

A misty forest landscape with evergreen trees and a grassy field. The scene is bathed in a soft, golden light, likely from a low sun, creating a hazy and atmospheric effect. The trees are dark against the lighter background, and the foreground is a textured, green field.

**PRAYER, FAITH,  
AND MORE**

**BY WILLIAM R. HUNT**

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## **Introduction**

Christianity is built on facts. The Word of God is its Constitution, better known as the Bible. The Bible has many great and eternal promises, many of them for Israel. There are mega Bible promises for the Christian church. Both Joshua and King Solomon, who lived about 400 years after Joshua, confirmed the truth of God's promises. Satan and his allies have endeavored to pollute and destroy the credibility of the Word of God. The credibility of God's Word is confirmed by many witnesses: by the Dead Sea Scrolls, by the complete scroll of the book of Isaiah found in a cave. Also, archaeologists have found complete books of Genesis, Exodus, and Deuteronomy dating back to the 7th or 8th century B.C. Archaeology has confirmed a great numbers of historical facts written in the Bible. The purposes of the author's writings is to reinforce: Confidence in Christ, Commitment to Christ, and Cherishing Christ's words and the whole Bible.

## Goals for the New Year

The following are good GOALS: searching God's Word (Jn. 5:39) for God's truth: 1. for correct concepts of sin and its results (Lk. 16:24b; Matt.13:41, 42), 2. for correct concepts of human nature (1 Cor. 2:14; Rom. 8:7; Rom. 1:21-31), 3. to have a great influence for Christ (2 Cor. 12:9, 10), 4. for high and holy views of God (Isa. 6:1), 5. for correct views of God's attributes—justice, judgment, love, etc., and 6. for God's will for you. There are many Scriptures on the above goals just for you. Reader, have a great spiritual feast by reading God's Word daily.

## **Praying the Scriptures**

The following are good Scriptures to ask Jesus to fulfill in your life. 1. REVEAL THE FATHER to me (Matt. 11:27), 2. The blessing of a PURE HEART (Matt. 5:8), 3. Answer to Paul's prayer, "FILLED WITH ALL THE FULLNESS OF GOD" (Eph. 3:19), 4. Let the PEACE of God RULE IN MY HEART (Col. 3:15), 5. Enable me to present my body a LIV-ING SACRIFICE, HOLY, ACCEPTABLE unto God (Rom. 12:1), and 6. Lord, enable me to have COMPASSION on ALL PEOPLE as Christ had in Mark 6:34-44 when He saw the multitude as sheep without a shepherd.



## Preparation for Prayer

The book of Daniel gives the preparation for answers to prayer. Daniel **PURPOSED** to honor and be identified with God (Dan. 1:8; 2:20; 5:11, 12; 6:5). In chapter 10, Daniel was **PERSISTENT** in prayer. He fasted and prayed for three whole weeks. Listen to the answer: “O, Daniel, a man greatly beloved, fear not. Daniel, your prayer was heard the first day you prayed. Because of war, I was detained, but Michael, a chief Prince, came to help” (10:11-14). “O man greatly beloved, fear not: peace be unto thee, be strong, yea, be strong” (10:19). The above incident was recorded in the Bible to help us prepare for answers to prayer. Christ placed great emphasis on prayer.

## Jesus' Prayers

Our Lord Jesus, by example and teaching, placed great emphasis upon prayer. He spent all night in prayer (Lk. 6:12). Satan desired Peter, but Jesus prayed for Peter (Lk. 22:32). He prayed early before daybreak (Mk. 1:35). He prayed fervently and earnestly. Jesus offered up “prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared” (Heb. 5:7). He went up into a mountain to pray and when evening came, He was there alone (Matt. 14:23). In the agony of death, Jesus prayed, “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34).

## Biblical Faith

What is Biblical faith and its purpose? A. Taylor answered the question this way, “FAITH IS A GRACE WROUGHT IN THE SOUL OF A SINNER BY THE HOLY SPIRIT, whereby, being emptied of all opinionative thoughts of his own righteousness, strength, and fullness, he is enabled to look to Christ, to give himself to Christ as his only Saviour, to receive Christ, to rest and rely upon Christ for remission of his sin, for righteousness to justify him in the sight of God. For strength to enable him to perform duty, follow after holiness, encounter spiritual enemies and eternal life. . . .” Faith disregards the apparent impossibilities. Faith accepts God’s promises and God’s Word as absolute and unchangeable. Abraham is a great example. God told Abraham to “look at the stars, number them, so shall your seed be”—an apparent impossibility. But Abraham believed the Lord, and it was counted to him for righteousness (Gen. 15:5, 6).

