

# The Risk of Christ

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## Introduction

We know from our dictionaries that the word “risk” has something to do with the possibility of success or failure, gain or loss. As members of the human race, we accept risk as a fact of life. We all know that we can limit our successes and failures by the risks we take. Investors know this rule. They will invest their money in ways that will bring them a sure return on their investment. Of course there are circumstances beyond our control, but if you don’t take the risk, you cannot get the return that you had hoped for.

Many of us are not willing to risk going beyond our five senses. We do not believe there is anything that exists that we cannot see, hear, touch, smell, or taste. But we have an unseen part of us. Our consciousness is not something we can see, but we know it is there. Our feelings are unseen parts of us as is our mind, our intellect, our thoughts, and our conscience. Our life principle is not seen, but we exist, and all of these things are seen working out through the physical part of us, our bodies. They give us our identity, our individuality. We are unique in this world. We have a signature all our own.

In chapter 5 of his book, **The Signature of God**, Grant Jeffrey notes that prior to 1890 or so, “doctors did not know that germs from human and animal waste caused infections that number among the greatest dangers to humanity,” **The Signature of God, Grant Jeffrey, 2010, page 140**. Grant then states that one “Ignaz Semmelweis, a brilliant Hungarian doctor in the mid-nineteenth century, created a tremendous improvement in practical medical treatment and the control of infectious diseases. An article in the Encyclopaedia Britannica documents that, as a young doctor in Vienna in 1845, Semmelweis was appalled by the staggering rate of death by infection of women who gave birth in hospitals. While most children were born at home, a number of women, usually the homeless or sick, gave birth in a hospital. The level of infectious puerperal (child-bed) fever was horrendous, with between 15 and 30 percent of such mothers dying. This tragic situation was generally accepted and considered normal at that time.” **ibid, page 142**.

Grant continues as he states, “But Semmelweis was convinced there must be a way to protect more of these women from puerperal fever. He began to study the conditions under which the women were giving birth. He noted that every morning, young interns examined the bodies of the mothers who had died and then, without washing their hands, went to the next ward where they would examine expectant mothers. This was considered a normal medical practice in the mid-nineteenth century because the existence of germs was not yet known,” **ibid, page 142**.

Grant then adds, “However, Semmelweis insisted that the doctors under his supervision follow his new orders to wash their hands in water with chlorinated lime prior to examining living patients. Immediately, the mortality rate from infection among the expectant mothers fell to less than 2 percent. Despite such dramatic improvement, the senior hospital staff despised Semmelweis’s medical innovations and eventually fired him. Most of his medical colleagues rejected his new techniques and ridiculed his demands that they wash their hands. They could not believe infections could be caused by something that was invisible to the naked eye,” **ibid, page 142**.

One has to wonder why the other doctors and colleagues of Semmelweis rejected his advice to wash their hands before examining living patients. Was the risk of shame too great for them to admit that their procedure didn’t work, and in fact, caused the death of so many women? But to continue down that road when one knows what will save lives is unthinkable. Yet that is what these hospital workers did.

What was the risk for these hospital workers? If they submitted to the change in procedure that Semmelweis advised, they would suffer some shame because people would know that women had died under their care. However, they could have also saved lives, and thus be applauded because they received correction, and did not continue in their ignorance. They would have suffered a moment of shame, but a lifetime of peace knowing that they had done the right thing. Instead, they chose to remain ignorant, and as a result, people continued to die because of their willfulness.

It is one thing to act in innocence because of our ignorance, but quite another to choose to remain ignorant, and be responsible for the pain of others, when the truth is so openly shared with us, and we reject it. We need to ask ourselves, “What is the risk?”

Grant continues his account as he then states, “Later Semmelweis took a position with a hospital in Pest (Budapest), Hungary, the St. Rochus Hospital, which was experiencing an epidemic of puerperal fever among pregnant women. Immediately, Semmelweis’s new sanitary procedures again had a positive effect, with the mortality rate dropping to less than 1 percent,” **ibid, page 141-142.**

Grant states further that the Hungarian government then demanded “that all medical staff follow Semmelweis’s instructions for hand washing and general hospital sanitation. Still, the medical establishments of Europe and North America continued to ignore his techniques. Decades of rejection by his colleagues drove Semmelweis to a nervous breakdown. Tragically, due to an infection he received through a cut on his hand while performing an operation in 1865, he succumbed to the infectious disease he spent his life trying to alleviate,” **ibid, page 142.**

Semmelweis took a great risk to help others. He eventually paid with his life. A man named Jesus said that there is no greater love than that a man would lay down his life for his friends in **John 15 (KJV):13** Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. 14 Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.

Semmelweis was a friend, and showed great love in helping others to live. Love is a risk, but certainly a risk worth taking.

Now at first glance, to risk one’s life as Semmelweis did seems to be the greatest risk anyone could ever take. However, Jesus speaks of an even greater risk as we read in **Luke 16 (KJV):19** There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: 20 And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, 21 And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. 22 And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; 23 And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. 24 And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. 25 But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. 26 And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence. 27 Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: 28 For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. 29 Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. 30 And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. 31 And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.

Jesus points out in this story that there are no second chances. Once we die, there is no going back and doing life over again. Now, while we are living, is the time to say yes to God, and not after we are dead. I believe the greatest risk we can take in this life is to choose to remain ignorant of the truth of God, which He has revealed to us through His Son, Jesus Christ.

### **Proof of the Existence of God**

Now Grant Jeffrey, in his book, **The Signature of God**, also points out that the Bible records medical knowledge that unknown to mankind over a thousand years before it was discovered by scientists. Grant begins as he notes, “Germs from a corpse are more dangerous to another human than germs from an animal carcass because of the greater likelihood of the transmission of infection. Deadly germs are especially prevalent in the bodies of those who have died due to disease. However, the Bible gives instructions to protect people from many of these diseases.” **ibid, page 141-2.**

Grant refers to the book of Numbers, from the Bible, in **Numbers 19 (KJV):14** This is the law, when a man dieth in a tent: all that come into the tent, and all that is in the tent, shall be unclean seven days. 15 And every open vessel, which hath no covering bound upon it, is unclean. 16 And whosoever toucheth one that is slain with a sword in the open fields, or a dead body, or a bone of a man, or a grave, shall be unclean seven

days. 17 And for an unclean person they shall take of the ashes of the burnt heifer of purification for sin, and running water shall be put thereto in a vessel:

While we know that the ashes of a burnt heifer do not heal anyone, yet the scripture points to this as an antidote for sin at the time. What is especially significant is the law of cleanliness given by God to Israel through Moses sometime before 1400 BC.

Grant further notes that, “The continents of Europe and Asia have periodically been engulfed by epidemics of leprosy and plague, especially from 1200 to 1400. More than sixty million people, almost one-third of the population of Europe in the fourteenth century, are estimated to have died by the Black Death (bubonic plague). Those who survived described scenes that sounded like the haunting visions of Dante’s descriptions of hell.” **ibid, page 145.**

Grant is speaking of a time that the plague occurred in the middle ages, between 1200 AD and 1400 AD. Grant also notes that the plague during this time was only finally stopped when “several church leaders began to search the Bible to discover whether there was a practical solution. They saw that in Leviticus 13:46 Moses laid down strict regulations regarding the treatment of those afflicted with leprosy or plague.” **ibid, page 145.**

Grant is referring to **Leviticus 13 (KJV):46** All the days wherein the plague shall be in him he shall be defiled; he is unclean: he shall dwell alone; without the camp shall his habitation be.

Grant then states that, “Fortunately, the church fathers of Vienna finally took the biblical injunctions to heart and commanded that those infected with the plague must be placed outside the city in special medical quarantine compounds. Caregivers fed them until they either died or survived the disease. Those who died in homes or streets were quickly removed and buried outside the city. These biblical sanitation measures quickly brought the dreaded epidemic under control. Other cities and countries rapidly followed the medical practices of Vienna until the deadly spread of the Black Death was halted.” **ibid, page 145-6.**

Now Moses lived in the fifteenth century before Christ, that is, before 1400 BC. These instructions of his were then about 2600 years old. How is it that we find them in the Bible? Clearly the wisdom of God is manifest here.

Now it is recorded in the Bible that King David wrote the following in **Psalms 19 (KJV):1** The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork. 2 Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. 3 There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard. 4 Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun, 5 Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race. 6 His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.

The Apostle Paul says in Romans 1, verse 20, that the “invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead.” The more we study science, the more we see clearly that there must have been a designer. One only has to look at our DNA to know that we did not happen by chance, for our DNA is a blueprint for the design of every one of us, how we are to be made. We are thus “without excuse” as Paul concludes in Romans 1:20.

