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The Gospel is the Power of God (Romans 1:16)

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**Word of the Cross is to us Salvation
(1 Corinthians 1:18)**

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Messiah the Prince (Daniel 9:25)

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Gospel Message

Adam and Eve

On the sixth day "God created man in His own image" (Ge 1:27) in "spirit and soul and body" (1Th 5:23). "It is I who made the earth and created man upon it" (Isa 45:12). Flesh is corporeal in that "God formed the man from the dust of the ground" (Ge 2:7). But it lacks the dimension of life. For this reason God "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being" (:7). "The first man Adam became a living being" (1Co 15:45). "The first man is from the earth . . . [and] so also are those who are earthy" (:47-48). Therefore you might say that there is an inner as well as outer man. This is reflected in "who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man's spirit within him" (1Co 2:11)? In Hebrew his name means "humanity." In an extended sense the word "flesh" is also humanity. The human race inherits from Adam for, "as in Adam all" (1Co 15:22), applies to everyone. Then "the Lord fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man" (Ge 2:22) and they "were both naked and were not ashamed" (:25). "It was Adam who was first created and then Eve" (1Ti 2:13). "God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good" (Ge 1:31). Therefore it cannot be concluded that man is inherently sinful. However, Eve "took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate" (3:6). "It was not Adam who was deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression" (1Ti 2:14). Some might say that the rendition of Adam and Eve is just a metaphor because evolution proves otherwise. Some believe that Adam and Eve's existence is figurative and that the Bible's explanation of sin is allegorical. But God said,

"Because you have listened to the voice of your wife . . . cursed is the ground because of you" (Ge 3:17).

When God put Adam in the Garden of Eden he "commanded the man" (Ge 2:16) "from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die" (:17). It was not said that "you will drop dead" as if it was poisonous. So to die must mean that death was not part of God's scheme of things, but it would transpire if Adam was disobedient. However, Adam transgressed which is defined as lawlessness and it is against God's instruction because God asked, "Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" (Ge 3:11). But when they ate of the fruit of the tree "the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked so they . . . made coverings for themselves" (3:7). They had "become like one of us knowing good and evil" (:22). Did they know being naked as good or evil? They didn't feel shame before, but it seems they did now. They had to replace the innocence of their previous condition with a covering and God, himself, had to make "garments of skin for Adam and his wife" (:21). In Laodicea they didn't know that they were "wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked" (Rev 3:17). God advises "buy from me . . . white garments that you may clothe yourself, and that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed" (3:18).

Death Reigned

What had Adam done? He was "the one who sinned" (Ro 5:16). What is sin? It is a "transgression" (:15) or "offense" (:15 KJV). It is also a "trespass" (:15 RSV). You've seen signs saying "NO TRESPASSING." "God commanded . . . you shall not eat" (Ge 2:16-17). But Adam violated the command. "Through the one

man's disobedience the many were made sinners" (Ro 5:19). The result was "through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin" (:12). But others "had not sinned in the likeness of the offense of Adam" (:14). Then "death spread to all men" (:12) because "in Adam all die" (1Co 15:22). Sin is the culprit because "the sting of death is sin" (1Co 15:56). "The wages of sin is death" (Ro 6:23). Therefore "sin reigned in death" (5:21) and "death reigned" (:17). "Death works in us" (2Co 4:12). One might respond that everyone has to die naturally anyway. But you should consider "him who had the power of death, that is, the devil" (Heb 2:14).

"By a man came death" (1Co 15:21) and "you will all likewise perish" (Lk 13:3). Death is firstly interpreted as physical death. "Enoch was taken up so that he would not see death" (Heb 11:5). "It is appointed for men to die once" (9:27). Sin is the reason for the problem. You are "dead in your trespasses and sins" (Eph 2:1). Consequently you "shall be condemned" (Mk 16:16) and therefore must be "saved from wrath" (Ro 5:9). Sin contributes to the inevitable. It is "cause and effect" because it's a "law of sin and of death" (8:2). "The outcome of those things is death" (6:21) since there "is a sin leading to death" (1Jn 5:16). It is said we live in the flesh. However, "if you are living according to the flesh, you must die" (Ro 8:13). "The mind set on the flesh is death" (8:6). "With my flesh [I serve] the law of sin" (7:25) "resulting in death" (6:16). "While we were in the flesh, the sinful passions . . . were at work in the members of our body to bear fruit for death: (7:5).

How would you answer a person who asked, "Why would I have to repent if I didn't sin like Adam?" (Ro 5:14). Adam sinned because he broke God's commandment (Ge 2:17). He disobeyed (even rebelled) because he was not deceived (1Ti 2:14).

Perhaps he ate the fruit Eve gave him because he just wanted to keep her happy. Maybe he rationalized that death would be only a temporary disciplinary action. It's possible he considered knowing more and becoming wiser would be worth it. "Through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners" (Ro 5:19). It's as though we, as descendants, have inherited the "original sin." Since "by a man came death" (1Co 5:21), through solidarity with Adam, "death spread to all men, because all sinned" (Ro 5:12). "Like Adam they have transgressed the covenant" (Hosea 6:7). Our guilt is imputed in a legal way as if a contract has been violated and a judgment has taken place because the ground has been cursed (Ge 3:17-18). This is the Adamic Covenant where Adam, as the representative of the human race, causes God to introduce physical death saying, "'You [will] return to the ground, because from it you were taken'" (:19). Others may say that Adam's nature became corrupted by the sin and that we inherit the corruption and sin automatically (Ro 5:19). Calvinists believe that we are incapable of being spiritually saved except for God's grace. So if you repent for these reasons you acknowledge that "through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous" (:19).

Sinful Flesh

Paul was acutely aware of sin. "Those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh" (Ro 8:5). "Those who are in the flesh cannot please God" (:8). He made it clear that it wasn't just his opinion of what sin is. In fact, even though "sin was in the world . . . [it was] not imputed" (5:13) before the law. "Apart from the Law sin is dead" (7:8). "I would not have come to know sin except through the Law" (:7). It

was a "commandment, which was to result in life" (:10) by way of a "ministry . . . in letters engraved on stones" (2Co 3:7). "The Law came in so that the transgression would increase" (Ro 5:20). Therefore "the Law is spiritual" (7:14).

This behavior is explained as man's "flesh with its passions and desires" (Gal 5:24). It could be said that man's human nature is physical, sensuous and earthy. "The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak" (Mt 26:41). Man's flesh is but "a wind that passes and does not return" (Ps 78:39). "All flesh is grass, and all its loveliness is like the flower of the field. The grass withers, the flower fades" (Isa 40:6-7). He continues with "the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these" (Gal 5:19-21). Paul concludes by saying "I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh" (Ro 7:18). "The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; who can understand it?" (Jer 17:9). He states "no longer am I the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me" (:17). Sin reigns "in your mortal body" (6:12) and is a "body of death" (7:24). "The Scripture has shut up everyone under sin" (Gal 3:22) "making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members" (Ro 7:23). The "pleasures of sin" (Heb 11:25) "easily entangles" (12:1) and sin can become "master over you" (Ro 6:14). It has "lusts" (:12) and "coveting of every kind" (7:8). You can be "led into" (2Co 11:29) and "caught in any trespass" (Gal 6:1). Then you can "be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin" (Heb 3:13).

Restoration

God was the only one who could restore the relationship with man. He told the serpent he would "put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed" (Ge 3:15). Her seed (future offspring) was Christ which is why the word is capitalized. There was enmity because "while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son" (Ro 5:10). God said, "He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel" (Ge 3:15). God developed his plan through Abraham and told him "because you have done this thing and have not withheld your son" (22:16) "in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice" (:18). Then "after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise" (Heb 6:15). God told Abram, "Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, where they will be enslaved and oppressed four hundred years" (Ge 15:13). God has everything in control and cites that "when Israel was a youth I loved him, and out of Egypt I called My son" (Hos 11:1). Jesus remained in Egypt "until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: 'Out of Egypt I called My Son'" (Mt 2:15). God led Israel out of Egypt. Even then Hebrews explains that "the gospel was preached to us as well as to them" (Heb 4:2). Unfortunately God explains, "It is a people who go astray in their hearts, and they do not know My ways.' So I swore in My wrath, they shall not enter My rest" (Ps 95:10). "There remains a rest for the people of God" (Heb 4:9). "But the word which they [Israel] heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it" (:2). "He who entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His" (:10).

God's plan was implemented via Israel. Paul reminds "that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world" (Eph 2:12). "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself" (2Co 5:19). His purpose was "through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross" (Col 1:20) which "put to death the enmity" (Eph 2:16). "He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach" (Col 1:22). He reconciled "both [Jew and Gentile] in one body to God through the cross" (Eph 2:16). Paul encourages "on behalf of Christ, to be reconciled to God" (2Co 5:20). "Having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life" (Ro 5:10).

God told Abraham, "I will surely bless you and give you many descendants" (Heb 6:13). This was God's oath so that we would "inherit what has been promised" (:12). It was "an oath through the One" (7:21) who spoke to Jesus. God wanted to make his purpose very clear to the heirs" (:17). Therefore Jesus "became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey Him" (5:9). The author of Hebrews tells them that he is "confident of better things that accompany salvation" (6:9). Jesus accomplished this "when He offered up Himself" (7:27) and "has become the guarantee of a better covenant" (:22). Accordingly "the Lord has sworn [by an oath, saying] . . . 'Thou art a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek'" (Ps 110:4). "The word of the oath, which came after the Law, appoints a Son, made perfect forever" (Heb 7:28). The author of Hebrews was concerned about those "who are ignorant and going astray" (Heb 5:2) and those who were "slow to learn" (:11). He wanted to encourage the recipients of his

letter. He cites that "God wanted to make the unchanging nature of His purpose very clear" (6:17) so that they "may be greatly encouraged" (:18). "He is able to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them" (7:25). The author acknowledges they have "fled to take hold of the hope offered to us" (6:18). There is a "better hope, through which we draw near to God" (:19). "We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure" (:19). Therefore "in order to make your hope sure" (:11) "we want each of you to show this same diligence to the very end" (:11). Also, "imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised" (:12). "If that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion for the second" (Heb 8:7). It would be "'not like the covenant which I made with their fathers . . . which they broke, although I was a husband to them'" (Jer 31:32). "'I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel'" (:31). "'I will put My law within them, and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people'" (:33). There is the "setting aside of a former commandment because of its weakness" (Heb 7:18). It is by way of "another priest" (:11) "according to the power of an indestructible life" (:16). It brings in "a change of law also" (:12). "He has obtained a more excellent ministry, by as much as He is also the mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted on better promises" (8:6). He is a "high priest" (:1) "exalted above the heavens" (7:26) who is a "minister in the sanctuary in the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man" (8:2). "He abides forever [and] holds His priesthood permanently" (7:24). "'Has He said, and will not do it? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?'" (Nu 23:19).

Reconciliation

God's plan was implemented via Israel. Paul reminds "that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world" (Eph 2:12). "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself" (2Co 5:19). His purpose was "through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross" (Col 1:20) which "put to death the enmity" (Eph 2:16). "He as now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach" (Col 1:22). He reconciled "both [Jew and Gentile] in one body to God through the cross" (Eph 2:16). Paul encourages "on behalf of Christ, to be reconciled to God" (2Co 5:20). "Having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life" (Ro 5:10).

