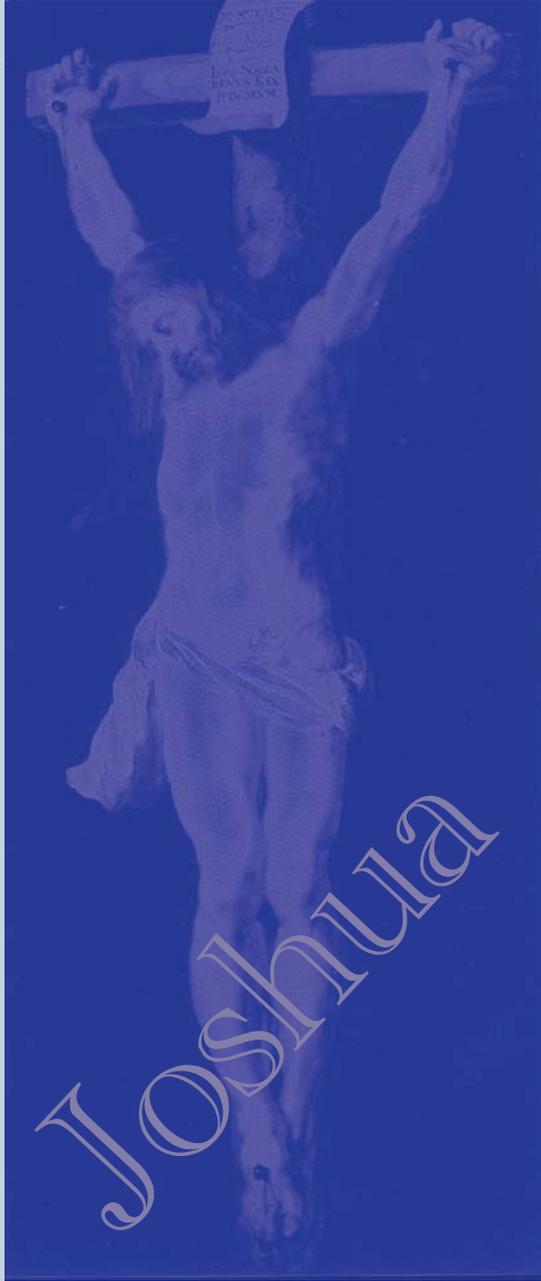




Letters to Ellen — My wonderful daughter who I love very much

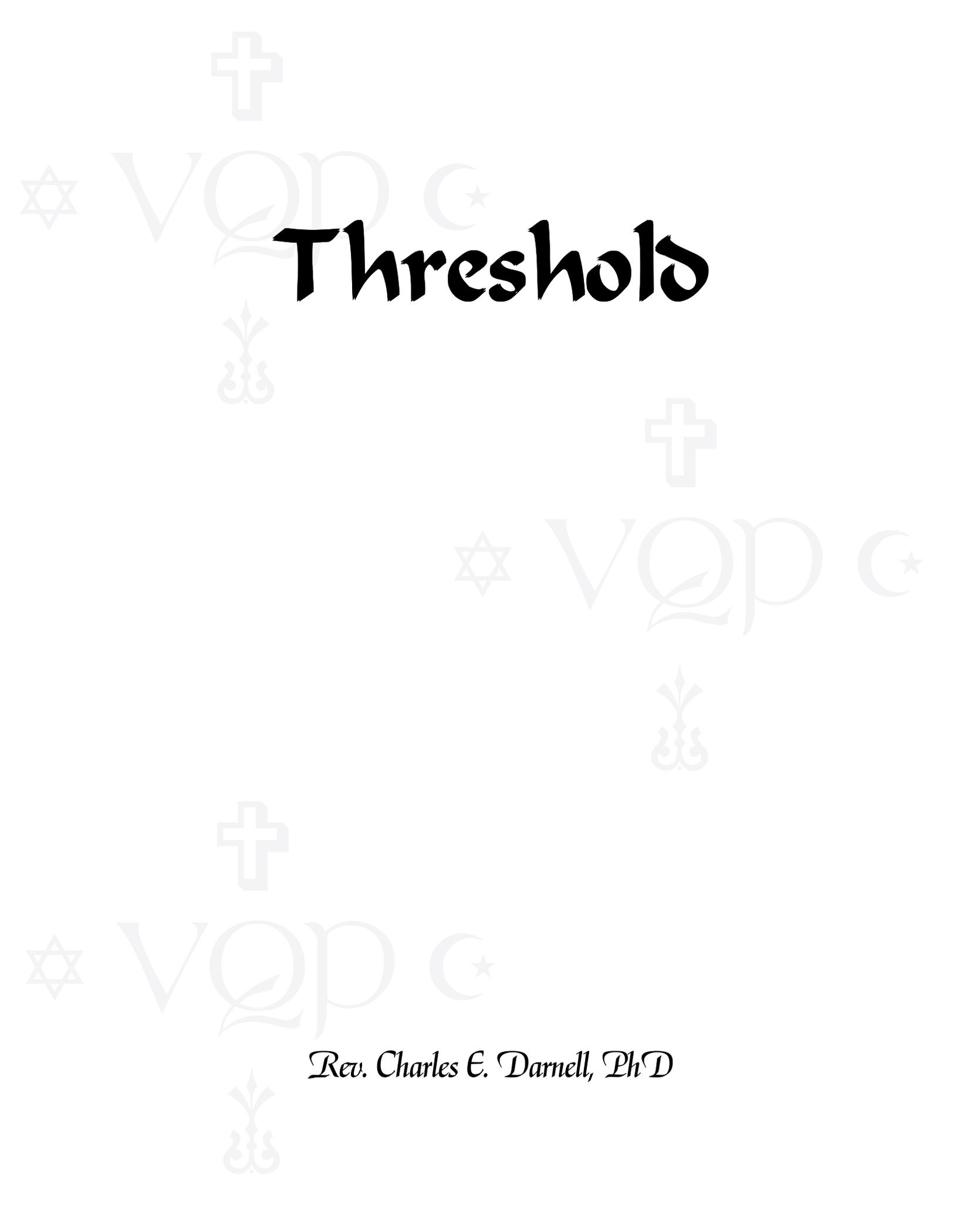
# Abundant Life for Teens

# Threshold



*Rev. Charles E. Darnell, PhD*





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# Threshold

There is a lot of meaning in this one little word *Threshold*, but we could speak of many words that contain multiple meanings as each word is spoken: life, death, trinity, tradition, religion, gang, love, God, heaven, hell, Jesus, and you. Yep! Especially **you**! You are the one who causes all this to gel into some kind of sense. Yea! I know, too much information in too few words.

Let's go back to the theme word, threshold. Webster's Dictionary gives the following definition for the word: **thresh•old** \ˈθrɛʃ-ˈhɔld\ *n* **1** : the sill of a door **2** : a point or place of beginning or entering : **OUTSET** **3** : a point at which a physiological or psychological effect begins to be produced  
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Look at these meanings! Yea! I know! I lost you on the first one. How can a door sill be a powerful charged meaning? Look again, but this time let's add the second meaning, a point or place of beginning or entering. If a threshold represents a point or place of beginning or entering, what is puberty, or the teenage years to the human species? Isn't that a point or place of beginning or entering? Now add the first meaning to this. Isn't puberty the doorway you are about to cross leading to a point or place of change? Wouldn't you enter on one side as who you are and after you make the crossing, you arrive at who you are to be. Now that is very powerful in meaning! Let's continue with the third element of the definition, we really are working toward a very powerful meaning. Think about this: you are now at a point where once you enter you cannot go back, the influences of your personal environment will impact upon the course of your direction and have its effect on the result. Your parents, school, teachers, siblings, friends, enemies, everything starts coming together in such a fast paced change there is no wonder this third meaning of threshold is a point where a physiological or psychological effect begins to be produced.

Now that this has been said, what is it I'm trying to tell you. First let me relate to you some of what I'm not trying to tell you! I'm not a child psychologist, nor a professional teacher! I am a concerned parent who believes in God and have been led to this point to start a great adventure with you. Some time ago I was in your shoes. Granted that was a long time ago, but I had the school bully take my lunch money and I was beaten up more than once because I said they couldn't have it. There are so many teens who will tell you books like this are not real, implying they don't take into consideration the difference of age, or ethnic background, or the oppression by race, a single parent home, the strength of a gang, or peer pressure, or any of the other things a teen may endure to become an adult.

Today's teens seem to forget each preceding generation also had its problems. Their generation was no different, and if we make it to the next generation that one won't be either. Yes! The circumstances will be slightly different, but the core of life and the problems in life will still be as it has been since the beginning of mankind's existence on this planet. So here it is! I feel led to write this book from a standpoint of love, a shared love for each of God's creations and a love for all of you. I know there are many who are hurting inside because of parents, or the situation of their environment, or the need they feel to be a misfit. By being a misfit or different from others allows them to at least receive some type of recognition. Life is not meant to be full of hurt. This brings us to our logo theme for this book: **3+U**. I can't change every situation you may have to go through as you make your journey toward adulthood, but I can certainly make you this promise! The Trinity of God the Father, Jesus His only Son, and the Holy Spirit are always with you, will always love you and will always help if you ask. I must establish a clear understanding that Jesus, the Son of God, and Christ are one and the same. I may use either term throughout this book, but they should mean the same to you the reader.

Returning to our discussion. Yes! I know there will be those circumstances where someone can show others something, or a situation, that would indicate God wasn't there when someone died, or was hurt, or something else bad happened. I will tell you this! I will do everything I can to show you the truth and

provide you information for you to make your decisions. I say your decisions, because as you grow older you should learn parents and teachers cannot walk in your shoes, or make decisions for you. You are learning to do that for yourself. If we, as adults, do our part, we should be providing the guidance so you will have the necessary tools to make wise and informed decisions. I understand there will be controversy in this because I cannot answer all questions of theology, or of traditions and fables created and passed from generation to generation until they seem to be the standard and the Bible. They are no longer the standard by which everything else is tested. I can tell you I am attempting to show you the Bible, really show you the Bible and let you weigh the questions.

I ask you this: If you are assigned a research paper in school, would you read several different articles and form your opinion from the various inputs? Do you expect in some way you will do the same thing concerning your own life and the values you ultimately form? Then why shouldn't you have some reference source showing you the Bible's input? No! I do not mean the canned theme preaching, teaching input. I mean a breathing, bleeding, heart pounding emotional input that gives the history of the Bible, the people of the Bible, the discipline of the Bible. Oh Yes! There is a discipline because the Bible can show you that you should have mastery over all aspects of your life. Look at all these characters/ letters. They form words and the words send messages. These words hold the power to influence, to give you new ideas, to show you the difference between right and wrong. Now, you say the Bible is dry and boring, however I say it is full of everything that makes life, from power to demons, from joy to sex. Look at the Bible itself. It contains words and those words are full of meaning. I say the Bible contains power and all of that other stuff.

For example what did God say about the power of the tongue? Proverbs 18:21, *Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit.* Look at the first part of the verse. Did you know you could speak death with your tongue? Have you ever thought about the fact that ever time you speak bad about someone else, you are speaking death to their life. In like manner, ever time you give praise to someone else, you are speaking life to that person's life. Think about it, you are not only affecting someone else, you are affecting yourself. Romans 10:17, *So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.* It is not only faith we build when we hear.

Don't you hear the words when you speak them? Then if there is power in the tongue to influence life and death, don't you think the same words heard by someone else causing them to be hurt and have bad feelings are also heard by you and can cause the same effect? I know that's a hard lesson to learn. Other people call you names and cause you to be hurt, and when you tell them off, you think you feel better inside because you have just won the round. Yes! That's true, but even though you think you got the upper hand and won, you really lost because those hateful words you sent toward the other person were also heard by your ears and taken inside and acted upon by your inner being. Now, let me show you this is true, and at the same time, show you some of the discipline we all must have inside ourselves to master the things of God.

Turn with me to the Book of James. Oh! In case you haven't figured it out, my writing will include any Bible verse I'm using. Look at it this way, too many people will never look at the verse if all I do is give them the verse reference and expect them to get up and get their Bible and open it to the verse being referenced. It will not happen in most cases because we (people) are lazy creatures for the most part. So I include the verses so you can study them along with the thought I'm telling about. I also do one other thing: I will show you the book, chapter and verse reference, either at the beginning or at the end of any verse used. Please note, if the reference is more than one verse there will be no verse numbers used in the passage (verse numbers were inserted by men). The Bible was written in paragraph form just as you would use if you were writing a report for school.

We now turn to James, third chapter. James 3:2-18, *For we all stumble in many things. If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body.*

*Indeed, we put bits in horses' mouths that they may obey us, and we turn their whole body. Look also at ships: although they are so large and are driven by fierce winds, they are turned by a very small rudder wherever the pilot desires. Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. See how great a forest a little fire kindles! And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell.*

*For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and creature of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by mankind. But no man can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. With it we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so. Does a spring send forth fresh water and bitter from the same opening? Can a fig tree, my brethren, bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Thus no spring yields both salt water and fresh.*

*Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom. But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic. For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there.*

*But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.* Can you find the power of the tongue in these verses? Verse five speaks of the tongue as a little member! Can you see the discipline needed in your life to conduct yourself in the manner God wanted you to act? Can you see that the power of the tongue will also impact yourself?

We should see that we do have power inside us and we also see a need for discipline. Join me as we investigate these words in more depth together. Perhaps you will dig deeper into our Creator's Guidebook. Let me make this clear, God's Guidebook means the Bible and Word is a term used to express who Jesus is. Words make up our greatest friend and at the same time our worst enemy! Couldn't we build a friend up or tear down an enemy with the words we speak? Therefore if we are to learn about all this, don't we need to understand The Word? Who is The Word? Is The Word a person, and if so, what has this person done for us? How does this Word affect us and what does it cause us to do?

Matthew, Mark, Luke and John! Yep! It's the names of a group, the **Gospel Group**. No! They are not a rock band, but Yes! They do spread good news. These are the writers of the books we call the Gospels. Boy! There is so much that could be said at this point. Have you ever considered that when all of this actually happened there were only four people in the whole world who wrote about the greatest of Teachers? Think about that! God inspired only four men to record the actions and life of His only Son. Of these four only two were appointed Apostles. Think about this, of the twelve men who were the original followers of Christ, only two wrote a gospel. Those two would be Matthew and John, and of those two, only one wrote to tell us who this man really was. John was the only gospel writer who illustrated who was The Word!

*John 1:1-17, In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God.*

*All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.*

*There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world.*

*He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave*

*the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*

*And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.*

*John bore witness of Him and cried out, saying, "This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me is preferred before me, for He was before me.'" And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace. For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.*

John identifies who The Word is. Notice that The Word was with God, and The Word was God! Think about *The Word is God!* Are you starting to see how important The Word is and the importance of the words we use in our life? First, let's clear up one thing. In verse six, John is speaking about John. Did you question this? He is not talking about himself, he is speaking of John the Baptist. Notice John's introduction goes for 17 verses before we are told the name of this person, whom he is calling The Word. There is one more thing before we move on: John's use of the term beginning goes back to the first verse in the Bible. Genesis 1:1, *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.*

I have said I intend to show you the truth and let you decide what is, or is not, and what it is that you care to believe. Ultimately, that is what happens for everyone. Recall the saying popular in early 1980's, "*If you don't stand for something, you'll fall (be swayed) for anything.*" Would you accept that the man we know as Jesus actually was a rebel in some ways? We could call it righteous indignation on His behalf and it sounds more correct. Really, what is the difference in saying Christ was a rebel against the ways of mankind or that He possessed righteous indignation over what he saw mankind doing? Didn't He turn over the money changer's tables in the temple? Didn't He upset the Scribes, Pharisees and Sadducees to the point they wanted Him dead? Why? What was the reason these groups wanted Christ killed? Didn't Christ go against the traditions of the time? Didn't He go against the teachings of the Rabbis over the rules of the Law? Would you consider yourself to be a rebel if you went against the traditions you have been taught? What if you were able to clearly see the written record, the Bible, and it doesn't match what adult traditions have taught you? Would you consider yourself to be a rebel against your parents and against your religion? What if I show you something different from what you've been taught? Am I a rebel causing you to turn from your parents or your traditions? Granted, I have no intention to do that and it would be very wrong on my part. But, what if the things I show you were spoken by Christ, or by God, and tradition has taught it another way? Who, then, is the rebel, or to put it more clearly, who is the liar? Let me show you where this leads us.

Matthew 24:4-5, *And Jesus answered and said to them: "Take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, saying, I am the Christ, and will deceive many."* Notice this is Christ himself speaking. Notice His warning! Answer this: What is a deception? Isn't that a lie? Isn't there a commandment of the Law that teaches against lying? Let's look at what God said:

Exodus 20:1-17, *And God spoke all these words, saying:*

*"I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.*

*You shall have no other gods before Me.*

*You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.*

*You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain.*

*Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the*

*seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates. For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.*

*Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the LORD your God is giving you.*

*You shall not murder.*

*You shall not commit adultery.*

*You shall not steal.*

*You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.*

*You shall not cover your neighbor's house; you shall not covet you neighbor's wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor's"*

How about that spoken by God Himself! That's pretty strong stuff if you ask me. Direct from God, and He tells us in verse 16 we are not to *bear false witness against our neighbor*. Isn't bearing false witness against someone the same as telling a lie against your neighbor? So in reality, didn't God tell us not to lie? If we are deceiving someone, aren't we lying to them? Aren't we breaking God's Law? Now we know there are those churches who make the claim they are a New Testament church and the Law does not apply. Did you catch that one? Law does not mean, in this case, running a red light! The Ten Commandments given by God are, in many ways and on most days, called the Law of Moses. The reality is that they are a list of moral instructions for life that God gave to all mankind.

Let's look at what Christ said. Matthew 5:17-18, "*Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled.*" Has anyone ever told you the meaning of a jot and tittle? These are those funny little marks in Hebrew that add meaning to their language. What Christ is saying is: there is nothing of the law that will be changed until all is fulfilled. Consider this! If we took away the dots over i and j, or removed apostrophes, we would have effectively changed the written word. Christ says this will not happen to the law of God. Remember, these verses are not from me, they are the words of God and of His Son and tell us truth. If we go against these words, aren't we really telling God we do not believe either Him or His Son? Have you studied God's words so you can know for yourself about such important issues?

Have you heard from your older family members that the Ten Commandments once hung in every classroom? Did your parents or grandparents tell you that they began every school day with maybe a hymn, a scripture reading or even with a prayer? Then I have another question on the Ten Commandments: Why is it the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and others define the Ten Commandments as a religious document? There's nothing religious in the document unless you are offended at the mention of the word God. If we were talking about Zeus and the gods of Greek mythology there would be no problem with the ACLU or other groups. Yet Zeus was worshiped, along with the other gods and goddesses of that pagan religion. Now, so it seems, just because the document has the word God in it, it is suddenly a religious document full of all kinds of religious ideas. Really? Look once again at the verses from Exodus 20. Since the first four commandments mention God, does that make them religious? Wouldn't Greek mythology or any other religion imply the same about their deity? So, why does that make the document religious? Doesn't it actually instill a warning that we are to believe in a certain manner or face a consequence? Isn't that more along the lines of discipline and not religion? Doesn't religion imply the manner in which one will worship the deity in question? Now look at the other six commandments. Aren't these six social rules for the sake of justice and fairness in how we deal with our fellow man? Wouldn't we find statutes (laws) in most states saying that you cannot commit murder, or that it is a crime to steal, or telling you how you are to treat both old people and young

children and other statutes defining adultery as one way to get a divorce?

Well then, if you agree with me, I have great difficulty accepting that these rules are making up a religious document. All these ten rules imply is, the respect for a Higher Being Who created all things in the first four items. The other six items instruct us to live justly within that created place. This means to respect both the Creator and the other parts of creation. Nothing more, and nothing less! Simple rules that give moral strength to any society! They do not compose a religion, demand worship, nor instruct how worship is to be conducted. The truth of the matter is, man in his desire to be in control, has followed the lead of Satan and instituted these rules as having something to do with a religion. The funny thing to me is that those who claim to be followers of these rules do not, nor will not, speak up about the stupidity of the ACLU and others in classifying these rules as a religious document. Once again, they are not religious in their very nature, they are social in their nature and are there for all men to accept them as a guide to live by, not as a means to worship a deity.

There once was a game show called *Name That Tune* with the object of the game to name a tune in the fewest number of notes and after a few clues, the contestants started telling how many notes it would take for them to name the tune. It really got interesting when a contestant said they could name a tune in one note. What if I told you I can show you a verse that condenses the Ten Commandments down to only two Commandments. That would be interesting, wouldn't it? Once again, these are not my words, they are the words of Christ. Mark 12:28-31, *Then one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, perceiving that He had answered them well, asked Him, "Which is the first commandment of all?"*

*Jesus answered him, "The first of all the commandments is: Hear, O Israel, the LORD our God, the LORD is one. And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength. This is the first commandment. And the second, like it, is this: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. There is no other commandment greater than these."*

These are the words of Christ and if you really look at the verses pertaining to the Ten Commandments in the book of Exodus (above), look at the structure of the commands. The first four pertain to God, or as Christ said, the first command is to, *"love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all you mind, and with all your strength."* The remaining six have to do with your relationship to other people, or as Christ said, *"And the second, like it, is this: You shall love your neighbor as yourself."* Wonderful! We have Christ's statements that we are not to let anyone deceive us, that He came to fill the Law, not to destroy it. Now we see the Ten Commandments can be reduced to only two commands. Well, if we went back to our game show, what if we can reduce the Ten Commandments to only one commandment?

John 13:34-35, *"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."* There we have it, a single new command given by Christ Himself, and if we would only follow this one command, all others would fall into their natural order. There would be no need to state the other commands because what they are commanding us to do would already be fulfilled. Notice the verses used reflect either the words of God or the words of His Son. I want you to fully grasp these are not my words. I am only telling them to you so that you may understand more of the Bible. Now, if you understand these words and have followed along this far, why is it that many people say the Bible is so hard to understand? Weren't the statements of God and of His Son rather simple? What was so difficult about the words? Maybe, just maybe, it is the influence of men who have made the subject so complex people do not understand what is being said. Maybe it is mankind's own laziness to seek an honest answer that has permitted life to become so messed up.

We have been talking about the man we know as Jesus. So tell me something! When was He born? I want a month and not a year for the answer. Why do you say December? Isn't that what tradition would have you believe? Is that the truth? What if I can show you the verses that indicate what you have heard, in its total traditional form, about the birth of the Christ child, is incorrect? Let's look at the record itself. The *Gospel Group*, remember that means Matthew, Mark, Luke and John as the gospel writers, only record facts about the birth of Christ in two of the four books. The two writers who record the event are Matthew and Luke, and only Matthew was an Apostle. We need to understand several things about the events in this story. First and foremost, we are speaking about Hebrew people. Therefore, the mother will be Hebrew, the supposed father will be Hebrew, the named relatives are Hebrew, the child will be a Hebrew. The shepherds in the fields will be Hebrew, the inn keeper was a Hebrew, the land where all this takes place is the land of the Hebrews. Do you have the picture? Then why is it we persist in calling this child by a Greek name? Why is it we persist in allowing His birth to be celebrated in December and why is it we put the wise men at the birth?

# The Birth of Christ

The two important dates for those who believe in the Son of God should be the day He was born and the day He arose, yet the traditions of mankind have clouded the truth of both events. There is no wonder Christ warned the disciples, and us, that we are to be deceived by no man. No man means your grandfather, your mother, your pastor, your Sunday School teacher, the TV story of these events or some commercial for a product that masks these events as something causing you to run out and spend money. I must tell you that most sources used for Christmas themes are not intentionally lying but merely repeating what they have been taught. We have lost sight of what we are celebrating and we have lost sight of the written record to give us the keys to understanding. Have you read carefully God's Word to see what clues it gives us as to when the birth of Jesus occurred?

We know up front that many men who have studied to be ministers and teachers of the Bible have searched the book to find out when Christ was born. They lose sight of one thing, they want to use this calendar or that calendar or perhaps they have failed to take into consideration how many days changed when people went from one calendar system to another. They have become so engrossed with these changes that they lost sight of the simple truth. **Hebrew!** This is the only word needed to understand the whole thing. We do not have to understand the Roman calendar at the time of the birth. We do not have to question how many days were lost or gained when this system was changed to that system.

The only calendar we need is the one contained in the Bible and given by God to the Hebrew people through Moses. That calendar from the Bible, and no other, is the simple answer to identify which calendar was in effect when the Christ child was born. Now let's look at verses in the Bible to find our true answers. First, notice in Luke 2:8 the following: *Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night*. Any person who has ever studied about the Middle East at the time of the birth of Christ will tell you shepherds did not have sheep in the field during winter. During winter, the flocks are brought from the hill country and placed in pens around the house of the shepherd. So, by virtue of this one verse alone, we should know that Christ was not born in winter but, there are verses that could lead us to a better understanding of the time of year when Christ was born! To show you this we will begin our search in the book of Luke. I will tell you up-front there are many verses we are going to use in this study in order to show you these things. Bear with me!

