

# The Gospel Mystery

“That they may all be one ...”

*John 17:21*

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NOTICE:

The purpose of this work is that the Mystery of Christ's Gospel be shared by you throughout the world, dispelling the corruptions wrought by religiosity, removing the barriers between us fostered by churchianity, and revealing the power of godliness that *is* the indwelling Spirit of Christ by grace through faith and that not of ourselves but by Him alone who gave himself for us all.

Please share this work with others and support our ministry with your prayers and financial contributions so we may proclaim the Mystery to everyone and set souls free!

“That they all may be one ...”

*John 17:21*

As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same to one another,  
as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

*1st Peter 4:10*

If the Lord build not the house, they labor in vain who build it.

*Psalms 127:1*

Where is boasting, then? It is excluded.

*Romans 3:27*

But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power  
may be of God, and not of us.

*II Corinthians 4:7*

# Frontispiece

Your Bible speaks of what the Apostle Paul calls “the Mystery of the Gospel”.<sup>1</sup>

Yet, in all likelihood you have never heard this mystery preached from a pulpit nor read of it in other works. That is because it has been hidden from you!

Paul declares this so when he describes the mystery in his letters to the church at Colosse<sup>2</sup> (An ancient city in the area we know today as Turkey. Home of Philemon, to whom Paul wrote another epistle preserved in our New Testament Bibles. Also known as Colossae, Chonae, or Kona.)

Read the four chapters of Paul’s epistle to the Colossians and discover this for yourself. Paul writes that this mystery we illuminate for you here was hidden “from ages and generations” but now is made manifest to you.

Yet, you have probably never heard it spoken of by church leaders.

Why?

Why is the gospel mystery hidden?

Why would anyone want to hide from you the gospel mystery?

Who could possibly benefit by hiding it from you?

How is the will of God revealed within *and only within* this mystery?

What is this mystery?

It is, as Paul describes it, “Christ in you, the hope of glory!”

Seven words ... seldom heard from pulpits of professional church leaders.

Why?

Is Christ *in* you?

Today’s professional church leaders ask, “Who are you in Christ?”

We urge you to ask, “Who is Christ in you?”

Let’s explore this mystery and its power to give to you and those you love unlimited power for unlimited life!

We provide footnote citations to Bible text and urge you to read all the citations so you may know what we tell you is Gospel truth!

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<sup>1</sup> Colossians 1:21-29

<sup>2</sup> This is the Epistle to the Colossians.

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# Dedication

To Kathryn Jo, my true wife, one in Christ, God's precious gift,  
by whose grace I've begun to better understand the mystery.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Ephesians 5:32

# Preface

Is Christ *in* you?

No question is more important.

If He is not *in* you, you are not yet saved.

If He is not *in* you, your soul is in danger of damnation.

If you prayerfully asked Him to live in your heart and be your Lord, have you yet begun to experience His presence *within* you?

Or is He still outside you, above you, beyond you or, God forbid, *beside* you?

Are you still in the “God is my Co-Pilot” stage of spiritual understanding?

Does Christ counsel your soul, that innermost part of you that is uniquely *you*?

Do you sense His presence *within* you and hear His Still Small Voice speaking to you, counseling you, guiding you, assuring you, encouraging<sup>4</sup> you ... or even warning you?

Have you yet discerned the difference He is making *in* your life?

Are you communing with Him daily *within* you, or are you still praying to a God who is “over there” beside you in the co-pilot’s seat or “up there” somewhere high above you and the clouds and even the stars, as you were taught by the commercial churches of this age to do?

Either He is *in* you, or you are not *in* Him. And, if He is *in* you, why do you seek Him high above the clouds and the stars, beyond you, or even beside you?

Is He *in* you? That is the question. That is the *most important* question.

And, if He is *in* you, we think you should begin asking, “Who is Christ in me?”

The commercial churches of this age ask their followers and financial supporters, “Who are *you* in Christ?” It is as if some are asking, “What part are you playing in our commercial enterprise? Are you giving? Are you attending? Are you helping to cook the Wednesday night church supper? Are you singing in the choir? Who are you in Christ?”

We urge you to ask, instead, “Who is Christ in *you*?”

Indeed, is Christ *in* you at all?

The Apostle Paul says the mystery of the gospel is Christ *in* you, the hope of Glory.

Is He *in* you?

No question is more important.

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<sup>4</sup> The very word “encouraged” means to have courage within, just as the word “enthusiasm” means to have God within. Words and their meanings are critical to understanding God.

# The Word

“In the beginning was the Logos, and the Logos was with God, and the Logos was God. ... And the Logos was made flesh, and dwelt among us ...” *John 1:1-14*

You’ve probably heard that passage written, “In the beginning was the Word, ...”, yet the Word used by John in the original Greek text is “Logos”, the Word that made the world and all that’s in it.

What does the Logos have to do with The Gospel Mystery?

Everything!

Because, the Logos *is* the mystery ... the very Christ of God in Spirit.

We will demonstrate this to be true. You can read your own Bible and find it to be true (though it is unlikely any preacher ever taught this to you from the pulpit of one of this age’s commercial churches).

The Logos is God’s Great Design!

The Logos is Christ Himself ... the Master Plan by which all we know or ever hope to know was fashioned into being and continues to this day according to the will of God the Father.

The Logos formed the stars, directs the planets in their courses, and determines the destiny of both men and nations according to fixed principles that never, ever change.

Your Bible says it clearly in that first verse of John’s story of Christ.

Read it for yourself!

The Logos and God are One!

The Word that was made flesh!

The Word that dwells within every soul who is truly saved, truly born again, truly alive and being transformed from within by that same indwelling Word who is Christ in Spirit.

Your Bible is not the “Word”. Those who’ve taught you this so many thousand years are either misled or have some motive to deceive you, to keep the Truth from you, just as Caiaphas the high priest of the Sanhedrin sought 2,000 years ago to put God’s Christ to death at the hands of Pilate.

The truth has been hidden from you but now is revealed to those with ears to hear and the gift of Grace to believe in faith.

John tells us, “The Logos was God. The Logos was made flesh. The Logos dwelt among us. But men loved darkness more than the light.”

Your Bible is a book that tells you about the Word. It is not the Word.

Your Bible is not the Logos that is God, the never-changing Force of Good that decides our present based on our past, and pre-ordains our future based on our present and the decisions we make in the present.

The Bible is a book that tells you holy truths.

The Logos, i.e., the Word, *is* Truth and cannot lie.

The Logos is the Word of God.

The Living Word is Christ Himself, not a book about Him.

The Living Word is Mercy.

The Living Word is Love.

The Living Word is Life that never, ever ends.

The Living Word is more than all these words relate, more than all the words that were ever written or could ever be written, more than we can think or even imagine!

The Word is All in All, the Beginning that has no End, the Rose of Sharon, the Prince of Peace, the Altogether Lovely One.

The Word is the Perfect Design and Plan of God for all Eternity.

The Word is the All that ever is and never shall not be.

The Word is that Perfect Will of our Creator.

The Word *is* our Creator.

And the Word took on a human form *and died!*

Why?

So you could find the mystery of His gospel *within yourself* ... and live forever!

You see, dear friend, The Mystery of the Gospel is the Word Himself alive *within* you and within all who truly seek Him and by His Grace *find* Him ... *within themselves!*

Nothing less.

Nothing more.

And, now you face the most important choice of your lifetime.

Will you seek to know more of this mystery or will you hold fast to the traditions of this age's commercial churches and deny the Will of God who, at this very moment, knocks on the door of your heart awaiting the invitation ... *your* invitation to Him.

The commercial churches of this world offer *you* an invitation, to enter into their fellowship, to become part of their life in Christ, and that is not altogether a bad thing.

But, it is not the more excellent thing!

The invitation that counts is the invitation *you* give to Him, the invitation that pleads for His Grace, the invitation that begs Him to *enter* you, to wash away your sin, to conquer your demons, to be your ever present counsel, to be your wisdom, your courage, your beauty, and eternally your very life!

Will you invite Him in?

Have you begun to seek Him ... *within you?*



# What Does the Bible Say?

Do not take our word for any of this!

There are two things we challenge you to do:

- Check out what we say by referring to your very own Bible!
- Experience Revelation within yourself, that just happens to agree with the Bible.

When those two come together (and they *will* for anyone and everyone who truly seeks to find the One who made us all and sustains us all and has an eternal plan for us all) then you will go on your way rejoicing. Old things pass away. Everything becomes new and exciting. You will begin to experience life as never before, *aware* that you are truly saved, safe in our Father's hands at last.

To discover the revelation we speak of, it's important for you to see for yourself what the Bible says about the mystery, the power for unlimited life, the peace that passes understanding, and the joy of righteousness that is *not* of your own making.

We wish you to see for yourself that much of what you've been taught about "serving the Lord", sacrificing yourself for others, repenting from sin, tithing, and other mantras of the commercial churches of this age is little more than a veil that has hidden from you the life-giving truth of Christ's gospel and its hidden mystery.

Why do you suppose your Bible quotes our Lord so often speaking to "those who have ears to hear"?

Not everyone can hear this truth, this mystery. It is only revealed by grace to them who are willing to be changed *completely*, to those who are so disgusted with their own form of "righteousness" that they wish to be filled with the New Wine of Christ, men and women who are weary with the effort to "be good" and by grace have received the great enlightenment of the mystery that only God is good, that it is only by His Power at work within us that any genuine goodness can ever pour forth from our lives.

If you do not believe this, you are in danger of eternal torment. If you wish God to be your servant, you are deceived. If you wish to please God with how well you live your life *on your own without the mystery of Christ alive within your heart*, you've condemned your soul and separated yourself from the God who alone can save your soul beyond the moment of your physical death.

Life in Christ is good.

Life in fellowship with other believers is good.

But, unless the Life *in* you *is* Christ, then you are not truly alive ... spiritually.

Paul writes, "Who can deliver me from the body of this death?"

You will learn what the scriptures mean when they repeat again and again that God wishes “mercy and not sacrifice”<sup>5</sup> ... and you will learn *why* this is true, even as you gain the true “power of godliness”<sup>6</sup> that transcends your human abilities and glorifies the One who alone is worthy of glory.

We urge you to look up the references provided in the footnotes, so you need not trust us and our teachings. Pray for wisdom, the principal thing.<sup>7</sup> Seek to know the “deep things of God”.<sup>8</sup>

The Mystery of the Gospel. The hope of glory!

And, rest for your soul.

### ***It is God who works in you!***

“It is God who works in you both to will and to do his good pleasure.”<sup>9</sup>

That’s what your Bible says.

When it comes to good works, it is *God* who is at work, not you.

Of course, your pride may elect to deny this, and you will suffer for your pride, because, “Pride comes before destruction.”<sup>10</sup>

The lie of too many corporate churches is that *we* must work to do “his good pleasure” when, in fact, what *we* must do is make room for God to work *in* us and acknowledge that the good works others see in us is God’s work, not ours!

This is the Mystery of the Gospel.

Learn and live!

Notice also, that this work of God *in* you is twofold. God works in your will, and God works in your actions that please him ... *if you allow God to work and acknowledge to others that it is truly God at work changing your will and doing the actions that please him.*

God desires to have fellowship with you, and to be honored by you.

If you pretend to be the author of your own faith, the master of your fate, the instigator of whatever good others see in you, then you are cheating God of his glory and separating yourself from his fellowship. Is that what you want?

Dare you separate yourself from God’s fellowship, just so *you* can be seen as a “good person”, instead of confessing to others that “God alone is good”?<sup>11</sup>

The Mystery of the Gospel is Christ *in* you!

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<sup>5</sup> Hosea 6:6; Matthew 9:13, 12:7

<sup>6</sup> 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 3:5

<sup>7</sup> Proverbs 4:7

<sup>8</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 2:10

<sup>9</sup> Philippians 2:13

<sup>10</sup> Proverbs 16:18

<sup>11</sup> Romans 3:10

Who is doing the good work?

You?

Oh, how we desire to get credit! How we desire to be recognized by others and, as often as possible, to be seen as “better” than at least some! How we judge our brothers and sisters, as if any good thing apart from Christ were in us!

So, we fall from grace!

And, we struggle to do what we can never accomplish, to justify ourselves in the sight of God. Yet, the scriptures are clear. No man can be justified by his works in the sight of God.<sup>12</sup>

A man (or woman<sup>13</sup>) can only be justified by faith, and that the faith of Christ. Read those passages in Galatians. It is not *your* faith that justifies you. It is the faith of Christ *in* you, if indeed he is in you yet! (More on this later.)

You see? It really *is* a mystery!

A wonderful, marvelous, miraculous mystery that saves men from themselves, that redeems souls from the torture that is the eternal inheritance of the proud, that shames men into true repentance, and that offers this present age an opportunity to unite the True Church at last and usher in the Age of Grace we pray for, the age of peace when every man is a brother, and only God is our Father.<sup>14</sup>

Can you receive it?

Dare you refuse the truth and risk damnation?

It is God who works in you to change your will, to modify your desires, to alter your motives and soften your hard heart. Not you! You cannot make yourself “good” any more than you can make yourself “God”. There is a reason Jesus asked, “Who among you can make yourself taller by taking thought?”<sup>15</sup> It is as impossible as imagining that you can make yourself righteous or godly by your own effort. Indeed, it is a mockery of God to think such things! Yet many corporate churches teach their followers just this, and by so doing pile burdens on guilty souls who are either crushed by the impossible weight of that duty or pretend to be righteous, something they can never be by their own effort.

Either this is true or your Bible is a sham!

Read what your Bible says for yourself.

Learn and live!

Christ *in* you is your only hope of glory!

Is he *in* you? Have you asked him to come into your heart? If you have not, there is no better time than right now to do so! Simply ask, expecting to hear his still small

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<sup>12</sup> Galatians 2:16, 3:11; James 2:24

<sup>13</sup> We include the female in the male pronoun and ask your kind indulgence with this traditional style of English writing.

<sup>14</sup> Matthew 23:9

<sup>15</sup> Matthew 6:27; Luke 12:25

voice within you, counseling you, guiding you, changing your will (if you let him), and working the great work of love by grace through your life ... the miracle of salvation!

Anything less is *not* the gospel.

If you have asked him in, have you begun to acknowledge him in all your ways?<sup>16</sup>

Our human will is perverse, you see? Our human will wishes to be acknowledged, rather than to acknowledge that we *do* fall short of the glory of God.

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<sup>16</sup> Proverbs 3:6; 1<sup>st</sup> John 2:23

# Faith

The deacon of an old country church I visited many years ago had a saying we entreat you to remember: “It’s either *all* grace, or it’s not grace at all.”

The mystery of the gospel cannot be appreciated by those who don’t yet know the truth of this simple statement.

It’s either *all* grace, or it’s not grace at all!

In the second chapter of Paul’s letter to the Ephesians we read a passage that’s become the identifying cornerstone of many evangelical churches today, the foundation of their doctrine, and the talisman they use for initiation to church membership. Paul writes, “By grace you are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves. It is the gift of God.”<sup>17</sup>

If only today’s Christians knew the tremendous depth of this great truth! Churches touch on it, but fail to pursue the power it leads to ... power to unite us, power to uplift us all in peace and unity, power to usher in the promised millennial kingdom. Instead of proclaiming the fullness of this truth, they actually deny its power,<sup>18</sup> seeking instead the mere appearance of godliness that is but a shabby counterfeit of the glory God wishes us to have, organizing themselves in hierarchies by which a few rule the many through deeds that God hates<sup>19</sup> ... all because they fail to see the greater meaning of the very grace they teach!

Those who follow them and their “partial gospel” teachings, therefore, cannot pass through the veil of life to receive the liberating truth of Christ’s Gospel Mystery that alone can unite us in one body - *His True Church!*

Notice what Paul writes. We are saved through faith given by the grace of God.

The faith that saves us is not something we can generate. It is the gift of God.

No one has it because he or she is “good”.

No one has it because he or she has a greater knowledge of the Bible.

No one has it because he or she has prayed more than others, or given more than others, or sacrificed more, or done anything whatever other than to ask as a child asks.

We receive the faith that saves us by God’s grace.

Everything that we have is only what we have been given ... by God’s grace.

Everything we are is by God’s grace.

Everything we hope to be or become is by God’s grace.

Those who don’t yet have this grace need our prayers and assistance.

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<sup>17</sup> Ephesians 2:8

<sup>18</sup> 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 3:5

<sup>19</sup> Revelation 2:6 and 2:15

“Freely you have received,” Jesus tells us and admonishes us to, “freely give.”<sup>20</sup>

Those who have this grace already need to better understand what they’ve been given and why!

Jesus says, “A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven.”<sup>21</sup>

What do you have that you have not been given? The root of all sin is the thought that we can do anything whatever apart from the grace of God who gives us life and sustains us by our daily bread.

Can you remember to pray, if God does not remind you?

Can you desire to do good according to God’s pleasure, if God does not give you the will to do it?

Is your righteousness apart from God, your own badge of worthiness, a mark that puts you above others who are not as “good” as you – or are you what God lets you be, what God allows by grace?

If you think *your* righteousness is what God seeks, you are not saved.

God seeks His own.

God is the potter. We are the clay.

We are the sheep of his pasture.

