

FREE INDEED

TRUE STORIES OF PEOPLE WHO MET JESUS

Luke T. Knickerbocker

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Interior Design by Knickerbocker Printing

3911 W. Bay Ave. Tampa, FL 33616

Email: Knickprint@yahoo.com

Phone: (863) 458-1377



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Jesus is the true light in this world of darkness
and provides spiritual freedom for those who
believe on Him.

Introduction

Who Is Jesus Christ?

There is no person in history as polarizing as Jesus Christ. His actions are powerful and his words are even stronger. Many love him and have even died for their faith in him! Others, however, are offended at the mention of his name and refuse to listen to his teachings. Each of us will decide what we will do with Jesus – receive or reject him. But before you rush to judgment, please take time to consider who Jesus is and what he has done.

Below are the first few written statements from the record of John, one of Jesus' closest friends. Notice that Jesus has many titles and names which describe him, including *the Word, Creator, Life,* and the *Light of the world.*

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.
(John 1:1,2,14)*

Here we see written that Jesus is “the Word” who is from the beginning. He was with God, and was God. He became flesh and lived on this earth nearly 2,000 years ago. While he was here, he showed the glory of God, proving that indeed, he is God! Jesus revealed that God is a Person and desires to have a relationship with mankind. God reveals himself to us in the written Word of God, the Holy Bible. Therefore, we must listen to His words and obey them.

Next in verse 3, we see the power of Jesus, as he is the Creator of all things. “All things were made by him; and without him was not

any thing made that was made.” As Creator, Jesus is the rightful owner and ruler over this earth. He is our authority to whom we should submit.

We then learn in verses 4 and 5 that Jesus possesses life and is the Light of the world. “In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.” Jesus said, “I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.” (John 8:12)

If Jesus is God who created this world, why did he need to come live on this earth?

The prophet Isaiah lived about 700 years before Jesus and said the following about the coming Saviour of the world:

The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; (Isaiah 61:1)

Jesus affirmed this while teaching publicly. In fact, he quoted this prophecy and announced that he had come to fulfill this work. He came to give mankind liberty from captivity!

But to what are we in bondage? From what do we need rescued? What does Jesus want to do for each of us? What is the good news that He came to proclaim?

Let us consider the testimony of John the Baptist:

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. (John 1:6-8)

This man named John was the cousin of Jesus of Nazareth. Our family and relatives know us best. They know our faults and weaknesses. But notice what this man says about his own family member Jesus.

John the Baptist said in verses 9 and 10 that the true Light came into the dark world, yet the darkness comprehended it not.

That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. (John 1:9,10)

Sadly, Jesus was not welcomed by his own people: the nation of Israel rejected the Light, Jesus Christ. “He came unto his own, and his own received him not” (verse 11). The nation of Israel (Jews) refused to have Jesus rule over them. The reason they rejected Jesus is the same reason many reject him today. Simply put, “*Men love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil*” (John 3:19,20).

Yet, the rejection by Israel opened the door of opportunity to all other nations. “But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God” (John 1:12,13).

Whoever will receive Jesus as their own Saviour may become the child of God! Jesus declared, “All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out” (John 6:37).

Another reason many do not believe on Christ is simply because they don’t understand who he is and why he came. You see, what we are learning here is spiritual truth that must be accepted by faith.

John the Baptist had the important responsibility to prepare the way for Jesus as the Messiah (the chosen one of God to deliver the

Jews). He was a preacher of sin, righteousness, and judgment. Those who repented and believed his message were baptized in the river.

John proclaimed that Jesus is to be preferred before him as he deserved to be given greater honor. He again wrote that Jesus must increase because he came from above (Heaven), and is above all other people (preeminent on earth).

Jesus' cousin John also said that Jesus came before him. This is interesting because, Jesus was born three months after John the Baptist. So according to birth order, John was older than Jesus! But John referred to the fact that Jesus' existence was from the beginning of time. Remember it is written in John 1:1, "In the beginning was the Word [Jesus]." In other words, Jesus has existed from the beginning of time. Notice what claim Jesus made in John 8:58, "Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am." Abraham had lived about 2,000 years before Jesus!

A fascinating statement is made in John 1:17, "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." With contrast to Moses, who gave the Laws (Ten Commandments), Jesus came to give us grace and truth. The law condemns sinners, but grace forgives sin!

Jesus has priority and preeminence over the greatest Jewish fathers Abraham and Moses, because he is the eternal God!

John declares in verses 29 and 36 that Jesus is "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." When Jesus declared to others that he was God and had the ability to forgive sin, people became angry. Why? Because forgiveness of sin is a work only God can do. But if Jesus is truly God as He claimed, then he certainly has the ability and authority to forgive our sin!

So let us return to the questions "Why did Jesus come" and "What does he want to liberate us from?" Simply put, Jesus came to deliver

us from sin and its consequences of death and separation from God. He came to restore the relationship of sinful mankind with our Holy God in Heaven.

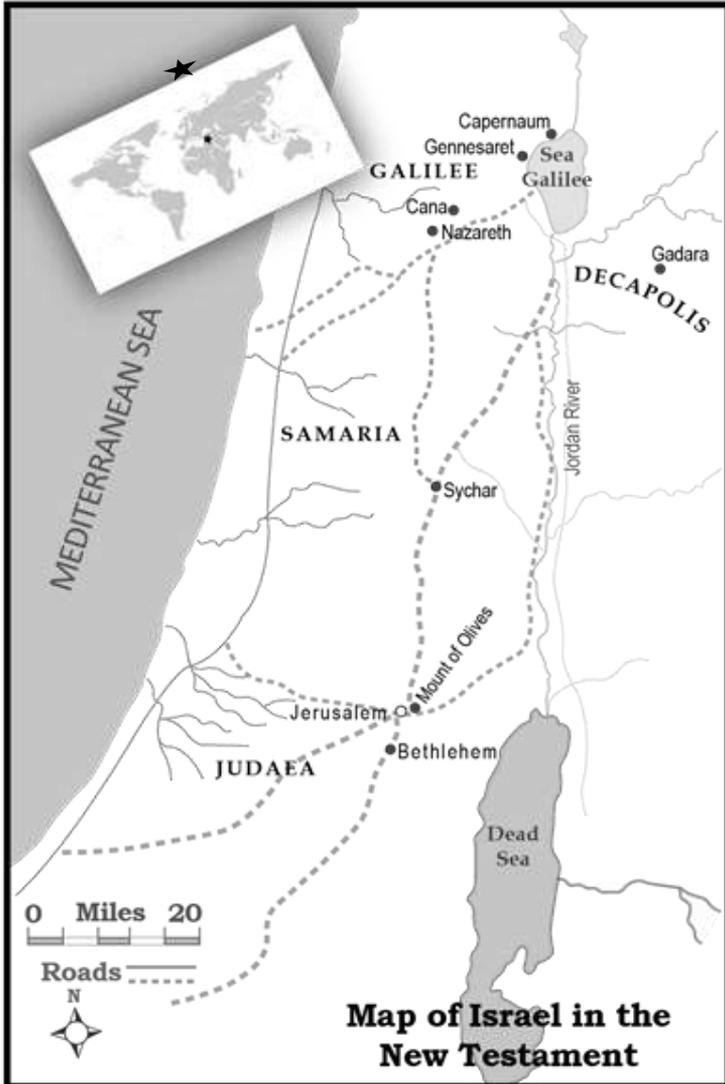
Jesus is the true light in this world of darkness and provides spiritual freedom for those who believe on Him. But before you make a decision for or against Jesus, please read about others who met him personally and had their lives changed by him.

You will learn the following about Jesus Christ:

- He is the great Teacher – Revealing truth
- He is the true Prophet – Reading thoughts of man
- He is the good Shepherd – Rescuing the lost in sin
- He is the loving Saviour – Redeeming by His blood
- He is the only Mediator – Reconciling man with God
- He is the Healer – Restoring the hurting soul
- He is the rightful Lord – Ruling the world He created
- He is the powerful King – Returning to judge evil

Note: On the following page there is a map of the area where all the stories in this book took place nearly 2,000 years ago. Every account is true as found in the Holy Bible. The map is a reference for the places you will read in each story.

Map of Israel



Chapter 1

Good News for All People:

A Saviour is Born



And the angel said unto them, “Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.” (Luke 2:10)

Stated above is the joyous announcement from angels in heaven to humble shepherds of the birth and life of Jesus Christ. Although we do not know the exact day Jesus was born, his birth is celebrated world-wide on December 25 each year. It is a time when we gather with family and friends to eat a nice meal, sing songs, exchange gifts, and read the story of Jesus’ birth from the Bible.

The story of Christmas is the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ. But nothing about his birth was normal as we know it. It was truly miraculous and still impacts the world today.

Have you ever wondered why our calendar dates back nearly 2,000 years? In the Gregorian calendar, we refer to events before Christ's birth as B.C. (meaning Before Christ) and the time after Christ as A.D. (*Anno Domini* which is Latin meaning "in the year of our Lord").

The story of Jesus' birth begins in a small town called Nazareth in modern day Israel. An angel from Heaven, who is God's messenger, appeared with a special message to a young maiden. Mary was a virgin and was startled to receive the news that she would be having a baby. The Holy Spirit of God would enable her to conceive a child miraculously. This child would be the Holy One come from heaven, the Son of God. She simply agreed, saying "Be it unto me according to thy word" (Luke 1:38).

Joseph was worried about what to do. He also was a good man and wanted to do the right thing. But he knew that if people heard that Mary was going to have a baby before their wedding, it would cause much shame to both of them. The angel from God told him in a dream to be faithful to Mary and not put her away. The baby boy would be named Jesus, meaning "saviour", for he would "save his people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21). Joseph obeyed God and promised Mary that he would not abandon her, but would still marry her. He trusted God to work out the details until that time.

God's prophets had already foretold many details about the birth of Jesus Christ hundreds of years earlier. These prophecies are also recorded in God's written Book called the Holy Bible.

