

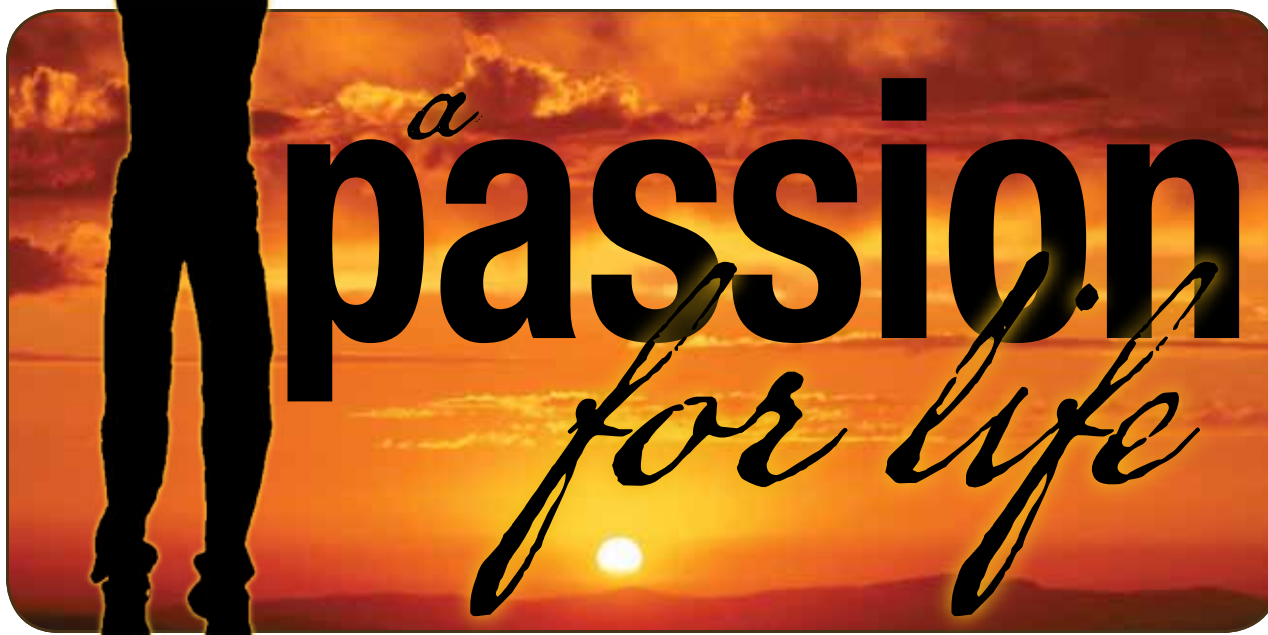
SPIRITUAL INSIGHT FOR YOUR LIFE

FAITH *for life*

*"The life which I now live...I live by the **faith** of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me." Galatians 2:20*

Complimentary Copy

From the Ministry of **Metropolitan Baptist Church**



a **passion** *for life*

"Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work...in the grave, whither thou goest"
Ecclesiasties 9:10

Years ago there was a mortician with a sense of humor who had a sign in his window that read "Why Walk Around Half Dead When We Can Bury You for \$69.95?" Do you have a passion for life? The Bible says "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work... in the grave, whither thou goest" (Eccl 9:10). The tireless space scientist Dr. James Van

Allen didn't have the usual mail tray on his desk that read "in and out." He had four slots that read, "pressing, urgent, frantic, and overdue!" Unlike Dr. Van Allen, many people go through life in a docile and sedated state making plans, but lacking the ambition to follow through. The road of life is truly paved with good intentions, but one accomplished deed is still worth more than a 100 brilliant plans.

OUR ADMONITION

The verse once again states, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." That speaks of passion, vigor and zeal! President Harry Truman said; "I've studied the lives of great men and women and found that those at the top all have one thing in common... they live their lives with enthusiasm, energy and hard work. The Bible says "And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily" (Col 3:23). During his

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lifetime, an old time circuit-riding preacher preached three sermons a day for over 54 years (over 59,000 sermons). He averaged 5000 miles a year on horseback and spent over 200,000 miles in the saddle during his ministry. He also wrote a four-volume commentary while pastoring a church until age 83. He became apologetic at that time because he could only write for 15 hours a day without his eyes getting sore. At age 86 he still preached twice a day riding horseback over 30 miles daily! How do we measure up when it comes to a passion for life? As someone once said, a pessimist is someone who needs a kick in the "can'ts." Do you sleepwalk through life just "going through the motions?" In the Bible it mentions King Hezekiah and says; "In every work that he began in the service of the house of God...to seek his God, he did it with all his heart" (II Chron 31:21). Any old dead log can float downstream. God is seeking Christians who will stop dragging their feet as they shuffle through life, and put their whole heart into it.