If you believe anything else, you are deceived, the truth is not *in* you, and you are in danger of eternal death, because you have separated yourself from God, instead of walking in His Grace with joyful thanksgiving for the truth that He has made you what you are. He has allowed you the degree of health you possess. He has permitted you to achieve what you are today.

What do you have that you have not been given?

Nothing!

Then, if salvation is through faith by grace, how great is that grace?

What are its limitations?

What can we do to appropriate *more* grace for our lives and the lives of those we love, the souls entrusted to our watch care and prayers?

Unlimited power for unlimited life!

That’s what God offers to those who will walk in His grace and refuse to claim righteousness for themselves ... those who will acknowledge Him in all their ways, so He can direct their paths.

If God is our co-pilot, as some bumper stickers say, then we are out of grace. We are piloting our souls, not He.

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<sup>20</sup> Matthew 10:8

<sup>21</sup> John 3:27

The unlimited power for unlimited life comes only to those who accept that our very lives, each beat of our heart and every tiniest chemical transformation that gives us thought and movement are the Grace of Him who gave himself for us at Calvary.

Grace is what we need ... grace with unlimited power for unlimited life.

That's what we *all* desire for ourselves. There are no exceptions. We all wish the power to succeed, to enjoy good health, long life, love, and happiness. Yet, none of these things can be ours apart from God's grace ... and our acknowledgment of that grace.

What, then, is the key to receiving greater grace?

Read on in prayer and in the willingness to displace old ideas to make room for the Truth that alone can set you free.

Christ *in* you!

Make room in your heart ... more room!

Jesus said, "No one puts new wine in an old wineskin, lest the wineskin breaks and both are lost."<sup>22</sup> New wine is unfermented juice. Un-pasteurized. Juice that gives off gas when it ferments. Gas that expands to press against the walls of its container. If the container is an old, worn wineskin, the expanding gas will burst its container, and the wine will be lost along with the broken old wineskin.

Do you wish to contain the new wine of greater understanding by His grace?

Do you wish more blessings, more health, more vitality, more success in life?

If so, you must not imagine you can live in your old wineskin of pre-conceived notions, the doctrines of men, or even your Sunday school vision of the Gospel.

Expand your vision.

Look within for the Christ who is your hope.

Prepare to do some soul-searching.

Be willing to judge yourself.

Above all, be willing to judge yourself.

If you are not willing to honestly examine where you are on your spiritual journey of life, you cannot possibly get beyond your present spiritual condition.

If you refuse to see how much higher you can go, you are blinded by your own spiritual conceit, thinking you have achieved what you claim to be, a soul that is stunted by pride ... pride that goes before destruction.

You cannot grow, if you believe you are as tall as you need to be.

Get out your Bible. Look up the references we offer in our footnotes. See for yourself that the Gospel Mystery revealed in these pages is, indeed, the very same gospel mystery the Apostle Paul said has been hidden for generations, according to the will of God, made alive in all who will embrace the Truth that sets men free.

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<sup>22</sup> Matthew 9:17, Mark 2:22, Luke 5:37-38

Too long the world has embraced the worn-out doctrines of man-made churches, blind to the victory power of Christ within.

Too long has Jesus been an “exterior person” outside us, beyond us, somewhere “up there” above us, when all along it’s been His desire to dwell *in* you, to guide you, to counsel you, to give you life eternal.

Unlimited life begins today ... or it never begins at all.

The mystery is in your hands.

Read on.



# The Untold Story of Job

“I will fetch my knowledge from afar, and will ascribe righteousness to my Maker.”

Elihu

Job 36:3

Have you heard of the patience of Job? Perhaps you read the story. Some say it's the oldest book in the Bible. And yet, Job's story is not well understood at all.

Job, you may remember, was a rich man. He had lands and cattle, a loving wife, seven sons, and three daughters. Job was a God-fearing man who was faithful in worship and honest in his dealings with others.

Then one day Satan said to God, "Job praises you because he is rich. Let me take his riches, and he will curse you to your face."

Whereupon, God did something that may seem strange to us. He said, "Take what you will," and gave Satan permission to torment Job. Though this may seem cruel to us at first, we shall see, in the long run, God used it to bless Job in a very special way, and if you're willing to learn something new about the story of Job, God will give you a special blessing also. God has a way of turning bad things into blessings, if we are willing to see with new eyes.

Job lost everything including his health. Some say he wasn't dismayed by his reverses, that he remained patient under the most extreme conditions of his misery. Many praise Job for being patient, as if that were the central message of this oldest book in our Bible. These people do not know the story of Job at all. They miss the point entirely. They are like so many who learn from others, without checking the facts for themselves. Anyone who believes the point of Job's story is to encourage people to be patient in conditions of adversity hasn't read the book with an open mind. There's a much more important message to be found, if you are willing to open the eye of your spirit and see the truth that remains hidden only from those who refuse to understand it.

I won't tell you about Job's patience. Let others preach about it. It's been told ten thousand times already, and no doubt it will be told ten thousand more – with all its errors.

I prefer to tell you about a wonderful discovery Job made, a discovery God wants us all to make. You see, the real story of Job is about a unique enlightenment that came to Job in the midst of his troubles. The lesson Job learned has nothing to do with patience, or any other human virtue.

Indeed, Job's discovery is the purpose God had when He permitted Satan to torment Job. God knew how the story would turn out. God knew Job would make this wonderful discovery. God knew that Job would be blessed in the end, but God also knew Job needed to learn a few things about himself before those blessings could come. Job

was tested so the mystery of God's grace could be revealed in Job. If you are wise you will allow the mystery to be revealed in you.

Job's discovery is about relationships: man to man and man to God.

Job's discovery, if you will accept it for yourself, will change you. To be changed, however, you cannot remain as you are. If you allow the discovery, you will never be the same.

All of us can profit from learning Job's lesson -- hopefully without enduring Job's trials. The University of Hard Knocks is a tough row to hoe. No one knew this better than Job. There is an easier way. Reading works like this can help, but even the easier way requires some effort on your part. You not only need to read. You need to open your mind and dare to think thoughts you've never thought before. It is the only way you can grow.

Please read (and think) on.

Until we learn what Job learned, I believe, we can't be truly born again.

Now many, no doubt, will take issue with this statement. There are salvation brokers, pastors and priests who preach an easy way to Heaven. They select their texts, like John 3:16, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on Him shall not perish but have everlasting life," and preach ideas in isolation. They seldom if ever define their terms, and they lead many innocent souls astray.

They ask their anxious followers, "Do you believe?"

The anxious followers anxiously answer, "Yes."

Whereupon the preachers pronounce, "Then you are saved!" The anxious followers relax. A few become preachers themselves, and the process is multiplied over and over again.

Too often, believers do not know exactly what is meant by the word believe. Job's story reveals truth about this most important word. Study and learn.

The word believe means far more than we were taught as children. There are complex implications of this all-important term that reach beyond our simple, common, everyday usage of the word. Without understanding these implications, it is impossible to fully see the true meaning of John 3:16. God hides the truth from those who will not learn. This is part of the gospel mystery the Apostle Paul writes about, a mystery that remains hidden from too many today simply because they are not being told the complete truth about God's central message in the Bible.

You can learn as Job learned, or you can learn by submitting your mind to receive truth.

The word believe can mean many things. Job believed. But, Job lacked understanding. His was not the belief mentioned in John 3:16, "whosoever believeth in Him ...". Job did believe, but Job did not believe correctly. Our Bible tells us the devils believe – and tremble. It is the source of belief that makes the difference, and our

relationship to that source. Job did not discover the belief that saves our souls until the last chapter of the book when he saw God with the eye of his spirit.

Job believed he believed. Many people believe they believe. Dead churches are filled with people who believe they believe. But, until we discover the mystery of God's purpose, we do not believe as we ought to believe. Look what it cost Job to discover this truth.

Stay with me as we examine this powerful and complex word.

Do you believe in me? I wrote the words you're reading. You know or should know that I existed when these words were being written and, hopefully, I may at this very moment still be writing in some quiet place, hoping to teach new truths to others. Certainly, these words did not get written by themselves. They had to have an author, and they did have an author. Me!

But, do you believe in me? It all depends on what one means by the word believe, doesn't it? Surely I existed at the time of writing this, but to say you believe in me is saying something more, isn't it? Do you see how a word can mean different things when applied in different ways?

Do you also see that the word itself is not changed by our application of it. The word still stands for itself and is not moved, no matter how we choose to use it. We should not forget that a word means what it means -- no matter what we think it means.

Let me show you.

Do you believe in rainbows? Do you believe in chocolate? Do you believe in fossils, cows, the Eiffel Tower? These are things you can see. Do you, therefore, believe in them? Perhaps you haven't seen the Eiffel Tower, but you've heard so many people talk about it you're convinced it's real, so you "believe" in the Eiffel Tower. And surely you believe in rainbows, though of course you've never actually touched one, and they are difficult to capture in a jar. Chocolate may be far easier to believe in, especially when it gives you a tummy ache.

How about celestial black holes, the center of the earth, or next Tuesday? These are things no one has seen. Physicists assure us black holes exist, based on evidence from radio telescopes, but do you believe in black holes? Geologists claim to know what's at the center of the earth, but no one has ever been more than a few miles beneath the surface, so how can you believe in the center of the earth? What of next Tuesday? Do you believe in next Tuesday? What assurance do you have that next Tuesday will happen? Most of us have lived long enough to testify that Tuesdays have a way of coming along reliably on schedule, but do you believe in next Tuesday?

What do you believe in?

Do you believe in things you cannot see? You may say you believe, but can you believe in the same way you believe in things you can see, touch, taste, and smell? Is there a difference?

Now for some tougher things to believe in. How about love? Do you believe in love? Do you believe in freedom? Do you believe in the principles of government set

forth in our United States Constitution? Do you believe in capital punishment or the income tax?

These are intangible things: ideas, principles, spiritual things. They can't be seen. They can't be touched. They won't be analyzed by scientific instruments or explained by mathematics. Yet most of us would proudly say, "I believe in freedom," and a few might even admit, "I believe in income tax." It is certain we mean something altogether different when we say we believe in these things. We aren't affirming they exist, as we affirmed the Eiffel Tower. Rather, we are aligning ourselves with ideas. We are putting ourselves into relationship with intangibles. When we say "I believe" in this context, we are using precisely the same word we used when we said, "I believe in chocolate," and yet the word comes across with quite a different meaning. Are you beginning to see what Job might have missed?

Part of modern society's unwillingness to believe in unseens and infinities results from our misuse of the word believe. We want to say we believe, but we aren't certain we know what we're saying when we say it. We don't understand the word.

This failure to understand the meaning of words contributes to much human misery.

Our modern word "belief" derives from the Anglo Saxon *geleafa*, which includes the ideas of confidence and permission. We believe when we give ourselves permission to have confidence which, in turn, is a word meaning to have faith (*fide*) with (*con*).

When we believe in a person (like Christ Jesus), we have faith with that person (Jesus). We trust. And, importantly, we trust not because we have merely decided point blank to trust, but because we have given ourselves permission to trust. Our belief rests on evidence, and from that evidence we allow ourselves to have confidence, i.e., "faith with".

The beautiful mystery of this truth about the meaning of the word "believe" is that none of us can believe until we have faith. Faith comes first.

As will be more fully explained, faith is a gift from God.

Faith comes to us. We aren't required to manufacture it on our own. Indeed, we cannot manufacture it on our own. God doesn't ask us to manufacture it.

The gift of faith comes slowly to some precisely because they do not realize it is a gift. They, like Job, are so busy trying to manufacture their own righteousness to please God, as if God were some demanding parent, they don't see the gift of faith when it's being offered to them for their salvation. God's giving and our receiving the gift of faith is what creates and sustains our relationship with God. If we believe otherwise we are in darkness, as Job was in darkness when Satan began to tempt him.

Salvation in Christ Jesus is relationship.

Salvation is not status ... and it certainly is not an accomplishment of the human will.

Job, you see, suffered from a common malady of blindness that affects us all. Indeed, in Job's case, the poor man almost died before he saw the truth. He suffered

terribly, and God permitted him to suffer because it was only by suffering that Job would learn. Because you have the Bible to teach you, it may not be necessary for you to suffer as Job did. If you refuse to see what Job learned, however, you will surely suffer. God wants you to learn.

Job's friends came to visit him when he was suffering. Some challenged him. They said, "Can you not see, Job. It is your unrighteousness that has brought calamity upon you."

Job refused to see his blindness. Job was steadfast. He denied that he had fallen short. In the eyes of the world, i.e., as the world sees things these days, we might have to agree with the poor old fellow. Even the Bible says Job was a perfect man (in the eyes of the world). He was an "upstanding" citizen (in the eyes of the world). And, when Job countered his detractors, he was perfectly justified (in his own eyes), for Job was indeed a "perfect" man (in the eyes of the world).

But, Job was a man for all of that. Herein lies the incisive message we can discover in the Book of Job.

Job was a man.

Only the Lord is God.

It took Job a long time to see this simple truth. Perhaps his friends saw it. Perhaps they didn't. They were good friends, or they wouldn't have bothered to visit Job. They talked to Job. Each offered his own ideas why Job had been stricken.

Of course, Job replied to each. Job always held to his claim of an unwavering faith in God, proclaiming himself righteous.

Then, after answering all his friends, Job was visited by God Himself. God challenged him with concepts Job had not before considered. God asked Job difficult, probing questions. Job had shown himself so wise when answering his neighbors. Now he struggled in vain to answer God.

In the process, Job made a miraculous discovery. He saw The Light -- literally!

God allowed Job to see the mystery Paul writes about in his epistles. The mystery that is hidden from those who perish.

This is the paramount lesson of Job. It's a lesson that can benefit all who seek to discover it for themselves. It is essential for those who seek God. Without it we're all totally ignorant, blinded by our pride, living in a dark and hopeless realm of our own imagining, cut off from true life and true love ... indeed, cut off from truth itself.

The lesson Job learned about himself and his relationship to God is far and away more important than his patience. It amazes me that Job is noted for his patience, while the vital lesson God taught him at the end of the story is understated or ignored for the most part. We learn about "the trials of Job" and "the patience of Job". Indeed, these are clichés. Yet we hear surprisingly little about "Job's discovery", the lesson by which God brought a "perfect" man (in the eyes of the world) into a more perfect relationship with Him (in God's eyes).

So, here follows the story — straight from the Bible.

Job was a man from the city of Uz, faithful and honest in his dealings with others. The Bible tells us he was "perfect and upright", that he "feared God and eschewed evil".

Now, this is not to say Job was perfectly perfect as Christ Jesus is perfect. In Hebrew the word perfect means complete, balanced. Job was a complete man, a balanced man. As Dr. Morgan puts it in his *The Answers of Jesus to Job*, he was "an all-round man". He was "upright". He was honest, straightforward, and trustworthy. He obeyed the law.

He was also rich. He had a wife, seven sons and three daughters. He had 7000 sheep, 500 yoke of oxen, 500 donkeys, and a large staff of servants. In fact, he was one of the richest men in all the world (about 1520 BC).

When Satan said to God, "Job praises you because he is rich. Let me take his riches, and he will curse you to your face," God gave permission with a reservation that Satan would not touch the man himself but only his possessions.

Then Satan caused Job's children to be killed along with his cattle and servants. Job was upset, to say the least. He tore his clothes and shaved his head, but the Bible tells us he worshipped God in the midst of his calamity, saying, "naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither. The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away. Blessed be the Name of the Lord."

The Bible tells us, "In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly."

Satan then said that for good health a man will worship God. He asked to prove his point by having Job inflicted with disease, and Job was smitten "with sore boils from the sole of his feet to the crown of his head". Job sat in ashes and scraped his itching, festering sores with the sharp edge of a piece of broken pottery.

But, when challenged, Job's answer was, "We receive good at the hand of God. Shall we not also receive evil?"

And the Bible says, "In all this Job did not sin with his lips."

Then Job's friends came to see him: Eliphaz, Bildad, Zophar, and Elihu. These were good friends, for we are told they were so moved by Job's distress that they wept for him, tore at their own clothing, and sprinkled dust on their heads. They "sat down with him upon the ground seven days and seven nights, and none spake a word unto him: for they saw that his grief was very great". That's friendship!

Job spoke first, cursing the day he was born. "Why died I not from the womb?" he complained. What about this demonstrates patience? This is not patience at all.

Eliphaz, a man of spiritual insight, told Job not to despise things God has done but to be encouraged. He tried to console Job. "Man is born unto trouble," he said, "as the sparks fly upward." But he added that he and the others were convinced that Job would be restored and live to a good old age. He prophesied, "Thy seed shall be great, and thine offspring as the grass of the earth. Thou shalt come to thy grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in in his season." He explained that "we have searched it", i.e., it was spiritually discerned. Eliphaz assured his friend Job, "So it is; hear it, and know thou it for thy good."

Job answered only with a further wish that God would let him die. This is not patience or faith. Like all of us do when self-occupied with our own ills and calamities, Job seemed not to hear the encouragement of Eliphaz. Job complained that a true friend would show him pity. Job insisted he was a righteous man. Job asked, "Is there iniquity in my tongue?"

Think, dear reader. Think!

Learn from Job so you need not suffer as Job suffered.

