

BASICS
of the
CHRISTIAN
FAITH
BIBLE,

A look at the teachings
of God's Word the Holy Bible
and
How they differ
from the doctrines of men

Special
Compact Edition

Prepared for TheTrueChristianChurch.org

PLEASE NOTE

This booklet edition of **Basics of the Christian Faith** is especially prepared for **The True Christian Church** and is composed of material that is taken from the book of the same name. For this reason this edition is available free from *thetruechristianchurch.org* in PDF format. This booklet is considerably shorter than the complete book, but has all the essential information necessary for anyone who wants to serve God and carry out the commandment of Jesus found at Matthew 28:19, 20.

All scriptures, unless noted otherwise, are from the *ASVME*, a modern language Bible derived from the *American Standard Version* of 1901. The *ASVME* has not yet been published. The abbreviation AKJV, which appears in some places in this booklet, refers to the Authorized (King James) Version.

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1 Will the Faith Be Found on Earth?

We call ourselves the True Christian church, not to boast, but to remind ourselves that we must always be true to the teachings, commandments, and leadership of our God, and his son our Lord Jesus Christ. Our name in its full form is The True and Faithful Christian Church.

We do not make any claim to be the only true church, but we know of no other association of Christians who are fully and faithfully carrying out all the words that Jesus commanded his followers at Matthew 28:19, 20.

Go therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the holy spirit, teaching them to observe all the things I commanded you, and look, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.

Notice that Jesus said they must teach all who became disciples to obey all the things that Jesus commanded. We know of no church that has fully carried out this command. In truth, most of the Churches have fallen far short in fulfilling the command of the Lord.

Two thousand years ago Jesus asked this question: *...when the Son of man comes, will he find the Faith on the earth?* (Luke 18:8)

You will find many translations say *will he find faith on the earth?* But that obscures what Jesus was really asking. The actual text says *the Faith*, and it is important to preserve what Jesus actually said, because he was not asking whether faith would be found but whether the Faith that he taught and founded would still exist. That is a far different question.

There are honest Christians today who would say an emphatic — NO! The Faith does not exist! But how can this be when TWO BILLION PEOPLE identify themselves as Christian? Because Jesus did not say, when the Son of man comes will he find people calling themselves Christians. No! He was not asking whether there would be Christians on the earth when he comes. He was asking whether the Faith would still be around. The Faith is the system of worship he established. He gathered his followers, organized them, and by the

holy spirit made them into the True Church after he was put to death. The Faith then is the True Church. So the question he was asking was will the True Church still exist.

So what honest Christians are saying is that none of the churches or religious associations on earth today give evidence of being The True Faith that began with Jesus. Neither the fact that they contain honest believers, and that they do fine works, or any other thing changes that truth, if they do not meet the requirements in the Bible for the true Faith, they are not the True Faith.

Jesus showed this emphatically when he said: *Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? And in thy name have cast out devils? And in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.* (Matthew 7:21-23. Authorized King James Version)

Jesus said that anyone who does not do the will of his Father is an evildoer, even if that person or group does “wonderful works” in his name!

Why? Well all kinds of people can do good works, or wonderful works, even if they do not claim to be Christian. What makes a Christian different is that they do God’s will. And God’s will is that they practice the True Faith.

So what is the True Faith that Jesus taught? It is made up of three parts: True Christian beliefs, Christian conduct, and Christian worship.

True Christian beliefs mean accepting and believing what Jesus and the Holy Bible teaches. Nothing less—and nothing more. The closing words at the end of the last book of the Bible, apply in principle to the entire Holy Bible and all that is taught and commanded by God therein.

I bear witness to everyone that hears the words of the prophecy of this book, if anyone should add to them, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book. And if anyone should take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his part from the tree of life, and out of the holy city, that are written in

this book. He who bears witness to these things says, Yes, I am coming quickly. Amen! Come, Lord Jesus. (Revelation 22:18-20)

Look at the three aspects of the true Faith and you will see why it seems that Jesus would not find The Faith if he came now. First, he would not find any group that is teaching precisely what he taught, in fact, a shock faces anyone who looks and believes in the teachings of the Bible and then compares them with the teachings of the churches. The cold hard fact is that what the churches teach is far removed from what Jesus taught.

If you are not too familiar with the Bible or with the beliefs of the churches of Christendom you might find this hard to believe. But go list the main beliefs of the churches and try and find them specifically mentioned in the Bible. You will be surprised at the result. Or read this booklet. Later we discuss the chasm between the doctrines of men as taught by the churches and what the Bible really teaches.

While the form of worship practiced by the various churches can differ quite a bit, you will also find that much does not agree with the form of worship taught by Jesus Christ.

And while most religions, including non-Christian religions, and even nonbelievers, seem to have some agreement on what constitutes good conduct, you will find that in many cases the conduct of those professing to be Christian and even those churches that claim to be Christian is not Christian.

We believe that the True Faith does not exist on the earth today. In this booklet our purpose is to make known the True Faith by examining what God's Holy Word teaches. We will see that what was foretold in 1 Timothy 4:1 has come to pass in our day: *But the spirit says definitely that in later times some will fall away from the faith, giving heed to seductive spirits and doctrines of demons...*

It is an urgent and necessary task and ministry to expose and fight against apostasy and false and blasphemous doctrines. Our task and ministry is to make known the true teachings found in God's Word and to provide a haven for true believers who follow God's command to *Come out of her, my people, so that you do not share in her sins, and so you do not receive her plagues. (Revelation 18:4)*

We believe that the True Faith must be restored. We believe that the True Faith *will* be restored. Many before us have claimed that they

have restored the true Faith, but they have failed. We must succeed. We will succeed!

What are the true Christian beliefs, Christian conduct, and Christian system of worship that we say do not exist on the earth today in a form that can be called The Faith that was received from Jesus? The purpose of this booklet is to answer those questions.

2 The Inspired Word of God

The Bible is the inspired Word of God. This means that God, by means of his holy spirit, caused a long line of men of faith to write down certain material, and then caused it to be collected together in various ways, so that in our day it forms a collective work we call the Holy Bible.

Some of these writings and materials are a historical narrative telling us things that occurred. This can have been derived from earlier records, as is shown in a number of references in the Hebrew Scriptures (Old Testament), or by the writer searching out the information and writing it down, which was what Luke, the physician, did in the Greek Christian Scriptures (New Testament). (1 Kings 11:41; 1 Kings 14:19; 1 Kings 14:29; 2 Kings 1:18; Luke 1:1-4)

Other writings, especially in the Hebrew Old Testament, are prophecies. Still others are wise counsel and poetry, and especially in the Greek New Testament, directions, specific counsel, and guidance.

God guided the writing, but often allowed the writer's personality to shine through. He also guided the collection of the pre-Christian writings into a book, and then later guided the Christian writings into the same book. So his servants now have the complete Bible. And that Bible is, in its very own words, *inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness.* (2 Timothy 3:16)

But the Bible had a great and powerful enemy, Satan the Devil. He is the great opposer, and would have liked to suppress and wipe out the Word of God. God did not allow that, but rather protected and guarded his Word through the many centuries. But Satan made God's faithful servants suffer because they sought to make the Divine Word known to all. They were tortured, ill-treated, imprisoned, murdered, and burnt at the stake. But by God's spirit they stood firm, and Satan lost the battle.

But at times, God does allow Satan to do certain things for a purpose. These work out as tests of faith for those who claim to be

Christian. As the author of the Bible, God caused his name to be written down almost seven thousand times in the Hebrew Old Testament. But God allowed Satan to influence men who lacked faith to remove his name from the Bible. By this action, God's name was not lost, nor did it become unknown, so two things happened. God's name remained known, but also, those who did not respect his name or majesty were revealed when they took the Divine Name out of their versions of the Bible.

Despite the removal of God's name from many Bibles, persons professing to be Christian and who read the Bible know what that name is, and that for eight hundred years it has been written as Jehovah. Since the letters v and i only became differentiated into u, v, and w, and i, j, and y, in recent centuries there is some variation in spelling, such as Yehowah, and Iehovah, but these are of no real consequence. The name has remained the same. In the last fifty years or so, mostly more secular scholars have favored Yahweh, but their arguments for the change are not persuasive.

In the year 1901, the translation of the Bible now known as the *American Standard Version*, which was the work of nineteen of the very top Bible scholars in the United States at that time, made the decision to fully restore the Divine Name in all the places that God had caused it to be written down in his Word. They explained it this way: *The change first proposed in the Appendix — that which substitutes “Jehovah” for “Lord” and “God” (printed in small capitals) — is one which will be unwelcome to many, because of the frequency and familiarity of the terms displaced. But the American Revisers, after a careful consideration, were brought to the unanimous conviction that a Jewish superstition, which regarded the Divine Name as too sacred to be uttered, ought no longer to dominate in the English or any other version of the Old Testament, as it fortunately does not in the numerous versions made by modern missionaries.*

In that shining moment of clarity and faith they restored the Divine Name of the author of the Bible to the places that God, the author of the Bible, had it written down in antiquity. And thus they undid the wrong of centuries where men under the influence of Satan the Devil had removed God's name from the Bible. But it was indeed only for one shining moment, because the very owners of the

American Standard Version only fifty some years later produced a revision that completely stripped God's name from the Bible. Since then there have been many translations, and more often than not they have removed God's name from their translations of the Bible, which is an act of sacrilege. Some versions have allowed the use of the name in a few places, and a very few have used the name throughout, but almost all use the secular form Yahweh, instead of the form that appears to have been given to Christians by Divine Providence, Jehovah.

We cannot, and will not, bow to satanically influenced superstition, no matter how much those under the influence may try to defend their assertions. But the lack of modern translations that are freely available and that use the divine name in the form long used by Christians, has made it necessary that we use a version of the Bible in modern English that is derived from the *American Standard Version*. At present that version or edition is referred to as the *ASVME*. It has not yet been published, although it is expected to become available in the future.

We would like to suggest that whenever we cite or quote a scripture that you look it up in the *American Standard Version* or in the Bible of your choice, and where you come upon the word LORD or GOD written in small capitals that you use the Divine Name, Jehovah, knowing that is the name that God, the author of the Bible, divinely inspired to be written in that place in his Word.