The prophet Isaiah, who had lived 700 years earlier, said, "A virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall

call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is God with us” (Matthew 1:23).

Another prophet named Micah, who also lived 2,700 years ago said, “But thou Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting” (Micah 5:2).

Truly the entrance of Jesus into the world was no ordinary birth. It was the moment in time when the everlasting God would become a man and come to live on earth. Jesus had always existed in Heaven because He is God. He is the Creator of the World. But because the first man and woman, Adam and Eve, had rebelled against God, they could no longer enjoy His presence. Every child born after them would be born in sin, separated from God. This is why there is so much suffering and death in our world today – it is the consequence of man breaking God’s moral laws. God is holy and without sin. Yet he loves the people he created and wants to have a relationship with each person. But there is no way man can clean his own heart and mind and become pure by his own efforts.

This is why God made a plan to come to earth: thus, we have the virgin birth of Jesus. Because the sin nature is passed on through the seed of man, it was important that Jesus was not born from the physical union of a man and woman. Because the Holy Spirit of God overshadowed Mary, she conceived the baby Jesus. Jesus was born of a virgin; therefore, he was born without sin as the Son of God!

Now let us return to our story. Nine months had passed since Mary was told by the angel that she would have a baby boy. She is about to give birth. But there is a problem! Mary is still living in Nazareth at this time. The prophet Micah said that this special Ruler would be born in a different town called Bethlehem! It just so happened that the Roman government dominated the world at this time. Caesar Augustus wanted to take a census, and thus gave a

command that everyone return to the town where they had been born. Because Joseph was from Bethlehem, he and Mary had to travel there to be counted. After they arrived, they discovered that there was no place to stay. An innkeeper told them that they could sleep in a stable with animals. Soon Mary gave birth to Jesus. She wrapped him in old rags and laid him in a manger (feeding trough with hay) to make a simple cradle for her newborn baby.

Meanwhile, on the hillside nearby, some shepherds were watching their flock of sheep. Suddenly an angel appeared with good news that would be shared with all people. He said, “that a Saviour [was born], which is Christ the Lord” (Luke 2:11). They could find the baby in a stable in Bethlehem. A multitude of angels then joined him and said, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men” (Luke 2:14).

The shepherds ran to see this special baby and worshipped him. Afterward, they ran to tell everyone about the entrance into this world of the God-man named Jesus. But why would his coming be good news to all people? This is what we will learn as we read the stories of individuals who met him.

After the shepherds found Jesus with Joseph and Mary, they excitedly went around the countryside and told everyone that Jesus had been born!

A couple years later, some wise men from the East –possibly from Iran or Iraq– began a journey. They had read the prophecies about a ruler being born in Bethlehem and went to go find him. When they finally arrived, they worshipped Jesus and gave him gifts – gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

These gifts appropriately represented who Jesus was and what He would accomplish in his life on earth. These were expensive gifts that would be offered to honor a king. These wise men recognized the high position of Jesus Christ as the King of Kings.

Jesus grew up in the town of Nazareth. His mother married Joseph, who was a carpenter. Jesus grew up in their home and had younger brothers and sisters. At age 30, Jesus began his public ministry and travelled throughout Israel. He demonstrated to many people he met that he was God who had become a man. Jesus is the image of the invisible God.

There are four written records about the life of Jesus written by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. They each feature a unique aspect of the person of Jesus Christ.

- **Matthew** portrays Jesus as the King of the Jews.
- **Mark** shows how Jesus was Servant of man (to the Greeks).
- **Luke**, a Gentile medical doctor, focuses on the Humanity of Jesus as the Son of man.
- **John** gives us the final and most definitive revelation of Jesus in declaring his deity as the Son of God who is the Saviour of all people.

The most unusual purpose of Christ's birth was that he was born to die. He lived only 33 years, yet had the most important task to perform. As the only pure sinless person to live, he was qualified to die in the place of sinners like you and me. As the Good Shepherd, he gave his life for his sheep. He paid for our sin by shedding his blood and satisfying the debt we owe our holy God. When Jesus hung on the Roman cross, He said the words, "Father forgive them for they know not what they do." (Luke 23:34) Another man dying next to Jesus realized that Jesus was innocent. He confessed his own sinfulness and asked Christ to remember him in His kingdom. Jesus promised that He would honor his wish.

Jesus rose again three days later, proving He was God and had power over death. He offers the gift of eternal life to all who will receive it. In the Bible it is written in Romans 6:23, "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." We each must make room in our heart to receive Jesus as our Lord and Saviour. He wants to deliver you from your sin and give

you truth, freedom, and hope. But you must understand who He is and the terms for what He demands if you will truly receive this Good News.

Now I want to introduce you to some people that met Jesus personally during his brief life here on earth.

Chapter 2

The Uneducated Fishermen:

Christ's first followers



And it came to pass, that, as the people pressed upon him to hear the word of God, he stood by the lake of Gennesaret, And saw two ships standing by the lake: but the fishermen were gone out of them, and were washing their nets. And he entered into one of the ships, which was Simon's, and prayed him that he would thrust out a little from the land. And he sat down, and taught the people out of the ship.

Now when he had left speaking, he said unto Simon, Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught. And Simon answering said unto him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net. And when they had this done, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake. And they beckoned unto their partners, which were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both the ships, so that they began to sink.

When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord. For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken: And so was also James, and John, the sons of Zebedee, which were partners with Simon. And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men. And when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all, and followed him. (Luke 5:1-11)

The first people Jesus called to be with him were not the religious Jews, but rather ordinary fishermen. Jesus met two sets of brothers, who were also friends, at the Sea of Galilee. Their names were James and John; and Andrew and Peter. In fact, after a few years, these men would become the leaders of the Christian church that Jesus started.

The most outspoken of these men was Peter. He was willful, stubborn, and crude. But his brother Andrew had heard John the Baptist point out Jesus as “the Lamb of God” sent to be “the Saviour of the world.” Andrew was excited and told his brother Peter the good news, “We have found the Messiah”, he told him. The Messiah (Messiah) was the Chosen One sent from God whom the Jews had

waited for the past several hundred years. Now the prophecy had finally come true!

Jesus calls us to come unto him by faith.

Jesus wants all men to come to him. Christianity is not another religion where man attempts to find peace with God through his own efforts and good works. Rather, it is a relationship with the creator God in Heaven through His Son Jesus Christ. God the Father sent Jesus His Son to be the Saviour of the world (I John 4:14). He came to us because we could not go to him.

My friend, are you at peace in your mind and heart? Perhaps you are troubled at the thought of dying. Perhaps, you have been waiting for some good news. You may find rest for your soul today! Jesus said, “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light” (Matthew 11:28-30).

We each must realize there is more to life than the pleasures and cares of this world: there is eternity to ponder. As nothing in this world can guarantee satisfaction, so can no amount of money purchase peace. God alone holds the key to peace and rest for your soul.

Our soul is the intellect, emotion, and will. Have you ever had thoughts of fear and loneliness, wondering what the purpose of life is? In our world of chaos and crisis, the soul of man seeks peace. Jesus came into this world to bring peace: not the temporary conditional peace that this world offers, but true peace with God and rest for our soul.

But we must choose to come to Christ. This is an act of our own will after we have heard the invitation of Christ’s word to come to him by faith. Jesus promised in John 6:37, “All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.”

Jesus calls us to come after him by following him.

Jesus had singled out Peter...the influential leader of the fishing team. He had spoken directly to him and used his boat to teach from. Then he had a lesson to teach him. "Launch out...let down your nets." Notice Simon Peter's response in verse 5, "And Simon answering said unto him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless, at thy word I will let down the net."

Simon could have had a long list of excuses why he should not launch out and let down his nets again. After all, he was surely tired from fishing all night! Not only was he tired, but he had been fruitless...no fish were caught! He was surely discouraged from this. Now he was finishing up and ready to get some needed rest. In fact, he had already washed his nets! But Simon shows his faith in Jesus when he says, "nevertheless at thy word I will".

The result was miraculous! They caught so many fish that they needed help to haul them in. Both ships were filled and began to sink. Notice Simon Peter's reaction. "When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord" (verse 8).

Jesus had demonstrated his power and Simon Peter recognized there was something special about Jesus. He recognized something pure in Christ and it revealed his own sinfulness. Some people want to follow Christ for the "boat load" of money they think he will give them. But when we truly encounter the real Jesus, we will have to face our own sinfulness and unworthiness. We must humbly acknowledge and bow to the Lord of Lords!

According to verse 9, Jesus had done something that astonished these hardened fishermen. He met them where they were so He could take them to where he was going: to fish for men!

In Luke 4:43, Jesus had told the people in Capernaum that he needed to go preach in other cities also. But he chose to include and

involve others in this mission. He would teach these disciples by modeling to them how to fish for men in many places.

Something so dramatic happened in Peter's life, from the time they had left shore with Jesus until the moment they returned, that His entire future was changed. He began a journey of a lifetime. Luke 5:10 says that Jesus told Simon, "Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men." This meant he had to stop following his own heart, and start listening to the voice of his new Master. Proverbs 3:5,6 says, "Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."

Simon Peter had to put aside the excuses, for truly nothing about obeying Christ made rational sense at the time; most certainly not based on his own previous experiences! Peter and the fishermen listened to the voice of Jesus and obeyed him. Jesus said in John 10:27,28, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them; and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life: and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." Jesus met the fishermen where they were and called them unto himself. They heard him and believed that he was worth leaving everything else behind. This is true faith!

Jesus will call us to come up to be with him in the future.

In Matthew 17:1-6, Jesus called Peter, James, and John to join him on a mountain where he showed his glory. They heard with their own ears the affirmation of God the Father in Heaven as he said the words of affirmation, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him" (verse 5). One day, Jesus will bring his followers to be with him in His presence!