Since man couldn't help himself God decided to solve the problem. "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son" (Jn 3:16) as a propitiation. He was "revealed" (1Ti 3:16) and sent "in the likeness of sinful flesh" (Ro 8:3), "has come in the flesh" (1Jn 4:2), and was made "in the likeness of men" (Php 2:7) as a "descendant of David" (Ro 1:3). This was to demonstrate His righteousness" (Ro 3:24-25). John saw the "Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (Jn 1:29). Jesus "will save His people from their sins" (Mt 1:21). Your sins will be "wiped away" (Ac 3:19). How is this accomplished? It is because "Christ died for our sins" (1Co 15:3). He "was delivered over because of our transgressions, and was raised because of our justification" (Ro 4:25). God "made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf" (2Co 5:21) and he was "offered once to bear the sins of many"

(Heb 9:28). "He died to sin once for all" (Ro 6:10) and "condemned sin in the flesh" (8:3). Jesus said "'I DESIRE COMPASSION, AND NOT SACRIFICE', for I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners" (Mt 9:13). Christ gave "His life a ransom for many" (Mt 20:28) and therefore "in Him we have redemption through His blood" (Eph 1:7). You believe that he is the "propitiation for our sins" (1Jn 2:2). Therefore "consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus" (6:11). We are "always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body" (2Co 4:10). Because of what Christ accomplished "the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God" (Gal 2:20). Paul said "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ in me" (:20). "Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness" (Ro 8:10).

Redemption

To redeem means to get possession of something you don't own by paying for it. Perhaps ownership of something was lost and you want to regain it. There is the case where a man was "so poor . . . as to sell himself" (Lev 25:47) as a slave. Fortunately "one of his brothers may redeem him" (:48) or "if he prospers, he may redeem himself" (:49). "If a ransom is demanded of him, then he shall give for the redemption of his life whatever is demanded of him" (Ex 21:30). In man's case we had been "severed from Christ" (Gal 5:4) and "alienated and hostile in mind" (Col 1:21). "God created man in His own image" (Ge 1:27). But now Adam had "a son in his own likeness" (5:3), and due to the fall of man, this image was not equivalent to the original likeness because man's relationship with God had

deteriorated. Unfortunately man was caught in a "yoke of slavery" (Gal 5:1) and "through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives" (Heb 2:15). "We are slaves; yet in our bondage, [and] our God has not forsaken us, but has extended lovingkindness to us" (Ez 9:9). "God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Ro 5:8). Christ had to accomplish this because "no man can by any means redeem his brother or give God a ransom for him--for the redemption of his soul is costly, and he should cease trying forever" (Ps 4:7-8). Redemption means to buy back by making payment, and in man's predicament, it pertains to freeing him from his bondage to sin. Therefore Jesus explained, "the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and give His life a ransom for many" (Mk 10:45). The payment of a ransom applies to a loosing or setting someone free, and by this, the Father through Christ is regaining possession of something that originally was his as a "redemption of God's own possession" (Eph 1:14). It is "the church of God which He purchases with His own blood" (Ac 20:28). "Without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness" (Heb 9:22). Christ "gave Himself as a ransom for all" (1Ti 2:5) since "God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself" (2Co 5:19). Someone once told me that it means everyone automatically goes to heaven. But you must appropriate what Christ has done to make it personally official.

Christ "cancelled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us; and . . . nailed it to the cross" (Col 2:14). However, "the word of the cross is to those who are perishing foolishness" (1Co 1:18). But it is serious and not just academic. Christ "redeemed us . . . having become a curse for us" (Gal 3:13) by his crucifixion. It was from "the curse of the

Law" (:13) for "forgiveness of our trespasses" (Eph 1:7). It is "redemption [for] the forgiveness of sins" (Col 1:14) and "transgressions that were committed under the first covenant" (Heb 9:15). It was to redeem us "from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers" (1Pe 1:18) and "from every lawless deed . . . [to be] zealous for good deeds" (Titus 2:14). He "rescued us from the domain of darkness" (:13) and "from the hand of our enemies" (Lk 1:74). It was a "testimony given at the proper time" (1Ti 2:6) and "displayed publicly as an atonement in His blood through faith" (Ro 3:25). "Jesus said, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood" (1Co 11:25) "poured out for many" (Mk 14:24). Redemption has numerous important objectives. One result is that we are "justified as a gift by His grace" (Ro 3:24). It is so "we might receive the adoption as sons" (Gal 4:5) and to "receive the promise of eternal inheritance" (Heb 9:15). We have "the first fruits of the Spirit" (Ro 8:23) and are "sealed" (Eph 4:30) by the Holy Spirit. Christ to us becomes "wisdom from God, and righteousness, and sanctification" (1Co 1:30). Through Christ we "are believers in God . . . so that your faith and hope are in God" (1Pe 1:21). "Through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all" (Heb 9:12) having "purchased for God . . . men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation" (Rev 5:9). "Do you not know . . . that you are not your own?" (1Co 6:19,20). "You were bought with a price; do not become slaves of men" (7:23).

Came to Seek

Paul noted in Romans 3 by quoting that "The Lord has looked down from heaven upon the sons of men, to see if there are any who understand, who seek after

God" (Ps 14:2). Why does Christ seek the lost? It is because no one seeks on their own since "every one of them has turned aside; together they have become corrupt" (Ps 53:3). Paul elaborates in Romans 10 by citing "I permitted Myself to be sought by those who did not ask for Me; I permitted Myself to be found by those who did not seek Me" (Isa 65:1). Paul asks "how shall they hear" (Ro 10:14) without anyone telling them? He also asks "surely they have never heard, have they?" (:17). But he affirms the promulgation of doctrine in Romans 10 by quoting "their line has gone out through all the earth, and their utterances to the end of the world" (Isa 19:4). However Isaiah asks, "Who has believed our message?" (53:1). Paul then presents the caveat that "a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised" (1Co 2:14). If you need the Spirit to comprehend scripture, but don't have the Spirit because you haven't experienced salvation, then it is a "catch-22" and you need a way to comprehend the gospel initially. Paul said he was "not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to every one who believes" (Ro 1:16). Scriptures "have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ" (Jn 20:31). It is "the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation" (Eph 1:13) and the "living and enduring word of God" (1Pe 1:23). "All scripture is inspired by God" (2Ti 3:16) and "if any man is willing to do His will, he shall know of the teaching whether it is of God" (Jn 7:17). It is revelation by "faith which comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ" (Ro 10:17). The Greek word *rhema* defines it as the Living Word of God himself speaking. Jesus told Peter "'flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven'" (Mt 1:17).

Not only did God perform works, but he personally made things known to his servants which got recorded in scripture. It is estimated that one-third of scriptures are prophetic and two thousand prophecies have already been fulfilled. Jesus, himself, quoted fifteen Old Testament books. He prefaced a quote of Deuteronomy 8:3 by answering, "It is written" (Lk 4:4). He substantiates the Old Testament because "He was teaching them as one having authority" (Mt 7:29). He had this authority as exemplified by his using "But I say" (Mt 5:33,28,32,34,39,44) six times in the Sermon on the Mount. He deferred to the Bible as when he said "have you not read that which was spoken to you by God" (Mt 22:31) when quoting Exodus 3:6. God was speaking to Moses from a burning bush. But Jesus said he had spoken "to you" and didn't treat it as a second-hand reference. His dialog was with people "not understanding the scriptures" (:29). Another time he asked them, "Why do you yourselves transgress the commandment of God?" (Mt 15:3). He said, "You invalidated the word of God" (:6) in referring to the Fourth Commandment (Ex 20:12). Jesus states that "Scripture cannot be broken" (Jn 10:35) and you shouldn't ever break "the least of these commandments" (Mt 5:19).

Paul said "all Scripture is inspired by God" (2Ti 3:16) and Peter said that prophecy came by men who "spoke from God" (2Pe 1:21). God told Moses he would "teach you what you are to say" (Ex 4:12) and told Jeremiah "all that I command you, you shall speak" (Jer 1:7). Peter said "Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you" (2Pe 3:15). Paul concurs saying "the things which I write to you are the Lord's commandment" (1Co 14:37) and "taught by the Spirit" (2:13). He told the Ephesians he had declared the "whole purpose of God" (Ac 20:27). In TV detective

shows they often mention the "chain of evidence." Jesus followed the same "standard operating procedure" as Peter and Paul. Jesus explained, "'the Father Himself who sent Me has given Me commandment, what to say, and what to speak'" (Jn 12:49). He also said the Spirit "'will bear witness of Me'" (15:26) but "'will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak'" (16:13). Furthermore "'the Holy Spirit . . . will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you'" (14:26). Therefore you will "'know of the teaching, whether it is of God, or whether I speak from Myself'" (7:7).

Repentance

Repentance is therefore necessary. John the Baptist began preaching, "'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand'" (Mt 3:2). The purpose of it was "for the forgiveness of sins" (Mk 1:4). It is because "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Ro 3:23). Then "Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel'" (Mk 1:14-15). Paul said, "Having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent'" (Ac 17:30). Isaiah said to "turn from transgression" (Isa 59:20) and Ezekiel said to tell him to "turn from his wickedness or from his wicked way" (Eze 3:19). Paul said "the Lord will . . . bring to an end . . . the activity of Satan . . . with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth to be saved" (2Th 2:8-10). The disciples told Jesus about the Galileans who Pilate had killed. He replied, "'Unless you repent, you will all likewise perish'" (Lk 13:3). To perish means to die or be destroyed. God said to

Ezekiel, "Warn the wicked from his wicked way that he may live" (Eze 3:18). Jesus said, "Whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life" (Jn 3:16). Also, "I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish" (10:28). The Lord is "patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance" (2Pe 3:9). "Do you not think . . . that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?" (Ro 2:4). "The sorrow that is according to the will of God produces a repentance without regret, leading to salvation" (2Co 6:10). It is "repentance toward God" (Ac 20:21).

The first message that John the Baptist and Jesus preached was "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Mt 4:17). Then early in Jesus' ministry he had a conversation with "Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews" (Jn 3:1). Jesus revealed, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (:5). Some people say that unless you aren't water baptized you don't qualify, but Jesus is stating a principle and not creating a checklist based upon works. Nicodemus didn't understand so Jesus responded, "Are you a teacher of Israel and do not understand these things?" (:10). The Jews had the Old Testament scriptures and were supposed to understand spiritual things. Jesus observed, "You do not believe [earthly things] so how shall you believe if I tell you heavenly things?" (:11). Then he proceeded to say "whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life" (:16). I've heard people say that it's difficult to grasp the concept of eternity much less living forever. The translation of Melchizedik's name is "king of righteousness, and then also king of Salem" (Heb 7:2). "Without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, he abides a priest

perpetually" (:3). "His name will be called . . . Eternal Father, Prince of Peace" (Isa 9:6). "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever" (Heb 13:8). To understand Biblical doctrine you must comprehend what the Bible says. It may sound like a circular argument but its possible to be "handling accurately the word of truth" (2Ti 2:15). God gave the Bible's authors accurate information because "men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God" (2Pe 1:21). How do you understand the concept of eternal life? Eternity depends on God. God says, "I am God. Even from eternity I am He" (Isa 43:12-13). "His goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity" (Mic 5:2). "You are from everlasting" (Ps 93:2). "Are You not from everlasting?" (Hab 1:12). Furthermore, "I live forever" (Dt 32:40). "From everlasting to everlasting, You are God" (Ps 90:2). "Your years will not come to an end" (Ps 102:27). "The Lord shall reign forever and ever" (Ex 15:18). He saved Israel "with an everlasting salvation . . . to all eternity" (Isa 45:17). "His ways are everlasting" (Hab 3:6). This "momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison" (2Co 4:17). It depends upon your perspective. "Things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal" (2Co 4:18). "The one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life" (Gal 6:8). "We have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens (2Co 5:1). The "free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Ro 6:23). "This is the promise which He Himself made to us: eternal life" (1Jn 2:25). "God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son" (5:11). "This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent" (Jn 17:3). Christ "died for sins once for all" (1Pe 3:18). "Having been made perfect, He

became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation" (Heb 5:9). Therefore "he who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life" (Jn 3:36). Jesus cautioned the Jews, "You think that in [the Scriptures] you have eternal life . . . [but] you are unwilling to come to Me so that you may have life" (5:39-40).