But is there some mark that is a tell tale sign of God’s signature? We are all asked to sign something in our lifetime. Our signature is our authentication of our choices. Any attempts at forgery can then be detected by ever so slight differences in the signing. We depend on the signature to determine whether a document is trustworthy or not. It is how it is known that we, and not someone else, bought a house, or used our VISA card, or signed a check. Our signature is the mark that says that what we have signed is trustworthy. Is there some mark that tells us that there is a God, and that He is the God of the Bible?

Again, Grant Jeffrey in his book, **The Signature of God**, states that there is conclusive proof that every teaching, every command, every promise in the Bible is true. Grant first notes that there is ample evidence that the Bible is reliable historically. Grant cites “archaeological investigations” which “have demolished the position of those who rejected the biblical account of Israel’s kings, including King David. In 1993, archaeologists digging at Tel Dan in northern Israel found a fragment of a stone inscription that clearly refers to the “House of David” and identifies David as the “king of Israel.” This is the first inscription outside the Bible that confirms that David was the king of Israel in the ninth century before Christ.” **The Signature of God**,

**Grant Jeffrey, 2010, page 59.** Grant notes many other archaeological finds that corroborate Bible events and characters such as an inscription found on the base of the ruins of the Tower of Babel, a quote from the Babylonian king, Nebuchadnezzar, **ibid, page 46**, the tomb of a wealthy Yemenite woman who died during the time of the Egyptian famine recorded in Genesis 41, **ibid, page 50**, the Merneptah Stele's reference to Israel, which proves that Israel was a people known to the Egyptians many centuries before the reign of King David, **ibid, page 60**, and Assyrian inscriptions found in Nineveh which "confirm the Bible's records of these additional kings of Israel: Ahab, Jehu, Joash, Menahem, Pekah, and Hoshea," **ibid, page 63**, and many others.

Not only so, but Grant also points to the reliability of the original Old and New Testament writings, stating that, "Modern scholars possess more than five thousand manuscript copies of portions of the New Testament in the Greek language," and that there are "an additional fifteen thousand manuscripts in other languages from the first few centuries of this era," **ibid, page 82**. Grant also cites quotes from non-Christian sources such as Cornelius Tacitus, Governor of Asia in AD 112, who mentions "Christus" who was "put to death by Pontius Pilate, procurator of Judea in the reign of Tiberius," **ibid, page 84-85**. Grant also mentions quotes from Suetonius, the official Roman historian in AD 125, and Pliny the Younger, governor of the Roman province of Bithynia in AD 112, and Lucian of Samosata, and the Jewish historian Flavius Josephus, a contemporary of the apostle Paul, born in AD 37. In addition, Grant notes that the Dead Sea Scrolls, which a Bedouin found in a cave in 1947, and which number "more than one thousand priceless manuscripts dating back before AD 68," point to the reliability of the Old Testament, **ibid, page 91**.

Grant also notes in chapter four of his book that there is "an astonishing amount of advanced scientific knowledge that cannot be explained unless a supernatural Being inspired the writing of the Scriptures," **ibid, page 101**. One example Grant mentions is the dimensions of Noah's ark. The dimensions are mentioned in **Genesis 6(KJV):15** And this is the fashion which thou shalt make it of: The length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits, the breadth of it fifty cubits, and the height of it thirty cubits.

Grant states that, "The Lord specified to Noah, at a time when no one had ever seen a ship, that the perfect proportions for a stable vessel were 30:5:3. Today's shipbuilders design ocean liners following similar proportions. These design specifications are recognized globally as the ideal dimensions to optimize a ship's stability in the ocean," **ibid, page 124**.

In chapter 5 of his book, Grant notes that the Bible contains advanced medical knowledge. He states, that, "The first five books of the Bible, recorded by Moses approximately 1491-1451 BC, reveal highly advanced knowledge about medicine, hygiene, and sanitation," **ibid, page 131**.

And as we noted before, Grant also states that the Bible's laws on sanitation actually prevent disease, and display the wisdom of God as evidenced in **Numbers 19 (KJV):14** This is the law, when a man dieth in a tent: all that come into the tent, and all that is in the tent, shall be unclean seven days. **15** And every open vessel, which hath no covering bound upon it, is unclean. **16** And whosoever toucheth one that is slain with a sword in the open fields, or a dead body, or a bone of a man, or a grave, shall be unclean seven days. **17** And for an unclean person they shall take of the ashes of the burnt heifer of purification for sin, and running water shall be put thereto in a vessel:

Grant asks, "How could Moses have written these incredibly accurate medical instructions unless God had inspired him to do so?" **ibid, page 141**.

Again, Grant further states that, "More than sixty million people, almost one-third of the population of Europe in the fourteenth century, are estimated to have died by the Black Death (bubonic plague)." Grant then states, as we noted earlier, that the plague was finally stopped when, in Vienna, "Several church leaders began to search the Bible to discover whether there was a practical solution. They saw that in Leviticus 13:46 Moses laid down strict regulations regarding the treatment of those afflicted with leprosy or plague," **ibid, page 145**. Again, we read this in **Leviticus 13 (KJV):46** All the days wherein the plague shall be in him he shall be defiled; he is unclean: he shall dwell alone; without the camp shall his habitation be.

Grant concludes, "God answered their prayers for deliverance when they finally began to obey His scriptural commands. This divine medical rule demanded that a person who contracted the plague must be isolated from the general population during his infectious period," **ibid, page 145**.

We take such knowledge of sanitation for granted in our day and age. But people in general were

ignorant of such a simple truth for most of the nineteenth century.

Grant also notes the medical importance of the Red Heifer sacrifice prescribed in Numbers 19:5-13. Grant states that, “the water of purification described in Numbers 19 actually had the ability to destroy germs and infection. The resulting water-of-purification solution contained ashes from the Red Heifer sacrifice combined with cedar, hyssop, and scarlet thread,” and actually contains “an antifungal an antibacterial agent still used in medicine,” **ibid, page 150-151**.

### **Our Predisposition Makes It Hard to Believe**

With all of this evidence pointing to the trustworthiness of the Bible, why do so many today reject it out of hand? Grant offers one possible answer as he states that Dr. Millar Burrows, a professor at Yale University, “discussed the underlying reason most scholars reject the authority of the Bible: “The excessive skepticism of many liberal theologians stems not from a careful evaluation of the available data, but from an enormous predisposition against the supernatural...On the whole, however, archaeological work has unquestionably strengthened confidence in the reliability of the scriptural record,” **ibid, page 60**.

It is not unreasonable to think that a God who is all powerful, who knows all things, even the end from the beginning, who is the one who created the heavens and the earth, could speak to us in such a way that we could know it was Him who spoke to us. But this is the God of the Bible. He values the individual so much that He speaks to any man or woman who is willing to hear His voice and do His will. This is what Jesus is saying in **John 7 (KJV):17** If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.

There are many voices out there in the world. We might ask how are we to know His voice. But if we just say, “yes, I am willing”, we can know for He will show us. That is all He asks. Just be willing, and He will speak to us in a way that we can hear Him.

Jesus spoke a parable in **Matthew 13 (KJV):1** The same day went Jesus out of the house, and sat by the sea side. 2 And great multitudes were gathered together unto him, so that he went into a ship, and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore. 3 And he spake many things unto them in parables, saying, Behold, a sower went forth to sow; 4 And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up: 5 Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth: 6 And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. 7 And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them: 8 But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold. 9 Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

Jesus’ words, “who hath ears to hear, let him hear”, are part of the parable. We all have ears to hear, but Jesus meant something else. What He is really saying is, “he who is willing to hear, let him hear what I am saying”. Listen to what Jesus spoke in answer to the disciples question why He spoke to the people in parables in **Matthew 13 (KJV):13** Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. 14 And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: 15 For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. 16 But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear.

The disciples really saw and heard what Jesus was saying because they were willing. Is it too big of a risk to be willing to hear from God? Hearing from Him would be better than any ride in a spaceship to other planets. Imagine that the God who created the universe spoke to you! What would you do? How would you respond?

So what, we might ask, would convince us that God had spoken to us? What would convince of that the God of the Bible is real, and that the Bible is His inspired word? Grant Jeffrey points to the answer in Chapter 6 of his book, **Precise Fulfillment of Bible Prophecy-the Signature of God**. Grant states there that, “The study of the fulfillment of biblical prophecy provides overwhelming proof that God is controlling human history. The

hand of God is moving behind the scenes to bring about His will on earth.” **ibid, page 155**. He then refers to Isaiah 42:9 where we read as in **Isaiah 42 (KJV):9** Behold, the former things are come to pass, and new things do I declare: before they spring forth I tell you of them.

God is speaking to us through Isaiah the prophet here and saying that He spoke of former things, and they are come to pass, and now He speaks of new things before they come to pass so that we may know that it was He and no one else. This I believe is His signature.