OUR ACTIVITY

William Wrigley (of chewing gum and Wrigley Field fame) came to Chicago as a young man with \$50 in his pocket, and turned it into millions. He was often quoted as saying



"nothing great is ever achieved without enthusiasm." Why should we do our best in life? The verse again states "do it with thy might; for there is no work...in the grave, whither thou goest." This life is the only opportunity we will ever have. Christianity doesn't need any more sluggards. The Bible says "the soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing" (Prov 13:4). It's been said that the first step in making your dreams come true is to wake up! An old time preacher once said "give me 300 men who

"Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work...in the grave, whither thou goest"

ECCLESIASTES 9:10

fear nothing but God...hate nothing but sin...and are determined to know nothing but Christ...and we will turn the world upside down." Jesus even said while still a 12-year-old boy "I must be about my Father's business" (Lu 2:49). Later on He showed great passion by going to the cross and doing His Father's will (Jn 4:34). In the Greek language in which the Bible was originally written, the word "enthusiasm" means "one possessed by God." In I Cor

5:10 the Apostle Paul speaks of laboring abundantly by the grace of God working in his life. Are you a Christian who is really fervent in spirit? Or are you just going through the motions living a bland life? Back in the 1920s

Thomas Edison and Henry Ford visited their good friend Luther Burbank out on the west coast. Luther had them both sign his guest book, which included their names and interests. After Edison had written in the book, Ford went to write something, pausing to notice what Edison had written. Under "name" he had written "Thomas Edison." Under "interests" Edison had written "everything!" Where

are the Christians who will take an interest in the things of God? We only live once on this earth, and a life is too precious to waste. The Bible speaks of making good use of our time (Eph 5:16).

OUR APPOINTMENT

Our study verse says "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work...in the grave, whither thou

goest" (Eccl 9:10). We all have an appointment with the grave.

The Bible says "it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Heb 9:27). Many years ago, a friendly undertaker in Washington State used to sign his letters; "eventually yours." We are all racing toward the grave, and a lifetime truly flies by. What kind of a legacy will we leave behind?

You can travel the world and view the Great Wall of China, the Stone Hedge, the Pyramids, the Coliseum, or the Catacombs. Those who built

them are long gone, and one day we will join them on the other side. We will all leave something behind. In a sense, we're planting trees we will never sit under. What will we leave behind? The Bible says "the memory of the just is blessed" (Prov 10:7).

We've all been given potential to influence others. Do we inspire those around us with our passion for life? St. Paul told some folks in the city of Corinth; "your zeal hath provoked many" (II Cor 9:2). Does our exuberance inspire anyone? We only get one chance at life. Whatever needs to be done must be done now with a heart of zeal. The Bible even says in Deut 6:5 "Thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might." In Proverbs 3:5 it says; "Trust in the LORD with all thine heart." The Bible also tells us to obey our God with all of our heart and soul (Deut 30:2). It may be high time for some Christians to stop moping around. Too many are living an inward life preoccupied with "self" and focused on their own needs. Consider one more time the instruction of our text; "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work...in the grave, whither thou goest" (Eccl 9:10).



CULTURAL CHRISTIANITY

“Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith.”
II Corinthians 13:5

These days it's in vogue to be a Bible believing Christian in America. Mega-churches abound with sharp programs and entertainment. It is now cool to be a fan of contemporary Christian music. Radio stations are playing music about Jesus, and there are bookstores full of Christian material. Many people pray over a meal before eating and even celebrities wear crosses around their necks. There are football players kneeling to pray after a game and “John 3:16” banners by the goal posts. It's a much different world than the days when the Catacomb martyrs were bleeding and dying for the faith. In light of this, many today are making *decisions* for Jesus, but are they supernatural or superficial decisions? In the Bible we find unbelievers just going with the flow of “Christian culture” without being truly converted to Christ and the cross. The Bible predicted a great “apostasy” (departure from the truth) in these last days in which we're living (II Thes 2:3, I Tim 4:1, II Tim 3:1). Today we see many deciding to make Jesus their Savior, without making Him their Lord (master). The Bible says “*that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ*” (Acts 2:36). We don't become a real child of God with just a mental assent to right theology. The clergy of Christ's day had a lot of right doctrine (Mt 23:3) but Jesus still called them children of the devil (John 8:44). Is it possible to agree with Bible truth and still be on the road to hell? Jesus spoke of the coming Judgment Day, and of those who thought they were Christians, but were tragically wrong (Mt 7:13-14/21-23). They

were going along with the *Christian Culture* without ever truly being converted to Christ. We don't become a future citizen of heaven by just mechanically reciting a sinner's prayer. The culture and trend of today is to get into a Bible study, read Christian books, and turn over a new leaf. Unfortunately this is not the spiritual birth Jesus spoke of when He said, “*Ye must be born again*” (in order to go to heaven; John 3:3,7). This spiritual transformation is not something you “grow into.” It is not becoming more knowledgeable about spiritual matters. Jesus said, “*Except ye be converted...ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven*” (Mt 18:3). This conversion takes place in the heart, not the head. It starts with a change of mind about our sin. Many today are sauntering up to the old rugged cross for forgiveness and salvation, without any guilt, shame, or repentance over their sin. In the Bible we find the unsaved under great conviction (guilt) over their sin (Act 2:37/9:6/16:29-30). In this day and age of the “feel good gospel” it's hard to find many pulpits preaching against sin like Jesus did (Mt 23:13-32). The bar has been lowered to the point where anyone can jump over it into the “Christian world.” Today's definition of godliness and holiness is pitiful (I Pet 1:15). We find a spiritual menace among us called “easy believism” which promotes a velvet cross instead of a blood stained one. We've resorted to worldly methods to draw crowds instead of really preaching the Word without compromise. The result is shallow decisions, and counterfeit Christians. The ultimate result is superficial conversions instead of