Luke 1:1-80, *Inasmuch as many have taken in hand to set in order a narrative of those things which have been fulfilled among us, just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word delivered them to us, it seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write to you an orderly account, most excellent Theophilus, (you can put your name here and it will mean the same thing) that you may know the certainty of those things in which you were instructed.*

*There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the division of Abijah. His wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and they were both well advanced in years.*

*So it was, that while he was serving as priest before God in the order of his division, according to the custom of the priesthood, his lot fell to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord. And the whole multitude of the people was praying outside at the hour of incense.*

*Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing on the right side of the altar of incense. And when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him. But the angel said to him, "Do*

*not be afraid, Zacharias, for your prayer is heard; and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth. For he will be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink. He will also be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb. And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God. He will also go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."*

*And Zacharias said to the angel, "How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is well advanced in years."*

*And the angel answered and said to him, "I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, and was sent to speak to you and bring you these glad tidings. But behold, you will be mute and not able to speak until the day these things take place, because you did not believe my words which will be fulfilled in their own time."*

*And the people waited for Zacharias, and marveled that he lingered so long in the temple. But when he came out, he could not speak to them; and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple, for he beckoned to them and remained speechless.*

*And so it was, as soon as the days of his service were completed, that he departed to his own house. Now after those days his wife Elizabeth conceived; and she hid herself five months, saying, "Thus the Lord has dealt with me, in the days when He looked on me, to take away my reproach among people."*

*Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And having come in, the angel said to her, "Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!"*

*But when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and considered what manner of greeting this was. Then the angel said to her; "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end."*

*Then Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I do not know a man?"*

*And the angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore also that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God. Now indeed, Elizabeth your relative has also conceived a son in her old age; and this is now the sixth month for her who was called barren. For with God nothing will be impossible."*

*Then Mary said, "Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.*

*Now Mary arose in those days and went into the hill country with haste, to a city of Judah, and entered the house of Zacharias and greeted Elizabeth. And it happened, when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, that the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. Then she spoke out with a loud voice and said, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! But why is this granted to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For indeed, as soon as the voice of your greeting sounded in my ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy. Blessed is she who believed, for there will be a fulfillment of those things which were told her from the Lord."*

*And Mary said: "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior. For He has regarded the lowly state of His maidservant; for behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed. For He who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is His name. And His mercy is on those who fear Him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with His arm; He has scattered*

*the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He has put down the mighty from their thrones, and exalted the lowly. He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich He has sent away empty. He has helped His servant Israel, in remembrance of His mercy, as He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his seed forever.”*

*And Mary remained with her about three months, and returned to her house.*

*Now Elizabeth’s full time came for her to be delivered, and she brought forth a son. When her neighbors and relatives heard how the Lord had shown great mercy to her, they rejoiced with her.*

*So it was, on the eighth day, that they came to circumcise the child; and they would have called him by the name of his father, Zacharias. His mother answered and said, “No; he shall be called John.”*

*But they said to her, “There is no one among your relatives who is called by this name.”*

*So they made signs to his father; what he would have him called. And he asked for a writing tablet, and wrote, saying, “His name is John.” So they all marveled. Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue loosed, and he spoke, praising God.*

*Then fear came on all who dwelt around them; and all these sayings were discussed throughout all the hill country of Judea. And all those who heard them kept them in their hearts, saying, “What kind of child will this be?” And the hand of the Lord was with him.*

*Now his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit, and prophesied, saying: “Blessed is the Lord God of Israel, for He has visited and redeemed His people, and has raised up a horn of salvation for us In the house of His servant David, as He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets, who have been since the world began, that we should be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us, to perform the mercy promised to our fathers and to remember His holy covenant, the oath which He swore to our father Abraham: To grant us that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies, might serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him all the days of our life.”*

*“And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Highest; for you will go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways, to give knowledge of salvation to His people by the remission of their sins, through the tender mercy of our God, with which the Dayspring from on high has visited us; to give light to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.”*

*So the child grew and became strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his manifestation to Israel.*

Okay, we now have the verses to start the search to learn when the Christ child was born. Are there really keys to unlock this secret in these verses? Well, follow along and you be the judge. Notice verse 5 because it contains our **first key**: *There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the division of Abijah. His wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth.* We learn that Zacharias was a Hebrew priest of the tribe of Levi. It would also appear Elizabeth was of the tribe of Levi, *daughters of Aaron*. So here we have a Hebrew couple both of the tribe of Levi. Now, if they are both of the tribe of Levi and Zacharias is a priest, wouldn't you believe they would be following the structure of feasts God established through Moses? Wouldn't it make perfectly good sense that this priest would be serving under the calendar in relationship to the feasts of God, and not to some man-made calendar, such as of the Romans at this time? In fact we really have confirmation of exactly that in verse six: *And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.* Doesn't it say, *walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.*? All right, I said there was a key in this verse. Look at the order to which Zacharias belonged. It's right there in the words *of the division of Abijah*. These words, believe it or not, establish the time of year Zacharias was serving at the temple. We can confirm this in verses 8 and 9, *So it was, that while he was serving as priest before God in the order of his division, according to the custom of the priesthood.* The temple of the Lord was at Jerusalem so this is the

location of Zacharias at this time. We now have to establish the meaning of the term *division of Abijah*. To find this meaning we turn to 1<sup>st</sup> Chronicles and find the following:

1 Chronicles 28:13, *also for the division of the priests and the Levites, for all the work of the service of the house of the LORD, and for all the articles of service in the house of the LORD.* In this first verse, we see that there was a division of the priests and the Levites. 1 Chronicles 27:15 *The twelfth captain for the twelfth month was Heldai the Netophathite, of Othniel; in his division were twenty-four thousand.* It is very important to see in this second verse that there were twelve months used as in our calendar today. Remember we are using the Hebrew system and their calendar is set up according to the feasts set down by God. So now where do we find the division of Abijah? Turn back three chapters and read in 1 Chronicles 24:5-19 the following: *Thus they were divided by lot, one group as another, for there were officials of the sanctuary and officials of the house of God, from the sons of Eleazar and from the sons of Ithamar. And the scribe, Shemaiah the son of Nethanel, one of the Levites, wrote them down before the king, the leaders, Zadok the priest, Ahimelech the son of Abiathar, and the heads of the fathers' houses of the priests and Levites, one father's house taken for Eleazar and one for Ithamar. Now the first lot fell to Jehoiarib, the second to Jedaiah, the third to Harim, the fourth to Seorim, the fifth to Malchijah, the sixth to Mijamin, the seventh to Hakkoz, the eighth to Abijah, the ninth to Jeshua, the tenth to Shecaniah, the eleventh to Eliashib, the twelfth to Jakim, the thirteenth to Huppah, the fourteenth to Jeshebeab, the fifteenth to Bilgah, the sixteenth to Immer, the seventeenth to Hezir, the eighteenth to Happizez, the nineteenth to Pethahiah, the twentieth to Jehezkel, the twenty-first to Jachin, the twenty-second to Gamul, the twenty-third to Delaiah, the twenty-fourth to Maaziah. This was the schedule of their service for coming into the house of the LORD according to their ordinance by the hand of Aaron their father, as the LORD God of Israel had commanded him.*

We see that the division of Abijah is the eighth division and there are twenty-four divisions of priests to serve over the twelve months of the year. Now common sense will have to enter and it shouldn't take a rocket scientist to determine each division was one-half of a month or roughly two weeks in length of service. We also need to see how the Hebrew calendar is laid out. According to importance, what is the first month? This is not the easiest of tasks to do using Biblical text. There is no single place in the Bible that states each month by its Hebrew name, however there are several verses that identify the first month of their calendar. Here are some of those verses, notice how the answer is still hidden:

Exodus 12:2, *"This month shall be your beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year to you."*

Exodus 12:18, *"In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at evening, you shall eat unleavened bread, until the twenty-first day of the month at evening."*

Exodus 40:2, *"On the first day of the first month you shall set up the tabernacle of the tent of meeting."*

Exodus 40:17, *And it came to pass in the first month of the second year, on the first day of the month, that the tabernacle was raised up.*

Leviticus 23:5, *"On the fourteenth day of the first month at twilight is the Lord's Passover."*

Numbers 9:1, *Now the LORD spoke to Moses in the Wilderness of Sinai, in the first month of the second year after they had come out of the land of Egypt, saying:*

Numbers 9:5, *And they kept the Passover on the fourteenth day of the first month, at twilight, in the Wilderness of Sinai; according to all that the LORD commanded Moses, so the children of Israel did.*

Numbers 28:16, *"On the fourteenth day of the first month is the Passover of the LORD."*

Numbers 33:3, *They departed from Rameses in the first month, on the fifteenth day of the first month; on the day after the Passover the children of Israel went out with boldness in the sight of all the Egyptians.*

We see in all of these verses the importance of the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Now watch when we add the following:

Exodus 13:4, *“On this day you are going out, in the month Abib.”*

Exodus 23:15, *“You shall keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread (you shall eat unleavened bread seven days, as I commanded you, at the time appointed in the month of Abib, for in it you came out of Egypt; none shall appear before Me empty)”*

Exodus 34:18, *“The Feast of Unleavened Bread you shall keep. Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, as I commanded you, in the appointed time of the month of Abib; for in the month of Abib you came out from Egypt.”*

Deuteronomy 16:1, *“Observe the month of Abib, and keep the Passover to the LORD your God, for in the month of Abib the LORD your God brought you out of Egypt by night.”*

We see the month Abib is the first month of the Hebrew calendar and in this month are the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Now if we know what is now called this month, we have the information we need to see when Zacharias was serving at the temple. Many good Bibles give extra information in the appendix and the Thompson Chain-reference Bible is no different. In it we find the names of the months on the Hebrew calendar.

Month	Reference	Divisions
1. Abib, or Nisan, April	Exodus 13:4	1 and 2
2. Ziv, May	1 Kings 6:1	3 and 4
3. Sivan, June	Esther 8:9	5 and 6
4. Tammuz, July	Jeremiah 39:2; Zechariah 8:19	7 and 8
5. Ab, August	Numbers 33:38; Zechariah 7:3	9 and 10
6. Elul, September	Nehemiah 6:15	11 and 12
7. Ethanim, or Tisri, October	1 Kings 8:2	13 and 14
8. Bul, November	1 Kings 6:38	15 and 16
9. Chisleu, or Kislev, December	Ezra 10:9	17 and 18
10. Tebeth, January	Esther 2:16	19 and 20
11. Shebat, February	Zechariah 1:7	21 and 22
12. Adar, March	Esther 3:7	23 and 24

Okay, time for all rocket scientists to rally so we can figure this out. If the first month is Abib, or Nisan, and there are two divisions per month, the eighth division should come during the second half of July. So the end of the time Zacharias was serving at the temple would be the last of July or the first of August. The next question we have to ask is: How far did he travel to get home when his service was over? We get a portion of our answer a little further in the story from Luke. Look at verses 39 and 40 in our Luke reference: *Now Mary arose in those days and went into the hill country with haste, to a city of Judah, and entered the house of Zacharias and greeted Elizabeth.* Let's turn one chapter and look at chapter 2 of Luke. Luke 2:4, *Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David.* For the sake of our discussion, let us say the city Mary went to and the city that Mary and Joseph went to are one and the same, or very close to each other. That being the case, Zacharias would have to travel about 15 miles to get home from the temple. We can say he was within one day's walk of getting home. We see in verses 23 and 24 he went home immediately after his service and Elizabeth became pregnant just after that, *And so it was, as soon as the days of his service were completed, that he departed to his own house. Now after those days his wife Elizabeth conceived; and she hid herself five months, saying.*

Notice it says *after those days*, meaning after the days of Zacharias' service at the temple, so once again, we can say Elizabeth became pregnant sometime around the first part of August.

Now we need our second key verse. Look at verses 26 and 27, *Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary.* Notice the term *in the sixth month*, we are not speaking of the sixth month of the year, we are speaking of the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy. We continue with our story from Luke and we find the following verses confirming Mary has conceived and traveled to see Elizabeth. "*And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS. Now indeed, Elizabeth your relative has also conceived a son in her old age; and this is now the sixth month for her who was called barren.*" . . .

*Now Mary arose in those days and went into the hill country with haste, to a city of Judah, and entered the house of Zacharias and greeted Elizabeth. And it happened, when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, that the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. Then she spoke out with a loud voice and said, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!"* Finally, we see Mary returned home just before Elizabeth was to deliver John the Baptist in verse 56, *And Mary remained with her about three months, and returned to her house.* We are now ready to continue searching for what we can learn about the birth of Christ. We have already seen the first month of the Hebrew calendar equals our month of April and we have deduced the eighth division of service at the temple would be in the last half of July. Knowing these things, we can safely say Elizabeth became pregnant about the first week in August and verse 26 shows us John the Baptist would be six months older than Christ. So, if this is the case, nine months after August would be the first part of April. Being so, we can also add the following statements: Mary conceives the Christ child in January and the Christ child will be born 6 months after John the Baptist, or in the month of October.

My question is: Why are learned men who have studied for years and have made a life long commitment to theology, been unable to see these things? Why does God enlighten me to understand these things? Furthermore, let's look at the significance there is in the two months these births take place. To begin, go back and review the verses we used to find the first month of the Hebrew calendar, Abib. April equates to Abib. Remember also April contains the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. I find it so strange to see the simple truth God left for us. April is the first month, the month John the Baptist was born and the month the Christ will be crucified. To me, the simple truth is John the Baptist is representing the Feast of Unleavened Bread that we are to honor before God and **Christ is our Holy Passover.** It is the death of Christ, as the only acceptable sacrifice before God, that gives us eternal life. Even John introduced Christ in this manner: John 1:29, *The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"* This is the sacrificial Lamb of God to be sacrificed on that one fateful Passover about two thousand years ago.

But, what about October? What are the God Ordained festival days that occur in the month of October? What are the festival days that should have meaning to everyone who says they follow His Son? Look in the book of Leviticus at the following: Leviticus 23:23-44, *Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, "Speak to the children of Israel, saying: In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you shall have a sabbath-rest, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, a holy convocation. You shall do no customary work on it; and you shall offer an offering made by fire to the LORD."*

*And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: "Also the tenth day of this seventh month shall be the Day of Atonement. It shall be a holy convocation for you; you shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire to the LORD. And you shall do no work on that same day, for it is the Day of Atonement, to make atonement for you before the LORD your God. For any person who is not afflicted*

*in soul on that same day shall be cut off from his people. And any person who does any work on that same day, that person I will destroy from among his people. You shall do no manner of work; it shall be a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings. It shall be to you a sabbath of solemn rest, and you shall afflict your souls; on the ninth day of the month at evening, from evening to evening, you shall celebrate your sabbath.”*

*Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, “Speak to the children of Israel, saying: The fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be the Feast of Tabernacles for seven days to the LORD. On the first day there shall be a holy convocation. You shall do no customary work on it. For seven days you shall offer an offering made by fire to the LORD. On the eighth day you shall have a holy convocation, and you shall offer an offering made by fire to the LORD. It is a sacred assembly, and you shall do no customary work on it.*

*These are the feasts of the LORD which you shall proclaim to be holy convocations, to offer an offering made by fire to the LORD, a burnt offering and a grain offering, a sacrifice and drink offerings, everything on its day; besides the Sabbaths of the LORD, besides your gifts, besides all your vows, and besides all your freewill offerings which you give to the LORD.*

*Also on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the fruit of the land, you shall keep the feast of the LORD for seven days; on the first day there shall be a sabbath-rest, and on the eighth day a sabbath-rest. And you shall take for yourselves on the first day the fruit of beautiful trees, branches of palm trees, the boughs of leafy trees, and willows of the brook; and you shall rejoice before the LORD your God for seven days. You shall keep it as a feast to the LORD for seven days in the year. It shall be a statute forever in your generations. You shall celebrate it in the seventh month. You shall dwell in booths for seven days. All who are native Israelites shall dwell in booths, that your generations may know that I made the children of Israel dwell in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God.”*

*So Moses declared to the children of Israel the feasts of the LORD.*

In verse 24 we see the first day of the seventh month (October) is a Holy day and is the Feast of Trumpets. What better way to announce the coming of the Christ child than the blowing of trumpets to call attention to what is to come? Notice the next Holy day! In verse 27 we find the tenth of the month is the Day of Atonement. Now, consider by these calculations, Christ is born during the second week of October, on the tenth to be exact! Is there a more fitting day before the Lord for His Son to be born? Doesn't Christ represent our atonement for sin before God? Do you now understand that it would be appropriate for Christ to be born on this day? But wait! We are not finished with the feasts during this month. In verse 34 we see the Feast of Tabernacles is to begin on the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month.

If you go back and review all you can find about the Feast of Tabernacles you will find a twofold reason for this feast. It represents a memorial for the time God dwelt with the Hebrews and also a memorial to the time when God had the Hebrews living in tents after He brought them out of Egypt. These two memorials represent two milestones in the history of the Hebrew people. Now, if the Day of Atonement isn't the appropriate time for the birth of Christ, it would seem any time during the Feast of Tabernacles could be a good time to commemorate the relationship between God the Creator, and we, His creation. Either way, I see the simple truth that tells me October is the most appropriate time for the birth of Christ. **The day of the tenth would stand out, head and shoulders, above all other dates on the Hebrew calendar for Christ to be born!**

With respect to the birth of Christ, there are Old Testament prophecies that reveal who Christ actually is and what He must fulfill to answer all of the prophecies. Okay, in my theory, the tenth of October will be the actual birth date of Christ, and if so, we should be able to find verses in the Bible that gives us information about atonement, which could be represented in a very Special Man. Read the following:

Numbers 35:33, “*So you shall not pollute the land where you are; for blood defiles the land, and no atonement can be made for the land, for the blood that is shed on it, except by the blood of him who shed it.*”

Deuteronomy 32:43, “*Rejoice, O Gentiles, with His people; for He will avenge the blood of His servants, and render vengeance to His adversaries; He will provide atonement for His land and His people.*”

Psalms 79:9, *Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of Your name; and deliver us, and provide atonement for our sins, for Your name’s sake!*

Proverbs 16:6, *In mercy and truth Atonement is provided for iniquity; and by the fear of the LORD one departs from evil.*

I indicated in the beginning of this work that I would show you the truth and let you decide what you are going to believe. Remember God created us as free will spirits who have the right to choose. Few will choose a path of righteousness, but most will choose a path toward destruction. Only you can decide what you will do with what I have shown you! **You will be that which your free will chooses you to be!** God did not create losers! He did not create sinners! He did create mankind as male and female! He did not create gays, lesbians or any other gender beyond the two stated in the last sentence!

I have tried to show you only one thing about deception and to guide you through the various passages of the Bible to come to a logical conclusion of when Christ was born. There are many deceptions now accepted as tradition in the church as a whole. The birth of Christ is only one point where I find great difference between what the Bible says and what man says.

At this point, I will use a couple more examples from the story of the birth of Christ to demonstrate what I mean. Look at angels for a moment. We are taught angels are God’s messengers and we, for the most part, look at them as being good. Look back at the reference verses pertaining to the story of Zacharias. Notice something in verses 20 and 64; (20) “*But behold, you will be mute and not able to speak until the day these things take place, because you did not believe my words which will be fulfilled in their own time.*” (64) *Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue loosed, and he spoke, praising God.* The angel Gabriel was the one who caused Zacharias to be mute and this condition lasted until the child (John the Baptist) was born. Pretty powerful stuff coming from an angel, wasn’t it? Think about it! An angel spoke a command and that command could cause you to become unable to speak for nine whole months. There are some who now want to worship angels because they are God’s special messengers. Contrary to this, we should all remember that the angels are created beings, just as we are created beings. God the Father was, and is, the one who created both and He did not create the one to be worshiped by the other. Creation is to give honor and praise to God only!

Finally, let’s investigate one more item from the birth story of Christ. When did the wise men come to see Christ? Tradition now has it that the wise men are at the manger scene. That’s untrue by the Biblical account! In Luke 2:8-20 we see the shepherds who have been called by angels to be aware of the birth of Christ and they go to the inn to find the child. In fact, we don’t even find the wise men in the Luke account. We have to turn to the Matthew account to see when the wise men came to see Christ. Matthew 2:1 should give us a clue right off the bat: Matthew 2:1, *Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem.* However, it is verse 16 that really gives us a good idea of when the wise men came to see Christ: Matthew 2:16, *Then Herod, when he saw that he was deceived by the wise men, was exceedingly angry; and he sent forth and put to death all the male children who were in Bethlehem and in all its districts, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had determined from the wise men.*

With this information we determine that the wise men did not come to see the Christ Child until He was almost two years of age. While we are looking at this verse, notice something. In the Luke account we saw that Mary traveled from Nazareth to the hill country of Judea to see Elizabeth. At the actual birth of Christ, Mary and Joseph are at Bethlehem, and it would seem from the Matthew account they stayed in this area after the birth of Christ until the angel told them to flee to Egypt. It would seem it isn't until after they return from Egypt that they return back to Galilee and Nazareth.

Okay! We have now seen the circumstances surrounding the birth of Christ. What about His death? Would you believe we have also managed to mess up the facts of the death of Christ? Turn to the next chapter to find out how.

# The Three Days Christ Was In The Tomb

The following is a study to encourage thought! It is not meant to cause doubt or for you to change your ideas about Good Friday or the day now called Easter Sunday. However, as Americans we normally do not follow other nations' holidays, and yet, we are dealing with the Hebrew holidays: Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. These holidays take place in conjunction with the crucifixion of Christ. Tradition has now entered and surrounds the term *sabbath* as used in the crucifixion account, without taking into consideration Hebrew customs. Using the Old Testament, the history and manner for following Hebrew customs on these holidays should be available for us to study. In doing this, there would also be information whereby there can be a full three days that Jesus was in the tomb.

Here's the Biblical text to support Christ's own statement in Matthew 12:40. The first thing to look at is there must be a full three days to account for within text. The following four references show that the mention of three days Christ must be in the tomb can be found in more than one place.

Matthew 12:40 KJV *"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."*

Matthew 16:21 KJV *From that time forth began Jesus to show unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.*

Matthew 27:62-63 KJV *Now the next day, that followed the day of the preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate, Saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again.*

Mark 8:31 KJV *And he began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.*

Biblical text you can understand is actually fulfilled by Biblical account and I can show you the text in plain black and white statements taken from the Bible itself! I find it so terribly strange men have now placed their religion over and above Christ's own words and have taken the truth away from the statement. Look very carefully at Matthew 12:40! If you have a red-letter edition of the Bible, you will see these words are spoken by Christ. Now, let's ask a very serious question. Do you think the Son of God knew what was going to happen to Him? Do you think He knew the truth and was going to speak the truth for mankind to understand? Then why, when He says He must spend three days and three nights in the tomb, does mankind seem to think they know more than God, or His Son, and they tell us Friday to Sunday makes three days and three nights? I have been told, and told again, that in the Jewish tradition they use intuitive reckoning to fulfill time and that any part of a day constitutes a full day. I don't believe it and I continue to maintain, and to think otherwise, anything less calls Jesus a liar. Sorry, but not by my lips will I call Jesus a liar! If Jesus said He must spend three days and three nights in the tomb, as Jonah spent three days and three nights in the great fish, that must be completed as stated, and by no other means! All I can say is someone surely failed in math class and the rest, who say they follow the Son, just want to go along for the ride, because they are not saying anything either. In my opinion, there seems to be great confusion over the use of the term Sabbath which is used for the resurrection of Christ. Let's first look at the account leading to Christ's crucifixion.

Mark 15:42 KJV *And now when the even was come, because it was the preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath.*

John 19:14 KJV *And it was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King!*

John 19:31 KJV *The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day, (**for that sabbath day was an high day,**) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away.*

Notice in these three verses the use of the term preparation and also in verse 31, this was a high Sabbath day. In reading Matthew, Mark, Luke and John there is no mention of the weekly sabbath as being a high day or that there is a preparation day before the weekly sabbath, therefore this must be a different Sabbath day, and if so, must be supportable by Biblical text. Consider what is customary in our time. We do not call every day a holiday. A holiday is a special day. Look again at verse 31 above, at the use of the term **high day**, in this case meaning that this Sabbath is different from the normal sabbath occurring every week, thus, a special holiday Sabbath! Let's look at text that supports different days, other than the weekly sabbath, that are called Sabbath days.

Numbers 28:16-18 KJV *And in the fourteenth day of the first month is the passover of the LORD. And in the fifteenth day of this month is the feast: seven days shall unleavened bread be eaten. In the first day shall be an holy convocation; ye shall do no manner of servile work therein:*

Leviticus 23:3-8 KJV *Six days shall work be done: but the seventh day is the sabbath of rest, an holy convocation; ye shall do no work therein: it is the sabbath of the LORD in all your dwellings. These are the feasts of the LORD, even holy convocations, which ye shall proclaim in their seasons. In the fourteenth day of the first month at even is the Lord's passover. And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the feast of unleavened bread unto the LORD: seven days ye must eat unleavened bread. In the first day ye shall have an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein. But ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD seven days: in the seventh day is an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein.*

In verse three of Leviticus 23, the day of rest is called a sabbath, this is the weekly sabbath. Please understand the terms sabbath and holy convocation are synonymous, or mean the same thing. Notice in verse five the fourteenth day of the first month. Now go back to Numbers 28:18, and if Sabbath were inserted instead of Holy Convocation, the meaning would remain the same.

Leviticus 23:24 KJV *“Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, In the seventh month, in the first day of the month, shall ye have a sabbath, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, an holy convocation.”*

Leviticus 23:27 KJV *“Also on the tenth day of this seventh month there shall be a day of atonement: it shall be an holy convocation unto you; and ye shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD.”*

Leviticus 23:32 KJV *“It shall be unto you a sabbath of rest, and ye shall afflict your souls: in the ninth day of the month at even, from even unto even, shall ye celebrate your sabbath.”*

Leviticus 23:32 is one of the keys that will help define the day Christ was crucified. Notice the day, or Sabbath, goes from even unto even, that would be from twilight (dusk) until twilight the next day, or in present day terms from 6:00 PM until 6:00 PM the next day.

Leviticus 23:34-37 KJV *Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, “The fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be the feast of tabernacles for seven days unto the LORD. On the first day shall be an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein. Seven days ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD: on the eighth day shall be an holy convocation unto you; and ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD: it is a solemn assembly; and ye shall do no servile work therein. These are the feasts of the LORD, which ye shall proclaim to be holy convocations, to offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD, a burnt offering, and a meat offering, a sacrifice, and drink offerings, every thing upon his day.”*

You should now understand that a high day would be a feast day, a Holy Convocation or a Sabbath day. In Numbers 28:16 and Leviticus 23:5 there is the term fourteenth day of the first month. Let's show what day this is in a different manner. The text above identifies the fourteenth as the LORD's Passover. Where does this come from and how do we identify the Hebrew month? This actually goes back to the same search we went through to find the first month, so we could identify when Christ was born.

Exodus 12:1-6 KJV *And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, "This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you. Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house: And if the household be too little for the lamb, let him and his neighbour next unto his house take it according to the number of the souls; every man according to his eating shall make your count for the lamb. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goats: And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening."*

Notice the time the lamb was killed . . . in the evening. The following verse will identify the specific Hebrew month we are talking about.

Esther 3:7 KJV *In the first month, that is, the month Nisan, . . .*

Most any good concordance will transpose Nisan into the month we call April. In the account from Exodus we have a lamb that is to be sacrificed. Look at what John the Baptist says about Jesus in the following verse.

John 1:29 KJV *The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."*

Here we have the true sacrifice God sent to correct the error caused by Adam. We also know the sacrifice had to take place on the preparation day, or fourteenth of Nisan, before the first Sabbath of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and a Hebrew day went from evening to evening. Therefore, it would seem to me the crucifixion and burial of Christ had to take place on Wednesday prior to twilight. You would then have Wednesday night (**night 1**), Thursday day (**day 1**) (also please note this first night and day would make up the High Holy Sabbath of the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread), Thursday night (**night 2**), Friday day (**day 2**), Friday night (**night 3**) and Saturday day (**day 3**) (now, make note the Friday night and Saturday (the night/day components of the third day) would make up the weekly Sabbath—the second Sabbath during this week) which would make up three days and three nights before the beginning of the first day of the week which would be Saturday at evening (twilight or about 6:00 PM). Then the following verse would be correct to complete the Biblical account.

Matthew 28:1-6 KJV *In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre.*

*And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow: and for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men.*

*And the angel answered and said unto the women, "Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here: for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay."*

We read in Leviticus 23:32 the day started at evening and went until the next evening. The actual resurrection of Christ occurred sometime between three in the afternoon (three full days from the time that Jesus died) and twilight on Saturday (end of the Sabbath and beginning of the first day) and not at the coming of dawn on Sunday. The reason the stone was rolled away was not to let Christ out but to let the others into the tomb. Christ was already resurrected by the time the two Marys arrived at dawn. *Remember it is not the death of Christ that gives the free gift from God, it is His resurrection that*

*provides this gift.* Where did tradition enter to change the meaning? Historically, we tend to forget common man did not have the Holy Bible until 1611 when the King James version (KJV) was printed. Up to that date the Bible remained, for the most part, in the hands of the church and the nobility. It is so very important that you understand who this historical church is at that time, however, I am not here to upset anyone over the name of a denomination, history verifies this. Go and look yourself to see who the church really was at that time.

The church, or the influence from the nobility upon the church at that time in history, could establish any number of ideas that would become tradition. There was no check made by common man to see if that which was being said, instructed or told to the common man was true, or even scriptural. One such tradition is Easter. It seems we have also forgotten the term **Easter** does not mean **Passover**. It is derived from the word *Astarte*, the goddess of fertility. This is where the easter bunny, baby chicks and eggs come into the enactment of this holiday, and all the other pagan traditions now associated with the crucifixion of Christ.

If you understand the structure of the Hebrew holidays given to Moses, there will never be a **Resurrection Day** prior to, or after, the 14<sup>th</sup> day of April, and yet, we celebrate Easter whenever it appears on the calendar. Please go and look on your calendar to see the day on which you celebrated the resurrection of your Lord in any given year. You might even find it more confusing if you look to see when the calendar says Passover is celebrated. I do not know why the Bible says Passover is on the 14<sup>th</sup> of April and yet the calendar shows it on another date. Well, that isn't actually correct either. The Jews also want to play with a calendar and they use some old statements that cause the day of Passover to change from the 14<sup>th</sup> of April. All I can say is the influence of men has caused this date to be changed to meet with some hidden agenda. I will show you the hidden agenda in a later chapter. If mankind would only accept the simple truth and leave other things alone, we would be worshipping God on His feast days as He instructed, plain and simple.

# The Name of the Son and also of God the Father

Have you noticed I have tried, as much as I could, to avoid using the name Jesus or the term Jewish? Why? Would you believe I do not want to mislead you down any possible path? This can certainly be one of those paths that leads toward deception and I would prefer you to know the truth.

Did you catch all of the emphasis put on the term Hebrew in the story of Christ's birth? Why is it you believe God would have the story of His Son, and in it, have a Hebrew mother, a supposed Hebrew father, and a Hebrew child; and yet the world is going to call this child by a Greek name? My given name is Charles so why would I want everything about me to be shown as Carlos? I have tried to explain this to several people and I continue to get an unacceptable answer. The answer I get back is, "What difference does it make?"

Let me make a statement to show you the difference. If you are willing to accept the little changes to God's Word, then you will also accept larger changes. If you don't take a stand on something, you will fall for anything! That is how deception gets started, how Satan gets his foot in the door to change the truth, how mankind falls for the trickery and permits a false statement to become tradition accepted as the truth. Case in point is the name of the Christ child. Why do we permit the story to go on and on and on stating the given name of this child as Jesus? If it really doesn't make a difference, why don't we use the Spanish pronunciation of the name and call the Christ **Hay-sus**? I have asked this question and the answer I got back blew me away.

The answer was because, "Christ was not Spanish."

I fired back, "Christ certainly wasn't American or Greek either, so why use the name Jesus?"

The answer was, "Because the Bible says to name the child Jesus."

My next question was: "Oh! So you now want me to believe the angel of God spoke to Mary and Joseph and told them both, in English, they were to name their Hebrew child with a Greek name? Really! I find this to be absolutely humorous. Can I turn to Matthew in my Bible and find it written that the name of the child was to be Emmanuel? Do you hear anyone telling others they believe in Emmanuel and follow his ways? Have you ever heard anyone explain their religion as a denomination of Emmanuelism?"

Here is the actual name of the Christ child — **His name is Joshua!** Jesus is the Greek form of Joshua, which means *the Lord saves*. Emmanuel means *God with us*. In either case, this man represents the anointed one of God. The Messiah or Savior! His Hebrew name was Joshua and yet the churches we attend won't teach you the man's true Hebrew name. Why? Is it because the pastors and teachers don't know this name or they won't teach the truth?

Now, I proclaimed at the beginning of this chapter that I would show you the name of the Father. We have heard God is named Jehovah or Yahweh. I want you to carefully read the following verse: John 17:11-12 NIV, "*I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name—the name you gave me—so that they may be one as we are one. While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by that name you gave me. None has been lost except the one doomed to destruction so that Scripture would be fulfilled.*"

So, it would seem if we know the name of the Christ, we also know the name of God the Father. Actually, it is a little more difficult than that. We would have to study Hebrew to understand the complete manner in which the one name is the same, actually part of, the other. Here is the truth! If you really know the Son, you know the Father, and that is the simple part we should understand.

We have now looked at the birth, the death and the name of Christ. Have you ever heard anything like this while in church? You mean you didn't know the name of Christ was Joshua? Did you really think December 25<sup>th</sup> is the day of Christ's birth? Do you actually believe the name of the day Christ arose was Easter? Haven't I explained and shown by Biblical text, how these thoughts and terms have been changed down through the ages? Who has been deceived?