### **Bible Prophecy – The Signature of God**

There have been those who have presumed to foretell the future, and part of what they have predicted has come to pass, but only a part. The rest of their prophecy has always proved to be false. Moses speaks of this in **Deuteronomy 18 (KJV):14** For these nations, which thou shalt possess, hearkened unto observers of times, and unto diviners: but as for thee, the Lord thy God hath not suffered thee so to do.

Diviners are those who try to foretell the future. As we continue to read in Deuteronomy, God then promised through Moses that He would raise up another prophet like him in **Deuteronomy 18 (KJV):15** The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken; 16 According to all that thou desiredst of the Lord thy God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not. 17 And the Lord said unto me, They have well spoken that which they have spoken. 18 I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. 19 And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him.

God made a promise through Moses that He would raise up another prophet like him. Moses was a prophet like no other in the Old Testament. No other prophet parted the sea like Moses. But Jesus walked on water, and stilled the storm, and healed thousands of evil spirits and all manner of disease.

The Lord then gave instruction to not be presumptuous when speaking a word in His name as we continue to read in **Deuteronomy 18 (KJV):20** But the prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die. 21 And if thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the Lord hath not spoken? 22 When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him.

It is a requirement that not just part, but all that a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord comes to pass. The prophet Isaiah was such a prophet. Isaiah was not the prophet that would come spoken of in Deuteronomy 18:15, but Isaiah is a trustworthy prophet because all that he has spoken about Christ, who is the prophet spoken of in Deuteronomy 18:15, in regards to His first coming has come to pass.

Isaiah the prophet prophesied between approximately 740 to 680 B.C.E. In his writing, the Lord often speaks in the first person, and indeed tells us again and again that His signature is to foretell the future as we read in **Isaiah 41 (NIV):21** Present your case," says the LORD. "Set forth your arguments," says Jacob's King. 22 "Bring in your idols to tell us what is going to happen. Tell us what the former things were, so that we may consider them and know their final outcome. Or declare to us the things to come, 23 tell us what the future holds, so we may know that you are gods. Do something, whether good or bad so that we will be dismayed and filled with fear. 24 But you are less than nothing and your works are utterly worthless; he who chooses you is detestable. 25 "I have stirred up one from the north, and he comes --one from the rising sun who calls on my name. He treads on rulers as if they were mortar, as if he were a potter treading the clay. 26 Who told of this from the beginning, so we could know, or beforehand, so we could say, 'He was right'. No one told of this, no one foretold it, no one heard any words from you. 27 I was the first to tell Zion, 'Look, here they are!' I gave to Jerusalem a messenger of good tidings. 28 I look but there is no one—no one among them to give counsel, no one to give answer when I ask them. 29 See, they are all false! Their deeds amount to nothing; their images are but wind and confusion.



The Lord is telling us through Isaiah that the way we can know His signature is to hear what He has said about the future, for He tells us of things to come, before they come to pass. Then, as we read His word, we can know that He is God, and He alone. This is something that the idols of men, the gods who are really not gods at all, cannot do. They are pretenders.

And as Moses spoke of a prophet like himself that would come, so Isaiah speaks of a chosen servant of the Lord in **Isaiah 42 (NIV)**:1 "Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him and he will bring justice to the nations. 2 He will not shout or cry out, or raise his voice in the streets. 3 A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out. In faithfulness he will bring forth justice; 4 he will not falter or be discouraged till he establishes justice on earth. In his law the islands will put their hope." 5 This is what God the LORD says --he who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and all that comes out of it, who gives breath to its people, and life to those who walk on it: 6 "I, the LORD, have called you in righteousness; I will take hold of your hand. I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people and a light for the Gentiles, 7 to open eyes that are blind, to free captives from prison and to release from the dungeon those who sit in darkness. 8 "I am the LORD; that is my name! I will not give my glory to another or my praise to idols. 9 See, the former things have taken place, and new things I declare; before they spring into being I announce them to you."

The Lord states above that He is the one who created the heavens and stretched them out, and spread out the earth and all that comes out of it, and that He is the one who gives breath to its people, and life to those who walk on it. The Lord also points out His identifying mark, His Scripture as it were, as He says that the former things which He foretold have come to pass, and now He will declare new things "before they spring into being".

Again the Lord speaks of this same identifying mark through Isaiah as we read in **Isaiah 44 (KJV)**:6 "This is what the LORD says—Israel's King and Redeemer, the LORD Almighty: I am the first and I am the last; apart from me there is no God. 7 Who then is like me? Let him proclaim it. Let him declare and lay out before me what has happened since I established my ancient people, and what is yet to come—yes, let him foretell what will come. 8 Do not tremble, do not be afraid. Did I not proclaim this and foretell it long ago? You are my witnesses. Is there any God besides me? No, there is no other Rock; I know not one."

The Lord speaks through Isaiah here about how He declared what would happen to His ancient people, Israel, again and again and it came to pass. One example of this is in **Genesis 12 (KJV)**:1 Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: 2 And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing:

Again the Lord spoke as in **Genesis 15 (KJV)**:13 And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; 14 And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance.

Israel was in Egypt for four hundred years, and afterwards the Lord delivered them through Moses just as He spoke to Abraham. These are just some of the prophecies the Lord spoke through His prophets concerning His ancient people, Israel.

Now again we hear that there is none like Him who makes "known the end from the beginning" as we read in **Isaiah 46 (NIV)**:8 "Remember this, fix it in mind, take it to heart, you rebels. 9 Remember the former things, those of long ago; I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me. 10 I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come, I say: My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please. 11 From the east I summon a bird of prey; from a far-off land, a man to fulfill my purpose. What I have said, that will I bring about; what I have planned, that will I do.

God is in control. Everything we see happening on earth is within His domain. And again the Lord speaks of His signature as we read in **Isaiah 48 (NIV)**:1 "Listen to this, O house of Jacob, you who are called by the name of Israel and come from the line of Judah, you who take oaths in the name of the LORD and invoke the God of Israel—but not in truth or righteousness— 2 you who call yourselves citizens of the holy city and rely on the God of Israel—the LORD Almighty is his name: 3 I foretold the former things long ago, my mouth

announced them and I made them known; then suddenly I acted, and they came to pass. 4 For I knew how stubborn you were; the sinews of your neck were iron, your forehead was bronze. 5 Therefore I told you these things long ago; before they happened I announced them to you so that you could not say, 'My idols did them; my wooden image and metal god ordained them.' 6 You have heard these things; look at them all. Will you not admit them? "From now on I will tell you of new things, of hidden things unknown to you. 7 They are created now, and not long ago; you have not heard of them before today. So you cannot say, 'Yes, I knew of them.' 8 You have neither heard nor understood; from of old your ear has not been open. Well do I know how treacherous you are; you were called a rebel from birth. 9 For my own name's sake I delay my wrath; for the sake of my praise I hold it back from you, so as not to cut you off. 10 See, I have refined you, though not as silver; I have tested you in the furnace of affliction. 11 For my own sake, for my own sake, I do this. How can I let myself be defamed? I will not yield my glory to another.

The Lord spoke through Moses in Deuteronomy, chapter 28, about the blessings if Israel was faithful to the covenant He had made with them, and the curses if they were unfaithful to this covenant. And the Lord knew that all these things, the blessings and the curses, would come upon Israel as we read in **Deuteronomy 28 (KJV)**: 1 And it shall come to pass, when all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before thee, and thou shalt call them to mind among all the nations, whither the Lord thy God hath driven thee, 2 And shalt return unto the Lord thy God, and shalt obey his voice according to all that I command thee this day, thou and thy children, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul; 3 That then the Lord thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations, whither the Lord thy God hath scattered thee. 4 If any of thine be driven out unto the outmost parts of heaven, from thence will the Lord thy God gather thee, and from thence will he fetch thee: 5 And the Lord thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it; and he will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers.

The first time Israel was scattered among the nations was in 723 BC when Assyria invaded Israel and took the 10 tribes in the north captive. Then the southern two tribes, Judah and Benjamin, went into captivity to Babylon in 586 BC. But the Lord promised that Israel's captivity the first time would last 70 years as we read in **Jeremiah 29 (KJV)**: 10 For thus saith the Lord, That after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place.

This has come to pass as we read in **2 Chronicles 36 (KJV)**: 22 Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the Lord spoken by the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, 23 Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, All the kingdoms of the earth hath the Lord God of heaven given me; and he hath charged me to build him an house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Who is there among you of all his people? The Lord his God be with him, and let him go up.

We know that the temple was rebuilt by Zerubbabel as we read in **Ezra 5 (KJV)**: 2 Then rose up Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and began to build the house of God which is at Jerusalem: and with them were the prophets of God helping them.

Then the walls of the city were rebuilt by Nehemiah as we read in **Nehemiah 2 (KJV)**: 7 Moreover I said unto the king, If it please the king, let letters be given me to the governors beyond the river, that they may convey me over till I come into Judah; 8 And a letter unto Asaph the keeper of the king's forest, that he may give me timber to make beams for the gates of the palace which appertained to the house, and for the wall of the city, and for the house that I shall enter into. And the king granted me, according to the good hand of my God upon me.