There is another warning, or caveat, that we would like to make. If a scripture seems different from what we quote, or from what we suggest when citing a scripture, look it up in other translations, because some translators, for reasons of their own, sometimes tamper with the scriptures and do not correctly translate certain passages.

It is a solemn and sacred duty for translators of the Word of God to be true to the Bible and what it says, but sadly many and even most fail in that obligation, which is a terrible and fearful failure and shows a profound disrespect for Almighty God and his Word the Bible. Because so many fail and lack faith, it makes it necessary that we be ever cautious and vigilant. *Do your best to present yourself approved to God, a workman that does not need to be ashamed, handling the word of truth aright.* (1 Timothy 2:15)

3 Let No Man Mislead You

For 6000 years Satan the devil has been luring mankind away from serving and worshipping God. He is very well experienced at it. He knows just what to do and how to do it. He is very skilled, but he is not perfect. He does not succeed with everyone. Do not let him succeed with you.

To avoid being tricked or fooled by Satan it is well to know his techniques. What are they? Well, he has different tried and true methods that work well with different people. We will take a look at them. It is important to realize that we are not alone. We have a helper if we allow ourselves to be helped. That is the key, we must ‘allow ourselves’. The Bible says: *Oppose the devil and he will flee from you.*—James 4:7

That is very good and valuable counsel, but let us take a look at the techniques used by the devil and his cohorts.

Tradition

Tradition has always been one of the devil's most effective tools. Just think of the arguments for tradition. “Things have *always* been that way!” The ideas we inherit we usually accept without question. If someone comes along and questions a traditional belief, are you going to believe all the wisdom of the scholarly men for 1000 or 2000 years, or are you going to believe someone who comes along and says it is not true? Those faithful scholars over the centuries cannot be wrong, can they? Yes they can! Jesus said of the important religious scholars of his day that they made the word of God invalid by their traditions. (Mark 7:13)

Oftimes, traditions are an accumulation of error. Satan lured Christendom into accepting erroneous beliefs and doctrines, often appealing to tradition. He lured them away from the true faith into grievous and God dishonoring error, and as years passed these errors became ossified and turned into doctrinal pillars of a church that had lost its way and been led astray. The true faith was abandoned in favor of false and unchristian doctrines and teachings that denied and

contradicted what our dear Savior had taught. The wise and scholarly can be wrong and common folk that believe and follow the teachings of the Bible can be right, as Jesus said in prayer to God. (Matthew 11:25)

Another technique of Satan is to cause people to deny his very existence. Satan is vain but he also really enjoys fooling people. Jesus believed in Satan and indeed knew him, but even if Satan did not exist we can still see his tricks in action.

So how else do Satan and his lackeys try to fool you, and try to get you to believe false doctrines?

Repetition

Studies have shown that if something is repeated often enough people will come to believe it. Take the Trinity. This is the doctrine that there is God the father, God the son, and God the Holy Spirit (Ghost), and these are not three gods but one God, and that they are co-equal and co-eternal. This is often called the three in one doctrine. Despite the fact that no advocate of the Trinity can find any scripture in the Bible that either names or describes the Trinity, many believe in it not only because of inherited tradition but because of *repetition*.

Despite the fact that their doctrine is absent from the Bible they not only believe it but they struggle to make some scriptures appear to support it. Their scholars have even intentionally altered the text of the Bible in an attempt to make it seem to agree with their godless and anti-Christian doctrine.

At times, in the past they have used physical coercion to make people agree with them even going as far as torture and burning at the stake. While physical coercion has now been mostly abandoned, other forms of coercion are still in use. A good example of psychological coercion much used in the past, although less so nowadays, is scaring people by threatening that those who do not accept their doctrines will burn in an eternal, unending realm of pain, torment, and agony in a perpetual fiery hell.

And Satan has other tricks. One briefly alluded to above, is mistranslating the Bible in places so it will seem in agreement with Christendom's devilish false teachings.

There is another technique that has been used that is called selective quotation. They isolate a scripture and then attempt to spin it so it appears to have a meaning that will agree with their false and blasphemous doctrines. In other cases, when they cannot spin a scripture, they will use excuses, trying to explain it away by claiming it doesn't deny their teachings.

One obvious example is John 14:28 where Jesus said: *my father is greater than I*. Their problem is obvious. The Trinity doctrine says Jesus and his father are coequal. So they disingenuously argue that he was meaning that his father was greater while he, Jesus, was on earth. The problem with that argument is painfully obvious. If you are equal, you are equal wherever you are. And anyway, that absurd argument is rejected and put to rest in First Corinthians 11:3 where God's word says *the head of the Christ is God*, and these words were written more than 20 years after Christ was enthroned in the heavens by his father.

Cacophony of Many Voices and Ideas

Another technique in our day has been to drown out the truth in a river of propaganda and burying it in a sea of sometimes discordant voices. There is so much religious propaganda out there, with thousands of voices on the Internet, radio waves, and printed material, attempting to drown out the truth of God's Holy Word.

An old and effective trick of Satan is to send out blind guides who seem important and are often charismatic. Jesus said of those guides *But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Because you shut up the Kingdom of heavens in front of men, for you do not enter in yourselves, neither do you allow them that are entering in to enter*. One very important scripture is Second Corinthians 4:3, 4 which shows that Satan has blinded unbelievers. It is important to note that unbelievers are not limited to those who don't believe in Jesus. In fact, in our day as in Jesus's day most of the blinded unbelievers are those who show by their beliefs that they do not accept all that Jesus taught. They do not believe all that he taught, so it is in this way they are unbelievers. (Matthew 23:13)

So why do they believe those false teachings? Look at it from their point of view. We know that if our doctor gives us advice we

believe it because we trust our doctor, and it can also be because we like our doctor. So too with our plumber, and electrician, dentist, auto mechanic, etc. They are experts. We are not. So it is generally true that we accept what they say. Even much more so, will we be inclined to believe what our religious teacher tells us.

We can see the power of Satan's techniques and why they are effective. It is difficult and uncomfortable to go against those we might feel know more than we do, especially if we like them, respect them, and maybe even love them, and even if we suspect that what they say might be flawed. This makes us very vulnerable. It is very hard for most of us to go against this form of opposition especially if it appears to be friendly. It takes courage and fortitude, and trust in our own judgment. That is why we should always seek divine guidance in such matters. If we waver in our confidence in our own judgment, we can always be sure of God if we rely on him, but we must not allow ourselves to be swayed by men.

Add to this that some doctrines seem comforting. Keep always in mind that Satan has three trademarks. They are lies, deception, and slander. This is what he used back in the Garden of Eden, and this is what he uses now. All these techniques we have just looked at, and the others he uses, all involve one or more of these trademarks, and usually all three, and if you recall what happened in Eden as narrated in Genesis 3:1-7 then you know exactly what he is going to do to us and everyone else as well.

So what can we do? Here is what the inspired Word of God tells us at Ephesians 6:10-18a: *Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God so that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the complete armor of God that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. Stand therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the readiness of the gospel of peace. Besides all this, taking up the shield of faith, with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the evil one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God. With all prayer and supplication praying at all seasons in the spirit, and stay alert with all perseverance, and prayers for all the holy ones.*

4 What Jesus and the Bible say about God

...there is no God but one. For though there are those that are called gods, whether in heaven or on earth, as there are many gods and many lords, yet to us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things, and we for him, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and we through him.—1 Corinthians 8:4-6

We must only worship one God. There are many gods both on earth and in heaven but we only worship one God and that is the Father. The Ten Commandments tell us we must worship only one God. Those other gods that people worship take various forms. Some are idols of stone, wood, and metal. Some are humans alive or dead. And some are spirit creatures such as Satan and the fallen angels. (Exodus 20:3; 1 Corinthians 8:4-6)

Examples of those whom some people regard as gods are shown by these scriptural quotes to which we have added emphasis:

*On an appointed day Herod clothed himself in royal apparel, and sat on the throne, and made a speech to them. And the people cried out: **The voice of a god**, and not of a man. And immediately an angel of the Lord struck him, because he did not give God the glory, and he was eaten by worms, and he breathed his last.—Acts 12:22*

*...in whom **the god of this world** [Satan] has blinded the minds of the unbelieving, so that the light of the good news of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should not shine forth upon them.—2 Corinthians 4:4*

*Let no man rob you of your prize by taking delight in a false humility and **the worship of the angels**, detailing the things he says he has seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind...—Colossians 2:18*

*And the rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, that **they should not worship demons, and the idols of gold, and of***

silver, and of copper, and of stone, and of wood, which can neither see, nor hear, nor walk.—Revelation 9:20

We must obey God and do his will. We must emulate his quality of love. Since he made all things through his son, our Lord Jesus Christ, we must acknowledge God as Creator. He is the one who chooses us and grants to us his holy spirit. We must worship God and God alone. When we pray, we pray to God. We must pray to no other. God, and only God, is who answers our prayers. (Acts 5:29; 1 John 2:17, 4:7, 8; Ephesians 1:3-5; John 14:26; Acts 2:1-4; 1 Peter 1:12; Matthew 6:6-9)

God is eternal. God is all powerful. God sees all and knows all things. And it is God who will reward us for our faithfulness. God is our Father and we must hold no other as equal to God—to our Father. He is the only truly eternal one. He was alone until he created the Word who became our Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Timothy 1:17; Genesis 17:1; 1 John 3:20; Matthew 5:11, 12; Isaiah 45:5, 6)

5 What the Bible says about Jesus

Jesus Christ is the only begotten son of God. That means he is the only one directly created by God. All others in the universe, and all things in the universe, were created by and through Jesus Christ.

To understand who Jesus is, and the true depth of his sacrifice in coming to this earth and dying upon a stake, we need only read John 1:1. *If* we read it in the original language. The translation of that scripture in most Bibles is an indictment of Christendom, because they have purposely mistranslated it, so that it might appear to support the Babylonish doctrine of the Trinity, which they have dragged in from pagan sources and foisted upon professed Christians.