Then Bildad charged Job as a hypocrite saying, "God will not cast away a perfect man."

Job insisted that God "knowest I am not wicked." All the while, however, Job continued to complain bitterly and wished for death to end his agony. Where is the patience in this? Why have others taught you Job was patient? Why did you listen to them instead of reading the story for yourself?

Then Zohar spoke, challenging Job's claim to righteousness. Zohar insisted that Job would respond differently if God, Himself, "would speak, and open His lips against thee."

Job replied with sarcasm. "No doubt but ye are the people, and wisdom shall die with you." That's about as sarcastic a comment as ever was heard by man.

Job rebuked them all, saying he was just as smart as they. He told them nothing they said was new to him or, for that matter, unknown to others. He insisted he was a just and upright man. He attacked his friends, accusing them of attacking him.

Then, as if to justify himself further, he made that now famous pronouncement: "Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him."

But, immediately thereafter, he revealed error when he said, "I will maintain my own ways before him." Job held on tenaciously to that persistent claim of righteousness in self. Job held to the view that in Job's power was the strength to be good in God's sight.

Then Eliphaz spoke again. He charged that Job's own speech revealed his error. He asked, "Hast thou heard the secret of God? What do you know that we do not?" Then Eliphaz asked, "What is he which is born of woman that he should be righteous?" Eliphaz was wiser than Job.

Job now railed in anger! He called his friends "miserable comforters". He said if he were in their shoes and they in his, "I would strengthen you with my mouth." He complained that if the tables were turned his words would "assuage your grief". He grumbled sourly how God had done such terrible things to him, and he continued to insist it was "not for any injustice in my hands".

Are you beginning to see the story of Job is *not* about patience or self-control?

Added to this proud pronouncement he said to those who'd come a long way to visit him in his affliction, "I cannot find one wise man among you."

Poor Job.

Then Bildad asked, "Why are we accounted beasts, and reputed vile in your sight?"

Job then threatened them to have pity on him. He warned that punishment is reserved for those who bring wrath on others.

Isn't it wonderfully curious that Job couldn't see his own wrath?

"Be ye afraid of the sword," he cautioned them, "for wrath bringeth the punishment of the sword, that ye may know there is a judgment."

Job was now skating on thin ice.

The four friends argued as husbands and wives often do, deaf to the replies of their opponent, waiting for a moment of silence to attack again with more of the same, dishing it back and forth, unaware of the blunders on both sides.

Zohar, driven beyond reason perhaps, gave a weary discourse on the fate of wicked men.

Job, of course, disagreed. We imagine he would disagree with any statement not his own. He adopted the view that wicked men do well in the world. "They spend their days in wealth," Job said. Then he actually accused his friends of concocting lies to substantiate their vile arguments.

Where is the patience in this? Why were you told Job is patient? Why were you not told the truth that has power to change your own life? Read on and spare yourself Job's suffering.

Eliphaz pointed out that Job had "not given water to the weary to drink", that he had withheld "bread from the hungry", that he had sent "widows away empty".

Job now changed the subject, not surprisingly. Isn't that what often happens when we are called to answer for our faults. It's easier to change the subject than to admit the truth.

Job confessed he did not know how to find God, yet he continued to maintain that if he knew where to argue his case his argument would be so worthy of reward that God would respond with complete restoration of all Job had lost. Think about it, dear reader. Think!

Job persisted, "My foot hath held his steps. His way have I kept."

Bildad asked how "can man be justified with God?" So simple a question, yet the answer to this dynamic question is hidden within the mystery of the gospel.

Job did not understand.

Job was jealous. He envied his friends' wisdom. He made many pompous pronouncements of knowledge of the ways of God, things a wiser man might have known were obvious to others. As if he were enlightening his friends, he said, "He hath compassed the waters with bounds, until the day and night come to an end," and, "The pillars of heaven tremble and are astonished at His reproof," and yet more proud proclaimings like, "He divideth the sea with His power." These are clearly things his



friends well knew. But Job, in all his profound pronouncements of knowledge of God, admitted he did not understand God and did not know how to find God.

He clearly didn't understand, for he says haughtily, "I will not remove mine integrity from me. My righteousness I hold fast."

Whose righteousness was Job clinging to?

Think!

Job needed the proverb, "Get knowledge but, with all thy getting, get understanding."

Job had knowledge, but he had little understanding. He didn't understand understanding. He instructed his friends with information they already had. Many people do this.

He said things like, "Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom." Correct, Job!

He said, "To depart from evil is understanding." Correct again, Job!

Yet for all his profession of knowledge, Job showed he'd not yet learned it is God who determines what is evil and what is good. It is God who sets the boundaries, not we.

Job defined good and evil, as we all are also tempted to do, in terms that kept him safely on the side of good. Perhaps he succeeded in departing from evil, but if he only departed from the evil he himself chose to define as evil, then how much evil did he not depart from?

We are all like Job. That's why we need justification from a source outside ourselves.

Job, however, did not see this ... yet.

Instead, Job droned on about the good deeds he'd done in the past. He said, "I put on righteousness, and it clothed me. My judgment was as a robe and a diadem. I was eyes to the blind. I was feet to the lame. I was father to the poor. The cause which I knew not I searched out."

Job was a do-gooder. And bully for him!

Better a do-gooder than a do-badder!

But what of the causes Job "knew not", causes he was unable to "search out"? What did he do about them? What did he do for the wretched homeless to the south, the freezing nomads of the north? What did he do for those who struggled for life's comforts in neighboring cities? What did he do for those who died before he was born or those who were yet to be born and die long after he was dead? What could he do for a numberless multitude of souls in terror of death's sting, gasping for that one last breath, straining to hold onto the only reality they know, hoping for a miraculous last moment reprieve to snatch them back from the edge of eternity? What did Job do for these?

Job is intent upon justifying himself.

He said, "I put on righteousness, and it clothed me: my judgment was as a robe and a diadem." Job's righteousness is his own, you see.

Whose righteousness are you trusting in?

The Bible tells us, "So these three men ceased to answer Job, because he was righteous in his own eyes."

Then spoke Elihu, a younger man. He was angry, not only with Job but also with the other three. Elihu saw that the wisdom of the older men omitted something in which Elihu put great confidence. Elihu recognized the mystery that remains hidden from too many.

Elihu told them, "If any say I have sinned and perverted that which was right," a statement none of the others could bring themselves to make, "He will deliver his soul from going into the pit, and his life shall see the light." Elihu taught wisdom. How great a victory for Jesus if only more modern age churches would teach this simple wisdom and proclaim it in the streets!

"God is greater than man," Elihu said. "Far be it from God that he should do wickedness." Elihu told them all, "For he will not lay upon man more than right."

Elihu incisively examined Job's error. "Job has spoken without knowledge, and his words were without wisdom." Listen, dear friend. Think carefully about what this young man told the others. "Job has spoken without knowledge, and his words were without wisdom."

Elihu accused Job of rebellion against God ... a difficult sin to detect in one's self!

Job had spoken as if to say his righteousness was more than God's, for did he not say God had brought calamity upon him undeservedly?

Elihu hit the mark. How wonderful if more evangelists and preachers would straighten their aim and reveal this truth for the multitudes who remain in error to this day!

The younger man added, "Suffer me a little, and I will shew thee that I have yet to speak on God's behalf. I will fetch my knowledge from afar. I will ascribe righteousness to my Maker."

Hallelujah! This wise young man did not ascribe righteousness to himself as Job did.

Elihu explained that God "sealeth up the hand of every man; that all men may know His work," and "He respecteth not any that are wise of heart."

Then a whirlwind descended into their midst, and out of that wind the Voice of the Lord spoke to Job and said, "Gird up now thy loins like a man; for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me!"

God challenged Job to admit his hopeless ignorance. God challenged Job to reveal how all our pride is lost within our own mortality. God challenged Job to confess that it was God who made creation, that God is alone Creator, and God alone knows every thing!

"Where was thou when I laid the foundations of the earth?" God asked Job.

"Where is the way where light dwelleth?" God demanded.

God asked Job if he could capture light and hold it within boundaries.

God asked, "Who makes the rain to fall where no man is? Who guides the stars in their courses? Who makes the tender buds spring forth?"

God asked, "Who hath put wisdom in the inward parts? Or who hath given understanding to the heart?"

These last two questions were keys that began to unlock Job's limited human awareness of God's Character and God's Purpose.

Job would soon be free.

God asked Job who provides the food for ravens, who colors the wings of peacocks, who feathers the ostriches, who gives strength to the horses?

God asked if Job taught the hawks how to fly or commanded the eagles to soar.

"Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct Him?"

Then Job took that first step all must take who wish to be truly born again. There is no other way, no substitute, no alternative. It matters not what denominations teach. It matters not how many books are written. This step is essential for all of us, or we have no place with God.

Job said, "I cannot answer."

"Will thou condemn me," God demanded of Job, "that thou mayest be righteous?"

God proclaimed to Job, "Whatsoever is under the whole heaven is mine."

Then, at last, Job repented.

This is the story of Job.

Repentance, not patience.

Job repented.

"I know that thou canst do every thing," Job finally admitted, "and that no thought can be withheld from thee."

Job is almost free.

Job then confessed to God, "I have uttered things I did not understand. I have said things too wonderful for me, things I did not truly know."

Job is beginning to see the light.

Job said, "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now my eye sees thee." Job finally saw God with the eye of his spirit, i.e., by spiritual awareness in the heart and not by man's knowledge that fills our heads with things too wonderful for us, things we only think we know.

Job finally is silent when he says, "Wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes."

And at once Job was saved from his calamity. At once God restored his health. His disease was gone. His poverty was gone.

Most importantly, however, his pride was gone.

Dr. G. Campbell Morgan, in his book, *The Answers of Jesus to Job*, explains that Job's word "abhor" derives from a Hebrew word that means to disappear. Job gave up. He disappeared. He relinquished his pride. He resigned himself to being human, like the rest of us. He was shown by God that no matter how wonderfully righteous we may seem to ourselves, we are hopelessly weak when compared to God's Power and wretchedly evil when compared to His Holiness.

Dr. Morgan tells us that in submission Job's "greatness was revealed", but I think Job's message to the world is that there is no greatness in us except the greatness God gives us freely by His grace. Job's submission was, in fact, the sole design and unaided work of God. God alone ordains that we submit to Him. Our "greatness" only interferes with God's purpose.

It must be thus, lest we get credit to ourselves for some perceived virtue in submitting. We are in error when we ascribe righteousness to ourselves in any degree. It nearly cost Job his life to learn this lesson. What will it cost the churches of this modern age to learn?

Dr. J. Sidlow Baxter in his *Explore The Book*, writes that Job came to "the end of his self-ism", that he responded to God and in that response he was freed of pride and enabled by God's Grace to "find his all in God." I agree. For all his haughty insistence upon self-worth and personal integrity, Job discovered, as I hope we may all discover completely someday, that every good gift is from God -- and that means every good gift.

Whatever we perceive to be some goodness within ourselves is really the gracious power of God alive within us to work out His own pleasure according to an eternal plan.

We may deny this, of course, as Job did. We may bring calamity upon ourselves. We may lose everything, even our lives, if that's what it takes to learn this lesson.

God gives us freedom to believe or not to believe. We only choose to do so. We can claim the goodness in us is of our own making. That's our nature, as it was Job's nature. But someday, when at last our name is called and we step forward from the crowd of souls assembled to receive eternity's decree, when we kneel at the nail-pierced feet of Jesus to be judged by the Lamb of God according to His Mystery, when the Book of Life is opened and we wait with the angels to learn our fate, then each of us will discover the ultimate reality of God -- and we will finally know, if we have not already learned, what Job discovered back in the city of Uz.

All goodness is of God.

Everything we do in our name, every act we hope others will praise as a good deed, every kindness intended to demonstrate our generosity, every sacrifice given to secure a place in the memory of those around us, and even the charitable works we do in the hope God will be pleased with our goodness is, according to the Bible, only "filthy rags" in the sight of God. This may seem difficult to accept. You may prefer to reject it, to insist that you or someone close to you is a "good" person, but this was the error of Job.

Jesus said, "There is none good, no not one."

We are the sheep of His pasture. He is The Good Shepherd.

He is the potter. We are but clay.

If we confess our shortcomings to God, if we admit that God created us in His image, if we recognize that our only "good" is the good God does through us, if we ask God to forgive us for the bad things we've done and for the bad things we may yet do, if we ask Jesus to come into our hearts and live through us to do His will in us by the power of His Holy Spirit compelling us by His love to be conformed to His image, and if we will confess to others that we have made this decision, praising and thanking God for performing His miracle of grace within us so that now all our good works are the labors of God working through us by the power of His Holy Spirit in Christ Jesus, then we will discover the very truth that Job discovered.

Indeed, we shall be saved.

We shall be "born again".

Don't be surprised if this sounds rather silly at first. God made it that way to confound the wise. Jesus said, "Except ye be as little children ye shall not enter the Kingdom of Heaven." We are to be as little children, trusting God, asking Him to come into our hearts and work out his will through us by His power. Then we will be saved.

If you wait till you "understand" it, you'll never be saved.

Give God the glory – for the glory, all glory, is His alone.

Count Him wonderful – for He is truly wonderful, magnificent, complete, and merciful to those who call upon Him in repentance.

This is the message of Job. Repentance, not patience.

It is truly amazing God brings us to this so we can see His majesty and discover our own weakness – for these are certainly not things we can bring ourselves to see. To believe in a god we have created for our own convenience is easy. To believe in God as God truly is runs contrary to our nature. It goes against the grain ... for God is all in all, while we are nothing at all but what He allows us to be.

This is the only path to salvation, however few there be that find it.

This is the new birth and the hope of the world in Christ Jesus.

Some, of course, see God as cruel taskmaster demanding our allegiance and subservience. They condemn the One who gives them life because they cannot live as gods themselves. They hate God because they cannot live forever by the exercise of their own wills. Rather than confess their imperfection and mortality to Him who is forever and rest in His promise of life for those who will repent, they perish.

We should admit that from time to time we wish God would give us more and expect less in return. We long to have our own way. We wish to do as we please, where we please, whenever we please. But, as we discover the mystery Job learned the hard way, we find God's love is far beyond our mortal comprehension. God's love reaches down to us when we reach up to Christ Jesus the Crucified One. He wants only what's

best for us. He will give us every good gift. First, however, we must establish ourselves by confessing His righteousness and not our own.

God's love is much broader than our vain ideas of it. We learn only by submitting to His divine authority. Only then are we truly free. This is the meaning of liberty.

God is only good.

God wants only good for us.

We, on the other hand, are not good -- no matter how much to the contrary we may have convinced ourselves and others. Do not fall in the trap that captured Job. We are not righteous. We can't define what's good and bad for ourselves then live within the boundaries of our own self-defined goodness and proclaim, as Job did, "I am not wicked."

God is not mocked.

Consider the Cross of Calvary, whereon the greatest price that love could pay was freely given so you and I might know God's love in a way we can understand, so we can realize that we will never earn God's favor by our deeds.

God wants but one thing from you—all of you.

Job gave in, after an unnecessarily long struggle.

Why suffer when you can live in victory today?

The Bible tells us, "The Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before." We read, "So the Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning."

The story ends with, "After this lived Job an hundred and forty years, and saw his sons, and his sons' sons, even four generations. So Job died, being old and full of days."

And, we might add, full of wisdom ... not his own wisdom, but the wisdom given *by grace through faith and that not of ourselves but by the gift of God!*

Our wills are ours, we know not how,  
Our wills are ours to make them thine.

... Lord Tennyson

Morgan, G. Campbell; The Answers of Jesus to Job; Marshall, Morgan & Scott; Edinburgh; 1961.

Baxter, J. Sidlow; Explore the Book; Zondervan; Grand Rapids; 1967.

# The Invitation

It was late morning and too hot to sleep, anyway. A policeman tapped Fred on the feet with a night-stick. "Time to get up, yer majesty," he ordered.

Carefully, Fred gathered the newspapers that were his blanket on the park bench and pitched the bundle into a nearby trash can. He stretched his arms like the antennae of a nervous insect, stomped the sleep from his legs and feet with a little staccato dance, and walked off along the winding concrete path that led to the heart of town.

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"Only four hours to go," Lydia reminded the gardener, "and so much to do!"

"Yes, mum," the servant replied. "Will you be wanting flowers in the hall?"

"Oh, dear me, yes!" Lydia answered. "There must be flowers. Daffodils and tulips. Lots of them! Everything must be perfect!"

"I'll see to it, mum," the gardener respectfully assured her.

"Thank you," Lydia absently responded. "Now where *is* that window washer?" She turned from the gardener as if he weren't there and walked briskly across the wide expanse of tended lawn. Brilliant, white furniture dotted the thick green carpet of neatly mown grass. A large yellow sun hat flapped its brim above her gaunt features as her eyes flashed this way and that, checking each area, noting each need, hunting the servant who must clean the bird baths and scrub the slippery moss from the smooth slate paving stones of the northern walkway. Hoops and stakes were placed for croquet with strictest precision. Nearby an umbrellaed cart held brightly colored balls and mallets. All was ready.

"Two o'clock! Oh, dear me. Two o'clock!" Lydia muttered to herself. "How will I ever be prepared?"