And in **Nehemiah 6 (KJV)**: 15 So the wall was finished in the twenty and fifth day of the month Elul, in fifty and two days.

The temple and the wall of Jerusalem were rebuilt and were still standing when Jesus came as we read in **Matthew 21 (KJV)**: 12 And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves...

These are the former things which have all come to pass, just as the Lord spoke through the prophets.

Now we read in the Gospel of John that Jesus told His disciples that He was going to leave them as we read in **John 14:23** Jesus replied, "If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. 24 He who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me. 25" All this I have spoken while still with you. 26 But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. 27 Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid. 28 "You heard me say, 'I am going away and I am coming back to you.' If you loved me, you would be glad that I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I. 29 I have told you now before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe. 30 I will not speak with you much longer, for the prince of this world is coming. He has no hold on me, 31 but the world must learn that I love the Father and that I do exactly what My Father has commanded me.

Jesus told His disciples "before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe." Jesus also spoke of a second dispersion that would happen to Israel as we read in **Luke 21 (KJV):20** And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. 21 Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto. 22 For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. 23 But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. 24 And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

This prophecy has most certainly been fulfilled. The Jews as a nation have certainly been trodden down of the Gentiles. The holocaust, where an estimated six million Jews were murdered by Adolf Hitler's Nazi regime, is a fact of history.

Now Isaiah prophesied of a second regathering as we read in **Isaiah 11 (KJV):10** And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious. 11 And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. 12 And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.

This second regathering has already begun in our day as Israel became a nation again in 1948. It will not be complete until Christ comes in His second coming.

### **The Need for a Redeemer**

The Bible explains why we need a redeemer. We begin reading in **Genesis 1 (KJV):1** In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

The Bible states that God also created man as we read in **Genesis 1 (KJV):26** And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. 27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. 28 And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

God placed the first man that He had formed in a garden called Eden as we continue to read in **Genesis 2 (KJV):7** And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul. 8 And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed. 9 And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and

evil.

The Lord God then gave the man a charge as we continue in **Genesis 2 (KJV):**15 And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. 16 And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: 17 But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

We may wonder why man was put on probation so to speak like this. The reason is because sin was already in the universe. An angel had become corrupt through disobedience to God, and was in fact in rebellion to God. This angel was called Lucifer and is mentioned in **Isaiah 14 (KJV):**12 How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! 13 For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north:

That this is the same angel that is mentioned in Ezekiel 28 there can be no doubt as we read in **Ezekiel 28 (KJV):**12 Son of man, take up a lamentation upon the king of Tyrus, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord God; Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. 13 Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created. 14 Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. 15 Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee. 16 By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. 17 Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee. 18 Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffick; therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee. 19 All they that know thee among the people shall be astonished at thee: thou shalt be a terror, and never shalt thou be any more.

Man was put on probation because this angel, who became Satan, was now at large in the universe. Man must then be tested in regards to his obedience to God.

Now God had commanded this man that He had created not to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil for in the very day he eats of this tree, God said he would die as we read in **Genesis 2 (KJV):**17 But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

God then also made woman, a helper for man, as we continue in **Genesis 2 (KJV):**18 And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him. 19 And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof. 20 And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him. 21 And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; 22 And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. 23 And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. 24 Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. 25 And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

The Bible then goes on to record the first man's disobedience as we read in **Genesis 3 (KJV):**1 Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? 2 And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: 3 But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. 4 And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: 5 For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be

opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. 6 And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. 7 And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons. 8 And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden.

Snakes don't talk as we all know today. The serpent mentioned here was controlled by Satan, who was a fallen angel who had sinned in a dateless past as we read in **Revelation 12 (KJV):9** And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

Since sin was already in the universe through this angelic being, man was then put on probation in the Garden of Eden. Satan was allowed to tempt the man and the woman through the serpent. God then called the man to account as we read in **Genesis 3 (KJV):9** And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? 10 And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself. 11 And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat? 12 And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. 13 And the Lord God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat. 14 And the Lord God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: 15 And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

When the man ate the fruit, he lost his innocence in disobedience to God. He committed the first sin of the human race. This disobedience, or sin, plunged the whole human race into spiritual death, since God had promised that in the day Adam would eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil he would die. And in addition, all therefore who descended from Adam, that is the whole human race, now bear his likeness and image and must die a physical death as well.

This sin made an atonement for man's sin necessary if God was to restore spiritual life to the man, and destroy physical death as well. Man must be restored to the innocent relationship he had with God before he sinned.

Man's sin was not unforeseen by God. The God who created a hundred billion galaxies knew this would happen and had a plan of salvation already in mind. This is why God speaks of a "seed" when speaking to the serpent as we read again in **Genesis 3 (KJV):14** And the Lord God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: 15 And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

The words "thy seed" relate to the children of Satan, or those who would remain in a state of spiritual death. That is, they would have no relationship with God. The words "her seed" relate to one who would come and bruise the head of the serpent, or Satan. This hints of a redemption for man. Satan's power over man would be crushed by a certain "seed" whose heel would also be bruised in the process. The entire Old Testament is the progressive unfolding of how man's redemption would be accomplished. We shall see how this is so shortly.

Now there were more consequences to man's disobedience as we continue to read in **Genesis 3 (KJV):16** Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. 17 And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; 18 Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; 19 In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.

The woman would now have pain in childbirth, and her husband would "rule" over her. The man would now experience hard labor and sorrow. Physical death was a secondary result of man's sin. He would return to

the dust from which his physical body was made.

Now another consequence of man's sin was his feeling of shame. We read again in **Genesis 3 (KJV):9** And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? 10 And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself. 11 And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?

Man had never felt shame before in the Garden of Eden. It was only after he had sinned that he began to feel shame. As we continue to read in Genesis, chapter 3, we see that God clothed man to cover his nakedness in **Genesis 3 (KJV):20** And Adam called his wife's name Eve; because she was the mother of all living. 21 Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them. 22 And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever: 23 Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. 24 So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.

The skins of the animals only covered over man's shame. They did not remove it. Also, the death of the animals, whose skins the Lord God used to cover the man and the woman, is implied here. We see again the hint of an atonement here. God would provide a way for man, but the way would be more difficult, and the full atonement would be at some future time and it had something to do with the seed who was to come.

Now, with this introduction, what evidence is there for a signature of God in the Bible?

### **Old Testament Predictions Concerning Christ**

Dr. Albert Grimes published his study, **Old Testament Predictions Concerning Christ**, in the Christian Training Center newsletter, **Crusader**, from April, 1977 to June, 1977.

In the April, 1977 segment, he begins by stating that, "The Bible came into existence as God revealed Himself to human beings in such a manner, that they, the men whom God had chosen, recorded accurately, and free from all human error, whatever God divinely revealed to them. This is the statement of the scriptures as in **2 Timothy 3 (KJV):16** All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness."

Dr. Grimes continues as he says that, "The term in **2 Timothy 3(KJV):16** "All scripture", relates to the thirty nine Books of the Old Testament and the twenty seven books of the New Testament. So we have a divine library of sixty-six books which are all, because of the different principles of truth revealed through them, one book. The Old Testament came into existence from 1400 B.C., the time of Moses, to 400 B.C., the time of Malachi. The New Testament was produced during the last two thirds of the first Century, from about A.D. 33 to A.D. 100. Thus the entire Bible was produced over a period of about one thousand and five hundred years, from 1400 B.C. to A.D. 100. The main theme is Christ, the Redeemer, and its one purpose is the record of human redemption."

The word "Christ" is the English transliteration of the Greek word Χριστός, (pronounced Christos). This word in the Greek is a translation of the Hebrew word מָשִׁיחַ (pronounced mashiyach). This word means "anointed one". The English transliteration of the Hebrew is messiah. The messiah, as we shall see, is the "seed" who would accomplish the redemption of mankind, and who would restore man's innocence by atoning for man's sin.

Dr. Grimes also explains that, "A prediction is a foretelling concerning a person, place, or thing. It is a revelation, and the truth is contained in the words concerning the prediction, being uttered, or written."

He also states that, "Christ is the central theme of the Bible," and that "the New Testament is enfolded in the Old Testament. Or as Augustine states, "The New is in the Old contained. The Old is by the New explained.'""

Dr. Grimes then adds, "In the principle of connecting the Old Testament with the New Testament we will discover that the prediction is first made in the Old Testament, then its fulfillment brought about in the New Testament."

So we will see that in the mind of God, the redemption of man was an accomplished fact before He created the heavens and the earth.

Now as we read the Old Testament, we will see that there were two comings, or appearances prophesied of this promised “seed”. The first coming, or advent, for advent means “coming”, or “appearance”, is what we will look at next.