They claim it says: *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.* That is a false and misleading translation. This is what the scripture actually says:

IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE WORD AND THE WORD WAS WITH THE GOD AND A GOD WAS THE WORD—John 1:1 *a literal translation of the Greek text of the Bible* (Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ Λόγος καὶ ὁ Λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν Θεόν καὶ Θεὸς ἦν ὁ Λόγος)

So the correct literal translation of John 1:1 is, *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was a god.* But translated that way, is that not saying there is more than one God? To ask that question is to ignore what the Bible actually says. The Bible does not say there is only one god, but what it says is that there are many gods and many lords, but we only worship one God and only serve one Lord. (1 Corinthians 8:4-6)

In the Bible even the angels are referred to as gods. Psalm 8:4 is translated as, *What is man, that you are mindful of him? And the son of man, that you care for him? For you have made him a little lower than the angels, and crown him with glory and honor.* The original Hebrew actually says, *For you have made him a little lower than the gods...* The word *god* refers to any spirit. The important thing is that Christians only worship one God, and one Lord. Just as the son of a man made of flesh is a man of flesh, so too the son of God, the Word, would be a god.

And knowing what that scripture actually says helps us to appreciate the true sacrifice that our Lord Jesus Christ made in coming to this earth and sacrificing himself for our sake. *But he emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being made in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, the death of the stake.* (Philippians 2:7, 8)

After telling us that the Word was a god, John goes on to tell us, *All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that has been made.* It tells us that God made all things through the Word, who became our Lord Jesus Christ. *Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. Because by him all things were created, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things have been created through him, and for him.* (John 1:3; Colossians 1:15, 16)

That fact that Jesus was the ‘firstborn’ of all creation tells us that he was created by God and did not always exist as is claimed by those who believe the blasphemous Trinity doctrine, which claims that Jesus was not created.

Another claim that is made is that Jesus was not just a man but was an incarnation. The Bible contradicts that claim. Note that John also says *And the Word became flesh...* It does not say that the word was incarnated or took on flesh, or anything like that, but it says he became flesh. So Jesus was completely a man. He was not a god-man. He was not God, according to the Holy Scriptures, but solely a man and nothing else. (John 1:14)

In being a man, as Adam was, he could be a genuine and complete sacrifice to buy back the life that Adam had lost, and also be a genuine ransom for all of our sins. (Hebrews 10:10, 12, 14, 19-21; 1 Corinthians 15:20-22, 45)

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, glory as of the only-begotten from the Father), full of grace and truth. (John 3:16; John 1:14)

God did this, obviously with the willing agreement of the Word, because four thousand years earlier, Adam, the first man on earth was

unfaithful and brought about the sentence of death on all mankind. The only way this could be corrected is by the sacrifice of an equal. Adam was perfect until he sinned. Only a perfect man, but one without sin, could redeem mankind from the sentence of death. Jesus was that one. He not only redeemed us from the sentence of death that the first man Adam brought upon mankind, but since we are imperfect and sinful, he redeemed us from our own sins as well. (Romans 5:12-14, 18; Romans 4:25; Matthew 20:28; Hebrews 4:15; 1 Corinthians 15:21, 22, 45; Romans 5:13)

To be a redeemer for mankind, Jesus had to be exactly the same as Adam, that is wholly and completely a man. He could not be an incarnation, because if he was, he would not be completely a human in every sense. No incarnation or god-man would qualify as a ransom—as a Redeemer. Likewise, for his redeeming of us from our sins, he had to be completely what we are without reservation. Jesus was fully and completely human. To claim that Jesus was an incarnation, to claim that Jesus is God, is not only a denial of the Bible, but it is the denial of the Christ. (John 1:14)

To claim that Jesus is God is to claim that Jesus is equal to God and that is not only a denial of what the Holy Bible teaches us, it is also a gross blasphemy. (John 14:28; 1 Corinthians 11:3)

The Bible tells us that while Jesus in his pre-human existence as the Word was a mighty spirit he gave absolutely no consideration to try to make himself equal to God. To do as some have done, including some translators, and twist the scriptures to appear to mean the very opposite is a vile and God accursed blasphemy. (Philippians 2:5-11)

Jesus never claimed equality with God. Jesus never claimed to be God. Only men, who are in truth enemies of God and enemies of Christ Jesus, make that claim.

Jesus always showed himself as subject to God who is his Father and our Father. He made this plain on his last day on earth when he told Mary Magdalene to give this message to the Apostles: *I am ascending to my Father and your Father, and my God and your God.* (John 20:17)

Jesus always acknowledged the headship of his Father, God. While he was here on Earth, he said, *If you loved me, you would rejoice, because I go to the Father, for the Father is greater than I.*

(John 14:28) And some twenty or so years after his being put to death, and being resurrected and ascending to sit at the right hand of his Father in the heavens, he acknowledged that God is head of the Christ. (1 Corinthians 11:3)

At his baptism, it was most clearly demonstrated that he was not God. This event is described in this way in the Bible: *And Jesus when he was baptized, went up immediately from the water, and look, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the spirit of God descending like a dove, and coming upon him, and look, a voice out of the heavens, saying, This is my Son, the beloved, in whom I am well pleased.* (Matthew 3:16, 17) So the Father of Jesus, who is also our Father, spoke from the heavens, while Jesus was on Earth, and God's holy spirit descended from heaven, and came upon Jesus. Let us repeat that. God was in heaven, Jesus was on Earth, and the holy spirit traveled from God to Jesus. To all who can see, they were each shown in a different location, evidencing that God and Jesus are not the same. Over and over, while on Earth, Jesus emphasized that it was not his will, but his Father's will that prevailed. Even in heaven, years later, it was his Father's will and not his. (Matthew 26:39; Mark 14:36; Luke 22:42; John 5:30; 6:38)

Sometime in the year 1 BCE, God by means of his holy spirit implanted the life force of his only-begotten son, the Word, into the womb of a betrothed Jewish virgin by the name of Mary. (Luke 1:26-38; Matthew 1:20; John 1:14, 18)

Near the end of the first century BCE, Mary and her husband Joseph, both of whom were descendants of King David, himself a descendant of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, welcomed the birth of a baby boy whom they named Jesus. (Matthew 1:20, 21, 25; Matthew 1:6-16 *the genealogy of Joseph*; Luke 3:23-31 *the genealogy of Mary*; Matthew 1:2-6; Luke 3:31-34)

Jesus was born in late 1 BCE, not in 4 BCE or earlier. When he was about 30 years old, in 29 CE (AD), he began his ministry. It lasted about 3½ years and he was put to death in the spring of 33 CE (AD).

At the end of his earthly ministry he told his disciples that God would send his holy spirit to remind them of the things that he taught. (John 15:26) In addition, on at least two occasions his disciples John and Paul received direct revelations. (2 Corinthians 12:1-4;

Revelation 1:1-3, 9-11) While Jesus was on earth he taught his disciples many things, not all of which would be written down, as the aged Apostle John comments at John 21:25. The important things they did not recall would be brought back to mind by God's holy spirit. (John 14:25,26; John 15:26; John 16:12,13) Therefore both the counsel spoken directly by Jesus Christ and the things brought to mind by God's holy spirit form a whole, a complete body of teaching.

Since Christ guides the congregation, then all counsel found in the New Testament, the Greek Holy Scriptures, is in essence from Christ. (Matthew 16:24, 23:10; John 13:15; 1 Peter 2:21)

6 What the Bible says about the holy spirit

And Jesus when he was baptized, went up immediately from the water, and look, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the spirit of God descending like a dove, and coming upon him, and look, a voice out of the heavens, saying, This is my Son, the beloved, in whom I am well pleased.

(Matthew 3:16, 17)

While Matthew's description of the baptism of Jesus clearly shows that God, Jesus, and the holy spirit are not the same, and that the man-made doctrine of the Trinity is false, it might make someone wonder what the holy spirit really is.

Some make the gross error of claiming that the holy spirit is a person of equal power, and authority, and eternity, as God. This is an evil and outrageous lie. The scripture you just read in Matthew, Chapter 3, clearly shows that is not true, as do all other references to the holy spirit in the Bible. The fact that the holy spirit was used to guide and direct Christians does not make it a person. When a person in charge or command gives an order or instructions in a letter or in some other form of communication, that letter or method of communication does not become a person. Such an idea is totally absurd. Likewise, the suggestion that the holy spirit, sent forth by God, is not just a force from God, but is a person in itself is outrageous and absurd. (Acts 13:2, 4)

God is the Creator and ruler of all. Our Lord Jesus Christ is his only-begotten Son, the only one directly created by God. The spirit of God, his holy spirit, is what God uses to carry out his will.

To understand what the spirit is it is well to look at the words in the Bible that are translated *spirit*. In the Old Testament which was written in the Hebrew language the word used was *ruach*. It is usually translated by one of three English words, breath, wind, and spirit. Which one is used is mostly the one the translator decides to use.

For instance, at Genesis 1:2, most translators say, *the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters*. But at Genesis 8:1 they translate it this way, *and God made a wind to pass over the earth, and*

the waters subsided. You will notice that what is said in both scriptures is very similar, so why is it translated two different ways? The two different translations of the same word in similar situations imply a difference that is not inherent in the scriptures.

What you will notice is that in both cases a force from God moves over the waters. In both circumstances the earth is covered with water, and in each case a force from God is involved. In the Authorized (King James) Translation, the word *ruach* is translated as spirit or Spirit some 232 times, and as wind, 92 times, and as breath, 27 times. You will observe there is some interpretation at work in some of those cases.

If you were to look closely at those occurrences where God is involved, you would notice that it is a force from God, and is not a living creature. It is not a person. Trinitarians claim it is a person, but notice when the word is used in connection with people. At Genesis 41:8 it says of Pharaoh of Egypt, *And it came about in the morning that his spirit was troubled.* Would anyone claim that *his spirit* was a separate person from Pharaoh?

Look at Genesis 45:27 where it says, *And they told him all the words of Joseph, which he had said to them. And when he saw the wagons which Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of Jacob their father revived.* It clearly means that Jacob felt better emotionally, not that a separate person, his spirit, had revived. Such a suggestion seems ridiculous. So if it is ridiculous in the case of men, why would it make any sense that God's spirit is a separate person from God? It just plain doesn't. God's spirit is clearly a force from God and not some third person of a Trinity.