Jesus told his followers that if they believed in God, they must also believe in him. One day Jesus will bring his followers to live with him in Heaven (John 14:1-3). Belief in God is the first step toward the light of truth. It doesn't require an education, but rather

believing God's Word. Consider the words and testimony of Simon Peter and his friend John years later:

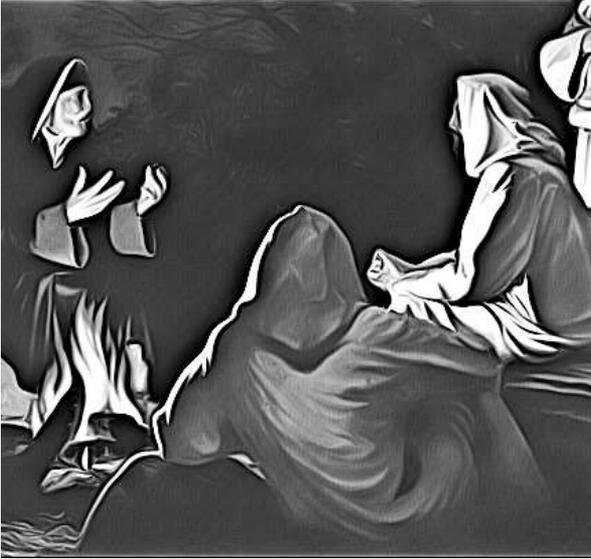
“Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marveled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus (Acts 4:12,13).

These fishermen may not have had wealth and education, but they had the privilege of meeting Jesus. When they heard his words, they believed on Jesus, and obeyed him. Their lives were changed, and they followed Jesus until their death. They became bold preachers of truth warning others of their need to be delivered from sin.

Chapter 3

The Religious Teacher:

Searching for Answers



There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee,

Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. (John 3:1-7)

The Confession

Jesus was in Jerusalem, the capitol city of Israel. He had performed many miracles, after which many believed on him. But he did not yet reveal the fact that he was the Messiah come from God. He knew all men and the thoughts in man. (John 2:23-25)

We learn that Nicodemus was a Pharisee and a *ruler* of the Jews. The Jewish nation, known as the country of Israel, is the fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham about 4,000 years ago. God had chosen Abraham to reveal Himself as a personal God to the world. "Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness" (Romans 4:3). He was called the Friend of God. (James 2:23)

The Jewish leaders, especially the Pharisees, were strict adherents of the Law of Moses. God had separated his people the Israelites from the worldly nations. The biggest difference was that the Gentile nations worshipped false idols like the sun and moon. God demanded that they worship only the true God who created this world.

But when Jesus was born, many Jewish leaders didn't believe that He was God. They were skeptical. They were looking for a political savior to free them from the Roman government.

Next, Nicodemus approaches Jesus personally and acknowledges him as a teacher come from God. He admitted that the miracles Jesus had performed were only possible if God was with him.

Jesus performed many miracles during his three-year public

ministry. If all the works Christ did were recorded, the world could not contain the books (John 21:25)! Jesus did what no one else could do. Jesus convinced the skeptics, calmed the storms, conquered evil spirits, cured the sick, and converted sinners.

The Confusion

The Declaration of the Kingdom of God

Jesus' message to mankind was regarding the Kingdom of God. Men love power and desire to rule others. But God's desire is to rule the heart of man. The Creator who made the earth has the right to make the rules. He wants us to recognize who the true God in Heaven is and submit to his authority. This is a matter of faith from our heart, not words from our lips or works of our hands. This is why there was much confusion in the mind of Nicodemus. He had observed God's laws, had an important position as a leader, and tried to live a good life. But Jesus would point out something that was missing in his life.

The Distinction of the Flesh and Spirit

Jesus told Nicodemus that God's kingdom was a spiritual kingdom, not earthly. He proceeded to explain that this was a spiritual concept, not to be experienced in the physical realm. It was necessary to be born again by the Spirit of God!

Nicodemus was confused. "How can I be born twice?" he asked (verse 4). In verses 5-7, Jesus gives him the answer. The first birth is our physical birth – the time we enter this world from our mother's womb. The second birth is a spiritual birth – the time we enter God's family by the Holy Spirit.

Let us consider the illustration of a candle. A candle is made up of two basic parts, the wax and the wick. But the purpose of the candle is to burn a flame. A flame gives light and warmth. Without the wax

and wick there can be no flame. But without the flame, the wax and wick do not fulfill their purpose.

Our life is like a candle in that we have a body and soul. The body and soul is like the wax and wick of a candle. But without our spirit being made alive, our life is unfulfilled just as a candle is useless until the flame is lit. It is through our spirit that we may know God.

The body is made up of five senses (taste, touch, see, smell, and hear) which allow us to interact with the physical world around us. The soul is composed of our intellect, emotions, and will. We have a brain with which to think, a heart to feel emotion, and a will by which we make decisions. Because we have a soul, we have self-consciousness.

But the most important part of humans, that differentiates us from animals, is that we have a spirit. The spirit is the way by which we have a God-consciousness. We desire to worship, make and follow moral laws, and seek justice. But there is a problem! Because we are sinners, our spirit is dead. Our sin separates us from God's Spirit.

Because of Adam and Eve's first sin of disobedience in the Garden of Eden, all people are born in sin. Our sin separates us from God. It is through our spirit by which we are influenced by God or Satan. By nature, we are born sinners and are in darkness. This is why Jesus came into the world - to bring light! We are dead in our sin, but Jesus came to give us eternal life!

The Comparison

Jesus goes on to explain, as Nicodemus still did not understand. He tells him a story from Israel's history. Jesus tells Nicodemus a story from the life of Moses. The Israelites had refused to worship the true God who loved them and were being punished by poisonous snakes. But God still wanted to show mercy and forgive them. So he told Moses to make a snake out of metal and put it on a pole. Whoever would look on it would be healed.

Jesus explained that the Son of man (speaking of himself) would also be raised on a pole (the cross) to die for the sins of all people. Through this comparison, Jesus showed how he would provide forgiveness for our sin! All who would look to him for salvation would receive mercy from God. God would give eternal life instead of punishment in hell fire.

The Condemnation

Jesus came to give deliverance from sin and its punishment, yet many still reject Jesus the Son of God. (vv18-21) God gives us the following warning. The sinner is condemned because “he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God” (v.18). “...men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil” (v.19). Lastly, “he...hateth the light, ...lest his deeds should be reproved” (v.20).

But there is hope for the person willing to accept truth and come to the light. Freedom from darkness is possible if you believe on Jesus Christ. Our religious rituals and good works cannot give us spiritual life any more than meditation in a cave can bring enlightenment. Consider the final words in vv34-36.

For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him. The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him. (John 3:34-36)

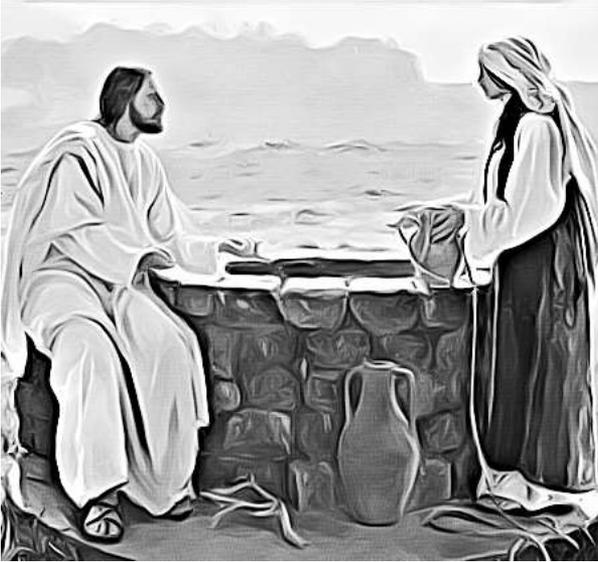
It is important to remember that religion cannot make man free from his sinful condition. Nicodemus learned that new life is a spiritual matter that only Jesus could give. Jesus alone can give purpose to your life.

Because all people are made in the image of God, each person is important. Our identity must not be based on our ethnicity, culture, or status in society. Our identity should come from our Creator!

Chapter 4

The Lonely Woman:

A Sinner Learns True Worship



He [Jesus] left Judaea, and departed again into Galilee. And he must needs go through Samaria. Then cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour. There cometh a woman of Samaria (to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink. (For his disciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat.) Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou,

being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans. Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water. (John 4:3-10)

Jesus had been travelling and was tired and thirsty. He had arrived outside the city of Samaria and sat down on a well of water. It was noon, and must have been very hot. Normally, the women would come draw water to fill their pots during the cooler time of the day. But Jesus knew one woman would be coming all alone at this time. She was lonely and had a bad past, as we will soon learn.

Truth about the Samaritan Woman

When the woman from Samaria arrived, Jesus was sitting there alone at the well. He had sent his disciples into town to buy food. As we learned earlier, God came to mankind when he entered the world through a virgin birth. He came to earth because man needed His help. Now Jesus is coming to this woman in need. Even when we don't know who God is, he knows and cares about us!

When Jesus asked her to give him water, she was quite surprised. In their culture, Jews despised Samaritans. Samaritans were not pure Jews, but rather half Jew and half Gentile. They had worshipped false gods and departed from the true faith. They were considered to be the "untouchables" of society. It is understandable that this woman was surprised that Jesus wanted anything from her – especially water to drink himself! Jesus was actually honoring her and showing her that she had value to God, even if others didn't recognize it.

Because all people are made in the image of God, each person is important. Our identity must not be based on our ethnicity, culture, or status in society. Our identity should come from our Creator!

Truth about Christ's Water

Jesus proceeds to talk about spiritual matters. He makes the physical connection of the body's need for water to the need of living water for our spirit. Drinking water comes from earth, the living water comes from heaven. We must work to obtain physical water; but the spiritual water of life is a gift from God!