## **The First Advent of Christ**

### **The Seed of the Woman**

Now as we look into the Bible, we find that the very first statement regarding the “seed” is found in **Genesis 3 (KJV):14** And the Lord God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: 15 And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

God here is talking to Satan, for the serpent was under his control. Notice that the enmity spoken of was first to be directed against the woman, and Satan has degraded women wherever possible.

Then we notice that there is enmity “between thy seed”, that is the children who are of Satan and who have no relationship with God, and “her seed”, referring to the one “seed” who would come and redeem mankind, and also all those who are God’s seed because of Him. That is, they are His descendants because He has redeemed them.

Then notice the words, “it shall bruise thy head”. The woman’s offspring, that is the “seed”, would bruise the head of the serpent, that is, Satan, and Satan would bruise His heel, speaking of the death of Christ on the cross. Though Satan was the one who motivated those who put Christ to death on the cross, this actually brought about his own defeat as Christ would die for man’s sin, and rise again from the dead in order to fulfill God’s plan of the redemption of mankind.

Dr. Grimes states that, “The fulfillment of this promise is brought out in **Galatians 4 (KJV):4** But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law.

Now God wanted to be certain that man would know that He was the one who would bring to pass man’s redemption. So all through the Old Testament He has made predictions that were clues to the identity of His Messiah, the Christ.

### **He Was to Be the Promised Offspring of Abraham**

Dr. Grimes continues his study in the May, 1977 newsletter of the Crusader. He states there that the Christ was to be the promised seed, or offspring, of Abraham. This was foretold in **Genesis 12 (KJV):1** Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: 2 And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: 3 And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

The statement, “And in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed”, relates first to Christ, for Christ was to come from the seed of Abraham as the redeemer. That is, He would be a descendant of Abraham. The families of the earth would be blessed because the redeemer would save them if they had faith in Him.

Dr. Grimes then states, “This statement, “And in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed”, this promise is fulfilled in Abraham’s seed, Christ, and in all the spiritual seed of Abraham who, like Abraham was, they also would be justified by faith in Abraham’s seed, who was Christ as is stated in **Romans 4 (KJV):16** Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace, to the end, the promise might be sure to all the seed, not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all.

Peter notes the fulfillment of this promise in **Acts 3 (KJV):25** Ye are the sons of the prophets, and of the covenant, which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed, shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed.

Then Luke in Acts notes that this seed is Jesus Christ in **Acts 3 (KJV):26** Unto you first God, having raised up his Son, Jesus, sent him to bless you in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.

This is how “all families of the earth” will be blessed. They would be freed from sin.

### **The Promise to Abraham**

Actually, the promise to Abraham, that “in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed”, made by God in Genesis 12:3, is also restated in **Genesis 22 (KJV):18** And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.

In Genesis, chapter 22, it came to pass in Abraham’s lifetime that God tested him in a wonderful way as we read in **Genesis 22 (KJV):1** And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am. **2** And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of. **3** And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him.

Some today have related this story to the pagan practices of sacrificing their sons and daughters to their gods. However, God never intended that Abraham would actually sacrifice his son to Him. In fact, that was the reason why God had Israel push out the Canaanites out from the land of Canaan, because they sacrificed their sons and daughters to their gods. But God told Abraham to do this in order to show him, and us, what must take place in order for man to be reunited with God in perfect fellowship. God wanted us to know the price He Himself would have to pay in order for that to happen.

In order to understand God’s plan, let us continue to read in **Genesis 22 (KJV):4** Then on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off. **5** And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you. **6** And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife; and they went both of them together. **7** And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering? **8** And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together.

We see Abraham’s faith in the trustworthiness of God in verse 8, where Abraham responds to his son’s obvious discernment, as he says, “My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering”.

We continue then in **Genesis 22 (KJV):9** And they came to the place which God had told him of; and Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood. **10** And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son.

What a place to stop in the narrative! It is here that we see the cost that God would have to pay. We feel what Abraham must have felt when he had to offer up his own son for a burnt offering. It stirs anguish in me even to think of it.

We continue again in **Genesis 22 (KJV):11** And the angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here am I. **12** And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me. **13** And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son. **14** And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovahjireh: as it is said to this day, In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen.

Now in verse 14 above, The word “Jehovahjireh” in the Hebrew literally means “the Jehovah sees”. The Lord saw Abraham’s need and provided for it. Abraham needed to sacrifice something, and the Lord provided a



ram as a substitute for his son. This was an answer to Abraham's prayer in **Genesis 22 (KJV):8** And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together.

This ram was a type of Jesus as we read in **John 1 (KJV):29** The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

This is why the apostle John says that God "so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son", as we read in **John 3 (KJV):16** For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

This was the price that God would have to pay to redeem mankind, but He would not allow us to pay as we see in the testing of Abraham.

That this was God's set purpose all along is revealed in **Revelation 13 (KJV):8** And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

### **He Was to Be the Promised Seed of Isaac**

Now we can trace the genealogy of the seed as we look in **Genesis 17 (KJV):19** And God said Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed, and thou shalt call his name Isaac, and I will establish my covenant with him, for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him.

That Christ was to come through Isaac and the "seed" after him was fulfilled in the statement made in **Matthew 1 (KJV):2** Abraham begat Isaac, and Isaac begat Jacob and Jacob begat Judah, and his brethren.

### **He Was to Be the Promised Seed of Jacob**

Now we read in **Numbers 24 (KJV):17** I shall see him, but not now. I shall behold him but not near. There shall come a star out of Jacob, and a scepter shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth... **19** Out of Jacob shall come he that shall have dominion, and shall destroy him that remaineth of the city.

So the seed of the woman of Genesis 3:15 was to descend from Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. This scripture is fulfilled in regards to Jacob in Luke 3:34. The reference here begins in **Luke 3 (KJV):23** And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph, which was the son of Heli.

Then verse 34, **Luke 3 (KJV):34** Which was the son of Jacob, which was the son of Isaac, which was the son of Abraham, which was the son of Thara, which was the son of Nachor,

In the tracing of the seed of the woman, we now come to one of the twelve sons of Jacob, from which this seed, Christ was to come.

### **He Was to Come from the Tribe of Judah**

Now we read in **Genesis 49 (KJV):10** the scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver, from between his feet, until Shiloh come and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.

The word "Shiloh" refers to the Messiah's reign, and the prophecy of **Ezekiel 21 (KJV):27** I will overturn, overturn, overturn it, and it shall be no more, until he comes whose right it is, and I will give it him".

The Lord Jesus Christ is the only one, "whose right it is". When He finishes overturning men's affairs and thrones, He will take His own throne, and rule over the world from Jerusalem, and he will come from the tribe of Judah.

There will never be any more kings who rule in Israel until Christ comes in the Revelation as the King of Kings, **Revelation 19 (KJV):16** And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, King Of Kings, And Lord Of Lords.

This was fulfilled in **Luke 3 (KJV):33** Which was the son of Aminadab, which was the son of Aram, which was the son of Esrom, which was the son of Phares, which was the son of Juda, **34** Which was the son of

Jacob, which was the son of Isaac, which was the son of Abraham, which was the son of Thara, which was the son of Nachor,

From the son of Judah, came the tribe of Judah, from whom Christ came. Now as Christ was to rule as king, he was to be the heir to the throne of David, he was to be the Son of David.

### **He Was to Be Heir of the Throne of David**

In Isaiah we read, **Isaiah 9 (KJV):7** Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever. The zeal of the Lord of Hosts will perform this.

This is fulfilled in **Matthew 1 (KJV):1** The Book of the generations of Jesus Christ the son of David, the son of Abraham.

### **The Place of His Birth**

We must remember that we are dealing with predictions that were made long before they came to pass. David lived about one thousand years before Christ. The prophet Micah lived over seven hundred years before Christ, and prophesied in **Micah 5 (KJV):2** But thou Bethlehem Ephrathah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee, shall come forth unto me, that is to be ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been of old, from everlasting.

Christ comes forth from Bethlehem, in time, and in the flesh, but his activities have been from eternity. The eternal pre-existence of the Messiah is here strongly put forth.

This was fulfilled in **Matthew 2 (KJV):1** Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men, from the east to Jerusalem.

### **He Was to Be Born of a Virgin**

**The prophet Isaiah also lived over seven hundred years before Christ, and he prophesied** as we read in **Isaiah 7 (KJV):14** Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign. Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

This prediction of the virgin birth of the Lord Jesus Christ, is not only addressed to the faithless King Ahaz, the king of Israel at this time, but to the whole house of Israel.

The objection that such a far off event as the birth of Christ could not be a sign to Ahaz is therefore not correct. It was a continuing prediction addressed to the family of David.

This was fulfilled in **Matthew 1 (KJV):18** Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. 19 Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily. 20 But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. 21 And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins. 22 Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, 23 Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.