A small man walked up behind her. A huge ladder was balanced on his right shoulder and a large bucket hung from his left hand. "Have you been looking for me, Missus Apple?"

"Yes, yes!" Lydia answered, turning about quickly. "The baths are a disgrace, the northern walk is simply treacherous, and I'm late for church. You really must see to these things, Perkins. They'll be here in four hours, and we must be ready."

"Will there be anything else, ma'am?"

"No, no. That should keep you quite busy until I get back."

"Yes ma'am," the little man replied obediently, and each of them turned from the other. Lydia hurried toward the garages. The little man deftly swung his ladder in the opposite direction and walked away like a tiny picnic ant under his massive burden.

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Lydia shifted nervously in her pew. Her pew. She had always sat there. Her family had used that pew for years. Now that her husband had passed away and the

children were grown, Lydia sat in the varnished space - fifth from the left, right-hand side -- all by herself.

It irritated her that such a man could be admitted to the building, bare the thought that he should have been seated next to her.

Why, the very idea!

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"Excuse me, ma'am. Is this space taken?", Fred asked. Lydia smiled an unconvincing smile. Fred sat down and glanced uncomfortably around the sanctuary. The organist's fingers danced across the keyboards, creating the intricate fugues and harmonies that lured Fred in from the lonely, noise-scorched streets. As the music soared, Fred's spirit was lifted beyond the rags he sat in.

Lydia sat frozen in a silent forward stare.

Fred didn't mind. He came to hear the music ... melodies and counter-melodies, diverse sounds side-by-side, independent notes in harmonies, separate spirits singing as one ... music for God.

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"Our Lord and Heavenly Father, ..." Silence hushed the room. Heads bowed.

Awkwardly, Fred looked down at his hands of gnarled fingers, broken nails and knuckles scarred from long-forgotten barroom battles.

"We beseech Thee our God, by the Grace of Thy Promises, that Thou would bless this hour to Thy Glory, to the strengthening of Thy Spirit within us, and to the Honor of Thy Son, our Savior and Eternal Hope."

"Perhaps he'll leave," Lydia thought hopefully.

"Now's my chance," Fred thought, hoping to sneak out before the plate was passed and before the sermon could begin.

"Number three-hundred-thirty-seven," the pastor's friendly voice resounded. "Will you stand?"

Fred glanced furtively to his left as a young couple with two small children filled the pew. Lydia's floppy yellow hat blocked him on the right. He felt a hand on his shoulder, and an elderly gentleman in the pew behind handed him an open hymnal.

"Our faith looks up to Thee," they sang together, "Thou Lamb of Calvary, Savior Divine."

Fred's eyes followed the windows -- each a portrait of some Bible hero he had long ago forgotten. There was Abraham and Isaac on the mountain top; Moses by the Burning Bush; the young Christ teaching in the temple; and the Risen Christ, walking a rocky hillside path with bare, pierced feet, His hands held out before Him, the prints of nails inspiring wonder in the simple country folk who bowed in adoration as He passed.

"Since the fall of Adam," the preacher began, "our Heavenly Father has yearned for His people to love Him. He sent His Son, Jesus, to die at Calvary so we would know



God's Love -- and He is waiting now for lost souls to surrender their pride and receive the Miracle of a new self, the Mystery of the Indwelling Christ. The Bible tells us Jesus seeks entry into our hearts. 'Behold,' He says, 'I stand at the door and knock.' Will you ask Jesus to come into your heart today?"

Clouds passed through the beams of sunlight that pierced the colored panes of the stained-glass picture of the Risen Jesus. Patterns shifted. Colors faded and returned again with radiance and a new reality. The sacred scene began to move, to come alive. The mournful eyes looked down on Fred, the scars no longer leaden chips of glass but wounds through hands of flesh and bone.

Fred stared up at the window.

"Jesus wept," the minister continued. "A man of sorrows, the Bible tells us, He was without sin, innocent of any crime. Yet He was betrayed, imprisoned, beaten, spat upon, and nailed to an old wooden cross where he was left to die alone. Soldiers gambled for his clothing while He hung from those cruel nails until that last breath of life escaped His body, and Jesus died."

Fred searched for the soul of the stained-glass image, and a sense of wonder touched his heart.

"The body was removed from the cross and sealed in a guarded tomb. A massive stone covered the entrance, and soldiers stood watch day and night. Within the tomb, a lifeless body lay."

An icy chill shivered through Fred's body.

Lydia's features were completely hidden by her wide-brim floppy yellow hat.

"But God!" the preacher shouted in joy, "By that Great Mercy wherewith He loves us, reached into the silent tomb to breathe life afresh within the Body of Our Christ, and Jesus arose victorious, having conquered death itself through Love!"

Fred squirmed. His eyes flashed to the pulpit, riveting on the speaker. The preacher's eyes, soft as the eyes in the window, powerful as the prints of the nails, looked directly at Fred and gently whispered, "For you."

A momentary silence ... then the preacher's glanced moved on.

"How long will you struggle under the cruel burden of guilt and pride? How long will you walk through life all alone?" Fred studied the polished railing at the front of the choir loft, the gold candlesticks, the arch of shiny organ pipes.

"Wouldn't you like to be free?"

Fred's gnarled fingers worked with the hymnal he held on his lap.

"Have you a friend as true as our Jesus?"

The chill returned like icy fingers struggling to freeze his heart into stone.

"Ask Jesus to come into your life today! Ask God to forgive, and eternal life and joy beyond measure will be yours."

Something deep within broke free, like the heavy cargo of a storm-tossed ship. Fred struggled to hold on as his mind whirled.

"Before our Savior ascended into Heaven, He assured us with these words, 'Let not your hearts be troubled. I go to prepare a place for you, that where I am there you shall be also.'"

Fred wondered in amazement.

"We believe He is coming again, and we invite you to join us as we place our lives in God's hands and in His service. Do you believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God?"

"I do," Fred's lips moved silently.

"Come forward now. Walk down these aisles and confess before the people here assembled that you do believe, and God will honor His Promise of abundant life both now and for forever."

Fred's legs twitched, his feet shuffled, and Lydia, her eyes hidden by the brim of her floppy yellow hat, looked down at the pair of scuffed and well-worn shoes. Fred bowed his head enough to almost see the face that hid beneath the hat and then looked up again at the preacher's gracefully flowing robe, the glowing hand-rubbed pews, the towering stained-glass windows ... and Fred remembered the horrified expression on the lady's face as he first seated himself. She was staring at his shoddy, shuffling feet and ragged trousers.

"Come forward as we stand to sing together number two-hundred-thirty-three."

Lydia's yellow hat faced rigidly forward.

As the organist played the people stood and began to sing "Just As I Am".

Fred stood with them, sidled to his left, smiled at the two small children, bowed to the young mother, and said, "Excuse me," to the man on the end of the pew, paused just a moment as he reached the aisle as if uncertain which way to turn.

Then Fred walked slowly toward the preacher who waited at the front with a welcoming smile.

The music stopped.

The preacher asked, "Do you believe in your heart that Jesus died to purchase the forgiveness of your sins and that He has prepared a place for us who believe to live eternally with Him when our struggles here are through?"

"I do," Fred answered. "I truly do."

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A tear of unexplainable joy made a tiny path down Lydia's powdered face.

# Power in Truth

Here's a new way to see God more clearly, to protect yourself from enemies, to recognize true friends, and to win continuing victories in life that can be yours simply by taking control of the words you use and daring to look at the reality around you in a new way that has been written about for centuries but lost in old books few people bother to read these days.

To gain this power in truth you need only set aside the partial truths you've been taught and embrace what is genuinely true ... for your soul's sake.

Everything offered here is in agreement with what you've been taught all your life about the Bible, about being good, and about pleasing God ... however we are going to explore all this in greater depth than you've ever been shown before, as we urge you to make a decision you have never before been asked to make ... a decision Job was unable to make *until he saw God and saw himself in the light of who God truly is.*

The Gospel is easy enough for a child to understand, yet to grasp Gospel Power, you must reach beyond where you presently stand. You must allow God to take you higher. You must let the scales of prideful conceit fall from your eyes so you can see the hidden truth more clearly. You must open your mind and allow God to reveal to you the deeper mysteries of life. You must let go of "who you are in Christ" and rejoice with us as you discover more clearly each day "who Christ is in you!"

Once this "new life" is born in you, you will begin to experience the power of the Resurrection. As the principles in this book are applied to your life, the half-truths you've been taught will fall away, and the glorious Light of Love Unending will fill your soul with peace, comfort, and joy beyond anything you have ever imagined.

To appropriate this power as your own, however, you must *make it your own.* You must allow God to transform your mind. Note, we do not say *you* must transform your mind.

No.

No.

No.

That is what "religion" teaches.

Religion says, "You must do this. You must do that. You have to make yourself pleasing to God if you expect to receive His blessings."

In fact, the contrary is true. You need only ask with thanksgiving, praising God for the degree of grace you have now – and confessing to others that whatever you are, whatever you may become is all by the Grace of Him who died for you at Calvary.

Anything more than this is the “leaven of the Pharisees” that Jesus speaks of in three of the four Gospel books: Matthew<sup>23</sup>, Mark<sup>24</sup>, and Luke<sup>25</sup>

“Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees,” He warns us ... the life that takes pride in its own accomplishments, that believes it is able to do anything it sets its mind to, that thinks it can achieve unto righteousness by power of the human will ... apart from God’s grace!

This leaven is poison to your soul.

Be free!

God alone is our righteousness.<sup>26</sup>

God offers this liberty to all who will embrace the truth that He desires to live *within* us and there to have intimate fellowship *with* us, and all we need to do is ask as a child asks and receive His gift of eternal life with thanksgiving, acknowledging that *every* good gift is from above<sup>27</sup> ... without a single exception!

Perfect freedom and joy that has no limit ... not by struggling to achieve but by surrendering to receive.

Your Bible says, “Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is Liberty!”

Do you want that liberty? Do you wish to be free from the have-to’s and musts of religion and churchianity? Do you wish unlimited power for unlimited life?

Then allow God to transform your mind, so you may see what He has planned for you *beyond what you have planned for yourself!*

Let go of your pre-conceived notions of self, and allow Him to change the way you view the world around you. Let Him change the way you relate to others. Let Him reveal Himself *within* you. Let Him give you the Victory Christ died for!

As you receive the truth offered here, you’ll overcome difficulties at work, solve problems at home, and gain victory over struggles within yourself that have crippled your faith and left you wondering why your prayers aren’t being answered.

If you’re ready for power that can only be found in truth, read on.

## **PART ONE:**

The first step to gaining power in truth is learning God’s Name.

God’s Name is not “God”.

Though God has many names, there is one Name by which God specifically instructed us to remember Him, to think of Him, and to communicate with each other about Him.

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<sup>23</sup> Matthew 16:6, 16:11-12

<sup>24</sup> Mark 8:15

<sup>25</sup> Luke 12:1

<sup>26</sup> Jeremiah 23:6

<sup>27</sup> James 1:17

This is the Name by which all generations are to know God, whether you're a Christian, Jew, Muslim, or of any other religion whatever.

This is the Name we are commanded to keep holy.

This is the Name we should never use in vain.

God's Name is I AM.<sup>28</sup>

God said to Moses from the burning bush on Mount Horeb, "I AM THAT I AM."

In this Name God proclaims to be all that is, all that ever was, and all that ever will be ... everything true ... without limit in time or space.

God is the universe in which we move and have our being.<sup>29</sup>

And God is much, much more than just the universe ... much more than eternity.

God is the tangible and the intangible.

God is the now and the forever.

God is alive, conscious of Himself and all that is within Him. He is aware of all that is, every miniscule corpuscle of blood that circles through your body, every thought that flits across your mind, everything you see, everything you say.

There is nothing that is not God.

Indeed, only "nothing" is not God. God is never nothing, and nothing is never God ... just as light is never darkness, and darkness is never light. And yet, it is the darkness of this "nothing" that gives us so much trouble, *as you will discover later in our little book.*

Your Bible says, "God is light, in whom there is no shadow of turning."<sup>30</sup>

God is, as children and the Psalmist proclaim, *everywhere.*<sup>31</sup>

Yet, we ask you in our little book the question that decides your eternal future, "Have you yet found God in Christ and Christ *in you*?"

Finding Him *within* is easier as you meditate upon His Name both day and night, seeking to *know* Him, seeking His presence, His nature, His love and even His judgment (for without judgment there can be no wisdom, and without wisdom man is a fool unable to know God as God wishes to be known, unable to receive the blessings God wishes to shower on each and every one of us who will acknowledge God as God Almighty ... not our co-pilot but the Lord of Everything!

There is only *one* God.

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<sup>28</sup> Exodus 3:13-15.

<sup>29</sup> Acts 17:28

<sup>30</sup> James 1:17

<sup>31</sup> Psalm 139

Those who sing, “Our God is an awesome God,” seem to imply there is another. There is no other. All that is or ever was or ever will be is He and He alone ... one God seeking whom He may save by the glorious grace of his indwelling presence!

God told Moses to tell the children of Israel “I AM” was the Name by which He was to be remembered by all generations. Yet, we do not remember God as I AM in this rebellious age.

We have many names for God.

Most simply refer to God as “God” ... not knowing “God” is not His Name.

They are unable to use God’s true, eternal Name because they don’t yet know it.

Or, because they have not yet been taught to honor it.

God’s Name is the greatest of treasures awaiting your discovery.

In God’s very special Name there is power.

By meditating on God’s Name our hearts are opened to receive true wisdom.

Keeping His Name holy, as all are commanded to do, great power is released in us who will obey and acknowledge that we are *nothing* apart from Him who loves us and gave Himself for us so that we can live by His unlimited power ... beyond anything we can possibly imagine!

Commandment number three of the Ten Commandments is to keep God’s Name holy ... for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes His Name in vain!<sup>32</sup>

What does it mean, therefore, to keep something holy?

What is holiness?

This word comes from the same root as “hallowed”, a special word in the first sentence of the Lord’s Prayer. We pray, “Hallowed be thy Name.”

To “hallow” God’s Name is to keep His Name holy.

Yet, many of us have no idea what we’re saying when we pray the Lord’s Prayer.

Have you ever said those words?

Of course you have.

Do you know what they mean?

Do you *really* know what they mean?

When Moses stood in the presence of the burning bush, God said, “Draw not hither. Put off your shoes, for the place where you stand is holy ground.”<sup>33</sup>

Moses did, of course, as he was told, but what did God mean by “holy ground”?

What is holy?

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<sup>32</sup> Exodus 20:7

<sup>33</sup> Exodus 3:5.

Webster's dictionaries define the word as "set apart for the worship of God." We see, then, that something holy is to be used *only for worship and for no other purpose*.

Holy things are set apart for the purpose of worshipping God.

They are not to be used vainly. We are not to use God's Name in vain.

What is vanity, then?

Vanity is the elevation of ego, conceit, putting self in the center ring.

Anything "taken in vain", therefore, is robbed of its holiness, used to honor self, worshipping the creature instead of the creator.

When we are commanded not to use God's Name in vain we are told to use God's Name only for God and not for self.

After all, God's Name is not *your* name, nor is it my name, nor is it anyone else's name.

God's Name is God's Name and God's Name alone ... and it is *holy!*

God's Name is to be used for no purpose but worshipping God.

When we use God's Name to refer to ourselves, we take God's name in vain.

Vanity and not holiness is the result.

We break the commandment.

We make a mockery of the Lord's Prayer, "Hallowed be thy Name."

Examine the Bible verses yourself. Every dictionary will tell you what the words "holy" and "vain" mean.

God's Name is for speaking to God in worship ... the Christ *in* you.

Remember our question, "Who is Christ in *you*?"

He *is* I AM!

Power in truth cannot be acquired by those who refuse to embrace this truth – the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

This *is* truth.

God's Name is holy, set apart for worship, never to be used in vanity, i.e., not to refer to ourselves but to refer to Him who is *within* us!

We refuse to see God as God *is* ... because we want God to be what *we* want, an entity *outside* ourselves, our co-pilot, someone we can call upon when we want our needs met, when the going gets tough ... an external person "up there somewhere".

This is *not* what the Bible teaches – no matter how much today's churchianity teaches otherwise.

We choose to believe what we've been told about God, because it's easy for us to accept. "Surely," we say to ourselves, "God must be what my Sunday school teacher [or rabbi or priest or pastor or other religious leader] taught me – an all-powerful, all-

knowing being who lives somewhere far above us. We teach our children when they hear thunder, “That’s God in heaven, moving His furniture!” We are taught God is in heaven, as if God’s heaven was some faraway place ... when, in fact, God is *everywhere at all time both now, in all yesterdays, and in all tomorrows*. We put God in a box of traditional understanding, refusing to reach beyond the vision our religious training presents, and by refusing to reach we fail to obtain the intimate relationship for which God created us in the first place ... an internal relationship where God clothes our souls with His light.

His light ... not our own.

His wisdom ... not our counterfeit.

His love ... not our fumbling attempts at love.

His life ... not our limited number of years, months, and days.