The woman still did not understand the analogy and thought about the well of water Jesus had been sitting on. But more importantly, she did not realize who the person was that she was talking with. She asked Jesus if he was greater than Jacob who had dug the well.

Jesus answered her by making a contrast of the results of physical water and spiritual water. Physical water temporarily quenches the thirsty tongue, but the spiritual water eternally satisfies the spirit and soul. Now Jesus repeats this topic of "everlasting life" that he had taught Nicodemus. Jesus had said, *"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life"* (John 3:16). This everlasting life has no ending. Only an eternal God can offer this eternal gift!

But the woman still did not realize that the water Jesus is talking about cannot be obtained by physical means. She wants this gift so that she will not have to return to the well. Many people want the spiritual blessings for their own physical benefit. Beware of religions that offer health and wealth obtained through practices such as giving offerings and repeating prayers. Earthly practices can only obtain earthly rewards. A heavenly home and eternal life can only be given by an eternal God by spiritual means.

Truth about our Wickedness

Jesus told this woman to go call her husband. Before Jesus would give her this "living water", he had to reveal an important truth to her. Many do not receive the truth today because they are trusting in their

own works according to their traditions, history, and culture. Some may even be willing to add Jesus to their belief system with their other ancestral deities. But truth is exclusive. Once you are confronted with truth, all conflicting teachings are exposed as error. Worshiping the true God must be exclusive. God said not to worship any other God. He will not share his glory with another.

Jesus continues the conversation by showing the woman who she was (a sinner) and revealing who He was (the Savior from sin). She first recognized that he is a prophet.

The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband: For thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly. The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet.”
(Verses 17-19)

Before we can be liberated by the truth, we must be honest about ourselves and confess the truth about who Jesus is. This is very humiliating, and thus, very hard for most people. No one wants to admit how bad they are to someone else, especially to a stranger. This woman was listening to Jesus tell her that she had already failed in five marriages and was now living in adultery!

Feeling ashamed and guilty, the woman attempted to justify herself. She started to talk about religious matters saying, “Our fathers worshiped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship” (verse 20). Like we all naturally do, this woman shifted the focus off herself and tried to look “holy” by talking about God. She talked about the place of worship. Many people talk about religions as though they all lead to the same God. But contradicting beliefs do not come from the same source. There is only one God, thus, there is only one way to knowing Him and worshiping him.

Truth about God's Worship

Jesus saith unto her, "Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." (John 4:21-24)

Jesus taught this woman the most significant truth about worship. It is not about the place, but rather about the Person we worship. Many people go through the motions of worship, perhaps ringing bells and lighting candles. But how can these rituals make any difference if we do not know the God we are supposed to worship?

True worshippers worship the Father in spirit and in truth. We must understand the truth of who God is. We find here that we are to worship only the true God. This God is referred to as the Father and as a Spirit. Thus, we "must worship him in spirit and in truth." In verse 22, Jesus says, "we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews." Remember that Jesus is God who became a man. He was born a Jew. Jesus is the fulfillment of the prophets about the Messiah. In verses 25 and 26, the woman from Samaria recognized that Jesus is the Messiah for whom the people had been waiting. We each must worship the Triune God: God the Father, God the Son (Jesus Christ), and God the Holy Spirit. He is one God in three distinct Divine persons.

Man is made in the image of God, in that we are one being yet made up of three parts: body, soul, and spirit. As we already learned, the body is the physical part with which we relate to others. Our soul

is the invisible part of us where we have thoughts, feelings, and make decisions. But it is with the spirit that we must worship God.

When people like this Samaritan woman do not know the true God, they do not know who to worship. Because we are born in sin, we are spiritually separated from God. Spiritual freedom is only possible when we get honest about our bondage to sin. Because we are not perfect, it is impossible to please God with our works! This is why the coming of Jesus is such good news!

Conclusion

When the disciples returned, the woman left her water pot and ran back to the city in excitement! She told them how Jesus had told her about her past. The people surely were curious and came out to meet Jesus. (verses 27-30)

Many believed on Jesus because of the testimony of this woman. But many others believed because of Jesus' own words. Faith comes by hearing God's Word. The people testified of Jesus, that he is "indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world" (verse 42).

It is embarrassing to admit that we have offended a holy God. But this is necessary if we are to worship God in truth. Jesus does not only want us to be honest about who we are as sinners, but also recognize who He is as the perfect God who came to rescue mankind from sin.

Chapter 5

The Rich and Powerful:

Faith and Humility



So Jesus came again into Cana of Galilee, where he made the water wine. And there was a certain nobleman, whose son was sick at Capernaum. When he heard that Jesus was come out of Judaea into Galilee, he went unto him, and besought him that he would come down, and heal his son: for he was at the point of death. Then said Jesus unto him, Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe. The nobleman saith unto him, Sir, come down ere my child die. Jesus saith unto him, Go thy way; thy son liveth. And the

man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him, and he went his way.

*And as he was now going down, his servants met him, and told him, saying, Thy son liveth. Then enquired he of them the hour when he began to amend. And they said unto him, Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him. So the father knew that it was at the same hour, in the which Jesus said unto him, Thy son liveth: and himself believed, and his whole house. This is again the second miracle that Jesus did, when he was come out of Judaea into Galilee.
(John 4:46-54)*

A sick person with a disease has two options. He can hide his symptoms, and do his best to care for his illness himself; but without professional help and modern medicine, he will likely have an untimely death.

His second option is to go to a doctor. Naturally, this is often very difficult to do. Especially when he must be honest about the fact that he cannot help himself or change his condition. It may cause embarrassment to talk about his personal habits such as his diet and weight. If he must stay for a prolonged time, he will have to wear a hospital gown. It is uncomfortable having shots and IV's put in his arm and the medicine does not taste good. Staying in the hospital costs lots of money. There are many reasons a person may not choose option two.

But if a sick person wants to get better, he must be honest about his condition and trust the doctor. He must receive the treatment and medicine no matter the cost. But the most dangerous disease, is the one without symptoms that the person would recognize. To be sick and not know it is bad because you will not be able to treat it!

The Nobleman's Sick Son

Jesus has returned to the town of Cana where he had performed his first miracle. Earlier, at a marriage ceremony there, the wine (grape juice) had run out. Jesus told the servants to fill the pots with water. He then turned the water into the best wine! The people in town were aware that he had power to do unusual things. This is the first miracle Jesus had performed! When he returned to this town, a nobleman sought his help. A nobleman is an officer or minister to a prince or king. This man was a government official. But even people with political power are limited in their ability. We learn that he required help for a problem he could not fix himself. This nobleman lived in nearby Capernaum and his son had become really sick. Capernaum was about 16.5 miles (26.5 kilometers) from Cana. So he travelled this great distance to meet Jesus!

He sought for Jesus and begged him to come heal his son who was nearly dead. He humbly requested the only person able to help his need!

Many only believe in what they can see. But faith requires a person to accept what the eye cannot see. For example, we know that wind, air, and electricity are real, although we cannot see them. We do however see the effects and therefore believe they exist!

But the man continued to beg Jesus to come heal his son before he died. Jesus tested the faith of this man. He said simply "Go thy way; thy son liveth." (verse 51) The man believed the word of Jesus, and immediately did what Jesus said. He returned home with the confidence that Jesus would perform his word. This nobleman received help because he had faith in Jesus, and went to him believing that he had the power to perform a miracle.

The nobleman would need at least a day's journey to return home. But on the way, his servants met him with the good news that his son was alive! The nobleman asked what time he got better. It was at 1 P.M. the day before. He knew that when Jesus had said his son would

be healed, that the miracle had happened immediately! He and his entire household believed on Jesus Christ.

This government worker had to humble himself to ask Jesus for help. No doubt this nobleman had seen all the best doctors, and had tried everything in his own power to heal his son. A parent loves his child dearly. We will stop at no expense to protect our family. But we must recognize that no matter how much power we have, we are all limited in what we can do. Diseases and viral pandemics can overtake any country. We need to know who to go to for help.

Only God can do the impossible. We must realize that Satan and evil spirits also are powerful. This is why many people go to witch doctors and pay shamans to help. They realize there is a spiritual power that is holding them in captivity, and they want relief or release from this bondage and fear. Oftentimes it is through sickness that evil spirits attack people.

But there is a sickness we all have that is greater than physical illnesses and fevers. We all are sinners. Because of our sin, the Bible says we must die. Romans 6:23 says, “For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” We must come and surrender to the All-powerful God who is greater than the power of evil. Like the nobleman, we must turn aside from all our human efforts and believe the word that Jesus speaks to us. “God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble” (James 4:6b).

The Rich Young Ruler's Sick Soul



And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet? Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to

the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me. But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions. Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 19:16-23)

Let us consider another man who was young, rich, and powerful. But when he met Jesus, he did not have the same faith that the nobleman had. Instead, he relied on his own riches. The Bible says he had “great possessions.” But worse yet, the possessions had him. This rich young man trusted in his own goodness and his temporary riches. He was moral and proud of it. He said, “All these I have kept from my youth up” (verse 20). He was self-righteous and self-reliant. He had an ‘I’ problem, saying, “...what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?” (verse 16)

If we offend God’s law in one point, we are guilty of breaking all of God’s commands. (James 2:10) The Law can never justify a person, but rather always condemns him. The law is like a mirror: it reveals the dirt on your skin, but it cannot clean it. The purpose of the law is to make us guilty and realize that we need God’s forgiveness through Jesus Christ.

This rich young man did not put his faith in Jesus; thus, he did not receive eternal life. The law is given to the proud; but God gives grace to the humble.

In Matthew 19:21, Jesus said, “Come and follow me.” Sadly, this young rich ruler could not let go of his possessions to follow Christ. He loved his money more than the Master. We are warned in I Timothy 6:10 that “the love of money is the root of all evil.” Our trust must be in God and not in our riches.