## **Examples of Biblical Faith**

The following people won divine approval by their faith. Abel worshiped by faith. Enoch pleased God by faith. Noah worked by faith. Abraham lived by faith. Sarah was too old to have a child, yet she conceived seed and gave birth to Isaac by faith. Joseph by faith commanded his bones out be taken out of Egypt when Israel left. Moses worshiped, suffered, and led the children of Israel through the Red Sea by faith. Joshua conquered by faith. By faith, others endured torture, trials of cruel mocking, scourging, and imprisonment. Others were stoned. This is the power of the Biblical faith that God recorded in Hebrews 11 for you and me.

## The Call of the Cross

“The cross is the symbol of Christianity, and the cross speaks of death and separation, never of compromise. No one ever compromised with a cross. The cross separated between the dead and the living. The timid and the fearful will cry ‘Extreme!’ and they will be right. The cross is the essence of all that is extreme and final. The message of Christ is a call across a gulf from death to life, from sin to righteousness, and from Satan to God” (A. W. Tozer). Justice, love, mercy, and the grace of God brought about two dwelling places— heaven and hell. Every being will spend eternity in either heaven or hell. By the crucifixion, Jesus took on Himself the justice men deserved that they might have a PERSONAL relationship with Him (Jn. 15:4). I urge you to make heaven your destination by a total surrender of self to Christ.

## Results of Faith

The word FAITH is found 245 times in the New Testament. IT IS A WORK OF GOD BY THE HOLY SPIRIT (Jn. 14:26) WHICH COMES BY HEARING (Rom. 10:17). It is essential. Without this FAITH, it is impossible to please God (Heb. 11:6). “The just shall live by FAITH” (Rom. 1:17). Salvation is by FAITH (Eph. 2:8). The results of faith are 1. peace with God (Rom. 5:1), 2. a pure conscience (1 Tim. 3:9), 3. a pure heart (Acts 15:9), and 4. FAITH grows (2 Thess. 1:3). We are to follow after righteousness, godliness, FAITH, love, patience, and meekness (1 Tim. 6:11). By faith, we can be led by the Holy Spirit through this world of sin as a brother/sister of King Jesus, the Creator of all things (Col. 1:16). Glory and praise to the Lamb of God.

## **The Head or the Tail?**

Israel went into Egypt as “the head.” They found great favor with the Egyptians. But over a period of 400 years, they became “the tail” because of unbelief—a lack of faith. The Bible teaches that when man walks with God by faith, he is “the head.” When he forsakes God, he becomes “the tail.” Israel forsook God, and then they became slaves to the Egyptians. While in slavery, Israel cried to the Lord. He heard them, said He would deliver them, and He did. God gave them traveling expenses. It was enough for two to four million people to travel for 40 years. That’s our God—when we are willing to forsake all and follow Christ in Bible faith.

## Chosen By God

Before being conceived in their mother's womb, all of mankind was CHOSEN to be HOLY and without blame before Christ (Eph. 1:4). Whether we live under a bridge or in a 52-room mansion, whether fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, thieves, covetous, revilers, drunkards, rich, or poor, we are CHOSEN. Color of skin makes no difference: we are CHOSEN. In the context of this passage, "CHOSEN" means changing families. "All have sinned" (Rom. 3:23). We were all in a family controlled by the power of darkness. God translates those who choose to change families into the family of His dear Son, Jesus the Christ (Col. 1:13). After we change families, we have access to all of God's promises for His family. He will completely change our natures from sinful to divine (2 Pet. 1:4), enabling us to live holy and without blame before God.



## Lessons for the Disciples

In Matt.14:22-32, Jesus taught His disciples (and us) a great lesson on obedience and faith. In v. 22, Jesus “constrained” or “commanded” them. Today, we might say He put His thumb in their backs. Why did Jesus need to constrain the disciples? These seasoned fishermen knew that by all indications it was too dangerous to try to cross to the other side (14:24). The wind was contrary. They were being tossed in their boat, which was dangerous (14:30). The storm had picked up momentum. It had become boisterous. The waves and whitecaps made it impossible to see as Peter stepped out of the boat. Peter became afraid. But he was a wise man, and he cried out, “Lord, save me!” Why did Peter become afraid? Jesus answers the question. “O thou of little faith, why did you doubt?” Hebrews 11 informs us that the just live by faith and are obedient.

## Hiding From God

One of the characteristics of sin is to hide itself. Adam and Eve hid from God among the trees. David hid behind his power as king when he wanted Uriah murdered. Sin is always seeking hiding places. Some current examples: hiding behind 1. the law as being socially accepted, 2. status as a minority, 3. culture, 4. traditions, and 5. a preacher's perversion of Biblical truths (a BIG DANGER and hiding place). In six passages, God warns of the results of hiding due to sin—two in John's writings and four in Paul's. God never changes. As with Adam and Eve, God is still calling those who think they are hiding from Him. He knows from conception until death what each person's choices will be each moment. It pays to choose not to hide, but to turn to Christ, then seek God's will and wholly follow Christ.