supernatural ones. Being genuinely born again requires a miraculous work of God on the heart. It cannot be manufactured by man. It cannot be found in a “touchy, feeling-oriented” emotional experience. It's not just an intellectual decision. It is a God-spawned miracle. No watered down gospel will ever produce this supernatural spiritual birth. People today are blinded by their sin, self-righteousness, false religion, and pride (II Cor 4:4). They have been lured into a false sense of security by the Christian culture. Most people feel they are going to heaven when in actuality they're not (Matt 7:13-14). Only God can break through the blindness to reveal Himself to the unsaved (John 6:44). When the Holy Spirit works on the human heart (John 16:8) the sinner sees his need to repent! Only then can he exercise saving faith to make Christ the Lord of his life. This is neither cheap nor shallow. Jesus said, “*whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple*” (Luke 14:33). It means giving your whole life to Christ. It's an all-or-nothing commitment. Many people today are actually looking for something real and worthwhile to commit their lives to. When you truly mean business with God, you'll cross the bridge from the world and burn it behind you. Only then will you know the joy and excitement of being genuinely converted, and not just a *cultural Christian*.

*For more information on becoming a true Christian please carefully read pages 6-7. ■

I Have A Question

How Important is the Bible?

The French atheist Voltaire was a famous writer who owned his own printing company in the 1700s. He did everything he could to disprove the Bible and once boasted that within 25 years he'd have the Bible lodged in a morgue! Within 25 years, Voltaire was lodged in a morgue having died a miserable death. Ironically, the Geneva Bible Society bought Voltaire's printing press and property to print and distribute the Word of God around the world. Just how important is the Bible?

The Bible was inspired and given by God. *"The prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."* (II Pet 1:21) *"All scripture is given by inspiration of God"* (II Tim 3:16). The Bible is God's Word. I Thessalonians 2:13 says, *"When ye received the Word of God ...ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the Word of God."* II Timothy 3:16 adds, *"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine ... for correction, for instruction in righteousness."* There are 3800 references in the Old Testament alone to the Bible being called the Word of God.

The Bible is the source of truth. The big question today is... "Where is the truth?" Jesus said in John 17:17, *"Sanctify them through thy truth: thy Word is truth."* The Bible is called "the Word of truth" (II Tim 2:15). The Bible is our Creator's instruction manual on life! George Washington said, "It is impossible to govern the world without God and the Bible." God gave us the Bible to guide us through life. The psalmist said, *"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path"* (Ps 119:105). Jesus said in

Matthew 4:4, *"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God,"*

The Bible is the pathway to find God. Romans 10:17 says, *"Faith (to find God) cometh by hearing...the Word of God."* The Bible will show us what is 'missing in life'. Hebrews 4:12 says, *"The Word of God is powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword ...and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."*

The Bible is the only thing Jesus ever quoted (many times). The Bible is the only source of information about Jesus. Jesus said, *"Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me"* (John 5:39). The Bible says in John 20:31, *"These (scriptures) are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name."*

God values it above His own Name. Psalms 138:2 says, *"Thou (God) hast magnified thy Word above all thy name."* The Bible is the only source of information about, who God is, where we've come from, why we're here, what happens when we die, the flood, the Jewish nation, all doctrine, the 10 commandments, and God's standards on all the issues, (i.e.- what's right & wrong, marriage, children, finances, political matters, the way to heaven, etc).

The Bible has been miraculously preserved without error. Psalms 12:6-7 says, *"The words of the LORD are pure words... Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever."*

Psalms 119:160 adds, *"Thy word is true from the beginning: and every one of thy righteous judgments endureth forever."* In 1948, a young Arab shepherd in Israel found the Dead Sea Scrolls in a cave while looking for a lost sheep. Additional findings in ten other caves in the same Qumran region over the next decade gave the world a jigsaw puzzle of 100,000 pieces of ancient texts that were the remains of 870 scrolls representing all or portions of every book of our Old Testament. These OT scrolls date back hundreds of years before Christ, and line up exactly word for word with our current King James Bible! (Masoretic text). Jesus said, *"Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away"* (Luke 21:33). Millions have died upholding it, preaching it, and preserving it.

Satan hates the Bible and his first attack was to cast doubt on what God said. In Genesis 3:1, *"He said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said?"* (sounds like scoffers today). The Bible should never be tampered with. Revelation 22:18-19 says, *"If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book (found in hell): And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life"* (he will not make it into heaven).

The Bible interprets itself. II Peter 1:20-21 says, *"No prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation."* We are not to just interpret the Bible as we please, but 'compare scripture with scripture' – (I Cor 2:13). Example: There are things mentioned in the last book of the Bible (Rev 12:1) that are interpreted in the first book of the Bible (Gen 37:9).

