacing Tylenol with Cyanide and people started dying. Remember that episode? Our safety with pain pills obviously depends on more than trust and belief. Likewise, our sincerity of belief in Jesus Christ as the lamb who takes away the sins of the world is vital to obeying the Gospel, but that isn't the whole story. Remember, the Gospel event itself is a physical, historical event.

So How Does One Obey The Gospel? (II Thessalonians 1:8-9)

One of the great things I so enjoy about the Bible is that it answers its own questions. Remember, the Bible doesn't read like a how-to manual. It's a book filled with history, human drama, God's glory, what faith means, the foretelling of God's Scheme of Redemption and so on.

This is why we need the Old Testament. It is through the Old Testament where we learn God's law of sin and death, about the importance of blood sacrifices and covenants. It is in the Old Testament where we learn mankind can have no relationship with God, except through a covenant sealed with blood (Hebrews 9:22). We also learn that blood sacrifices and covenants of the Old Testament served as an anti-type, that foreshadowed or represented a reality of something yet to happen. They were not intended to be permanent.

As we look then at obeying the Gospel of Jesus Christ, it can only make sense in light of what we know from Old Testament teaching and example. For example, God's law of sin and death is still alive and well. Likewise, so is God's requirement to be in a covenant relationship with him (Read Chapter Two). Neither the New Testament nor obeying the Gospel of Jesus Christ has changed this truth. Here are two important examples that illustrate this truth.

From the Old Testament: **Moses then took the blood, sprinkled it on the people and said, “This is the blood of the covenant that the Lord has made with you in accordance with all these words.”** - Exodus 24:5-8

From the New Testament: **The Lord Jesus Christ on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, “This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.” In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, “this cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this whenever you drink of it, in remembrance of me. For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.** - I Corinthians 11:23-26

From these two scriptures, one from the Old Testament and one from the New Testament, we learn the importance of being in a covenant relationship with God: One that is sealed with blood, one in which people make contact with the blood of the covenant.

What did Christ mean when He said, **this cup is the new covenant in my blood**? The ancient Jews understood blood covenants. Lacking knowledge of the Old Testament, we do not so much today.

Under the old Mosaic law, God required the sprinkling of blood on the Tent of Meeting, its altar, and even the priests and their garments (as well as on the people) as a sign of the covenant He made with Israel. That old covenant was an anti-type pointing to the new blood covenant we now have with Christ. Following the old covenant example, we know we must also be sprinkled (symbolically) with the new covenant blood of Jesus, **before** we can be in a covenant relationship with Him. But how?

Baptism

In the Old Testament, God used water to save His People: First with the Great Flood (Genesis 6 through 8), then with the parting of the Red Sea (Genesis 13 and 14). These were anti-types. Now with the death, burial and resurrection of our Lord, water again is used to save us.

As you read and study, understand the matter of belief, repentance, and confession of sin all play roles in our salvation. Unless we believe Jesus is who He says he is, unless we repent of our sins and strive to live sin free, and unless we are willing to confess our sinfulness, baptism is meaningless. More on this later. What I want us to learn here is what we must do to come into contact with the blood of the New Covenant in Christ. Remember, this is not an option (II Thessalonians 1:8-9).

While we cannot literally replicate the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus, God has provided a way for us to re-enact the Gospel through baptism. Paul wrote:

...Don't you know all of us who were baptized into Christ were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the father, we too may live a new life.

If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin – because anyone who has died has been freed from sin.

Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives he lives to God. In the same way count yourself dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus - Romans 6:3-11

You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourself with Christ. - Galatians 3:26

What I want you to see and understand is the only way to be clothed with Christ is through baptism. There is no other way. Yes, faith comes through hearing the message and the message is heard through the Word of God (Romans 10:17). But what is that message?