But what about in the New Testament? In Greek the word that is translated spirit is *pneuma*. And what does *pneuma* mean? Exactly the same as *ruach*. It is translated as wind, breath, or spirit, just like *ruach*. So it makes no more sense to make out that God's spirit is a person in the Greek than it does in the Hebrew.

Look at Romans 8:16 which says, *The spirit itself bears witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.* If the spirit, the holy spirit, is a separate person, then what about our spirit, is it also a separate person? To be consistent it would have to be. The problems that causes, and the absurdity of it all, is very obvious. Clearly, the holy spirit is a force from God and not a separate person.

So where did the idea of the God's holy spirit being a separate person come from. The fact is that it is inherent in the false doctrine of the Trinity. Outside of God's people who believed in one true God and not a triune God, most of the pagans believed in some form of a Trinity. When Constantine entered Rome on the 29 of October of the year 312, there were three religions prominent in Rome. The Roman religion, which was the religion of Constantine, the Christians, and the cult of Isis and Osiris.

Constantine legalized the Christian religion, which had drifted away from the true Christian religion, and he poured out favors upon its prominent leaders. Over the next ninety years or so, the church, which claimed to be Christian, adsorbed many of the false doctrines of the Roman religion and the cult of Isis and Osiris.

Prominent in the cult of Isis was the trinity of Osiris, the father, Horus, the son, and Isis, the mother. The father, the son, and the mother. When adopted by the Church it became the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. By making the holy spirit a person, they now matched the pagan religious trinity. The pagan trinities, and there were quite a few, all had the mother figure, thus by personalizing the holy spirit the Church was able to take its place alongside all the other religions. It abandoned the religion God had given to Israel and the pure worship Jesus had taught his followers. In the 300s, at the latest, True Christianity died, and was replaced by a fake Christianity.

Christians were forewarned that this would occur, yet it seems most were fooled when it came about. *Let no man deceive you in any way, for it will not be, unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, he that opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship. So that he sits down in the temple of God, setting himself up as a god.* (2 Thessalonians 2:3-12)

The holy spirit is a powerful force that comes from Almighty God and is ever present to aid and assist the people of God. So we should seek the aid and guidance of the holy spirit, in full knowledge that it is a powerful helper and force from God to his people but is not a separate person as the fallen and the apostates claim. We must worship the one True God, and serve our Lord Jesus Christ, with the help of God's holy spirit.

7 Death, Resurrection, and Paradise

One day Jesus received word that his friend Lazarus was sick. The message was sent by Mary and Martha of Bethany, the sisters of Lazarus. By the time Jesus arrived, Lazarus had been dead for four days. As Jesus approached, he was met by Martha, and he told her, *Your brother will rise.*

Jesus intended to resurrect Lazarus, but Martha misunderstood what Jesus meant. So she said to Jesus, *I know he will rise in the resurrection on the last day.* (John 11:1-45)

Notice closely what she said, because it reflects what God's people believed when Jesus was on this earth. Notice too that Jesus did not say she was wrong. Why? Because what she said is what the Bible teaches.

And what does the Bible teach about death and resurrection? It is quite different from what a lot of people believe.

What does the Bible say happens when we die? Do we go to heaven? Take a look at what Martha and all others of God's people believed when Jesus was with us. *...and at that time your people will be delivered, everyone who is found written in the book. And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.—*Daniel 12:1b, 2

So you see, what Martha believed came from the Bible, that the faithful would be resurrected on the last day. In the book of Revelation, the very last book of the Bible, it tells us the same thing as the book of Daniel. (Revelation 20:11-13)

So what the Bible says is that the dead will be raised on what Martha called "the last day", the time when the resurrection takes place. Notice that not only did Jesus not say she was wrong, but he never taught anything different while he was on Earth, or after he was resurrected and raised to a position of glory next to his Father in the heavens. Go take a look at the Bible. Try and find any scripture that says anyone will go to heaven when they die. Look for a scripture that explicitly tells us that our loved ones are in heaven right now. People can, and regrettably do, make their own interpretation of scripture and

claim it says something that it does not, but find a scripture that clearly and unequivocally says that we go to heaven when we die.

What the Bible teaches is much kinder. Would you like to be in heaven looking down at all the troubles, heartaches, and suffering that your family may go through when you are gone, and not be able to do anything to help? The Bible says you will not, but will lie as in sleep until the blessed resurrection that Martha and all faithful men and women back in Bible times and in our day look forward to in the future.

But what does the Bible tell us happens when we die? *...for dust you are, and to dust you will return.* When our mortal body returns to dust, what becomes of us? The Bible clearly tells us that we are unconscious. *Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might, for there is no work, nor reason, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in Sheol, where you are going.* A few verses earlier Ecclesiastes 9:5 tells us: *For the living know that they will die, but the dead do not know anything, neither do they have a reward anymore, for the memory of them is forgotten.* (Genesis 3:19; Ecclesiastes 9:10; Psalm 104:29; Ecclesiastes 3:20; 12:7)

None of this should make us feel bad, however, because what this tells us is that the dead are unconscious. It tells us that they are not in heaven, but it also tells us that they are not suffering in any way, whether physically or mentally. They are as if asleep. (1 Thessalonians 4:14)

Now if the mortal body of the dead has decayed and returned to dust, and if they are not conscious, where are they? Do they have an immortal soul that is at rest somewhere? Not according to the Bible. (Genesis 3:19)

In Genesis chapter two, it tells us of the creation of man. *And Jehovah God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul.* Notice what it says. It does not say that God gave man a living soul. Rather, it says that man became a living soul. God created a physical body for the first man and breathed in the breath of life. God gave the life to man. But it does not say that he implanted or incarnated an immortal spirit into man. When man's life ceased, that life returned to the giver of life. Life in essence returned to God, but no spirit flew off to the heavens or anywhere else.

When a person dies, whether a good person or a bad person, he or she just plain and simply ceases to exist. Anyone looking for a scripture that explicitly says otherwise, will look in vain. Again, we keep using the word explicitly because there are many who take the scriptures and try to imply they say something that they do not. In doing this, in trying to alter the meaning of the scriptures, they do themselves a grave disservice as they are inviting the wrath and disapproval of Almighty God. (2 Peter 3:16)

But if the dead are to be raised on that last day, where are they until then? Simply put, they are in the memory of God, which is the very best and safest place to be. Remember that God did not make the universe and all that is in it from pre-existing material. He created it out of nothing through his son Jesus Christ. He created every atom, every subparticle, every entity of whatever description. It all came from him. (Colossians 1:16)

God knows all things. The Bible tells us he knows when a sparrow falls. He knows every particle in existence. And he very thoroughly knows us down to every atom and molecule in our body, and every thought and memory in our mind. (Matthew 10:29: Hebrews 4:12)

So God is able to raise us to life again, correcting our shortcomings and infirmities, but leaving intact those things he chooses to leave intact. And one thing he does not change is our free will, because he chooses to have as his servants only those who serve him of their own free will.

Where will they be raised to life? The vast bulk of mankind will be raised to life on this earth. Will this not overwhelm the resources of the planet? The Bible does not have much more to say about the resurrection beyond a few brief references, because we do not need to know any more than it tells us, but keep in mind that the Bible says all things will be new. God will take care of everything perfectly and to an extent that it will result in unending joy and happiness to those blessed by being resurrected and those who live to see that wondrous time. (Revelation 1:5; 20:13; 21:1-7)

There was something Jesus did not tell Martha when she correctly referred to the resurrection on the last day. It was something he would reveal later. The Bible refers to it as a mystery. Some of those who are faithful to God would not be resurrected to life on

earth, but to life in the heavens. Christ Jesus would originate a New Covenant with his faithful followers that would replace the Old Covenant that came through Moses. Those in that covenant will receive a heavenly resurrection. And those covenant followers of Jesus who survive until his coming will be elevated to life in the heavens. (1 Thessalonian 4:17; Luke 22:29, 30)

The Bible tells us at 1 Corinthians 15:42-54 that the faithful followers of Jesus who are in the New Covenant with him, when they die will have their physical body replaced by a spiritual body, so that they will be like Jesus. While on earth they have a physical body made of dust like Adam, when raised to life in the heavens they will be given a spiritual body just like Jesus. The Bible is very emphatic about this. In that scripture it says *Now this I say, brothers, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, neither does corruption inherit incorruption.* Our physical body here on earth is made of flesh, which as Jesus showed represents our body, and the blood that courses through our veins, just as when Jesus used the unleavened bread to represent his body, his flesh, and the wine to represent his blood. (Luke 22:19, 20)

There is a question that naturally comes to mind. In all four gospels, we are told that when Mary Magdalene and other disciples of Jesus went on the first day of the week to the tomb where he had been laid they found it empty. His body was not there. Matthew, Mark, and Luke, tell us that they were informed by angels that he had risen. At Luke 24:6 the angels asked *Why are you looking for the living among the dead? He is not here but he has risen.*

But his body? What happened to his body? When Mary Magdalene and the others wondered about that, they were told by the angels: *He is not here. He has been raised up.* The angels said nothing else about what may have happened to the body of Jesus. Since Mary Magdalene encountered Jesus shortly after, it is very easy to conclude that Jesus had been raised to life body and all, But there is a problem with that conclusion. (Matthew 28:1-15; Mark 16:1-8; Luke 24:1-12; John 20:1-18)

As noted above, the Apostle Paul, under divine inspiration, said that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God. A fleshly body, cannot live in the heavens. What is the explanation? We cannot, and must not, go beyond the scriptures, nor can we accept an

explanation that contradicts the holy inspired scriptures. Nor can we apply an explanation that does not take all of God's inspired word into consideration. Make no mistake about it, the Bible clearly shows that the term 'flesh' refers to the physical body, the flesh, muscles, sinews, organs, and skeletal structure, of the body, with the exception of the blood which is regarded as separate and sacred since it is the one body component that can be drained.