**Are you ready for more truth?**

# Lies, Hype & Deceptions

Lies, hype and deceptions are Satan's geek-speak. We can call this many different things. It may be political correctness, gender neutral, smart marketing, our traditions, or any number of other titles, but when seriously analyzed it all comes down to simple deceptions, or the telling of lies.

We can find it on the television, in the movies and even at those places we go to worship which we call church. Let's recall something from American History. Abraham Lincoln said, "You can please some of the people some of the time, and all the people some of the time, but, you cannot please all the people all the time." Wouldn't it make sense that this applies across the board and in politics as well as anything else? Then wouldn't it make sense that no matter how many polls are taken, not every one is going to be pleased with the results? So, why then, is it necessary to exaggerate the positive statements or positions to the point they become lies?

We can see this in almost any advertisement on television. We can see this in the actions of insurance companies who pay hospitals and doctors. We can see this when there are Congressional hearings over something that's gone bad. We can even see this in those churches that hide the truth, mask the manner of teaching, and call it their traditions.

Let's go back to the Bible and see several things just for the sake of illustration. When we speak about Joshua (Jesus) and the Apostles, from what book did they teach? We know that Jesus could read because it is recorded as being so. Look at the following selection of verses and we will study several things:

*Luke 4:13-32, Now when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from Him until an opportune time.*

*Then Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and news of Him went out through all the surrounding region. And He taught in their synagogues, being glorified by all.*

*So He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read. And He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written:*

*"The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD."*

*Then He closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him. And He began to say to them, "Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."*

*So all bore witness to Him, and marveled at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth. And they said, "Is this not Joseph's son?"*

*He said to them, "You will surely say this proverb to Me, Physician, heal yourself! Whatever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in Your country."*

*Then He said, "Assuredly, I say to you, no prophet is accepted in his own country. But I tell you truly, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, and there was a great famine throughout all the land; but to none of them was Elijah sent except to Zarephath, in the region of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow. And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet, and none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian."*

*So all those in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, and rose up*

*and thrust Him out of the city; and they led Him to the brow of the hill on which their city was built, that they might throw Him down over the cliff.*

*Then passing through the midst of them, He went His way. Then He went down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and was teaching them on the Sabbaths. And they were astonished at His teaching, for His word was with authority.*

To start this portion of our study, look at verse 13. Do you clearly see Satan is involved with all this? Do you see that Luke wrote that Satan left Christ until *an opportune time*? Satan thought that opportune time was when Christ was on the stake (cross) and died. When Jesus arose on the third day, Satan's power of death was broken. After Christ rose into heaven, Satan thought he could break the influence of Christ by persecuting believers. When that didn't work, and the movement continued to grow, Satan went to his old bag of tricks and started misleading the thoughts of men from the truth and deceived them into accepting the lies he was telling. At this point let's get back to these verses. Notice the full power of Christ in verses 14 and 30. In verse 13 we see Christ going from Jerusalem to Galilee in the blink of an eye. If you do not believe this to be so, please explain what it means when it says, *in the power of the Spirit*. The other verse to show the power of Christ is in verse 30. To fully understand verse 30 let's add verse 29 and read them together, *and rose up and thrust Him out of the city; and they led Him to the brow of the hill on which their city was built, that they might throw Him down over the cliff. Then passing through the midst of them, He went His way*. Christ permitted these people to lead Him from the city (verse 29), however, it clearly shows in verse 30 He was not finished with His mission and was not harmed by these people. In fact, it says He *passed through the midst of them and went on His way*.

Now that I've shown you this verse, I ask another question. Have you seen this illustrated someplace else and never even thought about where it came from? Well, have you watched any of the Star Wars movies? You mean you watched Phantom Menace and saw the Jedi knights move their finger and pass around Empire Storm-troopers or how they did other things of the force and never saw the tie to the teaching of good and evil in the movie? Honest, if you watch closely, there are many ways God sends ideas to people to continually tell the story of good and evil. God may inspire people to show good and evil in a book, a magazine article, on television, in a movie or on the Internet. What you must understand is Satan can influence mankind to do the same, but for evil purposes. It becomes a decision for you if you will find the good or if you will find the bad in all things, and yes, they will both be there. In Star Wars, it was the Empire spreading evil, and the influence of the force can be either good or bad. Look at the Internet. It can be a blessing of knowledge that expands your understanding by a vast margin. At the same time, the Internet has a dark side that can lead you to destruction. It is there! It is not hard to find! The question is what will you do with it when you find it? These are to be your decisions! Choose wisely!

Now, returning to our study, the point showing that Christ could read is found in verse 16. Here's the question! What book did Christ and the Apostles read? What advantage did the Apostles have that we seem to have forgotten? First, let's understand Jesus and the Apostles did not read from the Bible! Second, let's understand there wasn't a New Testament, no letters from Paul, no Revelation of Jesus as given to John. The only books Jesus and the Apostles had were those we call the Old Testament. Look at our reference verses. What does verse 17 say? It reads, *And He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written.*

The advantage the Apostles had that we seem to have forgotten is the teachings of the prophets in the Old Testament and the Apostles knew the prophecies pertaining to the Messiah. It has been said there are 459 prophecies pertaining to the Messiah in the Old Testament. Seriously, I cannot begin to define all these verses and show you the corresponding fulfillment in the Gospels. The point to be made

is, today most people do not understand the Old Testament, as they should, to see why Christ was the Messiah. We also do not understand the simple truth God laid out for mankind from which we have strayed. God set out certain feasts to be celebrated each and every year, just as He set a Sabbath day for mankind to rest from work. Answer this! Where is it written in the Bible that mankind will worship God on Sunday? Wasn't the original Sabbath Saturday? Who changed it? Why? Why don't we celebrate the feasts God established? Please do not give me the cop-out answer. We are not Jewish! If we follow the ways of Christ then we are to follow the feasts God the Father established for mankind. We do not have to be Jewish to do this. Look at what God said when He gave these special days to Moses.

First and foremost God gave us the Sabbath! What does God's laws say about the Sabbath? Leviticus 23:3, "*Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of solemn rest, a holy convocation. You shall do no work on it; it is the Sabbath of the LORD in all your dwellings.*" Now, where in this statement from God does it say we will rest and worship Him on the first day of the week?

The feast days carry special statements: Leviticus 23:14, (Concerning Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread) "*You shall eat neither bread nor parched grain nor fresh grain until the same day that you have brought an offering to your God; it shall be a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings.*" Concerning the Feast of Weeks, Leviticus 23:21, "*And you shall proclaim on the same day that it is a holy convocation to you. You shall do no customary work on it. It shall be a statute forever in all your dwellings throughout your generations.*" Concerning the Feast of Trumpets and the Day of Atonement, Leviticus 23:31, "*You shall do no manner of work; it shall be a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings.* Concerning all the appointed feasts, Leviticus 23:37-38, "*These are the feasts of the LORD which you shall proclaim to be holy convocations, to offer an offering made by fire to the LORD, a burnt offering and a grain offering, a sacrifice and drink offerings, everything on its day; besides the Sabbaths of the LORD, besides your gifts, besides all your vows, and besides all your freewill offerings which you give to the LORD.*" Finally, concerning the Feast of Tabernacles, Leviticus 23:41, "*You shall keep it as a feast to the LORD for seven days in the year. It shall be a statute forever in your generations. You shall celebrate it in the seventh month.*"

How did we get so far from the truth? If these are the Holy days God the Father set up, why is it we no longer celebrate them before God? Can't we remember the verse in the Book of Luke where Jesus said, Matthew 5:17 "*Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill.*"

Well, is it the New Testament act of the Lord's Supper that some people feel has replaced the ordained feasts? That wouldn't do justice to God the Father or to His Son. Doesn't every verse pertaining to the feasts identified in Leviticus tell us *it shall be a statute forever in your generations*. What part of that didn't you understand? Was it statute? That means a law! Was it forever? That means forever! Was it in your generations? That means the continued presence of mankind upon this planet! So what misled mankind from the instructions given by God?

I can show you, what I feel! One of the cop-out answers used to convince mankind to make changes came from the original church and these changes did not come from modern man. Look at the book of Acts in the 15<sup>th</sup> chapter. In this question presented to the church there were those who desired everyone to meet, adhere or follow the Law as given to Moses. After a lengthy discussion, James, the brother of Jesus and leader of the church at Jerusalem, stood and told the others they should not place an extra burden upon the new believer by following everything of the law when they themselves could not do it. Here is the text of Acts 15:5-21:

*But some of the sect of the Pharisees who believed rose up, saying, "It is necessary to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses."*

Now the apostles and elders came together to consider this matter. And when there had been much dispute, Peter rose up and said to them: “Men and brethren, you know that a good while ago God chose among us, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe. So God, who knows the heart, acknowledged them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He did to us, and made no distinction between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. Now therefore, why do you test God by putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved in the same manner as they.”

Then all the multitude kept silent and listened to Barnabas and Paul declaring how many miracles and wonders God had worked through them among the Gentiles. And after they had become silent, James answered, saying, “Men and brethren, listen to me: Simon has declared how God at the first visited the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name. And with this the words of the prophets agree, just as it is written:

“After this I will return and will rebuild the tabernacle of David, which has fallen down; I will rebuild its ruins, and I will set it up; so that the rest of mankind may seek the LORD, even all the Gentiles who are called by My name, says the LORD who does all these things. Known to God from eternity are all His works.”

“Therefore I judge that we should not trouble those from among the Gentiles who are turning to God, but that we write to them to abstain from things polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from things strangled, and from blood. For Moses has had throughout many generations those who preach him in every city, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath.”

The simple answer that I can give you goes back to the temptation of Jesus in the desert and was caused by Satan! Remember in Luke, chapter 4, verse 13 Satan was waiting for an opportune time. His opportune time came to the church itself. Satan came to mankind and told them that others did not believe as they did and those others were going to hell. He continued and placed levels of authority upon the church and there was power and influence which could go to a person’s head. That authority made particular individuals great and diminished the authority of Jesus. Satan convinced the church that it was more important to have traditions based upon the words of men and not through the authority of God or in His Word, the Bible. Men changed worship into religion for their own power and glory and not for the glory of God the Father. There is no verse in the entire Bible identifying an observance of the ordinances given by God that says they are a religion. I know — show you! There are only five verses in the Bible using the word religion. None of these verses are in the Old Testament, that is the place where the ordinances of God were set up and where the basis of the New Covenant took shape. Here are the five verses:

Acts 25:19, “*but had some questions against him about their own religion and about a certain Jesus, who had died, whom Paul affirmed to be alive.*” This verse is pertaining to the Jewish religion set up by the Rabbinical system.

Acts 26:5, “*They knew me from the first, if they were willing to testify, that according to the strictest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee.*” Again, this concerns the Jewish religion under the Rabbinical system.

Colossians 2:23, *These things indeed have an appearance of wisdom in self-imposed religion, false humility, and neglect of the body, but are of no value against the indulgence of the flesh.* The underline says it all.

James 1:26, *If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one’s religion is useless.* A generalized statement spoken by James.

James 1:27, *Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.* Wait, what is this? Isn't this a statement showing the true Way of Christ? Aren't we to help one another, especially those who are less fortunate, and to discipline ourselves from the blemishes of the flesh?

I will not be foolish and tell you there are no references in the Bible to any religion. There are references to both Judaism and to Christianity, however if you really study the teachings of Jesus you will see the teachings of loving your neighbor as yourself and not the pomp and ceremony of religion. In fact, it was Jesus' acts outside of the Rabbinical system of ceremony and their interpretation of the law that got Christ into trouble with the Jews in the first place. Did you notice I used the term Jews? It seems Jesus liked to call the Sadducees, Pharisees and Scribes the Jews and even went so far as to tell the Apostle John the following in the Revelation:

Revelation 2:8-9, *"And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write,*

*'These things says the First and the Last, who was dead, and came to life: I know your works, tribulation, and poverty (but you are rich); and I know the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.'* Jesus did not use this statement only one time, He used it a second time in the statement made to the church at Philadelphia. We read the second record of this statement in Revelation 3:7-10, *"And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write,*

*These things says He who is holy, He who is true, He who has the key of David, He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens: I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name. Indeed I will make those of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews and are not, but lie—indeed I will make them come and worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved you. Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth."*

Oh! By the way, did you notice the last sentence in this passage? Notice that the *hour of trial* shall *come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth*. Where are you living? Are you upon the Earth? Do you understand the *hour of trial* and what it is? What is, *My command to persevere* and do you have it or must you go through this trial?

We started this study of hype, lies and deception with various types of hype (or lies) that we are exposed to on a daily basis. Would you agree the cause of most hype is greed? Not for an honest profit or for an honest day's pay for the work you do, I mean out-and-out greed? Is there a difference between a company making a profit and a company getting out of control for the sake of greed? For example, during the late part of 2001 and the early part of the year 2002 we saw the fall of a company known as Enron. What was the major cause for the fall? Wasn't it greed and not an honest profit? An honest profit would have established the company accounting books were okay and numerous partnerships did not have to be arranged to mask the corruption and the profit taking by the leadership. How about a later example. Look at the banking scandal and collapse of the world's economy in 2008 and 2009. Wasn't that a result of personal and corporate greed? Okay! Another question. Why is it necessary to pay the executives at a company such ridiculously high salaries? You mean you can't find someone who would lead a company for less than a million dollars a year? What about a basketball player? You mean you can't find one who would play for less than multimillion dollars a year? What happened to honest leadership or even sportsmanship?

One more example! Watch the Red Lobster commercials on television and see what is wrong with them. In watching the lobsters walk across the bottom of the sea, in watching the man look at a lobster in an aquarium and in the one where the life guard runs into the ocean and raises a lobster. What

color are the lobsters? Aren't they all red? Do you know how you get a red lobster? The only way I know is to cook the lobster, therefore, every one of the lobsters in the commercials are not only dead, they are all cooked, which means they cannot move as they are shown on television. It's just another way to get you to believe something that isn't true. Truth is, most people wouldn't want to watch a commercial with live, dull, brown lobsters, and since the red one looks so much better to the eye, who is going to think about whether the lobster is alive or dead, or if it can really move while it is dead.

There is no wonder Satan has gotten into the inner reaches of the organized church. Didn't the priests in Moses' time receive food to eat and some of the gifts presented to God as their livelihood? Wouldn't the priests of Moses' time be considered bad in the sight of God if they took money from people and told the people they would say a super special prayer for them? Did the people of Moses' time believe the priests might have some special power or connection to God and could get a special answer from God if a priest was paid a little extra? Don't you think God would have been upset if something like that happened?

Do we practice or allow this today? Sure we do! We do it in church, and we do it with television preachers. They ask for special gifts because they need the money, so we give them something extra and think we're going to get some special answer direct from God. Don't you think it would have been the same thing as today if the priests of Moses' time started selling extra special favors? Isn't it an extra special favor to ask a leader of the church to intercede on your behalf and have your sins forgiven? What happened to Christ being given as a sacrifice for all of mankind's sins? What does it mean when you are told by church leaders you can't read and understand the Bible, so don't read it. You are told by this denomination that if you want a question concerning the Bible answered, ask the church leader?

What does it mean if you are told you need another book, in addition to the Bible, to understand your church's particular brand of religion? Don't you think God would give you the correct answers the first time, in His book? Maybe, your church thinks it is above God and God didn't tell you the truth the first time. Well, what about a writer, pastor, or teacher that must use five, ten, even one hundred references, other than the Bible, to show you their particular thinking? Have you noticed, I have only used the Bible itself to bring you these truths? Haven't I shown you that in certain verses, it was God, or Joshua (Jesus) who was making the statement? So why is it you desire to let other people tell you lies? You must want to be deceived because you have not learned how to understand the truth? Maybe there is another answer! Maybe you have been deceived because someone who didn't understand the truth taught you what you know. Either way, you have not received the full benefit of truth. Let me show you a little more of what I mean.

I'm going to write about things in our present day society. Look at the field of medicine. The oath taken by doctors means they would work to find a cure for your illness. Doesn't it seem, if you go to the doctor today, the first question is, "Do you have insurance?" and not "What seems to be the problem?" Why is it we have so many television commercials for drugs? Do you believe the pharmaceutical companies work with doctors to help identify cures? If that were so, the last time we saw a cure was in 1957 when Doctor Salk introduced his vaccine for polio. Have we cured cancer? Why not? You mean we don't spend enough on research? What about diabetes, heart disease or even aids? If we listen to television or read the ads in magazines, we are taking this pill or that pill to reduce the symptoms. Notice in the ads the particular pill was designed to reduce the symptom, not cure the disease. If we cured the disease, the pharmaceutical companies would not be making all that money, the executives wouldn't be able to draw that extra large salary and the people would not be tied to the companies for their advantage. Now, here is what the Bible says about sickness and healing!

Have you ever been told the power to heal yourself has already been given to you? Why not? Have you ever been shown there are no fewer than four places in the Bible that tells us that the Messiah not only took all of our sins upon the cross, but He also took all of our afflictions.

Psalms 103:3, *Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases,*

Isaiah 53:4-5, *Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed.*

Matthew 8:17, *That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying: “He Himself took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses.”*

1 Peter 2:24, *Who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness; by whose stripes you were healed.*

I am not going to try to tell you there are no sicknesses in the world. There are sicknesses in the world because mankind permits them to be and not because God ordained them. Since there are sicknesses in the world, are there lessons to be learned in the Bible on how to promote healing? Yes! There are! Would you believe there are no fewer than twelve (that's 12) ways to promote healing?

**1) By obedience,** Exodus 15:26, *He said, “If you listen carefully to the voice of the LORD your God and do what is right in his eyes, if you pay attention to his commands and keep all his decrees, I will not bring on you any of the diseases I brought on the Egyptians, for I am the LORD, who heals you.”*

**2) By forgiveness,** Psalms 103:3, *Who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases,*

**3) By speaking with a wise tongue,** Proverbs 12:18, *Reckless words pierce like a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing.*

**4) By the name of Jesus,** Luke 9:6; Acts 3:16. (Luke), *So they set out and went from village to village, preaching the gospel and healing people everywhere.* (Acts), *By faith in the name of Jesus, this man whom you see and know was made strong. It is Jesus' name and the faith that comes through him that has given this complete healing to him, as you can all see.*

**5) By the gift of the Spirit,** 1 Corinthians 12:9, *To another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit.*

**6) By faith,** Matthew 8:13; 9:22; Luke 8:48. Matthew 8:13, *Then Jesus said to the centurion, “Go! It will be done just as you believed it would.” And his servant was healed at that very hour. Matthew 9:22, *Jesus turned and saw her. “Take heart, daughter,” he said, “your faith has healed you.” And the woman was healed from that moment. Luke 8:48, *Then he said to her, “Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace.”***

**7) By the word,** Psalms 107:20; Matthew 8:16; Luke 7:7. Psalms 107:20, *He sent forth his word and healed them; he rescued them from the grave. Matthew 8:16, *When evening came, many who were demon-possessed were brought to him, and he drove out the spirits with a word and healed all the sick. Luke 7:7, *That is why I did not even consider myself worthy to come to you. But say the word, and my servant will be healed.***

**8) By anointing with oil,** Mark 6:13, *They drove out many demons and anointed many sick people with oil and healed them.*

**9) By laying of hands,** Luke 4:40, *When the sun was setting, the people brought to Jesus all who had various kinds of sickness, and laying his hands on each one, he healed them.*

**10) By rebuking evil spirits,** Luke 9:42, *Even while the boy was coming, the demon threw him to the ground in a convulsion. But Jesus rebuked the evil spirit, healed the boy and gave him back to his father.*

**11) By prayer,** Acts 28:8; James 5:14-15. (Acts) *His father was sick in bed, suffering from fever and dysentery. Paul went in to see him and, after prayer, placed his hands on him and healed him.*

(James) *Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven.*

**12) By confession,** James 5:16, *Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.*

Think about this, when I started showing you the truth, I illustrated the power of the tongue and told you the effect it could have on others as well as upon yourself. Now, think about this, Jesus was called the great physician — why? Don't the verses I've shown clearly illustrate Jesus was the great physician simply because He took all our sicknesses with Him? Therefore, if a follower believes in Jesus, they have the power inside themselves to heal their own being! Yes! We can use the assistance of a doctor, and an honest doctor will tell you they are only assisting the body to do what the body does best, heal itself. However, if the doctor tells you he/she needs to run another test and that test comes back negative, and they need to run another test, the doctor is only benefiting from your insurance company and not trying to assist you as you heal yourself. I stated above that God did not ordain sickness in the world. Sickness is Satan's handiwork. I must tell you it was not God's intent for mankind to be sick. Do you know that the earth is the kingdom of Satan? Look at the following verses to discover this truth!

John 12:31, *"Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out."*

John 14:30, *"I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming, and he has nothing in Me."*

John 16:11, *"Of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged."*

In each verse the speaker is Jesus and He is talking about Satan as the ruler of this world. Now, I want you to consider the fact that God loves His creation and for every disease Satan throws our way God has placed a natural cure someplace on the earth for us to find and use.

The greatest example God intended for us to be well rests inside every one of us. It is called the immune system! It was designed by God, and when working as intended, it does what it was supposed to do. It keeps us well! Alas, there are factors that can cause the immune system to mess up and not work as God intended. Diet and exercise are only two things that can throw the immune system out of whack. However, these are things you have in your control. You can eat healthy food and you can exercise! The real question is, will you? Remember, you are now working on a personal body design that will last a lifetime. Are you building a strong, sleek shape, or a plain, brown bag shape? You decide!

Health and healing is not the only place we can see the deception and greed of those in one particular field of work or endeavor. Look at modern day law! In similar fashion to that stated above we hear advertisements about this lawyer or that lawyer and how much money they can get you in a settlement. Funny, they don't tell you the percentage of the settlement they are going to keep for representing you. If you really knew all the facts you could represent yourself in any court of law. All you have to do is make the statement that you are representing yourself, "Pro Se". Are you aware that you could issue subpoenas and take depositions just as can any lawyer? Granted, you probably would need to spend several days in a good law library (most law schools have one you can use) so that you know the correct procedures on how to get things done. The point is that you really can represent yourself in a court of law. For most of us, we don't take the time to read the fine print, or listen to the super fast talk that gives all the extra-required information on side effects of taking a particular pill. Sometimes, if we would take the interest to read the fine print or listen to those extra fast spoken words, we would find the benefit is somehow lost in what we are not going to get or what the company bringing us the benefit is going to get.

Our society seems to be made up of hurrying people who can't, or won't, take the time to find out the effect a new pill, or a new law, will have upon themselves. If you take this super-duper pill that has more side effects than benefits, what is the use? If you can't take the time to prepare a meal and you stop by the fast food establishment and you think getting chicken is more helpful than hamburgers, look again at the nutrition sign on the inside of the restaurant. There is just as many fat grams in deep-fat fried chicken as there are in one of those super big burgers. There is no wonder we are slowly killing ourselves, even with the gains we have in health services. Our fast paced lifestyle of limited exercise, eating excessive amounts of fatty foods and this nonsense that we have to hurry to beat out the other person for the next deal, only shows we are selling ourselves. We sell ourselves for ever so many reasons and those reasons have nothing to do with sex.

Think about this! Corporate America desires you to believe that those in high positions of authority, and who make corporate decisions, are the reason for their company's success. In truth, it is the little guy in the production line who is the person creating the product that is for sale, or perhaps the customer service agent representing the company who affects the consumer the most. It is this person's position in the company that actually has the rubber meeting the road (so to speak), not in some executive office where decisions are made on how to present the product in this light, or that light, to show off its best side. Maybe, the lawyers for the company really need all those big bucks for writing the fine print that leaves you hanging the day after the warranty runs out because they didn't want to build the best product they could. Their goal appears to be that they wanted to build a product you had to keep replacing.

Look at all the questions I've asked requesting you to think concerning your life, my life and the lives of those we meet and greet on a daily basis. Our society is so deceived that it puts black people against white people, blacks against Hispanics, most people against Native Americans, the rich against the poor, male against female, kids against parents, North against South, West against East, Democrat against Republican, conservative against liberal and vice-versa in all these cases. Deception is all around us on a daily basis and we are the ones who must decide what it is we are going to believe. Let's unwind just a little and have some fun.

Time for a pop quiz! Our society doesn't seem to take time to understand, or listen to many things. The following is a little test to see how you listen (in this case read because I can't speak these questions to you). Hey! This is a fun test you can take now and you can use it later on your friends. Get a piece of paper and answer the following:

1. Do they have a 4<sup>th</sup> of July in England?
2. How many birthdays does the average person have?
3. Some months have 31 days; how many have 28?
4. In baseball how many outs are there in an inning?
5. Is it legal for a man in California to marry his widow's sister?
6. Divide 30 by  $\frac{1}{2}$  and add 10. What is the answer?
7. If there are 3 apples and you take away 2, how many do you have?
8. A doctor gives you three pills telling you to take one every half hour. How many minutes will it take before the pills are gone?
9. A farmer has 17 sheep, and all but 9 die. How many are left?
10. How many animals of each sex did Moses take on the ark?
11. How many two-cent stamps are there in a dozen?

The answers are at the end of the book. To continue showing you examples of how our society thinks, read the following little story:

Once upon a time, a perfect man and a perfect woman met. After a perfect courtship, they had a perfect wedding. Their life together was, of course, perfect. One snowy, stormy, Christmas Eve, this perfect couple was driving their perfect car along a winding road, when they noticed someone at the side of the road in distress. Being the perfect couple, they stopped to help. There stood Santa Claus with a huge bag of toys. Not wanting to disappoint any children on the eve of Christmas, the perfect couple loaded Santa and his toys into their vehicle. Soon they were driving along delivering toys. Unfortunately, the driving conditions became worse and the perfect couple and Santa Claus had an accident. Only one of them survived. The mind-numbing question is: Who was the survivor?

The perfect woman survived. She's the only one who really existed in the first place. Everyone knows there is no Santa Claus and there is no such thing as a perfect man. All females can stop reading here. That is the end of the story.

Males keep on reading!

So, if there is no perfect man and no Santa Claus, the perfect woman must have been driving. And that explains why there was a car accident. By the way, if you're a female and you're reading this, this illustrates another point, females never listen, either.

There are four serious errors in the story above. Can you identify them?

First, there is the statement there isn't a Santa Claus. The name of Santa Claus is also associated with Saint Nicholas and there really was a priest in Southern Turkey named Nicholas. Nicholas had a reputation for giving gifts and was finally made a Saint. This is a portion of where we get the story of Santa Claus. The second error in the story was that while it led up to Christmas and it mentions Santa Claus, there is nothing said about this eventful eve also being the eve of the birth of Christ. Yes! I know we went through a whole chapter to prove Christ was born on the tenth of October. Unfortunately, the world is not going to change their traditions, their gift buying habits, the trimming of a tree, or the Christmas dinner just because the truth was written in this book. The third error is the statement made for the females and says, "There is no such thing as a perfect man". If that were true, there would be no reason for Christmas, no reason for churches, no reason for people to be believers in Christ. If Christ was not a perfect man, everything we've been taught in the Christian religion is a lie. Finally, the fourth error is in the statement made to the males, "this illustrates another point; females never listen, either". If we go back to the Garden of Eden and check in the book of Genesis it was both the male and the female who did not listen. They had been given a rule from God to not eat of the tree of *Knowledge of Good and Evil* in the middle of the garden. Satan lied to the woman and she took of the forbidden fruit. She then gave it to the male. Seems to me they both broke the rule and cast mankind into a state of sin. And it would also illustrate that both the male and female did not listen.

I have tried to show you in this chapter that as you grow toward becoming an adult, you can face many challenges of hype, deception and out-and-out lies. No one place is free from the effect of these lies and it is up to you to understand what is going on around you. I will make a statement I hope you fully understand. “No child needs to be sheltered from everything in life!” If you are protected under a basket from any and everything, how will you know about the danger and how to say “NO!” and move on? I could say this represents smoking, drugs, or drinking alcohol, but, what about television, the computer, movies, magazines and even video games? Isn’t there crime, violence, and sex in these areas of day-to-day life? So, how do you answer your friends about becoming involved with a gang, or how do you tell your boyfriend “NO!” if he starts talking about sex in every other sentence? I know you think it’s funny every time I mention the word sex, but, I am not like most adults. I know you have some understanding about the subject and probably have since the third or fourth grade, if that late. So why can’t I, at least, use the word?

Remember in the first chapter where I used the one reference to shrink the Ten Commandments to one statement. Those verses were John 13:34-35, “*A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.*” Think about these verses. If we all did as these verses commanded there would be no hype, no deception and certainly no lies. We would all live life to the fullest and love our fellowmen. We would honor each other by being honest and trustworthy and have love for everyone. We would also see the logo for this book (3+U) and completely understand it. There is a reason to write these things to you. You represent the next generation. My generation may be old dogs who fail at learning new tricks, but your generation is just entering the threshold and have so much ahead of you. With love, understanding, guidance in the truth and the grace of God the Father, you are on your way to being who you are to become.