## Childlike Communication

“Except you become converted and become as little children, you SHALL NOT enter into the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 18:3). E. M. Bounds wrote, “Prayer is the child’s approach, the child’s plea, the child’s right. It is the law of prayer that looks up, that lifts up the eye to, ‘Our Father which art in heaven.’ Our Father’s house is our home in heaven. Heavenly citizenship and heavenly homesickness are in prayer. Prayer is an appeal from the lowness, from the emptiness, from the need of earth, to the highness, the fullest, and to the all-sufficiency of heaven. Prayer turns the eye and the heart heavenward with a child’s longings, a child’s trust, and a child’s expectancy.” Biblical prayer is the way to great joy and peace in Christ and loving fellowship with our Christ and His church.

## Following With Confidence

There is a great lesson to be learned from the wise men who came from the East seeking the Child Jesus as a baby. They had CONFIDENCE that God's messenger—the STAR—would take them to the CHRIST, the King of the Jews. The messengers of the living God have always either pointed to or led men to Christ (Acts 28:23). Jesus, speaking of the last day, warned us against false preachers or false messengers (Matt. 24:4, 5, 11, 24, 25). Many people want Jesus as Saviour, but not as Lord and King of their heart, soul, and mind. I urge you to have CONFIDENCE in God's Word to lead you to a place where you make Christ Saviour, Lord, and King of your heart and lifestyle. There will be storms of life outside, but the peace of Christ inside.

## Seek His Will

Jesus said, “AS THE FATHER HAS SENT ME, EVEN SO SEND I YOU” (Jn. 20:21). This verse teaches that there is a sacrifice required of each of us. Jesus gave up His glory to become a church planter of the Christian faith. Christ came to SEEK and save that which was lost (Lk. 19:10). Jesus said, “I SEEK not my own will, but the will of the Father which has sent me (Jn. 5:30; 6:38). If you will make the sacrifice to seek what Christ sought, there will be a deep, settled peace in your soul that the world cannot take away. I know that God has a plan for your life. If you will fast and pray, you can know God’s plan for you.

## **Access to God Through Christ**

The wise men of the East had CONFIDENCE that they would see the Christ, the King of Israel, and they prepared gifts to give Him. The Living God led them by a star to the Christ. Then they rejoiced, worshiped, and gave Him gifts (Matt. 2:1-11). The foundation for their CONFIDENCE was their belief that there is a Living God in heaven. Instead of using a star today, the Living God is using people like you and me to lead other people to King Jesus who said, “No man comes to the Father but by me” (Jn. 14:6). King Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil (1 Jn. 3:8). CONFIDENCE in God and His Word results in faith in God’s Word (Rom. 10:14-17).

## The Spiritual Realm

God does not reveal much of what is behind the scenes in the spiritual world. God does give us a few peeks through the keyhole.

1. “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness” (Gen. 1:26). 2. We were chosen before the foundation of the world to be holy (Eph. 1:4). 3. The angels that left their first estate are under darkness awaiting judgment (Jude 6). 4. There was a spiritual war between Michael the archangel and the devil over the body of Moses (Jude 9). 5. Daniel set his heart to understand more about the Lord. He prayed three whole weeks. But, unknown to Daniel, there was a spiritual war between the messenger and the Prince of Persia (Dan. 10:13). SPIRITUAL WAR IS STILL THE EFFECT OR RESULT OF A GODLY PERSON’S PRAYER. BE A DANIEL IN PRAYER.

## Warnings By Jesus

Jesus gave many warnings about hell and preachers who pervert God's Word in the last days. The following truth is taken from Luke 16:19-24. Lazarus was the beggar on earth. The rich man was the beggar in the flames of torment in hell. Lazarus was the beggar on earth, but he had friends, plus the dogs were his friends. The rich man was the beggar in hell, but he had no friends; not even a dog. The remedy for missing hell is this—"Do the will of God" (Matt. 7:21) by a total surrender to Christ as LORD and Saviour of your life. Remember—Christ surrendered His life for you. CHRIST IS THE ONLY WAY TO DWELL ETERNALLY IN GOD'S LOVE. Jesus said, "No man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (Jn. 14:6).



## **Fundamental Truths**

There are some fundamental Bible truths that are necessary for a person to believe if he wants to be a Christian. He that comes to God **MUST** believe (by faith) that He is, and is a Rewarder of them that seek Him (Heb. 11:6). He also **MUST** believe that Jesus Christ is the only begotten Son of the Father (1 Jn. 2:22, 23; 2 Jn. 1:9, 10). Believing in the virgin birth is also a necessity (Isa. 7:14, Lk. 1:30-34). The law of creation is that a created being can only offer to God for itself. Being very God and very man, and by not being a created being but from everlasting to everlasting, Christ could make atonement for mankind's sin. **NO MAN CAN BY ANY MEANS REDEEM ANOTHER PERSON'S SOUL, NOR GIVE TO GOD A RANSOM FOR HIM** (Psa. 49:7).