The Bible has always miraculously come to pass (prophecy). When originally written, 1/3rd of the Bible was prophecy (predictions). Through hundreds of predictions, it has always been 100% accurate in foretelling the future. *"Blessed be the LORD, there hath not failed one word of all his good promise, which he promised"* (1 Kings 8:56). If you look at the life of Christ alone, there are 333 Old Testament prophecies about Jesus: (born of tribe of Judah, lineage of David, born of a virgin, in Bethlehem, Herod would seek to kill; Mary & Joseph flee to Egypt). Daniel 10

even foretold to the day when Jesus would ride a donkey into Jerusalem (April 14, 32AD). The Bible foretold how Jesus would be rejected of the Jews, betrayed by Judas for 30 pieces of silver, spit & beat on, offered gall & vinegar to drink, He would be crucified between 2 thieves, lots would be cast for his garments, buried in borrowed tomb, etc. The odds of someone fulfilling all 333 prophecies are impossible. In fact, the odds of someone fulfilling just 8 of the 333 prophecies would be like filling the state of Texas two feet deep in silver dollars, and having a blindfolded man pick out the one silver dollar painted red. Ezekiel 12:25 says, *“For I am the LORD: I will speak, and the word that I shall speak shall come to pass.”*

The Bible will be there on Judgment Day and we'll be judged out of it. Jesus said, *“He that ...receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the Word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day”* (John 12:48). Revelation 20:12 says, *“The dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books”* (there are 66 books in the Bible). Sadly, many will reject the Bible. II Timothy 4:2-4 says, *“Preach the word... For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine ... And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables”* (religious tradition, evolution, humanism). It's dangerous not to believe the Bible. Hebrews 3:7-8,12 says, *“Today if ye will hear his voice (speaking from His Word), Harden not your hearts ... Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief.”*

Accepting the Bible will change your heart and life. Lew Wallace was an agnostic writer and territorial governor in the 19th century. His best friend Robert Ingersoll was a famous atheist who continually tried to 'debunk' the Bible. While traveling together through St. Louis and observing all the church steeples, a disgusted Ingersoll challenged Wallace to write a book to disprove the Bible and the life of Christ. Wallace accepted the challenge and departed to the holy land while studying the Bible. Instead of disproving anything, Lew Wallace himself became a devout believer in the Bible and Jesus Christ. He went on to write the famous novel ...Ben-Hur!

Jesus Said WHAT?

Most people think there are many different ways of getting to heaven. To listen to most preachers, you would think it doesn't really matter what you believe, as long as you're sincere. You've probably heard the expression *“All roads lead to heaven.”* In these politically correct days, people want to be broad-minded and not exclude any religion or religious leader. **But what did Jesus say?** Jesus claimed to be the only way to heaven. He clearly stated in John 14:6, *“I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”* Notice that Jesus didn't say he was a good way, or a better way, or even the best way. He said I'm THEE way, and added that you cannot come to God (or heaven) except through him! Now that would be perceived as pretty narrow in these all-inclusive days, but that is what the Creator of the universe said. Are you going to believe the broad-minded preacher, or God the Son? Jesus Christ also added, *“He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that*

believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him” (John 3:36). Again, he intimates that he's the only way to heaven. The Apostle Peter was apparently pretty narrow as well. He spoke of Jesus Christ and said, *“Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved”* (Acts 4:12). The Apostle Paul adds, *“For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus”* (I Timothy 2:5). Apparently St. Paul didn't think there were many different ways to heaven. The Apostle John stated, *“This is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life (heaven), and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life”* (I John 5:11-12). Apparently St. John didn't feel that all roads led to heaven. There are a number of other Bible verses, but the conclusion is clear. According to Jesus and the apostles, Christ is the only way to heaven. If you claim to be a follower of Jesus Christ, do you believe that? ■

HOW TO HAVE A RIGHT Relationship WITH GOD GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION

There are three things you can know for sure...

1) That you are going to Heaven. *"These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life"* (I John 5:13).

2) That your life will be changed when you get saved. *"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new"* (II Corinthians 5:17).

3) You will never lose your salvation. *"And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand."* (John 10:28).

It all revolves around Jesus Christ!

Who is Jesus Christ? John 1:1 says, *"In the beginning was the Word (Jesus), and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."*

John 1:3 continues, *"All things were made by*

him; and without him was not any thing made that was made." Jesus was God in flesh or God the son who created everything.

He came to earth to save us. *"For the son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost"* (Luke 19:10). The first step in going to heaven is to realize we need to be saved.

How do we get to heaven?... *"Jesus answered and said unto him, verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God"* (John 3:3).

There is a difference between a physical birth and a spiritual birth. *"That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the spirit is spirit"* (John 3:6).

Why do we need a spiritual birth? Man was originally created a three part being in God's image—a trinity. *"And God said, let us make man in our image, after our likeness: so God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them"* (Genesis 1:26).

Man is made up of body, soul, and spirit.

God placed Adam and Eve in the garden. *"And the lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die"* (Genesis 2:16-17). Man ate of

the fruit and though he didn't die that day physically, he died spiritually!