# Another Step

Some of you have already accepted Joshua (Jesus) as your Lord and Savior, which is another threshold, others of you have not and wonder why there is such a fuss. I cannot tell you when you will reach the age of accountability (that age where you fully understand right and wrong, good and bad, or righteousness and evil is an individual event for each of you). In fact, I cannot tell how old you will be when you become an adult. Do you see all the thresholds ahead of you? Not only is there puberty, there's responsibility and accountability. Some may accept responsibility at age twelve and others will be in their thirties or even forties before they reach adulthood. It's a fact that some people accept responsibility and are willing to put down toys and games and take up a different role, while others don't ever want to let go of the good time, the fun with friends and all the time you spent together. No matter which group you may fit into, you will have your friends, do things you shouldn't and learn from your mistakes. Those who do not want to learn and continue to make the same mistake over and over may not like the conditions our society sets up for those who continue to break the rules. I can tell you this, God does love you. That is why He sent His Son to die in your place.

I understand, as an adult, that not everyone your age agrees with the church scene, and they think God is not real or that He really loves them. But! But, that's why I'm writing this book so I can show you that God really does love you and that there really is a **3+U, The Trinity of God and you**, always there, always together! It doesn't matter where you are or what you are doing the Trinity is there with you. They know when you are awake and when you are asleep. They know when you are happy and when you are sad. They know when you are good and when you did bad. Even when you have done something bad, they still love you.

I want to attempt to answer questions you may have about the Trinity and about the Bible. Can the Trinity really be three different people? Is there a simple way to show all this? What's with all the stories in the Bible? Do they really mean something? Why would God send His Son to Earth? Did Jesus really die for mankind's wicked sins? What is expected of me when I accept Jesus as Savior? What happens to us when we die? What are the three parts of man? Where do the soul and spirit go when we die? Is there a hell?

If you wanted to explain Jesus to a friend, what would you use? If you answered the Bible, what book of the Bible would you use first to teach about Jesus? Let me guide you through some of my thoughts and see if you agree? Basically, there are only four books about Jesus. Yes! There are references to Jesus in the remainder of the New Testament but it is the Good News of the Gospels that tell the story of Jesus. So which book in these four would be the first one to study to understand Jesus and what He was all about? Interesting question and I have an interesting answer. Of the four gospels, the writer of only one declares there is a purpose for his writing of the book. The funny thing is this writer did not make the statement at the beginning of his book, but toward the end. Look at the following verses.

John 20:30-31, *And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.*

John is making the statement and he wrote these things so that we all may know the truth about Jesus and know He was the Son of God. This is just a minor fact the other gospel writers did not include. Of course, two of the other writers were not Apostles, and Matthew did not make a similar statement. Therefore, I feel called to show you some of the record John wrote about Jesus in order to show you who this Man, Jesus, really was and what He taught.

John opens his writing with a remarkable description of whom he is going to write.

John 1:1-5, *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God.*

*All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.*

We see John wrote his Gospel so all who read it may believe Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and by believing, shall have eternal life. So what can we learn from the Gospel of John? Let us study this Gospel to find out.

# The Gospel of John

The Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John tell us about the life and teachings of Jesus. Of these, John's gospel stands by itself on its own merit. There is much we can learn from the other Gospels, however I feel much more can be learned from the teachings of John. The gospel of John is especially good for a babe in Christ desiring to mature as quickly as possible, in other words, for your growth, or even your ability to talk to one of your friends to show them the truth which John gives to all of us!

Chapter one of John's gospel explains who Jesus is and his relationship to God, the Father. We also learn a little about John the Baptist. There is much more of the story of John the Baptist in the other Gospels. I find it odd that people are taught the story of John the Baptist, where Jesus was baptized and the gathering of the disciples and no thought is given to the time line of these two events. Mankind sees only one thing, reacts to that single entry and suddenly there is a tradition that actually makes no sense to the relationship of the entire story.

The life of John the Baptist is one of those stories. The major items that we are taught include: His birth, his teachings in the wilderness, the baptism of Jesus, John's imprisonment, and finally, the beheading of John. Of these facts we like to look at only one, the baptism of Jesus. Tradition tells us Jesus was baptized in the Jordan someplace south of the Sea of Galilee and east of Jerusalem. My questions are: Why does tradition tell us this? Where do people get the idea Jesus was baptized near Jerusalem? How does this tie to the selection of the Apostles? I believe there is much more to the story.

In the Matthew account, we see the story of John the Baptist in chapter three. I would like to review three verses from that chapter:

Matthew 3:1, *In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea.*

Matthew 3:5, *Then Jerusalem, all Judea, and all the region around the Jordan went out to him.*

Matthew 3:13, *Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him.*

In the Mark account, we find the same story in chapter one. Read the following verses for comparison:

Mark 1:4, *John came baptizing in the wilderness and preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.*

Mark 1:5, *And all the land of Judea, and those from Jerusalem, went out to him and were all baptized by him in the Jordan River, confessing their sins.*

Mark 1:9, *It came to pass in those days that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized by John in the Jordan.*

In the Luke account, we find this story in chapter three. Again, compare these verses here:

Luke 3:3, *And he went into all the region around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.*

Luke 3:7, *Then he said to the multitudes that came out to be baptized by him, "Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"*

Luke 3:21, *When all the people were baptized, it came to pass that Jesus also was baptized; and while He prayed, the heaven was opened.*

I can safely say that while the verses are similar, they are not exactly the same! In the first verse of each gospel grouping, we see the place of reference changes from *the wilderness of Judea* to *the wilderness* to *all the region around the Jordan*. I can further say with these three verses reading slightly different, there is no absolute point that identifies where John the Baptist was baptizing. In the second group of verses we see *Then Jerusalem, all Judea, and all the region around the Jordan, and all the*

*land of Judea, and those from Jerusalem and to the multitudes that came out to be baptized by him.* From these three statements can it really be said that John the Baptist was baptizing in the Jordan River east of Jerusalem at this time? These verses give an indication that people from all over were coming to John, not just from Jerusalem. In the Luke account, the statement is so broad that there is no indication from where the people are coming. Finally, look at the third group of verses. In this group we see the baptism of Jesus and find the following: *Then Jesus came from Galilee* in the Matthew account, *came from Nazareth of Galilee* in the Mark account, and, *When all the people were baptized, it came to pass that Jesus also was baptized* in the Luke account. Wherever John was, I can safely say Jesus had to travel to get there.

There are several things to note from this review. Up to this point, none of these accounts speak about the disciples being selected and if we bring in the account in John, there is no mention of the 40 days Jesus spent in the wilderness after He was baptized. There is one other word which causes great confusion about these events and where they occurred. Look at John 1:28, *These things were done in Bethabara beyond the Jordan, where John was baptizing.*

I feel compelled to attempt to clear up some of the ideas presented in scripture concerning the events around the beginning of Jesus' ministry. First, the account in Luke says John was baptizing in *all the region around the Jordan*. Secondly, Jesus had to travel to get to John. Thirdly, after the baptism of Jesus, He went into the desert for forty days. Next, we come to the account given in John. John does not record all of the details in the same manner as the other gospel writers. I feel he realized he didn't have to say the same thing over again, it had already been said, so why do it again? However, in the John account, we start to see a period of several days that illustrate the beginning of Jesus' ministry. I feel at this time, after Jesus had been in the desert for forty days, Jesus, once again, found John and at this particular time, John was north of the Sea of Galilee, along the banks of the Jordan River, teaching and baptizing. I feel led to believe that the name of the village in verse 28 is misunderstood and should be the village recorded in verse 44.

I have inserted an area map to illustrate for you what I have said. See *Map 1* on page 38 and the *ledger* on page 39. Using both the map and the ledger we need to find 9 places. At the bottom of the map you find the Dead Sea with Jerusalem being off to the upper left corner of the Dead Sea. Going from the top of the Dead Sea we follow the Jordan River all the way up to the Sea of Galilee. When we go up the page to the Sea of Galilee we find Cana between the Sea of Galilee and the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. Along the upper left hand coast of the Sea of Galilee we can find both Capernaum and Gennesaret. Finally, at the mouth of the Sea of Galilee and the Jordan River we find the village of Bethsaida.

Looking at the ledger there is the following information stated:

- 7.) Jesus Baptized by John
- 8.) Jesus Tempted by Satan
- 9.) Five Disciples Chosen
- 10.) Changes Water to Wine
- 11.) From Cana to Capernaum
- 36.) From Capernaum to Bethsaida
- 37.) Near Bethsaida 5,000 Fed
- 38.) From Desert to Bethsaida
- 39.) Jesus Walks on the Sea from Bethsaida to Gennesaret

That's a total of nine places.



## Ledger for *Map 1*

-  River
  -  Roman Political Boundaries A.D. 6-44
  -  Cities of Decapolis
  -  Fortresses
- 0 20 Miles

Territory:	Governed by:
Judea Samaria Idumaea	Roman Prefect (e.g. Pilate)
Galilee Perea	Herod Antipas (Son of Herod I)
Trachonitis Turaea Gaulanitis Batanea Auranitis	Philip (Son of Herod I)
Decapolis Philistines	City States Special Roman Control

### Jesus's Early Life

Numbered in Chronological Order

- 1 Birth of Jesus at Bethlehem (Lk 2:6-7)
- 2 Visit of the Magi (Mt 2:1)
- 3 Presentation in the Temple (Lk 2:22)
- 4 Escape to Egypt (Mt 2:14)
- 5 Jesus Grows up in Nazareth (Lk 2:51-52)
- 6 Jesus at age 12 Teaches in the Temple Courts (Lk 2:46)

### Jesus's Year of Inauguration

First Year of Ministry (Jesus is about 30)

- 7 Jesus Baptized by John (Mt 3:13-17)
- 8 Jesus Tempted by Satan (Mt 4:1-11)
- 9 Five Disciples Chosen (Jn 1:38-51)
- 10 Changes Water into Wine (Jn 2:6-10)
- 11 From Cana to Capernaum (Jn 2:12)
- 12 To Jerusalem for Passover (Jn 2:13)
- 13 The Temple Cleansed (Jn 2:14-16)
- 14 Jesus and Nicodemus (Jn 3:1-21)
- 15 To the Judean Countryside (Jn 3:22)
- 16 Jacob's Well in Sychar (Jn 4:3-5)
- 17 The Samaritan Woman (Jn 4:6-26)
- 18 From Samaria to Cana (Jn 4:34-46)
- 19 Healing the Royal Official's Son (Jn 4:46)
- 20 John the Baptist Imprisoned (Mt 4:12)
- 21 From Cana to Nazareth (Lk 4:16-27)

### Year of Popularity

Second Year of Ministry (Jesus is 31)

- 22 Jesus Reads from Isaiah (Lk 4:14-30)
- 23 From Nazareth to Capernaum (Lk 4:16)

- 24 Tour of Galilee (Mk 2:1)
- 24 The Paralytic Healed (Lk 5:18-25)
- 25 To Jerusalem for Passover (Jn 5:1)
- 26 The Cripple Healed at the Pool of Bethesda (Jn 5:2-9)
- 27 To Capernaum
- 28 The Mount of Beatitudes (Mk 3:13)
- 29 12 Apostles Ordained (Mk 3:13-19)
- 30 Return to Capernaum (Mt 8:5)
- 30 Second Tour of Galilee (Lk 7:11)
- 31 Widow's Son Raised (Lk 7:12-15)
- 32 A Sinful Woman Anoints Jesus's Feet (Lk 7:36-50)
- 32 Third Tour of Galilee (Lk 8:1)
- 33 Jesus Calms the Storm (Lk 8:22-25)
- 34 The Demoniac Healed (Lk 8:28-35)
- 35 Jairus' Daughter Raised (Mt 9:23-26)

### Year of Opposition

Third Year of Ministry (Jesus is about 32)

- 36 Fourth Tour of Galilee (Mt 9:35)
- 36 From Capernaum to Bethsaida (Mk 6:32)
- 37 Near Bethsaida 5,000 Fed (Mk 6:38-44)
- 38 From Desert to Bethsaida (Mt 14:22)
- 39 Jesus Walks on the Sea from Bethsaida to Gennesaret (Mt 14:25)
- 40 Gennesaret to Capernaum (Jn 6:24)
- 41 From Capernaum to Phoenicia (Mk 7:24)
- 42 Syrian Woman's Daughter Healed
- 43 From Phoenicia Through Decapolis (Via Lake Semechronitis thru Batanea) (Mk 7:24)
- 44 Deaf and Dumb Man Healed (Mk 7:32-37)
- 45 4,000 Fed (Mt 15:32-38)
- 46 To Dalmanutha by Boat (Mk 8:10)
- 47 To Bethsaida by Boat (Mk 8:22)
- 48 A Blind Man Healed (Mk 8:22-26)
- 49 To Caesarea Philippi (Mt 16:13)
- 50 To the Mount of Transfiguration (Lk 9:28)
- 51 Boy w/ Evil Spirit Healed (Mk 9:17-27)
- 52 From Mt Transfiguration to Capernaum (Mt 17:24)
- 53 From Capernaum to Samaria (Lk 17:11)
- 54 Ten Lepers Healed (Lk 17:12-16)
- 55 From Samaria to Jerusalem (Jn 9:1)
- 56 Blind Man Healed (Jn 9:1-41)
- 57 From Jerusalem to Bethabara (Jn 10:40)

### Jesus' Last Months

(Jesus is about 33)

- 58 The Raising of Lazarus (Jn 11:1-46)
- 59 From Bethany to Ephraim (Jn 11:54)
- 60 From Ephraim to Perea (Mk 10:1)
- 61 The Crippled Woman Healed (Lk 13:11-13)
- 62 Jesus Blessing Little Children (Lk 18:15)
- 63 From Perea to Jerusalem (Mt 20:17)
- 64 Blind Bartimaeus Healed (Mk 10:46-53)
- 65 Jesus Anointed by Mary of Bethany (Jn 12:1-9)

From these nine places there are three toward the Dead Sea and Jerusalem. The other six locations are located around, or near, the Sea of Galilee. Here are my questions. Why would Jesus travel from Nazareth to the Jordan River outside of Jerusalem to be baptized by John the Baptist (7 on the map)? Why would he spend 40 days in the wilderness around the Dead Sea (8 on the map)? Why would He choose five of His disciples at Bethany (9 on the map)? This one really takes a stretch to even begin to be correct! Who are the first five disciples? Aren't they all fishermen? How far is Bethany to the sea? In this case the sea would be the Dead Sea and we are told there are no fish living in the Dead Sea. Why would you be gathering fishermen along a body of water that supports no life? What is the distance from Bethany to Cana (9 and 10 on the map)? How many days would it take to walk from Bethany to Cana?

Let's look north to the Sea of Galilee. We find Nazareth, Cana (10), Capernaum (11), Gennesaret (39) and Bethsaida (36) all located around the Sea of Galilee. Look at the sequence of events listed as 36, 37, 38 and 39. Can you find the Jordan River? Can you find a reference to a desert (37)? Can you find a fishing village (36, 38)? How far is the distance from Bethsaida to Cana? How many days would it take to walk from Bethsaida to Cana? Wouldn't you agree the places in Galilee match with the account given in the gospel of John? Let us closely examine the account given in the gospel of John. We begin with a certain number of days.

Now, let's review this period of days. On the first day, we have John the Baptist answering the questions of the Pharisees, who had been sent to question him (verse 19). The second day, we see Jesus coming to John (verse 29). Notice there is nothing to indicate that Jesus was baptized at this time, therefore, I believe this is after the forty days Jesus spent in the wilderness. Finally, we get to verse 35 where we see Jesus starting to gather his disciples. The remainder of this work will be a study of the Gospel of John so that we may understand more of who Jesus is.

John 1:35-44, *The next day John was there again with two of his disciples*. Notice this would be on day number three during this period. This is John the Baptist and not the Apostle John spoken of in this verse. Observe two of John's disciples are with him. *When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, "Look, the Lamb of God!"* John the Baptist fully understood that Jesus was the only acceptable sacrifice to God the Father for the removal of mankind's sins. Without this sacrifice being made, mankind could not know the former relationship Adam and Eve had with God in the Garden of Eden. *When the two disciples heard him say this, they followed Jesus*. It seems that John had been teaching the message from the Book of Isaiah that the Messiah was coming for some time.

These two disciples also understood what John meant about Jesus and they desired to follow him. *Turning around, Jesus saw them following and asked, "What do you want?"*

*They said, "Rabbi" (which means Teacher), "where are you staying?"* The implication is they wanted to know more about Jesus and his teachings. *"Come," He replied, "and you will see." So they went and saw where he was staying, and spent that day with him. It was about the tenth hour.* The invitation is made for them to follow, or see. *Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus.* Andrew is one of the two disciples indicated in verse 35. My next question, is John (the soon to be Apostle) the other? It can be taken as such, because the second disciple is never named, that follows the manner in which John wrote. *The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, "We have found the Messiah" (that is, the Christ).*

It seems in John's account, Andrew is the first to believe in Jesus even though the other Gospels indicate Peter is the first Apostle. Notice Andrew is so overjoyed that he goes to his brother Simon, who Jesus names Peter, and tells him about Jesus. There is another question that rests in these verses. Notice back in verse 28 where this is taking place. We think of Jesus' public ministry beginning in Galilee and

the disciples being called from fishing at the Sea of Galilee. When John uses the name of a town, we are thrown off our accepted traditional thinking. Tradition places John the Baptist on the other side of the Jordan between a point east of Jerusalem and south of the Sea of Galilee. We really need to view a map of the area and see where tradition places the baptism of Jesus and where the account in John takes place. See the map on page 38 and look for reference 7 above the Dead Sea and on the banks of the Jordan River. This location is the point that tradition wants you to believe that Jesus was baptized.

I believe there are those other clues in text itself that we have already seen. In Luke 3:3 there is the indication John the Baptist taught and baptized in all the country around the Jordan. That could mean closer to the southern tip of the Sea of Galilee or even north of the Sea of Galilee in the area of the town identified in verse 44. Return with me to the gospel of John and we pick back up at verse 42 of chapter 1. *And he brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, "You are Simon son of John. You will be called Cephas" (which, when translated, is Peter).* NOTE: Both Cephas and Peter translate as rock in English. Did you ever think about calling the apostle mentioned here Rock? Do you now see what we talked about in the chapter concerning the name of Christ? The true name of the apostle is Simon, just as the true name of Christ is Joshua. Now with the addition of Peter it seems we now have identified three of the Apostles. *The next day Jesus decided to leave for Galilee. Finding Philip, he said to him, "Follow me."* We are now up to four apostles and, yet, they are not the four normally mentioned. The normal structure is Peter, Andrew, James and John but here in the Gospel of John we have Andrew, John, Peter and Philip. *Philip, like Andrew and Peter, was from the town of Bethsaida.* We find in this verse the hometown of these three apostles is Bethsaida. Few of us have ever heard of Bethsaida, and the references available indicate this is a fishing village on the north east shore near the point where the Jordan enters the Sea of Galilee. The journey from where they are to where they are going, may be a day's walk, or about 20 miles (vs. 43-44). It is approximately 80 miles from Bethany to Cana and would take about four days travel time. This wouldn't match with the number of days given in the gospel of John.

Let us continue. We stopped at verse 44 and I now must ask a question. Who is the fifth apostle? Can you name this person? I am certain that the next series of verses will leave you wondering about the teachings you have been taught in Sunday School class! Let us go back to text and begin again with verse 45. Here we see that Jesus and four other men are about to embark on a new journey. Before they leave on the fourth day or the second day these men were with Jesus at Bethsaida, we have another story. *Philip found Nathanael and told him, "We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."* Philip tells his friend about Jesus and the friend has a response.

Notice at this point the respect for the family. Jesus is called the son of Joseph. Here is the point that information on the true name of this man must enter the story. This man is the son of Joseph, hence the ending of bin Joseph, or son of Joseph. Now, let us all remember we are speaking about Hebrew people who spoke Aramaic and this person's name would also be Hebrew or Aramaic and not Greek. We have gotten so caught up with the Greek translation and the traditions passed down we fail to realize and understand the truth as it was in the mother tongue and mother customs of the locale of which we are speaking. Jesus is the Greek form of **Joshua**, which means *the LORD saves*.

Therefore, the true name of this man is **Joshua bin Joseph**, whom we now call Jesus the Christ (from the Greek) or Messiah (Hebrew). Now that we have said this concerning Jesus we can get back to our story and find out who this Nathanael is: *"Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?" Nathanael asked. "Come and see," said Philip.* A challenge is issued and we can see by the next verse the challenge is accepted by Nathanael (Nathaniel in English). *When Jesus saw Nathanael approaching, he said of him, "Here is a true Israelite, in whom there is nothing false."* There is much said in this one verse.

We see Jesus calling Nathanael an Israelite and not a Jew. The implication is that this person knows the law and the history of the people. Jesus uses the wording, *in whom there is nothing false*, indicating Nathanael knows truth and is not a deceiver as we will see the Jews are in later verses. *“How do you know me?” Nathanael asked. Jesus answered, “I saw you while you were still under the fig tree before Philip called you.”* What would you do if someone told you your whereabouts and they had never met you? *Then Nathanael declared, “Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the King of Israel.”* This is what Nathanael did! Would you have declared that person to be the Son of God? Notice how strong the belief is, yet there isn't an apostle named Nathanael.

However, there is an apostle named Bartholomew, who is one and the same person. In reading the other Gospels, Philip is always named in association with Bartholomew and the name Nathanael is never used in those Gospels. In like manner, John always names Philip and Nathanael together and never uses the name Bartholomew, thus they are one and the same. *Jesus said, “You believe because I told you I saw you under the fig tree. You shall see greater things than that.” He then added, “I tell you the truth, you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.”* How would you react to a statement such as this?

In the next verse we see a reference to the third day. We could go back to verse 35 and see this is the first day (in, or near, Bethsaida), verse 43 is the second day (in Galilee) and the beginning of the second chapter is the third day (at Cana). That would be correct if we are only looking at the period Jesus starts to gather His Apostles. However, we have already seen there were two days previous to this point, thus we are actually seeing things that took place on the fifth day in this period. Can you start to see why people become confused over what the Bible says and why some people say they can't understand the Bible? Can you see how easy it would be to change the meaning of verses so statements made by men don't really identify with the actual verse?

I find it is interesting to note in verse 2:1 Jesus' disciples are invited to this wedding. Since the only indication of time is what we have recorded here, does this mean there are only five disciples, Andrew, Peter, John, Philip and Nathanael (Bartholomew) at this time? There is another indication of time available in verse 13. What if I tell you this meeting between Jesus and Andrew, Peter, John, Philip and Nathanael, and the marriage at Cana all took place in late March or early April. Would you believe me?

Let's skip over the verses telling about the marriage at Cana, for the moment, and read further:

John 2:11-12, *This, the first of his miraculous signs, Jesus performed at Cana in Galilee. He thus revealed his glory, and his disciples put their faith in him.* We see the results of this sign in two ways: the glory of Jesus, and the faith of the disciples. *After this he went down to Capernaum with his mother and brothers and his disciples. There they stayed for a few days.* There are several things we need to ask about this verse. It says Jesus, His mother, His brothers and His disciples went to Capernaum. Where did they stay? Who paid the bills for this group? If we combine what we know, we can say there are at least 13 people in this group. The party would include (1) Jesus, (2) Mary, (3 thru 6) are Jesus' brothers of James, Joseph, Jude, and Simon, (7 and 8) are Jesus' sisters. We know these sisters are not mentioned here and you're going to tell me the rest of the family is gone, and therefore, the sisters are left at home by themselves. I don't think so! (9) Peter, (10) Andrew, (11) John (12) Philip, and (13) Nathanael.

This list above gives a total of 13 people as the minimum number in the group. In addition, I could add Joseph to this list. Remember there is no verse telling us when Joseph died, and that would bring this group count to 14. I say minimum because of something we have skipped. So for the moment let us go back to a statement made in verses 2 and 3 of the second chapter. For illustration these verses are from the KJV: *And both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage. And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, they have no wine.* Look at verse 3a. Who is the *they* of this verse. If we go backward, it would seem that the *they* are the disciples of Jesus.

If we only have five disciples and skip forward to verse 6, I have a question. Why would five men (the only five so far named) need to have 120 to 180 gallons of wine, the amount indicated by the size of the water pots in verse 6? The more serious question is how many people actually went to Capernaum? I could easily say all twelve disciples were there. I could even go so far as to say many followers of Jesus were there. The questions could then become: Where did you find rooms for fifty to one hundred people to stay in Capernaum? Who paid for the several days stay of this group?

Let us go back to the original 13 identified above and answer a question. Customs in the Middle East are such that whoever invites the others is paying the bills. By the order of the arrangement of people in verse 12, one could safely say there are at least eight people from one family in this group. I would be willing to say it was Jesus and/or his family who paid for this trip to Capernaum.

Now, doesn't that go against the traditions that we have heard concerning Jesus? Haven't we been told repeatedly Jesus was from a poor family and He, Himself, was a poor man? Wouldn't the invitation to the marriage at Cana and the trip to Capernaum indicate Jesus and his family had means and were among the elite in the Galilee region? We seem to forget the lineage Matthew records for Christ in his gospel. That lineage indicates Joseph is of the royal lineage of Israel, or the throne of King David. Ask yourself this: Would the royal line of Israel mean poor people?

I indicated above that the marriage in Cana was around the beginning of April. The answer to prove this is in verse 13 and, yet, it seems to be hidden from view. Look at what is recorded, *When it was almost time for the Jewish Passover, Jesus went up to Jerusalem.* Verse 12 shows Jesus is in Capernaum for a few days and verse 13 tells us the next event to take place. Old Testament teachings concerning the Hebrew festivals tell you Passover is the 14<sup>th</sup> day of April. We read in Luke 2:41 *Jesus' parents went to Jerusalem for the Passover every year.* While we see Jesus with his parents, there is no reason to say the rest of the family is not in Jerusalem. This verse from Luke gives additional support to the statement above concerning the means of Jesus' family. Now could they afford to travel to Jerusalem every year if they were as poor as tradition would lead us to believe? There is another question hidden in this statement. Aren't we taught God will meet our needs? If we all lived in a communal state, we could possibly say everyone had the same needs. However, we do not live in such a condition, and neither did Jesus. It is a true fact that people have different needs. The indications of text itself shows Jesus' family had means and there is nothing to indicate God did not meet the needs of this family. To say otherwise is complete foolishness. In John, we have Jesus as an adult going to Jerusalem in the first year of his public ministry. Next we will see what happens in the rest of chapter two.

In the first chapter, I indicated I was taught by the grace of God and my knowledge did not come from a denominational or theological viewpoint. The story of Nicodemus and Jesus will illustrate what these words are trying to get you to understand. Look at this story from John 3 *Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a member of the Jewish ruling council.* There are two groups of people identified in this verse, one is the Pharisees and the other is the Jewish ruling council, or Sanhedrin. The stories of the Gospels tell us with very little research, the Pharisees and the Sadducees were like Democrats and Republicans today in our country. In other words, they played politics and wanted to have the control of the nation. We also know the country of the Israelites was under the control of Rome, thus, the actual point of law came from Rome and not from these men here. We can say they had differences of opinion, but together made up the ruling council of the Jewish religion.

Since a lot of the story of Jesus will hinge upon what these three groups do to Him, for Him, or about Him, we should have a common picture of who they are. The Sanhedrin of that day could be called the congress of the Hebrew church. The two groups who made up the Sanhedrin were the Pharisees and the Sadducees and we need to see what they thought.

Pharisees - A political party among the Jews that put extreme stress upon the observance of rites and ceremonies. They made a grand pretense of superior piety and separated themselves from the common people. They were believers in the immortality of the soul, the resurrection of the body, and the existence of angels and spirits. If we wanted to correlate this group to something in our modern day thinking, these are conservative Republicans.

Sadducees - Another political group who were very materialistic in their actions. They denied the resurrection and the existence of angels and spirits, and for the most part rejected the traditions of the elders. In like manner, this group could be considered modern day liberal Democrats. (Actually, I'd prefer to associate both groups to various types of believers within the Church, with both these groups being deceived by Satan.)

Just so the adults who are reading this book don't get upset, I must state there were other groups at this time. I could include the Herodians, the scribes, the Zealots, the Essenes, the Nazarites and others.

Let's continue with the story of Nicodemus. *He came to Jesus at night and said, "Rabbi, we know you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the miraculous signs you are doing if God were not with him."* Notice he came to Jesus at night, most probably so he wouldn't be seen and recognized. He called Jesus a Rabbi, said he was a teacher, and came from God. He further states by the signs Jesus performed, God had to be with him. We see Nicodemus went to Jesus as a representative of the Sanhedrin. Oh! You didn't see that being stated. Look very closely at the words when Nicodemus called Jesus Rabbi. Doesn't it say *we know*? Who are the *we*? Wouldn't you have to go back to verse 1 to see that the *we* is the Jewish ruling council. Isn't that the Sanhedrin? If Nicodemus wasn't acting as a representative, why the use of we instead of I, which would indicate this meeting was for his own understanding? The most important point we need to understand is that as a member of the Sanhedrin and a Pharisee, Nicodemus would have known who had been instructed in the Law by a member of that group. Jesus did not fit into that picture because He was not taught in that manner. His grace and knowledge was from God, the Father. *In reply Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again."* We can see by the next verse that Nicodemus did not understand the statement from Jesus.

*"How can a man be born when he is old?" Nicodemus asked. "Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb to be born!"* This discussion tells us that Nicodemus is thinking in the realm of the physical and Jesus is speaking in the realm of the spiritual.

*Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit."*

There rests in this verse a stumbling block for many of mankind. The word *water* means cleansing and/or repentance and yet we have infighting within the Christian community on how a person must be baptized in order to enter into the kingdom of God. If we look about us we can almost see the Pharisees of today telling us how we are to perform the rites and ceremonies that must be obeyed. Actually, Jesus spoke the answer in the next verse. *Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit*. We must understand the things being spoken by means of the spirit, which resides within us, and not by the ideas and thoughts of mankind in the physical realm. Jesus continues with his discussion with Nicodemus. *You should not be surprised at my saying, "You must be born again."* Jesus is again telling Nicodemus he must change his manner of thinking in order to understand. Jesus then gives an illustration: *"The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit."* The illustration is for us to understand more of the Spirit, so that when we are born again we start to understand our spirit. Up until that point, we don't think much about our spirit. *"How can this be?" Nicodemus asked.* By Nicodemus' answer, we can almost sense the level of frustration within him.

Jesus continues: *“You are Israel’s teacher,” said Jesus, “and do you not understand these things?”* We can again see the relationship of the Sanhedrin and the Pharisees in this verse. They are the teachers and the council of the Law. Jesus continues: *I tell you the truth, we speak of what we know, and we testify to what we have seen, but still you people do not accept our testimony.* There was a question to the *we* used in verse 2 and I said it indicated Nicodemus was representing the Sanhedrin. In this verse, Jesus is returning the statement and using *we* to indicate the Trinity, whom He is representing. Jesus continues: *“I have spoken to you of earthly things and you do not believe; how then will you believe if I speak of heavenly things?”* The rebirth must occur here, as an earthly thing, and we must understand these earthly things to prepare us for heavenly things. Here’s a simple way to restate this verse: BIBLE — meaning, **Basic Instructions Before Leaving Earth.** *“No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven—the Son of Man.”*

Verse 13 causes problems for many who read these verses. Tradition tells us we go to heaven when we die. This verse tells us the only one who has ever gone into heaven is Jesus. Let’s try to straighten this out. Let’s discuss the issue of Jesus having gone to and returned from heaven: Do you remember the Genesis account? Do you remember the number of times the plural was used concerning God? Do you remember the statement pertaining to God walking with man in the cool of the day? Do you recall that God went back to heaven after man was expelled from the garden? The plural spoken of represents all three persons of the Trinity, therefore, Jesus has gone into heaven and returned. We also see the title Jesus calls himself—the Son of Man, representing his birth among mankind.

Now, the second concern of this verse is: Where people go when they die? This is going to be a hard subject for some people to understand. When Jesus made this statement, there had only been two people who had made it to heaven, Enoch and Elijah, and even I, cannot fully understand why Jesus made this statement. Everyone else, including Moses and Abraham, went to Hades and had to wait for the Resurrection of Jesus.

There are many at the banquet table of the Word and some eat steak, others eat bread, and many play with the Word and do not eat. By the time we finish this book, I hope you understand this statement.

Once again, Jesus continues: *“Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life.”* Jesus used an illustration Nicodemus should have understood because it was an illustration from the Law. The Hebrews were being killed by snakes during their journey in the wilderness and they cried out to Moses. Moses spoke to God and God told Moses to cast a bronze snake and put it on a pole saying *anyone bitten by a snake could look at the pole and live* Numbers 21:8-9. Two things can be stated at this point. The point Jesus was making to Nicodemus was belief must be demonstrated according to faith, just as the Hebrew in the desert had to have faith if bitten by a snake. They only need look at the pole with the bronze snake and they would live.

The other point is the symbol this represents. Healing by faith: Have you ever looked at the symbol for the medical profession? What is it you see when you look at this symbol? Isn’t it two snakes on a pole? Healed by faith! Isn’t it an amazing concept? Sent by God thousands of years ago and mankind still thinks they have all the answers. We have now arrived at one of the more famous verses in the Bible. We see that the verses from 16 to 22 are spoken to Nicodemus, surely, for the ruling council to have an understanding of whom Jesus is and the love that God, the Father, has for all of His creation. *“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”* Notice several things in this verse. First and foremost, it says: God loved the world. If God loved the world, what part is left out? Secondly, notice there is only one Son. Finally, observe there is no religion, no denomination nor any other action required for this gift to be granted.

The only requirement for the promise is a belief in the Son. There is further support for the statement concerning water from verse 5. Do you see any requirement in this verse saying you must be baptized (in any manner)? *“For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.”*

Look at the full promise given. Jesus was sent to save the world because of God’s love, not to condemn the world because of mankind’s sinful nature. *“Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son.”* That should make it straight forward and clear. To all the religions that do not believe in the name of God’s Son: for all the goodness you may do; all the good works you may perform; all the money you may give; all the medical treatments you may create; they all mean nothing and you remain condemned. *“This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil.”* There’s the full answer, the reason, the pure simple truth. Mankind as a whole would rather have the darkness than to understand the light because of the evil surrounding him. *“Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed.”* It seems clear that Jesus understood the hearts of men and stated the truth. That was 2000 years ago and the same applies today as it did at that time. Mankind still hates the light and is afraid of his deeds the light would expose. *“But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God.”* So, there are those who desire to live by truth and they come into the light. I am not afraid of the light, I live by the light, and I trust you may see what I am giving here is from God and not myself so you may understand.

In the remainder of chapter three we see John the Baptist testifying once again to who Jesus is. There is an interesting story in chapter 4 that causes many who read these words to have a problem and question why Jesus did what he did.

John 4, *The Pharisees heard that Jesus was gaining and baptizing more disciples than John*, I must admit the first three verses in chapter 4 puzzle me and I wonder why they say what they do. In this verse, we see the concern of the Pharisees over who is gaining and who is baptizing more disciples. Really, were they running a contest to see who baptized more? Is this verse there to cause us to think about the Pharisees, how they were so concerned with their position under Roman rule, and then they quickly became afraid of what Jesus was doing? Verse 2: *although in fact it was not Jesus who baptized, but His disciples*. Again, I do not understand why this tidbit of information is given. What difference would it make who was doing the baptizing? The baptism by water only represented cleansing or repentance. *When the Lord learned of this, He left Judea and went back once more to Galilee.*

It appears the place John was baptizing must have been north of Samaria and closer to Galilee. Our question remains: Why would that information cause Jesus to leave Judea and head north toward Galilee? *Now he had to go through Samaria*. Sorry, I jumped ahead to explain verse 3. *So He came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph*. Well, if nothing else, we learned where Joseph’s land was located. *Jacob’s well was there, and Jesus, tired as He was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about the sixth hour*. We also learned where Jacob’s well is located. We need to understand why the time is indicated in this verse. The sixth hour represents from 9:00 AM to noon. That is long after the preparation of the morning meal and not a normal time for women to be at the well to draw water. *When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, “Will you give me a drink?” (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.)* There is further evidence Jesus had means to support himself. Notice it says in verse 8 the disciples had gone to buy food. By this time, I should be able to safely say that all the disciples are with Jesus, so at the least, we are talking about the Noonday meal for 13 men. *The Samaritan woman said to Him, “You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?” (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.)*

What told this woman Jesus was a Jew (Hebrew or Israelite)? Was it his attire, his hairstyle, or possibly his speech that told her he was a Jew? We should add a portion of history into this verse. For all practical purposes, the Samaritans are not kin to the Jews and they appear to disagree over how things should be done, as we'll see later. *Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water."* Jesus engages this woman in conversation speaking to her in the spiritual, and she, like Nicodemus, hears in the physical. *"Sir," the woman said, "you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his flocks and herds?"*

There is much to understand in these verses. We see the physical understanding concerning the drawing of water. We see a part of the relationship between Jew and Samaritan in the statement concerning Jacob and his sons. The fact of the matter is, Jacob has no kinship tie to the Samaritans. Historically, the kingdom of Israel was divided into two kingdoms: Israel and Judah. Later, in the history of the two nations, Israel (the ten tribe nation) was taken into captivity by the Assyrians. The Assyrians resettled Samaritans, from other places in their realm, to live on the land of the northern kingdom. In time, the Samaritans attempted to act and claim that they were kin to the Jews and there was a common heritage, which in fact is not true. Therefore, the Jews and the Samaritans were fighting between each other *Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."* Jesus answered her first in the physical and then shifted his teaching to the spiritual. *The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water so that I won't get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water."* The woman still hasn't caught the spiritual message and once again answers in the physical. Jesus continues his teaching: *He told her, "Go, call your husband and come back."*

Since Jesus knew her heart, he went straight to the point, straight to her greatest sin, to get her to understand. We see her reply in the next verse. *"I have no husband," she replied. Jesus said to her, "You are right when you say you have no husband. The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true."* Now we start to see the shift in understanding of this woman. The bell has gone off, she now knows this is no ordinary man to whom she is speaking. *"Sir," the woman said, "I can see that you are a prophet."* Notice there is no startling statement from the woman. She doesn't make statements demanding to know who He is, or why He's in her business, or that she will sue Him because He has violated her rights. She then takes the next step in faith and makes a statement about the politics that has gone on previously between the Jews and the Samaritans. *"Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem."*

The examples John gives us about Jesus should cause us to look at ourselves, and our own situations. What difference is there from this time of 2000 years ago and today over how, or where, one should worship? Over the course of the last 2000 years we started with one denomination that lasted for the first 1000 years, actually until 1054 with the Great Schism, that became two denominations until the 16th century. At this point we have Martin Luther appearing and then there were three denomination. Now over the last almost 500 years we have gone from three denominations to well over 20,000 denominations. Is there any wonder there is no unity in the Church? Can't we see, in many ways, we are only reliving the events that have already been recorded? Look at Jesus' reply to the woman which confirms this, *Jesus declared, "Believe me, woman, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem."* Jesus knew at that time what lay in the future and He tells this woman. *"You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the*

*Jews.*” Oh, the truth revealed in this statement! Lest any of us forget, our salvation, even to this very day, and it will be so even a thousand years from now, came from the Jews. *“Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks.”*

Now we have the true statement made and the reason why Jesus has come. He revealed to this woman at the well that the time had come for the true worshiper to worship the Father in spirit, not by ritual, not by ceremony, not by song, not by speaking in tongues and not by any other means, other than spirit and truth. Jesus confirms this in the next verse *“God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth.”* The reason and the manner for worship of God the Father is plainly stated there. By this time the woman is caught up in the discussion with Jesus and replies, *The woman said, “I know that Messiah” (called Christ) “is coming. When He comes, He will explain everything to us.”*

Oh my! This woman understands some of the Law, the history of the Jews, the promises given to Abraham. Now look at the next verse, second statement, contrary to popular belief Jesus was concerned with women as much as He was for males. Salvation is for mankind with no thought toward gender. *Then Jesus declared, “I who speak to you am He.”* In all the record of the gospels there are only two occasions when Jesus reveals He is the Messiah to anyone outside of the Apostles themselves. One is to this woman! There is significance in the statement: There are men, even denominations, that claim women do not have a major role in belief, faith and the manner of worship, yet here is the first of only two public admissions that Jesus is the Christ, and it is made to a woman! We will see the other admission in chapter 9.

Jesus considered women to be a major portion of his ministry. You don't believe that? Okay, look at the next verse. *Just then his disciples returned and were surprised to find him talking with a woman. But no one asked, “What do you want?” or “Why are you talking with her?”* The disciples are the ones who show surprise, not the woman. The customs of that day placed women below the male, just as in certain places of the world today, yet the disciples knew not to ask the obvious. This break permitted the woman to act upon her newly formed faith. *Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, “Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Christ?”* She is overjoyed at what she now knows and wants to share with everyone in town.

Meanwhile, Jesus is teaching the disciples. Look at verses 30-38: *They came out of the town and made their way toward him. Meanwhile his disciples urged him, “Rabbi, eat something.”*

*But he said to them, “I have food to eat that you know nothing about.”*

*Then his disciples said to each other, “Could someone have brought him food?”*

*“My food,” said Jesus, “is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work. Do you not say, Four months more and then the harvest? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest. Even now the reaper draws his wages, even now he harvests the crop for eternal life, so that the sower and the reaper may be glad together. Thus the saying One sows and another reaps is true. I sent you to reap what you have not worked for. Others have done the hard work, and you have reaped the benefits of their labor.”*

Next we see the people of the town listening, first to the woman and then to Jesus and their belief, as a result, verses 39-43: *Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, “He told me everything I ever did.” So when the Samaritans came to him, they urged him to stay with them, and he stayed two days. And because of his words many more became believers.*

*They said to the woman, “We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Savior of the world.” After the two days he*

*left for Galilee.* Such a marvelous story of faith, and yet every time I hear it, I laugh at the hidden story most people jump right over. Did you notice the statement about how long they stayed? There is confirmation of this in verse 43, that says Jesus and the disciples stayed in this town for two days. Where do you think He stayed? My belief is that He and the disciples stayed at the house of this woman. I know there is nothing to indicate any such thing except the story itself. This woman has had her eyes opened to the realm of the spirit, has had her sins forgiven, has repented in her heart and shared her joy with everyone in town. If Jesus told her about the other six men, don't you think she is quite capable to attend to the needs of Jesus and the disciples? I do not intend for this to be taken in any carnal, meaning worldly, manner other than the physical needs of nourishment and sleep. Can't you remember the day you accepted Jesus as Lord in your life and the joy that filled you. You wanted to share this with everyone you knew? If you had just met the Savior of the World, wouldn't you invite him to stay at your house?

The remainder of Chapter 4 tells the story of Jesus healing the official's son. The important verse is 50. John 4:50, *Jesus said to him, "Go your way; your son lives."* *So the man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him, and he went his way.* There are two things that happened in this verse. First Jesus speaks the word, or the command, which prompts the healing. Secondly, we notice the faith of the official who did not question but did as Jesus told him. We learn in verse 54 that this is the second miraculous sign Jesus performed. John 4:54, *This again is the second sign Jesus did when He had come out of Judea into Galilee.*

At the beginning of chapter five we have a clue as to the time of year, but that is all it is a clue. This could be in either June or October because that would be the time for the next two Jewish feasts after Passover. John 5:1, *After this there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.*

Now let us look at certain passages in chapter 5. This first story in chapter five is where Jesus heals the man at the pool of Bethesda. Notice in verse 6, Jesus first checks the faith of the man. *When Jesus saw him lying there, and knew that he already had been in that condition a long time, He said to him, "Do you want to be made well?"* Since he desires to be healed, Jesus speaks the command in verse 8, and the man is healed. *Jesus said to him, "Rise, take up your bed and walk."* Notice in verse 10, the reaction by those Jesus calls the Jews. *The Jews therefore said to him who was cured, "It is the Sabbath; it is not lawful for you to carry your bed."*

This term, Jews, is used in John's writings to indicate the Pharisees and the Sadducees. From this story I must make one other observation. Apparently, the man had committed a sin that had caused his paralysis for 38 years. Look at verse 14 for the statement Jesus makes to this man. *Afterward Jesus found him in the temple, and said to him, "See, you have been made well. Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you."*

We can find the reason the Jews wanted to kill Jesus in chapter 5. Look in verse 18 for the reason: *Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God.* Jesus didn't follow their rules, which took away their power of influence. The conclusion of the Jews is that Jesus was blaspheming God and making himself equal to God. There are important statements made by Jesus to confirm some things I have already written. Look at verse 22 to see who of the Holy Trinity does the judging. *"For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son."* Earlier I spoke about those who have died and were in Hades and not in heaven. At the time of John's writing that was a true statement, however, we shall see the statement is no longer true. Two other verses are important in chapter 5. Verse 25 records, *"I tell you the truth, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live."* This verse is not speaking of the physically dead,

instead it is talking about the spiritually dead, however there is another passage to read in verses 28-29, *“Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and come out—those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned.”* These two verses are speaking about the physical body of the dead, both believers and the wicked. Notice in verse 29, there are two resurrections of the dead, one for the good and one for the wicked. What isn't said here is that the two resurrections mentioned take place one thousand years apart.

There are other interesting statements pertaining to Christ in chapter five. In the verses from 31 through 47, we can see various testimonies about Christ. I have already given you the reason the Jews wanted Christ killed and told you it came from verse 18. The question Jesus is now answering for the Jews has to do with the testimony of who He is. Under Jewish law, you had to have two or three people to testify before an accusation was accepted or a truth was confirmed. In these verses, Jesus is providing the Jews the testimony of three about Himself. First, Jesus offers the testimony of John the Baptist:

John 5:31-33, *“If I bear witness of Myself, My witness is not true. There is another who bears witness of Me, and I know that the witness which He witnesses of Me is true. You have sent to John, and he has borne witness to the truth.”*

Jesus continues and provides the second testimony from God the Father:

John 5:36-40, *“But I have a greater witness than John's; for the works which the Father has given Me to finish; the very works that I do; bear witness of Me, that the Father has sent Me. And the Father Himself, who sent Me, has testified of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His form. But you do not have His word abiding in you, because whom He sent, Him you do not believe. You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.”*

Notice one thing in verse 40. Jesus wants us to come to Him so we may have life, not religion. There is not one verse in all the Bible that indicates Jesus came to create a new religion. He came to redeem mankind and to correct the sin committed in the Garden so that mankind could once again go before God the Father as an heir and not as an outcast.

The third testimony Jesus gives to the Jews is that of Moses and comes from verses 44-47: *“How can you believe, who receive honor from one another, and do not seek the honor that comes from the only God? Do not think that I shall accuse you to the Father; there is one who accuses you; Moses, in whom you trust. For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?”* Think about that! Jesus gave the Jews three persons who would testify to whom He was, John the Baptist, God the Father and Moses (representing the Law the Jews put so much into) and they would still not accept the fact of who He was. So what has changed over the course of two thousand years? The Jews still do not believe Jesus is the Messiah. Men and women around the world believe today that doing good works and acting in a good manner will get you into heaven, and another portion of mankind would rather be partying than even worrying about the consequences. There is no wonder our world is messed up, and you, the next generation, are going to inherit the mess. Will your belief and your actions benefit the generations to come? Will your generation follow the course handed down by traditions? More importantly, will your generation see the Second Coming of Christ?

It really is up to mankind to tell the Father when to send Christ the second time. If we repent, become obedient to God's ordained Law, and worship Him in spirit, we can see future generations on this planet. However, **if we continue** at the pace, and in the direction we are presently going, **we will see** the Second Coming of Christ in your lifetime. I believe Jesus told the truth when he said no man

will know the hour of the Second Coming of Christ for the simple reason that mankind will influence that hour thus it is up to us. If we continue to rebel against God, we bring the Second Coming at a faster pace. If we repent, become obedient and follow in the manner God ordained, we prolong the blessings God has given us. **It is up to us** how God will react, and if present day is any indication, God does not like what He sees. Yes! The Second Coming of Jesus could be in your lifetime! For example, observe the timeline between destructive occurrences. It used to be that you might hear about any such event once a month. Today it seems that it is a daily news event, from someplace in the world, to have a volcanic eruption, an earthquake, or a flood, drought, severe storm in the form of cyclone, hurricane or tornado, excessive rain or snow, frigid cold weather, mud slide, fire, some type of multiple wreck, or a workplace explosion. Mankind still doesn't seem to understand that God is in charge and this is one way that He is trying to get our attention. If it is not the weather we are hearing about it is something that is medical. We have had outbreaks of Ebola, new strains of flu, flesh eating bacteria, MRSA and CRE and new outbreaks of old diseases such as measles. What would be the outcome if we had an outbreak of plague, polio or tuberculosis crossed with a super bug virus? The longer we go without listening the more severe and the shorter the time element is between these occurrence. Think about what is going on in the world around you. Have you seen these news feeds on your smart phone or tablet? For now, let's get back to our study of John.

Chapter Six provides several items of interest for our study. The first story is the feeding of the five thousand. We can say several things about the length of time Jesus has been in the area teaching. We know he went to Jerusalem shortly after his baptism and the beginning of his public ministry. We know from the statements at the beginning of Chapter Four that He returned to Galilee and went again to Jerusalem at the beginning of Chapter Five. Sometime after the healing of the man at the pool at Bethesda, Jesus returns to Galilee. We now begin Chapter Six and we know almost a year has passed because of the wording in verse 4 that the Jewish Passover Feast was near. One of the strongest points of understanding to be revealed in Chapter Six is the power of a word. Jesus uses the power of speech for us to understand and He teaches us that we can use His name to do the same. For the purposes of illustration, look at the following verses from Chapters 4, 5 and 6 to see this power:

John 4:50 *Jesus replied, "You may go. Your son will live."*

John 5:8 *Then Jesus said to him, "Get up! Pick up your mat and walk."*

John 6:10 *Jesus said, "Have the people sit down."*

John 6:12 *When they had all had enough to eat, he said to his disciples, "Gather the pieces that are left over. Let nothing be wasted."*

All of these examples go back to the manner John introduced Jesus in verse 1:1, *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.* We can see in Chapter Six that even Jesus needs solitude. Jesus was in a human body, an earth suit if you want to call it that, and while He was God in the flesh, He needed some space to avoid the demands people put on Him. Look in verses 6:14-15 to confirm this: *After the people saw the miraculous sign that Jesus did, they began to say, "Surely this is the Prophet who is to come into the world." Jesus, knowing that they intended to come and make him king by force, withdrew again to a mountain by himself.*

The next story in Chapter Six is of Jesus walking on the water. The account in John provides information that the disciples left by themselves and started across the Sea of Galilee in a boat. It became dark and they had rowed three to three and half miles prior to Jesus' approach. To see the full impact of this story we need to look at what Matthew recorded in Matthew 14:28-32, *"Lord, if it's you," Peter replied, "tell me to come to you on the water."*

*"Come," he said.*

*Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, "Lord, save me!" Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him.*

*"You of little faith," he said, "why did you doubt?"*

*And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down.* Other gospel accounts (Matthew 14:26; Mark 6:50) indicate that the disciples were afraid and thought they were seeing a ghost. We can confirm this in verse 19 of the sixth chapter of John, *So when they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea and drawing near the boat; and they were afraid.*

There are many verses in chapter six containing spiritual teachings from Jesus. The people that Jesus told these things didn't understand the spiritual. Jesus tried to get them to understand and in verses 26 and 27, Jesus answered, *"I tell you the truth, you are looking for me, not because you saw miraculous signs but because you ate the loaves and had your fill. Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. On him God the Father has placed his seal of approval."* There is a discussion that follows, and the answer Jesus gives to the people is amazing. That answer is in verse 29, *Jesus answered, "The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent."* That's rather straight forward and simple, isn't it? There is nothing stated about a certain denomination, there is nothing stated about the method of baptism, there is nothing stated about any race, color or creed. It is a simple statement directly from Jesus and would certainly agree with John 3:16, which we have already discussed. To continue with chapter six look at verse 33, *"For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."* The bread Jesus is talking about is Himself, and He alone is the substance, or nourishment, or bread, of God the Father. Notice in this verse Jesus gives life, it does not say He gives religion, or Christianity. Jesus continues with this teaching that He is the bread of life in verse 35, *Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty."*

Look very carefully at verses 39-40. I am showing you truth as I believe God leads me to do. I want you to understand God loves you, and desires you believe in the One He sent, so you may have eternal life. There are simple statements made in the book of John showing us these things. See if you don't agree when you read these two verses, *"And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all that he has given me, but raise them up at the last day. For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day."* Jesus continues and makes some wonderful statements in verses 45-48. *"It is written in the Prophets: They will all be taught by God. Everyone who listens to the Father and learns from him comes to me. No one has seen the Father except the one who is from God; only he has seen the Father. I tell you the truth, he who believes has everlasting life. I am the bread of life."*

Jesus told these things to the people and still they did not believe. In fact, there was great confusion among the people as we can see in verse 60, *On hearing it, many of his disciples said, "This is a hard teaching. Who can accept it?"* Jesus answered them in the following manner, and we see part of the reason in verse 64: John 6:61-64, *Aware that his disciples were grumbling about this, Jesus said to them, "Does this offend you? What if you see the Son of Man ascend to where he was before! The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life. Yet there are some of you who do not believe." For Jesus had known from the beginning which of them did not believe and who would betray him.* The remaining of chapter six is a discussion Jesus has with His twelve disciples.

From verse two of chapter seven, we know this occurred in October of the second year of Jesus' ministry. We can say the second year because of the statement in verse 6:4. We find in verses 3-4 Jesus' brothers. Yes! Jesus had brothers and sisters. Matthew 13:55-56, *"Is this not the carpenter's son? Is not His mother called Mary? And His brothers James, Joses, Simon, and Judas? And His sisters, are they not all with us? Where then did this Man get all these things?"* Mark 6:3, *"Is this not the carpenter, the Son of Mary, and brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon? And are not His sisters here with us?"* And they were offended at Him. Acts 1:14, *These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.* Prior to Jesus' crucifixion His brothers mocked Him and we see the reason in verse 5. John 7:5, *For even his own brothers did not believe in him.* I must make a note at this point. At this time I can say Jesus' brothers did not believe in Him. That is why Jesus named John to take care of His mother after He was crucified, however they did believe in Him after His death as shown in Acts 1:14. James became the leader of the church in Jerusalem after Jesus' death and both James and Jude (Judas) have a book in the Bible.

In reading the Bible and studying about Jesus He always did the will of God the Father. Therefore, He waited with patience to see what God wanted done in this particular situation. Jesus didn't jump in and act when He thought it should be done, so verses 7:6-9: *Therefore Jesus told them, "The right time for me has not yet come; for you any time is right. The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify that what it does is evil. You go to the Feast. I am not yet going up to this Feast, because for me the right time has not yet come."* Having said this, he stayed in Galilee.

Having said that, I can safely say after every one in the family had left to go to Jerusalem, He received the will of God to go and He did, John 7:10: *However, after his brothers had left for the Feast, he went also, not publicly, but in secret.* Verses 11-13 provides information, but look at what happens in verses 14-15, *Not until halfway through the Feast did Jesus go up to the temple courts and begin to teach. The Jews were amazed and asked, "How did this man get such learning without having studied?"* I can make a direct reference back to 3:2 from verse 7:15. Nicodemus and the others of the ruling council knew who had been taught by a Rabbi and they all knew Jesus was not trained in this manner. So they didn't believe Jesus could teach the way He did without studying (under one of the Rabbinic teachers). Jesus tells the Jews how He knew the Law in the verses from 16 to 20, *Jesus answered, "My teaching is not my own. It comes from him who sent me. If anyone chooses to do God's will, he will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own. He who speaks on his own does so to gain honor for himself, but he who works for the honor of the one who sent him is a man of truth; there is nothing false about him. Has not Moses given you the law? Yet not one of you keeps the law. Why are you trying to kill me?"*

You want to see a funny? Do you think God has a sense of humor? Are there verses in the Bible from which we can find humor? I think so, and here is one of those verses! I will address the next statement in a moment but notice something in verse 19. Jesus is speaking to the Jews, these members of the ruling council and the very ones who are not only trained in the Law of Moses, but in a position to teach the Law throughout Israel. Jesus tells them they do not keep the law: *"Yet not one of you keeps the law."* Boy! You talk about a slap in the face! This statement made by Jesus really is one. Everything these men stand for has now been brought into question. Do you see the humor in this verse? The ones who are in a position of leadership and control have just been told that they do not keep the law they are so strongly trying to protect. Is that funny or not? Well, I thought it was! It's not very often you see the rulers being told that they don't know what they're talking about.

Now notice the reply in John 7:20, *"You are demon-possessed," the crowd answered. "Who is trying to kill you?"* It is not the Jews who respond, it's the crowd, and apparently the crowd was not

aware of the feeling of the Jews over the healing of the man at the pool at Bethesda verse 5:18. Jesus answers and tells both the crowd (who did not know) and the Jews (who He knew wanted to kill Him) the following in verses 7:21-24: *Jesus said to them, "I did one miracle, and you are all astonished. Yet, because Moses gave you circumcision (though actually it did not come from Moses, but from the patriarchs), you circumcise a child on the Sabbath. Now if a child can be circumcised on the Sabbath so that the law of Moses may not be broken (NOTE: This goes back to Genesis 17:12), why are you angry with me for healing the whole man on the Sabbath? Stop judging by mere appearances, and make a right judgment."*

In chapter eight we see one of the stories that we have heard in Sunday School class. Verses 3-11 tell us about the woman caught in adultery and the crowd ready to stone her. John 8:3-11, *The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before the group and said to Jesus, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?" They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him.*

*But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger. When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, "If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her." Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground.*

*At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there. Jesus straightened up and asked her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?"*

*"No one, sir," she said.*

*"Then neither do I condemn you," Jesus declared. "Go now and leave your life of sin."*

There are three things I'd like to illustrate in this story. Notice the teachers of the law and the Pharisees bringing a woman before Jesus and telling him she was caught in the act of adultery. First, where is the man? Under the law, both parties are to be stoned. Did the man run too fast and get away, or was he part of the trap being setup? We saw in Luke 4:16 Jesus could read, *So He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read.* We now see that Jesus could write. The third thing I would like for you to understand is the forgiveness of which Jesus was capable. Notice Jesus did not condemn this woman for her sin.

How many times have you tried to talk to someone about Jesus and they told you they are so-o-o bad-d-d-d that God, or Jesus, couldn't possibly love them. Why not? Jesus forgave this woman who was caught in a very sinful act. The only thing He told her was to "... *leave your life of sin.*" That's obedience, not religion. Jesus never asked any of these people He healed to worship Him. He told them their sins were forgiven and to go and not sin again. He told them to honor and love the God of their fathers. A little discipline, simple obedience and nothing more. It was not religion that Jesus taught, it was the richness of life. Look at the next verse to understand this, John 8:12 *When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."* Jesus, as the light, replaces the darkness, representing mankind's sin. If you do not believe in Jesus, you are walking in the darkness of sin. Jesus removes that darkness and replaces it with His light.