Yet, Jesus beholding him, loved him. Sadly, when this young man saw Jesus, he loved his riches. He had to make a choice who would

be his master – the Lord Jesus or money. We also must make a choice of who we will serve. Will we serve Jesus or money? (Matthew 6:24)

Conclusion

Today we see a contrast of two men who were rich and powerful: the nobleman came to Jesus with humble faith: the other man was a rich ruler who was proud and chose to love his money more than God. The first man was concerned about others, the latter was selfish. The first man was interested in what Jesus could do, rather than boasting in what he had done himself.

Do you need help today? Have you been depending on your own strength or money to make yourself right with God? Do you realize that you cannot pay your sin debt?

This is why Jesus came and died on the cross. He shed his blood to pay for your sin. We are made clean (righteous in the eyes of God) when we accept his sacrifice in our place. This is the only payment for sin that satisfies the demands of our holy God in heaven.

Are you willing to trust in Jesus rather than the money you possess? Are you willing to be honest about your sin and need of forgiveness? Are you ready to humble yourself and ask God for help? Do you believe His Word? Jesus says the following:

He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life. (John 5:23-24)

Notice the two things Jesus promises to those who hear his word and believe: 1) they have everlasting life and 2) will not come into condemnation!

What can be greater than the miracle
of being physically healed? The
greatest miracle is that we can be
forgiven from our sin.

Chapter 6

The Greatest Power: *Forgiveness of Sin*



And again he [Jesus] entered into Capernaum after some days; and it was noised that he was in the house. And straightway many were gathered together, insomuch that there was no room to receive them, no, not so much as about the door: and he preached the word unto them. And they come unto him, bringing one sick of the palsy, which was borne of four. And when they could not come nigh unto him for the press, they uncovered the roof where he was: and when they had broken it up, they let down the bed wherein the sick of the palsy lay. (Mark 2:14)

As Jesus proclaimed the Word of God to a group of people, a lame man was brought to Jesus. His friends believed that if they could get to Jesus, their helpless friend could be healed. They would not let anything stop them and even removed the tiling from the rooftop of the house to lower their friend into the presence of Jesus Christ! But what Jesus did next was surprising and even upsetting to many of those present.

The Most Powerful Master

When we think of powerful beings, we recognize that man's strength has limits. There are spiritual beings, both good and evil, who possess more power than people. But when we consider all of creation, we must not forget there is only one Creator who made all things visible and invisible. God in heaven made all living beings to bring himself glory. But Satan, a powerful angel, wanted to usurp God's authority and was lifted up with pride. God banished him from Heaven and now Satan works to influence this world for evil seeking to steal, kill, and destroy all that God meant for good.

But we need not fear. Though God has an enemy who is powerful, God still has the advantage! We see in the following story that there are limits to Satan's power, but God is capable of doing anything.

There is a story in the Bible about Moses who had been given the responsibility to confront the Egyptian Pharaoh. God wanted his chosen people Israel to be freed from being slaves to the Egyptians. Pharaoh refused to acknowledge the existence of God and resisted the request to let God's people go free.

God showed his mighty power through several plagues on the land. The first was turning the water into blood. The magicians of Egypt were able to replicate this work. Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he continued to refuse to let the people of God go free. Again, Moses demonstrated the power of God by bringing frogs out of the

Nile River. The magicians of Pharaoh likewise did the same with their enchantments!

Again, God sent lice to plague the land of Egypt. The magicians also tried to bring forth lice from the dust of the earth, but were not able. The magicians admitted to Pharaoh, “This is the finger of God.” (Exodus 8:19) Though Satan has more power than humans, his power is inferior to the true Creator God.

The Most Powerful Miracle

When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee. But there was certain of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts, Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? who can forgive sins but God only? (Mark 2:5-7)

Jesus wanted to do something greater for this crippled man than a physical miracle. The man had a physical problem, but also a spiritual condition that only God could change. Jesus called him “son” welcoming him into the family of God. This is only possible because the man’s sin was forgiven. Jesus had the authority to forgive his sin. This is what was brought into question by the skeptics’ thoughts. They thought Jesus was wrong for claiming to do what only God had the power to do, that is, to forgive the sin of mankind.

And immediately when Jesus perceived in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, he said unto them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts? Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (he saith to the sick of the palsy,) I say unto

thee, Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house. And immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went forth before them all; insomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, We never saw it on this fashion. (Mark 2:8-12)

Because Jesus is God, he knows everything, including the thoughts of other people. He knew their doubts and questions and asked them a simple, yet profound question: Is it easier to say “Your sins are forgiven” or “Arise and walk home”? He did this to teach them an important truth: Jesus has the power on earth to forgive sins.

Jesus, the Creator of mankind, desires to have fellowship with each person. But our sin of rebellion against God separates us from Him. Therefore, we must be punished for our sin. God cannot allow sin to go unpunished. But because He loves us, God became a man to suffer the punishment of our sin on the cross. This is why Jesus came to earth from Heaven. His love for us is demonstrated by his sacrifice on our behalf. Because Jesus paid the penalty of our sin, he has the authority to grant us forgiveness from our sin!

Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. (Romans 5:1,8-10)

What can be greater than the miracle of being physically healed? The greatest miracle is that we can be forgiven from our sin. Jesus came to earth, lived perfectly, and died for our sin. When we place

our faith in him, we are justified, meaning “declared righteous.” All believers are cleansed by the blood of Jesus and are right with God.

The Most Powerful Mediator

I remember talking with a friend who was following the teaching of a guru in India. This guru pointed out what he thought were the fallacies of all the world’s religions and made his own list of rules to attain perfection. After some questioning, I learned that this guru claimed perfection only after the age of 30 years. Although he claimed to perform some miracles, he did not possess the power to forgive the sin of others.

There are many religious leaders and shamans who claim to intervene for the needs of people by placating evil spirits through prayers and sacrifices. Many offer a false hope by appealing to Satan and demonic spirits to leave suffering people alone. But we must remember that people are restricted in power to mediate healing, and even the Satanic powers they appeal to are limited.

Jesus Christ is the only one who meets the requirement to forgive our sin. He is our mediator. I Timothy 2:5 states, “For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;”

There are many on earth who possess a great amount of power. Satan, who is a fallen angel, is the enemy of God. Because he is a spiritual being, we cannot see him. Yet, he is working with all his might to influence this world with his evil. But even Satan’s power is limited. God has all power because he is the creator of the heaven and the earth. Everything that has life, including spirits were made by the true living God. Therefore, God has all power over everyone!

My friend, do not be deceived by men of power who can do what seems miraculous. There are Satanic influences who can do mighty works. But the power that Satan has is small compared to the finger of God. Satan’s goal is to keep man from knowing the forgiveness and freedom that Jesus offers. Because Jesus is God, he possesses the power to forgive sin.

We must recognize the influence of evil spirits. They bring spiritual bondage and fear to people. They want us to be thinking about death and participate in activities that destroy our life.

Chapter 7

The Maniac of Gadara:

Freed from Satan's Bondage



And they came over unto the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gadarenes. And when he [Jesus] was come out of the ship, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit, Who had his dwelling among the tombs; and no man could bind him, no, not with chains: Because that he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces: neither could any man tame him. And always, night and day, he was in the

mountains, and in the tombs, crying, and cutting himself with stones. (Mark 5:1-5)

The Confrontation

Jesus visited a place called Gadara in Decapolis. This was a territory where the cultures of Greek and Roman coexisted with the local Jewish inhabitants. Their idolatrous influence led to a very immoral lifestyle.

We already learned that Jesus went to Samaria to meet an immoral woman and changed her life. Now Jesus has come to a place where Gentiles live. They are pagans with no knowledge of God. They practiced wickedness with no fear of God. Jews were forbidden to go to this unclean territory. Imagine a father and son on their fishing boat out on the Sea of Galilee. The loving father instructs his son that they are to follow the true God in Heaven who created them. Perhaps he might warn his son, “We are not to be involved with the evil of this world. Do not go to the land of filthiness and Satanic influences. Stay away from the Gadarenes.”

Notice the description we find of this man possessed by an unclean spirit. He lived among the tombs with the dead; he could not be subdued by chains or controlled. He made loud noises crying out and cutting himself.

In this story, we learn that this man was possessed by an unclean spirit that led him to a place of the dead. It is interesting to note that in present-day religions, there is much preoccupation with the dead, and places of the dead.

One of the highest deities in Hinduism is lord Shiva. This is the god who is believed to be the destroyer of life. The statue of Shiva is located in Nepal at Pashupatinath, Kathmandu. This is where the dead

bodies are cremated along the Bagmati River. The priests who live there cover their naked bodies with ashes from the deceased.

I remember meeting a former Buddhist monk who spent a couple long seasons of fasting and meditation. I was intrigued that one time he spent two and a half months meditating at a burial ground where the dead are taken. The practice of yoga, popularized by both Hinduism and Buddhism, is even performed by enthusiastic adherents in graveyards for a deeper spiritual experience!

What is the goal of religion? For many, it is to find release from sin or to become pure. Perhaps some desire to find acceptance with God, peace of mind, or hope for their future. I remember talking with another Buddhist monk. I asked him why he meditated and followed his religion with such devotion. He stated that he wanted to get his mind pure. Sadly, he admitted that he did not believe that this goal was achievable during his lifetime.

Our conscience tells us that we are not okay in our present condition. We know we have done wrong. The Bible tells us our sin separates us from God. How do we find freedom from sin and evil influences?

The Conversation

But when he saw Jesus afar off, he ran and worshipped him, And cried with a loud voice, and said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the most high God? I adjure thee by God, that thou torment me not. For he said unto him, Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit. And he asked him, What is thy name? And he answered, saying, My name is Legion: for we are many. And he besought him much that he would not send them away out of the country.

Now there was there nigh unto the mountains a great herd of swine feeding.