When Adam and Eve had children they were now born spiritually dead as well (no longer in God's 3-part image). Genesis 5:3 says *"And Adam lived an hundred and thirty years, and begat a son in his own likeness, after his image; and called his name Seth."* That is why we must be re-born spiritually.

That is also why we have a sin nature. You don't have to teach a toddler to be selfish, lie, steal things, sass back, fight with siblings, etc... it is our nature even as we grow up. The 10 commandments reveal our sinful condition.

#1 "Thou shalt have no other Gods before me" (Exodus 20:3). No one can claim that they have never put anything ahead of God (money, career, another person, own goals, pleasure, sin & vice, etc).

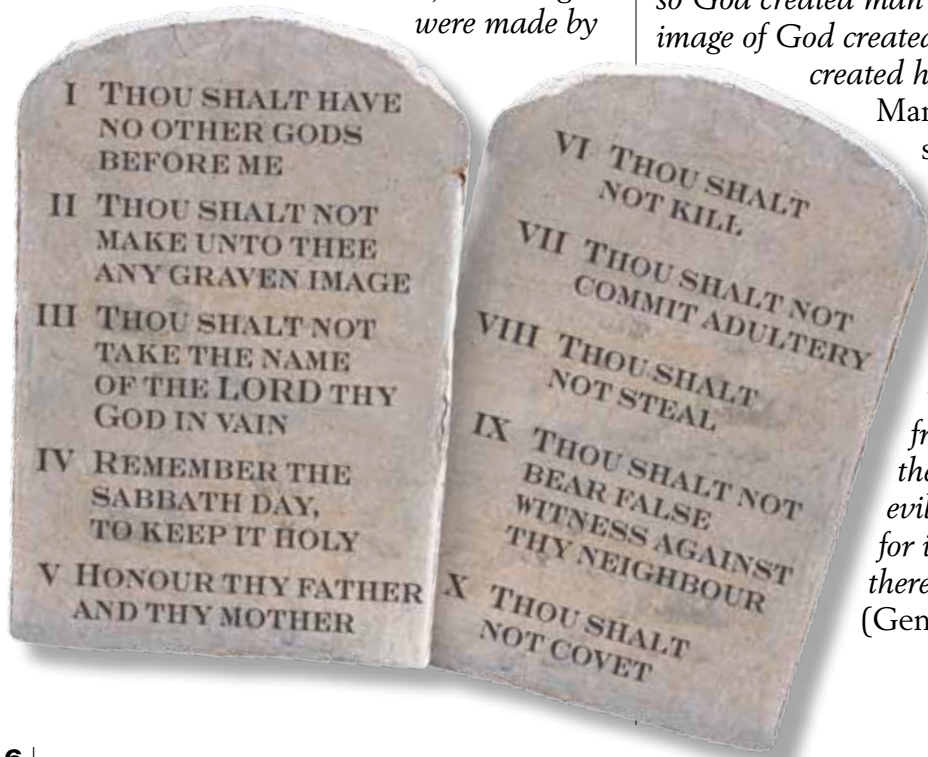
#2 "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image" (Exodus 20:4). Many have been guilty of inventing a God of their own imagination and liking (a "God that overlooks sin and takes everyone to heaven").

#3 "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain" (Exodus 20:7). Read it carefully—are you guilty of ever doing this?

#4 "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy" (Exodus 20:8). Have you always been faithful in this area?

#5 "Honour thy father and thy mother" (Exodus 20:12). Who can say that they have always honored their parents?

#6 "Thou shalt not kill" (Exodus 20:13). While most have never committed murder,



Jesus clarifies this commandment when he tells us that to even hate or be bitter at someone is murder of the heart (Matthew 5:21-2).

#7 “Thou shalt not commit adultery” (Exodus 20:14). While many have never committed adultery, Jesus tells us in the Bible that to even lust after the opposite sex is adultery of the heart (Matthew 5:27-8).

#8 “Thou shalt not steal” (Exodus 20:15). Who could claim that they’ve never taken anything that doesn’t belong to them?

#9 “Thou shalt not bear false witness” (Exodus 20:16). (i.e., lie) No one could honestly claim they have never told a lie.

#10 “Thou shalt not covet” (Exodus 20:17). Have you ever desired anything you didn’t need, or that wasn’t yours?

Many places in the Bible tell us that liars, adulterers, idolaters, thieves, the covetous, etc., will spend eternity in hell (Revelation 21:8, I Corinthians 6:9-10, Galatians 5:19-21).

Romans 3:10 tells us, *“As it is written, there is none righteous, no, not one.”*

Romans 3:23 says *“for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.”*

Romans 6:23 explains that sin has a penalty: *“For the wages of sin is death”* (hell).

We cannot possibly get to heaven by keeping the law (10 Commandments).

The 10 Commandments were given by God to show us how impossible it is to be saved by doing good works. *“Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith”* (Galatians 3:24). The law (10 commandments) shows us that we are condemned and need a Savior.

You will never get to heaven by doing good works. Titus 3:5 says, *“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us.”* *“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ”* (Romans 5:1).