On the Day of Pentecost, filled with the Holy Spirit, Peter stood before a large crowd and preached the Gospel message for the first time. When the people gathered heard this Gospel message they were cut to the heart, and asked Peter, “What shall we do?” (Acts 2:37) Peter answered them saying;

“Repent and be baptized, every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sin.” - Acts 2:38

Here were people already convicted of sin in their hearts. They believed Peter's message. Some in this crowd were people who demanded Jesus' death and had jeered Him. They were guilty of killing the Son of God and knew it. So their question, “what shall we do,” should tell us they were seeking forgiveness of their sins. They already believed after listening to Peter.

Keep in mind this is the first time the Gospel message was ever preached on Earth. It was the beginning of a new blood covenant open to any and everyone who believed the Gospel message. That Gospel message and the form of teaching the Apostles taught to obey it, was preached over and over throughout Paul's missionary journeys.

One of my favorite Bible stories is told in Acts 8. Philip, one of the Apostles, overheard an Ethiopian Eunuch reading aloud from the Septuagint, the book of Isaiah. The Eunuch was traveling by chariot on the road to Jerusalem to go worship. Philip was on the same road. As the Eunuch was traveling along, Philip overheard the Eunuch read this passage of Scripture;

He was led like a sheep to the slaughter, and as a lamb before the shearer is silent, so he did not open his mouth. In his humiliation he was deprived of justice. Who can speak of his descendants? For his life was taken from the earth. - Acts 8:26-33

When the Eunuch asked Philip if he knew who the prophet was talking about, Philip began with that very passage the Eunuch was reading, and told him the good news about Jesus. Though Luke (The Author of Acts) didn't record it, we know Philip told the Eunuch about the new blood covenant and how to access it because of what happened next.

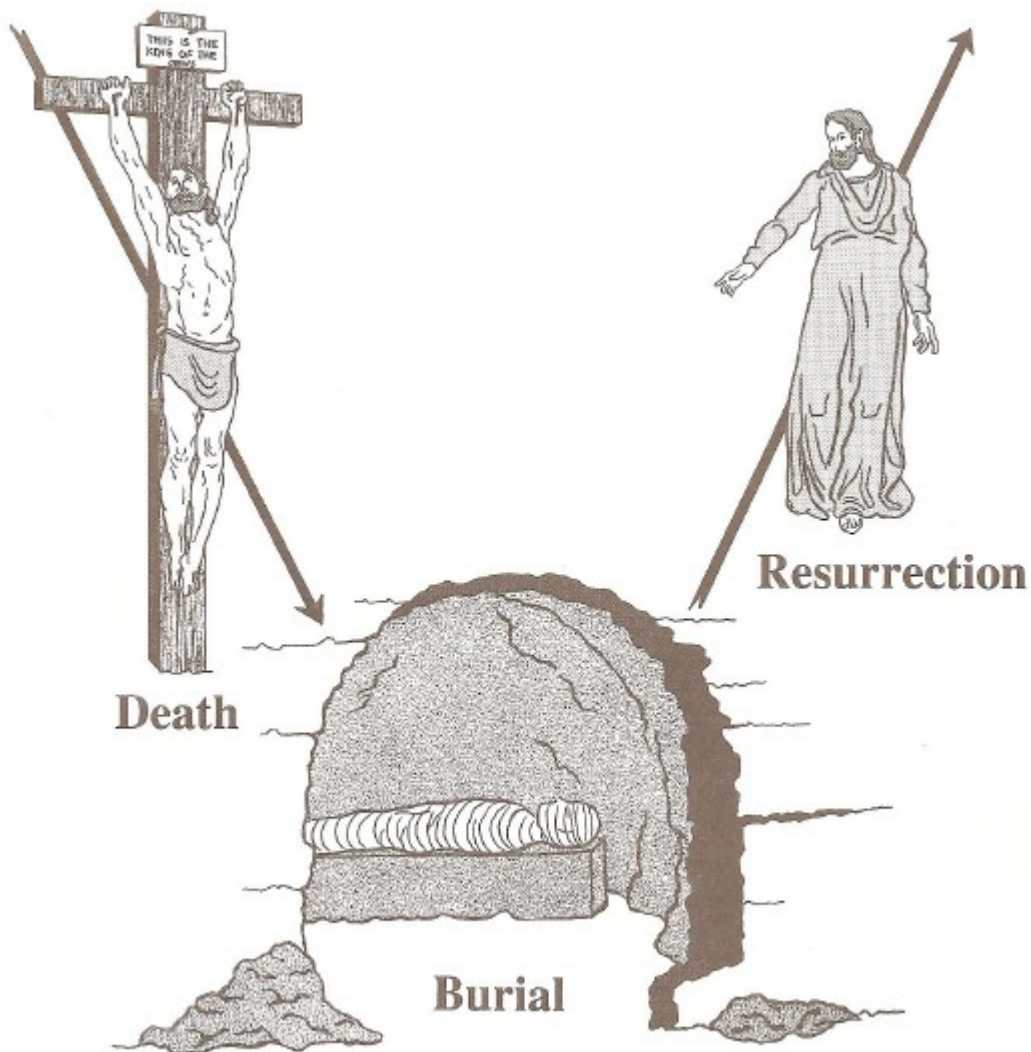
The Eunuch said, “Look, here is water. Why shouldn't I be baptized?” So he stopped the chariot. Then both Philip and the Eunuch went down into the water and the Eunuch was baptized. The Eunuch believed The Gospel Story Philip shared with him. He knew he needed to be baptized in order to receive forgiveness of his sins.