And all the devils besought him, saying, Send us into the swine, that we may enter into them. And forthwith Jesus gave them leave. And the unclean spirits went out, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the sea, (they were about two thousand;) and were choked in the sea. And they that fed the swine fled, and told it in the city, and in the country. And they went out to see what it was that was done. (Mark 5:6-14)

What is the response of the man possessed with devils? He runs to worships Jesus! The unclean spirit recognized who Jesus was. James 2:19 says, “Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.” Satan and his evil spirits know the position and power of Jesus. They know that he created them and will judge them. One day, they will be cast into the lake of fire. In our story above, these unclean spirits are begging not to be cast out of the country. So Jesus cast them out of the man and into the pigs nearby. The pigs immediately ran violently over the cliff.

We must recognize the influence of evil spirits. They bring spiritual bondage and fear to people. They want us to be thinking about death and participate in activities that destroy our life. Notice even many lyrics of popular music today with the subject matter promoting death and destruction through drugs, alcohol, and sexual perversion.

The Conversion

And they come to Jesus, and see him that was possessed with the devil, and had the legion, sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid.

And they that saw it told them how it befell to him that was possessed with the devil, and also concerning the swine. And they began to pray him to depart out of their coasts. And when he was come into the ship, he that had been possessed with the devil prayed him that he might be with him. Howbeit Jesus suffered him not, but saith unto him, Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee. (Mark 5: 15-19)

Jesus purposely had travelled with his disciples to meet only this one bad man! Notice the changes He made in his life. Jesus conquered evil and demonstrated the miraculous power of God! This is what true conversion is. We must remember that Jesus, who is God, is the life-Giver. He is the light of life, Resurrection and the life, the way, truth, and the life, and giver of eternal life! He gives life instead of death, and offers purity instead of filthiness.

Notice the changes we see Jesus made in the life of this man who previously was controlled by an evil spirit. He was sitting instead of being out of control. He now had a peaceful spirit because of the power of the Holy Spirit that took possession of him. He was clothed instead of naked. He now was no longer impure and immoral, but made clean by the Holy God. He was in his right mind instead of being lunatic and emotionally unstable. He had a different mentality and desired to be with Jesus.

Jesus sent him home to tell his family and neighbors what great things he had done! He showed his faith in Christ by obeying Jesus' words. He returned to Decapolis to declare the goodness and compassion of God. He was not ashamed to publicly confess his faith in Jesus Christ.

The local people were angry because they lost money. Yet, they were not interested in a man getting his mind and life restored! They

had the wrong priorities. Jesus asked his followers, “For what shall it profit a man if he should gain the whole world and lose his own soul” (Mark 8:36)?

When we meet Jesus, he makes changes in our body, mind, and soul. We have a renewed mind and thoughts. We have new desires and want to spend time with God, read the Bible, and tell others about him. We want to honor him with our body and possessions. We want to obey truth because we love God. These are the results when Christ subdues the enemy of our soul and frees us from the bondage to Satan. He takes us from being spiritually dead in our sin and gives us real life! “For God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind” (II Timothy 1:7).

What characterizes your life? Is it anger, fear, death, or suicidal thoughts? You can experience peace with God and peace from God even in a world of chaos. You may have rest for your soul, a renewed mind, and purpose when you meet Jesus personally by faith in him. Our purpose is to glorify God. But first you must experience his freedom from sin. Will you call on him to deliver you and include you in the family of God?

Chapter 8

The Unclean Woman:

Hope for Healing



And a certain woman, which had an issue of blood twelve years, And had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse, When she had heard of Jesus, came in the press behind, and touched his garment. For she said, If I may touch but his clothes, I shall be whole. And straightway the fountain of her blood was dried up; and she felt in her body that she was healed of that plague. (Mark 5:25-29)

Jesus was on his way to help an important man who was in desperate need. While walking to his house, he was interrupted! Read how Jesus responded to a woman in Capernaum who was ceremonially unclean!

The Woman's Hurt

A woman approached Jesus having had an issue of blood for twelve years! She had suffered much from a hemorrhage (continued bleeding). We are not told the cause of her ailment, but because she was a Jew, we understand the consequences under the Old Testament law. In the Book of Leviticus, the LORD God gave His Jewish people laws for their sanctification (separation), that they may be holy. The Israelite people were required to eat only clean animals for a good diet and follow laws for their physical purification.

According to Leviticus 12:2-5, a woman giving birth to a son would need to be separated from the public for 40 days and if she gave birth to a daughter, 80 days total of separation was necessary. After her time of purification was complete, she must bring a sacrifice to the Jewish priest who would make an atonement for her (verse 6). Only after this, may she again be considered clean and return to normal life in public! Consider the implications of this old Jewish practice.

1. An unclean woman could not touch any holy thing (verse 4) She had to be separated from others including the public worship of God at the holy meeting place.

Like this woman, we are all unclean in God's eyes because of our sin. We are thus separated from our Holy God and cannot enter His presence. We are not able to properly worship God.

2. This woman needed to be purified...She had been separated much longer than 40 or 80 days: she had this issue for 12 years, which is 4,380 days!

All cultures feel the weight of their sin; this is why they turn to depend on their works and religion. They want to worship, but because they don't know the true God, they make idols. They sense their need for help: hence, in every culture people attempt to pray, and make sacrifices to appease their gods. For example, the annual festival of Dashain in Nepal involves the bloodshed of goats to appease the bloodthirsty goddess of Kali (Shiva's wife). Many years ago, humans were sacrificed! But even the sacrifice of another sinful man is insufficient to cleanse our sin. This is why Jesus had to be sinless, so he could be the perfect substitute dying in our place!

3. She needed a priest to make a sacrifice for her cleansing.

No matter how much we attempt to satisfy the demands of the Holy God in heaven, we cannot purify ourselves by our own works. Only through Jesus, our High Priest, may we receive forgiveness and cleansing from sin. Jesus gave His own blood to make us clean.

For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation. (Hebrews 9:24-28)

The Woman's Helplessness

Religion is expensive. The pride of man demands to work for his own salvation. Even a church or religious leader is not able to clean the soul of man! Man-made rules and laws only keep sinners in captivity with no hope. Good deeds cannot earn eternal life. There is no one capable of being perfect.

Only God can give grace to the humble. God will help an honest sinner who confesses his need. Notice the woman's honesty and humility. "But the woman fearing and trembling, knowing what was done in her, came and fell down before him, and told him all the truth" (Mark 5:33).

I remember talking with a Hindu who told me there are 330 million gods, with three chief deities – Brahma (the giver of life), Vishnu (the sustainer of life), and Shiva (the destroyer of life). But sadly, with all of these gods believed to exist, not one is able to forgive his sin! He told me that he must try to achieve this impossible feat all alone. This is truly a helpless state for anyone.

The Woman Heard Good News

There came a time in this woman's life when someone told her about Jesus. In Mark chapter 1, Jesus had been teaching in Capernaum and healed a man with an unclean spirit. He also healed a woman with a fever and others who were diseased. Now Jesus was in Capernaum again. The woman likely had heard of what Jesus had done for others. Now she needed Jesus to help her! She put aside her pride, and the fact that she was unclean. She just needed to go to Jesus!

Jesus told his disciples in John 16 that the Holy Spirit is working to convince the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. We each must turn from our sin, and submit to Jesus by putting our faith in

Him who is righteous. Instead of God's judgment, we may receive His mercy!

The Woman's Hope

Most people live with an empty hope and a baseless promise because they are blinded by Satan's deceitful lies. But those who come to know Jesus are given an assuring hope both in life and after death. Consider the hope you may have when you have a relationship with God through Jesus!

- You will receive answers to life's most important questions from the Holy Bible.
- You may receive forgiveness from sin because Jesus was sinless and died in your place.
- You may sing a joyful song. Notice the lyrics and music of Christians based on the hope and peace.
- You may truly experience love and acceptance by God. I have heard many times someone say, "Jesus loves you." But never in my life has a Hindu said that any one of their deities love me. I have never had a monk tell me that Buddha loves me, or any Muslim say that Mohammed loves me.

The Woman's Healing

After years of seeking help, this woman met the All-powerful physician. Immediately she had new life! This was instant deliverance, not gradual. Eternal life is a gift given only by Jesus Christ at the moment we put our faith and dependence on Him. He restores our soul.

Are you willing to humble yourself like this woman and say "I am dying with a sin-sickness and need help. I can't please God and make myself pure. I have offended God, and I am truly sorry." Get honest with God: he already knows the truth about your condition.

But he will not heal your soul and forgive your sin until you turn to him and trust him completely. Recognize that Jesus alone is the way of eternal life. Call on him to save you today!

The Woman's Happiness

And Jesus, immediately knowing in himself that virtue had gone out of him, turned him about in the press, and said, Who touched my clothes? And his disciples said unto him, Thou seest the multitude thronging thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me? And he looked round about to see her that had done this thing. But the woman fearing and trembling, knowing what was done in her, came and fell down before him, and told him all the truth. And he said unto her, Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague. (Mark 5: 30-34)

Jesus addressed this woman as “Daughter.” This woman, who had been isolated because of her impurity, was now accepted by God and adopted into His family! This is the only time in Scripture where Jesus calls a woman “daughter.” Jesus saw that she depended upon Him! Because she had faith, she was healed. After years of separation, Jesus welcomed her into His family.

Jesus is the Great Physician who can heal our sin-sick soul. He is also our High Priest who alone can declare us clean and restore us back into the presence of God. This is reconciliation! Jesus is the only mediator between God and mankind. (I Timothy 2:5)

We have the promise that if we come by faith to Jesus, he will declare us righteous and make us his child. “But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.” (John 1:12)

Conclusion: Jesus came to heal the broken-hearted. This is because Jesus has genuine compassion on the hurting and helpless. If you are without hope of eternal life today, humble yourself and be honest with God. Admit your need and come to Jesus by faith.

When God became flesh as Jesus Christ, he was born without sin because He is perfect! He is the only one who has the right to judge us, and He also has the right to show mercy and forgive sin.