Verses 14-19 are further validation of His testimony. We saw this in chapter 5 and this only confirms those statements. We also saw in chapter five where Jesus told the Pharisees they did not believe the Law of Moses, verses 5:45-47. We see in chapter eight even a stronger statement. Look at verse 19, *Then they asked him, "Where is your father?"*

*“You do not know me or my Father,” Jesus replied. “If you knew me, you would know my Father also.”* If we changed the words in this verse, couldn't we say the same thing if we removed Father and inserted God? Then isn't Jesus telling them they do not know God? Talk about being beat-up with your own religious ceremonies: Jesus dug them a hole; pushed them into it; and filled the hole with this statement. He really buried them with their interpretation of the Law. In the verses from 19 to 42 we see the rest of this discussion. Now we get down to what Jesus really thought about these people He called Jews. Look at what He says in verses 44-47, *“You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies. Yet because I tell the truth, you do not believe me! Can any of you prove me guilty of sin? If I am telling the truth, why don't you believe me? He who belongs to God hears what God says. The reason you do not hear is that you do not belong to God.”*

The last portion of chapter eight contains another clue to who Jesus really is. We can find this clue in John 8:58, *“I tell you the truth,” Jesus answered, “before Abraham was born, I am!”* Jesus continues to inject words that should make the Jews stop and think what He is saying and what their religion taught them. When God brought Moses to lead the Israelites out of Egypt, Moses asked God who of the Israelites would believe him if he could not tell them who had sent him. God answered in the following manner in Exodus 3:14, *And God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM.” And He said, “Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, I AM has sent me to you.”* So if we really look at verse 58 Jesus is really saying, *“before Abraham was God and I am part of God!”*

In chapter nine we find the healing of the blind man. I will show you that this is the second person to whom Jesus admits He is the Son of God. In verse 2 we see the disciples asking Jesus if the man or his parents had sinned to cause the blindness. We start with verse 3 and find Jesus speaking, John 9:3-5, *“Neither this man nor his parents sinned,” said Jesus, “but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life. As long as it is day, we must do the work of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work. While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”* We see the reason this man was blind and now we are going to jump through some verses to see what happens:

John 9:11, *He replied, “The man they call Jesus made some mud and put it on my eyes. He told me to go to Siloam and wash. So I went and washed, and then I could see.”* Notice in this verse the man calls Jesus a man.

John 9:14, *Now the day on which Jesus had made the mud and opened the man's eyes was a Sabbath.* Notice the day this healing was done was a Sabbath.

John 9:17, *Finally they turned again to the blind man, “What have you to say about him? It was your eyes he opened.”*

*The man replied, “He is a prophet.”* Notice this time when asked, the man identifies Jesus as a prophet. We next find the parents of this man were brought before the Pharisees.

John 9:18-23, *The Jews still did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they sent for the man's parents. “Is this your son?” they asked. “Is this the one you say was born blind? How is it that now he can see?”*

*“We know he is our son,” the parents answered, “and we know he was born blind. But how he can see now, or who opened his eyes, we don't know. Ask him. He is of age; he will speak for himself.” His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews, for already the Jews had decided that anyone who acknowledged that Jesus was the Christ would be put out of the synagogue. That was why his parents said, “He is of age; ask him.”* You read that this was a man. How old this person was is only indicated by the statement of the parents when they tell the Pharisees that *he is of age* meaning he was

over the age of twelve and accountable for his own actions. It appears from the next verse that the Pharisees had dismissed the man because he was called a second time.

John 9:24, *A second time they summoned the man who had been blind. "Give glory to God, " they said. "We know this man is a sinner."* In this series of questioning we see the faith of the man grow with each question asked by the Pharisees and we see the frustration of the Pharisees grow with each answer given.

John 9:25-33, *He replied, "Whether he is a sinner or not, I don't know. One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!"*

*Then they asked him, "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?"*

*He answered, "I have told you already and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you want to become his disciples, too?"*

*Then they hurled insults at him and said, "You are this fellow's disciple! We are disciples of Moses! We know that God spoke to Moses, but as for this fellow, we don't even know where he comes from."*

*The man answered, "Now that is remarkable! You don't know where he comes from, yet he opened my eyes. We know that God does not listen to sinners. He listens to the godly man who does his will. Nobody has ever heard of opening the eyes of a man born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing."*

One last action by the Pharisees is completed in verse 34, *To this they replied, "You were steeped in sin at birth; how dare you lecture us!" And they threw him out.* Did you see the faith of the man grow? It can be seen by the way the man identified who healed him. First it was a man, the man became a prophet, and finally this man was from God. In reality that's how simple this whole thing is.

You hear about this man named Jesus, you start to believe, then you accept He is the Son of God. That's how simple it really is, and yet we have already passed over the very reason mankind does not want to believe. We live in the domain of Satan, a place of darkness, and we do not want to approach the light. Would you like to have a simple illustration to show this statement to be true? The Bible used for this work is standard size and the number of pages that make up the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John is 126. You can't get a lot of people to read 126 pages to learn about this man named Jesus and I would be willing to say you have had more than 126 pages of homework over the course of the last school year. Why are you willing to do your homework and not willing to read about Jesus? The homework may help you in this life and upon this plain (meaning upon the surface of this planet), never the less, the reading about Jesus may gain you an eternal life in a higher plain (meaning in a higher state of being). It is simply a matter of priority. Which priority do you chose?

I still have not directed you to the second place where Jesus admits who He is. We find that statement in verses 35-38: *Jesus heard that they had thrown him out, and when he found him, he said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?"*

*"Who is he, sir?" the man asked. "Tell me so that I may believe in him."*

*Jesus said, "You have now seen him; in fact, he is the one speaking with you."*

*Then the man said, "Lord, I believe," and he worshiped him.*

In chapter 10 we see Jesus using an illustration of a shepherd and his flock as an example to show who He is to the Jews, and yet they still do not understand what Jesus is trying to tell them. We can find a condensed summary of the discussion with the Jews in verses 25-30: *Jesus answered, "I did tell you, but you do not believe. The miracles I do in my Father's name speak for me, but you do not believe because you are not my sheep. My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand. I and the Father are one."*

I have indicated in several places the Jews did not believe in Jesus, but what if I show you they did understand who He was? Look at the next three verses to see the actions of the Pharisees in verses 10:31-33: *Again the Jews picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus said to them, "I have shown you many great miracles from the Father. For which of these do you stone me?"*

*"We are not stoning you for any of these," replied the Jews, "but for blasphemy, because you, a mere man, claim to be God."* Cut through all the nonsense of the Jews, and at the bottom, they did understand what Jesus was saying about who He was! They just couldn't accept the facts. At the conclusion of chapter 10 we see Jesus going to the other side of the Jordan River.

We are now beginning the eleventh chapter out of twenty-one. Would you believe me if I said we were almost done with this study? Mathematics doesn't have anything to do with this. If it did, why did we cover over two years of the life of Jesus in 10 chapters and we will cover less than six months in the next ten. Would you believe me if I said the major portion of the next ten chapters will cover only two weeks? Well, let's see what happens!

To me, chapter 11 is the critical chapter of the entire book of John. We have seen Jesus telling those around Him that He is the light, the bread and the water of life. We passed over many of the statements about Jesus being the Good Shepherd in Chapter 10. Now we must go back and pick up one verse, John 10:11, *"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep."* In this verse we see one indication where Jesus must die for the sake of mankind as a whole. At this time I must do two things to setup chapter 11. First, Jesus tells on four occasions that He must be in the grave three days. None of these occasions are in the Gospel of John.

Matthew 12:40, *"For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."*

Matthew 16:21, *From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day.*

Matthew 27:62-63, *On the next day, which followed the Day of Preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees gathered together to Pilate, saying, "Sir, we remember, while He was still alive, how that deceiver said, after three days I will rise."*

Mark 8:31, *And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.*

The important verse is Matthew 12:40. This is a statement directly from Jesus indicating He must be three days and three nights in the grave. Jesus uses another illustration in this verse. What did He say about Jonah? Didn't He say that *"Jonah was three days and three night in the belly of the great fish?"* Jesus did not say if Jonah was alive or dead while in the great fish and traditional teaching would tell us Jonah was alive during this period! Really? What does the story of Jonah say? We find the book of Jonah between the Books of Obadiah and Micah and only four chapters in length. The portion we need to study is the last verse of chapter one along with part of the prayer of Jonah in chapter two. Look first at Jonah chapter 1:17, *Now the LORD had prepared a great fish to swallow Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.* Notice two things in this verse, first, the LORD (that means God) prepared a great fish to swallow Jonah. Secondly, notice that Jonah was in the belly of the fish for three days and three nights. Now, notice something that is not stated. There is no statement saying Jonah was alive or dead in this verse. Once again we can find an answer in Biblical text, away from the teachings of denominational training. This writer interprets this passage of scripture to read that Jonah was dead for these three days and three nights. Look at the wording recorded in the following verses:

Jonah 2:1, *Then Jonah prayed to the LORD his God from the fish's belly.* This may have been the last conscious thing Jonah did as he was drowning. Was he really dead? Well, read the next verse to see if you agree.

Jonah 2:2, *And he said: "I cried out to the LORD because of my affliction, and He answered me. Out of the belly of Sheol I cried, and You heard my voice."* You didn't see where it says Jonah was dead, did you? Notice this verse does not say out of the *belly of the fish*; instead it says out of the *belly of Sheol*. I need to explain Sheol: Sheol is the Hebrew word for grave, or the representation of death. So Jonah himself tells us he had died. Now, let's confirm that statement in verse 6:

Jonah 2:6, *I went down to the moorings of the mountains; The earth with its bars closed behind me forever; Yet You have brought up my life from the pit, O LORD, my God.* There are two confirmations that Jonah was dead in this one verse. Jonah says the *earth with its bars closed behind me forever*. Isn't that being buried? But look at the next statement: *Yet You have brought up my life from the pit, O LORD, my God.* The term *from the pit* means from the grave. My understanding is Jonah admitted his life was saved by God alone (after three days and three night).

If you agree Jonah was dead, then we are ready to find some sort of confirmation that there was a resurrection of Jonah. This is found in verse ten:

Jonah 2:10, *So the LORD spoke to the fish, and it vomited Jonah onto dry land.* It was God who brought Jonah back from the grave by first having the great fish vomit him out onto dry land. All this is fine and good, but what does it have to do with the study of John? Now pick up one more reference we jumped over in chapter ten. John 10:17-18, *"Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father."* The command to resurrect Jonah came from God and in these two verses, we understand God has given this capability to Jesus.

We are now ready to tackle chapter 11. We must use four different stories to connect the full impact of what Jesus is telling to the Apostles. Remember in story one, Jesus had said that He must spend three days and three nights in the grave as Jonah spent in the great fish. Continuing in story two, we clarified that Jonah was dead in the great fish. In story three, we are told by Jesus that He has the power to lay down His life and to take it back up again. Finally, we must insert the fourth story and this is the story about Lazarus, the brother of Mary and Martha, who lived in the village of Bethany. The location of Bethany is about a day's journey from where Jesus was at this time across the Jordan River. In verse 1 we are told that Lazarus is sick. In verse 3 Mary and Martha send a message to Jesus. The messenger will take one day to get to Jesus and I can tell you now it was on this day that Lazarus died. Now notice what Jesus does with this news in verse 6, *Yet when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was two more days.*

I can also tell you Jesus knew Lazarus was dead before He started the journey. This is confirmed in verses 11-15: *After he had said this, he went on to tell them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I am going there to wake him up."*

*His disciples replied, "Lord, if he sleeps, he will get better." Jesus had been speaking of his death, but his disciples thought he meant natural sleep.*

*So then he told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead, and for your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him."* We can now confirm Lazarus died on the day the messenger was sent because of what is recorded in the next verse. If the messenger took one day to travel, Jesus waited two additional days and it took one day to travel back. That's four days! Look at the next verse:

John 11:17, *On his arrival, Jesus found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days*. There are two places in bold print in the text above. Jesus tells the disciples in the first statement he is going to wake Lazarus, and in the second statement, He tells them this will be done so they may believe. It is not only for the sake of the disciples this was done. It refers to the statement we see John making in chapter 20 that he writes this book, so you may believe that Jesus is the Son of God. I write these words so you may have an up-to-date belief statement that these words are true and **that you may believe and have eternal life**.

Now, let's ask a question. How much difference is there between three days and three nights and four days? I ask this because Jesus has retold the story of Jonah and said Jonah was in the great fish three days and three nights and He (Jesus) must spend three days and three nights in the grave. Now we see the statement Lazarus was dead four days. Isn't the difference between the two illustrations only a moment? Doesn't three days and three nights change to four days at the first break of light on the fourth day, or, if we used our modern system of time, a stroke after midnight? If we use the structure of time in the days of Jesus, wouldn't the difference between three days and three nights and the fourth day be the moment (one second) after sundown? I have shown all of this so you can understand that what Jesus is about to do has to do with both Jonah and Himself. God commanded Jonah to be resurrected, and we saw in chapter 10 this ability was also given to Jesus.

It is now time for Jesus to glorify God by waking Lazarus from the dead, or in other words, to demonstrate His ability to raise the dead, even Himself. Finally, we must tell you that to the Hebrews, a person dead for two days was gone forever and that-was-that. So now we see Jesus arriving during the fourth day. We can see the faith of Mary and Martha in the following two references: John 11:21-27, *"Lord," Martha said to Jesus, "if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask."*

*Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again."*

*Martha answered, "I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day."*

*Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?"*

*"Yes, Lord," she told him, "I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who was to come into the world."*

We see the reaction and faith of Mary in verses 31-35, *When the Jews who had been with Mary in the house, comforting her, noticed how quickly she got up and went out, they followed her, supposing she was going to the tomb to mourn there. When Mary reached the place where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and said, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died."*

*When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled. "Where have you laid him?" he asked.*

*"Come and see, Lord," they replied.*

*Jesus wept.*

Are you aware that you just read the shortest verse in the Bible? It was verse 35, *Jesus wept*. Do you see the compassion within this Man? Do you see the love of God the Father for His creation? Here is God, in the flesh, among men and women, and He cries in empathy for the love of a friend and the sorrow of that friend's family. There are many religions in the world today, but there is no other religion containing the same story line as that contained in the Bible. Now, we shall see the full power of God the Father granted to Jesus, the Son of Man, to glorify the Father. Look at the rest of the story in verses 38-44: *Jesus, once more deeply moved, came to the tomb. It was a cave with a stone laid across the entrance. "Take away the stone," he said.*

*“But, Lord,” said Martha, the sister of the dead man, “by this time there is a bad odor, for he has been there four days.”*

*Then Jesus said, “Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?” So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, “Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me.” When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!” The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face. Jesus said to them, “Take off the grave clothes and let him go.”*

From this point on, we are in a headlong rush toward the crucifixion of Jesus upon the cross. The first verse in chapter 12 says it is six days before Passover. On this particular Passover, the only acceptable sacrifice is the Lamb of God. It is Passover day when Jesus will be crucified, so we are now talking of six days before His death. There are four major subheadings in chapter 12: Jesus anointed at Bethany; the triumphant entry to Jerusalem; Jesus predicting His death; and the continued unbelief of the Jews.

There is one reference we need to view. As Jesus was predicting His death, there is something extra that happens, look at verses 27-32: *“Now my heart is troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour. Father, glorify your name!” Then a voice came from heaven, “I have glorified it, and will glorify it again.” The crowd that was there and heard it said it had thundered; others said an angel had spoken to him. Jesus said, “This voice was for your benefit, not mine. Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out. But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself.”* I spoke earlier about the major religions of the world. The Bible is the only place you can find these stories! However, there is one point I can add from these verses. No other holy book pertaining to an individual, prophet, or leader of a religion ever stated that a voice was heard from heaven as these stories tell about Jesus.

This reference is the third time a voice has come from heaven to speak about this man. The first time was at His baptism: Matthew 3:17, *And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”* Mark 1:11, *Then a voice came from heaven, “You are My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”* Luke 3:22, *And the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from heaven which said, “You are My beloved Son; in You I am well pleased.”*, the second time the voice from heaven is heard takes place on the Mount of Transfiguration: Matthew 17:5, *While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!”* Mark 9:7, *And a cloud came and overshadowed them; and a voice came out of the cloud, saying, “This is My beloved Son. Hear Him!”* Luke 9:34-35, *While he was saying this, a cloud came and overshadowed them; and they were fearful as they entered the cloud. And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, “This is My beloved Son. Hear Him!”*

In chapter 13 the three subheadings are: Jesus washes His disciples’ feet; Jesus predicts His betrayal; and Jesus predicts Peter’s denial. We will study only two of these references. Here is a good trivia question. Did anyone, other than Jesus and Judas, know Judas would betray Jesus? Well, maybe! There was at least one other, and possibly two, of the disciples who knew Judas would betray Jesus! Look at verses 21-27: *After he had said this, Jesus was troubled in spirit and testified, “I tell you the truth, one of you is going to betray me.”*

*His disciples stared at one another, at a loss to know which of them he meant. One of them, the disciple whom Jesus loved, was reclining next to him. (this would mean John) Simon Peter motioned to this disciple and said, “Ask him which one he means.”*

*Leaning back against Jesus, he asked him, “Lord, who is it?”*

*Jesus answered, "It is the one to whom I will give this piece of bread when I have dipped it in the dish." Then, dipping the piece of bread, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, son of Simon. As soon as Judas took the bread, Satan entered into him. "What you are about to do, do quickly," Jesus told him. So, it appears Jesus showed by His own actions, after His statement, that Judas was the betrayer. If John had given the answer to Peter, both John and Peter knew Judas was to betray Christ.*

You thought I was kidding when I said we were almost finished with this study. We just went through 3 chapters in less than two typed pages. We are now at chapter 14 and we find the subheadings: Jesus comforts His disciples; Jesus the Way to the Father; and Jesus promises the Holy Spirit. We may have to slow down for just a moment to look at a few things in this chapter. We need to slow down because Jesus is preparing the disciples for His death and the coming of the Holy Spirit. Now, with the introduction of the Holy Spirit, we have all three persons of the Trinity of God and there is a simple means to show that they are really three persons. Look at what they are called — what I mean is this. God told Moses to tell the Hebrew people that *I AM* sent me. In verse 6 of chapter 14 Jesus says, "*I am the way*" recorded in the following, *Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."* In chapter 14 verses 16 and 17 we see the Counselor or Spirit of truth recorded in the following, "*And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever—the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.*" God = I AM; Jesus = the Way; Holy Spirit = Counselor or Spirit of truth, so together we have the statement for the Trinity — ***I Am the Way to the Spirit of Truth!*** This is simple statement most often overlooked by the scholarly, teachers of denominational traditions, and shepherds of lost flocks. Now I understand that I have already shown you where I AM came from, but how did I come to such an understanding that Jesus equaled **The Way**. The real answer is in the book of Acts and we need to read four verses:

Acts 9:2, *And asked letters from him to the synagogues of Damascus, so that if he found any who were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.* This is Saul, before he becomes Paul, and he is persecuting the followers of Jesus and bringing them to Jerusalem.

Acts 19:23, *And about that time there arose a great commotion about the Way.*

Acts 24:14, "*But this I confess to you, that according to the Way which they call a sect, so I worship the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the Law and in the Prophets.*"

Acts 24:22, *But when Felix heard these things, having more accurate knowledge of the Way, he adjourned the proceedings and said, "When Lysias the commander comes down, I will make a decision on your case."*

I can tell you this, the original followers of Jesus were followers of The Way and were not called Christians. In fact, the term Christian does not enter the picture until the Book of Acts, chapter 11 Acts 11:26, *And when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. So it was that for a whole year they assembled with the church and taught a great many people. And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.*

The readings above from Acts are how I determined *The Way* and from where the name Christian came. There is one other reference we need to look at and in John chapter 14, that is verses 30-31: "*I will not speak with you much longer, for the prince of this world is coming. He has no hold on me, but the world must learn that I love the Father and that I do exactly what my Father has commanded me. Come now; let us leave.*" The prince of this world is Satan. Now some of you may be familiar with the story, *A Wrinkle in Time* in which *It* represents Satan. Both are the shadow of evil, or as they would say in *Star Wars*, the dark side of the force. We can also see two other things about Jesus. First, the evil shadow does not have a hold over Jesus, unlike us, **Jesus does not have a sin nature**. Like us, Jesus lived in the domain where the presence of evil was and was felt. The gift of life Jesus is offering to

mankind, by believing in Him, removes the influence of the shadow of evil from around us. Be careful, I said the belief in Jesus removes the influence of the shadow of evil. I did not say this belief removed the shadow of evil. What the Bible is trying to tell us is that mankind lives in Satan's home, but by believing in Jesus, Satan's power is broken. I must tell you at the same time you start to believe in Jesus, Satan will try and try and try to get you to doubt, to change to your old ways, to disbelieve, to do anything he can to steal you from the hands of Christ. Some days I think Satan cannot read. If he could, he would understand what is said about him and what he can and cannot do. Didn't we see in chapter 10 that as the Good Shepherd, we are the sheep of Jesus' flock and no one can snatch us out of Jesus' hand or the hand of God, John 10:28-29. This includes Satan! I don't know about you, but I'd rather be safe in the hands of God than be under the control of the shadow of evil. In verse 31 we see Jesus must do the will of the Father and be the sacrifice who removes the blemish that placed mankind into sin in the Garden.

In chapter 15 we have the subheadings: the vine and the branches, and the world hates the disciples. In the portion under the subheading of the vine and the branches. Jesus gives the one command He gave in John 13:34 not once but twice, John 15:12; 17. Verse 12, *"My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you."* Verse 17, *"This is my command: Love each other."* This is the truth Jesus came to teach us, not religion.

The second subheading is hard for us to accept. If we are doing good, why would anyone want to hate us? Jesus gives us the answer in verses 21-25: *"They will treat you this way because of my name, for they do not know the One who sent me. If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not be guilty of sin. Now, however, they have no excuse for their sin. He who hates me hates my Father as well. If I had not done among them what no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin. But now they have seen these miracles, and yet they have hated both me and my Father. But this is to fulfill what is written in their Law: They hated me without reason."*

I have said you are on a threshold, or the gateway that takes you to adulthood! We are studying the Gospel of John in the Bible and run across a verse that says the world will hate you if you believe in Jesus. That is rather hard to swallow at your age. Is it true the world will hate you if you follow the Way of Joshua (Jesus)? Yes! It is true! Here is the trade off. By following the Way, you have eternal life, even if mankind may hate you in the present life. By choosing to follow earthly life you may party, have many friends, money, a big house, and all the joys life may bring, however you give up eternal life and accept eternal, or spiritual death. That is the beauty of being human and why we are placed above the angels. We have this right of choice that the angels have, but in a different way. I know, I just heard a lot of you saying that angels also have free will choice. Yes! But the human perspective is different. Now, if we were required to worship God without the benefit of choice, we would be no more than robots following a prescribed course of action. As it is, we have the God given ability to choose between following what is right and following what is wrong. Oh Yes! There are many who will try to change the wording, put spin on the meaning and get you to follow a falsehood instead of the truth. It takes wisdom, courage and understanding to follow truth because it is the more difficult choice to make.

The easy path is to follow everyone else and do what they are doing. To make it simple, it is your self-esteem! There are many teens who do not believe they are pretty, smart, or that they fit in socially with the rest of the class. All are a perception of self-esteem! Reality should tell you that beauty is only skin deep. The true beauty of a person is the love of others they possess. Must you be smart to have eternal life? Well, there is a little Proverb that says differently. Proverbs 17:28 *Even a fool is counted wise when he holds his peace; when he shuts his lips, he is considered perceptive.* Why must you feel as a fish going to the spawning grounds and swimming in a battle upstream, when the natural

flow of the force of water is to go against the grain and swim out to sea? The same applies to the choice you make to follow Jesus. You can accept the social standard and swim with the group, or you can step outside the flow and go in the other direction. God gave you the ability to say, NO! That in a nutshell, is greater self-esteem than anything your friends can tell you. Even if they are encouraging you to try drugs, sex, join a gang, rob someone or some place, the thrill of saying NO! and meaning it, is a high they cannot describe until they experience it. They can tell you about their high and you can tell them about your high. Reality calls it a Mexican standoff, where neither side is going to budge.

We can see this in the world today. In the Middle East, we have the war between the Palestinians and the Israelis with both sides losing sight of the reason they are fighting. Neither side is going to give an inch of what they have gained, and both sides declare the other as the enemy. The truth of the matter is that neither side is going to win until the Second Coming of Christ. Neither side is going to back off and try to give a little, so they may gain a lot. Compromise permits both sides to walk away with pride and dignity, but as it is, compromise has been thrown out the window. Pride is a matter of nationality, and dignity has absolutely nothing to do with the entire situation. The only way to win in the present situation is for one side to defeat the other with no compromise permitted. So, what does the world, as a whole, win by all of this? **Nothing!** We win the Second Coming, we win the destruction of life as we know it on this planet, and we win the inability to have future generations in the manner as generations in the past. **WE LOSE! — GOD WINS!** At that point, only God can set it right and cause the whole thing to start over. We, as a species, cannot. Our inability to love, our inability to forgive, our desire to hide in the darkness with pride, greed, and self indulgence will guide us to that point and we, as a whole, cannot turn back.

Seriously, that is what Jesus is showing us in these verses. He has shown us time and time again that the Jews understand, but do not want to believe (they would lose control of their influence over the people and their power would be reduced). The people themselves are like sheep, they follow the lead ram and will go wherever led. That is why we have a term called the Judas goat. This goat leads the sheep to destruction and the sheep are too obedient to not follow the false leader. In other words, the story of the vine and the branches, and why the world hates the disciples. John, chapter 15

There are two things we need to understand in chapter 16. Let's begin with Jesus' statement about the Holy Spirit. We saw in chapter 14 where Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit and in this chapter we find Jesus giving the disciples more details of the work of the Holy Spirit. To see this work, look in verses 13-15: *"But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you. All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you."*

The second statement I want to review is what Jesus told the disciples about asking the Father for anything in Jesus' name. We need three verses to see all of this statement, John 16:23, 26-27: *"You ask in my name. In that day you will ask in my name. I am not saying that I will ask the Father on your behalf. No, the Father himself loves you because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God."*

We are now looking at another of those places where the text is not what we have been taught in church. How is the Lord's Prayer spoken? Doesn't it start out, *"Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name."* What if I tell you that is not the Lord's Prayer, instead, it is the **People's Prayer**. Would you believe me? Let's look at the entire verse where this prayer starts. It is recorded in Matthew chapter 6:9-13. Verse 9 says, *"In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name."* This is Jesus speaking, but notice what He says *In this manner, therefore, pray*. Isn't that an instruction? Well, answer this, who is He instructing? It can't be Himself, because it would sound real

silly for Jesus to say, “*Self, this is the way you should pray.*” Jesus is telling people how they should pray, thus this is the people’s prayer and not the Lord’s Prayer. If you want to see the true Lord’s Prayer, it is in the 17<sup>th</sup> Chapter of John.

This may seem a little long, but it should read in an amazing manner:

*After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed:*

*“Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do. And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.*

*I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me and they have obeyed your word. Now they know that everything you have given me comes from you. For I gave them the words you gave me and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me. I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me, for they are yours. All I have is yours, and all you have is mine. And glory has come to me through them. I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name—the name you gave me—so that they may be one as we are one. While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by that name you gave me. None has been lost except the one doomed to destruction so that Scripture would be fulfilled.*

*I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them. I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified.*

*My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.*

*Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.*

*Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me. I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them.”*

When I began this book, one of my goals was to show you who Jesus, the Christ — the Son of God, was. In writing the entire chapter above I can only hope every one of you can see who Jesus is. He came to glorify the Father. He came to reveal God to mankind. He asks that those who believed in Him be protected by His name. We, who believe, are sanctified (sanctified means set apart or made different). We are to retell the message to others. God loves Jesus and Jesus loves us. That is who Jesus was, and is to this very day, and He said in chapter 10 that He had authority over death, verse 18, “*No one takes it from Me (meaning his life), but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father.*”

Chapters 18 and 19 provide the details of the arrest, trial(s) of Jesus and finally the crucifixion. If you have been in Sunday School or a church teaching class around the time of Easter, you have most

probably heard the story told several times. I will not repeat it here, however, there are several verses I would like to show you. In chapter 18 we see the arrest of Jesus, and Peter following Jesus to the house of Annas. For most of us, who have heard these stories, we have been told it was only Peter who followed where Jesus was taken. But here in chapter 18, we find another one of these little facts we somehow have not heard. Look in verses 15-16: *And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple. Now that disciple was known to the high priest, and went with Jesus into the courtyard of the high priest. But Peter stood at the door outside. Then the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out and spoke to her who kept the door, and brought Peter in.* The other disciple, known to the high priest, was John.

There are several statements in chapter 19 normally not made known as we study the story of Jesus going before Pilate. Here's Pilate, the Roman governor. You wouldn't think too much would scare this man, would you? Pilate had a palace, he had soldiers at his command, he ruled the territory and it was Pilate who had the authority to crucify someone. Jesus is taken before Pilate and Pilate finds no reason to have Jesus crucified. He is having this discussion with the Jews and the following two verses are recorded in John 19:7-8: *The Jews answered him, "We have a law, and according to our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God." Therefore, when Pilate heard that saying, he was the more afraid.* No wonder Pilate made the big show of washing his hands of the whole thing.