## **The Vine and the Branches**

John 15 includes many comforting passages for the totally surrendered Christian. Verse 4 says Jesus is the Vine. Followers of Christ are the branches. The Vine and its branches have the same nature. Jesus is divine; therefore, the branch has a divine nature. Peter confirms the words of Jesus when he spoke of “partakers of the divine nature in this present world” (2 Pet. 1:4). Jesus said, “My Father is the husbandman” or gardener (Jn. 15:1). Those words are a great comfort to the Christian. God the Father has His eye on the branches. He is continuously working to make the branches fruitful for the kingdom of Jesus, His only begotten Son. May I say, “Throughout eternity, you will never be sorry for totally surrendering to His instructions and chastisement.”

## Faith Brings Confidence

“But without faith it is impossible to please him [God]: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him” (Heb. 11:6). For faith and confidence to stand firm under pressure when Satan endeavors to destroy a person, the following list (R. E. Carroll) must be indelible on his heart:

“There is no falsehood in God.

“There is no deceit in God.

“There is no fraud or pretense in God.

“There isn’t any insincerity in God.

“There isn’t any shadow of dishonesty in His conduct.

“He brings true doctrine along with Him.

“His doctrine is to be depended on and received; and such was about Christ.”

## **Do Not Be Deceived**

All of God's attributes are in harmony with one another. The Lord's Word is in harmony with all His attributes. In His Word, the Lord tells us that in the last days there will be many false teachers and preachers. "Watch that you are not deceived." Today there is some preaching that grace covers everything. Jesus gave us an account of ten virgins (Matt. 25:1-12). Five of them found out too late that grace did not cover their neglect. They heard these words from Christ, "I know you not." Jesus repeated the same words in Luke 13:25 to those who had neglected the warning about the strait gate. Jesus warns about a strait gate and a wide gate leading to a broad way. One leads to life, the other to destruction (Matt. 7:13). A total surrender of self to the Lord makes it a pleasure and honor to do God's will and pleasure.

## Love and Intolerance

God made a plan for man because man rejected God's original creation plan. The new plan was revealed through God's Word. A study of the two plans reveals the attributes of God's character: His intolerance of sin, but also His love and plan of deliverance from sin for mankind. The suffering and death of Christ reveals God's wrath against sin. He was smitten of God, and afflicted. God bruised Christ and put Him to grief, making his life an offering for OUR SIN (Isa. 53:4-10) that "WHOSOEVER will" could be justified. "MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAST THOU FORSAKEN ME?" (Matt. 27:46) Those words reveal God's intolerance for sin, and God's love for lost people. God loves you. Total confidence and total surrender to God will change your goals, ambitions, and purpose for life.

## **Wait on the Lord**

We live in a world where most people want everything instantly. But that is not God's way. It is written that there are great benefits in waiting on the Lord (Isa. 40:31). Jesus said to the apostles, "Wait for the promise of the Father" (Acts 1:4). God told 75-year-old Abram, "I will make you a great nation, I will bless you, I will make your name great" (Gen. 12:2). Abraham had to wait 25 years before God started to build the promised nation. Isaac's birth (Gen. 21:5) marked the beginning of Israel, which is still in existence because of God's promise to Abraham. I urge you to **WAIT ON THE LORD** by faith for what He has promised in His Word.

## God's Great Deliverance

“Come and see the works of God” (Psa. 66:5, 6). “The LORD caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the [Red] sea dry land, and the waters were divided” (Ex. 14:21). Two to five million people walked across on DRY GROUND. The water formed a wall on either side. When all the host of Pharaoh (Egyptians), their horsemen, and their chariots endeavored to cross, Moses stretched forth his hand, and the sea returned to its strength. The waters covered the chariots, the horsemen, and the host of Pharaoh. There was not one of them left alive. ALL DIED (Ex. 14:21-31). God knew then how to deliver people from bondage. He is still delivering people from the bondage of sin. If you want deliverance, place your confidence in Christ.

## **Power of the Gospel**

“I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation” (Rom. 1:16). The gospel of Jesus Christ caused the prison keeper at Philippi to run to Paul and Silas. He fell down, saying, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” After they gave the jailer the word of the Lord, he was a changed man. He was rejoicing and believing in God (Acts 16:31-34). The woman of Samaria previously had five husbands, but was living with a man she was not married to. After she met the Author of the gospel of Jesus Christ, she was changed. She became an evangelist. Many of the Samaritans believed and asked the Author of the gospel, Jesus Christ, to stay with them. All who will yield to the gospel of Jesus Christ will be changed.



## Benefits for Christ's Followers

Through Peter, the blessed Holy Spirit records a number of benefits for followers of Christ who exalt Christ's death on the cross, resurrection, and glory to follow. The benefits: 1. a lively hope (1 Pet. 1:3), 2. an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled . . . reserved in heaven (1:4), 3. being kept by the power of God (1:5), 4. redemption—not with corruptible things as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ as a lamb without blemish and without spot (1:18, 19), 5. a precious faith (2 Pet. 1:1), and 6. being a “chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people . . . called . . . out of darkness into His (Jesus) marvelous light” (1 Pet. 2:9). Oh, praise the Lord for all His benefits to His followers.