### **The Massacre of the Children after His Birth**

The prophet Jeremiah lived over six hundred years before Christ. He prophesied of a massacre of children, relating to when Herod tried to kill Jesus. This was foretold in **Jeremiah 31 (KJV):15** Thus saith the

Lord, A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping; Rachel weeping for her children, refused to be comforted for her children, because they were not.

This was fulfilled in **Matthew 2 (KJV):**16 Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the wise men. 17 Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying, 18 In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not.

### **The Flight of Jesus' Parents into Egypt**

In order to save Jesus alive, his parents left the place of his birth. The prophet Hosea was born over 750 years before Christ, and prophesied of this in **Hosea 11 (KJV):**1 When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt.

This is a statement not only to the exodus of Israel from Egypt, but also to the fact that all of God's dealings with Israel were based upon the love that he would show in calling His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, back from the safety of Egypt, in order that He might suffer and die to accomplish the great work of redemption.

This was fulfilled in **Matthew 2 (KJV):**14 When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt: 15 And was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son. 16 Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the wise men.

### **The Ministry of the Lord**

#### **To Bring Light to Those in Darkness**

Isaiah prophesied again in **Isaiah 9 (KJV):**1 Nevertheless the dimness shall not be such as was in her vexation, when at the first he lightly afflicted the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, and afterward did more grievously afflict her by the was of the sea, beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the Gentiles. 2 The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.

This relates to the regions in which the Lord would minister. Isaiah the Prophet points out that, in the very region where Assyrian armies brought darkness and death, they would be the first to rejoice in the light brought by the preaching of the Lord. This was fulfilled in **Matthew 4 (KJV):**13 And leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea coast, in the borders of Zebulun and Nephthalim: 14 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, 15 The land of Zebulun, and the land of Nephthalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles; 16 The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up.

#### **To Heal the Sick and the Brokenhearted**

The ministry that Jesus was anointed to perform was also predicted by the same prophet Isaiah in **Isaiah 61 (KJV):**1 The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the meek: he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives; and the opening of the prison to those who are bound. 2 To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord; and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all that mourn".

This was fulfilled in **Luke 4 (KJV):16** And 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 for to read. 17 And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, 18 The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, 19 To preach the acceptable year of the Lord. 20 And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him. 21 And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.

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

### **To Be a Prophet Like Moses**

Moses himself was a prophet, and he lived over fifteen hundred years before Christ. Moses predicted that God would raise up a prophet like unto himself, as in **Deuteronomy 18 (KJV):15** The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee, a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me, unto him ye shall hearken.

This was fulfilled in **John 6 (KJV):14** Then those men, when they had seen the miracle, that Jesus did said, This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world.

Then also Peter, speaking of Jesus, in **Acts 3 (KJV):22** For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you, of your brethren, like unto me, him shall ye hear, in all things whatever he shall say unto you.

### **To Fulfill the Law and the Prophets**

Jesus' own statement on what He was to do is stated in **Matthew 5 (KJV):17** Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. 18 For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.

Then in **Matthew 3 (KJV):14** But John forbade him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? 15 And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him.

Again, Jesus' own statement about what He was doing in **Matthew 26 (KJV):52** Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword. 53 Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? 54 But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be? 55 In that same hour said Jesus to the multitudes, Are ye come out as against a thief with swords and staves for to take me? I sat daily with you teaching in the temple, and ye laid no hold on me. 56 But all this was done, that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. Then all the disciples forsook him, and fled.

### **To Bring Justice to the Nations**

Isaiah prophesies in **Isaiah 42 (KJV):1** Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. 2 He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. 3 A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth. 4 He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law.

The word "judgment" in context here means justice, and is so translated in the **New American Standard** version of the Bible as we read in **Isaiah 42 (NASB):1** "Behold, My Servant, whom I uphold; My

chosen one *in whom* My soul delights. I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the nations. 2 “He will not cry out or raise *His voice*, Nor make His voice heard in the street. 3 “A bruised reed He will not break And a dimly burning wick He will not extinguish; He will faithfully bring forth justice. 4 “He will not be disheartened or crushed Until He has established justice in the earth; And the coastlands will wait expectantly for His law.”

This was fulfilled in **Matthew 12 (KJV)**:15 But when Jesus knew it, he withdrew himself from thence: and great multitudes followed him, and he healed them all; 16 And charged them that they should not make him known: 17 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, 18 Behold my servant, whom I have chosen; my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased: I will put my spirit upon him, and he shall shew judgment to the Gentiles. 19 He shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets. 20 A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory. 21 And in his name shall the Gentiles trust.

### **To Speak in Parables**

Isaiah again prophesies as we read in **Isaiah 6 (KJV)**:8 Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me. 9 And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. 10 Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.

This was fulfilled as Jesus explained in **Matthew 13 (KJV)**:13 Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. 14 And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: 15 For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.

Then Asaph prophesies in **Psalms 78 (KJV)**:1 Give ear, O my people, to my law: incline your ears to the words of my mouth. 2 I will open my mouth in a parable: I will utter dark sayings of old: 3 Which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us. 4 We will not hide them from their children, shewing to the generation to come the praises of the Lord, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done.

This was fulfilled as we read in **Matthew 13 (KJV)**:34 All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables; and without a parable spake he not unto them: 35 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world.

It is not that the parables the Lord spoke were not known by their fathers, but that the people Jesus was speaking to were not submitting themselves to God's word. They were rather rejecting it.

We must surrender our hearts and be willing to hear Him speak to us as Jesus says in **John 7 (KJV)**:17 If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.

If we are willing, we can know that what He is saying is true.

### **He Was to Be a Priest after the Order of Melchizedek**

In Genesis 14:18, a brief history is given of Melchizedek as we read in **Genesis 14 (KJV)**:18 And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God.

He was king of Salem, and the priest of the Most High God, who had no recorded parents, and no recorded date of birth or death, a type therefore of the Messiah in His eternal priesthood, as stated in **Psalms 110 (KJV)**:4 The Lord hath sworn and will not repent. Thou art a priest, forever after the order of Melchizedek.

This was fulfilled in **Hebrews 6 (KJV)**:20 Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.

## He Was Rejected By Men and His Own People

Isaiah prophesies of this in **Isaiah 53 (KJV):3** He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

This was fulfilled in **John 1 (KJV):11** He came unto his own, and his own received him not.

Then Jesus speaks in **John 5 (KJV):43** I am come in my Father's name, and ye received me not; if another shall come in his own name, him ye shall receive".

Then in **Luke 4 (KJV):29** And rose up, and thrust him out of the city and led him unto the brow of the hill on which their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong.

Then Jesus' own statement in **Luke 17 (KJV):25** But first must he suffer many things, and be rejected by this generation.

Then finally in **Luke 23 (KJV):18** And they cried out all at once, saying, Away with this man, and release unto us Barabbas.

They hated Jesus without cause as we read in **John 15 (KJV):24** If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father. 25 But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause.

King David, who was a prophet himself, wrote as in **Psalms 35 (KJV):19** Let not them that are mine enemies wrongfully rejoice over me: neither let them wink with the eye that hate me without a cause.

David also wrote as in **Psalms 69 (KJV):1** Save me, O God; for the waters are come in unto my soul. 2 I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing: I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me. 3 I am weary of my crying: my throat is dried: mine eyes fail while I wait for my God. 4 They that hate me without a cause are more than the hairs of mine head: they that would destroy me, being mine enemies wrongfully, are mighty: then I restored that which I took not away.

## The Stone the Builders Rejected

This is spoken of **Psalms 118 (KJV):22** The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner. 23 This is the Lord's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes.

This is also referred to in **Isaiah 8 (KJV):13** Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread. 14 And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

This was fulfilled by Jesus Christ as He Himself relates in a parable to the chief priests and Pharisees as we read in **Matthew 21 (KJV):33** Hear another parable: There was a certain householder, which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a winepress in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country: 34 And when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it. 35 And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. 36 Again, he sent other servants more than the first: and they did unto them likewise. 37 But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son. 38 But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance. 39 And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him. 40 When the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen? 41 They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons. 42 Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? 43 Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. 44 And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder. 45 And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them. 46 But when they sought to lay hands on him, they feared the multitude, because they took him for a prophet.

The chief priests and Pharisees were like the husbandmen in the parable. They were to take care of the vineyard in such a way that it bore fruit. They proved themselves to be the very builders spoken of in the parable for they eventually killed the Son of God and seized His inheritance.

The apostle Peter also speaks of this in **1 Peter 2 (KJV):4** To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, 5 Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. 6 Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. 7 Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, 8 And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.

### **He Offered himself as Their King and Was Rejected**

The prophet Zechariah, who lived over 500 years before Christ, prophesies in **Zechariah 9 (KJV):9** Rejoice greatly O daughter of Zion; shout O daughter of Jerusalem; behold thy king cometh unto thee; he is just and having salvation; lowly and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of an ass.