Some time ago I made some drawings for a ministry to illustrate the Gospel message and how we

become clothed with Christ through baptism. I offer those drawings here. The first graphic illustrates the Gospel (the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus) as it was enacted.

The Historical Gospel Event

I Corinthians 15:3-4



You can read about the crucifixion of Jesus, how His body was cared for, His burial and resurrection three days later in Luke 23:26 through Luke 24.

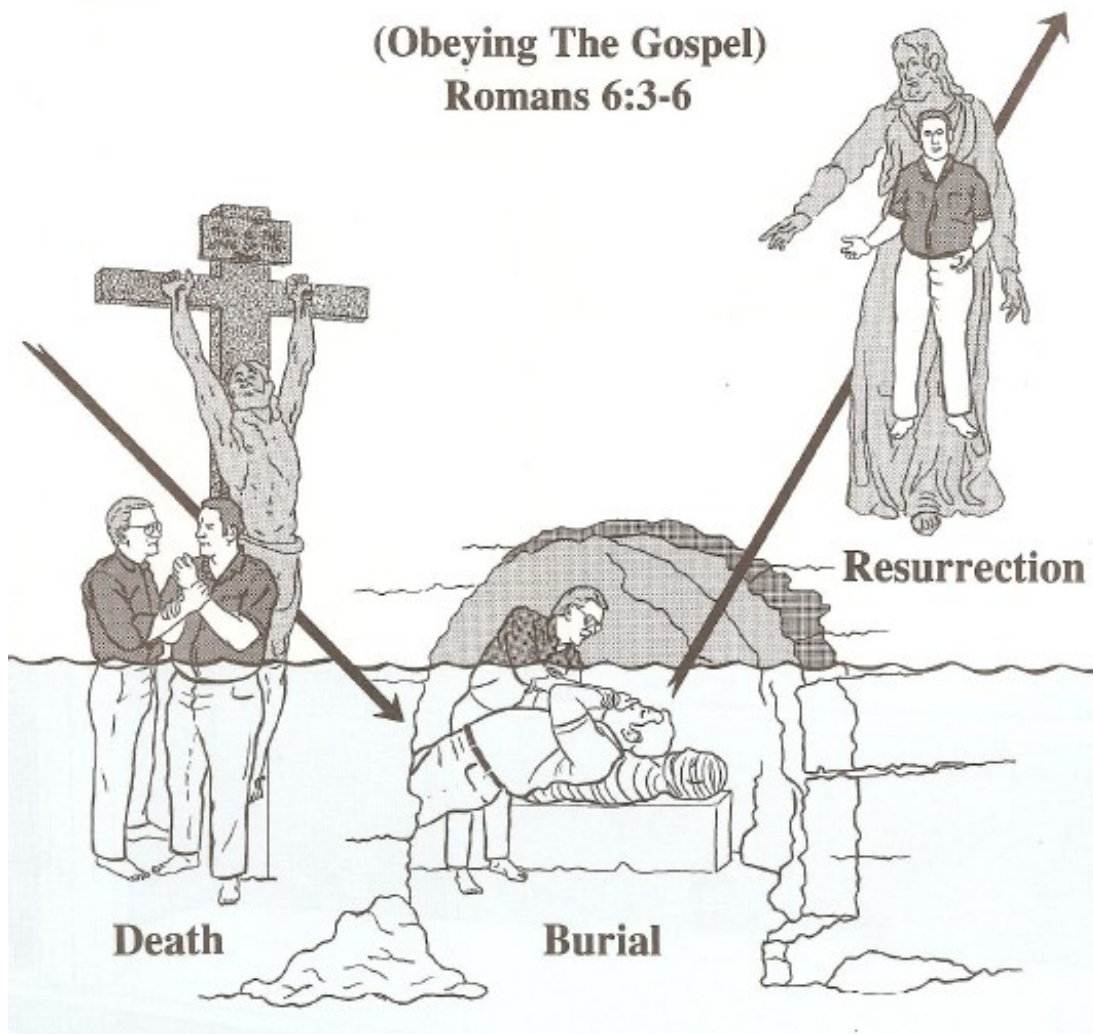
The second graphic illustrates what happens when we re-enact and obey the Gospel in Baptism.

The Gospel Re-enacted in Baptism

Romans 6:3-6

Don't you know that **all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into his death** in order that just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the father, we too may live a new life.

If we have united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin – because anyone who has died has been freed from sin.





The Gospel event (the death, burial and resurrection from the grave) of Jesus Christ is the blood sacrifice God required to pay for our sins. Baptism (re-enacting the Gospel) is how we gain access to the blood of Jesus Christ, to clothe ourselves with Him. It is through baptism that we enter into a covenant relationship with God. – Romans 6:3-6

Requirements of Baptism And Benefits

Baptism without faith, repentance and confession of sins means nothing more than getting wet. Until we come to God in faith with a contrite heart in repentance, knowing we are sinful beings, and are willing to openly confess ourselves as sinners, baptism is a futile exercise.

On a personal level, the act of baptism means you believe and have faith that Jesus, the Christ, died for your sins, that through baptism you are freed from the law of sin and death, and live now in faith and confidence in Christ for the resurrection of your body from the grave.

But while baptism is most certainly an acknowledgment of faith in Christ, it is much more. Baptism is what puts us into a blood covenant relationship with God, being clothed in Christ.. (Remember from Chapter Two, we cannot have a relationship with God without a covenant.)

Further, In offering Himself to make atonement for our sins, Jesus became the mediator of a new covenant between God and man.

For this reason **Christ is the mediator of a new covenant** that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance – now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the the first covenant. - Hebrews 9:15

For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all men...
- I Timothy 1:5

A mediator is one who speaks on our behalf. In this manner, Jesus serves as our high priest before God, mediating on our behalf.

He is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because **he always lives to intercede for them... He sacrificed for their sins** when he offered himself once for all - Hebrews 7:25-27

Therefore, since **we have a great high priest** who has gone through the heavens, **Jesus the Son of God**, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess.