Message of the Cross

Son of David

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God" (Jn 1:1). He is "the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father" (:18). He said to the Father, "You loved Me before the foundation of the world" (17:24). Jesus said it was "the glory which I had with You before the world was" (:5). This was before the Creation. "He is before all things" (Col 1:7). Jesus has "neither beginning of days nor end of life" (Heb 7:3). He says, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end" (Rev 22:13). He is "the same yesterday and today and forever" (Heb 13:8). "I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am" (Jn 8:58). "In Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form" (Col 2:9). This relationship is cited as having been predicted by a prophet regarding a Messiah being born in Bethlehem (Mt 2:4). The facts are scripturally correlated. The scriptures are "God-breathed" (2Ti 3:16) as the Spirit "carried along" (2Pe 1:21) the writers. What is written about Jesus is from the Spirit. God "has testified concerning His Son" (1Jn 5:9). Jesus said the Holy Spirit would "teach you all things and remind you of everything I have said to you" (Jn 14:26 NIV). That is why they had knowledge impossible to know otherwise. Jesus was "in the

beginning with God" (1:2). "All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being" (:3). "You, Lord, in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of Your hands" (Heb 1:10). "For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible" (Col 1:16). "The world was made through Him" (Jn 1:10). It is He "for whom are all things, and through whom are all things" (Heb 2:10).

Adam and Eve disobeyed God (Ge 3:6). One of God's responses was to the serpent. He said, "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head" (:15). When you consider God had said to Adam, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth" (1:28), Eve's seed could be anyone. But God had a plan. Ultimately an angel announced that, "today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord" (Lk 2:11). Matthew records a "genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, the son of David" (Mt 1:1). "Jesus was born, who is called the Messiah" (:16). The name "Christ" means that God had anointed him supernaturally with power to accomplish what he had been assigned to do. It was further explained that "the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end" (Lk 1:32-33). Jesus asked the Pharisees, "What do you think about the Christ, whose son is He?" (Mt 22:42). They answered, "The son of David" (:42).

The Jews believed this because of what Nathan prophesied to King David that, "the Lord also declares to you that . . . I will raise up your descendant after you, who will come forth from you . . . and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever" (2Sa 7:11-13). David

prayed that God would "confirm it forever, and do as You have spoken" (:25). Even though there is no eschatological foundation in the Old Testament for a Davidic dynasty, Jews regarded the promise as God potentially returning to restore Israel's monarchy. There is a Hebrew word "mashah" which deals with anointing with oil. The word "mashiach" comes from it which refers to the "anointed one" who would become this messianic king. Paul said to the Thessalonians, "This Jesus whom I am proclaiming to you is the Christ" (Ac 17:3).

Lord and Christ

Peter explained "that God had sworn to [David] with an oath to seat one of his descendants on his throne" (Ac 2:30). "He was a prophet" (:30) and predicted "For You will not abandon my soul to Sheol; nor will You allow Your Holy One to undergo decay" (Ps 16:10). "Surely the Lord God does nothing unless He reveals His secret counsel to His servants the prophets" (Am 3:7). Peter said that David "looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ" (Ac 2:31). "This Jesus God raised up again, to which we are all witnesses" (:32). He also said that Jesus was "delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God" (:23). God's plan is cited by Matthew (Mt 1:22-23) when he quotes the prophecy "the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel" (Isa 7:14). Matthew also speaks of the prophecy regarding the Messiah being born in Bethlehem (Mt 2:6) quoting "from you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity" (Mic 5:2).

At Corinth Paul began "solemnly testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ" (Ac 18:5). The angel

had said "there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord" (Lk 2:11). He was "born for you." Mary was told "you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins" (Mt 1:21). Scripture says Jesus is Lord. Jesus confessed, "You call Me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for so I am" (Jn 13:13). Peter stated "that God has made Him both Lord and Christ" (Ac 2:36). "Every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord" (Php 2:11). When a person is referred to as a "lord" it means he occupies a supreme place.

When Peter explains Jesus' position he shows "having been exalted to the right hand of God . . . [he] received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit" (Ac 2:33). Being exalted would be occupying a "supreme place" and he can be referred to as "Lord." To prove it Peter explains that from Jesus' position "He has poured forth this which you both see and hear" (:33). This is substantiated because he quotes "It will come about after this that I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind" (Joe 2:28). Even Jesus refers to prophecy to make a point. He asks the Pharisees, "How does David in the Spirit call Him 'Lord,'" (Mt 22:43) for "if David then calls Him 'Lord,' how is He his son?" (:45). The reference is "The Lord says to my Lord: 'Sit at My right hand until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet'" (Ps 110:1). Jesus was proving that he was the Messiah and "no one was able to answer Him a word" (Mt 22:46).

Part of Jesus' assignment was "to teach and preach in the cities" (Mt 11:1). But he told them, "My teaching is not Mine, but His who sent Me" (Jn 7:16). This is not to conclude that he was just a messenger. After the resurrection he declared, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth" (Mt 28:18). "All things that the Father has are Mine" (Jn 16:15). Jesus

had told them to wait until he sent the Holy Spirit (Lk 24:49) "whom the Father will send in My name" (Jn 14:26). Jesus told them "when He, the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all the truth" (16:13). All scripture is true. "He who sent Me is true" (8:26). Jesus said that the Spirit "will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak" (16:13). Jesus had said "the things which I heard from Him, these I speak to the world" (8:26). He said that the Spirit would "glorify Me; for He shall take of Mine, and shall disclose it to you" (16:14). Jesus always gave God credit. When he quoted Exodus 20:12 he said it was the "commandment of God" (Mt 15:3) and that "God said" (:4) it. When he quoted Exodus 3:6 he said it was "spoken to you by God" (22:31). When teaching he asked "have you not read?" (19:4) and declared they were "not understanding the Scriptures" (22:29). He quoted Deuteronomy 8:3 to prove, "It is written" (Lk 4:4) and Isaiah 29:13 to emphasize Isaiah's prophecy (Mk 7:6). He knew that the "Jews ask for signs" (1Co 1:22) so he gave them the "sign of Jonah the prophet" (Mt 12:39). He also quoted Psalm 110:1 as an example of an Old Testament anointing where "David himself said in the Holy Spirit" (Mk 12:36). This confirms that, "He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you" (Jn 14:26). "I did not come to abolish [the Law] but to fulfill" (Mt 5:17). "My words will not pass away" (24:35).

Saved by Grace

There is a second kind of birth. Jesus said "no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit" (Jn 3:5-6). This is possible whereby "all of us who were baptized into Christ" (Ro

6:3) were "all baptized by one Spirit" (1Co 12:13). Therefore "if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation" (2Co 5:17). Furthermore Jesus will "baptize you with the Holy Spirit" (Mt 3:11). "If anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ" (Ro 8:9). It is not God's will that anyone should perish (Mt 18:14). The gospel is "the power of God to salvation" (Ro 1:16). To keep from perishing, the gospel provides "a righteousness that is by faith . . . [so that] the righteous will live by faith" (:17). The theme of Romans is justification by faith. No one lacks faith because it "comes by hearing" (10:17). "What may be known about God is plain because God has made it plain" (1:19 NIV). The truth (:18) is more accurately defined in verse 25 as the "truth about God." The truth is "known" (:19,:21), "seen, understood" (:20), "knowledge" (:28), and "knowing" (:32). "What may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them" (:19 NKJV). "Since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities . . . have been clearly seen" (:20). They include his eternal power and deity.

God is "clearly seen" (Ro 1:20) and "they knew God" (:21). "God made it evident to them . . . since the creation of the world" (:19-20). They saw "His invisible attributes . . . through what has been made so that they are without excuse" (:20). This includes "His eternal power and divine nature" (:20). This revelation is "faith [which] comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ" (10:17). In Greek it is "rhema" which means the "Living Word" or God himself speaking. It would "show the work of the Law written in their hearts" (2:15). "God made it evident to them" (1:19) and since it was "within them" (:19) "the word is . . . in your heart" (10:8). God has allotted to each a measure of faith" (12:3). Even Paul recognized that he "received [his revelation] from the Lord" (1Co 11:23) and he "received

it through a revelation of Jesus Christ" (Gal 1:12). This was "the word of faith which we are preaching" (10:8). Therefore "believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved" (10:9). How do you hear with your heart? "If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him" (Rev 3:20). Communication is "inspired by God" (2Ti 3:16). "The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit" (Ro 8:16). When Peter heard, Jesus said, "flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven" (Mt 16:17). It is by "faith which comes through Him" (Ac 3:16). "By grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God" (Eph 2:8-9).

Truth of God

They didn't apply their knowledge since "they did not honor Him as God, or give thanks" (Ro 1:21). It was a deliberate decision because "they did not see fit to acknowledge God" (:28). They "suppress the truth" (:18). They "exchanged the glory" (:23) and "the truth of God for a lie" (:25). In their pride they claimed "to be wise" (:22) and "worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator" (:25). By their behavior they sealed their own fate. When they "became futile in their speculations" (:21) it gave "birth to sin . . . [which] brings forth death (Jas 1:15). Therefore God "gave them over" (Ro 1:24, 26, 28) to the desires of their hearts. "Their foolish heart was darkened" (:21) in the form of "impurity" (:24) and "degrading passions" (:26) which are acts of sexual indecency. They received "in their own persons the due penalty of their error" (:27). Finally "God gave them over to a depraved mind" (:28) and worse things happened.

What do you think the destiny of those who "suppress the truth in unrighteousness" (Ro 1:18),

"exchanged the truth of God for a lie" (:25), and "do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness" (2:8) will be? There will be "wrath and indignation . . . tribulation and distress for every soul of man who does evil" (:8-9). You take the wrong direction when you don't "honor Him as God or give thanks" (1:21). When you claim "to be wise" (:22) yourself and do "not see fit to acknowledge God any longer" (:28) you become "selfishly ambitious" (2:8). You serve instead "the creature rather than the Creator" (1:25) and your "heart was darkened" (:21). "You are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of . . . the righteous judgment of God" (2:5). Your "end will be according to their deeds" (2Co 11:15). But if you go the right direction there will be "glory and honor and peace to everyone who does good" (Ro 2:10). If you don't "hold fast . . . until the end" (Heb 3: 6) then you won't be saved.