Then the prophet Isaiah also prophesies in **Isaiah 62 (KJV):11** Behold, the Lord hath proclaimed unto the end of the earth. Say ye to the daughters of Zion, Behold thy salvation cometh; behold his reward is with him, and his work before him”.

This was fulfilled in **John 12 (KJV):12** On the next day much people that were come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, 13 Took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried, Hosanna. Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord. 14 And Jesus when he had found a young ass, sat upon it as it is written...

Matthew also mentions the fulfillment of this in **Matthew 21 (KJV):1** And when they drew nigh unto Jerusalem, and were come to Bethphage, unto the mount of Olives, then sent Jesus two disciples, 2 Saying unto them, Go into the village over against you, and straightway ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her: loose them, and bring them unto me. 3 And if any man say ought unto you, ye shall say, The Lord hath need of them; and straightway he will send them. 4 All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, 5 Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass. 6 And the disciples went, and did as Jesus commanded them, 7 And brought the ass, and the colt, and put on them their clothes, and they set him thereon. 8 And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way; others cut down branches from the trees, and strawed them in the way. 9 And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest. 10 And when he was come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, Who is this? 11 And the multitude said, This is Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee.

### **He Was to Be Betrayed By a Friend**

In Psalm 41, a psalm of David, we read, as in **Psalms 41 (KJV):9** Yea, mine own familiar friend in whom I trusted, who did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me.

This was fulfilled in **Mark 14 (KJV):10** And Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve went unto the chief priests, to betray him unto them.

Jesus Himself spoke of his betrayal in **John 13 (KJV):17** If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them. 18 I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen: but that the scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me. 19 Now I tell you before it come, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am he.

### **He Was Sold for Thirty Pieces of Silver**

Zechariah prophesies in **Zechariah 11 (KJV):12** And I said unto them, If ye think good, give me my price; and if not, forbear. So they weighted for my price thirty pieces of silver. 13 And the Lord said unto me, cast it unto the potter a lordly price that I was priced at of them. And I took the thirty pieces of silver and cast them to the potter in the house of the Lord”.

Matthew notes the fulfillment of this in **Matthew 26 (KJV):15** And said unto them, What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver. And from that time he sought opportunity to betray him.

Matthew also adds as we continue in **Matthew 27 (KJV):5** And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself. 6 And the chief priests took the silver pieces, and said, It is not lawful for to put them into the treasury, because it is the price of blood. 7 And they took counsel, and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in. 8 Wherefore that field was called, The field of blood, unto this day. 9 Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value; 10 And gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord appointed me.

Matthew is referring to **Jeremiah 32 (KJV):6** And Jeremiah said, The word of the Lord came unto me, saying, 7 Behold, Hanameel the son of Shallum thine uncle shall come unto thee saying, Buy thee my field that is in Anathoth: for the right of redemption is thine to buy it. 8 So Hanameel mine uncle's son came to me in the court of the prison according to the word of the Lord, and said unto me, Buy my field, I pray thee, that is in Anathoth, which is in the country of Benjamin: for the right of inheritance is thine, and the redemption is thine; buy it for thyself. Then I knew that this was the word of the Lord. 9 And I bought the field of Hanameel my uncle's son, that was in Anathoth, and weighed him the money, even seventeen shekels of silver.

The 17 shekels of silver in Jeremiah 32:9 relate to the purchase of the field. The thirty pieces of silver in Zechariah 11:12-13 above relate to the price paid for Jesus.

### **Jesus Predicted His Own Death**

The apostle John records this in **John 18 (KJV):8** Jesus answered, I have told you that I am he: if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way: 9 That the saying might be fulfilled, which he spake, Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none.

Luke also in **Luke 18 (KJV):31** Then he took unto him the twelve, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished. 32 For he shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on:

And Matthew in **Matthew 26 (KJV):24** The Son of man goeth as it is written of him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born.

Again we read in **John 18 (KJV):31** Then said Pilate unto them, Take ye him, and judge him according to your law. The Jews therefore said unto him, It is not lawful for us to put any man to death: 32 That the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled, which he spake, signifying what death he should die.

### **He Was Numbered with Transgressors**

Isaiah prophesied again as we read in **Isaiah 53 (KJV):12** Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

This was fulfilled in **Luke 22 (KJV):36** Then said he unto them, But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip: and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one. 37 For I say unto you, that this that is written must yet be accomplished in me, And he was reckoned among the transgressors: for the things concerning me have an end.



## They Parted Lots For His Garment

King David, also a prophet, prophesied of Christ in Psalm 22. David first describes His suffering in **Psalm 22 (KJV)**: 1 My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring? 2 O my God, I cry in the day time, but thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent. 3 But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel. 4 Our fathers trusted in thee: they trusted, and thou didst deliver them. 5 They cried unto thee, and were delivered: they trusted in thee, and were not confounded. 6 But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people. 7 All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, 8 He trusted on the Lord that he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him. 9 But thou art he that took me out of the womb: thou didst make me hope when I was upon my mother's breasts. 10 I was cast upon thee from the womb: thou art my God from my mother's belly. 11 Be not far from me; for trouble is near; for there is none to help. 12 Many bulls have compassed me: strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round. 13 They gaped upon me with their mouths, as a ravening and a roaring lion. 14 I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels. 15 My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death. 16 For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet. 17 I may tell all my bones: they look and stare upon me.

David then prophesied that His garments would be parted among them and that lots would be cast for His vesture in **Psalm 22 (KJV)**: 18 They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture. 19 But be not thou far from me, O Lord: O my strength, haste thee to help me. 20 Deliver my soul from the sword; my darling from the power of the dog. 21 Save me from the lion's mouth: for thou hast heard me from the horns of the unicorns. 22 I will declare thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee. 23 Ye that fear the Lord, praise him; all ye the seed of Jacob, glorify him; and fear him, all ye the seed of Israel. 24 For he hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; neither hath he hid his face from him; but when he cried unto him, he heard. 25 My praise shall be of thee in the great congregation: I will pay my vows before them that fear him. 26 The meek shall eat and be satisfied: they shall praise the Lord that seek him: your heart shall live for ever. 27 All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee. 28 For the kingdom is the Lord's: and he is the governor among the nations. 29 All they that be fat upon earth shall eat and worship: all they that go down to the dust shall bow before him: and none can keep alive his own soul. 30 A seed shall serve him; it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation. 31 They shall come, and shall declare his righteousness unto a people that shall be born, that he hath done this.

John records the fulfillment of this in **John 19 (KJV)**: 23 Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also his coat: now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout. 24 They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that the scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots. These things therefore the soldiers did.

## His Bones Were Not to Be Broken

David again prophesies in **Psalm 34 (KJV)**: 18 The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit. 19 Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the Lord delivereth him out of them all. 20 He keepeth all his bones: not one of them is broken.

And John again records the fulfillment of this prophecy in **John 19 (KJV)**: 35 And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe. 36 For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken. 37 And again another scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced.

This was also in fulfillment of the Passover which was a feast instituted by Moses when the Israelites

were delivered from the last plague in Egypt because they sacrificed a lamb and put the blood on their doorposts as we read in **Exodus 12 (KJV)**:43 And the Lord said unto Moses and Aaron, This is the ordinance of the passover: There shall no stranger eat thereof: 44 But every man's servant that is bought for money, when thou hast circumcised him, then shall he eat thereof. 45 A foreigner and an hired servant shall not eat thereof. 46 In one house shall it be eaten; thou shalt not carry forth ought of the flesh abroad out of the house; neither shall ye break a bone thereof. 47 All the congregation of Israel shall keep it. 48 And when a stranger shall sojourn with thee, and will keep the passover to the Lord, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it; and he shall be as one that is born in the land: for no uncircumcised person shall eat thereof. 49 One law shall be to him that is homeborn, and unto the stranger that sojourneth among you. 50 Thus did all the children of Israel; as the Lord commanded Moses and Aaron, so did they. 51 And it came to pass the selfsame day, that the Lord did bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt by their armies.

Then in **Numbers 9 (KJV)**:9 And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, 10 Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, If any man of you or of your posterity shall be unclean by reason of a dead body, or be in a journey afar off, yet he shall keep the passover unto the Lord. 11 The fourteenth day of the second month at even they shall keep it, and eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. 12 They shall leave none of it unto the morning, nor break any bone of it: according to all the ordinances of the passover they shall keep it.