For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are – yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may **receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.** - Hebrews 4:14-16

Sanctification: Why We Need a High Priest

Just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: **Be holy because I am holy.** - I Peter 1:15

Understand baptism is an act of legal justification that makes us holy in the sight of God. God does this on our behalf. However, though we are legally justified, we remain in truth, sinful beings. That is to say, we remain capable to give in to temptation, which gives birth to sin (James 1:14).

Sanctification is an act of volition. It's a life-long process we undergo to live holy lives, free of sin. Upon our physical death, God will not judge us by our perfection (holiness) or lack of it, but rather by our walk in the Lord (Sanctification) assuming we are “in the Lord.” (I John 1:8-10).

This is why we need a High Priest, one who is able to make atonement for our sins when we do sin. After all, if we never sin, what need is there of a high priest.. What if you sin tomorrow, and you later want atonement for that sin. As a Christian, you have Jesus Christ, your high priest, who is able to make atonement for all sins you have yet to commit.

We have been made holy through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ once for all. - Hebrews 10:10

By one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy. - Hebrews 10:14

Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. - Hebrews 4:16

Now this is important. Without clothing ourselves with Christ in baptism, we have no blood for sacrifice, we have no high priest with which to mediate on our behalf when we do sin. We are still living under the law of sin and death.

Therefore, **there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death.** For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man.- Romans 8:1-3

Until we re-enact the Gospel through baptism, we are not in Christ. We are not clothed with Christ. We are not covered with His blood to forgive our sins. This is the form of teaching taught by the Apostles.

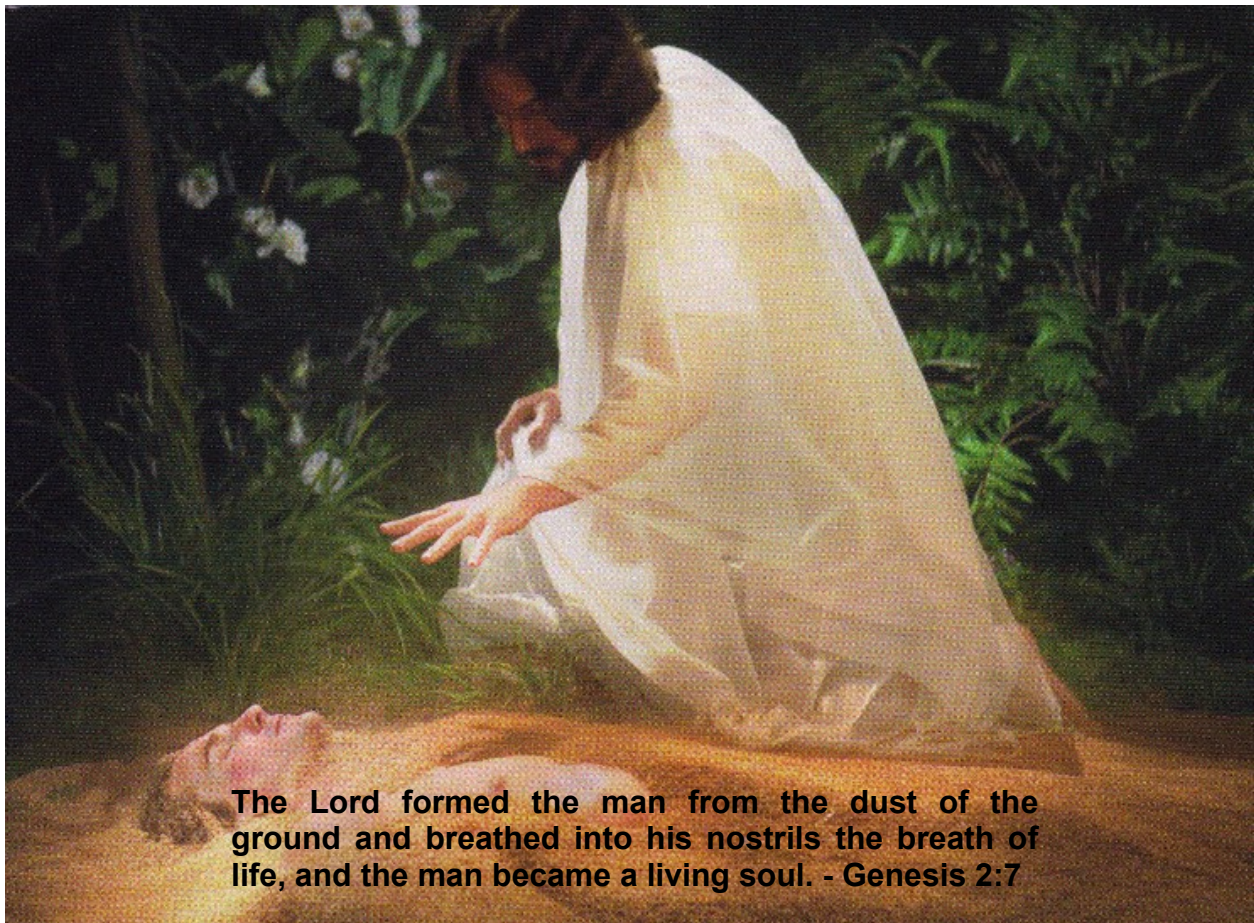
Being clothed with Christ and being covered by His blood, means God no longer sees or remembers our sins (Hebrews 8:12). He sees only the blood of His Son, our Savior and High Priest, Jesus Christ. Not that we should go on sinning (Romans 6:1-2). We must not. **God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life** (I Thessalonians 4:7). But when we do sin, we have the Son of God mediating before God on our behalf. This is God's mercy and grace at work. Praise God!

Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound,
That saved a wretch like me.
I once was lost but now am found,
Was blind, but now I see.

T'was Grace that taught my heart to fear.
And Grace, my fears relieved.
How precious did that Grace appear
The hour I first believed.

Through many dangers, toils and snares
I have already come;
'Tis Grace that brought me safe thus far
and Grace will lead me home.

**To Whom Did God Speak When He Said,
“Let Us Make Man in Our Image, In Our Likeness?”**



The Lord formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living soul. - Genesis 2:7

By now the answer should be obvious to you. God was speaking to Jesus! The man, Jesus!

The natural question is how is this possible? Jesus wasn't born until thousands of years after creation. What makes the answer seem all the more impossible is God was speaking to Jesus as another human being, before human beings were ever created. How can this be? The answer lies with our lack of understanding of time and eternity.

Jesus is Self-Existent and Eternal

The Jews of Jesus' day had no problem in believing that Jesus was a prophet of God. What they struggled with was His claim to be God.

In addressing the Pharisees, Jesus declared, “if you do not believe that ***I am***, you will indeed die in your sins” (John 8:24). What does “***I am***” mean? A few minutes later Jesus used the same words declaring, “I tell you the truth, before Abraham was born, ***I am***” (John 8:58). Again we see the use of the same expression “***I am***.” What was Jesus telling the Pharisees about Himself?

One reason we can rely on Scripture for answers is that the *Bible* interprets itself. Whenever a

question of prime importance is raised, you can be assured the *Bible* offers the answer.

To understand what Jesus was telling the Pharisees about Himself, we need to go to the Old Testament and examine the conversation God had with Moses at the burning bush in Exodus. God had chosen Moses to free the descendants of Abraham from the Egyptian Pharaoh. Moses, much afraid, wanted to know who he shall say had sent him to free his people. God answered saying, “***I am who I am***. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: ‘***I am has sent me to you***’” (Exodus 3:14).

There is no other expression used in this manner found in Scripture, yet Jesus used it to declare Himself to the Pharisees. In doing so He is declaring Himself to be the “***I am***” who spoke to Moses—God!