Having the truth is crucial since "they perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved" (2Th 2:10). They "suppress the truth by their wickedness" (Ro 1:18). The knowledge of God was accessible but people closed their minds to it. "They did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God" (:28). The truth of God has been "clearly seen . . . [and] men are without excuse" (:20). It is a matter of what one decides in his mind. "Their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened" (:21). They didn't glorify God or give thanks (:21) and then "claimed to be wise" (:22). "God sent them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie and so be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness" (2Th 2:11). "Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts" (Ro 1:26). God had protected them before. But "since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, he

gave them over [again] to a depraved mind" (:28). "As a man thinks in his heart, so is he" (Pr 23:7).

Pay Close Attention

The writer of Hebrews was encouraging Jews to keep the faith. Many of them had been indoctrinated into Judaism and there was undoubtedly pressure on them to return. They were warned not to "drift away" (Heb 2:1) and not to "neglect so great a salvation" (:3). The gospel is "the power of God for salvation to every one who believes" (Ro 1:16) because "in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith" (:17). "It was at the first spoken through the Lord" (Heb 2:3) and "God [was] also bearing witness with them" (:4). Then "it was confirmed to us by those who heard" (:3). The author reminds them to "pay much closer attention to what we have heard" (2:1). He asks "how shall we escape?" (:3) if we ignore what we have heard. He warns about "falling away from the living God" (3:12) "whose house we are" (:6). Not "any one of you should seem to have come short of [the promise]" (4:1). We are "partakers of a heavenly calling" (3:1) and "partakers of Christ" (:14). It is because "we have had good news preached to us" (4:2). But it is necessary to "hold fast our confidence" (3:6) and "the beginning of our assurance" (:14). We are to cling to "the boast of our hope firm until the end" (:6). "Show the same diligence so as to realize the full assurance of hope until the end" (6:11). Remember that "faith is the assurance of things hoped for" (11:1). The author goes as far as to say "let us fear while the promise remains" (4:1). The danger is that "you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin" (3:13). "Today, if you would hear His voice, do not harden your hearts"

(Ps 95:7-8). "Take care, brethren, lest there should be any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart" (Heb 3:12).

There is a legal saying that possession is nine-tenths of the law. So if you "have once been enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift" (Heb 6:4) you have an entitlement. Also, if you "have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come" (:5) you demonstrate ownership. These are heavenly, not worldly, characteristics. "Ground that drinks the rain which often falls upon it and brings forth vegetation useful to those for whose sake it is also tilled, receives a blessing from God" (:7). However, if they "then have fallen away, it is impossible to renew them again to repentance" (:6). "They have escaped the defilements of the world by knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2Pe 2:20). "It would be better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn away from the holy commandment delivered to them" (:21). Therefore, be mature and train yourselves to put the use of your spiritual senses into practice "to discern good and evil" (Heb 5:14).

New Covenant

Tabernacle worship signified that "the way into the holy place [had] not yet been disclosed" (Heb 9:8). It meant that sacrifices were "offered which [could] not make the worshipper perfect in conscience" (:9). But then "through His own blood, [Christ] entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption" (:12). He will now "cleanse your conscience from dead works" (:14) to serve God. A new covenant is therefore created "since a death has taken place for the redemption of the transgressions" (:15). "All things are cleansed with blood, and without shedding of blood

there is no forgiveness" (:22). "Where a covenant is, there must be the death of the one who makes it" (:16). A covenant is a legal agreement whereby a testator writes a will making a bequest of what belongs to him to the heirs of the inheritance. Consequently "He is a mediator of a new covenant" (:15). "He has obtained a more excellent ministry, by as much as He is also the mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted on better promises" (8:6). "We have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Heb 10:10). "He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified" (:14). "You are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Mt 5:48). "I am the Lord who sanctifies you" (Lev 22:32). "You were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ" (1Co 6:11). Therefore "we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus" (Heb 10:19). "Let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith" (:22). "Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful" (:23). "We are not of those who shrink back to destruction, but of those who have faith to the preservation of the soul" (:39).

Faith Overcomes

You are "enlightened" (Heb 10:32) "after receiving the knowledge of the truth" (:26). "Faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ" (Ro 10:17). Jesus said, "Your faith has saved you" (Lk 7:50). "Faith is the assurance of things hoped for" (Heb 11:1). "In hope we have been saved" (Ro 8:24). Faith is "the conviction of things not seen" (Heb 11:1) which is "your confidence" (10:35). It produces "endurance, so that . . . you may receive what was promised" (:36) and be able to "run with endurance the race that is set before

us" (12:1). "The righteous will live by his faith" (Hab 2:4). Noah became "an heir of the righteousness which is according to faith" (Heb 11:7). Abraham received faith "when he was called" (:8) "from hearing" (Ro 10:17) by the Lord saying "'Go forth from your country . . . to the land which I will show you'" (Ge 12:1). "He who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him" (Heb 11:6). "In hope against hope he believed" (Ro 4:18) and "did not waver in unbelief, but grew strong in faith" (:20) "being fully assured that what He had promised, He was also able to perform" (:21). "Sarah herself received ability to conceive . . . since she considered Him faithful who had promised" (Heb 11:11). "Consider Him . . . so that you may not grow weary and lose heart" (12:3) by fixing [your] eyes upon Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith" (:2).

The author of Hebrews said that at the start they "endured a great conflict of sufferings, partly, by being made a public spectacle through reproaches and tribulations" (Heb 10:32). Jesus said, "'In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world'" (Jn 16:33). Does that mean we'll always be prosperous and healthy? Paul asks, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine" (Ro 8:35)? He answers "in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him" (:37). He also states that God "always leads us in His triumph in Christ" (2Co 2:14). The author encourages them to "remember the prisoners, as though in prison with them, and those who are ill-treated, since you yourselves also are in the body" (Heb 13:3). He cites "you showed sympathy to the prisoners, and accepted joyfully the seizure of your property, knowing that you have for yourselves a better possession and an abiding one" (10:34).

The author warns them about "thinking of that country from which they went out" (Heb 11:15). He replies that there is a better "heavenly one" (:16) namely "a city for them" (:16). God "warned them on earth" (12:25) and "warns from heaven" (:25). There's a tendency to treat intangible things as unrealistic because you have to put food on the table and take care of your family. However, the author wants heavenly things to be meaningful. He invites them to come to "the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem" (12:22). "Angels . . . and the church of the first-born" (:23) are there. Plus "God, the Judge of all" (:23) is there as well as "Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant" (:24). "Much less shall we escape who turn away from Him" (:25).

Eternal Salvation

God told Abraham, "I will surely bless you and give you many descendants" (Heb 6:13). This was God's oath so that we would "inherit what has been promised" (:12). It was "an oath through the One" (7:21) who spoke to Jesus. God wanted to make his purpose very clear to the heirs" (:17). Therefore Jesus "became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey Him" (5:9). The author of Hebrews tells them that he is "confident of better things that accompany salvation" (6:9). Jesus accomplished this "when He offered up Himself" (7:27) and "has become the guarantee of a better covenant" (:22). Accordingly "the Lord has sworn [by an oath, saying] . . . 'Thou art a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek'" (Ps 110:4). "The word of the oath, which came after the Law, appoints a Son, made perfect forever" (Heb 7:28). The author of Hebrews was concerned about those "who are ignorant and going astray" (Heb 5:2) and those who were "slow to

learn" (:11). He wanted to encourage the recipients of his letter. He cites that "God wanted to make the unchanging nature of His purpose very clear" (6:17) so that they "may be greatly encouraged" (:18). "He is able to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them" (7:25). The author acknowledges they have "fled to take hold of the hope offered to us" (6:18). There is a "better hope, through which we draw near to God" (:19). "We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure" (:19). Therefore "in order to make your hope sure" (:11) "we want each of you to show this same diligence to the very end" (:11). Also, "imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised" (:12). "If that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion for the second" (Heb 8:7). It would be "not like the covenant which I made with their fathers . . . which they broke, although I was a husband to them" (Jer 31:32). "I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel" (:31). "I will put My law within them, and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people" (:33). There is the "setting aside of a former commandment because of its weakness" (Heb 7:18). It is by way of "another priest" (:11) "according to the power of an indestructible life" (:16). It brings in "a change of law also" (:12). "He has obtained a more excellent ministry, by as much as He is also the mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted on better promises" (8:6). He is a "high priest" (:1) "exalted above the heavens" (7:26) who is a "minister in the sanctuary in the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man" (8:2). "He abides forever [and] holds His priesthood permanently" (7:24). "Has He said, and will not do it? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?" (Nu 23:19).

Testimony of Christ

Paul preached "Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake" (2Co 4:6) whereby "through us spreads everywhere . . . the knowledge of him" (2Co 2:14). Furthermore, "in Christ we speak before God with sincerity, like men sent from God (v.17)." He was sent to "preach the gospel-not with words of human wisdom" (1Co 1:17) but to "preach Christ crucified" (:23). He "did not come with eloquence or superior wisdom [but with] the testimony about God" (1Co 2:1). He "received from the Lord" (1Co 11:23) and "what I received I passed on to you as of first importance" (1Co 15:3). Paul was committed to this "field God has assigned to us, a field that reaches even to you" (2Co 10:13). He did "have knowledge [and] made this perfectly clear to you in every way" (2Co 11:6).

The result of Paul's ministry was that "our testimony of Christ was confirmed in you" (1Co 1:6) in that God "has called you into fellowship with his Son" (:9). This applies to "all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (:2) because they are "sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be holy" (:2). Paul sought to reach everyone "so that by all possible means I might save some" (1Co 9:22). He was "not seeking my own good but the good of many, so that they might be saved" (10:33). He saw "the message of the cross . . . to us who are being saved [as] the power of God" (1Co 1:18). He observed that "God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe" (:21). He considered himself as a servant "through whom you came to believe" (1Co 3:5). Believing is the key. Paul reminded them that "the gospel I preached to you,

which you received and on which you have taken your stand [is how] you are saved" (1Co 15:1-2).

The Corinthian church was "enriched in every way" (1Co 1:4) yet still had problems. You would think that with the help of the Apostle Paul they wouldn't "sit in judgment" (1Co 9:3) of him. He was concerned that "when I come I may not find you as I want you to be" (2Co 12:20). Yet he was concerned that "your minds may somehow be led astray" (:3). You have to be careful what you tolerate in your mind because "a little yeast works through the whole batch" (1Co 5:6). They were susceptible because Paul said "you put up with it easily enough" (2Co 11:4). But it is dependent on that "you hold firmly to the word I preached [or else] you have believed in vain" (:2). It is a continuing process as you are "among those who are being saved" (2Co 2:15).