The lamb that was sacrificed was a substitute for the Israelites. The lamb was a type of Christ who would be the ultimate substitute for the sins of all mankind as Paul reveals in **1 Corinthians 5 (KJV)**:7 Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us:

The Passover was part of the law of Moses. That the Passover was only a shadow of Christ is explained in **Hebrews 10 (KJV)**:1 For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. 2 For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. 3 But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. 4 For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. 5 Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: 6 In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. 7 Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God. 8 Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law; 9 Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. 10 By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

### **Israel Will Look on Him Whom They Pierced**

Again, Zechariah prophesies in **Zechariah 12 (KJV)**:1 The burden of the word of the Lord for Israel, saith the Lord, which stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth, and formeth the spirit of man within him. 2 Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling unto all the people round about, when they shall be in the siege both against Judah and against Jerusalem. 3 And in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people: all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it. 4 In that day, saith the Lord, I will smite every horse with astonishment, and his rider with madness: and I will open mine eyes upon the house of Judah, and will smite every horse of the people with blindness. 5 And the governors of Judah shall say in their heart, The inhabitants of Jerusalem shall be my strength in the Lord of hosts their God. 6 In that day will I make the governors of Judah like an hearth of fire among the wood, and like a torch of fire in a sheaf; and they shall devour all the people round about, on the right hand and on the left: and Jerusalem shall be inhabited again in her own place, even in Jerusalem. 7 The Lord also shall save the tents of Judah first, that the glory of the house of David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem do not magnify themselves against Judah. 8 In that day shall the Lord defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David; and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the Lord before them. 9 And it shall come to pass in that day,

that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. 10 And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn. 11 In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon. 12 And the land shall mourn, every family apart; the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart; 13 The family of the house of Levi apart, and their wives apart; the family of Shimei apart, and their wives apart; 14 All the families that remain, every family apart, and their wives apart.

Though this prophecy primarily speaks of a yet future time of Israel's repentance and deliverance, verse 10 above speaks of one who would be "pierced", and whom Israel would look upon and grieve "as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn". Zechariah lived about 500 years before Christ who must first be pierced before this prophecy can be fulfilled. The fulfillment of His piercing is recorded in **John 19 (NASB):34** But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out.

Then also in **John 20 (NASB):27** Then He said to Thomas, "Reach here with your finger, and see My hands; and reach here your hand and put it into My side; and do not be unbelieving, but believing."

### **Jesus Fulfilled the Words of Isaiah 53**

The prophet Isaiah prophesied, speaking of Christ, in **Isaiah 53 (KJV):1** Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? 2 For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. 3 He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. 4 Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. 5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. 6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. 7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. 8 He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken. 9 And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth. 10 Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. 11 He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. 12 Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

The apostle John refers to this in **John 12 (KJV):37** But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him: 38 That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?

Now Isaiah had also prophesied in **Isaiah 6 (KJV):10** Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.

And the apostle John also refers to this in **John 12 (KJV):39** Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, 40 He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them. 41 These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him.

## All of God's Words Will be Fulfilled

In Matthew Jesus assures us that all of God's words will be fulfilled in **Matthew 5 (KJV):17** Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. 18 For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.

Jesus says the same in **Luke 16 (KJV):16** The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it. 17 And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail.

## The Risk of Christ

How do we know whether something is true? Jesus seems to say that we know it when we hear it as we read in **John 18 (KJV):37** Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice. 38 Pilate saith unto him, What is truth? And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, I find in him no fault at all.

Pilate recognized the truth about Jesus, that is, that there was no fault in him at all. Yet he did not hold to or uphold that truth. To deliver an innocent man up to be crucified is to be guilty of putting an innocent man to death. Yet, this is what Pilate did. Sometime after this, Pilate handed Jesus over to be crucified as we read in **John 19 (KJV):14** And it was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King! 15 But they cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Caesar. 16 Then delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified. And they took Jesus, and led him away. 17 And he bearing his cross went forth into a place called the place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha: 18 Where they crucified him, and two other with him, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst.

It is interesting that the man who handed Jesus over to be crucified did not know what truth is, as he asked in John 18:38, "...What is truth?" Pilate recognized the truth, but he did not hold to it. That is, he was not of the truth. All those who hold to the truth, that is, they are of the truth, will hear Jesus' voice, as Jesus said in John 18:37, "...Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice."

But how can we hold to the truth if we do not know what truth is? Does truth have a signature? Are there markers that indicate that this is the truth? Jesus said that He is the truth as we read in **John 14 (KJV):6** Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

But how do we know that what he is saying is the truth? Another word for truth might be the word, real. How do we know that Jesus is real?

Jesus said that if we are willing, we can know the truth as we read in **John 7 (KJV):17** If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.

I want to challenge you to go on a quest for truth with those who say they knew Jesus. Begin with the writings of his disciples, that is, the Gospels, the book of Acts, and the epistles. Just say in your mind, "God, if you are there, I am willing. Show me." This is the risk of Christ.

## My Testimony

There was a time in my life when the truth became important to me. In college, as an adult living on my own, and supporting myself, I was continually challenged by my surroundings. I lived in a fraternity house, and I now had to make choices in my life, how I would live and "do life". I had been raised by my mother to believe in God. She would pray the "Our Father" every night at the foot of my bed. Now, I began to question if God were real or not. I still went to Mass every Sunday but it seemed to be just a ritual. God seemed so distant. But if He was real, then I would have to make my choices according to what He wanted me to do. If not, then it seemed to me that I could do what I wanted without restraint.

I decided to try to find out the truth about God. I was raised to believe in God as a young boy, my mother, being Roman Catholic, having sent me to Catholic school. I now told God that I had to hear from Him in a way that I could know it was Him. I told Him I was willing to believe, but I had to hear from Him.

It was not long after this that I remembered there was a man in the supermarket where I worked, a “Jesus Freak” I thought, who was always telling people about Jesus. I decided in my quest for truth that I would rule him out right away. He frequently invited people at work, or anyone who came through his line as a cashier, to go get coffee after work. So I asked him if we could go get coffee after work one night. He said yes, and after work we were sipping our coffee at the coffee shop in the same block as the Lucky supermarket where we worked in Santa Monica. I waited about 30 minutes for him to give me his spiel, but it wasn’t happening. Growing impatient, I finally asked him, “Aren’t you going to give me your spiel?”, thinking he would try to convert me. He said to me, “I don’t have a spiel. You talk...” I was floored. I didn’t know what to say. I decided to test him. I started talking about my life growing up in an alcoholic home, with parents who constantly fought, and finally divorced. He seemed genuinely interested. I never did hear his spiel that night. But he invited me to his church, on Sunday and I decided I needed more info before I could rule him out so I went.

We met at his house, and he drove us to church with his wife and young child. I was not that impressed with his church, which was held in a recreation center where they had set up chairs in circles. But after church, we went back to his house, and he gave me a parallel New Testament. He said to read it, implying that it would answer a lot of my questions. I took it home, and began to read the Gospel of Matthew.

As I read, I remember asking myself, “What is the message? What is Jesus trying to tell me?” I had read Genesis and part of Exodus in the third grade in Catholic school. I remembered the feeling that I had when I put the book back in my desk after we finished reading in class. It was not like my math book. There was something different about the Bible. I remembered feeling something, something good.

I now read through Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, the Gospels, but I still wasn’t sure what the message was. Jesus was a good guy, healing people and telling us to love each other. It would be great if it were true, I thought to myself. But I wasn’t sure. However, after I would read for a while, there was that feeling again that I had felt in the third grade. There was something about the Bible. I felt peace. And every time I read, the peace seemed to grow inside me.

After a while, I began to feel so much peace, it seemed to me that me and God were having a conversation. I remember having trouble with the epistles though. I would read Romans, but I could not understand a word of what he was saying. I just could not put it together. That seemed so strange to me. I am in college, I thought to myself. I should be able to understand this book. What if I had a class and had to answer questions about it. There was something wrong I thought.

I still felt a peace when I read, but I was frustrated because I was not understanding it. I decided not to give up but to keep reading, and just listen to what I was hearing. I remember stopping at **Romans 10 (KJV):6** But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:) 7 Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) 8 But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; 9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. 11 For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

I remember thinking, “It could not be that simple”. I understood that if I simply believed that God raised Jesus from the dead, and that I confessed Him as Lord with my mouth that I would be saved. That was plain to me. It was simple faith. I did not have to understand everything before I believed in Jesus.

I remember shortly after this revelation that my friend prayed for me after work one night in the parking lot of the supermarket. I felt as if all heaven had just been poured inside of me. I didn’t know what I believed, but I knew it had something to do with Jesus. Jesus was real. That much I knew.

I still had a lot of questions. I kept telling the Lord that I was willing, if He would show me. This seemed to be my *modus operandi*. I would tell the Lord I was willing, and some how, some way, He would answer my question in a way that I knew it was Him. It’s funny, but I was later to understand that this

willingness is what the Lord requires of us. Jesus says so in **John 7 (KJV):**17 If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.

It has been over forty years since that night in the parking lot. I now understand more of what I read in the Bible. But I have learned to be humble, knowing that there are some things only God knows. I am still on a quest for truth. But I know this. Jesus is Lord, and God has raised Him from the dead. This is a risk, but it has had a good return so far. And this is only a taste of what is to come.

**Psalms 34 (KJV):**8 O taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him.