The Apostle Paul affirmed this same truth in Colossians 2:9. A transliteration of that verse reads: “***For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.***” The word for dwelleth in Koine Greek is katoikeo, pronounced “kat-oy-keh'-o.” It means to house permanently. Jesus Christ is God in the flesh, not just then, not just for the time He appeared on earth, but eternally (katoikeo). Even God, Himself, refers to His Son as God (Hebrews 1:8).

Again in I Timothy Paul wrote;

***For there is one God and one mediator between God and men,
the man Christ Jesus.*** - I Timothy 2:5

The word “man” is written in the present tense, meaning Jesus to this day remains in His glorified fleshly body. His body underwent spiritual changes when He was glorified, but He still retains His hu-manity. He is as we are, with a human body, spirit and soul.

Being self-existent, it was Jesus who spoke to Abraham, Jesus who spoke to Moses, and the same Jesus who addressed the Pharisees. But how is this possible? All of this was simply too much for carnal minds to accept, and the Pharisees attempted to stone (kill) Him for blasphemy.

When John wrote his Gospel account, he began it by declaring the eternal, self-existent nature of Christ. He was with God in the beginning and became a human being (John 1:1-14). Jesus Christ is both a human being and God, God incarnate (in the flesh). He is the great “***I Am.***”

As you read this trying to make sense of it, understand we only see things in the physical world through the eyeglasses of time. Events in our world are constrained through time. With time, there is a beginning and an end, and all that time in-between. Not so in eternity.

In eternity, such things as time cease to exist. Because of this, God saw Jesus on the Cross even before creation. In his mind’s eye, the Gospel was already accomplished. This is the reason why God could tell Satan that He “***...will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel***” (Genesis 3:15). The use of the word “will” in this verse is spoken of in the venue of time.

Time. How much of it do you have? From beginning to end, time is but a fleeting moment, a mere blink of the eye. For now, however, until we die we only know this thing called time. Spend it wisely.

About The Author



Jim Lynn, a veteran minister and evangelist in the church of Christ, holds a degree in Sacred Literature from White's Ferry Road School of Biblical Studies located in West Monroe, LA. In 1990 and 1991, Jim went to Russia and Ukraine to work as a missionary. While in Ukraine, Jim lectured at Dnepropetrovsk State University on Bible and Christianity. As a result of Jim's teaching and numerous public appearances, many atheists were converted and immersed into Christ in baptism.

Jim is an accomplished writer, artist and speaker. He has been interviewed on numerous radio and television shows, including the *World Broadcasting Network* in Franklin, TN.

Jim illustrated the *Good News Gospel* magazine published by *We Care Ministry*. This Magazine story line, presented in cartoon format, is now in its fifth printing, and published in three languages. *We Care Ministry* reports that many thousands of people have obeyed the Gospel as a direct result of reading this magazine created by Jim. Two illustrations from this magazine were chosen to be published in a pocket size edition of the New Testament. Jim's book, [The Miracle of Healing in Your Church Today](#), has been claimed by readers as the "best book ever written on the subject of healing."

Jim is always been an activist for God's Word. When Atheist Madalyn Murray O'Hare filed a lawsuit against NASA for reading from the Book of Genesis while orbiting the Moon on Christmas Eve, 1968, Jim leaped into action. Jim organized and led a petition drive in support of the Astronauts that raised over one million signatures. As a result, O'Hare's lawsuit was dismissed, and Jim was invited by the now late U.S. Senator Everett Dirksen of Illinois to be an honored guest at the NASA Apollo Mission Recognition Dinner.

In 1962 Jim was recipient of the *Most Outstanding Young Citizen Award*. In 1988 he was nominated for the *Outstanding Young Man of America Award*. Jim is also an *Eagle Scout* in the Boy Scouts of America.

Now retired, Jim and his wife, Joyce, live on a forested mountainside in South Central Alaska, where their interests include gardening, prospecting, enjoying nature and the open wilderness.

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