We listen to teachers to tell us what our Bible says, because we are too lazy (or afraid) to read the scriptures for ourselves and “rightly divide the word of truth”<sup>34</sup>. We watch TV, read the newspapers, go to movies, and occasionally sit in church to hear what someone else has to say about the truths in our Bibles, but few of us search the scriptures, as Jesus commanded us to do so we might find Him!<sup>35</sup> It’s so much easier to let someone else read that big, thick book. So much easier to choose a denomination that believes what we wish to believe. To follow after the traditions of men.<sup>36</sup> To believe what others believe, thinking that by their great number they have attained to perfect understanding.

Indeed, we choose teachers<sup>37</sup> who teach us what we want to know ... while the greater truth that sets men free is there in your Bible ... *if only you would pick it up and allow God’s grace to show you what has too long been hidden from us all*.

It is there in black-and-white ... Christ *in* you, the hope of glory.<sup>38</sup>

God Himself ... inside you ... the great I AM!

Read your Bible<sup>39</sup> and decide for yourself what is true ... the traditions of men and their denomination religions ... or the greater truth revealed here, truth so plain that a child can understand in part, yet so ineffably complex that even the wisest of us cannot fully comprehend it.

Look up the words of your Bible in a dictionary.

See for yourself what it *really* says.

Stop trusting in the traditions of men ... even the traditions of your chosen church denomination.

Take responsibility for the destiny of your eternal soul.

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<sup>34</sup> 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 2:15

<sup>35</sup> John 5:39

<sup>36</sup> Mathew 15:16, Mark 7:8-9, Mark 7:13, Colossians 2:8; 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 1:18

<sup>37</sup> 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 4:3

<sup>38</sup> Colossians 1:27

<sup>39</sup> Exodus 3:13-15



Seek God, while you may yet find Him.<sup>40</sup>

Only the truth is true. Nothing else is.

God is all that is, all that ever was, and all that ever will be.

God created us. Not we ourselves.<sup>41</sup>

God alone decided when we would be born, what we would look like, what our future would be, and when we will die.

We are not the author of our creation or our salvation, nor are we yjr finishers.<sup>42</sup>

We are *created* beings alive solely by the grace of God and by that grace alone!

To think anything else or teach anything else is blasphemy.

To hold to the doctrines of men and “the leaven of Pharisees” is open rebellion against God, and the truth of God, and the Gospel of Christ Jesus!

Meditate on that for a moment ... *or a lifetime!*

As you obey with your soul, you will experience a revelation: God *within you!*

You will see God more clearly.

You will worship God more purely.

Everything you are, were, or ever will be is only because God allows it.

God is I AM!

God makes you possible!

You cannot take another breath if God forbids it.

Your heart cannot beat once more unless God wills it.

God is in control ... absolute ineluctable control.

God is I AM ... not you, not me, not us.

God is truth and knows all truth.

We know only in part. We see as through a glass that’s darkened with the stain of our vain pride and spiritual ignorance.<sup>43</sup>

There is no falsehood with God.

Our own errors are constantly discovered in the light of “who God is”.

God is light. We hide from the light, because our thoughts and deeds are evil.<sup>44</sup>

There is no darkness with God.

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<sup>40</sup> Job 23:3, Acts 17:27

<sup>41</sup> Psalm 100:3

<sup>42</sup> Hebrews 12:12

<sup>43</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 13:12

<sup>44</sup> John 3:19

We see the vastness of reality only dimly and for such a short space of time. We peer through giant telescopes to understand an unlimited star-speckled sea of space that surrounds our earth in all directions, imagining we will someday understand and explain how it all began, yet we cannot even explain why magnets attract or how a baby is born.

We describe our universe with language and the tools of science and mathematics, then proudly proclaim “we understand” things because we can measure and describe them and their behaviors. We offer theories. We speculate. While, in fact, we understand only what we see, measurements limited by the precision of our measuring tools. We say we “understand” when, in fact, we merely speculate ... a word derived from a word that means “to see”.

We see only by the light of God, yet even in darkness God is there ... far beyond what we see, deep within what we examine, cosmic wisdom beyond the reach of science, a mystery that cannot be fathomed by any of us.

The I AM that is, that was, that evermore shall be ... beyond space, beyond time!

There is no place where God is not.

God is even with those who reject truth, souls deceived by lies, thinking they can hide their guilt by denying God’s reality ... the ultimate foolishness.<sup>45</sup>

Who can deny that which is, was, and forever will be?

Who can deny that we live and have our being in the Great Reality that *is* God?

Only a fool denies that Truth *is*!

Only a fool denies that Light *is*!

People choose to believe the lies of darkness, because in the darkness they think they can escape God’s judgment of their vanity, their pride, their guilt, their sin.

So, God is even with lost souls who choose to believe truth is only “illusion”.

God is with us all and wishes to be *in* us all through Christ.<sup>46</sup>

There again the mystery!

Each of us can open the eye of our inner being, as Job did at the end of his trials,<sup>47</sup> and see God as the one and only I AM.

It was only when Job stopped saying things “he knew not, things that were too great for him”, when Job finally *saw* God with the single eye of his soul, that his pain was replaced with thanksgiving, his sores healed, his family restored, his wealth reinstated. He finally saw himself as the creature and God as creator ... not in the words of religion (of which he was a master) but in the *mystery* of God’s reality that transcends mere words and congregational concepts. God rewarded Job and brought an end to his suffering when Job stopped being “I AM” and let God be who God *is*.

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<sup>45</sup> Psalm 14:1

<sup>46</sup> John 17:23

<sup>47</sup> Job 42:5

Would you like God to bring an end to *your* suffering?

Honor God.

Acknowledge God.

Confess God to others with your words and your actions.

Truth is not illusion. Truth is truth.

God is truth ... all that is, all that ever was, and all that ever shall be.

That's who God is!

The Name of God tells us this.

We can learn from meditating on God's Name, or we can turn aside to popular opinion or the familiar fables we've been taught and walk our lives down the wide road that leads to destruction.<sup>48</sup>

If we pray for wisdom, God will teach us in our inner being *who we truly are in God and who God is in us!* God will always grant our prayers when our prayers seek more of His Wisdom *within* us.<sup>49</sup>

Ask for grace to do this, and you will experience new and powerful insights.

You will begin to understand who God is *in* you.

You will learn to be sincerely humbled before God.

You will begin to realize how proud and boastful you've been all your life.

You will see more clearly you are only what God is making you, and you will be only what God allows you to become.

As you honor God's Name you'll lose the human tendency to think of yourself as if you should be given credit for what you are and what you have.

Admit it. You *are*, after all, the center of *your* universe.

It's a problem.

Perhaps it is our biggest problem, because when we put our souls at the center of our being, we put God outside us. There's only room for One at the center. Will it be you, as it was with Job before he discovered the truth within himself? Or will you allow God to be your I AM, center-stage, in control, counseling your inner being, guiding you, loving you, teaching you all truth in a way no man or woman can teach you.

As you honor God's Name, you'll be transformed. You'll no longer struggle to transform yourself, as is taught by the religions of this world and their traditions. He will transform your mind and show you what His perfect will is for your life.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Matthew 7:13

<sup>49</sup> James 1:5

<sup>50</sup> Romans 12:2-3

Then, as you walk in His will *that is then your own will by the mystery we speak of*, you will find happiness, fulfillment, peace, and victory that overcomes all obstacles, even death itself!

You will know you are not a “self-made” person after all. You are God-made.

You are not I AM.

He is.

You’ll acknowledge you do not sustain your own life force.

You’ll know you are not the power that keeps you alive.

You will begin to understand God better *and be blessed in miraculous ways*.

You’ll begin to worship God as God commanded you to worship ... *in holiness!*

Ask God for the mind-transforming power you need to *keep* His Name holy, and God will grant that prayer, for it is God’s will for you to keep His Name holy so He may have the intimate fellowship He seeks with all of us: God in Christ and Christ *within!*

*It is* the mystery within which God may be found and without which we are fools.

Ask for the mind-transforming power to keep His Name holy, and God will give you a new, supernatural vision by which you will begin to see your own ego more clearly so that self can decrease and Christ rise up in power, renewing your life in victory!<sup>51</sup>

As you relinquish the throne of your soul, God’s majesty will be revealed to you in ways you never before imagined.

Read your Bible. See for yourself what it says about God’s Name.

Discover the power of this truth for yourself.

Ask God to reveal it to you in your private prayers.

Reach higher!

Meditate on His Name.

Keep His Name holy by the power of His grace as you ask for more grace.

No false god has this name. Gods other nations worship include stones, trees, the sun, the moon, even living women and men who hold themselves out as gods (as did the pharaohs of Egypt and others who died in infamy). Such worshippers are not content to perish alone, so they deceive others into worshipping and serving them. Be not deceived. Take responsibility for your salvation. Seek God while you may. Time is short. Life is fleeting. If the trumpet sounds before you find Him, all is lost.

Only the one true, everliving God has this very special Name.

Only the one true God is I AM.

There is so much in this simple truth that volumes could be written and not tell the story fully. Much human misery arises from misunderstanding who God is, all because

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<sup>51</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 3:7

we do not know God's Name, do not keep His Name holy, and refuse to search for Him *within ourselves!*

Much sorrow could be avoided if we would only love our children enough to see how much they need to know God's Name and the Name of His Son who came to die for us so our pride-hardened hearts can be broken to receive Him *within!*

God is I AM.

We aren't.

God loves each of us, yet our pride demands the right to be God's equal (even when we refuse to see that this is the very essence of pride and that we all have it). We deny God the holiness by which God wishes to bless us. We make God our co-pilot, our brother, our servant. Some even make God "mother earth" or the magical powers of a healing crystal or mystical music or chants or mantras or meditating on nothingness as many Eastern religions do in a vain effort to "become gods".

The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God."<sup>52</sup>

Only when we worship God in truth, submitting ourselves to God alone as I AM, and confessing with our lips and our lives that we are only creatures and not our creator, do we begin to receive God's grace more fully ... unlimited power for unlimited life.

We see so very dimly.

Our understanding is imperfect.

Our vanity denies truth. Vanity that leads to death.

We fight among ourselves to see who is greatest of all. We are so foolish. Pride demands center-stage, not only in our own lives but in the lives of all around us, so our lives shrivel and die in the death of our own making ... the death of denying the One who never dies, the Way, the Truth, the Life.

God's Name is the essence of truth.

God's Name gave birth to us all.<sup>53</sup>

In this we overcome the sorrows of this world.

In this we impart new strength to nations as well as to individuals.

In this we bridge the gap between religions at war with each other.

In this we are re-born to life eternal.

God has many names. To some God is Elohim. To others El Shadai or simply Lord. Others use the word Jehovah, an English equivalent of the Hebrew Name **hwhy** given to Moses on Mount Horeb. Others say Yeshua. Yet one Name is truly above all the other names of God, the Name God gave Moses for an eternal memorial.

I AM.

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<sup>52</sup> Psalm 14:1

<sup>53</sup> Psalm 71:6

The original Hebrew word is so special ancient texts taught it should be spoken only once each year by the high priest of Israel who, it is reported in old books, emerged from the temple in Jerusalem to pronounce God's Name before the people gathered in the courtyard for this solemn annual occasion. When the people heard God's Name they fell on their faces. The sound of His Name pronounced in the Hebrew tongue of that day was so humbling they could not stand in its presence.

They were awestruck at its sound.

They were smitten by Godly wonder.

Perhaps more awe and wonder is needed in this age of commercial religions and occult beliefs that take God out of Christmas and turn local churches into profit-hungry businesses, selling new ideas people desire instead of truths that give power to make the world safe for our wives and our children. Perhaps holiness has been taken from us by the permissiveness of popular religions reluctant to offend for fear of losing revenues.

Have we allowed our leaders to water down the truth? Has the message of our faith become lukewarm?<sup>54</sup> Is there a danger God will spit us out of His Mouth?

Are we foolishly demanding God's "milk and cookies" instead of seeking strong meat that can strengthen our souls for dangerous days ahead?<sup>55</sup>

Or, do we need truths like this, to bring us closer to God and to bring God closer to us ... indeed, to bring God *within us* by the Life of Christ who seeks to dwell *in us*?

It is for this that Jesus died ... so we may have Christ *in us* ... God in Christ, and Christ in us.<sup>56</sup>

Do we need this greater truth? Or dare we deny the power so obviously missing in our divorce-ridden, drug-cursed, occult-deceived world?

The name given Moses that day God's voice spoke from Mount Horeb's burning bush is I AM. This truth will never change, nor will the commandment for us to keep His Name holy disappear from the pages of our Bibles or the tablets written on our hearts.

We may ignore this truth, yet this truth will remain unchanged until the very end of time.

Moses asked God, "When I go back to the people, who shall I say sent me?"

God told Moses, "Tell them I AM sent you."

"Tell them also," God said, "by this Name shall I be known to all generations."<sup>57</sup>

In Hebrew **hwhy** means, "I am all that is, all that ever was, all that ever shall be."

Only God is I AM.

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<sup>54</sup> Revelation 3:16

<sup>55</sup> Hebrews 5:12-14

<sup>56</sup> John 17:23

<sup>57</sup> Exodus 3:13-15

It is no more difficult than that.  
Appropriate power in truth.  
Obey, and your blessings will follow.

## **PART TWO:**

The next step toward acquiring power in truth is to learn what satan's name means. (We purposely do not capitalize that word, since it deserves no honor.)

Look up "devil" in a Hebrew or Greek dictionary. You may be surprised.

Look up "satan". It is not what you may think.

It certainly is not what most were taught in churchianity's Sunday schools.

If you're like many you'll be surprised to learn the truth, surprised and empowered by the simple knowledge conveyed in these two words: devil and satan.

The word devil means, literally, false accuser. Substitute "false accuser" for this word whenever you encounter it, and you're on your way to victory over false beliefs.

The word satan is similar, meaning the adversary of truth. Substitute "adversary of truth" whenever you encounter this word, and you'll begin to see the power of God in truth. Real truth. God's truth. No matter what the leaders of commercial churches say.

Don't take our word for this. Check it out for yourself. Use Strong's Concordance or any Hebrew and Greek dictionary. Look up the words on the internet if you don't have access to another reference. It doesn't matter where you look. Every reputable source will tell you these names mean just what we say they mean.

The word devil means "false accuser".

The word satan means "adversary of truth".

Compare these words with the Name of God, and you will see the power in truth, for God is I AM, all that is, all that was, all that ever shall be.

The devil satan is a liar, the false accuser, the adversary of truth.

When we listen to satan we are deceived.

When we are deceived, satan has the victory, because God is displaced by lies.

That's exactly what the enemy's name means, and that's exactly what the enemy seeks ... to displace God from your life and thereby to murder your eternal soul!

If we listen to the adversary of truth, we come away believing lies, lies that can only hurt us, lies that always hurt those around us ... sooner or later, one way or another.

When we listen to God we receive power in truth.

Light dispels darkness.

The liar *is* darkness.

God is light!

The one who is I AM overpowers the imposter that seeks to steal our souls with deception and fear as soon as we acknowledge God in all our ways.<sup>58</sup>

It is no more difficult than this to have victory.

Seek truth. Believe it. Trust it. Walk in it, and you walk with God.

God gives us this choice ... light or darkness, life or death.

If we do not know the truth revealed by God's Name and remain ignorant to the meaning of the words devil and satan, we cannot choose wisely. In our failure to make better choices we bring destruction and ruin on ourselves and those we love and cherish.

Truth is serious business.

We're not just talking about words, here. We're talking about forces that control human behavior. Light v. Darkness.

A close friend, who passed away recently, used to visit the prisons where he told the men, "You're best thinking got you here."

What we humans believe determines the destiny of both men and nations.

On one hand is Truth, the I AM who is and was and evermore shall be.

On the other hand is a shadowy pretence insinuating itself into our minds and hearts with taunts and temptations encouraging us to depart from truth.

Until we learn the difference, we are victims of our own ignorance.

Therefore, let us learn about the deceiver and gain power to see through the often beautiful disguises of deceit that draw us to paths that lead us away from God's truth *into destruction and death!*

Can we agree only the truth is true?

Can we agree only truth lasts forever?

Can we agree all that is not true is false?

Can we agree that, sooner or later, that which is false is always overcome by that which is true?

Is there anyone so foolish as to deny that light always drives darkness away?

Does darkness have any power whatever to drive away light? Of course not!

As soon as we turn off the lights in our bedroom at night, darkness cannot resist flooding in to fill every space the light leaves behind.

Each is a force.

Light is greater, for light has the power to dispel darkness.

Darkness cannot resist cannot be prevented from entering when light is removed.

Therefore, we need more light.

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<sup>58</sup> Proverbs 3:6



We need to share the light we have.

We need to lift the lamp of truth higher and receive power in truth for ourselves and future generations as our Bibles command us to do.

God is I AM, truth that is, that was, that evermore shall be.

God is light with irresistible power to dispel darkness, overcoming that which is false.

God has power over the devil satan.

The shadowy satan must obey God.

God gives us a choice. Whom will we serve?

God allows us to listen to lies.

God allows us to be seduced by deception.

God allows us to be lost in darkness, to be destroyed by our unwillingness to walk in the light ... by our refusal to make God the one and only I AM.

And yet, God always holds out to us the choice: “Whom will you serve?”<sup>59</sup>

If you wish to avoid destruction, choose truth over lies, choose God rather than the liar satan.