'Messiah the Prince' (Dan 9:25)

Everlasting

God spoke to Moses from the burning bush saying, "'I am the God of your father'" (Ex 3:6). Moses wrote the Pentateuch so this is not a second-hand conversation. He then asked, "When I say to Israel 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you' [and] they may say to me, 'What is His name?' What shall I say to them?" (:13). "God told Moses, 'I AM WHO I AM'" (:14). "'This is My name forever'" (:14). The crowd said, "'We have heard out of the Law that the Christ is to remain forever'" (Jn 12:34). "Before the mountains were born or you gave birth to the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God" (Ps 90:2). Abraham "called on the name of the Lord, the Everlasting God" (Ge 21:33). God is "the high and

exalted One Who lives forever" (Isa 57:15). "His goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity" (Mic 5:2). "The eternal God is a dwelling place" (Dt 33:27). "His name will be called . . . Eternal Father" (Isa 9:6). Because God instructed Moses to say "I AM has sent me to you" (Ex 3:14) it means he is eternal, everlasting, and lives forever. "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever" (Heb 13:8). "For I, the Lord, do not change" (Mal 3:6). The Lord instructed Jeremiah to say to Israel, "It is He who made the earth by His power, Who established the world by His wisdom" (Jer 10:12). Solomon personified the Messiah as wisdom saying, "The Lord possessed me at the beginning of His way, before His works of old. From everlasting I was established" (Pr 8:22-23). It was Christ who "was beside Him, as master workman; and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him" (:30-31).

Son of God

Jesus is "the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father" (Jn 1:18) who said to the Father, "You loved Me before the foundation of the world" (17:24). Also, it was "the glory which I had with You before the world was" (:5). This is before Creation because "He is before all things" (Col 1:7). "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God" (Jn 1:1). Jesus said, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end" (Rev 21:6) and "the first and the last" (22:13). Melchizedik personifies Christ as "having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God" (Heb 7:3). Jesus said, "Before Abraham was born, I am" (Jn 8:58). "His goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity" (Mic 5:2).

"For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible" (Col 1:16). "He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together" (:17). "All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being" (Jn 1:3). "You, Lord, in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of Your hands" (Heb 1:10). "The world was made through Him" (Jn 1:10). It is He "for whom are all things, and through whom are all things" (Heb 2:10).

We understand Jesus' pre-existence and everlastingness. He was the "only begotten from the Father" (Jn 1:14). John the Baptist declared, "I did not recognize Him, but He who sent me to baptize in water said to me, 'He upon whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining upon Him, this is the One who baptizes in the Holy Spirit'" (1:33). The Father communicated this to John. It was the "eternal Spirit" (Heb 9:14) about whom "John testified saying, 'I have seen the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven'" (Jn 1:32). John questioned his role in this and Jesus answered, "Permit it at this time; for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Mt 3:15). Here were the three equal members of the Godhead working together in a triune way. John explains that "the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His Glory" (Jn 1:14). Furthermore "God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son" (1Jn 5:11).

Bread of Life

God implemented his plan saying to the serpent, "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel" (Ge

3:15). Peter said that Christ "was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you" (1Pe 1:20). Israel was familiar with all the prophecies and even the Samaritan woman said, "I know that Messiah is coming . . . [and] when that One comes, He will declare all things to us" (Jn 4:25). The plan developed and in Jerusalem "it had been revealed to [Simeon] by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ" (Lk 2:26). Then in the temple when he saw Jesus he said, "My eyes have seen Your salvation, which You have prepared in the presence of all peoples" (:30). John the Baptist promulgated the message and said, "I am not the Christ,' but, 'I have been sent ahead of Him'" (Jn 3:28). However, he stated, "I myself have seen, and have testified that this is the Son of God"" (1:34). After Andrew encountered Jesus he told Peter, "'We have found the Messiah' (which translated means Christ)" (1:41). Then Philip told Nathanael, "'We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law and also the Prophets wrote'" (:45). Jesus revealed to the Samaritan woman, "'I who speak to you am He'" (4:26). "Many of the Samaritans believed in Him because of the word of the woman" (:39). Then they said, "'It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves and know that this One is indeed the Savior of the world'" (:42).

John began his gospel stating, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (Jn 1:1). John the Baptist confirmed this saying, "He whom God has sent speaks the words of God"" (3:34). Jesus himself reinforced this saying, "'I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me'" (6:38). "'I came forth from the Father and have come into the world'" (16:28).

"I know Him, because I am from Him, and He sent Me" (7:29). "Even if I testify about Myself, My testimony is true, for I know where I came from and where I am going" (8:14). "The bread of God is that which comes down out of heaven, and gives life to the world" (:33) "so that one may eat of it and not die" (:50). Jesus said, "I am the living bread that came down out of heaven . . . and the bread also which I will give . . . is My flesh" (:51). Some of his disciples responded saying, "This is a difficult statement; who can listen to it?" (:61). Then when Jesus questioned the twelve Peter answered, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life. We have believed and have come to know that you are the Holy One of God" (:68-69). Even John asked from prison, "Are You the Expected One, or shall we look for someone else?" (Mt 11:3). Jesus said to tell John "the blind receive sight and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up" (:4). Jesus is "the Word" (Jn 1:1). "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching" (2Ti 3:16). Jesus said, "It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all be taught of God.' Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father, comes to Me" (Jn 6:45). Jesus prayed "the words which You gave Me I have given to them; and they received them and truly understood that I came forth from You, and they believed that You sent Me" (17:8).

Jesus' Genealogy

Matthew writes to the Jews establishing "Jesus [as] the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham" (Mt 1:1). By saying that he is the "son of" these ancestors Matthew's using the genealogical record proves that Christ's legal inheritance is valid. He traverses the family tree of heirs from Abraham connecting each by

the phrase "the father of." This context is crucial because "the scripture . . . preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, 'All the nations will be blessed [in the future] in you'" (Gal 3:8). God said, "'In you all the families of the earth will be blessed'" (Ge 12:3). Therefore, there must be a continuity for its fulfillment to come to pass. "Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, 'And to seeds,' as referring to many, but rather to one, 'And to your seed,' that is Christ" (Gal 3:16). Therefore Jesus must be a legal heir. Consequently God promised "'one who will come forth from your own body, he shall be your heir'" (Gen 15:4) also stating that "'Sarah your wife will have a son'" (18:10). Abraham cooperated and God repeated, "'In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice'" (22:18). God confirmed that "'through Isaac your descendants shall be named'" (21:12). Furthermore God promised Isaac himself that "'by your descendants all the nations of the earth shall be blessed'" (26:4).

Luke traces his genealogy in a natural upward direction from Christ to Adam. He concludes it saying "the son of Adam, the son of God" (Lk 3:38). This is because "the Lord God formed man" (Ge 2:7) and "put him into the garden of Eden" (:15). "But for Adam there was not found a helper suitable for him" (:20) so God fashioned a woman from Adam's rib (:22). Adam said, "'She shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man'" (:23) (i.e. Adam's name). Then "the man called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all the living (3:20). God orchestrated the process from generation to generation. It developed within the Jewish nation. For instance, "God said to him, 'Your name is Jacob; you shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel shall be your name'" (35:10) and "a

nation . . . shall come from you" (:11). Abraham, himself, inherited a new Jewish identity. Some kings were at war and they took possessions and captives of which Lot was one (14:1-12). "A fugitive came and told Abram the Hebrew" (:13) about it.

There are subtleties in the genealogies that are significant regarding Jesus' virgin birth. Luke relates "Jesus . . . being, as was supposed, the son of Joseph, the son of Eli" (Lk 3:23). But an angel of the Lord explains the supposition by saying "'the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit'" (Mt 1:20). Eli was Mary's father and Luke's genealogy is from her perspective. Matthew also relates that "Jacob was the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, by whom Jesus was born (:16). In this case he uses "husband of" instead of "father of." Individual elements must coincide with the big picture. Paul said that he was "set apart for the gospel of God, which He promised beforehand through His prophets in the holy Scriptures, concerning His Son, who was born of a descendant of David according to the flesh" (Ro 1:1-3). Joseph qualified since he "went up from Galilee . . . to the city of David . . . because he was of the house and family of David" (Lk 2:4). An "angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, 'Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife'" (Mt 1:20). Even though Luke's genealogy is from Mary's perspective, legal inheritance is substantiated from Joseph's. Joseph is a heir via Jacob and could lawfully marry her because her father Eli was Jacob's brother of the same tribe of Joseph. This is in accordance with the scripture where God said, "'the daughters of Zelophehad . . . must marry within the tribe of their father . . . [so that] no inheritance of the sons of Israel shall be transferred from tribe to tribe'" (Nu 36:6-7). They "are Israelites, to

whom belongs the adoption as sons . . . whose are the fathers, and from whom is the Christ" (Ro 9:4-5).

Judah

Jesus' ancestry was not built by "natural selection." God chose whom he desired. He "rejected" (Ps 78:67) some and "did not choose" (:67) others. But he did "chose the tribe of Judah" (:68) and "also chose David His servant" (:70). God's purpose was to "shepherd Jacob His people" (:71) "according to the integrity of his heart" (:72). Balaam prophesied this as "the oracle of him who hears the words of God" (Nu 24:4). He declared, "How fair are your tents, O Jacob, your dwellings, O Israel!" (:5). "He couches, he lies down as a lion, and as a lion, who dares rouse him?" (:9). He continued saying, "A scepter shall rise from Israel" (:17) and, "One from Jacob shall have dominion" (:19). Jacob prophesied similarly to his sons and "all these are the twelve tribes of Israel" (Ge 49:28). To Judah he said, "Your brothers shall praise you" (:8) (i.e. Judah means "praise"). He declared that "the scepter shall not depart from Judah . . . until Shiloh comes, and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples" (:10). It is evident that our Lord was descended from Judah" (Heb 7:14). An elder revealed that "the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has overcome" (Rev 5:5).

David

Samuel was a priest and prophet in Israel. The people said to Samuel, "Behold, you have grown old, and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now appoint a king for us to judge us like all nations" (1Sa 8:5). The Lord then told Samuel, "Listen to the voice of the people . . . [for] they have rejected Me from being king

over them . . . [so] tell them of the procedure of the king who will reign over them" (:7-9). He was ministering in a certain city and Saul was seeking his help there. Saul was told, "You will find him before he goes up to the high place to eat, for the people will not eat until he comes, because he must bless the sacrifice" (:13). The previous day God had told Samuel, "About this time tomorrow I will send a man from the land of Benjamin, and you shall anoint him to be prince over My people Israel" (:15). Saul became king and later in a critical situation he "waited seven days, according to the appointed time set by Samuel, but Samuel did not come to Gilgal" (13:8) so he made the offering himself. "As soon as he finished . . . Samuel came" (:10) and he explained that he had been desperate saying, "I forced myself and offered the burnt offering" (:12). Samuel told him, "You have acted foolishly . . . but now your kingdom shall not endure" (:13). Later, God told Samuel, "I regret I have made Saul king, for he has turned back from following Me and has not carried out My commands" (15:11). Then Samuel told Saul, "Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, He has rejected you from being king" (:23). Later God said to Samuel, "I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have selected a king for Myself among his sons" (16:1). This fulfilled Isaiah's prophecy "a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse, and a branch from his roots will bear fruit" (Isa 11:1). Also, "the women said to Naomi, 'Blessed is the Lord who has not left you without a redeemer today, and may his name become famous in Israel'" (Ruth 4:13). "They named him Obed. He is the father of Jesse, the father of David" (:17). They brought David to Samuel and God said, "Anoint him; for this is he" (1Sa 16:12). Samuel did so and "the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David from that day forward" (:13).