Chapter 9

The Ashamed Adulteress:

Truth brings Freedom



Jesus went unto the mount of Olives. And early in the morning he came again into the temple, and all the people came unto him; and he sat down, and taught them. And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst, They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act.

Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou? This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped

down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not. So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground.

And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more. Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. (John 8:1-12)

Picture this scene of contrasts that Jesus encountered near the Temple in Jerusalem. See the group of angry men bringing a shamed woman before Jesus, as she had been caught in the wicked act of adultery. The men accusing her were the Jewish religious leaders. By law, the woman was guilty of death by stoning. What would Jesus do?

Jesus, a wise teacher, and bold preacher of truth, desired to show mercy instead of judgment. As the all-knowing God, he could see the wicked hearts of these men who dressed so nicely and appeared quite holy. They portrayed themselves as law-abiding, God-fearing, men. Yet, in secret, they took advantage of the poor, they robbed widows, and they were motivated by pride. They would pray loudly in public so that others would see them. But they did not truly know and fear

God. They trusted in their own piety and ceremonies. They thought that because they were not found guilty of heinous crimes that they would be excused from God's judgment. They believed their own righteous acts would earn God's favor.

Jesus knelt on the ground and wrote in the sand. Though we do not know what he wrote, we know that the angry men began to change their minds about stoning the woman. Perhaps he began writing the laws that God had given Moses, which these men thought they had been so faithful in obeying. Some of the commands God had given Moses were as follows: Worship God only. Do not have any other idols or graven images. Honor your parents. Do not kill, lie, or covet. Do not commit adultery. Jesus then looked up and said, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her" (verse 7). Yes, this woman had broken God's law and deserved death: but so had all the religious leaders too! God's Word says, "As it is written, there is none righteous, no, not one" (Romans 3:10). The Bible also says that "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).

Only one has never sinned – God. When God became flesh as Jesus Christ, he was born without sin. He is perfect! He is the only one who has the right to judge us. But he also has the right to show mercy and forgive sin: this is what he did for the guilty woman. He said, "Neither do I condemn thee. Go and sin no more" (verse 11).

Can you imagine the range of emotions this woman had in just a few hours? The pleasure of sin, the guilt of unfaithfulness to her husband, the shame of being exposed, the judgment of the religious leaders, and now the mercy of Jesus Christ! She finally had hope of a new life and a future of joy! Her own path had led her to self-destruction and almost death! But when she learned the truth, she was made free. Today, you may also discover freedom from guilt and hope of acceptance with God.

But you must be willing to come out of the darkness of sin by coming to the light of Jesus. Jesus said in John 8:12, “I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.”

Discover Truth

Jesus said, “If we continue in His word, we will know the truth” (John 8:31,32a). A Tibetan proverb states, “A guest who speaks truthfully and a lord who has good intentions are rare gems.” Let us consider what truth we need to learn and how it will benefit our life. When we comprehend truth, we may find freedom. With freedom, we possess hope that will never cease.

The Dalai Lama said, “For Tibetans, the real strength of our struggle is truth – not size, money, or expertise.” But we must answer the question, “What is the source of truth?” If something is true, it means it is without error! Do you want to learn truth? You first must have a source where it is declared.

The God of Heaven who created us, also gave us a Book to learn about him. The Holy Scriptures give us the directions for the path of each life. The Bible has all the answers to every question about life that we have. “Where did we come from, why are here, and where are we going?” The Bible is God’s Word which tells us how we can walk in light and not in darkness. Jesus said, “I am the way the truth and the life, no man cometh unto the Father but by me” (John 14:6). Jesus also said, “Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it” (Matthew 7:13,14).

Sadly, most people do not sincerely want to know the truth! The Italian astronomer Galileo is called “the father of modern science.” In the 1600’s, he was known as a great scientist. But did you know that he was also a convicted criminal?

Galileo studied the planets and stars, and he also discovered that the sun, not the earth, was the center of the solar system. At the time, people believed that the sun, stars, and other planets revolved around the earth. But Galileo insisted that the earth moved around the sun! When Galileo tried to persuade people that his special discovery was true, the religious leaders put him on trial. The court convicted Galileo of spreading lies (heresy), and he spent the last nine years of his life under house arrest. He was actually imprisoned for being right about the earth! He understood the truth, yet others rejected it! Today, he is highly regarded for his knowledge.

Discover Freedom

Jesus proceeded to say in John 8:32, "...and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." With truth comes freedom. Today, many scientists are able to make more discoveries about our solar system because of the facts that Galileo revealed. Truth may not be popular by the majority, but it still brings freedom to those who embrace it!

Nobody wants to live in bondage. Whether it is political freedom, financial freedom, personal freedom, or spiritual freedom, everybody wants to be free! Today, you may be burdened by past failures. Perhaps you have disappointed your family, or you may be ashamed by your mistakes. You do not have to remain a captive. In Luke 4:18, Jesus said that he was "anointed to preach the gospel to the poor; he was sent to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised."

How do you strive to find freedom from sin? Some free birds from cages, hoping to gain spiritual freedom. Others take pilgrimages to Mt. Kailash in Tibet or bathe in a lake that is considered holy. But no matter how many rituals you perform, prayer wheels you spin, or money you donate, you cannot release yourself from your past sins.

Your greatest enemy is not a government, an illness, or even a personal failure. Your greatest enemy is Satan who wants to destroy you and keep you in the darkness away from truth. Satan has blinded the spiritual sight of many. II Corinthians 4:4 says, “In whom the god of this world [Satan] hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.”

Discover Hope

There is hope today for you! If Jesus could forgive a woman sentenced to die for her immoral action, he can also forgive you for whatever wrongs you have done! Jesus Christ was sinless, yet took the blame of all mankind’s sin when he died at the hands of Roman soldiers. He paid our sin debt on the cross by shedding his blood. He came back to life three days later when he rose again. He possesses all power and wants to show you mercy. There is hope for you! But you must acknowledge the truth about your sin and believe that Jesus is the only one who can forgive you and make you truly free. This is your only sure hope!

Why do many have no hope? Ephesians 2:12-14 says, “That at that time ye were without Christ, ...having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace...”

Living without Christ is a life without hope. If you reject the Word of God, you will reject the light from God, Jesus Christ. But when you receive the light of truth and believe God’s Word, you will experience the deliverance from sin, Satan, and God’s judgment. Jesus Christ is the only one who can give true spiritual freedom. This is the eternal hope of those who have peace with God by walking in the light.

Chapter 10

Blind from Birth:

Sin, Suffering, and Superstition



And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth. And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him. I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world. When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, And said unto him, Go, wash in the pool

of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent.) He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing. (John 9:1-7)

Asking the Wrong Questions

When Jesus and his disciples came upon a man in Jerusalem who was blind from birth, the disciples asked him an interesting question “Was he born blind because of his own sin, or the sin of his parents?” This question has been asked by multitudes over the centuries. Many infer that sickness or disease is a direct result of something bad someone has done. Some people refer to this as “karma.” Those who believe in reincarnation might apply this teaching of “karma” to this story. They may explain that his blindness was from wrong-doing in a previous lifetime, or maybe even his parent’s evil deeds. But the disciples were asking the wrong questions because they had a wrong understanding of reality according to God’s perspective. The Bible teaches that another should not be punished for the sins of his parents. We each must be judged for our own sins. But the Bible also teaches that we have one life and after this comes the judgment. (Hebrews 9:27) So it is not possible for this man to have been born blind because of his sin in a previous lifetime.

Jesus gives them the reason in answer to their question. This reason should shape our perspective on our own life and circumstances. Why do bad things happen? Especially, why do bad things happen to “innocent” children and seemingly “good” people? We have to consider an important factor when approaching these difficult questions.

We must consider the Origin of life. The supreme God of Heaven created this world and is the sovereign ruler over all of life. Every man must be subject to His authority and must consider God in all his ways. Yes, the first man Adam and his wife Eve disobeyed God, and as a result, brought a curse upon this earth and mankind. Sin brings suffering and death upon all of us, because we are all born in sin. The

real question should be, “Why is God so good to us as we have all rebelled against him and resisted his love to us? Why does he extend grace when we do not deserve it? Why would God continue to love us and want to show us mercy? Why would God the Father send His only Son Jesus to come to this earth, serve others, and die for sinners?”

To answer the disciples’ question, Jesus informed them that the works of God should be manifested in him. God had a greater reason for this man’s blindness! His purposes are not always understood by mankind at the present time, as His ways are higher than our ways and his thoughts above our thoughts. Because God is more powerful and his plans are greater than ours, we must remember that God has good reasons to allow bad things to happen. Remember God is good, perfect, and always right. He does not do wrong. Satan is the evil one always trying to bring harm and fear to us. But God can use the bad circumstances to show His power to bring Himself glory! That is exactly what he did for this blind man.

Seeking the Wrong Approval

The neighbours therefore, and they which before had seen him that he was blind, said, Is not this he that sat and begged? Some said, This is he: others said, He is like him: but he said, I am he. Therefore said they unto him, How were thine eyes opened? He answered and said, A man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash: and I went and washed, and I received sight. Then said they unto him, Where is he? He said, I know not.

They brought to the Pharisees him that aforetime was blind. And it was the sabbath day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes. Then again the Pharisees also

asked him how he had received his sight. He said unto them, He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do see. Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath day. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them. They say unto the blind man again, What sayest thou of him, that he hath opened thine eyes? He said, He is a prophet.

But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind, and received his sight, until they called the parents of him that had received his sight. And they asked them, saying, Is this your son, who ye say was born blind? how then doth he now see? His parents answered them and said, We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind: But by what means he now seeth, we know not; or who hath opened his eyes, we know not: he is of age; ask him: he shall speak for himself. These words spake his parents, because they feared the Jews: for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue. Therefore said his parents, He is of age; ask him. (John 9:8-23)

After receiving his sight, the blind man was brought to the religious leaders. They asked him who had healed him. He told them it was Jesus, whom he believed to be a prophet. Some of them could not believe he had been blind, so they asked the parents about the matter. They confirmed that truly their son had been born blind! But they would not verify who it was that healed their son.