There’s no alternative.

You cannot allow some lies to remain in your life because they please you, then call on God for favors when you need help, secretly intending to return to the lies.

If you entertain satan (i.e., if you knowingly allow the liar to purchase your soul with promises of riches and pleasure, purposely denying truth so you can attain selfish goals) you will buy a lifetime of sorrow and eternity apart from God.

Don’t do it.

Choose truth.

Tell satan to depart from you by the Name of God in Christ Jesus!

Resist false accusations with love.

Overcome lies with truth.

God will come to your aid.

God will make satan flee.

God will save you.

If you ask in faith, believing ... and receive with thanksgiving, confessing.

Recognizing satan is sometimes difficult. The adversary of truth may come in the guise of a beautiful lover or friend who seeks to draw us away from God’s purpose for

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<sup>59</sup> Joshua 24:15

our life. The adversary of truth may come in a lucrative job offer with a company that promotes things contrary to God's will of peace for our lives. The adversary of truth may even be lurking in religious teachings offered by commercial churches, doctrines of men, traditions that seem to honor God but secretly entangle souls with grievous burdens.<sup>60</sup>

You learn how to detect deception, to recognize seducing lies, and to gain power over the false accuser by prayer and meditation on the Name of God.

Power is in truth and truth alone.

Only truth is true.

Only light has power to dispel the darkness in our lives.

Sometimes when we sin (we all sin) we're so afraid of God's judgment we choose to believe lies rather than face the certainty our sin will sooner or later be discovered. We hide from truth by choosing alternatives offered by our adversary who seeks to deceive us and thereby destroy us.<sup>61</sup>

Sin is the doorway through which satan enters our lives. We open the door.

Satan cannot get in another way. When we sin we lay a welcome mat at the door. Our sin makes us hide from the truth. We don't want anyone to know. So we lie to others and to ourselves.

God sees, anyway.

Sin is where the destruction of deception always comes upon us.

We sin. We open the door. Satan enters in a proud disguise of success or promise of ecstatic pleasures. The liar offers unbridled joy, financial success, power over others.

The doorway is always sin.

The promise is always a lie.

The only way out of satan's trap is to confess our sins, acknowledge God is I AM, and ask to be filled and forgiven by the life-giving power of Christ's Spirit of Truth alive *within* us.

There is no other way to be saved.

We *want* satan's promises, so we believe the lies.

We want to believe lies, because the alternative is facing God with our sin.

We are afraid.

We foolishly think we can hide.

We think we are embarking on a great adventure or we think we have arrived at last so we no longer need to learn, to change, to grow, to be forgiven.

We think we have power to see things others cannot see.

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<sup>60</sup> Luke 11:46

<sup>61</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 5:8

We think we can do things others cannot do.

We think we'll receive things others cannot receive.

All we get is sorrow in the end, for satan's lies are pure death-dealing deception.

Sooner or later God's light displaces satan's darkness.

We are always worse off than when we began.

Why, then, do people surrender to satan's lies?

They do not know the deep meaning of God's Name, refusing to allow His Name to shine its life-giving light into the hidden corners of their inner selves, thinking they are separate from God, that God is somewhere "out there".

They don't know what the words devil and satan mean.

They are misled into misery.

Others go willingly in rebellion, blindly believing satan has greater power than God, as if shadows had power over light. It is sublime foolishness.

The foolishness of mortal man.

The cause of war, crime, poverty, divorce, addiction, and disease.

Most people live satan's lies because they don't know that escape is offered by Christ Jesus through His sacrifice at Calvary, precious blood that redeems us from the disgrace and ruin we draw to ourselves in darkness. They do not yet know the truth in grace that is freely given and cannot be earned. They do not know there is a way to be spared the consequence of guilty pride. They don't know how to shake off shame. They make themselves God's equal and refuse to surrender to Christ as Lord of their lives.

Know the way out of sin. Escape the influence of the false accuser whose empty promises will steal your soul. Find power in truth and deny all false "powers" that seek to deceive you with enticing promises.

It is you who must decide each day whom you will serve.<sup>62</sup>

Each hour, each moment. Each of us is given this same eternal choice.

What will we believe?

How will we live?

In whom will we trust?

Will we look to I AM in whom alone is power to live victoriously as overcomers submitted to the commandments of God and illumined by His light, or will we slink away with satan to live a life of secret pleasures that will only catch up to us someday when our shame will be multiplied and our punishment more severe?

These may seem hard choices, however they can be made easy by power in truth.

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<sup>62</sup> Joshua 24:15

The pleasures of a moment may seem worth future sorrows, but this is deception. Our adversary the liar wants to steal your joy. Power in truth will show us the lie, if only we will open our eyes as Job did and see the I AM who alone can show us the way.

As one old preacher used to say, "There is only one God. You are not him."

Each moment we choose. We all choose. None who is exempt from the choice.

Children choose.

Old people choose.

As long as we live we must choose ... each day, each moment.

Whom will we serve?

How can we resist the temptations satan offers to steal our souls?

Sadly, the answer is seldom learned until one is old. It may take years of suffering the consequence of wrong choices to learn to resist. Broken dreams result from giving in to temptation. Once we learn what temptation always bring, we grow to hate it. We learn to resist because we see the disaster that results from giving in. As we age, we become more sensitive to satan's deceits. We fear the destruction that follows our foolishness.

After years of self-inflicted disappointment, it becomes easier to say no.

Too often, however, sensitivity comes only with the expense of having made bad choices and enduring the suffering that invariably follows.

For younger persons hoping to avoid the sorrows so many of us suffer in old age, there's another way to resist temptation. Test the spirits if they are of God or not.<sup>63</sup>

If a delicious thing offered to you is a good thing, it will also be true. It will not deny God. It will not insist reality is illusion. It will never lie to you. It will not wear a disguise. It will not emphasize the temporary value of material things. It will not seek to be with you in secret. And, above all, it will not falsely accuse you.

Don't wait until you're old to learn this. Appropriate power in truth today.

The devil is a false accuser and a liar.

If the devil is in a thing, sooner or later lies will be seen. Instead of building you up, it will tear you down. It may flatter you for a season, but in time it will find fault with you. It will condemn you. It will judge you, and because you give in to it and hide from God in the process, there will be some element of truth in its false judgment. You will be guilty, and shame becomes your prison. Deception is satan's toolbox. The eternal death of your soul is what satan seeks.

Don't let satan succeed in your life.

When you see these things, resist with the power of truth, i.e., the power of Christ *in you*.

Never give in to lies.

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<sup>63</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> John 4:1

If you ask I AM to give you power of discernment, you will see lies more clearly and not be so likely to be deceived in the first place. You will see the lies for yourself. You will choose love and life instead of pride and death. You will survive the tempter as you see that temptation is a tree that grows in a forest of lies.

If you fall before you see the lies, stand up quickly. Resist. Do not again give in.

Seek the will of I AM who is within you and return to that light within you where you can be judged *within* by I AM.

It is better to be judged for sin from *within* than to be condemned forever by the soul-destroying deceit of satan's lies and false accusations.

People serving satan can often be discovered by their speech. Not only do they refuse to honor God's Name, but they refuse to honor truth in any way. Some openly make fun of truth. Many say truth is relative or illusory. Some ridicule all who claim to believe in God or claim salvation comes by Christ and His grace. Others are so casual in the use of words that one may wonder if they *ever* speak the truth.

The liar is subtle as a snake, able to deceive even the wisest man or woman whose wisdom lacks power in truth. Those acquainted with the occult may spend years studying to achieve the powers promised by satan. Some are able to hypnotize unwitting victims to surrender their will to the lies. Their methods are always deceit, false accusation, sexual seduction, insobriety, illusion, or other departures from truth.

To discern satan, one must learn to discern truth.

To discern truth one must first believe truth *is*.

Only truth can save you.

Only truth can set you free.<sup>64</sup>

Only truth can forgive you.

Only truth can bring you peace.

The worst thing you can do when confronted by satan is to lie. That's just what satan is after. That's what satan wants. For, by lying you willingly give satan a place in your life. You feed the darkness. For this reason we're taught to agree with our adversary in things that are true,<sup>65</sup> and to resist the lies by which we are falsely accused. In this way we acknowledge I AM, and the light of truth dispels the power of our enemy.

The truth that is most powerful in our lives is truth that issues from our own lips.

Things we say are more powerful than things we do, because words are spirit!

When we admit our faults one to another, we serve God.<sup>66</sup>

When we deny our faults, we give power to the adversary who lives in our lies and uses them against us to destroy our souls.

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<sup>64</sup> John 8:32

<sup>65</sup> Matthew 5:25

<sup>66</sup> James 5:16

When we overcome satan with truth, we receive blessings from God. When we help others stand, instead of watching as they fall, we receive blessings from God. When we resist the liar who seeks to deceive us into a life of destruction and ruin, we receive blessings from God. As we grow older, this process frees us from traps we fell into so easily when we were young, and we are able to help those who have not yet learned.

There is no darkness in light.

There is no light in darkness.

Light is power darkness must obey.

Darkness has no power over light.

Satan has no power to rob us unless we hide from the truth.

Nothing false is of God.

If a thing is false, if a friend lies to you, if a lover deceives you, resist temptation.

Run so fast the dust shakes off your shoes!<sup>67</sup>

I AM is not in anything false.

Nothing outside of God is good.

Know your enemy.

No lie can overcome you, unless you permit it to do so.

Don't give in.

If someone falsely accuses you, recognize that the spirit speaking to you is not the spirit of truth but a lying spirit, instead. Love the soul, *but resist that lying spirit*.

Don't allow liars to put you down. Don't allow false accusations to cause you to have disruptive feelings of guilt. If someone you love accuses you of something that isn't true, pray for that soul but recognize they are controlled by satan, believing satan's lies, and love that soul back to the truth. In most cases it will do no good to argue with them, for the liar in their speech will never give in to truth. Better to pray for their soul, love them with kindness, forgive them as best as you can, and give it time.

Be strong by the strength of Christ *within* you.

Be good by the righteousness of Christ *within* you.

Have courage by the valor of Christ *within* you.

Let Jesus do what's right *within you* and, in time, those souls who seek to condemn you will see the error of listening to satan, and you will be restored to your friend.

Recognize that your enemy is satan, not other people.

Recognize the difference between souls and spirits. They are not the same at all! The Spirit of Christ divides the soul from the spirit, as a razor-sharp two-edged sword.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Matthew 10:14

Recognizing satan is a lifelong study. None of us ever becomes completely adept at it, but in time we become more sensitive, better able to discern lies and recognize the source of those lies so we can forgive souls who serve the lying spirit we call satan.

Only as we walk in light do we have power to see darkness and prepare ourselves against its insidious devices. Only as we surrender our souls to I AM, instead of living in the rebellion of asserting our own wisdom, can we appropriate the power to resist the liar who constantly seeks to destroy us and those we care for. So long as we claim our right to live as we wish no matter who it hurts, we will expose ourselves to unpleasant, deadly consequences that ultimately overcome all who choose to live in the lies of our enemy.

Be not deceived.

Truth will never fail.

Therefore, be on guard. Pray for wisdom to discern lying spirits and to resist the delights they offer when you are weak and willing to be deceived.

Test the spirits to see if they are true or false.<sup>69</sup>

Resist the liar.

Only the liar is your enemy.

Only what's false can destroy your soul.

Learn what this means, and you will be well on your way to victory in life.

There is power in truth. Knowledge of truth is power.

The power in truth is God's gift to each of us. Only by this power can love be ours. Only by truth can peace be sustained in our lives with joy that never ends.

There is no love apart from God.

There is no life in a lie.

Resist what is false.

### ***PART THREE:***

Words are spirit.

People are souls. You are a soul.

You are not a spirit.

You have a spirit. Your spirit gives you life.

You are a soul, not a spirit. Many fall into error believing this lie of commercial religionists who hold themselves out as prophets, teachers, and priests.

When God breathed life into Adam that first man became a living soul.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Hebrews 4:12

<sup>69</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> John 4:1

<sup>70</sup> Genesis 2:7

Adam *is* the soul into whom God breathed spirit.

The spirit gave Adam life.

Adam was a soul and, because souls never die<sup>71</sup>, he *is* a soul alive at this very moment, either in the light with God or in eternal darkness alone, the darkness that is hell, a place American Indians believe is at the very molten center of our earth.

Jesus warns us not to fear those who can take our life but those who can cast our souls into hell.

We are souls, not spirits.

We have spirits. Some have the true spirit given by grace through Christ. Others have lying spirits, willingly giving the enemy dominion over their eternal souls.

Spirits control souls. Souls become what spirits make them. Spirits give us life to do and say whatever our souls allow. If we allow false spirits to give us life, we will lie, cheat, steal, and perhaps even murder others because we are submitted to spirits that are false ... spirits that serve satan the liar, the murderer.<sup>72</sup>

If we serve the human spirit we were given at birth, we serve ourselves. We will be selfish. We will seek what's best for us, no matter who we hurt. We will feel sorry for ourselves. We will blame others when things go wrong. That's what our self-spirit does, the spirit we were born with.

There is another Spirit we can serve, however. This Spirit of Truth gives eternal life. This Spirit is also called the Holy Spirit, given to us by Christ *within* us. This is not the spirit we were given at birth when we took that first breath, nor is it a spirit that lies and deceives or accuses us falsely. This is the Spirit of Truth given freely to us by Christ Jesus when we accept His Truth, acknowledging that He died to free us from our human spirit and the spirits of deception sent against us by our enemy satan.

This Holy Spirit gives new life by the power of grace and truth.<sup>73</sup>

What spirit do you allow to give life to *your* soul?

What spirit speaks when you open *your* mouth?

What spirit motivates you to do the things *you* do?

The human spirit you were given at birth seeks only itself. Sometimes called the spirit of man, this spirit is bent on self-preservation. This is the spirit that makes babies throw their food out of highchairs when they don't get their way. Some people never grow out of this spirit, because they deny the power of God in Christ and will not invite Christ to enter them as Lord.

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<sup>71</sup> Our eternal soul will spend eternity either in the light with God or in the darkness of utter misery alone. The choice we make is made each waking moment of our lives. Whom will we serve. God or satan?

<sup>72</sup> John 8:44

<sup>73</sup> John 1:17



Lying spirits all serve the devil satan – taunting, deceiving, seducing, punishing, hating, shaming, stealing, slandering, gossiping, destroying, even murdering.

Lying spirits are often in league with our human spirit, serving the selfishness that is innate in the spirit we were born with. Our human spirit is prideful, resisting God, so lying spirits take advantage of the pride of our human spirit and pump us up with lies or condemn us for selfishness.

In every soul controlled by lying spirits there is either false pride or sinful guilt. It is as certain as night follows day.

The only Spirit that never lies is the Holy Spirit we receive when we accept that Jesus died for us at Calvary and was given life again to walk from the empty tomb; when we make His soul a sacrifice for our sin<sup>74</sup> (which we cannot do without confessing our sin); when we receive grace and power in truth revealed to us by His Holy Spirit who cannot lie and will never deceive us; when we invite Him to dwell *within* us.

It is Christ's Spirit of Truth that teaches us all things.

It is Christ's Spirit of Truth that brings purity, peace, gentleness, forgiveness, mercy, understanding, and hope.

The problem we humans have is that it takes time to learn all that the Holy Spirit teaches us. We don't suddenly become peaceful, gentle, or pure. We fall prey to desires. We fall prey to fears. We fall prey to pride. And, when we sin, we fall prey to guilt and shame. Each day we must learn again who God is *within us*, who we are *in Him*, and who our enemy the liar is in the world.

Each day we must make choices.

Whom will we serve?

If we are blessed with wisdom we choose to serve God, making I AM the author and finisher of our faith<sup>75</sup> instead of standing in our own counterfeit wisdom resisting truth.

If we are wise we submit to the authority of God, as taught by scripture, and avoid the tragedies that come to those who rebel out of fear or misplaced loneliness.

If we are open to I AM's Truth we see we are helpless apart from I AM's blessings, and we cry out in faith for I AM's protection from the lies of satan so we can escape the destruction that follows temptation's intent: the soul-destroying pride and shame that undermine faith and destroy lives.

For many of us this takes years of broken dreams, the chastisement of His Spirit that comes as a blessing as we discover God as our Father<sup>76</sup> and not our "co-pilot".

Understanding the vital difference between spirit and soul makes it easier for you to find the truth that alone can set you free ... the power that is in that essential truth.

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<sup>74</sup> Isaiah 53:10.

<sup>75</sup> Hebrews 12:2

<sup>76</sup> Hebrews 12:8

Words are spirit.

If words lie, they are false spirit serving satan.

If words praise self with arrogant pride, they are our human spirit serving self.

If words are true, peaceful, encouraging, loving, kind, gentle, approving, patient, seeking to benefit others, and enlighten us as to the nature of I AM and of Christ Jesus who alone can give us power in truth by grace, they are Holy Spirit.

God's Holy Spirit that cannot lie.

God's Holy Spirit cares for your soul.

God's Holy Spirit gives you life and hope where otherwise there would only be death and despair.

Our Bible teaches us to test the spirits, to see if they are of God or not.<sup>77</sup>

Spirits that lie are not of God.