Many years passed and "David inquired of the Lord" (2Sa 2:1) what to do. It led to the men of Judah anointing "David king over the house of Judah" (:4). Events led to Israel coming to David at Hebron. They said, "'The Lord said to you, 'You will shepherd My people Israel'" (5:2). A covenant was made with them and "they anointed David king over Israel" (:3). "He reigned thirty-three years over all Israel and Judah" (:5). There was a natural fortress on a rock escarpment on the western ridge of Jerusalem controlled by the Jebusites. "David captured the stronghold" (5:17) and "lived in the stronghold and called it the city of David" (i.e. Zion) (:9). He "realized that the Lord had established him as king over Israel, and that He had exalted his kingdom for the sake of His people Israel" (:12). He made Jerusalem his capital which was on the border of Judah and Israel. David "was buried in the city of David" (1Ki 2:10). "Soloman sat on the throne of David his father, and his kingdom was firmly established" (:12).

Throne of David

"The Lord has sworn to David . . . of the fruit of your body I will set upon the throne" (Ps 132:11). "'One will go forth for Me to be ruler of Israel'" (Micah 5:2). "'I will raise up for David a righteous Branch; and He will reign as king'" (Jer 23:5). Nathan prophesied, "'Your throne shall be established forever'" (2Sa 7:16). "'There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, on the throne of David and over his kingdom'" (Isa 9:7). "Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the descendants of David, and from Bethlehem, the village where David was?" (Jn 7:42). "Joseph went up from Galilee . . . to the city of David which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the

house and family of David" (Lk 2:4). An angel announced "'today in the city of David there was born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord'" (:11).

In the Bible a throne applies to royalty as when "Soloman has even taken his seat on the throne of the kingdom" (1Ki 1:46) and God told him, "'I will establish your royal throne as I covented with your father David'" (2Ch 7:18). A throne is symbolic of dignity as when Pharaoh said "'only in the throne I will be greater'" (Ge 41:40). The exercise of regal power is expected "when he sits on the throne of his kingdom" (Dt 17:18). Authority is inherent as when the angel told Mary that Jesus "'will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David'" (Lk 1:32). Paul stated that Christ "was born of a descendant of David according to the flesh" (Ro 1:3). Jesus, himself, cited the importance of this continuity saying, "'I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright and morning star'" (Rev 22:16). Prophecy culminates in Christ. Daniel predicted that "His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all the dominions will serve and obey Him" (Da 7:27). The angel explained regarding Jesus' birth that "'He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end'" (Lk 1:33).

Christ and Lord

At Corinth Paul began "solemnly testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ" (Ac 18:5). The angel had said "there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord" (Lk 2:11). He was "born for you." Mary was told "'you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins'" (Mt 1:21). Scripture says Jesus is Lord. Jesus confessed, "'You call Me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for so I am'" (Jn

13:13). Peter stated "that God has made Him both Lord and Christ" (Ac 2:36). "Every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord" (Php 2:11). When a person is referred to as a "lord" it means he occupies a supreme place.

When Peter explains Jesus' position he shows "having been exalted to the right hand of God . . . [he] received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit" (Ac 2:33). Being exalted would be occupying a "supreme place" and he can be referred to as "Lord." To prove it Peter explains that from Jesus' position "He has poured forth this which you both see and hear" (:33). This is substantiated because he quotes "It will come about after this that I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind" (Joe 2:28). Even Jesus refers to prophecy to make a point. He asks the Pharisees, "How does David in the Spirit call Him 'Lord,'" (Mt 22:43) for "if David then calls Him 'Lord,' how is He his son?" (:45). The reference is "The Lord says to my Lord: 'Sit at My right hand until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet'" (Ps 110:1). Jesus was proving that he was the Messiah and "no one was able to answer Him a word" (Mt 22:46).

Part of Jesus' assignment was "to teach and preach in the cities" (Mt 11:1). But he told them, "My teaching is not Mine, but His who sent Me" (Jn 7:16). This is not to conclude that he was just a messenger. After the resurrection he declared, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth" (Mt 28:18). "All things that the Father has are Mine" (Jn 16:15). Jesus had told them to wait until he sent the Holy Spirit (Lk 24:49) "whom the Father will send in My name" (Jn 14:26). Jesus told them "when He, the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all the truth" (16:13). All scripture is true. "He who sent Me is true" (8:26). Jesus said that the Spirit "will not speak on His own

initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak" (16:13). Jesus had said "the things which I heard from Him, these I speak to the world" (8:26). He said that the Spirit would "glorify Me; for He shall take of Mine, and shall disclose it to you" (16:14). Jesus always gave God credit. When he quoted Exodus 20:12 he said it was the "commandment of God" (Mt 15:3) and that "God said" (:4) it. When he quoted Exodus 3:6 he said it was "spoken to you by God" (22:31). When teaching he asked "have you not read?" (19:4) and declared they were "not understanding the Scriptures" (22:29). He quoted Deuteronomy 8:3 to prove, "It is written" (Lk 4:4) and Isaiah 29:13 to emphasize Isaiah's prophecy (Mk 7:6). He knew that the "Jews ask for signs" (1Co 1:22) so he gave them the "sign of Jonah the prophet" (Mt 12:39). He also quoted Psalm 110:1 as an example of an Old Testament anointing where "David himself said in the Holy Spirit" (Mk 12:36). This confirms that, "He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you" (Jn 14:26). "I did not come to abolish [the Law] but to fulfill" (Mt 5:17). "My words will not pass away" (24:35).

Prophecy

Prophets speak what only God knows and desires to communicate. It is not uncommon. Jesus said, "When He, the Spirit of truth comes . . . He will disclose to you what is to come" (Jn 16:13). It usually is about the future. Isaiah said, "Let them bring forth and declare to us what is going to take place" (Isa 41:22). He said to , "Cry loudly, do not hold back" (58:1). Jeremiah said, "The prophet who has a dream may relate his dream , but let him who has My word speak My word in truth" (Jer 23:28). Jesus presented himself as "the faithful and true Witness" (Rev 3:14).

To be a valid prophetic word it must be from God and sent by him. "The prophet who prophesies of peace, when the word of the prophet comes to pass, then that prophet will be known as one whom the Lord has truly sent" (Jer 28:9). Moses instructed, "You may say in your heart, 'How will we know the word which the Lord has not spoken?' When a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the thing does not come about or come true, that is the thing which the Lord has not spoken" (Dt 18:21-22). Jeremiah cautioned to not listen because "they speak a vision of their own imagination, not from the mouth of the Lord" (Jer 23:16).

There are hundreds of Old Testament prophecies many of which have been fulfilled in the New Testament and others which still must come to pass. For instance Isaiah prophesied, "The Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel" (Isa 7:14). This was fulfilled by the birth of Jesus Christ. He reiterated, "For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; and the government will rest on His shoulders; and His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace" (9:6). Was the meaning clear at that time or was it a mystery? Daniel said to the king, "There is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries, and He has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will take place in the latter days" (Da 2:28). But the king didn't know the meaning so Daniel responded, "I will read the inscription to the king and make the interpretation to him" (5:17). In Paul's case he said "by revelation there was made known to me the mystery" (Eph 3:3). He understood because "the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith" (Ro 1:17). Without God's inspiration man tries to understand with his intellect by questioning. But "one who doubts is like . . . a double-

minded man, unstable in all his ways" (Ja 1:6-8). Therefore you must believe in prophecy from the heart in faith.

John the Baptist

The word "angel" in the Bible is defined by teachers as a messenger. An angel appeared to Zacharias next to the altar of incense while he was ministering in the temple (Lk 1:11). The angel said, "I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news" (:19). The news was that "your petition has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son" (:13). Cornelius was told, "Your prayer has been heard and your alms have been remembered before God" (Ac 10:31). This is "the work which God has done from the beginning even to the end" (Ecc 3:11) and he "has made everything appropriate in its time" (:11). It goes down to the detail of "you will give him the name John" (Lk 1:13). It also goes to the larger context that "he will be great" (:15) and "will turn many of the sons of Israel back to the Lord their God" (:16). Zacharias was also told that John was the "forerunner" (:17) prophesied by Malachi. "I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord. He will restore the hearts of the children to their fathers, so that I will not come and smite the land with a curse" (Mal 4:5-6). "This is the One referred to by Isaiah the prophet when he said, 'The voice of One crying in the wilderness'" (Mt 3:3). The angel said John would "make ready a people prepared for the Lord" (Lk 1:17). Later John would preach, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Mt 3:2).

Immanuel

"Surely the Lord God does nothing unless He reveals His secret counsel to His servants the prophets" (Amos 3:7). Then he follows through accordingly as he explained to Jeremiah, "I am watching over My word to perform it" (Jer 1:11). God announces his intentions as when Micah prophesied to Bethlehem, "From you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity" (Mic 5:2) and cites "the time when she who is in labor has borne a child" (:3). When the time came Gabriel was sent to inform Mary (Lk 1:26-38). Gabriel explained "you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call Him Jesus" (:30). But God doesn't keep you guessing. The angel explained that this was possible because "the Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you" (:35) since "nothing will be impossible with God" (:37). "For that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God" (:35). God is the father and therefore "He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High" (:32). The ultimate purpose is that "the Lord God will give him the throne of His father David; and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end" (:33). Time passed and "before [Joseph and Mary] came together she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit" (Mt 1:18). Then the angel of the Lord explained everything to Joseph in a dream (Mt 1:20-23). He stated that "she will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins" (:21). Matthew explains that "all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet" (:22) Isaiah said, "the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call

His name Immanuel" (Isa 7:14). Matthew translates the name as "God with us" (Mt 1:23). Then Joseph "did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and took Mary as his wife, but kept her a virgin until she gave birth to a Son" (:24-25).

Virgin Birth

Prophetic utterances are consistent with the events they predict. Micah stated of Jesus that "at that time He will be great to the ends of the earth" (Mic 5:4). Gabriel told Zacharias that "he will be great in the sight of the Lord" (Lk 1:15). He told Mary "he will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High" (:32). Mary declared, "the Mighty One has done great things for me" (Lk 1:49). His name is the "Mighty God" (Isa 9:6). Jeremiah said, "There is none like You, O Lord; You are great, and great is Your name in might" (Jer 10:6). Moses said, "The Lord your God is . . . the great, the mighty, and the awesome God" (Dt 10:17). Nehemiah emphasizes that it is God's power that "keeps covenant and lovingkindness" (Neh 9:32). "He will remember His covenant forever. He has made known to His people the power of His works" (Ps 111:5-6). He is "mighty in deed" (Jer 32:19). The remnant of Israel that escaped "will truly rely on the Lord" (Isa 10:20) and will return "to the mighty God" (:21). Isaiah said Jesus would "bring Jacob back to Him, so that Israel might be gathered to Him" (Isa 49:5). Micah said "His brethren will return to the sons of Israel" (Mic 5:3). He said "He will arise and shepherd His flock in the strength of the Lord" (:4) and Isaiah cited that it is because "My God is My strength" (Isa 49:5). His name is the "Prince of Peace" (Isa 9:6). Micah said "this One will be our peace" (Mic 5:5). "He will speak peace to the nations" (Zec 9:10). The

heavenly hosts' praise was "on earth peace among men" (Lk 2:14).

Where does it begin? The Lord told Jeremiah, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you" (Jer 1:5). Isaiah prophesied "the Lord called Me from the womb" (Isa 49:1) and "formed Me from the womb to be His Servant" (:5) and there "He named Me" (:1). Gabriel told Mary "even your relative Elizabeth has also conceived a son in her old age" (Lk 1:36). Mary went to visit her and "when Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit" (:41). Zacharias had been told that "he will be filled with the Holy Spirit while yet in his mother's womb" (:15). How can people today say that you don't actually become a real person until you complete the birth process?