## Source of Forgiveness

The cry of Jesus' heart is for people to ask for forgiveness of sins (1 Jn. 1:9). He came down from heaven to demonstrate the love of God, and to show that God is a reasonable God, a merciful God, and a compassionate God. God demonstrated His love toward us, "in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8). "He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" if we are willing to confess our sins (1 Jn. 1:9). He casts them into the depths of the sea (Mic. 7:19). I urge you to place all your confidence, trust, and faith in Christ. He loves you!

## Worship

We have the account of Cain worshipping God in Gen. 4:4-7, 14. Four thousand years later, Jesus gave us another account of many who worshiped, preached, cast out devils, and did many wonderful works in Jesus' name (Matt. 7:21-23). Both Cain and those mentioned in Matthew had a number of things in common. Both were religious. Both worshiped God. Both were displeasing to God. BOTH WORSHIPPED THE WAY THEY WANTED TO. Both apparently disregarded God's truth. Both were driven from the presence of God. God seeks those who will worship Him in SPIRIT and in TRUTH. The question is—are we worshipping God as He prescribes, or are we worshipping God our own way as Cain and many others did?

## God Will Provide

“My son, God will provide” (Gen. 22:8). In context, we see Abraham was speaking about a sacrifice. Abraham believed God would provide for every real need. Abraham, the father of faith, obeyed when God spoke. God said, “Leave your country and your family, and go to the land I will show you” (Gen. 12:1). Abraham believed God would provide, so at the age of 75, he departed. He was not disobedient to God. “He went out, not knowing whither he went” (Heb. 11:8). Abraham had a personal relationship with the One who sent him through Canaan to the plains of Moreh where the Canaanite people lived. These Canaanite cults were utterly immoral, corrupt, and dangerously contaminating. But Abraham believed God would provide. God *still* provides where there is a personal relationship, faith, and obedience.

## Why Are We Chosen?

You were CHOSEN in Christ before the foundations of the world that you should be holy (Eph. 1:4). You are a CHOSEN generation (1 Pet. 2:9). Jesus said, “I have CHOSEN you” (Jn. 15:16). Each of these three passages teaches that it is God who chooses. John 15 gives us insights into why we are CHOSEN.

- 1) To bear fruit for God—v. 2.
- 2) To abide in Christ and Christ in us—v. 4.
- 3) To be effective in prayer—v. 7.
- 4) That our joy might be full—v. 11.
- 5) That we might love one another—v. 12.
- 6) To be obedient to Christ—v. 14.
- 7) You are not to be of this world because Christ has CHOSEN you out of the world—v. 19.

OH! What joy to immerse your will into God’s perfect will through faith and the help of the blessed Holy Spirit! I urge you to surrender unconditionally to Christ as Lord of all you are and possess.

## Source of Wisdom

The book of Hebrews reveals much about Christ and man's sinful condition. The Queen of Sheba traveled miles to hear King Solomon's wisdom (1 Kings 10:7). There is One greater than Solomon who speaks to us now (Heb. 1:2). He is the KING of KINGS (Rev. 17:14), and Heir of all things. His name is Jesus. He made the worlds, and He upholds all things by the word of His power. Jesus by HIMSELF purged the SINS of those who follow and trust Him (Heb. 1:3). The Queen of Sheba TRAVELED to King Solomon to hear his wisdom. Jesus, the Source of wisdom, COMES to us through the Spirit, whether we live in a mansion or live under a bridge, regardless of our race or nationality. TRUST and FOLLOW King Jesus. He is the only Way to the Father (Jn. 14:6).

## **Christ as Deity**

A precious truth from the book of Hebrews. When God brought His only begotten Son into the world, He said, “Let the angels worship him” (Heb. 1:6). Because of this, we can conclude that Christ was deity. Jesus said to Satan, “Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve” (Matt. 4:10). God said of the Son, “Thy throne is for ever and ever” (Heb. 1:8). We can conclude Christ is a KING who loves righteousness and hates iniquity. Though Jesus is deity and a King, because of God’s love for us, He was made “lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man” (Heb. 2:9). Your body was not made for sin. Your body was made to be the temple of the Holy Ghost (1 Cor. 6:19). Oh! Keep out the welcome mat for Christ at the door of your heart!

## Ownership by the Lord

“I, John, was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day, and heard . . .” (Rev. 1:10). Notice that “Lord’s day” is possessive. Possessive means ownership. The Blessed Holy Spirit let men know the first day of the week belongs to the Lord Jesus. Notice the Lord spoke, and John heard. Notice John was in the Spirit. John was not seeking to satisfy the flesh. He was totally surrendered to the spiritual and divine enjoyment of God. John knew the first day of the week was not his day. It belonged to the Lord. Adam and Eve experienced the beauty and charm of God daily. They learned too late that what God claims for His own is not to be used to satisfy the flesh. This principle is found from Genesis to Revelation, and is taught by Jesus when asked about paying taxes (Matt. 22:21; Mk. 12:17; and Lk. 20:25).