At Leviticus 17:11 it says *For the life of the flesh is in the blood...* Notice that it refers to the body as the flesh. The term flesh and blood refers to the whole creature both the body and the blood. Therefore when the Bible says flesh and blood it means the body in its entirety along with the blood. Jesus was raised up a spirit. His body was removed by God. (1 Corinthians 15:45) What became of his physical body the scriptures do not say, but they make absolutely clear that it could not have gone to heaven. It is reminiscent of what happened to the body of Moses. The Apostle Paul was not lying when he wrote those words at First Corinthians and he was writing under inspiration from God and the Bible says *it is impossible for God to lie*. We must not attempt to force our own ideas onto the Bible. (Hebrews 6:18; Deuteronomy 34:5-6)

A Closer Look

It is well that we take a closer look at what Jesus Christ and the Bible teaches us about a number of essential things.

We have already seen that Jesus by his death on a stake ransomed mankind from inherited death and the punishment that would come as a result of our own sins.

It is important to appreciate that God created Adam perfect. And it is important to realize that Adam was created to live, not to die. What the Bible says about Adam, Jesus, and the ransom, would make no sense if Adam was created just to die in the end.

In fact, Paul discussed this at some length in Romans 5:6-21. In verse twelve, he says *...through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death passed to all men, because all sinned...* Notice that Adam sinned and death came as a result of that sin. In Genesis 3:17-34, God passed sentence on Adam for

disobedience. That sentence was death—physical death. The Bible clearly shows that to be the case. Physical death came through Adam, and the only way this would make sense is if Adam was originally not intended to die.

God did not create Adam to live a while and then die and go to heaven. God made the angelic spirits to populate the heavens, and he made man to populate the Earth. Any suggestion otherwise contradicts the Bible. *He makes his angels spirits...* says Psalm 104:4. *The heavens are the heavens of Jehovah, but the earth he has given to the children of men.* (Psalm 115:16)

What this means is that mankind was intended to live forever, not to die and go to heaven. Therefore the sacrifice of Jesus redeemed mankind from that sentence of death. But if that is so, why after Jesus died for mankind do we still die?

The answer to that question is very important because it is much misunderstood and this leads to many wrong ideas, so let us go through it step-by-step.

When Jesus was put to death he redeemed all mankind. No more than fifty days later he went to heaven and was enthroned at his father's right hand. (Hebrews 12:2; Revelation 5:2-14) In accord with Jesus's promise holy spirit was poured out on his servants. (Revelation 16:7-15; Acts 2:1-4) He also presented his shed blood as a ransom for mankind. (Hebrews 9:11, 12)

That ransom was immediately applicable in the sense that now the faithful servants of God in this New Covenant could look forward to a resurrection of life, that is, if they died faithful they would live forever, and be raised to life, not on this earth but in the heavens.

(Hebrews 3:1; Romans 8:30; Philippians 3:11, 20, 21; 1 Corinthians 15:51-53; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-17)

Since the value of that sacrifice would cover all who ever lived, they will attain life if they died faithful, and others can attain life if they submit to God. They will have an opportunity to live on a paradise earth. (Revelation 20:11-15)

These faithful followers of Jesus who are part of the heavenly calling, were not immediately called to life in the heavens. When Jesus died, no one went to heaven except Jesus.

In Peter's speech, which he gave less than two months after the death of Jesus, Peter said of the patriarch David, that he did not

ascend to the heavens. (Acts 2:3, 4) In fact, at John 3:13 we are told *And no one has ascended into heaven, except the one who descended out of heaven, the Son of man, who is in heaven.*

The book of First Thessalonians was written almost twenty years after Jesus died and at that time no one had ascended to heaven. (1 Thessalonians 4:14-17) The Book of Revelation was written close to the end of the First Century, which is more than sixty years after Jesus died, and the faithful dead had not yet been resurrected. (Revelation 6:9-11)

This then raises the question, have the faithful dead, who are in a covenant with Jesus Christ, been resurrected yet? And if not, how much longer will they sleep? And those who have not covenanted with Jesus, or who died prior to his sacrifice, what of them?

Adam was created to live forever. God warned Adam that, *...of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you must not eat from it, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die.* This was no metaphorical or spiritual death. This meant that if he ate from the tree, and of course he ended up doing just that, he would die—his physical body would die and decay into the dust of the earth. (Genesis 3:17-19)

God intended man to live on the earth forever. Man was not created to populate the heavens. God created the angels to live in the heavens. We have already pointed out that Acts 2:34 tells us that King David, the ruler of the united kingdom of Israel, never ascended into the heavens. David lived about three thousand years ago. David was not alone in not going to heaven. When Jesus came to this earth some two thousand years ago, it had been about four thousand years since Adam died and returned to dust. At John 3:13 we are told that no man had gone to heaven. Truly, man was intended to live forever on this earth.

Because Adam, by his sin, brought the sentence of death on all his descendants, and thus all of mankind, God sent his son, Jesus Christ, to redeem, that is ransom, all those who would put faith in him. Those who put faith in him would partake of what the Bible calls the heavenly calling. So those who put faith in him, according to how that faith is defined in the Bible, would inherit life in the heavens. This means that when Jesus comes, if they are dead they will be resurrected to life in the heavens, and if they are still alive, they will

be elevated to life in the heavens. (Romans 5:12, 15; John 3:16; Hebrews 3:1; 1 Corinthians 15:51-53; 1 Thessalonians 4:17)

As we have seen, this had not happened by the end of the first century and it has not occurred yet. It will occur at what the Bible calls “the last trumpet” and Martha called “the last day”, that is the end of the age. We know it has not occurred because the Bible tells us everyone will know when the time comes. (Acts 1:11; Revelation 1:7)

But what of the rest of mankind? What of the faithful men and women of old? What of all the people that lived both before and after Jesus? What of all other people? We know where good people will live, because Jesus said that the meek will inherit the earth. The meek are the good people. We should never misunderstand the word meek as it is used in the Bible. It has been said that our English word meek does not have the same range of meaning as the original Greek word. We realize this if we consider that Jesus used the same word to describe himself, and the Bible tells us he will destroy the wicked. He will be the victor at the battle of Armageddon. (Matthew 5:5; Matthew 11:29)

In Revelation 21:2, 3, it says *And I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of the throne saying, “Look, the tent of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them, and be their God.”* You will notice it does not say that men will go up to heaven, but rather the New Jerusalem comes down to them. While it does so in spiritual sense, this still shows us that mankind will dwell on the earth, not in the heavens. Although it will be a transformed earth. (Revelation 21:1)

The Bible tells us that the dead will be judged according to their deeds. Those who are judged favorably will inherit eternal life. Death will then cease to exist. The death inherited from Adam will be no more, as the ransom paid by Jesus Christ will be applied to mankind. (Revelation 20:11-15)

So the dead in Christ, that is, the faithful in a covenant relationship with Jesus, will go to life in the heavens for a thousand years, and the rest of the dead who prove worthy will dwell forever on a paradise earth.

8 Where Do the Wicked Go?

In some ways, the most wicked and evil of all the false doctrines is the doctrine of hell fire. The purpose of the doctrine, no matter how much its advocates deny it, is to portray our loving heavenly Father, Almighty God, as cruel, heartless, and merciless. They advocate a God who is willing to inflict unremitting torture for all eternity upon some part of his creation. It truly is, as the Bible says, a doctrine of demons. What the Bible says is quite different from the doctrines of the hell fire preachers. *O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.* (Psalm 106:1; 107:1; 118:1-4; 136:1 AKJV)

Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils. (1 Timothy 4:1 AKJV) And that is exactly what happened. The doctrine of hell fire was dragged in from pagan religions and cruelly forced upon Christians. Its twofold purpose was to bring vile reproach on our beloved heavenly father, and our loving Lord Jesus Christ, and terrify Christians into accepting other false and unchristian, tainted, and polluted, doctrines of demons. Note how the doctrine of the Trinity was imposed by such cruel and crafty techniques: *And they that have done good shall go into life everlasting; and they that have done evil, into everlasting fire. This is the catholic faith; which except a man believe truly and firmly, he cannot be saved.*—Athanasian Creed

What does the Bible say about the doctrine of hell fire?

There are four words in the original Bible, as it was inspired by God, that the Authorized King James Bible translates with the word *hell*. Bible versions differ from one another as to when they translate the original Bible words as hell or not. The Authorized King James Bible even disagrees with itself.

These four words are *Sheol* which is the only word in the Hebrew Old Testament. In the Greek New Testament the remaining three are *Gehenna*, *Hades*, and *Tartaroo*. The word *Sheol* occurs 66 times in

the Hebrew Scriptures. *Sheol* is translated as hell 31 times; as *grave* 31 times; as *pit* three times; and it is not translated one time. The translators seem to have translated it hell whenever they could, but as grave or pit when it did not meet their doctrinal beliefs. Although, even there they made unusual choices.

For instance, they translated Jonah 2:2 as *...I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the LORD, and he heard me; out of the belly of hell cried I, and thou heardest my voice.* In this scripture, the Authorized King James Version has *hell* as being in the stomach of the great sea creature that swallowed Jonah. If you feel that is ridiculous and that it is not really saying that, then what is it saying? If it does not mean that he was in a burning hell, then what does it mean all the other times it translates *Sheol* as hell?

That is why most modern translations avoid the use of the word *hell* to translate the Hebrew word *sheol*. They avoid the problem the Authorized King James Version has at Genesis 44:29 where it says *ye shall bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave.* In this scripture it translates *sheol* as grave and not hell, because it does not want to suggest that the faithful patriarch Jacob will go to hell when he dies. They do the same with that paragon of faith, Job, such as at Job 11:8.

That is just gross dishonesty. To translate the original Hebrew word one way when it suits the religious doctrine you are promoting and another way when it doesn't suit your doctrines is un-Christian and a twisting of the Holy Scriptures. But as with all attempts at deception it goes awry. It leads to unresolvable conflict. In the Psalms of David they seem at odds with themselves on how they want to translate *Sheol*. In Psalm 30:3 David finds himself raised up from the grave, *O LORD, thou hast brought up my soul from the grave,* but in Psalm 16:10, he is not left in hell, *For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell.* Which is it? If hell is a realm of burning torment, is David saying he was in hell fire but God did not leave him there?