As we went through chapter 7 we saw that *even his own brothers did not believe in him.* We are now at the crucifixion, and we know at this time His brothers did not believe in Jesus, and yet we see Jesus' mother at the crucifixion of her first born son. Jesus then says the following in John 19:26-27, *When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to His mother, "Woman, behold your son!" Then He said to the disciple, "Behold your mother!" And from that hour that disciple took her to his own home.* I can say two things from these verses: First, surely Joseph is dead by this time, otherwise Joseph could take care of Mary; Secondly, I can tell you when John traveled to Ephesus, in modern day Turkey, to minister there, Mary went with him and had a house on top of Mount Nightingale, outside of Ephesus.

I am going back to pick up a group of verses we did not review and study. When we started this study we jumped over the marriage at Cana in chapter two. It is time to look at these verses and bring in a little more information. However, before I even start to show you the verses, I am going to tell you up front that what I am about to show you is not accepted by many people. Once again, I will show you what I see, then you must make up your own mind.

In preparing another work titled, *Lineage of the King of Kings*, I made every attempt to have it as complete as the Holy Spirit would allow me. In so doing, I was working on the various Marys recorded in the New Testament. Well, at that moment the Holy Spirit came for a visit and I must admit that what I was given to understand is not accepted as commonly known theology.

I was going through the list of Marys in an attempt to identify every person named Mary. I was using Holman's Bible Dictionary, copyright 1991, as a reference and reading material on page 929. Holman's identifies seven Marys in the New Testament. Okay, who is who? The various Marys were not even listed in verse order so that they could be shown in *Lineage of the King of Kings*! Well now, isn't that interesting? Holman's says the only verse in the entire Gospels which indicates Jesus' mother, Mary, was at the crucifixion of Jesus, is John 19:25, *Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.*

I don't recall what it was that bothered me so much about this statement. The Holy Spirit prodded me to sound out my thoughts. Here are those thoughts. You want me to believe that this woman: who was visited by the angel Gabriel, told she would have a child by the Holy Spirit, and given the promises

from God's own messenger, would not really show that much concern to the Gospel writers to be important enough to write about? Only one of the Gospel writers would record that Jesus' mother was at the crucifixion. If we follow that line of thought, then the last real demonstration of concern by Jesus' mother, as recorded in the Bible, was when Jesus was twelve and at the temple. His parents left Jerusalem, thinking that He was with His friends, and later went back to Jerusalem to get Him. Recorded in Luke 2:41-52 NIV. Notice in verse 51 the sentence reading, "*But his mother treasured all these things in her heart.*" Here is a mother who treasured all these things pertaining to her Son, however there is only one verse to state she was at Jesus' death? Someone must be kidding! Didn't it say in verse 41 of this passage that his parents went every year to Jerusalem for the Feast of the Passover? What, pray tell, was the feast being observed the night the cup and bread were passed (we normally call this the Lord's Supper)? Wasn't it the Passover meal? Where was Jesus? Wasn't He in Jerusalem? Where would you expect Mary, His mother, to be at this time? I'd say she was also in Jerusalem. But, again only one verse shows the concern of the loving mother for her first born Son on the day He was crucified. Go the next step in this thought process. You're going to tell me Mary, the mother of Jesus, would not go to the tomb on the morning of the first day of the week. Surely, you must be talking about some stone hearted woman who has no love for her Son. You can't be talking about the same Mary who believed the words of the angel or treasured these things in her heart at the temple.

Here's another piece of the puzzle. Notice there are four women identified above in the verse from John. We have three Marys identified in this one verse, and yet, Holman's Bible Dictionary says there are only seven Marys in the entire New Testament. Let's try to eliminate one Mary right now. Look at Romans 16:6. Romans 16:6 NKJV *Greet Mary, who labored much for us.*

Going back to Holman's on page 928 there is a picture of Mary's house in Ephesus. This refers to Jesus' mother and is one of few reference books, other than of my own writings, that I've seen such a picture. To whom is Paul writing? First, you have to understand where Paul is, what he is doing and where he is going. The book of Romans was not written from Rome. Both Paul and Luke confirm this through their own descriptions. Paul is somewhere in Greece collecting money to take to Jerusalem, afterwards he wanted to travel to Rome. Luke confirms this in the book of Acts. Now, if we establish John, the apostle and Mary, Christ's mother, are in Ephesus, then the date of writing becomes important. If the accepted date of writing for the book of Romans is 55-56 then we are talking of approximately 20-22 years after the crucifixion of Jesus. That's enough time for John and Mary to be at Ephesus and certainly Paul knows these two. Let's identify sources of information to establish this as a fact.

One such source is again Holman's Bible Dictionary, pages 803/4 and 1203. However, I would like to use the Bible as the source to see whether Spirit led logic would lead to the same conclusion. I believe Paul gives us one clue and Jude gives another. First, look at Galatians 1:19 NIV *I saw none of the other apostles—only James, the Lord's brother.* In this verse Paul identified James as being a brother of Jesus. Now look at the clue Jude gives in Jude 1:1 NIV *Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and a brother of James, to those who have been called, who are loved by God the Father and kept by Jesus Christ.* To establish the connection between the half-brothers of Jesus and James see the following: John 7:5 *For even his own brothers did not believe in him.* The second verse is Acts 1:14 *They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers.* These two verses give us the reason Jesus assigned the responsibility of caring for his mother to the Apostle John and confirms that after the resurrection Jesus' brothers became believers.

For the sake of discussion, we need to look at some of the statements made in the accepted traditional viewpoint. There are many sources available that indicate the Gospel of John is different from the other three Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke. Traditions give us the accepted author of the Gospels, the setting for the writing and the approximate date of the writing. For the most part we see

Matthew's writing assigned a date some time between CE 70-80 in a Syria-Palestine setting. Mark's Gospel is assigned to John (surnamed) Mark (and called such as a gospel writer) about CE 64 and the most favorable location for the writing is Rome. Luke is a companion of Paul, His writings follow a lot of Mark's writing, is a two volume set with Acts, and is assigned a date some time between CE 64-70. John seems to wait until later to pen his Gospel and the date of writing has been accepted as being in the 90s, with the location for the setting as either Ephesus or Galilee. There are other writings we now have in the Bible written for various reasons. For the most part, we of today, do not receive instruction in the history of each work and have little understanding of why a writing was made and how it got into our modern day Bible. It should be accepted knowledge that the Roman Empire destroyed Jerusalem and broke up the influence of a desire for an earthly Jewish kingdom between CE 62-70.

Two sources of information that provide knowledge of the whereabouts of John are the *InterVarsity Press Bible Background Commentary*, and the *Wycliffe Bible Commentary*. As such, John was most probably at Ephesus doing his writings, and for the sake of discussion, Mary was with him, living at the house he had built for her on Mount Nightingale. To illustrate, and in using, the *Wycliffe Bible Commentary*, copyright 1962, on page 1463 I find an explanation for the setting of the First Epistle of John. It reads: How long John remained in Jerusalem after Pentecost is uncertain. He was evidently not there when Paul first visited the city (Galatians 1:18-19), although he may have been there later as one of the members of the council (Acts 15:6). Furthermore, we can find evidence that tradition indicates John wrote the Second Epistle to a Christian woman and her family living at Ephesus. Other sources state, this is a letter to the church and its members, to which church is not clear.

Consider something different. What if the lady John was writing to was Mary and the children were the brothers of Jesus? Consider the circumstances and the possibilities. John was assigned the responsibility of caring for Mary, mainly due to Jesus' half-brothers not believing He was the promised Savior and shown above in John 7:5. Acts 1:14 indicates this changed after the death of Christ and it is accepted that the book of James and the book of Jude are written by Jesus' brothers. However, use the NIV translation and read carefully to whom John is writing in verses 1, 2 and 4 of 2nd John. Since there is no record for whom this letter was written, it could be that it is a note from John being sent to Mary at the top of Mount Nightingale, about six miles away from Ephesus. Mary would certainly fit the description of *the chosen lady* in verse 1. John would also know about James and Jude who were two of Mary's children, and would be walking in the truth as stated in verse 4. This could be as logical an explanation as any other pertaining to this letter composed by John.

Now let us return to our discussion of Romans 16:6. Look very carefully at the verse just prior to the one naming Mary. In verse five Paul sends a personal greeting to his dear friend Epentetus, who was the first convert to Christ in the province of Asia. The capital of the province of Asia is Ephesus, being the same Ephesus where John and Mary are located. This Mary appears to be Christ's mother in later years, long after the crucifixion. This being the case, we are down to six Marys. Three are identified in this verse from John: Mary, Jesus' mother; Mary Magdalene; and Mary, the wife of Clopas. The name Clopas is only used in this verse so there is no information to determine the identity of this Mary.

But wait, we still have one woman to identify and it is time to go out on a limb. Who is Mary's sister, this would be Jesus' aunt? Would you accept it to be Elizabeth? Luke is the only Gospel writer who records the full story of John the Baptist's birth, other Gospel writers reveal the story of John the Baptist preparing the way for Christ, but none record the circumstances of his birth except Luke. Look in Luke 1:36 NIV, "*Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be barren is in her sixth month.*" Now read verses 1:39-41 NIV, "*At that time Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea, where she entered Zechariah's home and*

*greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.*" Finally, read verse 1:56 NIV, *Mary stayed with Elizabeth for about three months and then returned home.* I can't prove this is Mary's sister nor can I prove it is not, but with the relationship shown between Jesus and John the Baptist, wouldn't it make sense that Elizabeth would also be comforting her sister at this humanly sorrowful time? Now consider what verse 40 reads and what verse 56 implies. In verse 40 it reads Mary *entered Zechariah's house and greeted Elizabeth.* I know times have changed, but do you read anything about knocking at the door or ringing the bell? It says she entered! Just a few years ago, we in this country would have acted the same way when visiting our family members. When you arrived at your family member's home, you would have announced a greeting and entered. In verse 56, it implies Mary stayed with Elizabeth until the baby was born. Wouldn't you expect sisters to do that for each other? But what does Holman's say? Holman's puts Mark 16:1, Matthew 27:56 and John 19:25 together (page 1222) to come up with Salome as Mary's sister. Let's look at all three verses. We have John 19:25 above, so what do the other two verses read? Matthew 27:56 NIV *Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of Zebedee's sons.* Mark 16:1 NIV *When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices so that they might go to anoint Jesus' body.* I think the answer rests in the identity of Zebedee's sons and we will show this shortly.

In going over this discussion, I let a pastor friend review the material I had gathered. As he went through the various thoughts and verses, he had an objection to the speculation that Elizabeth was Mary's sister. He showed me two more verses and asked several questions. The first verse he showed me was Luke 1:18 and the sentence reading, "... *I am an old man and my wife is well along in years.*" The second verse was Luke 2:36-37 NIV, *There was also a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was very old; she had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, and then was a widow until she was eighty-four.* There was one other verse mentioned and it must be included in this discussion. In Luke 1:36, above, it reads, ... *And she who was said to be barren is in her sixth month.* Here are my friend's questions and the remainder of the discussion. His view is that there must be a wide age difference between Elizabeth and Mary if Elizabeth is indeed Mary's sister. He reasoned that Luke 1:26 seems to imply Elizabeth was past menopause and the reference in Luke 1:18 seems to indicate Elizabeth was old and concluded Anna was old, as shown in Luke 2:37. How did I come up with such a difference in age?

Here's the counter thought: Luke 1:18 does not say Elizabeth was an *old* woman. It says Zechariah was an *old man* and Elizabeth was *well along in years* (my emphasis). What is well along in years? That depends on one's viewpoint. If you ask someone aged seventeen what does that mean they may tell you she was thirty. If you ask someone in their fifties, they may tell you it means she was over seventy. Let's bring in Luke 1:36 where it says Elizabeth was barren. Does this verse really imply Elizabeth was past menopause? If I accept the term barren to mean past menopause, then I would have a great many problems in trying to understand God's word. Wasn't Sarah barren, that's how Abraham had a son named Ishmael? Wasn't Leah, Rachel, Zilpah and Bilhah all barren at one point or another? Aren't these four women the source of the twelve tribes of Israel? It would seem to me that if that logic was followed, there would not be a Hebrew nation as we know it. Now, let's address the age issue. What is a norm? What is a mean average? Don't we need some extremes to arrive at either term? What if this is one of those extreme cases? I personally know of some women who entered menopause as early as age thirty-five and I know of one case where the woman did not enter menopause until age fifty-seven. What about our own ancestors who traveled across this vast nation and lived in various places? I can show you genealogy records of families having twelve, fifteen and even twenty children over a period

of twenty to thirty years. My own mother did not have her first child until she was 35 and in my ex-wife's family there were thirty five years between the youngest and oldest sons of her grandfather, he was sixty-eight when the last son was born. Now, look at the family of Mary and consider Elizabeth as the oldest sister with thirty years difference in age between she and Mary. If Mary was twelve when she married Joseph, then Elizabeth was forty-two when she got pregnant. It makes perfectly good sense to me that at age forty-two and having your first child, you would be considered to be barren. I said what I did for two reasons. Show me the verse that indicates Elizabeth had a previous birth. Secondly, it says she was barren. It did not say she could never have a child. Also, notice in the beginning of Luke 1:18 what Zechariah said to Gabriel. He did not laugh and tell Gabriel this was impossible. Instead he asked, "*How can I be sure of this?*" It would seem Zechariah had hope, just as Abraham had hope, and both possessed faith in God that what they had been promised was true. Why can't we have a little faith that this is possibly true and not just speculation?

We still have three Mary's to identify. One will be Mary of Bethany.

Luke 10:39 *And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word.*

Luke 10:42 *"But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her."*

John 11:1 *Now a certain man was sick, Lazarus of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha.*

John 11:2 *It was that Mary who anointed the Lord with fragrant oil and wiped His feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.*

John 11:19 *And many of the Jews had joined the women around Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother.*

John 11:20 *Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met Him, but Mary was sitting in the house.*

John 11:28 *And when she had said these things, she went her way and secretly called Mary her sister, saying, "The Teacher has come and is calling for you."*

John 11:31 *Then the Jews who were with her in the house, and comforting her, when they saw that Mary rose up quickly and went out, followed her, saying, "She is going to the tomb to weep there."*

John 11:32 *Then, when Mary came where Jesus was, and saw Him, she fell down at His feet, saying to Him, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died."*

John 11:45 *Then many of the Jews who had come to Mary, and had seen the things Jesus did, believed in Him.*

John 12:3 *Then Mary took a pound of very costly oil of spikenard, anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the oil.*

The fifth Mary would be Mary, the mother of John Mark. Note this John Mark is the writer of the Gospel of Mark, and this identifies his mother as being named Mary.

Acts 12:12 *So, when he had considered this, he came to the house of Mary, the mother of John whose surname was Mark, where many were gathered together praying.*

That leaves only one Mary to identify. The best description of this Mary is recorded in Mark 15:40, but, let's put all the verses together to reveal this particular Mary:

Mark 15:40 *There were also women looking on from afar, among whom were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the Less and of Joses, and Salome,*

Matthew 27:56 *among whom were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee's sons.*

Matthew 27:61 *And Mary Magdalene was there, and the other Mary, sitting opposite the tomb.*

Matthew 28:1 *Now after the Sabbath, as the first day of the week began to dawn, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb.*

Mark 15:47 *And Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses observed where He was laid.*

Mark 16:1 *Now when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, that they might come and anoint Him.*

Luke 24:10 *It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them, who told these things to the apostles.*

I indicated that Holman's identifies this Mary as the mother of James the Less NKJV or James the younger NIV. Let's look at two more verses.

Matthew 13:55 *"Is this not the carpenter's son? Is not His mother called Mary? And His brothers James, Joses, Simon, and Judas?"*

Mark 6:3 *"Is this not the carpenter, the Son of Mary, and brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon? And are not His sisters here with us?" And they were offended at Him.*

These two verses name Jesus' half-brothers and records that He also had half-sisters. There are two ways Mary, the mother of Jesus, could be identified. She is Mary the mother of Christ Jesus, being in association with the Holy Spirit and the virgin birth. She is also Mary the mother of James and Joses and wife of Joseph, an association of a normal family relationship. Wouldn't that make *James, the younger* a brother of Jesus? Being so, we can bring in some of that love Mary, the mother of Jesus, showed Elizabeth, the angel Gabriel, and the boy Jesus at the temple. I say that because we now see that Mary the mother of Jesus, James, and Joses was at the tomb, was concerned, and was there the morning of the first day of the week. That sounds more like the mother my Lord would have and the love she held in her heart for her Son.

Oh! Such a wonderful moment to know the love in Jesus' family. But, I was building another branch. Look at the only two references for the name Salome being used.

Mark 15:40 *There were also women looking on from afar, among whom were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the Less and of Joses, and Salome,*

Mark 16:1 *Now when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, that they might come and anoint Him.*

In Mark 15:40 and 16:1 we see the same three women. In the first reference, we see Jesus' mother and Salome at the crucifixion, and, in the other, we see the same three going to the tomb on the morning of the first day of the week. There is a closeness between Jesus and his mother. But, who is Salome? My speculation was to interpret the verse in Mark 15:40 in a manner that said James and Joses were sons of Mary, the mother of Christ, then as an afterthought to the writer and because of being a woman, the words *and Salome*, indicating that all three were the children of Mary, thus making Salome the sister of Jesus. My pastor friend gave me some insight I did not have available to me. It seems in the Greek language, the case would have to be the same for all three to be considered in the same grouping, however it changes in this verse indicating that Salome is another person. Mary and Salome are deeply concerned, as shown in verse 16:1, but resolved to what has happened, and yet respectfully come to prepare the body for a proper burial instead of the hasty preparation that was performed prior to the Sabbath. Salome may not be Jesus' sister, but she certainly is a very close follower of His and close friend to Mary, Jesus' mother. There remains that possibility of Salome being Mary's sister.

I have to include the version from Holman's Bible Dictionary and let you be the judge of who is leading whom. Holman's has the following to say about Salome. The name means *pacific*. She is the mother of James and John and wife of Zebedee. The liberty is taken to combine Matthew 27:56; Mark 16:1 and John 19:25 to identify her as a disciple of Jesus and placed her among the women at the crucifixion who helped prepare the Lord's body for burial. Holman's says that some believe John 19:25 mentions her as Mary's sister, Jesus' aunt thus making James and John Jesus' cousins.

With the use of the name James, I felt it was necessary to review the apostles themselves because of the use of the term, Zebedee's sons. There are several places where all the twelve apostles are named and we will look at three.

Matthew 10:2-4 NIV, *These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon (who is called Peter) and his brother Andrew; James son of Zebedee, and his brother John; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.*

The list in Mark 3:16-19 NIV, *These are the twelve he appointed: Simon (to whom he gave the name Peter): James son of Zebedee and his brother John (to them he gave the name Boanerges, which means Sons of Thunder); Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.*

Finally, the list as recorded in Luke 6:14-16 NIV, *Simon (whom he named Peter), his brother Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Simon who was called the Zealot, Judas son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor.*

I would like you to notice two things. First, there are two named James, one is James the son of Zebedee and the other is James the son of Alphaeus. Secondly, Thaddaeus is called Judas the son of James in the Luke record. The important point is my going out on the limb to name Mary the mother of James the younger as being Mary the mother of Jesus. Nowhere in the Gospels is the term James the younger used in connection to the twelve apostles. If the term James the younger is not used to associate with an apostle, wouldn't that also cancel the thought of Salome being a sister to Mary and wife of Zebedee?

There is one more verse reference I'd like to look at for the moment. Let's review Matthew 27:55-56 NIV. *Many women were there, watching from a distance. They had followed Jesus from Galilee to care for his needs. Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of Zebedee's sons.*

These two verses confirm two things. First, there is the confirmation that Mary, Jesus' mother, was indeed in Jerusalem for the Passover. Secondly, there were many women who traveled with Jesus, and let's not forget the disciples, to take care of their needs. Okay, we've gone out on a limb and named Elizabeth as the sister to Mary. We jumped on another limb and discussed whether Salome was Jesus' sister. We found another limb and suggested Mary, Jesus' mother, was, in fact, closer than tradition would lead us to believe to her Son. So what's another limb or two? What about the wives of the apostles? Wouldn't they be included in these women who were traveling with Jesus? Oh! You forgot there was at least one apostle who was married. Matthew 8:14 NKJV, *Now when Jesus had come into Peter's house, He saw his wife's mother lying sick with a fever.*

Even so, I think we need to add another reference so that we understand it was normal for the disciples to be married and to have children. The key lies in the book of Acts. This is recorded exactly as recorded in any New International Version NIV Bible. Acts 21:3-6 (NIV), *After sighting Cyprus and passing to the south of it, we sailed on to Syria. We landed at Tyre, where our ship was to unload its cargo. Finding the disciples there, we stayed with them seven days. Through the Spirit they urged Paul not to go on to Jerusalem. But when our time was up, we left and continued on our way. All the disciples and their wives and children accompanied us out of the city, and there on the beach we knelt to pray. After saying good-bye to each other, we went aboard the ship, and they returned home.*

Let's look specifically at two verses. First, look at verse three. Notice the manner of identifying these disciples. These are the apostles and not just normal everyday followers of Jesus. Paul did not say he *found disciples* and stayed with them for seven days. He says he *found the disciples*. Which disciples

do you think *the disciples* are if they are not special? The second verse to look at is verse five. Does it not say that *all the disciples, their wives and children* accompanied Paul out of the city?

Interesting! Let's think for just a few minutes and ponder some questions. Would a person who was married leave his wife and go wandering for over three years, or would he take his wife with him? Would a male, age thirty, normally be married? Would a Rabbi normally be married? If you were a modern day shaker and maker, would there be a lot of recorded information about your wife? Let's see! Who is Thomas Edison's wife? Who is Albert Einstein's wife? Let's try a little closer to our own time. Name the following American President's wives: Eisenhower, Johnson, Carter, Nixon, Ford, Reagan, and Bush. Fact is, there are probably only three president's wives who can be named by most, in the last one hundred years. They would be Eleanor Roosevelt, Jackie Kennedy and Hillary Clinton. Let's go back to another great president. What is Abraham Lincoln's wife's name? See what I mean about very little information being recorded for great men's wives? Now go back two thousand years. No name is given for Peter's wife. No record is made of the death of Joseph. The part Mary served is vaguely recorded. Yet, there is one more name that continually appears in these verses. Hey! I've already gone out on various limbs. Let's go for the big limb at the top of this tree and ask if you would be greatly offended to be told Jesus was married and the wife will go down in history as being Mary Magdalene and not recorded as the wife of Jesus. Go back and look at the verses for the various Marys. Who is around when the Gospel writers name the women. Mary the mother, Mary Magdalene and others. Who better to illustrate certain events than Jesus' mother and his wife? Who better to be at the tomb early the first morning of the week? Who better to be greeted by our Risen Savior than his mother and wife? Who better to give an account to the Apostles than someone whom they all knew and trusted, other than Jesus' mother, and wife? Look at the following verses:

Mark 16:1 *Now when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, that they might come and anoint Him.*

Mark 16:9 *Now when He rose early on the first day of the week, He appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom He had cast seven demons.*

Luke 8:2 *and certain women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities; Mary called Magdalene, out of whom had come seven demons,*

John 20:1 *Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene went to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb.*

John 20:11 *But Mary stood outside by the tomb weeping, and as she wept she stooped down and looked into the tomb.*

John 20:16 *Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to Him, "Rabboni!" (which is to say, Teacher).*

John 20:18 *Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that He had spoken these things to her.*

Notice something! When Jesus appeared to some, they did not immediately recognize him, and yet, in John 20:16 Mary Magdalene immediately called him *Rabboni* and reported what she had seen to the Apostles. **Why would Mary Magdalene recognize Jesus when others did not?** Could it be that they are husband and wife as I suggest? **What do you think?**

How can anyone come up with an idea that Jesus was married? There's certainly nothing recorded in the Bible that directly says Jesus was married. Of course, the opposite statement is also true *there is no verse that directly states Jesus wasn't married*. How can I come to that conclusion? Well, let's ask another question. How did John record the Revelation and how did the churches in Asia understand what was meant? There are many who now claim the Revelation is not meant to be understood and declare there is too much mystery in the prophecy? I really must think differently or read a different

Bible. I've come to understand that if you know the Old Testament, you can see the mysteries revealed in the Revelation. All you have to do is substitute old, understood accounts in the Old Testament into the Revelation of Jesus as given to John. Why this thought? I've tried to get you to understand there was no need to record the historical, that isn't the purpose of the Bible. Normally, if you will search, there is a clue to follow, you can find a reference that will clarify the mystery presented in the Bible. So where can we even get a vague idea that it might be possible for Jesus to be married? Look in the book of John at the first miracle:

John 2:1 *On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there.*

John 2:2 *Now both Jesus and His disciples were invited to the wedding.*

John 2:3 *And when they ran out of wine, the mother of Jesus said to Him, "They have no wine."*

John 2:4 *Jesus said to her, "Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me? My hour has not yet come."*

John 2:5 *His mother said to the servants, "Whatever He says to you, do it."*

John 2:6 *Now there were set there six waterpots of stone, according to the manner of purification of the Jews, containing twenty or thirty gallons apiece.*

John 2:7 *Jesus said to them, "Fill the waterpots with water." And they filled them up to the brim.*

John 2:8 *And He said to them, "Draw some out now, and take it to the master of the feast." And they took it.*

John 2:9 *When the master of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and did not know where it came from (but the servants who had drawn the water knew), the master of the feast called the bridegroom.*

John 2:10 *And he said to him, "Every man at the beginning sets out the good wine, and when the guests have well drunk, then the inferior. You have kept the good wine until now!"*

Let's go through this one verse at a time and see what clues are given. I could easily say this wedding took place on Tuesday. Doesn't it say, *on the third day*? If Sunday is the first day of the week, Monday would be the second day, and Tuesday would be the third day. However, that would be taking things completely out of context and it makes a false statement. If you read the account of John pertaining to Jesus, you have the record of His baptism on a certain day. The next verse starts the numbering of days and I believe this is after Jesus spent the forty days in the wilderness and was tempted by the devil. On the first day of this record, there is the decision by John, Andrew and Simon (Peter) to follow Jesus. On the second day, Philip and Nathanael (Bartholomew) also follow and on the third day was this wedding in Cana. Now, where did Jesus' family live? Wasn't it in Galilee? But in what village? How about the village of **Cana**? Notice the rest of the first verse. It says *the mother of Jesus was there*. Quickly read the second verse, but let's not get into a discussion of verse two specifically at this time. I asked at the beginning of this discussion about Mary, what the Bible said and did not say? Notice it does not invite Mary to the wedding, but it says *she is there*. Let's look at any modern day celebration we can think of, and explain the reason someone would attend when they were not invited. The only way I can consider this could work is if you are the host or hostess giving the celebration. You will be there, though you do not invite yourself. Well! Isn't that true?

Look at the wording in verse two. *Jesus and his disciples are invited*. Go back to Luke where we observed the naming of the twelve apostles and read the previous verse in Luke 6:13 NIV, *When morning came, he called his disciples to him and chose twelve of them, whom he also designated as apostles*. It seems to me there were certainly more than just the twelve apostles at this wedding. What better way to get the friends and followers of the groom to attend than to state in the invitation that the groom and followers are invited. Isn't that what it says, in different words, that Jesus and his disciples were invited.

Recall my pastor friend, he had great problems with what I'm proposing here. His question was, "Why would there be a need to invite Jesus if this was His wedding"? Well, that does make sense, doesn't it? However, consider this: I am not proposing this to destroy your ideas, nor faith. I'm addressing these issues to get you to read, to think, and to understand God's word better. Look again at the culture of which we are speaking. There was no television in Jesus' day, you couldn't send to Office Max or Staples and have 300 copies of invitations run off on the copy machine, nor could you go to the post office and ask for special love stamps for the envelopes. Again, if you invited the head of the group, and said his followers, you invited all by word of mouth. Look at a wedding announcement placed in a church bulletin. Doesn't that one invitation invite every member of the church? You didn't have to send all those extra invitations to accomplish the objective, did you? Neither did this! The one invitation, stated as it is, invited all the disciples. I think there is one major point continually overlooked. Take the entire New Testament and explain which book was not written by someone who was a Jew first, Christian later. What did they know from the old ways, the Old Covenant, that we have overlooked, set aside or didn't even know in the first place? Let's continue.

Verse three holds a major clue. Look at the wording that reads, *the mother of Jesus said to Him, "They have no wine."* I think the wording is not to indicate the host of the party has no wine. I think the wording is that the multitude of disciples do not have any wine. But, even more importantly, why would Mary bring such information to Jesus? Surely, Mary is not being a busybody and letting her Son know the host has put together a poor party and she is criticizing the host. I again, just don't think so. She is the hostess and she is letting Jesus know that there is a problem and something needs to be done.

Verse four almost sings with male chauvinism. Jesus says, *"Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me? My hour has not yet come."* God really does have a sense of humor. Here is God in the flesh attending His wedding, and while His mother is telling Him one thing, He is telling her something completely different. It seems Mary is worried about the earthly realm and Jesus is worried about the spiritual realm. Mary wants a problem solved while Jesus, on the other hand, doesn't see the problem as His mother does and replies that the things of His ministry are not yet ready to begin. So how is this resolved? Read the next two verses.