At Bethlehem "there were shepherds staying out in the fields and keeping watch over their flock by night" (Lk 2:8). Then an angel appeared before them (:9). In a dream Jacob saw a ladder "set on the earth with its top reaching to heaven . . . and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it" (Ge 28:12). "The glory of the Lord shone around them" (Lk 2:9). The angel announced "good news of great joy which will be for all people" (:10). Zacharias had been told "many will rejoice at [John's] birth" (1:14). The message was "today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord" (2:11). The angel also explained "'this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger'" (:12). To emphasize this news a multitude of angels appeared "praising God and saying, 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased'" (:13-14). Afterwards they went "away from them into heaven" (:15). The

shepherds then "found their way to Mary and Joseph, and the baby as He lay in the manger" (:16). They then "made known the statement which had been told them about this Child . . . [and] all who heard it wondered" (:17-18). They "had heard and seen, just as had been told them" (:20).

Out of Egypt

Matthew relates that "in the days of Herod the king, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem" (Mt 2:1) looking for Jesus. Herod had heard they were following a star and enquired of Jewish officials "where the Messiah was to be born" (:4). They quoted "from you [Bethlehem] One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel" (Mic 5:2). Herod sent them there to search (Mt 2:8) and to report back. They found Jesus and "presented to Him gifts" (:11) but "having been warned by God in a dream not to return to Herod, the magi left for their own country by another way" (:12).

Researchers have discovered that if people are repeatedly woken up while dreaming it has detrimental effects. There is a psychological purpose. However, dreams can also be instructional albeit frustrating when interpreting them. But when God gives a dream the interpretation accompanies it. Even so, others may not accept the explanation. Joseph asked his brothers to, "Please listen to this dream which I have had" (Ge 37:6). But "they hated him even more for his dreams and for his words" (:8). A Godly dream can save your life. "An angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream" (Mt 2:13) and told him to take the family to Egypt. He said Herod would try to kill Jesus and they were to stay in Egypt temporarily (:13). Paul instructed to "live by the Spirit" (Gal 5:25), be "led by the Spirit" (:18), and "walk by the Spirit" (:16). The angel said, "Remain there until I tell you" (Mt 2:13). Obedience is

essential. "Joseph got up and took the Child and His mother while it was still night, and left for Egypt" (:14).

"When Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt" (Mt 2:19). He was instructed to return to Israel (:20). Matthew cites the prophecy of this (:15). "When Israel was a youth I loved him, and out of Egypt I called My Son" (Hosea 11:1). God told Moses, "And it shall be when your son asks you in time to come, saying, 'What is this?' then you shall say to him, 'With a powerful hand the Lord brought us out of Egypt, from the house of slavery'" (Ex 13:14). God had "led them" (Hos 11:4), "fed them" (:4), and "healed them" (:3). But "they kept . . . burning incense to idols" (:2) and "they refused to return to Me" (:5). Then again "after being warned by God in a dream, he [Joseph] left for the regions of Galilee, and came and lived in a city called Nazareth" (Mt 2:23) fulfilling the prophecy "He shall be called a Nazarene" (:23).

Foreordained

There are over 300 predictions about the Messiah in the Old Testament. After the Resurrection Jesus accompanied two disciples on their journey and "explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures" (Lk 24:27). Later he reminded his disciples that, "These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled" (:44). It is God's word reinforced by Isaiah saying "truly I have spoken" (Isa 46:11). It is God "declaring the end from the beginning" (:10). Isaiah "moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God" (2Pe 1:21). "All scripture is inspired by God" (1Ti 3:16). Peter explains that "we have the prophetic word made more sure" (2Pe 1:19). Prophecy

encompasses events "from ancient times things have not been done" (Isa 46:10). Only God can accomplish this. He provides the perspective saying, "I am God, and there is no other; I am God and there is no one like Me" (:9). "No prophecy was ever made by an act of human will" (2Pe 1:21). God declares, "I have planned it" (Isa 46:11) and it is "My purpose" (:10). Isaiah prophecies fulfillment. It "will be established" (:10), "I will accomplish all" (:10), "I will bring it to pass" (:11), and "surely I will do it" (:11).

God instituted the Feasts of the Lord to atone for the sins of Israel. The animal sacrifices have their fulfillment in Christ's death on the Cross. This plan was introduced long ago and was practiced over a long period showing that God's intentions are not just ideas that "seemed good for the moment." The chance that the hundreds of prophecies altogether would come to pass as predicted accidentally is statistically small. Of course, if the prophecy was general lacking detail then an interpreter would have more latitude in explaining it in his own way. In fact, various religions often interpret a scripture so it reflects their own belief thereby invalidating your meaning in their eyes. It would be advantageous if the content of the prophecy didn't contain its own obvious explanation because that would eliminate the mystery. Also, there is a span of time between the prediction and its fulfillment such that the person speaking it does not have the opportunity to fulfill it by himself. In fact, it could be argued by some that since Christ knew the scriptures he could have manipulated events to cause them to happen that way. But there would have been too many imponderables and ramifications to make this possible. You must give God the credit for having the understanding and insight for knowing what would happen given certain circumstances. You must also recognize that God has

the power to determine outcomes without having to override peoples' freedom of choice.

Betrayed

Jesus was betrayed by Judas. This was foretold in the Psalms. "For it is not an enemy who reproaches me . . . but it is you, a man my equal, My companion and my familiar friend" (Ps 55:12-13). "We who had sweet fellowship together walked in the house of God in the throng" (:14). Jesus told his disciples, "I know the ones I have chosen; but it is that the Scripture may be fulfilled, 'He who eats My bread has lifted up his heel against Me'" (Jn 13:18). The reference is "even my close friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted up his heel against me" (Ps 41:9). It demonstrates that God's Old Testament plan is being carried out and that it is important to understand. To emphasize this Jesus explained, "From now on I am telling you before it comes to pass, so when it does occur, you may believe that I am He" (Jn 13:19). There is the original prophecy and then a prophetic reminder. Jesus then follows up testifying, "Truly, truly, I say to you, that one of you will betray Me" (:21). The devil had put the motivation to betray Jesus into the heart of Judas (Jn 13:2). At the Last Supper Jesus warned "woe to that man by whom He is betrayed" (22:22). A person should scrutinize and not just accept anything he hears because we are responsible for our actions.

"Then one of the twelve, named Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said, 'What are you willing to give me to betray Him to you?' And they weighed out thirty pieces of silver to him" (Mt 26:14-15). Later he "came up accompanied by a large crowd with swords and clubs" (:47). Peter afterwards acknowledged that

"the Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit foretold by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus" (Ac 1:16). David said "let his days be few; let another take his office" (Ps 109:8). "Now he who was betraying Him gave them a sign . . . [and] Judas went to Jesus . . . and kissed Him" (:48-49). "Jesus said to him, 'Friend, do what you have come for'" (:50). Later "when Judas . . . saw that He had been condemned, he felt remorse and returned the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders" (27:3). This is seen in Zechariah's prophecy. "I took my staff Favor and cut it in pieces, to break my covenant which I had made with all the peoples" (Zec 11:10). "The flock who were watching me realized it was the word of the Lord" (:11). "I said to them, 'If it is good in your sight, give me my wages' . . . so they weighed out thirty shekels of silver" (:12). "Then the Lord said to me, 'Throw it to the potter, that magnificent price at which I was valued by them'" (:13). Accordingly Judas "threw the pieces of silver into the temple sanctuary and departed; and he went away and hanged himself" (Mt 27:5). The officials "conferred together and with the money bought the Potter's field as a burial place for strangers" (:7). "That which was spoken through Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled" (:9). God told Jeremiah, "'Go and buy a potter's earthenware jar . . . and break the jar in the sight of the men who accompany you'" (Jer 19:1,10). Furthermore, "'Say to them, 'Thus says the Lord of hosts, 'Just so will I break this people and this city, even as one breaks a potter's vessel, which cannot again be repaired'''" (:11).

Arrested

When you repeat something again to someone you reinforce its importance. When you reiterate a fact two

times in the same dialog you are saying it is twice as important. In Matthew 26:54 Jesus said, "How then will the Scriptures be fulfilled, which say that it must happen this way?" In verse 56 he said, "But all this has taken place to fulfill the Scriptures of the prophets." In the first verse he warns that "all those who take up the sword shall perish by the sword." In the second he asks, "Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest Me?" Jesus states that he is innocent saying, "Every day I used to sit in the temple teaching and you did not seize Me" (:55). He was then brought before the high priest and "they kept trying to obtain false testimony against Jesus, so that they might put Him to death. They did not find any, even though many false witnesses came forward" (Mt 26:59-60). Prophetic scripture says for Israel in Egypt to take a "lamb" (Ex 12:3) which is "unblemished" (:5). On the fourteenth day of the month it was to be killed (:6) and they were to "take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses" (:7). "The blood shall be a sign" (:13). Israel's being delivered from Egypt's bondage on Passover is prophetic of Christ's crucifixion and resurrection for the forgiveness of our sins.

In Acts 1:16 Peter refers to Psalm 109:8 as "the Scripture [which] had to be fulfilled" on the same subject as stated in Matthew 26:54,56. In a similar way this reference is used prophetically to describe the trial before the temple officials. "For they have opened up the wicked and deceitful mouth against me; they have spoken against me with a lying tongue" (Ps 109:2). Finally two false witnesses "came forward" (Mt 26:60). The high priest "said to Him, 'Do You not answer? What is it that these men are testifying against You?' But Jesus kept silent" (:62-63). "Like a lamb that is led to slaughter . . . He did not open His mouth" (Isa 53:7).

Then before Pilate "He did not answer him with regard to even a single charge, so the governor was quite amazed" (Mt 27:14). This is because Jesus is one "who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in His mouth" (1Pe 2:22). He leaves "an example for you to follow in His steps" (:21). "While being reviled, He did not revile in return . . . but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously" (:23). Pilate's wife told him, "'Have nothing to do with that righteous Man; for last night I suffered greatly in a dream because of Him'" (Mt 27:19). Pilate responded saying, "'I am innocent of this Man's blood'" (:24).

Accused

They kept interrogating Jesus expecting that he would eventually be found guilty of an offence against the law. Pilate said to the Jews, "'Take Him yourselves and crucify Him, for I find no guilt in Him'" (Jn 19:6). In the questioning the high priest asked, "'I adjure You by the living God, that You tell us whether You are the Christ, the Son of God'" (Mt 26:63). The phrasing of the question presumes a response. Jesus replied, "'You have said it yourself'" (:64). Then the high priest said, "'He has blasphemed! What further need do we have of witnesses? Behold you have now heard the blasphemy; what do you think?' They answered, 'He deserves death'" (:65-66). The Jews later told Pilate, "'We have a law, and by that law He ought to die because He made Himself out to be the Son of God'" (Jn 19:7). Their religion made up laws like this, but man's laws are not ethical just because they're laws. Peter said, "'Let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ--this Jesus whom you crucified'" (Ac 2:36).