This leads to another oddity. If hell is a realm of burning torment, why would anyone go there to escape the wrath of God? Wouldn't that be the last place that anyone trying to escape divine judgment would go? Yet Amos 9:2 says *Though they dig into hell, thence shall mine hand take them; though they climb up to heaven, thence will I bring them down.* If hell is really a place of perpetual burning

torment, would that be the place the wicked would go to escape God's anger? It would seem to be a really futile and counterproductive act on their part.

Likewise, if hell is a place of fiery torment, why would there be different levels? *For great is thy mercy toward me: and thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell.* (Psalm 86:13) If hell is a place of fiery torment, how exactly would the upper parts of it differ from the lowest hell? If it is a place of fiery torment where the evil suffer an eternity of agony how would the different levels of it be different? If you are consigned to burning torture forever, it wouldn't seem to make any difference what part of that horrific realm you were consigned to.

But one of the strangest suggestions of all in the Authorized King James Version is found in their translation of David's words at Psalm 139:8 *If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there.* God is in hell! Really? That is what this scripture is saying in this translation. If hell is supposed to be a condition of permanent estrangement from God then what does this scripture mean?

This is why, by and large, the modern translations avoid translating *sheol*. It gets them into too much trouble.

One last point might be made before we look at the Greek New Testament. Some try to suggest that the Hebrew Old Testament just doesn't explain hell as well as the Greek New Testament. The trouble with that claim is that God says in Malachi 3:6 *For I am the LORD, I change not*, so while God may reveal more in the Greek New Testament than he does in the Hebrew Old Testament on some matters, he does not change. Therefore if he tells us certain facts about death (hell) in the Hebrew Scriptures, they remain true in the Christian Scriptures.

This is some of what he tells us about death in the *Authorized (King James) Version* of the Hebrew Scriptures:

Psalm 6:5 *For in death there is no remembrance of thee: in the grave who shall give thee thanks?*

Ecclesiastes 9:10 *Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.*

Job 10:21, 22 *Before I go whence I shall not return, even to the land of darkness and the shadow of death; A land of darkness, as darkness itself; and of the shadow of death, without any order, and where the light is as darkness.*

So according to God's word, *sheol* (hell) is a land of darkness, where there is no activity, knowledge, or consciousness. It is not a burning fire for anyone good or bad. A burning hell is a Satanic lie.

Here is one more interesting fact that can be found in most dictionaries. The English word hell once did not have the meaning of a place of fire and torment. It came from the Old English word *helan*, and originally meant to cover or hide. Only later was it turned into the monstrosity it became in the hands of cruel, dishonest and blasphemous churchmen.

What do the Christian Scriptures say about the doctrine of hell fire?

There are two words in the original text of the New Testament, the Greek Scriptures, that are translated as *hell* in the *Authorized (King James) Version*. They are often translated as *hell* in other versions of the Bible as well. There is the word *Gehenna* that is translated twelve times as *hell* or *hell fire*. And there is the word *Hades* that is translated as *hell* or *Hell* some ten times. In addition there is the word *pur* or *pyr* that appears some 74 times in the original Greek text and means fire.

While the *Authorized King James Version* translates both *Gehenna* and *Hades* as *hell* or *hell fire* some modern translations treat them differently. The claim of many Bible scholars is that *Gehenna* refers to punishment, while *Hades* refers to the condition of being dead whether for good or ill. So we will take a look at how these words are used.

The following are the twelve times that Gehenna is used in the New Testament. The translation we use here is the *Authorized (King James) Version*. After each quotation we give the literal translation from the ancient language that is represented by the word or words in ***bold italics*** in the scripture.

1- Matthew 5:22

But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of ***hell fire***.

Literal translation of the Greek is “Gehenna of the fire”

2- Matthew 5:29

And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into ***hell***.

Literal translation of the Greek is “Gehenna”

3- Matthew 5:30

And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into ***hell***.

Literal translation of the Greek is “Gehenna”

4- Matthew 10:28

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

Literal translation of the Greek is “Gehenna”

5- Matthew 18:9

And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into ***hell fire***.

Literal translation of the Greek is “Gehenna of the fire”

6- Matthew 23:15

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of **hell** than yourselves.

Literal translation of the Greek is “Gehenna”

7- Matthew 23:33

Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of **hell**?

Literal translation of the Greek is “of the Gehenna” Note that the original Greek word that is translated in this quotation as damnation means judgment.

8- Mark 9:43

And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into **hell**, into **the fire that never shall be quenched**:

Literal translation of the Greek is” the Gehenna ... the fire the inextinguishable”

9- Mark 9:45

And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into **hell**, into **the fire that never shall be quenched**:

Literal translation of the Greek is “the Gehenna ... the fire the inextinguishable”

10- Mark 9:47

And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire:

Literal translation of the Greek is “the Gehenna”

11- Luke 12:5

But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him.

Literal translation of the Greek is “the Gehenna”

12- James 3:6

And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on *fire of hell*.

Literal translation of the Greek is “being set on fire by the Gehenna”

Obviously, these scriptures refer to punishment, but what is that punishment? Is it a punishment of eternal torment in a burning hell fire as some claim? The answer to that is found by looking at what is really meant by the word Gehenna.

One good place to go to find the answer is *William Smith’s Dictionary of the Bible* which was published in the late nineteenth century. Many folks are familiar with compact versions of this dictionary, but the original was very comprehensive and numbered some 3667 pages, and was sold in four volumes.

In its entry on Gehenna some of what *Smith* had to say was:

GEHEN’NA the “valley of Hinnom,” or “of the son,” or “children of H.” (A.V.), a deep narrow glen to the S. of Jerusalem, where, after the introduction of the worship of the fire-gods by Ahaz, the idolatrous Jews offered their children to Molech (2 Chr. xxviii. 3; xxxiii. 6; Jer. vii. 31, xix. 2-6). In consequence of these abominations the valley was polluted by Josiah (2K. xxiii. 10); subsequently to which it became the common lay-stall of the city, where the dead bodies of criminals, and the carcasses [*sic*] of animals, and every other kind of filth was cast, and, according to late and somewhat questionable authorities, the combustible portions consumed with fire. From the depth and narrowness of the gorge, and, perhaps, its ever-burning

fires, as well as from its being the receptacle of all sorts of putrefying matter, and all that defiled the holy city, it became in later times the image of the place of everlasting punishment, “where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched...”

So we can see that Gehenna was the city garbage dump where combustible garbage was incinerated, which would help to inhibit the spread of disease and other problems that might result from rotten and putrefying refuse. What was dumped in Gehenna would be totally and permanently destroyed.

To someone listening to Jesus, when Jesus used the word Gehenna, it would represent total and permanent destruction. They would not see torment, either temporary or eternal, they would see permanent annihilation. That is what it meant then and that is what it always means. There is absolutely nothing in what Jesus said that would indicate eternal torment. Go back and read the scriptures quoted above and you will see that is so.

When Matthew 10:28 says *And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell*, it is pointing out that while death brings an end to life, it is not necessarily permanent. The Bible promises a resurrection, but God can cause death to be permanent by figuratively casting that person into Gehenna from where there is no resurrection. Likewise, when Luke 12:5 says *Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell*, it means fear God who can both kill and make that death permanent.

The other word that the *Authorized (King James) Version* translates as hell is the word Hades and it is found some ten times in the original Greek text of the Bible. It is obvious that the word Hades is used differently from Gehenna. But what does it mean?

In the Greek language, the word *hadés* came from two words that meant *not seen*, or *unseen place*. To the Greeks it was the abode of the dead. In the Bible it is where the dead go after they die. It is very similar in meaning to the Hebrew word *Sheol*. Of course, the pagan Greek religion attached a whole lot more meaning to Hades, but the Bible used it for its basic meaning as the place of the dead. Many references call it the abode of departed spirits but that is giving it a meaning beyond what the Bible means by using the word.

Let us take a look at the ten times Hades is translated as hell in the *Authorized (King James) Version*:

Matthew 11:23

And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to *hell*: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day.

Literal translation of the Greek is “of Hades”

Luke 10:15

And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shalt be thrust down to hell.

Literal translation of the Greek is “the Hades”

So the town of Capernaum was to be abased, but it is a town. How could a collection of buildings be tormented? It could not, but it could cease to exist as a town, in other words, the town could die. And so, ancient Capernaum ceased to exist. It died. It was brought down to Hades.

Of interest to Christians especially, is the fact that despite confident statements in some references as to the location of Capernaum, which has even lead to the raising of structures, there is some dispute about the accuracy of these claims. This despite how prominent the town was in the ministry of Jesus.

Two sites have been suggested as the location of Capernaum, one is Khan Minyeh, and the other is Tell Hûm. So the death of the town is so complete that no one knows for sure where it was located, all they can do is speculate. (Matthew 4:13 & 17:24; John 4:46; John 6:17-24, 59. See also *Smith’s Bible Dictionary* “Capernaum”)

Matthew 16:18

And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates *of hell* shall not prevail against it.

Literal translation of the Greek is “of Hades”

Unlike the town of Capernaum, the church established by Christ can never die. The gates of death cannot prevail against it or overcome it.

Verses 27 and 31 of the second chapter of Acts are most inconvenient for those who claim that hell is a place of eternal torment. This is what they have to say:

Acts 2:27

Because thou wilt not leave my soul in *hell*, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

Literal translation of the Greek is “Hades”

Acts 2:31

He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in *hell*, neither his flesh did see corruption.

Literal translation of the Greek is “Hades”

This tells us that Jesus, after he died, went to Hades. If hell was a place of eternal torment, then it would seem strange indeed to say that Jesus went there. But if it is the abode of the dead, then it makes perfect sense. Note that nowhere does the Bible say that Jesus was conscious in some way or other when he was in hell. Any efforts or claims made by those who assert that he was are without any Biblical foundation. The Old Testament, Hebrew Scriptures, say that in death *there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom*, and they call it *a land of darkness*, and there is no support of claims that in the case of Jesus it was any different. He died, and in truth did not exist except in the memory of God until God resurrected him on the third day. (Ecclesiastes 9:10; Job 10:21, 22)

The word Hades is used four times in the book of Revelation and in each instance it is linked with death.