Spirits that falsely accuse us are not of God.

Spirits that tear down instead of building up are not of God.

Spirits that condemn are not of God.

Spirits that lead us into sin are not of God.

Recognize the True Spirit given to us by the faith of Christ *within us*, the gift of life eternal, and cling to His Spirit that never lies.

Be taught by the Holy Spirit.

Be led by the Holy Spirit.

For, only the Holy Spirit can be trusted with your soul.

False spirits accuse falsely.

False spirits tell outright lies or partial truths.

False spirits deceive people into drawing away from God.

False spirits encourage souls to believe lies and thereby lead people into lifestyles and practices that ultimately destroy.

False spirits make bad things seem good.

False spirits make evil things seem proper.

False spirits betray the souls they deceive ... and ultimately murder them with eternal death, separated from God forever!

But, in the light of Truth, satan's lies can be seen for what they are.

God's Holy Spirit cannot lie, will never lie.

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<sup>77</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> John 4:1

God's Holy Spirit speaks only truth, and the truth the Holy Spirit speaks always honors Christ Jesus, teaching us about His love that transforms our souls and saves us from the liar who seeks to draw us away from what is truly good for us.

To be separated from I AM is the worst thing that can happen to any of us. Only with I AM are we safe from being lost in the darkness of lies that destroy our souls.

God's Holy Spirit by Christ is our rescuer, our comforter, our adviser, our friend.

Jesus said, "The Truth will set you free," therefore let us learn what truth is by learning *Who* Truth is.

God's Holy Spirit is given by Christ so we can learn truth and turn our backs on the lies that seek to turn us from the truth who *is* I AM in Christ Jesus *in us!*

Many people never learn this, because they choose to hold to children's fables, religious doctrines, and traditions of men. Many die believing simple fables about God, instead of living with power in truth that alone can set them free. Only when we are ready to accept the truth God offers, the truth our enemy wishes us never to know, can we find victory for our souls.

Satan is a liar.

Many spirits are in the world, not that I AM wishes this to be but because *we* allow it to satisfy our desire to be gods in our own right.

We wish to be outside the authority of I AM, to live our lives by our own rules.

We wish to be "I am" on our own.

We dishonor the Creator who made us.

We ignore the Truth in whom we move and have our being.<sup>78</sup>

We entertain spirits that tell us (in words, always in words) what we wish to hear.

We listen to spirits that whisper in the ears of our soul, telling us it is acceptable to sin or tormenting us with false accusations that keep us from walking in truth's light.

We admit lying spirits into our lives. They take up residence with our souls. They speak for us. They speak through us. They control our emotions. Finally they direct our behavior and, if we do not sooner submit ourselves to the truth and invite Christ to enter us and have dominion over us by His grace, they rob us of our very lives.

Often those around us see clearly what is happening, while we ourselves are blind to the evil influence that invades our hearts because we will not be submitted to I AM but choose instead to be "I am" in our own right.

This hard teaching is nonetheless true.

Your Bible confirms it.

Jesus said, "The words I speak to you are spirit, and they are life."<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Acts 17:28

<sup>79</sup> John 6:63.

Words are spirit.

We are souls.

We are not spirits.

The writer of Hebrews tells us, “The Word of God is sharp as any two-edged sword, able to divide the soul from the spirit.”<sup>80</sup> If soul and spirit can be divided, they are not the same thing.

Soul is soul.

Spirit is spirit.

False spirits condemn.

The Spirit of Truth sets us free.

False words mislead.

The Spirit of Truth guides us to victory ... in this life and in the next.

Those who accuse us of things we have not done are enemies of God, false spirits.

They are not souls, however, and though we judge false spirits we should love the souls who are under their control.

We judge spirits, but we should not judge souls, for souls who serve false spirits are deceived just as all of us have been deceived at one time or another.<sup>81</sup>

Souls serving false spirits can only be set free by accepting the love of Christ and inviting His Spirit to live *in* us as Lord. So it is that we pray for the souls who have spirits that wound us. We love them, even when they are unlovely.<sup>82</sup> And we ourselves resist the false accuser who speaks through them with their unwitting permission.

The Holy Spirit teaches us all these things and more than we can ever imagine.<sup>83</sup>

False spirits (i.e., spirits that lie or speak half-truths) seek only to separate us from I AM and make us believe we can live successfully outside truth, hiding from our errors. You can learn this now, or you can learn the hard way later in life when sin has destroyed your joy and shattered your dreams.

Truth never fails.

Therefore, judge the spirits.

Are they true?

Do they teach you about I AM, or do they try to influence you to believe you can hide from I AM and be “I am” in your own strength?

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<sup>80</sup> Hebrews 4:12.

<sup>81</sup> Romans 3:23

<sup>82</sup> Matthew 5:46, Luke 6:32

<sup>83</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> John 2:27.

Are you walking in the light, or are you hiding in darkness because your deeds are evil?

There is no way to escape truth, for truth is always with us.

If we listen to false spirits because we want to live our lives apart from I AM, worshipping created things instead of the I AM who created all that is, we are deceived and will inescapably suffer terrible consequences if we do not submit to truth before it is too late to repent.

When someone you love accuses you falsely, remember it is not their soul who speaks to you but spirits within them that serve the liar.

You are wasting your breath to argue with a lying spirit, because such spirits never abide in truth.

The best thing you can do is to love the soul.

Do good to the soul.<sup>84</sup>

Be kind.

Be patient.

Judge the spirit for what it is, and resist the spirit, for it can have no power over you unless you enter into its lies.

Resist the enemy, and the enemy will flee from you.<sup>85</sup>

Be free. Stand in the power of truth and love the soul that, for now, is permitting itself to be deceived.

Do this and you will find many victories.

In time you will receive much love in return.

#### **PART FOUR:**

You can be more nearly perfect.

That statement is so important it deserves to be repeated.

You *can* be more nearly perfect!

All that's necessary is to control your tongue.

You can receive power in truth to control what you say, and by doing so you will be made more nearly perfect. Yes, by controlling your speech you will be made more nearly perfect.<sup>86</sup>

Of course, your perfection depends on controlling your tongue, and the power to control your tongue *is not yours!*

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<sup>84</sup> Matthew 5:44

<sup>85</sup> James 4:7

<sup>86</sup> James 3:2

The power you need, the power we *all* need, is the power of Christ's *indwelling* Spirit of Truth. All our efforts will not succeed if He is not the author of them, if he is not our wisdom, our protector, our Lord.<sup>87</sup>

Jesus said it is not what goes into a man that ruins him but what comes out of his mouth that defiles his soul.<sup>88</sup>

Words.

Spirits.

Power for good or evil.

The choice is ours.

Lying, prideful, cruel spirits ... or True Spirit, that is Christ's Spirit *in* us.

James writes that the man who can control his tongue becomes a perfect man.

You may have heard it said, "Nobody is perfect," yet the Bible says we *can* be.

Jesus even *commands* us to, "Be perfect."<sup>89</sup>

Surely these things would not be written if they were utterly impossible.

With I AM, however, *all* things are possible<sup>90</sup> ... even perfection by His grace.

The key is to understand *and acknowledge with the words you say* that it is all by His grace, that every good thing in you is Him who is I AM.

Every good thing.<sup>91</sup>

God is in Christ, and Christ is in you who ask in faith by grace with thanksgiving.

So long as you hold onto being "I am" in your own right, however, these things are not possible. Power in truth is unavailable to those who believe they are the master of their own souls, or those who believe truth is relative or that reality is illusion.

To appropriate power in truth to be perfect, therefore, begin by accepting the truth of Christ *in* you and *speaking* it to this lost and dying world so others may be saved.<sup>92</sup>

You cannot lie and be empowered by truth.

You cannot joke around and later say, "I was only kidding," and expect to receive power in truth from God.<sup>93</sup>

You cannot say to your spouse, who washes dishes only on rare occasions, "You *never* wash the dishes," because it is not true.

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<sup>87</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 1:24, 30, 2:7; Ephesians 1:17; Colossians 2:3;

<sup>88</sup> Mark 7:18-23.

<sup>89</sup> Matthew 5:48.

<sup>90</sup> Philippians 4:13

<sup>91</sup> Philemon 1:6

<sup>92</sup> Romans 10:10

<sup>93</sup> Ephesians 5:4.

Nor can you say to your spouse who only buys flowers for Valentine's Day, "You never bring me flowers."

These statements aren't true.

They are not of God.

They are lies and part of the plot of satan who is the father of lies.<sup>94</sup>

Those who say such things serve the devil, not God.

Every lie is of the devil, and every lie works death in our souls.

No lie is of God.

A young man about 9 years old was at a church supper some years ago when the pastor unwittingly patted the boy on the head and said to one of the deacons, "Billy is a little devil. Aren't you Billy?" The boy nodded a sheepish agreement. Who but God will ever know what damage that single moment may have done to that child's soul? Perhaps the pastor meant no harm, but that fiery dart of satan found its mark on that boy's heart.

A father angrily shouted at his son, "You'll never amount to anything!" Who but God will ever know the harm that single statement did, the greatness that boy will miss because his very own Dad condemned him with false words.

Why serve satan when you can serve God, instead?

Encourage.

Edify.

Lift up.

You *can* control your speech ... once you decide to do so and ask God to work *in* you, both to desire and to do His good pleasure.<sup>95</sup>

First, however, you must make up your mind to do so. You must purpose in your heart not to listen to the lying spirits that tell you it cannot be done. You must trust the power of Christ *in* you and be submitted to I AM to give you the ability to do what you could never do without the power that is given by the *indwelling* Holy Spirit alone ... the Spirit of Truth who cannot lie!

If we give in to lying spirits that say we cannot do this, we commit sin, for with God all things are possible ... even this.<sup>96</sup> Indeed, perhaps *especially* this, for it is the things that come out of our mouths that destroy us and not thing the things that go in.<sup>97</sup>

Why are we so careless with our tongues?

Is it not because other people in this world are careless with theirs?

Is it not because we received weak instruction from those who taught us?

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<sup>94</sup> John 8:44

<sup>95</sup> Philipians 2:13

<sup>96</sup> Matthew 19:26

<sup>97</sup> Matthew 15:11

Is it not because we believe the lie that we cannot do otherwise or that it's foolish to try?

Of course we can do it!

It is our reasonable service to God who made us and sustains us and promises life eternal to all who will receive Him *within*.

After all, we are not compelled to say *anything*.

One need not speak to be alive.

One must breathe, eat, drink water, and sleep now and then, but none is compelled to speak and, certainly, none is compelled to speak lies or say hateful things about others.

The choice is ours.

Whom will we serve?

God or satan?

Many people think if they mean no harm it's acceptable to say to another, "What an ugly necktie you're wearing!" as if attitude prevents injury and humor is impossible without insult – innocent as they may believe it to be. As if custom excuses fault. As if so long as we say we were kidding it's alright to say anything we please.

It isn't alright. The Bible says we will give account of every word we speak,<sup>98</sup> and surely that includes hateful things we say in jest or half-truths we use to injure or control those closest to us.

We *can* control our tongues.

This *is* the path to perfection.

As we submit our tongue to I AM, we receive power in truth. Our mind comes under the dominion of the Holy Spirit, and our bodies begin to be submitted to purity and the rule of God's will *from within* ... and not from "somewhere up there".

The tongue may be a little member in our body, but it controls great things.<sup>99</sup>

As we submit our tongues to truth, we open the door to allow God's power of life into our souls.

Of course none of this is possible apart from the Love of Christ that gives power in truth by grace. It is the Love of Christ in our hearts that makes us *want* to do these things ... love given to us by His Grace, purchased for us by His Blood, sealed in us by His Suffering.

Apart from our desire to please God by loving others in response to Jesus' love for us, all our righteousness is as useless as filthy rags, unable to wipe our lives clean of the selfish pride that entices us to commit sin.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> Matthew 12:36

<sup>99</sup> James 3:1-11.

<sup>100</sup> Isaiah 64:6,



## **PART FIVE:**

Unlimited power for unlimited life is all in the Love of Christ alive *within* your own heart!

Love you can receive right now if you ask in faith, believing.

Love you *must* ask for, however.

Love that will fill you afresh every day, every hour, every moment.

Christ's Love ... *in* you!

Love that is life itself ... life eternal.

Your Bible teaches that the law came by Moses, but that grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.<sup>101</sup> Jesus died on a cruel cross so you could know truth in love and receive His grace of power in truth by love. It is only the love of Jesus *within* us that can empower us to be healed and perfected.

It is His life *within* us that never dies ... the life eternal we all seek.

Only by His life *within* us can escape the wrath of God's judgment.

Nothing else can save us.

Nothing.

Christ's life *in* us is the power in truth that sets us free.<sup>102</sup>

There is no love apart from Christ and His Blood Sacrifice for us, for those who are incapable of loving Jesus are incapable of loving anyone (even themselves).

Nothing but the love of Christ *within* us can rescue us from our adversary, for we have no power in truth apart from Him.

His Life within us *is* the power by which we overcome the enemy of our souls.

His Truth in us is our victory.

His Victory in us is our truth.

His Love in us is our wisdom.

This is the Truth that sets us free ... the Mystery of the Gospel ... Christ *in* you, the hope of glory!

There are many teachings. There are many great men who lived in times past and imparted great wisdom through their writings. But only one Man offers us power in truth that changes us *within*.

Religions challenge us to change ourselves. This is true of the Hebrew faith. It is true of Islam. It is true of Oriental teachings, some of which encourage self-sacrifice to the point of suicide for the sake of honor or the promise of paradise. And, unfortunately, it is true of the teachings of many well-known and highly-respected Christian teachers.

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<sup>101</sup> John 1:17

<sup>102</sup> John 8:32

Yet none of these teachings can give us the power we need to change *within*.

Religions impose restraints from without.

Religions seek to cause their adherents to submit to the will of the collective for the sake of the collective by the threat of the collective and its social acceptance.

The followers of religions are enslaved to the commandments they are told they must obey by the force of their own will ... *an impossible task*.

The followers of religions are not free.

They are slaves to those who rule over them with deeds that God hates.<sup>103</sup>

Only by having Christ *within* us are we able to receive power in truth by which we are transformed *internally* through the work of His Spirit alive in our hearts, moving us, motivating us, giving us the desire to do and become what is best for us and for those around us in the world ... setting us truly free.<sup>104</sup>

Many people miss this truth because they have been taught a child's view of God and of who Jesus is ... apart from The Gospel Mystery. To receive the grace of Christ we must embrace the mystery, enter into the mystery, receive Christ's life in our hearts, and confess His presence *within* us as our only good, our only hope.

As adults we are foolish to retain the Sunday school view of a God "somewhere up there" as we were taught as toddlers, the distant God who looks down on us from His heaven, unreachable, untouchable, unknowable.

We need to see God as God is, the embodiment of I AM in Christ *within* us.

We then celebrate as we see God transforming our minds and hearts from *within* by a power we do not possess ... the power of Christ's love *in* us by His grace.

Jesus said, "Consider the lilies. They do not toil. They do not work at weavers' wheels to spin raw fiber into cloth. Yet even King Solomon had nothing to wear as fine as these flowers you see."<sup>105</sup>

Jesus asked, "Who among you can make yourself taller by thinking about it?"<sup>106</sup>

"Who among you," He asks, "can make on hair on your head white by merely taking thought?"

Of course there was no answer from the crowd, because it cannot be done!

We are no taller than God made us to be.

We cannot think our hair white.

In this there is a prophetic lesson we must learn. We do not make ourselves good. God does. It is God who works in us both to will to do good and to do it.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> Revelation 2:6 and 2:15

<sup>104</sup> John 8:36.

<sup>105</sup> Matthew 6:28.

<sup>106</sup> Luke 12:25.

We ask.

We receive with thanksgiving.

The rest is up to God, and God is faithful to give us Himself when we ask.

Herein is the Mystery of the Gospel ... Christ *in* us the *only* hope of glory!

Is He *in* you?

The Mystery of the Gospel has been lost in the human struggles for power and preeminence that have haunted His church more than twenty centuries.

Jesus taught about the Mystery.

So did Paul, James, Peter, and John.

Apart from the Mystery there is no real power and certainly no lasting victory.

If the life-transforming power of Christ's love *in* us is omitted from a teaching, that teaching lacks the power we need to find the victory we seek, because it ignores the truth that alone can set us free. The power to overcome the enemy of our souls is found in the life of Him who overcame our enemy at Calvary and again at the empty tomb ... *and again when He entered your heart the moment you prayed to receive Him.*

We need to agree in this knowledge, for in this we are made to sit together in His presence as sons.<sup>108</sup>

We need to share with others the insight this knowledge offers, so they too may be set free and the world see who God is in Christ! If we are to change the world for Christ, we must first allow Christ to change us ... *within.*

We need this wisdom so we can reach out with power to all who are suffering because of the darkness that once deceived each one of us before we submitted to the power in truth that is now being manifest *in* us by His grace.

Only His love *within* us can overcome the enemy of our souls.

His Love *in* us is unlimited power for unlimited life.

This is not love as the world sees love but love as your soul sees love when you contemplate the amazing love by which Christ Jesus loved you at Calvary, the love that raised Him from the dead, the love that is changing you *internally* at this moment if you have asked in faith, believing.