Yet getting to heaven is not automatic just because Jesus died for your sins! Salvation is a gift that must be received. *“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God”*

(Ephesians 2:8). That means that baptism has nothing to do with being saved. Romans 6:23 explains, *“The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”*

How does a person know when they are ready to be born again? They know they are ready when they mean business with God, and are willing to repent of sin. Acts 3:19 says, *“Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out.”* II Peter 3:9 says the Lord is *“not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”* Jesus said, *“except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish”* (Luke 13:5). That means being willing to also turn from false religion or false teaching—anything contrary to the word of God, the Bible.

To repent means to change your mind about your sin, and make Christ the Lord of your life. Are you willing to turn from your sin and turn to God? Do you believe that Jesus paid the full price on the cross for your sins?

Though God hates sin, he loves you and sent Jesus to die for your sins. *“But God commendeth (proved) his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us”* (Romans 5:8).

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).

If God is convicting you of your need of forgiveness, and you would like to be saved (born again), the final step is to ask God for the gift through a simple prayer. *“For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved”* (Romans 10:13). Notice the promise of this verse from a God who cannot lie. Titus 1:2 says, *“God...cannot lie”*. Do you believe that God will save you simply because He said He would? Christ will save you if you are willing to make him the Lord of your life.

If you know that you are ready, you can pray and ask God to save you in your own words such as: “Dear Heavenly Father, I know that I am a condemned sinner unable to save myself, but I am willing to turn from my sins and make Jesus my Lord and master. I now trust in His sacrifice on the cross to pay for my sins. Please forgive me and save me. Amen.” ■

does life have meaning?

Hugh Morehead is the chairman of the Dept. of Philosophy at Northeastern University. Forty-five years ago he began a hobby of writing to famous philosophers, scientists, and authors asking them, **“What is the purpose of life?”** The responses he got back were depressing at best.

Legendary chemist and author, Isaac Asimov wrote back, “As far as I can see there is no purpose to life.” Karl Jung, the famous Austrian psychiatrist, wrote, “I don’t know what the meaning or the purpose of life is, but it looks like as if there were something meant by it.” And Albert Ellis, the psychiatrist who invented RET therapy said, “As far as I can tell, life has no special or intrinsic meaning or purpose.” Well-known educator, Edward Gorny replied, “I doubt if there is one”...**So much for the experts!**

For many years now, people have been told they are just a product of evolution. That makes them basically a refined animal. So many people today are searching for the meaning of life, and yet are not finding it. They see life as mere existence, void of any purpose or meaning. But as Christians we know that God has a purpose for our lives. The Bible says, *“We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose”* (Rom 8:28). He doesn’t want us to merely exist, but to fulfill His plan for our lives.

Solomon indicated in the book of Ecclesiastes that if we don’t understand the purpose of life, it will seem useless, tiresome, and unfulfilling. Ecclesiastes 1:2-3 says, *“Vanity of vanities ...all is vanity. What profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the sun?”* God tells us that when we live without His purpose and plan, it is all a waste! Only one life will soon be past, and only what’s done for God will last! ■

Did Jesus Create Everything?

Many religions like to place mere mortals on the same level as the Son of God. We need to ask ourselves, "Did Mohammed ever rise from the dead?" How about Mary, Buddha, Confucius, or any other human being? God only has one Son who rose from the dead, and His name is Jesus. But there is another criterion that sets Jesus apart from all others. According to the Bible... Jesus was the Creator of the universe.

In Genesis 1:1, the Bible says; *"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."* According to historian Fred Meldan, the ancient Egyptians believed that a flat world rested on four pillars of stone. The ancient Hindus believed that a flat world rested on the back of a huge elephant, the elephant stood on the back of an enormous turtle, and the turtle stood on an immense coiled snake! Instead of promoting such incredible theories, Moses, who was educated in Egyptian schools, was inspired by God to write the creation account in Genesis. He gave us the true, God-breathed account, in words of grand simplicity, matchless beauty, and exquisite accuracy: *"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."*

The Bible clearly states that God created everything. A person only has to look at the superb design of our universe, world, and human body to logically figure that we didn't evolve by accident! There was an intelligent and powerful Designer behind the design. God has supernaturally built this knowledge into us. Romans 1:20 says, *"The invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made (mankind) so that they are without excuse."* Many scientists are rethinking Darwin's faulty theories. The prophet David said, *"By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth"* (Ps 33:6).