Revelation 1:18

I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys *of hell* and of death.

Literal translation of the Greek is “of the Hades”

Revelation 6:8

And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and **Hell** followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.

Literal translation of the Greek is “the Hades”

Revelation 20:13

And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and **hell** delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.

Literal translation of the Greek is “the Hades”

Revelation 20:14

And death and **hell** were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

Literal translation of the Greek is “the Hades”

This linking of death and Hades is in no way unusual because death is the entry into the condition of being dead, that is being in Hades, the realm of the dead. It in no way signifies two different conditions or realms. Jesus has the keys to death and Hades because as he says at John 11:25, *I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.*

In Revelation Chapter Twenty it shows that all who have died will be resurrected. That is why the Bible uses the word Hades as the place where those once living and now dead reside, because they all will be resurrected at the time of judgment. Those who did good will be judged worthy of eternal life and those who did bad will cease to exist. This is discussed more in the section that discusses the future of those that die. That is why Hades, as the word is used in the Bible, will cease to exist. (John 5:28, 29)

Finally, we must look at how the word Hades is used at Luke 16:23, a scripture that is frequently misused in a most dishonest manner.

And in *hell* he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.
Literal translation of the Greek is “the Hades”

It is most dishonest to try and make this scripture a justification for a belief in a fiery place of torment, so let's look at the full account of the Rich Man and Lazarus found in Luke 16:19-31.

There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; And in hell [Hades] he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence. Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.

Not all who believe in hell fire cite this scripture as evidence simply because of the obvious problems, not the least of which is that to take a scripture literally it all has to be literal. Jesus was using this illustration to get the point across that he emphasizes at the end when he says *If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.* Jesus was not saying this really happened. He was giving a parable and his audience would be fully aware of that.

Note that he does not say exactly where either Abraham or Lazarus was. This we know, at the time Jesus gave this parable Abraham was not in heaven. How do we know that? Because the Bible says that at the time Jesus was on earth no man had ascended into heaven up to that time. (John 3:13)

So if this parable or illustration was telling of something that had actually happened, then where was Abraham? And, of course, where was Lazarus? There are many other questions that would come if this were literal. If the Rich Man was in a fiery place of torment how would a drop or two of water help. If the Rich Man was in a burning hell is it even believable that he wouldn't ask for more, a lot more, than just a couple of drops of water.

To all reasonable readers this is very clearly not a literal account and in no way gives even a shred of evidence to support the unchristian and pagan doctrine of hell fire.

There is one other word that the *Authorized (King James) Version* translates as hell and that is the Greek word *tartaroó*, which is the underworld in Greek mythology, which we normally translate as Tartarus.

2 Peter 2:4

For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment;

Tartarus is translated in a number of different translations, in addition to the *Authorized (King James) Version*, by the word *hell*. Here the fallen angels are not described as being in a place of fire, but instead they are described as being in chains of darkness much like the Bible describes hell when it uses the word Sheol or its New Testament equivalent, Hades.

The Bible's description of hell as being a place of darkness where there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, or remembrance, is in agreement with the original meaning of the English word hell. The word hell originally meant *to conceal, to cover, or to hide*, and it was only later that it took on the meaning of a fiery torment.

God, our God, is a God of justice. *The Rock, his work is perfect, for all his ways are justice. A God of faithfulness and without iniquity, just and right is he.* We are assured that he will do no wrong, and whatever he does, and however he judges, will be right. Regarding that final judgement, when the good and the bad will stand before his judgement seat the judgement he meets out will be fair and right. (Deuteronomy 32:4)

The Bible says, *For he that does wrong will receive payment for the wrong that he has done, and there is no partiality.* To the wicked, God will visit a punishment that will be fair and just. Regarding that great final judgement the Book of Revelation says, *And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. And another book was opened, that is the book of life, and the dead were judged out of the things that were written in the books, according to their works.* (Colossians 3:25; Revelation 20:12)

The Bible does not tell us much more than that about the details of that judgement. Some have been concerned that if there is no burning torment or fiery hell, how will the truly evil be punished? If they simply cease to exist, will they be getting away with their terrible deeds? We should realize that no one gets away with wrong. When we read that description of the last judgement, we see that it is metaphorical. We have every reason to trust that God will meet out punishment in a fair and just manner, and that the wicked will also be punished according to their deeds. What should be our concern is that we meet God's approval and receive a judgment of life forever in Paradise.

9 Christian Conduct

Only conduct yourself in a manner worthy of the good news of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or I am absent, I may hear the things about you, that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one soul, striving together for the faith of the good news.

—Philippians 1:27

The most famous set of commands for proper conduct is undeniably the Ten Commandments. These are found at Exodus 20:1-17, and are commonly arranged as:

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

- 1 You must have no other gods before me.
- 2 You must not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in the heavens above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the waters under the earth. You must not bow down yourself to them nor serve them.
- 3 You must not take the name of Jehovah your God in vain for Jehovah will not hold him guiltless that takes his name in vain.
- 4 Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you will labor, and do all your work but the seventh day is a Sabbath to Jehovah your God. In it you will not do any work, you, nor your son, nor your daughter, your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor the foreigner who is within your gates.

- 5 Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land which Jehovah your God gives you.
- 6 You must not kill.
- 7 You must not commit adultery.
- 8 You must not steal.
- 9 You must not give false testimony against your neighbor.
- 10 You must not covet your neighbor's house, you must not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor's.

The first four commandments concern our relationship with God, and the last six with our fellow-man. They regulate how we treat others. They are instructions on how to conduct ourselves in a manner worthy of the good news. They show us proper Christian conduct. Undoubtedly, most professed Christians believe they carry out these commandments, but they might be mistaken, and that will have far-reaching consequences.

The Christian and Violence

Do you agree with the commandment that says *You must not kill*? It is almost certain that you do. But what about if you or your family are threatened? Do you feel it would be all right to kill the assailant? The answer to that question is up to your conscience, but is your answer the right one? Your conscience is there to guide you, but to do that correctly it has to be trained to do God's will, to think God's thoughts. If you don't train it right, it won't guide you right. What do you think God would say about your answer? Remember, your eternal life depends on your pleasing God, not someone here on this earth. Eternal life depends on meeting God's approval, not man's approval. *But let God be found true, even if every man is found a liar.* (Romans 3:4)

But how do you train your conscience to think God's thoughts and not the opportunistic and unchristian thoughts and ideas of men who are separated from God? *There is a way which seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death.* (Psalm 14:2) It is necessary to always keep in mind what is at stake. At Job 14:1 it says: *Man, that is born of a woman, is of few days, and full of trouble.* But if we know and do the will of God, we will have everlasting life. (John 17:3)

So it is important to do what God wants us to do and not what man thinks is right. The wisdom of God is infinitely greater than that of man. If you do what man thinks is right or the best course of action, you might preserve your life, but you may also do the opposite. Doing what man claims is the best course could even cost you your life. Doing what God says is right will reward you with everlasting life. Always keep that in mind. Now, how do you answer that question that was asked above? Think about it.

Many who claim to be Christian, and many who know their Bible, and what the Bible requires of a Christian, still fail to train their conscience to be Christian. They rationalize the commands and instructions found in the Holy Scriptures to justify and defend non-Christian attitudes. Because they want to follow their inclinations which are at odds with God's Holy Word, they try to explain away scriptural admonitions that they don't want to follow.

If we enter a difficult situation well trained in what God wants, we are less likely to follow the justifications of men who do not have Jesus Christ in their hearts. The Bible condemns the works of the flesh and tells us they include hatred, strife, anger, fits of rage, and contentions. It tells us that those guilty of these things will not inherit the Kingdom of God. Instead we should exhibit God's spirit by being peaceful, showing patience and long-suffering, mildness, and self-control. (Galatians 5:19-26)

This does not mean we should be foolish in the face of danger, or fail to protect our family, but it does mean that as far as possible we will harm no person. There are many situations we might face, and how we deal with them will often involve difficult decisions, and indeed there may be little time to make a decision, that is why our conscience must be well trained.

Even if a soldier fights only infrequent battles, he must be well trained. He must practice repeatedly for what may be a brief but

intense fight, so that in battle, with little or no time to think, he will almost automatically do what is the right thing. So too with our conscience, which is really that part of us that guides us when there is no time to think. We must take in and take to heart the teachings of God's word, so in the heat of the moment we will always follow his will and not the impure reflexive actions of the ungodly.

Most know that the Bible says to turn the other cheek, but what does that really mean? It doesn't mean to put up with evil, but is a statement of a principle for those who wish to do the will of God. We do not wish to go against the teachings of the Bible, but we also don't want to behave in an apathetic manner. To understand the difference, we have to get to know the mind of God, which we can only do if we study his Word and learn from what it says. (Matthew 5:39)

By following the Bible we can avoid many difficult situations. When it tells us to be *slow to anger*, we should follow that Christ inspired advice. At 2 Timothy 2:24 we are instructed that *the bond servant of the Lord does not need to fight but must be mild towards all*. The original word that is translated here as fight, is *machomai*, which some translate as quarrelsome. It also has the meaning 'to do battle'. The concept is obvious. A Christian avoids fighting, quarrelling, or doing battle, if that is at all possible. (James 1:19; Romans 12:18)

The Christian and Sex

Do you agree with the commandment that says *You must not commit adultery*? It is very likely that you also agree with that commandment. In the Greek Scriptures, the New Testament, it uses the word *porneia* which includes all forms of illicit sexual conduct. *And those who belong to Christ Jesus have impaled the flesh with its passions and desires.* (Exodus 20:14; Galatians 5:24)

But there is an aspect of that command that Jesus brought out. *You have heard that it was said, "You must not commit adultery." But I say to you, that everyone that looks at a woman so as to lust after her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.* So Jesus was saying that if you want to commit adultery you are as guilty as if you committed the act itself. He was not talking about a passing improper thought. He was talking about dwelling on it and wanting to

carry it out. In other words, we should endeavor to put improper and illicit thoughts out of our mind. And we will actually be happier that way. You will also note that he is not talking about consequences or punishment, but of guilt.