Mary does not reply to Jesus, instead she replies to the servants, *"Whatever He says to you, do it."* Let's get things straight! There are three important points to be made in this verse. Mary is giving the orders, this is her house, and she's in charge. If that isn't true, think about this: You are having a party, one of your guests suddenly starts giving orders to your servants, your servants are looking around like they are confused, and you're getting ticked off. Right? Did you read anything indicating this happened? No! Therefore, Mary is at home. Joseph and Mary had servants, and they lived in a larger home. It seems this must be. How else would you hold a party for all the disciples and why would you need servants? Something else has to be said. This is a parent speaking to her Son. She is well aware of what He can or can't do, and has presented Him with a problem for which she expects a solution. We have to read verse seven for our final input pertaining to this verse.

How many waterpots are there in verse six? How much liquid volume did they hold? Simple math will tell you there is between one hundred twenty to one hundred eighty gallons of liquid storage area. I really want to ask a question. When was the last time you were at a party where the consumption of wine was between 120-180 gallons (remember this party had been going on for some time so there was even more wine than this that was consumed)? Again, I'm going to state that Joseph and Mary lived in a large house. Consider that these waterpots were there for the storage of water for household use, or as stated *"..., according to the manner of purification of the Jews, ..."* These six waterpots were probably a day's, maybe two day's, supply of water for this purpose. There was a well nearby. I

know you just stopped reading and started wondering where did I get that bit of news? Simple, it comes from the next verse.

Verse seven tells two important things. First, it completes the solution to the problem presented in verse five. It shows in this verse respect for the parent is a part of Jesus' life. Mother had presented a problem and Son was to find a solution. Secondly, look at what Jesus said to the servants, "*Fill the waterpots with water.*" They filled them to the brim. How would you accomplish this if they didn't have a nearby well? I'd even say it was their own well and not the village well. I say this because of the nature of mankind. If they had gone to the village well to get 120-180 gallons of water, someone would have been complaining and raising all kinds of fuss. Since there were no fights, the well was probably their own, and no one would care what was done with their own water. Let's use another illustration. If men had a cross piece over their shoulders and they had a five gallon bucket on each side, that would be ten gallons of water per man to carry. It would still take 12 to 18 men to do this in one trip and each would be carrying over eighty pounds in weight (the weight of ten gallons of water would equal roughly eighty pounds). How far would you expect them to carry the water? Remember these are servants and they have been given orders to fill those six waterpots. They are expected to do this quickly so the party may continue. It can't be two or three hours for these men to go to the village to get the water. Simple conclusion, they had their own well.

Verse eight gives another reference to the importance of a voice command. Jesus said to them, "*Draw some out now, and take it to the master of the feast.*" The servant took it to the master of the feast. Proverbs tells us life and death rests within the power of the tongue. Jesus cursed a fig tree and it withered and died. Here Jesus makes the simple voice command to the servants and the result has already been done. The water changed to wine when he said *now*.

Verse nine gives us another major clue to this mystery. There isn't a verse in the Bible identifying when Joseph died. I'd be willing to say because of this verse, Joseph was very much alive for this moment. To those who have traveled to the Middle East and have seen a village wedding, you know these things go on for days, up to about a week. The host for the wedding party is either one of three people: the father of the groom, the uncle (only on the father's side) of the groom, or the groom. The reason the uncle and groom are shown is because the father has died. The uncle is shown and will take this responsibility if this is his brother's son and the son does not have enough money to have the party. The primary two people who will host this party are the father of the groom, or the groom. Now since Jesus was invited, he did not host the party. You got it, the master of the feast is Joseph. Now look at the last portion of the verse that says, "*the master of the feast called the bridegroom.*" Remember, the only one who could tell the master of the feast who produced the wine was the servant who served the wine as commanded by Jesus to do so in verse 8. Yet, the Master of the Feast went to the bridegroom.

Verse ten gives the last important clue. The master of the feast is telling this to the bridegroom, "*Every man at the beginning sets out the good wine, and when the guests have well drunk, then the inferior. You have kept the good wine until now!*" Two questions. Who produced the wine? To whom is the master of the feast talking? Jesus made the wine and the master of the feast is talking to the bridegroom. Now, it would seem the master of the feast is talking to someone other than Jesus, however, let's remember who would be hosting a ceremony such as this. Wouldn't this wording also fit if it was the father talking to the son who was sharing the hosting duties of the party? Wouldn't the sentence saying, "*You have kept the good wine until now!*" still be correct? Here's my conclusion. This is Jesus' wedding and the name of the bride is Mary Magdalene. I know you want to know how I got this name as the wife. Go back to the discussion on the identification of the other Mary that gives the following verses:

Matthew 27:56; Matthew 27:61; Matthew 28:1; Mark 15:40; Mark 15:47; Mark 16:1 and Luke 24:10.  
Now add these verses:

John 19:25, *Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.*

John 20:1, *Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene went to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb.*

John 20:11, *But Mary stood outside by the tomb weeping, and as she wept she stooped down and looked into the tomb.*

John 20:16, *Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to Him, "Rabboni!" (which is to say, Teacher).*

John 20:18, *Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that He had spoken these things to her.*

I want you to observe one thing. In every verse, except John 19:25, Mary Magdalene's name is placed before Mary, Jesus' mother, by all four Gospel writers. Now why would this be done? Ask any man if he will give the name of his wife before he gives the name of his mother in an introduction, unless the circumstances make it necessary to name the mother first, as in John 19:25. What makes John 19:25 different? You have to put John 19:25-27 together. These are the verses that put the care of Mary (the mother) into the responsibility of the Apostle John. Therefore, you would direct the statement with the mother being identified first and the others following. Now, you ask if all this is true what happened to Mary Magdalene after the crucifixion and why isn't she mentioned again? No need to, her part had been played and we continue. Okay, look at this slightly differently. How many times is Mary, Jesus' mother, identified after the crucifixion in the New Testament? If you accept my analysis, the answer is twice: Acts 1:14 and Romans 16:6. If you accept Holman's the answer is only once: Acts 1:14. The point is as far as the Bible was concerned, the part had been played by both women, it was not necessary to mention them again. Never the less, it doesn't change history, nor does it wipe them from the face of the earth. Things just went on as they were intended.

Now you have Jesus' mother and his wife with him on his travels. You have Jesus' mother and wife in Jerusalem for Passover. You have Jesus' mother and wife at the tomb. You have Jesus' wife telling the apostles the tomb is empty.

Does this really change any belief about Jesus? NO! If anything, this shows in the following verse, to me, the love God the father has for his creation.

John 21:25, *And there are also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were written one by one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written. Amen.*  
Hebrews 4:15, *For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.*

I want to give you two more things to think about. Go back to Genesis. Who introduced mankind to sin? Adam introduced mankind to sin and in that portion of the third chapter of Genesis both the male and female were known as Adam (meaning mankind and not specifically the name of the male). Notice the woman is not given the name Eve until the 20th verse, and at that point, the sin had already been committed.

Jesus represents the second Adam who corrected the error of the first Adam and returned to mankind the means to have a personal relationship with God again. It took two, a male and a female, to place mankind into a sin situation, what better way than to have two, a male and a female, to correct the sin situation? Now, let's make this perfectly clear. I am not saying Mary Magdalene was needed to take the sin away, Jesus did that on His own and by Himself. Look at the God given order the Bible gives for the family in Ephesians 5:22-33. Christ is the head and it was Christ who took the sin away. But, look at the relationship with Mary

Magdalene in the picture. There is now the image of a supportive wife who, it seems, is close at hand providing support but not in the way of what must be done. The love is there, the forgiveness is there, the support is there. What better illustration is there than the one presented here.

There is still one other thing we must understand. God's number is seven, the number for completion. The best Satan can come up with is six. Consider what I have suggested. If you wanted full restitution and completion, wouldn't it seem that even in the background of your mind, there would be a thought that a female would be involved? If you accept the traditionalist viewpoint, haven't you accepted a number six completion to the full circle? When I say full circle, isn't that a completion? Please think about what is being presented to you. Isn't it wonderful to know God truly did come down to earth and walk and talk with mankind, live, marry, and die and left us with this wonderful free gift of having Him take our sins away? **Praise God!**

Now, think about this. There are two princes. One is the Prince of Light, and the other is the shadow prince. The shadow prince had chosen to disobey the father and was asked to leave the house, but, even so, he still had permission to visit home. These two princes continue with their distinct and separate paths. The Prince of Light is given the task to resolve the difference the shadow prince caused when he introduced sin. He comes to mankind in the form of one of us (we, you and I who wear an earth suit). In doing so, He places Himself in the presence of the shadow prince's domain and the shadow prince believes, surely, he will win this time. The battle has been long and the victories few for the shadow prince, but this one, surely, he will win. The hour comes and the skies are blackened with all the sickness, sin, and disease known to mankind, past, present and future are heaped upon the Prince of Light. Even the Father cannot watch at that moment and turns away. The shadow prince thinks he has won because the Prince of Light gives up the earth suit and dies. But wait, the story is not over. After three days and three nights in the grave, the Prince of Light is alive and walks and talks and shows himself to his friends, his family, and a multitude of others. He stays with these friends for another forty days and then leaves them to return to the Father.

The shadow prince loses again and decides if he can't win one way, then he will mislead, cause confusion and blind those left behind. Future generations will follow, so that the victory won by the Prince of Light is diminished and not as important as the traditions which will be established. Traditions will give educated men and women a sense of importance, not because of truth, but because of their education. The shadow prince splits the followers into different denominations, gives them different beliefs to praise and accuse each other of being wrong because they don't agree. He sets racism up as a major stumbling block for humankind and has it look like the Prince of Light is a wandering poor man. Finally, he identifies the earthly family of the Prince of Light as non-caring and poor. Oh my! The shadow prince has done his work well over the last two thousand years.

We somehow have forgotten we are now the body of the Prince of Light. His work is now accomplished through us. He is still the head, and as the head He gives the orders for us to follow and not the shadow prince. The Prince of Light is the son of the Great Glorious King of All Light and is not some wandering poor man. The truth of God's own Word will show that our Lord lived in a fine home, ate good meals and did not dress in rags. If, remember this, He had chosen to, He had command over all money, over all gold, over all silver, over all diamonds, and over any other thing mankind thinks is wealth. He chose to live a simple lifestyle so he could walk among normal people doing normal jobs on any normal day in any normal situation. He did not choose to be higher than you or me in his speech or mannerisms. It was others, led by the shadow prince, who called Him a drunkard and Satan. Isn't it funny how the shadow prince gets others to call the Prince of Light these names, they really were describing the shadow prince himself.

Here was the place for the fourth concern my pastor friend had for this entire presentation. He had problems with my addressing an issue that Jesus could command anything of material wealth if He had so chosen. His concern was that addressed in Luke 4:3-4 NKJV, *And the devil said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread."*

*But Jesus answered him, saying, "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God."*

My pastor friend understood this to mean that I was tempting Jesus to command wealth to appear at His discretion. Oh Lord! I hope the presentation did not come across that way. I was not suggesting Jesus should cause wealth to be at His command. I said He could if He so chose. I think there is a difference. In the verses from Luke, Satan challenges Jesus with that famous little word *if*. I was not issuing a challenge, instead, making a comment.

My pastor friend's next concern was the tempting issue I addressed about whether Jesus was married. He asked if I had ever read the book or seen the movie titled, *The Last Temptation of Christ*. I told him I had and he said, "The last temptation was not sex, as some people thought, instead it was not obeying the will of God and going to the cross but choosing to live a normal life." I fully agree. That's what I understood in the movie, however, that movie is not the driving force behind this presentation. Again, this presentation is being made in order to get you to think, to read, and understand more of the Bible. Let's share four verses of Jesus being tempted.

Matthew 4:1 NKJV, *Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.* Mark 1:13, *And He was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan, and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered to Him.* Luke 4:2, *being tempted for forty days by the devil. And in those days He ate nothing, and afterward, when they had ended, He was hungry.*

Notice something about these verses. Yes! They address the issue of Jesus being tempted by the devil, but I must add one more verse. Hebrews 4:15 NKJV, *For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.*

Now, look at the first three verses. Do you read anything in them about where Jesus was tempted in all things that can occur in a lifetime? Isn't that what is being said in the Hebrews verse when it says *..., but was in all points tempted as we are, ...?* How, when, or where, was all this tempting done? That really is not the point nor the issue. The issue is everything pertaining to the life of Jesus was not recorded. If that were true, we would have some type of record of Jesus' life from about the age of two or three (the visit of the wise men) to the age of twelve (at the temple) and the second big jump from twelve to the beginning of His ministry (about age thirty). Finally, my friend was concerned with my statement that Jesus was more than a wandering poor man. His verse references were: Matthew 8:20, *And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head."* Luke 9:58, *And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head."*

Here are my thoughts on these two verses. When Jesus started His public ministry, it was not preached and/or taught at just one location. It was conducted in many different places to many people. If, once again, we consider the locale, customs and circumstances of the events, there would be a logical reason for the statement being made. If you are traveling across the land, do you have a need for a permanent home? If you already know the final act you must perform for the sake of your ministry is to die, do you want to buy a home? Considering that knowledge, I can easily see why Jesus would make such a statement and that statement would certainly be true.

Consider two more points. First, if this presentation was being led by Satan, could I use the name of Jesus? Could I say, *In Jesus' name*, and use the authority He left to the church? Wouldn't that be

the same type of discussion the Pharisees had about Jesus? Look at the following two verses: Matthew 9:34 NKJV, *But the Pharisees said, "He casts out demons by the ruler of the demons."* Matthew 12:24, *Now when the Pharisees heard it they said, "This fellow does not cast out demons except by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons."*

Let me ask you this question. What is the difference between a pastor, a lawyer and a writer? I say, only the subject matter is different. The object is still to present a sermon, a case, or a cause. Each one will make a presentation, but remember the choice is left to you for a belief, a verdict or a conclusion. Secondly, what happened to the promises given to Abraham? I am not trying to take away from the grace that Jesus left to all of us through salvation. I am trying to get you to expand your level of thought and to embrace the love that God, through Jesus, has for all of mankind.

Look at Isaiah 11:1-10 NKJV, *There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots. The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, The Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD. His delight is in the fear of the LORD, and He shall not judge by the sight of His eyes, Nor decide by the hearing of His ears; but with righteousness He shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; He shall strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked. Righteousness shall be the belt of His loins, and faithfulness the belt of His waist. "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, The calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play by the cobra's hole, and the weaned child shall put his hand in the viper's den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea. "And in that day there shall be a Root of Jesse, who shall stand as a banner to the people; for the Gentiles shall seek Him, and His resting place shall be glorious."*

Let's also look at John 3, once again, to add to this discussion. What does John 3:16-21 say? John 3:16-21 NKJV, *"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God."*

I know many do not agree with my analysis, my reasoning, or even in the thoughts I possess. You cannot accept that Jesus could have been married, much less, that His wife could be named Mary Magdalene. There are many who cannot accept that Jesus would cast demons out of Mary, forgive Mary, nor marry her. "Why? She was a prostitute," seems to be the more popular reason given for why this can't be so. They seem to forget about Noah, Abraham, Job, Moses, Joshua, Paul and others who stood alone in faith to a belief that was against the grain of everyone else. Go back to our verses on the previous page from Isaiah. In verse one (1) *Jesus is the Rod and Christians are the branch*. Am I right or am I wrong? Then I have another question. Why don't the Christians of today understand they need to get back to the roots to see what they believe. We seem to like John 3:16 but we forget the rest of the statement being made. In John 3:16 can you show me where it says you must be a Christian? Can you show me where it says you must be baptized to receive the promise given? Doesn't this verse say that God loved the whole earth? Then, if God loved the whole earth what part is left out? Doesn't it say the

promise is given to those who believe in the Son? Isn't this restated in verse 18? Where does it say this belief must be in a particular manner or through a particular denomination? It seems to me there is too much misinformation, inaccurate teaching and nonscriptural traditions coming from most traditional churches. That's plain and simple, the bottom line.

Have I really taken you through this tree of discussion and placed you out on a limb without support of belief, or assurance from the Prince of Light? Oh! I pray not! I pray you have a slight glance at the true picture of who the Prince of Light really was and is. Jesus is more real to me now than ever before. His family was real and they cared for each other. His brothers and sisters were real and they showed this care. Do we forget his brothers James and Jude also have books in the New Testament? But, most of all, I must answer the question of, "So what difference does it make? I still believe in Jesus."

The difference is in the methods used by the shadow prince to diminish the victory. If you care to wash aside the history and the details, you do several things. First, you dishonor God the Father, He sent the Prince of Light and the victory secured by the Prince of Light for all humanity is real. Secondly, you dishonor the family. To any race, or family, history is to them what memory is to an individual. Don't we have memories? Do you just toss your memories aside like old rags? Then why do you toss aside the history pertaining to the Prince of Light? Thirdly, have you forgotten that we Christians, as a whole, are grafted onto the branch through grace and our means to get back to the promises given to Abraham must go through the Hebrew portion of the tree. Unknown to many Christians is the fact they are also by race direct heirs to the promises given to Abraham. Finally, have you fallen for the presentation given by the warriors of the shadow prince who portray themselves as beings of light and mislead us into accepting a falsehood? **You must be the one to decide!** It is your freewill choice to do so. You hold the key and this key rests in the truth, because it will set you free. Do as Paul instructed us to do and search the scriptures for the truth. I leave this discussion with the following statement. I proudly confess I serve a risen Lord and His Spirit fills my soul, my mind and my days. Have you found such an abundant faith in your own walk?

There still seems to be a shadow cast over all the research that has gone into the story of Mary and the marriage at Cana. I'm repeatedly asked, "If Mary Magdalene was Jesus' wife, why isn't there anymore information pertaining to her after the crucifixion of Jesus"?

Here is my view point and answer: There is really nothing different between Jesus' time and the present day if you only look at content and how it is applied to both situations. At the time of Jesus, there was no mail delivery, no newspapers, no radio, no television, and no photocopy machines. If I invited the leader of a famous group to a gathering I invited his entire group. Look at any movie release now where there is a party given for the movie stars. If you invite the star you've also invited their entire entourage along with the star. What was the difference? The difference was only in the matter of time between then and now! So, basically we do the same things, just by different means! Take for example any television program, a movie or even a theatrical performance. When the scene for a particular performer is over, they disappear from the scene because their part has been played. They do not stand around on the sidelines waiting to be recalled because you thought their performance made them great. We seem to forget that the Bible is a record of God's chosen people and it gives the written record of what they did, or did not do, according to God's will. So, when the scene of Mary, the mother of Jesus, is concluded, the record does not go on with her story by itself because that was not part of God's plan. In like manner, Mary Magdalene does not have a part to play after the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus, so she also disappears from the pages of God's Word. Does this change anything of the situation or the part the two women played in the life of Jesus? I really don't think so!

Let me try to explain this another way using real life people in more modern times. Let's take the history of the United States, a country which has been around as a country for just over 200 years. Now, give me the names of the wives for the following famous men:

Albert Einstein  
Thomas Edison  
Abraham Lincoln, our sixteenth President

Could you do that? Do you have a guess? Some of you may remember the name of Abraham Lincoln's wife, but I doubt many know the name of the wives for the other two men. These are famous men who have contributed great things toward this nation. Why don't we know about their wives?

We touched upon Abraham Lincoln, a famous man and a President of this country. In many cases we had to learn the names of the Presidents in order during history classes in school. Let's look at Presidents. Therefore, move this up once again toward today, and name the wife of the last eleven Presidents. Do this from memory and don't use the computer or Internet to help you. I want the wife's full first and last name and any pet name:

- 44) Barack Obama
- 43) George W. Bush
- 42) William 'Bill' Clinton
- 41) George H.W. Bush
- 40) Ronald Reagan
- 39) Jimmy Carter
- 38) Gerald Ford
- 37) Richard Nixon
- 36) Lyndon B. Johnson
- 35) John F. Kennedy
- 34) Dwight D. Eisenhower

I'm going to guess that out of that group of eleven famous men you could only name the wife for two of them. I'll guess they are Bill Clinton and John Kennedy. Why only these two? Because their wife played a distinct part of their own after the Presidency of their husband, thus their name is also known as that of a famous person. My point in this exercise is to plainly show that famous men do not create a record for their wife just because they are famous. This doesn't take place today, even with all our modern day means of communication, and it most certainly did not take place 2000 years ago at the time of Jesus. We know from Biblical text that Peter had a wife but we don't know her name, and we know Paul had a sister who had a son, yet we know not the name of either individual. So, is the Bible inaccurate because it does not fill in the names of certain people? Good heavens, NO! In like manner, it is not incorrect when a biblical character is removed from the story line. That person's part is completed, their act is over, they have fulfilled God's will and the story does not go on about them. So, if the Bible does not give us any more information pertaining to Mary, Jesus' mother, or Mary Magdalene, why do we feel the Bible must give more information for my analysis to be correct. It was Jesus who was married at the wedding at Cana and his wife is Mary Magdalene!

**Peace be unto you. Jesus is the answer,  
but you must decide if you will serve Him.**

There, it is done! This discussion was needed. Few have taken the time to sit down and really read their Bible to see what it says. They are happy and satisfied to accept the statements of others, that tradition, or the belief of another, is good enough for them and that is as far as they will go to seek the truth.

Let's identify the five Marys (please notice that I say five and Holman's says seven) by verse grouping:

(1) Mary, the mother of Jesus: Mt 1:16, 18, 20; 2:11; 13:55; Mk 6:3; Lk 1:27, 30, 34, 38, 39, 41, 46, 56; 2:5, 16, 19, 34; Acts 1:14; and Romans 16:6.

(2) Mary Magdalene: Mk 16:9; Lk 8:2; Jn 20:1, 11, 16, 18.

(3) Mary, the sister of Martha and Lazarus: Lk 10:39, 42; Jn 11:1-2, 19-20, 28, 31-32, 45; 12:3.

(4) Mary, wife of Clopas: Jn 19:25.

(5) Mary, mother of John Mark: Acts 12:12

(1 & 2) Mary Magdalene and Mary (Jesus's mother being identified as mother of James): Mt 27:56, 61; 28:1; Mk 15:40; 47; 16:1; Lk 24:10.

(1, 2 and 4, together) John 19:25

### Answers to who's wife is who:

#### Famous Men:

Albert Einstein — Mileva Maric

Thomas Edison — (1st) Mary Stilwell (2nd) Mina Miller

Abraham Lincoln — Mary Todd

#### Last Eleven Presidents:

44) Barack Obama — Michelle Robinson

43) George W. Bush — Laura Welch

42) Bill Clinton — Hillary Rodham

41) George H. W. Bush — Barbara Pierce

40) Ronald Reagan — (1) Jane Wyman (2) Nancy Davis

39) Jimmy Carter — Rosalynn Smith

38) Gerald Ford — Elizabeth (Betty) Bloomer Warren

37) Richard Nixon — Thelma Catherine (Pat) Ryan

36) Lyndon Johnson — Claudia Alta (Lady Bird) Taylor

35) John Kennedy — Jacqueline Bouvier

34) Dwight Eisenhower — Mamie Doud

Before I close let us have fun with one more passage from the Bible. I want you to look at the following verse and tell me something. First, look at the verse: Mark 14:51-52, *A young man, wearing nothing but a linen garment, was following Jesus. When they seized him, he fled naked, leaving his garment behind.* Now, what was the young man's name who ran from the Garden of Gethsemane? In fact, I want you to answer this question very truthfully. Have you ever heard or read about this taking place in the Garden of Gethsemane the night Jesus was captured? Why not? It is a portion of the Crucifixion Story! So, who is this person? Okay! Do you have any good guesses? How about the Apostle John, the one who wrote this particular Gospel? Let me tell you why I think it is John. First, and foremost, John was the youngest of the Disciples (Apostles), John was part of the inner circle of Jesus,

and John was there in the Garden of Gethsemane that night. While text may show that Peter wanted to stand and fight, I think these two verses show John wanted to get away quickly. Even so, other portions of text will show John must have returned, retrieved his garment and traveled on to the house of the Chief Priest so he could hear what was being done to Jesus.

Now to bring the Gospel of John to its conclusion. We were looking at the facts leading up to Jesus' crucifixion and have looked at the story of Jonah and Lazarus. In presenting that information about Jonah and Lazarus we saw Jesus had the authority from the Father to lay down His life and to take it up again. We now see the final act by Jesus himself in verse 30, *So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit.* Here is the point that Jesus lays down his life for mankind: He gave it up and it was not taken from Him. We will see in chapter 20 that He took His life back up and He was seen by His disciples and many others over a forty-day period after the Resurrection.

Oops, another little tidbit statement is placed in verse 31 and we need to understand what it means. Over the course of the last twenty years of study, I have come to the conclusion that Jesus was not crucified on a Friday. There are many who do not believe what I have written, the verses I show as evidence or any other reason. Actually, you went through that reasoning in the chapter on Easter earlier in this book. Okay, how about another verse from the Bible that would only show more of what I am saying. Look closely at the words in verse 31: *Therefore, because it was the Preparation Day, that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away.* Now let's look at the same verse from the NIV: *Now it was the day of Preparation, and the next day was to be a special Sabbath. Because the Jews did not want the bodies left on the crosses during the Sabbath, they asked Pilate to have the legs broken and the bodies taken down.* Do you see the mention of a Preparation Day? Find any reference in the Bible that there is a preparation day prior to the normal weekly Sabbath. Second, it says this is a high day NKJV or a special Sabbath NIV. In other words, this is not your normal weekly Sabbath on Saturday. I still go back to what I have already said and tell you the crucifixion of Joshua (Jesus) took place on a Wednesday.

In chapter 20 of the Gospel of John, we find the story of the Resurrection of Jesus. I can tell you these things. It was not the death of Jesus that brings us salvation, it is the Resurrection! I can also tell you the stone being rolled away from the entrance to the tomb was not to let Jesus out, but to let people in to see the empty tomb. In this chapter we see Jesus is out of the tomb and moving about. He has indeed picked up His life and is showing himself. It is in chapter 20 where we found the verse used to cause us to study this book of the Bible and not one of the other gospels. Once again that verse reads, *but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.*

The final chapter of John contains one more lesson that should be understood by every minister, every teacher and all parents who call themselves Christian. This lesson is in verses 15-19: *So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?"*

*He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You."*

*He said to him, "Feed My lambs." He said to him again a second time, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?"*

*He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You."*

*He said to him, "Tend My sheep." He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?"*

*Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, “Do you love Me?” And he said to Him, “Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You.”*

*Jesus said to him, “Feed My sheep. “Most assuredly, I say to you, when you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish.” This He spoke, signifying by what death he would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He said to him, “Follow Me.”*

The underlined words contain three questions and four statements made by Jesus. Each of the three questions are the same *do you love me*, however the three statements made after these questions change. Note in the first statement it is *feed my lambs*, in the second *tend my sheep*, and in the third *feed my sheep*. In the first statement we see the need to feed lambs. Doesn't that mean to give them nourishment, or food, so they may grow? In the second statement the feeding has changed to tending and the lambs has changed to sheep. First, doesn't tending mean to protect the sheep or to guard them from harm? In the third statement the tending has changed to feeding and the feeding this time is sheep instead of lambs. Doesn't that mean to provide nourishment to the sheep when they have grown up? Spiritually speaking, who are Jesus' lambs and sheep? Aren't the new believers in Christ the lambs and shouldn't they be fed the Word of God so they may understand and know the truth? In like manner, aren't the sheep of Jesus all those who believe in Him? Then wasn't Peter being told to teach the truth that the Apostles had been shown to the new believers (lambs) and to those who had believed (sheep) and to be the shepherd who would protect the flock? Doesn't this illustration become a responsibility to every minister, every teacher, and to every parent who is a Christian. Don't we have a responsibility to our children, to our friends and to our neighbors to feed them the truth of God and to protect them in Jesus' name from the evil one? Then isn't that why the fourth statement is made, *Follow me*? Jesus' own statement was made to the one He called Rock. Now what about you? Will you follow Jesus? **It is your choice and you alone must make a decision.** Cross the threshold, you can do it and you can grow as you travel through life. Always read, always study and always believe! Believe in yourself, and believe in God the Father, and Jesus His son who brought to mankind redemption from sin! Remember, Jesus brought life and not religion to us.

### Pop Quiz Answers from page 31:

1. Yes! It comes after the 3<sup>rd</sup> of July just like it does in the United States.
2. One! If you have more than one birthday each year there is something wrong.
3. 12! There may be one month with only 28 days but you have to go through 28 to get to 30 or 31.
4. 6! Each team gets three outs during an inning.
5. No! It can't happen the man is dead, that's why his wife is called a widow.
6. 70! We are dividing 30 by  $\frac{1}{2}$ , not by 2, so there are 60 halves in 30 plus the other ten.
7. 2! Didn't it just say that you took two?
8. 60 minutes! You take one at the doctor's office, the second at thirty minutes and the third at 1 hour (60 minutes).
9. 9! The same 9 that didn't die.
10. None! Moses wasn't on the ark it was Noah. There's another question here. Change the name to Noah and answer the question. The answer is half. Half of the animals must be male and half must be female for you to have pairs.
11. 12! A dozen is a dozen no matter what it is, two-cent stamps, or donuts, or something else.



VQP C



VQP C



VQP C





VQP



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