If God created everything, then He created you and me. The man Job said, *"The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life"* (Job 33:4). Again, David said, *"Know ye that the Lord he is God: it is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves"* (Ps 100:3). While these prophets point to God as the Creator, is there any place in the Bible where God Himself claims responsibility for creating the universe and mankind? In Isaiah 45:12, God says, *"I have made the earth, and created man upon it: I, even my hands, have stretched out the heavens, and all their host (stars) have I commanded."*

But the question at hand is... "Did Jesus actually create the universe?" The answer is "Yes"! The Bible definition of God includes the Trinity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. But as we get more specific, we find that the Bible points out "God the Son" as the one responsible for creating everything. The Bible says in Hebrews 1:1-2, *"God... hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son... by whom also he made the worlds"*. That means the One speaking everything into existence back in the first chapter of

the Bible was Jesus Himself. The Son of God didn't get His start in a manger in Bethlehem. He existed in eternity past. When it came time to hurl the planets into their places, and the stars into their sockets, it was Jesus who did so. In John 1:3 we read, *"All things were made by Him (Jesus); and without Him was not any thing made that was made"*. Not only were all things created by Him, but for His glory and honor. The Bible says in Colossians 1:16, *"For by Him (Jesus) were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible...all things were created by Him, and for Him."* This is why we say that Jesus is in a class all by Himself, and shouldn't even be mentioned in the same breath as other religious figures. By faith, we believe that He is the Almighty Creator of all nature. The Bible says in Hebrews 11:3, *"Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear"*. Please prayerfully consider the greatness of the One called Jesus Christ. Consider also the love He has for us (His creation) in that He was willing to die for our sins in order to save us. ■

God's Positive Bible Answers

You say...	God says...	Bible Verses
"It's impossible"	All things are possible.	(Luke 18:27)
"I'm too tired"	I will give you rest.	(Matthew 11:28-30)
"Nobody really loves me"	I love you.	(John 3:16 & John 3:34)
"I can't go on"	My grace is sufficient.	(II Cor. 12:9 & Ps. 91:15)
"I can't figure things out"	I will direct your steps.	(Proverbs 3:5- 6)
"I can't do it"	You can do all things.	(Philippians 4:13)
"I'm not able"	I am able.	(II Corinthians 9:8)
"It's not worth it"	It will be worth it.	(Roman 8:28)
"I can't forgive myself"	I forgive you.	(I John 1:9 & Rom. 8:1)
"I can't manage"	I will supply all your needs.	(Philippians 4:19)
"I'm afraid"	I have not given you a spirit of fear.	(II Timothy 1:7)
"I'm always worried and frustrated"	Cast all your cares on ME.	(I Peter 5:7)
"I'm not smart enough"	I can give you wisdom.	(I Corinthians 1:30)
"I feel all alone"	I will never leave you nor forsake you.	(Hebrews 13:5)

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WHAT WILL IT BE LIKE AT THE END OF THE WORLD?

Have you noticed all the floods, tornados, earthquakes, and other crazy weather patterns lately? Perhaps many people are wondering, "What is this world coming to?" Jesus spoke of "earthquakes in divers (various) places" occurring during the last days of earth's history. (Matthew 24:7)

One third of the Bible was prophetic when it was written, and it has a lot to say about end-of-time events. It all hinges upon the second coming of Jesus Christ. There were 300 Bible verses that predicted the first coming of Christ. There are over 1,800 verses that speak of His second coming. The Bible says, "*Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time*". (Hebrews 9:28)

In approximately 30AD, Jesus died, rose, and ascended back to heaven. Before He left, Jesus said to His followers, "*In my Father's house are many mansions... And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself*". (John 14:2-3) There are over 7,400 promises in the Bible. God the Son has never broken a promise!

The next event on God's prophetic calendar is the rapture. This is when born-again Christians will be 'snatched' from the earth in an instant of time. It is referred to in various places within the Bible. In the book of I Thessalonians 4:16-17, God's Word says, "*For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord*". This event will take place without warning.

The Bible says, "*In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we (living believers) shall be changed*". (I Corinthians 15:52) Those unbelievers who are left behind after the rapture will experience unspeakable chaos on this earth such as the world has never seen before. The Bible calls it the "*Great day of God's wrath*". (Revelation 6:17) The globe will come under the control of a 'one-world ruler' (Globalism is already shaping up across our world with national boundaries slowly being erased).

In the Bible, this one-world ruler is called the '*antichrist*', or the '*beast*'. He will require every person to be accountable to him, and will force them to receive some type of an identification voucher (possibly a computer chip?) that will enable him to keep track of everyone's whereabouts and purchases.

The Bible says, "*And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: And that no man might buy or sell, save (except) he that had the mark*". (Rev 13:16-17) The Bible sheds more light on this identification mark when it says, "*Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six (666)*". (Rev 13:18)

Already, this number can be found encoded into the Universal Product Code (UPC) located on almost all items you buy at the grocery stores, retail stores, etc. The worldwide rule of the antichrist will last for seven years with the first three and a half years taking place under the guise of peace, and the last three and a half years being utter chaos! (Matthew 24)

According to the Bible, approximately two thirds of the world's population will be eliminated in a blood bath. The antichrist will especially target the Jews for extinction, which is why the tribulation period is called a time of "*Jacob's trouble*". (Jeremiah 30:7)

The antichrist will make Adolf Hitler look like a choir boy. (Rev 12) Meanwhile, back in heaven, the raptured believers will be appearing before the judgment seat of Christ. (II Corinthians 5:10) At the end of the seven-year tribulation, Jesus will return to the earth at the valley of Armageddon. There He will defeat the armies of the antichrist. (Rev 19) In the late eighteenth century, the French military leader Napoleon once saw this valley in west central Israel, and called it the greatest place he had ever seen for a battle. From there, Jesus will go up to Jerusalem: "*And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst*". (Zechariah 14:4) Ironically, seismologists report that this fault line was created on July 11, 1927, when an earthquake struck the Holy Land.