## Spiritual Blessings

We say much about our physical blessings. Unquestionably, there are physical blessings. The Bible places the emphasis upon spiritual blessings. “Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven” (Psa. 32:1). Blessed is the man who trusts the LORD (Psa. 84:12). “Blessed is every one . . . that walketh in his ways” (Psa. 128:1). “Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness” (Matt. 5:6). “Blessed are the pure in heart” (Matt. 5:8). THE PERSON WHOSE PRIORITY IS SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS HAS THIS PROMISE— “Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb . . . these are the true sayings of God” (Rev. 19:9). Not one word of God’s good promises has failed (1 Kgs. 8:56). A total surrender to Christ will help you set spiritual goals.

## God's GPS

God's Word is one of the emphasis of book Hebrews. In the Amplified N.T., Heb. 4:12 reads, "The word of God speaks, is alive and full of power [making it active, operative, energizing, and effective]; it is sharper than any two-edged sword, penetrating to the dividing line of the breath of life [soul] and [the immortal] spirit, and of joints and marrow [of the deepest parts of our nature], exposing and sifting and analyzing and judging the very thoughts and purposes of the heart." Those who love not God's Word are not saved (2 Thess. 2:10). They will spend eternity with the rich man in torment (Lk. 16:24). I urge you to "buy the truth and sell it not" (Prov. 23:23). It is God's GPS to Christ's abundant mercy and a lively hope (1 Pet. 1:3).

## **Faith Is Essential**

“The word preached did not profit them [Israel], not being mixed with FAITH in them that heard it” (Heb. 4:2). We see here that FAITH IS ESSENTIAL. It must be mixed with the gospel. The gospel is the Word of God. Abraham is a great example of FAITH mixed with God’s Word. God said, “Abraham, can you number the stars? So shall be your seed.” Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness (Gen. 15:6). The very nature of FAITH in the gospel of Christ is to renounce all hope in ourselves, and place our hope on the GOSPEL. Like Abraham, Christians have nothing but promises. They live by FAITH on God’s promises in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

## **Bible-based Faith**

“Without faith it is impossible to please him [God]” (Heb. 11:6). What is faith? Faith is “an affirmation and an act, which bids eternal truth be present” (Thomas Cook). Rick Watson said, “The Word of God is the food of faith.” Hudson Taylor wrote a great definition. He said that “the promises of the Bible are very real, and that prayer is in sober fact transacting business with God.” Many people have displayed their faith by personal COMMITMENT in LOYALTY to God (Heb. 11:35-39). “Faith is a grace wrought in the soul by the Holy Spirit with Christ as its immediate Object” (A. Taylor). “Faith in God has a birth. The birth comes when one hears the word of God” (George Watson). Salvation, pardon, a pure heart, and the peace of God are only received from God through BIBLE-based FAITH.

## A Teachable Spirit

Jesus lived in a day when the world was very dark because of sin, in both the church and the world. WHAT DID JESUS DO OR SAY? His first public appearance without Joseph or Mary was in his Father's house—CHURCH. "I must be about my Father's business" (Lk. 2:46-49). Jesus had a TEACHABLE SPIRIT. "I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me . . . I do always those things that PLEASE him" (Jn. 8:28, 29). Jesus TAUGHT, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God" (Lk. 4:4). Jesus was a FRIEND to publicans and sinners (Lk. 7:34). "Father, I have GLORIFIED thee on the earth: I have FINISHED the work which thou gavest me to do" (Jn. 17:4). Grand finale—Jesus is our Example of His joy in you as well as how to hear the words "well done" (Jn. 15:11).

## **Proof Christ is the Messiah**

From prison, John the Baptist cried for help. Jesus sent proof that He was the Messiah (Matt. 11:2-6). Jesus said, "Blessed is he who is not offended in me." Jesus' message was for one who had preached, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." John called the Pharisees and Sadducees who had come for baptism without repenting a "generation of vipers." He said to Jesus, "I need to be baptized by you" (Matt. 3:14). As Jesus walked by, John said, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away THE SIN of the world" (Jn. 1:29). He said, "Jesus must increase, but I must decrease." Now John was in prison. He was discouraged. He sent two of his disciples to ask Jesus, "Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?" (Matt. 11:3) John set an example. He sent to Jesus for help. Jesus pointed him to the WORD of God and the Messiah.