The Christian and Stealing

The Bible says: *You must not steal*. But what does that mean? The answer might seem obvious, and yet is it really? The obvious answer is taking something that does not belong to you but to someone else. Do you agree? But what does that really mean? Does it mean what morally, ethically, intrinsically belongs to someone, or does it mean what the law says belongs to someone. The difference becomes obvious.

Back in the times of ancient Rome, the state could take the property of Christians, and even take their life, putting them to death in the arena for the entertainment of the populace. It was legal, but was it right? Before, and during the Second World War, the Nazis took the property of millions of people and also the property of nations it invaded. It was legal under the law of the Nazis, but was considered stealing by everyone else. In ancient Rome and in World War II, what the governments in power considered legal would by all good people be considered stealing.

Most can see this clearly because they do not live under these jurisdictions. But what about actions by governments in power at this time? The Bible makes clear, that from a Christian viewpoint, taxes are legal, but what about the confiscation of property and other actions. What about the practices of individuals? What is legal, may be going against the laws of God. This is something which as Christians we have to give careful thought to, because we will be judged by our obedience to the laws of God, not those of men.

If we employ people to work for us, and we pay them less than is necessary for them to live on, are we stealing their labor? The Bible deals with this situation when it says *for the laborer is worthy of his hire*, at Luke 10:7. If someone damages your car, and the insurance company will not pay to fix it, but offers you less than it costs to replace it, and relying on the fact that you need to have a working vehicle will force you to accept what they are willing to pay, are they

stealing from you? Legally no, but from the point-of-view of fairness, equity, and most important, the Word of God, they are indeed breaking the commandment, *You must not steal*.

Once again we see the need for a well-trained conscience that puts the Law of God above expediency and the unchristian inclinations of man.

The Christian and Lying

When the Bible says *You must not give false testimony against your neighbor*, it is clearly referring to testimony in a trial or some similar situation. But the principle applies to anything we might say about anyone or any occurrence. As a result, this might be the commandment that is broken the most by professed Christians.

While most Christians realize they must not testify falsely in court, or in any kind of an official situation, they seem to weaken when it comes to things they say in everyday life. It's as if they do not realize they are lying, or somehow believe what they are saying or doing does not really constitute a lie.

It may be inconvenient, but if you include false information on your tax forms, or any other government authorized forms, from the point-of-view of the Bible it is lying. To somehow convince ourselves that they have no right to the information or that it isn't really a lie, in no way mitigates what we have done, and since we want to meet with God's approval and not just satisfy our desires, we should listen to the Bible.

The right of the government to make demands, even ones we consider unfair, even ones that are wrong, was made clear by Jesus in the matter of taxes. *Then he said to them: Give to Caesar the things that belong to Caesar, and to God the things that belong to God*. In keeping with this admonition Jesus paid taxes. (Matthew 22:21; Matthew 17:24-27; Romans 13:7)

But if you had lived in Nazi Germany, or in the old Soviet Union, or in ancient Rome, or any other such place, and you knew where Christians were in hiding, if the authorities demanded to know their whereabouts, what would you say? If you refused to tell them you would likely face terrible punishment. So, would you give them false information and claim you did not know. That is clearly a very

difficult decision to make, and one that each has to decide on their own.

Some claim that lying is justified where the questioner has no right to know. But, even if that were the case, how would you decide when they have the right to know and when they do not? The claim is made that denying the authorities, or anyone else, a correct answer is acceptable to God and the right thing to do under certain circumstances, is shown by the case of David, who later became king of Israel.

David, having fled for his life before King Saul, came to Gath, where he feigned insanity before the king, and as a result was able to escape into the wilds. This action probably saved David's life. His insanity was clearly a lie, but the Bible does not say if God approved or disapproved. It does not pass judgment. So we cannot use it to know if some lying is acceptable to God or not. God certainly blessed him afterwards, but that still does not inform us.

This is the type of situation where you need a properly trained conscience, and it needs to be well trained beforehand.

The Christian and Coveting

Some, when they read the admonition forbidding coveting in the Ten Commandments, may feel that it is a less serious offence than the others. But, in fact, it is the basis of much evil, including adultery, killing, stealing, lying, and even the worship of false gods. By looking at another man's wife and feeding a growing desire and lust for her, or allowing a desire for property, lands, riches, possessions, and many other things, to grow within us, so that the desire becomes an overwhelming need to be satisfied, leads to these other sins. The people of Israel, rejected God's kingship over them and demanded a human king, because they coveted what the other nations had. (1 Samuel 8:7)

This is where the matter of coveting is so dangerous. It begins almost innocently, and grows, sometimes almost imperceptibly, until it becomes all-consuming and overwhelming. We must recognize it and the dangers it presents, and then crush these wrong ideas and notions, before they are able to take us over and consume us.

Stand firm, therefore, with the belt of truth around your waist, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having your feet shod in readiness with the gospel of peace. Besides all, having taken up the shield of faith, with which you will be able to quench all the fiery arrows of the evil one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. (Ephesians 6:14-17)

10 Christian Worship, Service, and Sharing the Faith

Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations...

—Matthew 28:19

This command of Jesus, first given to his eleven faithful Apostles, has been understood to apply to all Christians. If the truth of God's Word can and will save lives and opens the door to eternal life, how can anyone refuse to share it with others? It is the right thing to do.

If someone knows to do good, and does not do it, it is a sin for him not to do it. If we possess knowledge that can result in salvation and do not pass it on to others, it is a sin. (James 4:17)

The prophet Ezekiel was even more direct in what he said. *Son of man, I have made you a watchman to the house of Israel, therefore hear the word from my mouth, and give them warning from me. When I say to the wicked, 'You will surely die', but you do not warn him, nor speak to warn the wicked from his wicked way to save his life, that wicked man will die from his iniquity, but his blood I will require from your hand.*

As Jesus tells us at Luke 12:48, knowledge of the truth of God's Word brings with it a profound obligation to share it with others. But how? As individuals, how do we go about sharing it? Some people are very outgoing and find it easy to talk to others, but many are not. And what good does it do to tell others some snippet of scripture? It is obvious from the words of Jesus that more is necessary.

The first step in fulfilling the command of Jesus is to study God's Word, learn what it has to say, and then share it. To help in this, we have made available *Aid to the Study of the Bible* in PDF as a free download. You will find a number of suggestions that should be helpful, as well as information about the Bible.

A second step is to learn what the Bible teaches. This booklet, *Basics of the Christian Faith: Special Compact Edition*, has been made available for this purpose. This contains information extracted from a book by the same name and is available free in PDF format. It is a bit more thorough than what you have already read on the

website. But it is only a start. The word *Basics* is the key word. There is much more to learn.

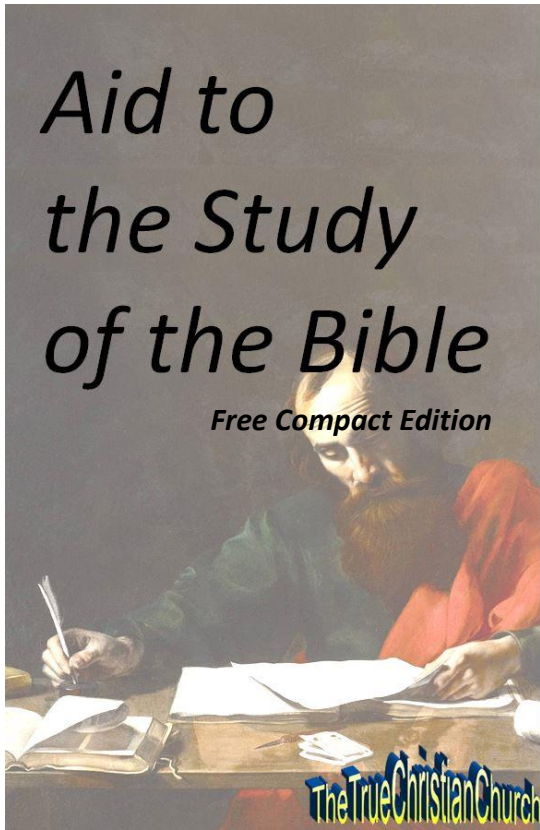
If you are inclined to worry about what you might see as your inability to make disciples or difficulties in carrying out the command of Jesus—DON'T WORRY. As is pointed out to Christians, at 1 Corinthians 7:7 and 1 Corinthians 12:1-31, each of us has his or her own gift. When Jesus saw a poor widow contribute two small coins, he made the point that she gave more than the rich, because they gave out of their surplus and she gave out of her want. (Luke 21:2) So what is necessary is that we do the best we can.

To help in this we have made available some brochures. If you print them out, either in black and white, or if you prefer, in color, then fold them in half, they will make a four page brochure. And share them or leave them someplace where it is appropriate. Just be considerate as to where you leave them, because if you annoy people they might not be disposed to read them.

We would deeply appreciate it if you keep us informed by telling us how you are doing. You can do this by emailing us at:

sharingtheword@thetruechristianchurch.org

Aid to the Study of the Bible: Free Compact Edition is a companion to this booklet, *Basics of the Christian Faith: Special Compact Edition*.



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Do the Churches today who claim to be Christian teach the True Christian Faith? Or are their doctrines far removed from what our Lord Jesus Christ taught? Many devout Christians feel that the Churches have gone far astray and are teaching what the Bible calls the doctrines of demons.— 1 Timothy 4:1

We invite you to see for yourself. In this booklet we examine what Jesus, and God's Holy Word, teach us about, God, Jesus, the holy spirit, the Bible, Death, Resurrection, and our future. We also look at what it says about proper Christian conduct.

The material in this booklet is taken from a book with the same title. Although it is considerably smaller than the book, it contains all the essential information necessary for anyone who wants to serve God and carry out the commandment of Jesus found at Matthew 28:19, 20.

This booklet is available free in PDF format by arrangement with the publisher of the complete book, and can be downloaded from:

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