Be not wise in your own conceits. That is the leaven of Pharisees.

Submit to God as I AM, and give up your struggle to be "I am" in your own right.

Let your wisdom be submitted first of all to Truth.

Know the devil satan is your enemy, not men. But, also know your enemy's only power is your willingness to believe the lies and be deceived by the temptations of false promises.

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<sup>107</sup> Philipians 2:13

<sup>108</sup> Ephesians 2:6

Words are spirits.

Some are false.

One spirit is true.

You are a soul with free will to choose what spirits you will serve. You can live by your own selfish human spirit. You can live by the lying spirits that seek to seduce you and ultimately bring about your death. Or you can live in the light of God's Holy Spirit given by Christ Jesus when you ask to receive His power of truth *within* you.

You *can* control your speech. Indeed, no one else can!

Only you determine whom your tongue will serve.

No lie is of God.

No half-truth is of God.

Jesting harms others.

Choose to allow Christ within you to control what you say.

Listen to His still small voice.<sup>109</sup>

The power to do these things comes only from Christ *within* you ... not outside you or beyond you but *within* you.

This is the Mystery of the Gospel and the Power of His Resurrection!

Go to Jesus in prayer.

Ask for wisdom and power in truth to resist the liar who is your enemy and to overcome your own human spirit whose pride threatens to cast you into hell.

Invite Jesus into your heart.

Make Him Lord of your life.

Listen for His still small voice, and obey Him in all things.

Then you will have power in truth, victory with others, and life eternal.

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<sup>109</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> Kings 19:12

# Laying the Keel

*No foundation can any man lay than that which is laid by Christ Jesus.*

In my Sunday school class recently men were talking about changes they've seen in the church over the past 50 years and changes they see taking place in the world today. The discussion was aimed at discovering a connection if there is one. The men wanted to know, "Are we doing all we should?"

The only honest response is, of course, "We are not doing all we should do."

Jesus made this clear when He said, "If I be lifted up, I will draw all men unto me."

In these words Jesus challenges the church today.

Are all men drawn to Christ?

Are we doing all we should?

Sometimes God uses messages with multiple meanings. This does not make God double-minded, for a double-minded man uses falsehoods to hide the truth or sometimes uses truth to hide falsehoods. God is not double-minded, for God only speaks truth. Yet, many times the messages God offers us as children have truths we cannot see until we are matured by life's trials, lessons we cannot learn until we have suffered, treasures we cannot take hold of until our minds are transformed by the work of His grace in faith.

As children we hear the Gospel story and receive its truths.

As we get older we see new truths – not that the old truths are taken away but that they are improved upon, expanded, given greater meaning, holding out a challenge only mature hearts can receive.

The original meaning a child can grasp is amplified by a meaning that imposes an adult duty.

As we grow older still, additional truth is discovered in the same message. The original child's truth remains, yet deeper truth is discovered as we mature. This is what our teachers mean when they urge us to let the Holy Spirit "reveal" hidden messages of scripture to our hearts and minds.

We must dig deeper for diamonds.

So it is with this statement Jesus made about being lifted up.

For the child or young Christian (of whatever chronological age) this statement is clearly a message about the pain of Calvary's Cross. Jesus was lifted up on that Cross. He is drawing all men to Him. Even those who reject the teachings of our church are being drawn to Jesus because of Calvary. They may be intrigued by the empty tomb, but they are drawn to the Suffering Lamb of Innocence who was lifted up on that Cruel Cross for all the world to see.

It is His Love that draws them, even as it is His Love that draws us.

It is by being lifted up by Pilate's soldiers that He draws men even today.

Yet there is another meaning to this message. Pilate's soldiers are not the only ones who "lift" Jesus so He can draw all men to Him. The church lifts Jesus. Some lift Him high above all things, while others lift Him now and then as their traditions or the demands of their governing assemblies permit.

How are *we* lifting Jesus?

An old man once remarked to me when he and his wife were being introduced by a friend at church, "I love my Sally." I looked at the dear lady standing obediently beside him in an inexpensive gingham dress that looked as though she'd worn it scrubbing floors for years. Her bare feet were stuffed into a pair of rubber soled sandals through which bulged the blue-black traces of overworked varicose veins. She wore no jewelry but a thin gold wedding band. Her hair was tied carelessly in a knot on her head. She spoke not a word. She made no gestures as her husband talked. She looked at me with vacant, silent eyes too long denied the joy of laughter.

His shoes were shiny. His crisply creased trousers freshly pressed. His white shirt clean and neatly tailored. His soft hands were carefully manicured. The lapel of his jacket proudly displayed a fraternity pin of some sort. On his right hand was a heavy gold class ring that marked him as a man of distinction entitled to the honors of this world.

How are we like this man?

How is the church receiving honor from the world?

What place of honor have we given Jesus?

Do we lift him highly enough?

Are we careful to put Him above our programs and the collective will of our committees?

Or are we like the man in church who said he loved his Sally?

If our human hearts are deceitful above all things, is it not possible that the heart of our churches is also deceitful ... hiding from the greater truths God wishes us to learn, refusing to lift Jesus higher so all men will be drawn to Him?

When a great ship is built, the first part that's manufactured is the keel. This is the vessel's backbone, the part that gives the vessel its great strength. The keel is first laid on the shipyard floor, then the rest of the ship is attached by bolts and rivets, piece by piece, each part being added until finally the bell and whistle are attached and the ship is ready for duty. First, however, the keel is laid.

Everything is done decently and in order.<sup>110</sup>

First things first.

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<sup>110</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 14:40

It's important to note that even before the keel is fashioned on the shipyard floor a plan for the completed ship is drawn on the shipwright's drafting table and later cast full-size on the master carpenter's floor. The plan is precise in every detail, not least of which, of course, is the keel itself. A drawing is made for the keel and for the manner in which the rest of the parts will be attached. The length of the keel is measured. The width and shape are drawn. The manner in which the ribs and plates will be bolted to it is laid out in strict obedience to the naval architect's vision of the finished vessel. The material from which the keel will be made is selected. All the ship depends for its strength upon the keel, the ship's sure foundation ... and the plan that brings the pieces together.

Now our Bibles tell us, "No greater foundation ....."

Are we willing to ask ourselves, "What does the world see when it sees the church today?"

Are we lifting Jesus high enough?

Are we giving other things priority to this?

Do we tell the world we love Jesus, while relegating Him to a position secondary to our other projects, the building fund, the need for numbers, the compromises we make to draw the world by lifting other things we think will entice them to join our ranks?

What is the backbone of Christ's Church? Is it money? Is it padded pews? Is it the music ministry or the Wednesday night supper? Is it doctrine? Is it association with other ministries, the approval of the world, the satisfaction of members whose ears itch to hear only what comforts them to hear?

What is the keel we are laying?

Is it the power of the Gospel, Christ's Mystery *within* us ... or is it our prideful way of claiming our own righteousness in men's traditions, the ugliness that turns the lost away?

When Jesus says, "If I be lifted up I will draw *all* men unto me," are we not like the selfish husband seeking honor for ourselves as we lift other things in Jesus' place?

Surely "all men" are not yet drawn to Jesus.

Are we ready to admit we are failing in this?

Are we ready to admit that "all men" are not yet being drawn because we are not "lifting" Jesus as we should?

We can, you know!

We can lift Jesus higher ... but only as we *decrease* so He may *increase!*

John the Baptist said, "I must decrease so He may increase."<sup>111</sup>

Are our churches willing to decrease so He may increase?

Are we willing to examine ourselves?

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<sup>111</sup> John 3:30

Are we proudly proclaiming our love, like Sally's self-centered, selfish husband, while refusing to see the truth of our failures ... the truth we try to hide ... the truth this world sees more clearly, perhaps, than any of us are willing to admit.

If we were lifting Jesus as we should, wouldn't more souls be drawn to Him?

When a ship is constructed, the decks aren't built first. The sides aren't erected then the bottom put on. The smokestack isn't hung from the rafters and the rest of the vessel built under it.

No. That's not doing things decently and in order.<sup>112</sup>

When a ship is built, the keel is laid first, and every last detail of the ship is added to that fixed and fundamental foundation that gives the vessel its essential strength.

There is an old hymn, "The church's one foundation is Jesus Christ the Lord."

Are we building castles in the air?

Are we striving to do God's will as the world strives to make money?

Are we failing because we have things out of order?

Though we give lip service to putting Jesus first, like the selfish husband with his shiny shoes and gold lapel pin, are we lifting Jesus?

Are we lifting Him up for all the world to see?

Or are we holding ourselves up as examples of "what a Christian ought to be"?

Are we foolishly seeking to share His Glory ... the Glory that is His alone?

Paul wrote to the Romans, "Let every one of you admit your faults. Declare that only God is true. Then you will overcome when you are attacked by your adversaries."<sup>113</sup>

Why not lay again that foundation, the keel on which a sturdy ship can be built?

Jesus turned to His disciples one day, "Who do men say I am?"<sup>114</sup>

They answered that public opinion was that He was one of the ancient prophets come to life once more.

"But, who do *you* say?" He asked.

And Peter answered, "Thou are the Christ, the Son of the Living God."

Then Jesus laid the keel for the eternal ship that is His True Church. "Blessed are you, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven, *and upon this I will build my church!*"

Too many believe He meant the church would be built on Peter, a mere man.

No. No. No.

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<sup>112</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 14:40

<sup>113</sup> Romans 3:4

<sup>114</sup> Matthew 6:13, Mark 8:27,



Jesus reveals the Gospel Mystery in the answer He gives Peter. It is not a man, or a doctrine, or traditions, or religion that forms the foundation of his Church. It is God's revelation *within* us that reveals who Jesus is!

And, it is upon this revelation that His True Church is built.

Wisdom the world cannot comprehend.

So, as God reveals to us the Holiness of His Son, we in turn lift Jesus higher as we confess it is He *within* us that is our hope ... He and He alone ... the Mystery revealed.

Jesus first.

Jesus over all.

Jesus all in all.

Why not press everything else down? Why not cast aside every weight that does so easily beset us and press on for the Glory that can only be revealed when He and He alone is lifted up?<sup>115</sup>

Why not set aside (at least for a season to test and see if God will bless us) every program that does not lift Jesus, giving Him the Glory and not ourselves? Why not for a season of seeking God's will make every message, every song, every prayer, and every activity in the church an effort to lift Jesus higher?

Jesus taught, "No man can come to the Father except by me."<sup>116</sup>

I've wondered for years why the church talks about "God" instead of Jesus.

I've wondered how those in positions of leadership miss this simple message.

"No man can come to the Father except by me."

What's true is true.

What Jesus says is true.

There is no admixture of falsehood in it.

Jesus didn't make a mistake.

If the lost do not come first to Him, they cannot come to "God".

Confusing them with theories of the trinity is not a good idea.

Why not tell the lost about Jesus ... and save theology for the flock of God who are saved by their love for the Lamb?

When church doors open to the unsaved public, why not draw them to Jesus by telling them more about Him, about His Life, His Death, His Resurrection, and His Power *within* all who invite Him *in* ... instead of trying to teach them doctrines of the church or obedience to a set of politically correct moral principles?

Why not lift Jesus higher?

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<sup>115</sup> Hebrews 12:1

<sup>116</sup> John 6:65

Paul said to the church at Corinth, “I purposed to know nothing among you but Jesus and Him crucified.”<sup>117</sup>

What saved you?

Were you saved by doctrine?

Were you saved by theories of theology?

Were you saved by some inner human strength by which you turned from your wickedness because you were told of some moral code you should obey?

Were you saved by discussing how many angels can dance on the head of a pin?

Or were you saved by the sorrowful passion of Jesus’ dying on the Cross for you?

What makes us a church?

The same thing that makes us one!

We were all saved in the same way.

We were all saved by faith in our Savior, a gift given by grace ... occasionally by the foolishness of preaching, but always by the act of someone’s lifting Jesus higher.

Jesus is the author and finisher of our faith ... not the church, not its doctrines, not a moral code, not the fear of hell or the promise of heaven.

Jesus in our hearts is the hope of Glory ... nothing else ... and Jesus comes into our hearts only when He is lifted up.

This is the church’s job.

If the church is failing today it is failing in this ... nothing else. More programs won’t fix what’s broken. More pamphlets won’t do it. More Monday night visitation won’t repair the damage that’s destroying souls all around us. These things may be good to do, but unless they are lifting Jesus – unless their purpose is to lift Jesus higher – they are obstructions to the Gospel, hindrances to God’s eternal purpose.

“Only one thing is needful,” Jesus told Mary’s sister Martha , as she busied herself in the kitchen one day while Jesus visited the two women.<sup>118</sup>

Only one thing is needful.

God does not give us a challenge God will not also give us power to perform.

We do not need to stand idly by while the world waxes worse and worse.

We can lift Jesus higher.

We can see more men and women, children and the elderly, being drawn to Him in these critical days ... even as we see the final prophecies being fulfilled.

We can enjoy our church more than ever before as multitudes come to share with us in the glorious mystery of God’s Love in Christ Jesus in our heart.

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<sup>117</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 2:2

<sup>118</sup> Luke 10:42

First, however, we must put aside the things that hinder our lifting Him higher.

One thing is needful.

The Gospel Mystery.

# Tenets of our Philadelphia Mission

Belief = love

Believers are converted to righteousness by their belief, i.e., by “love”, which includes trust, adoration, honor, and faith.

One cannot love without trusting.

One cannot love without adoring.

One cannot love without honoring.

And, one cannot love without having faith in the object of our love, for it is out of faith that love springs forth and rises above the physical realm of lust and desire.

Confession = salvation

Love must begin first.

One cannot confess unto salvation until the love is present, for otherwise it is not a true confession.

The thing that needs to be confessed, you see, is love, for in this Jesus is honored in God, and Christ is released *in us* to do His work.

Therefore, when the believer (i.e., lover) confesses love for Jesus with his or her mouth, two things occur.

One is God’s response, for in that moment we are sealed, and what we “felt” is made manifest to the world in a way we cannot retract. We cannot unring the bell. That’s why confession should be made before many, if possible, and always before at least one other person. Whether it is enough to confess love for Jesus in privacy I do not know, but I do know that when we stand before a congregation of believers and confess our love for Him there is an honor to Jesus that brings with it a release of past sin and counts us as one in the body of His Church Triumphant ... the One True Church that has no walls.

So, for our discussions of “church” here, we don’t need to address the theology of private confession. Confession before others should be essential to membership in the body. We are changed by it. We put away our offense at the cross.

Remember, the cross is an offense to them that perish.<sup>119</sup>

When we confess our love for Jesus in the presence of others, we are set free from the root of offense, free from the condemnation of this world ... entering into fellowship with others who have also done the same, even as Jesus enters us!

Confession is not a one-time experience. It is daily.

In every situation we confess our love for Jesus.

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<sup>119</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 1:18

If we are unwilling to confess our love for Jesus in the world, we allow ourselves to be bound again. Such things should not be.

#### Priesthood of Believers

All are priests who are baptized, believing, confessing, and fellowshiping.

I've often wondered if the church should not be "managed" by elders. Obviously there has to be management of temporal affairs and protection of spiritual principles from outside influence.

Deacons are men who wait tables. They can be elected according to their abilities. They serve. They do not lead. They cook, clean, pick up, store, collect, take inventory, repair, pay bills, this sort of thing.

There is, however, no hierarchy in Christ's True Church.

Either we have Christ and need no teacher, or we are outside and need to be drawn to the saving love "by the foolishness of preaching" and the word of salvation.

We are either in or out.

Once in there is none above another.

Some have greater responsibilities. That's all.

None has greater authority.

All operate according to the principle of liberty, i.e., "freedom to act within the restraint of law".

#### Fellowship

The primary purpose for fellowship is to strengthen faith, for all good things come by faith. The longer we fellowship, the stronger the anointing becomes in our lives.

We "put on Christ", i.e., being clothed in the anointing that empowers us to love and serve.

It won't work any other way, for otherwise we are just like any club.

Our power is Christ *in each of us*, i.e., in His anointing of our soul.

Not by power or might but by Christ *in us* ... our hope of glory.

Unfeigned love.

Genuine affection.

Service that grows from His desire within us, not duty imposed from outside us.

I suggest the carnation as a symbol. We are children of the incarnation of Christ. Christ lives in us, and we live by Christ. We share as our lives overlap, but Christ remains the same.

In this our salvation resides and by this our salvation is made sure.

It is His gift, so each of us should pray for others to receive.

The incarnation of Christ in our life is the hope of glory.

The Church at Large is the conscience of the world.

Abandon reliance on the power of self to do what self cannot do, because God will not permit it. God is the most high - not merely our “higher power”, a concept that insidiously implies God is just a separate power only somewhat higher than “our power”, a God who we have relegated to being our helper and not our all-in-all.

This is the myopia of churchianity that must be seen and overcome by surrender.

The only way to overcome is to surrender.

Surrender to the Truth that even the power to overcome is of God, not ourselves.

This *is* The Gospel Mystery ... your only hope of glory.

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Please write to us, or feel free to use our email – and please pray for and support our ministry so we may grow and reach the lost throughout our dying world.

Thank you.

# Postscript

“Now unto him who is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.”<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> Jude 1:24-25