## Creative Purposes

God's creative purposes are good. 1) Angels were given various orders. Seraphim cried one to another, "Holy, Holy, Holy is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory" (Isa. 6:3). Gabriel was sent to Daniel to help him understand (Dan. 8:16). Angels are ministering spirits sent to minister to them who are heirs of salvation (Heb. 1:14). 2) Man's created purposes are to show forth the image of God (Gen. 1:27), and to be holy and without blame before Him in love (Eph. 1:4). Satan tried to divert God's purposes for man. Satan sealed his own doom. Any person who continuously diverts God's purpose seals his own doom. Jesus is our EXAMPLE—"Father, I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do" (Jn. 17:4). To GLORIFY CHRIST 24/7 = Heaven!

## Job's Godly Character

Job said, “I go forward, but He is not there, and backward, but I cannot perceive Him . . . on the left hand . . . to the right, I cannot see Him” (Job 23:8, 9, NKJV). God had hidden Himself. Job went through a time when God shrouded Himself. Every circumstance was against Job. Job went from riches to rags in one day. He lost everything—his children, his livestock, all but five or six of his servants. His wife turned against him. She told Job to curse God and die. WHY ALL THIS? God basically said to SATAN AND THE WORLD, “When men allow Me to work in them, I can build character that will weather any storm or any dart the world or Satan may throw their way.” An unconditional surrender to Christ is a sure way to a godly character. Job was perfect (Job 1:1). God even testified that Job had spoken right about Him (Job 42:7).



## Never-failing Promises

King Solomon lived 400 years after Joshua did, yet both men said God's promises were true. They never failed (Joshua 23:1; 1 Kgs. 8:56). God promised Satan defeat and Eve victory in Genesis 3:15. About 1,900 years later, God spoke again about His promise of victory over Satan. This time, it is to Abram, "in thee SHALL all FAMILIES of the EARTH be BLESSED" (Gen. 12:3). The greatest blessing for mankind is the defeat of Satan and his power through the body of sin which Paul wrote about when he said, "Our old man is crucified with him [Christ], that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin" (Rom. 6:6). HALLELUJAH! VICTORY AT LAST!

## Promises of a Messiah

A study on the promises of Christ. God said to Abraham, “In Isaac shall thy seed be called” (Gen. 21:12). Abraham’s seed, Isaac, was a divine miracle. Both Abraham and Sarah were old (Gen.17:17). Sarah was past child-bearing age (Heb. 11:11). We have a foreshadow or hint through Abraham’s beloved son, Isaac, that the promised seed would be a sacrifice (Gen. 22:2-18). God told Abraham to offer Isaac as a sacrifice (v. 2). Abraham believed obedience would result in God providing His own Lamb for a sacrifice (v. 8), and God did (v. 13). God said to Abraham, “I will bless you. Your seed shall be as the stars and sand on the seashore. Your seed shall possess the gate of his enemies” (v. 17). “All nations shall be blessed through your seed” (v. 18). PLEASE NOTICE that the word is promised “seed,” not “seeds.”

## **Isaac—a Picture of Christ**

In Genesis 3:15, God told Satan that he was doomed through the seed of Eve. Satan's doom was to come through Abraham's seed (Gen. 21:12). The next promise of Satan's doom is through Isaac. In Genesis 26:4, the LORD said to Isaac, "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." There are characteristics about Isaac which are interesting. There was a long period of time between the promise of Isaac's birth and the actual birth. Abraham was told by God to offer Isaac as a sacrifice. He did. Just at the right instant, God provided a different sacrifice. There was a long period between the promise of the birth of Christ and His actual birth. Christ was smitten by God the Father as a sacrifice for our sin (Isa. 53:4). Place your confidence in Christ NOW—TODAY.

## Watch Judah

The promises of Christ's coming are worth studying. "The scepter shall not depart from Judah . . . until Shiloh [the Messiah] come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be" (Gen. 49:10). "Scepter" signifies a tribe. "Judah shall continue a distinct tribe till the Messiah shall come; and it did so"—Adam Clarke. After Christ came, Judah lost its distinction. In AD 70, Judah was scattered throughout the whole known world. All of God's promises are true. Jesus said, "No man cometh unto the Father but by me" (Jn. 14:6). Place your confidence in Christ. He is "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (Jn. 1:29). Christ is the mighty Conqueror! Satan's doom is sure, and the same is true for all who are their own little god.

## Promise From God

God's promise to Jacob—"In your seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 28:14). God began leading mankind up a trail through prophecies to remove all doubt as to who would be Satan's Conqueror and mankind's Redeemer. Up until this point in Scripture, we are given very little about the Conqueror of Satan. We see in Genesis 12:3 that ALL FAMILIES OF THE EARTH will be BLESSED through Eve's seed and the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The scepter shall not depart from Judah until Shiloh comes (Gen. 49:10). The word "Shiloh" signifies "**sent forth or delegated from God**" (Adam Clarke). Jesus spoke over 35 times about "HIM THAT SENT ME." The Bible is clear; God sent His Son (Jn. 3:16—17:5). Jesus laid claim to being Shiloh.