Their decision resulted in "some [who] began to spit at Him, and to blindfold Him, and to beat Him with their fists" (Mk 14:65). Isaiah had said, "I did not cover My face from humiliation and spitting" (Isa 50:6). Micah prophesied, "With a rod they will smite the judge of Israel on the cheek" (Mic 5:1). Later Pilate's soldiers "kept beating His head with a reed, and spitting on Him" (Mk 15:19). The Jews were violent "accusing him vehemently" (Lk 23:10). "They cried out all together, saying, 'Away with this man'" (:18). "They kept on calling out, saying, 'Crucify, crucify Him!'" (:21). Herod's soldiers treated Jesus contemptuously, mocked him, and returned him to Pilate (Lk 23:11). Pilate responded "'I have found in Him no guilt demanding death' . . . [but] their voices began to prevail" (:22-23). Therefore "Pilate then took Jesus and scourged Him" (Jn 19:1). Micah prophesied, "'I gave My back to those who strike Me, and My cheeks to those who pluck out the beard'" (Mic 5:6). "The soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on His head, and put a purple robe on Him" (Jn 19:2). The Jews threatened, "'If you release this Man, you are no friend of Caesar'" (:12) "so he handed Him over to them to be crucified" (:16). "His appearance was marred more than any man and His form more than the sons of men" (Isa 52:14).

Crucified

Jesus was crucified at a place near the city called Golgotha. "They pierced my hands and my feet" (Ps 22:16). Isaiah prophesied that he would be "numbered with the transgressors" (Isa 53:12). Jesus himself said, "'I tell you that this which is written must be fulfilled in Me, 'And He was numbered with transgressors'; for that which refers to Me has its fulfillment'" (Lk 22:37). "They crucified two robbers with Him, one on His right and

one on His left" (Mk 15:27). Psalm 22 predicted the situation. "For dogs have surrounded me; a band of evildoers has encompassed me" (Ps 22:16). Isaiah foresaw that "many were astonished at you" (Isa 52:14); and he would "become a reproach to them" (Ps 109:25). "The people stood by, looking on" (Lk 23:35). Psalm 22 prophesied that "all who see me sneer at me" (Ps 22:7); and "when they see me, they wag their head" (Ps 109:25). "They open wide their mouth at me, as a ravening and a roaring lion" (Ps 22:13). "They separate with the lip, they wag the head" (:7-8). "Those passing by were hurling abuse at Him, wagging their heads" (Mt 27:39). "Even the rulers were sneering at Him" (Lk 23:35). Some commented, "'If You are the son of God, come down from the cross'" (Mt 27:40) and others said, "'He saved others; He cannot save Himself'" (:42). After all, in Psalm 22 there is a request to "deliver . . . my only life from the power of the dog" (Ps 22:20) in accordance with "let Him rescue him, because He delights in him" (:8). However, Isaiah prophesied that he "interceded for the transgressors" (Isa 53:12) and "Jesus was saying, 'Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing'" (Lk 23:34).

Isaiah clarifies God's purpose. "He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities" (Isa 53:5). "He poured out Himself to death . . . [and] bore the sin of many" (:12). The suffering is described as the agony of dried up strength and the tongue cleaving to the jaw (Ps 22:15). It is stated prophetically that, "They also gave me gall for food and for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink" (Ps 69:21). Jesus said, "'I am thirsty'" (Jn 19:28). "They gave Him wine to drink mixed with gall" (Mt 27:34). They offered him "sour wine upon a branch of hyssop" (Jn 19:29). It was said, "They divide my garments among them, and

for my clothing they cast lots" (Ps 22:18). The soldiers divided Jesus' garments among themselves (Jn 19:23). They "cast lots for it [the tunic] . . . to fulfill the Scriptures" (:24). Psalm 31 states, "Into your hand I commit my spirit; you have ransomed me" (:5). Jesus cried out loudly, "Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit" (Lk 23:46). Isaiah prophesied, "The chastening of our well-being fell upon Him, and by His scourging we are healed" (Isa 53:5). Peter says, "He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed" (1Pe 2:24). He uses a common verb meaning to heal. "Is anyone among you sick?" (Ja 5:14). Here it is the same verb Peter uses regarding bodily healing. We are to "call for the elders of the church and they are to pray over him" (:14) and to "confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed" (:16). We should appropriate what Jesus accomplished, otherwise he died in vain.

Resurrected

Jesus was telling them about his death and resurrection. "But the disciples understood none of these things, and the meaning of this statement was hidden from them, and they did not comprehend the things that were said" (Lk 18:33). "They were afraid to ask Him" (Mk 9:32). Peter's understanding of it was that he "began to rebuke Him, saying, 'God forbid it, Lord! This shall never happen to You'" (Mt 16:22). Jesus replied, "'You are not setting your mind on God's interests'" (:23). God is interested in what he does and you should focus on it too. Jesus explained, "'I lay down My life for the sheep'" (Jn 10:15). "'I lay it down on My own initiative . . . and I have authority to take it up again'" (:18). However, "He warned the disciples

that they should tell no one that He was the Christ" (Mt 16:20). Furthermore, "As they were coming down from the mountain, Jesus commanded them, saying, "Tell the vision to no one until the Son of Man has risen from the dead" (17:9). He also instructed, "After I have been raised, I will go ahead of you into Galilee" (26:32). He had, however, provided some knowledge. He gave them "the sign of Jonah the prophet; for . . . so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth" (12:39-40). There is also the example of Lazarus. When Jesus arrived in Bethany, Martha told him, "Lord, by this time there will be a stench, for he has been dead four days" (Jn 11:39). He said to her, "Did I not say to you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?" (:40). Then he cried, "Lazarus, come forth" (:43) and he was raised by God's power in the same way that "God has not only raised the Lord, but will also raise us up through His power" (1Co 6:14). Paul sought to "know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His suffering, being conformed to His death" (Php 3:10).

Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James came to the tomb the first day of the week. They found the stone sealing the entrance of the tomb rolled away and two angels standing nearby. They said, "Why do you seek the living One among the dead? He is not here, but He is risen" (Lk 24:6). This was to fulfill the prophecy: "For You will not abandon my soul to Scheol; nor will You allow Your Holy One to undergo decay" (Ps 16:10). The angels reminded them what they had been told saying that it was "just as He said" (Mt 28:6). They said, "Remember how He spoke to you while He was still in Galilee" (Lk 24:6). At that time "Jesus began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem . . . and be killed, and be raised up on the third day" (Mt 16:21). He had also said, "Destroy this

temple, and in three days I will raise it up" (Jn 2:19). This is why Jesus was accused of blasphemy. Before the high priest a witness stated that Jesus had said, "I am able to destroy the temple of God and to rebuild it in three days" (Mt 26:61). Jesus, himself, had explained why they didn't understand due to the parables because "seeing they do not see, and while hearing they do not hear" (13:13). Jesus also told Caiaphas that "hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming on the clouds of heaven" (26:64). They didn't accept that either. When the angels explained things to the women at the tomb "they remembered His words" (Lk 24:8). However, when they "were telling these things to the apstotles . . . these words appeared to them as nonsense, and they would not believe them" (:10-11). It is not a matter of just bad memory. Jesus specifically told the twelve that all things written would be accomplished (18:31). The end result in Jerusalem would be "they will kill Him; and on the third day He will rise again" (:33). Again, Mary Magdalene "reported to those who had been with Him . . . [and] when they heard that He was alive and had been seen by her, they refused to believe it" (Mk 15:10-11). Jesus was aware of their state of faith. He appeared to the group at dinner and "reproached them for their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they had not believed those who had seen Him after He had risen" (16:14).

Appeared

After being resurrected Jesus appeared "to them over a period of forty days" (Ac 1:30). "The rain fell upon the earth for forty days" (Ge 7:12) as judgment. They spied out the land for "forty days" (Nu 13:25) but then wandered "forty years" (:34) because of their

disobedience. Jesus was tested for "forty days" (Ac 1:3). Jonah preached to Nineveh for "forty days" (Jon 3:4) regarding repentance. During this period Jesus "presented himself alive . . . by many convincing proofs" (Ac 1:3). He also spoke of the "kingdom of God" (:3). It is said that the number forty is symbolic of a probationary period. A certain period of time was necessary to make the point that he had indeed risen from the dead. Also, he had some additional instructions for them because he would no longer be present with them in the same way. He had previously prayed, "I am no longer in the world; and yet they themselves are in the world" (Jn 17:11).

Jesus had taught before using the symbols of his flesh and blood. The Jews argued, saying, "How can this man give us His flesh to eat?" (Jn 6:52). In John 6:53-58 he mentions this eating six times and the drinking four times. His disciples commented, "This is a difficult statement; who can listen to it?" (:60). But if they can't comprehend this then Jesus replies, "What then if you see the Son of Man ascending to where He was before?" (:62). His point is unless you do this "you have no life in yourselves" (:53). Food and drink provide sustenance for life. He instructs that whoever "believes in him will have eternal life" (:40). He who obeys "abides in Me and I in him" (:56) and "will live forever" (:58). He explains, "I live because of the Father, so he who eats Me, he will also live because of Me" (:57). "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing" (:63). "I go to prepare a place for you . . . [and] will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also" (Jn 14:2-3). "I will raise him up on the last day" (6:54).

Ascended

Jesus told Nicodemus heavenly things (Jn 3:12). "No one has ascended into heaven, but He who descended from heaven: the Son of Man" (:13). Jesus knew "that He had come forth from God, and was going back to God" (13:3). "For the joy set before Him [he] endured the cross, despising the shame" (Heb 12:2). "Through the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (1Pe 3:21) "He had made purification of sins" (Heb 1:3) so we could have "clean hands and a pure heart" (Ps 24:4) and "may stand in His holy place" (:3). "Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?" (Lk 24:26). Jesus told them, "But now I am going to Him who sent He" (Jn 16:5). "He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high" (Heb 1:3) and "at the right hand of the throne of God" (12:2). There he "intercedes for us" (Ro 8:34). God "seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places" (Eph 1:20) and "bestowed on Him the name which is above every name" (Php 2:9). "You are the Lord Most High over all the earth; You are exalted far above all gods" (Ps 97:9). God then told him to "sit at My right hand until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet" (110:1).

John reports that, "After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven" (Rev 4:1). Ezekiel said that "the heavens were opened and I saw visions of God" (Ez 1:1). When Jesus was baptized "the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove and lighting on Him" (Mt 3:16). Stephen said, "I see the heavens opened up and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God" (Ac 7:56). In John's case a voice directed him to, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place" (Rev 4:1). He saw that "a throne was standing

in heaven, and One sitting on the throne" (:2). Isaiah said, "In the year of King Uzziah's death I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, lofty and exalted: (Isa 6:1). Ezekiel stated that "in the expanse that was over the heads of the cherubim something like a sapphire stone, in appearance resembling a throne, appeared above them" (Ez 10:1). John says, "He who was sitting was like a jasper stone and a sardis in appearance, and there was a rainbow around the throne" (Rev 4:3).

Jesus "led them out as far as Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them" (Lk 24:50). "After He said these things, He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight" (Ac 1:9). "He was received up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God" (Mk 16:19). "As they were gazing intently into the sky while He was going, behold, two men in white clothing stood beside them" (Ac 1:10). They said that Jesus would return "in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven" (:11). "You have ascended on high, You have led captive Your captives" (Ps 68:18). "When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him" (Col 2:15). "He gave gifts to men" (Eph 4:8). "To each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift" (:7).