You see, his parents were so concerned about their own reputation, they did not want to be associated with Jesus. In fact, it was well-known that those who confessed to be a follower of Jesus

would be put out of the synagogue. The synagogue was the religious meeting center for the Jewish people. The fear of man was so great, that the parents made sure that no one would accuse them of being followers of Jesus Christ, even though he had miraculously healed their own son!

The fear of man is so great that many will also reject confessing the truth about God. Many desire the approval and acceptance of their own family and community, even if it means that they refuse the love of God! Many cultures will honor their parents and not question their ancestors' beliefs. Even though through the centuries, their own belief systems have changed having been influenced by other religions around them. For instance, animism and shamanism known as the Bon religion in Tibet became influenced by Buddhism. Many sects of Buddhism have sprung up around Asia. Yet, even before Buddhism had begun to exist, Hinduism was its origin. Today, Hindus and Tibetan Buddhists have very little in common, though they have similar roots. Yet, though there are many sects and differing thoughts among Hindus and Buddhists, many don't consider if what they believe today is the truth. They simply follow blindly what they have been told and reject the truth of the true God and Jesus Christ.

This was true in Jesus' day, as people had a form of religion, but did not know the truth of God. They did not want to please God by placing their entire dependence on him, but rather sought the approval of their peers and religious teachers.

Believing the Wrong Teaching

Then again called they the man that was blind, and said unto him, Give God the praise: we know that this man is a sinner. He answered and said, Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind,

now I see. Then said they to him again, What did he to thee? how opened he thine eyes? He answered them, I have told you already, and ye did not hear: wherefore would ye hear it again? will ye also be his disciples? Then they reviled him, and said, Thou art his disciple; but we are Moses' disciples. We know that God spake unto Moses: as for this fellow, we know not from whence he is. The man answered and said unto them, Why herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes. Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth. Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind. If this man were not of God, he could do nothing. They answered and said unto him, Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us? And they cast him out. Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when he had found him, he said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God? He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him? And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee. And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him.

And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind. And some of the Pharisees which were with him heard these words, and said unto him, Are we blind also? Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth. (John 9:24-41)

The religious leaders approached the blind man again, trying to understand what actually happened. The man simply replied, “I know that I was blind, but now I see!” The Pharisees were not about to acknowledge anything good about Jesus, and were determined that his power was not of God! They could not accept that they might possibly be wrong about Jesus, and thus, they had to find fault with him. So they said, “Jesus is evil because He healed the man on an holy day.” Then they said that they did not know where he came from, so surely he cannot be from God!

It’s fascinating to see that these religious leaders could admit their own ignorance, yet be so sure that they knew where Jesus was from! In their frustration, the Pharisees cast the man out of the synagogue! Imagine that this man was excommunicated from a religious congregation simply because he was healed!

Jesus learned about this man’s plight. So he meets with him and talks with him revealing that he is the Son of God. The man believed and immediately worshipped his new Lord! Worship is the natural reaction of one who truly knows God and believes on Him with all his heart and mind. Worship is reserved only by God for God. Nobody else received worship throughout the Bible. The prophets and even angels refused to be worshipped. But Jesus received this man’s worship because he is the true God! We do read however, about Satan, the angel who rebelled against God and desired to be like God. He even tempted Jesus offering to give him the kingdoms of this world in exchange for one thing...to be worshiped!

God commanded that we should not worship anyone else besides Him. We are not to make any graven image and worship anything created. Only God the Creator deserves to be worshipped. This blind man worshipped God because he worshipped Jesus Christ. Jesus is the true God! An interesting note here is that God also commanded his people to honor their parents. This blind man in no way

dishonored his parents, but he did not worship them either. God is the one who created our parents and hence, though we should respect our earthly mother and father, we should not put them before God. We must not follow our traditions and worship our ancestors, because this dishonors our Creator. Honor authority, but only worship the true God!

Be sure that the God you worship is the God who made you, not a false god made by you. For only the God who has the power to make you can also possess the power to save you!

Conclusion

Jesus' Invitation to You:

How to Receive Eternal Life



For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. (Romans 6:23)

How can you receive God's gift of eternal life? How can you be sure your sin is forgiven?

There are two places where the spirit of man goes after he dies: heaven where God lives, or hell where Satan will be punished forever. Heaven is beautiful: there is no sickness or sadness there. Hell is a place of suffering in fire. We all deserve to be punished for our sin in hell. But God wants us to be with him in Heaven.

Eternal life cannot be earned. It is a gift only an eternal God can give. Though God has done so much to show his love toward man, each person must make a choice with what He will do with the gift of God. Every gift of value has a high price. The gift of eternal life cost God the life of His only Son Jesus Christ. It is the shed blood of Jesus that cleanses us from sin. You can be forgiven by God!



Three days after Jesus died on the cross, He came back to life as he had predicted. This signified that he had power over sin, death, and our enemy the Devil. Through his death in your place, he paid the penalty for your sin. Through his resurrection, he enables eternal life to the sinner that turns from his own rebellious way to believe on Jesus. It is necessary to admit that as a sinner, you are going the wrong way. You deserve death and judgment in the lake of fire for your sin and you cannot save yourself.

Believe that God offers an alternative to eternal punishment. By turning from your own way and trusting in Jesus alone as your only hope of deliverance, you may have eternal life! You must receive the righteousness of God by believing on Jesus Christ as your Saviour. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6).

We each have a choice to make. We can believe the lie of the devil who says, "You are good enough, keep trying to be better. Your religion will be enough for God." Satan is a liar and keeps people in fear and darkness. Jesus says, "Come to me, and I will give you peace and rest." He is the light of the world.

Are you willing to abandon trusting your own self-righteousness, good works, and religion? Are you willing to submit yourself to God and acknowledge him as your only Lord and Saviour? God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. He is merciful and longsuffering, but there will come a time when He no longer withholds his wrath. Come to him today: He gives grace to the humble. Romans 10:13 says, "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the LORD shall be saved."

Will you believe Jesus' words? He said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life" (John 5:24).

If you believe that Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life, you may have eternal life today. You simply must turn from your way and quit trusting in your own good works and religion. This is repentance.

Accept Jesus' invitation to come to him. He will not turn away any who come to him for eternal salvation. He eagerly awaits to forgive you of your sin and welcome you into the family of God. This is faith. Please carefully read the words on the next few pages.

You May Have Eternal Life Today!

1. Realize That God Loves You

God loves you unconditionally and has a purpose for your life. “*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*” (John 3:16)

2. The Bible Says That All Men Are Sinners

Our sins have separated us from God. “*For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.*” (Romans 3:23)

3. God’s Word Also Says That Sin Must Be Punished

“*For the wages of sin is death...*” (Romans 6:23b) Wages means payment. The payment of our sin is death and hell, separation from God forever. If we continue in our sin, we shall die without Christ and be without God forever.

4. The Good News Is That Christ Paid for Your Sins

All our sins were laid on Christ on the cross. He paid our sin debt for us. The Lord Jesus Christ died and arose from the dead. He is alive forevermore! “*But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*” (Romans 5:8)

5. You Must Believe on Christ Alone to Save You

Repenting of your sin, depend on Christ to cleanse you with his blood. “*...the blood of Jesus Christ [God’s] Son cleanseth us from all sin.*” (I John 1:7b)

Receive Christ by faith to save you. The Bible says, “*But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.*” (John 1:12)

6. Become a Child of God by Faith in Christ

“For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.” (Romans 10:13) You may pray to God right now:

“Dear God in Heaven, I admit that I am a sinner and helpless to change myself. I believe Jesus died for my sins and rose again to give me eternal life. I now receive your forgiveness that you offer. Come into my life as my Saviour and Lord. In Jesus’ name, Amen.”

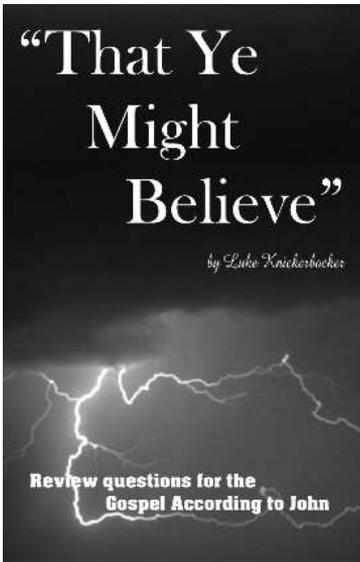
7. New Life is Given to Them Who Believe On Christ

“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are past away; behold, all things are become new.” (II Corinthians 5:17)

“These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life...” (I John 5:13)



If you have made a decision to trust in Christ as your personal Lord and Saviour, please tell someone today! I would be so grateful if you would send me an email so that I may rejoice with you. You may contact me at knickprint@gmail.com.



I encourage you to read more stories about the life and works of Jesus Christ in the Holy Bible. I recommend that you begin reading the Gospel according to John because it was written for all men in the world to understand who Jesus is, and that we may believe on Him as our Saviour. The Bible study resource, “That Ye Might Believe” will aid you as you read through this powerful book of the Bible.

The writer of the Gospel According to John is affectionately known as “John the Beloved” or “the one whom Jesus loved.” John was the son of a fisherman and became one of the closest followers of Jesus. It was with John whom Jesus entrusted his mother Mary to care for while he was dying on the cross. After Jesus returned to Heaven, John and his brother James became great leaders in the church of Jerusalem. They also suffered great persecution for being Christians.

The Gospel of John from the Holy Bible shows the works and miracles of Christ to bring readers to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God. The reading schedule and questions in this booklet will aid you in reading through the Gospel According to John in 30 days. Email the author at knickprint@gmail.com for your copy today.

**And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.
(John 20:30,31)**