## Conqueror of Satan

Isaiah tells us about the Conqueror of Satan. In chapter 8, He is called Emmanuel. In chapter 9, we learn He will be born as a baby; as a son given. He will have a government. He shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, the Mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end. He will sit upon the throne of David and upon his KINGDOM to ORDER and to ESTABLISH IT with JUDGMENT and with JUSTICE from HENCEFORTH EVEN FOREVER. There can't be such a kingdom until Satan and his servants have met their doom in the lake of fire. Serve Jesus now!

## **Good Tidings of Great Joy**

Christmas is a celebrating of the validity of God's promises to Satan of his doom through the seed of Eve (Gen. 3:15). Satan's doom was also to come through Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and David. We will be celebrating the birth of a King, a High Priest, and the Lamb of God that will take away the sin of the world (Jn. 1:29); making it possible for "whosoever will" to choose to follow Christ and be able to say, "Our old man is crucified with Christ that the body of sin might be destroyed that henceforth we should not serve sin" (Rom. 6:6). Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy—not one promise of God will fail (1 Kgs. 8:56). Place all your trust and faith in Christ and the Word of God.

## Two Thoughts

Two thoughts: 1) Matthew refers to the birth of Christ as Emmanuel (Matt. 1:23). This is the first union of the human nature with the divine nature. It may be passed on to Christians (2 Pet. 1:4). Paul confirms the union in Ephesians. 2) Isaiah 7 teaches that He will not be of the elite class. The angels did not announce the birth of Christ to the elite, but to the shepherds. The elite did not stay in a stable, but Christ was born in a stable, and His crib was a manger. The New Testament begins with Matthew, the despised tax collector. Jesus was a Friend of publicans and sinners. The elite did not announce His resurrection—it was a lady who had been devil possessed. Great was the day when Christ was born! The common people may access the throne of grace through Jesus.



## The Common People

The Old Testament is full of types and shadows of Christ. Malachi teaches about the priesthood. Levi apparently reached out to the common people. He turned many from iniquity (Mal. 2:8). God chose the tribe of Levi for the priesthood. But many of Levi's descendants departed from the way of the Lord. They turned the priesthood into an elite club. No one but the high priest entered into the presence of God. At times in history, the common people had to go through the ungodly priests to offer their sacrifice to God. Christ came to the common people, saying, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me" (Jn. 14:6). Hebrews teaches of the sinless CHRIST who is now the High Priest (Heb. 4:14, 15), reconciling whosoever will come to God (Matt. 10:32).

## Help for Seekers of Salvation

*What does Jesus offer to ALL people?*

*Answer: Forgiveness from sins*

To be saved, you must acknowledge that you are a sinner. You must believe you are created by God and have enough faith to believe God's Word. Forgiveness is for "who-soever" shall confess with his mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in his heart that God has raised Jesus from the dead. The Bible says *that* person "shall be saved" (Romans 10:9). St. John confirmed this when he said, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). "Whosoever believeth in him [Jesus] should not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:15). The gospel of Jesus Christ is for you!

*What does Jesus have to offer to the world?*

*Answer: Removal of sin*

If a person travels straight north until he reaches the North Pole and then he keeps moving, he will begin going south. If a person travels straight east, though, he can continue indefinitely, never meeting the west. “As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us” (Psalm 103:12). God will “subdue our iniquities” and cast all our sins “into the depths of the sea” (Micah 7:19b). God said, “I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more” (Jeremiah 31:34). Not only does God remove sin and remember it no more, but God also said, “Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool” (Isaiah 1:18).

*What must I do to receive God's salvation?*

*Answer: Believe that God will forgive you of your sins when you ask Him.*

Reader, you, too, can be saved and have a personal relationship with Christ. Here is a suggested prayer. "Lord, I know I am a sinner and need to be saved. Lord, I know Jesus arose from the dead and that His blood was shed for my sins. Lord, I'm asking You to forgive me of my sins and cleanse me. Lord, help me grow in Jesus and develop a love for Your Word. Lord, above everything, help me to keep my eyes focused on You and not on people. Lord, Your Word has confirmed that You would save me; I believe You *have* saved me. Please give me a witness from Your Spirit to my spirit that I am Your child. By faith I believe Your Word; still, my faith is weak. Lord, increase my faith. Amen."

Name and Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Scriptures for Times of Doubt

“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

“As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

“Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

“For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,

“Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:35-39).

“. . . Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen” (Matthew 28:20).

## Scriptures for Times of Doubt

“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me” (Galatians 2:20).

“According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love” (Ephesians 1:4).

“In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace” (Ephesians 1:7).

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God” (Ephesians 2:8).

“Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me” (Revelation 3:20).

## Scriptures for Times of Doubt

“All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.

“For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.

“And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day” (John 6:37-39).

“The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah” (Psalm 46:11).

“The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower” (Psalm 18:2).

“In my distress I called upon the LORD, and cried unto my God: he heard my voice out of his temple, and my cry came before him, even into his ears” (Psalm 18:6).

“For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock” (Psalm 27:5).