From Jerusalem, Jesus will set up His kingdom and world peace will finally be realized (Isaiah 2:2-4; 11:1-10). With all of that in mind, the key for a real Christian is to be found faithful when Christ returns. The Bible says, "*Abide in him (Christ); that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming*". (I John 2:28) Those who have never been truly born-again need to get ready for Christ's second-coming (Please see pages 6-7).





Israel is the nation most often mentioned in the Bible. But do you know which nation is second? It is Iraq! However, that is not the name that is used in the Bible. The names found in the Bible are Babylon, Ur of the Chaldees, Shinar, and Mesopotamia. The word Mesopotamia means between the two rivers, more exactly between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers (in modern day Iraq). The name Iraq, means “country with deep roots.” Indeed Iraq is a country with deep roots and is a very significant country in the Bible. No other nation, except Israel, has more history and prophecy associated with it than Iraq.

The “Cradle of Civilization” is located in Iraq also known as Mesopotamia. Noah built the ark in Iraq. By Genesis 11, the Tower of Babel was constructed in Iraq. Later on, Abraham the founder of the Jews, lived in Ur of the Chaldees. His ancient house is still a landmark to this day in the southern part of Iraq. His daughter-in-law Rebekah was from Nahor, an ancient city in Iraq. Abraham’s grandson Jacob (also known as Israel) met his wife Rachel in Iraq. Years later, Jonah (after spending three days in the whale) preached to the city of Nineveh, which is located in modern day Iraq. Old Testament prophets like Ezekiel and Amos preached in Iraq. Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, carried the Jews captive into Iraq in 587 B.C. Daniel was thrown into the lion’s den in ancient Iraq. When Jesus was born, the wise men from the east came from Iraq to Bethlehem. Peter would later go to Iraq to preach the gospel.

But Iraq hasn’t only had a significant past. Presently, you cannot read the daily paper or listen to the news without hearing about this country. According to the Bible, Iraq may also have a very important part in the future. It is ironic that Iraq has come to the forefront in the last few years. A careful reading of prophecy in Revelation (the last

book of the Bible), chapters 17 and 18, reveals both a world religious and economic system known as Babylon. Babylon is a Bible word synonymous with Iraq. Revelation 17:5-6 describes a one-world religion as, “Mystery Babylon the great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth... drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus.” It will apparently be a persecuting religion with its roots in the Babylonian worship of a mother and son (Semiramis and Nimrod). According to verse four, the religion will be very wealthy. Verses nine and eighteen also infer that this religion has ties with the city of Rome. Verse sixteen reveals that this Babylonian one world religion will be destroyed during the tribulation period.

Then there is another system associated with Babylon mentioned in Revelation 18. This one is political in nature, and likely represents a one-world government. This political system will eventually be destroyed as well. For years there was speculation concerning where this system would be headquartered. Now, many Bible scholars feel that the revival of ancient Babylon as the center of world power will literally be in Iraq. The remains of Babylon can still be seen in central Iraq. As the situation in Iraq continues to unfold, it will be interesting to see if the country slowly evolves into some type of a center of world trade. ■

Editor’s Note: The government of Iraq is currently moving forward with plans for building a modern city of Babylon. The project is aimed at rebuilding the glories of Mesopotamia’s most famous city. What’s more, the current US administration is contributing towards “The Future of Babylon Project,” through the State Department’s budget. Mariam Omran Musa, head of a government inspection team based at the site said, ‘It depends on funds. I hope that Babylon can be reborn in a better image.’ Bible prophecies in Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Revelation indicate the ancient city of Babylon in Iraq will in fact, be rebuilt in the “last days” of history and become one of the wealthiest and most powerful cities on the face of the planet. Iraqi Finance Minister Ali Abdul Ameer Allawi said “I think rebuilding Babylon is a wonderful idea.”

how is your **BIBLE** KNOWLEDGE?

USA Today reported recently on the outcome of a quiz given by Stephen Prothero, chairman of the religion department at Boston University and author of “Religious Literacy - What Every American Needs to Know.” The quiz revealed that 60% of Americans can’t name 5 of the 10 Commandments in the Bible, and over half of high school seniors think Sodom and Gomorrah...were married! 82% of Americans believe the Bible contains the words “God helps those who help themselves.” Back in 1975, McDonald’s launched one of the most memorable advertising campaigns of all time. These commercials taught people to name the main ingredients of a Big Mac hamburger in rapid-fire cadence. You’ll recall it’s “two all beef patties, special sauce, lettuce, cheese, pickles, onions on a sesame seed bun.” In conjunction with the October 19, 2007 release of the animated movie, The Ten Commandments, Kelton Research conducted a survey regarding Americans’ knowledge of Exodus 20. After polling 1,000 people, they discovered that more people could name the contents of a Big Mac than recall seven of the Ten Commandments. What about you? In a related “man on the street” interview study, knowledge about the Ten Commandments was pitted against cultural trivia. The findings of this recent study found that most respondents could name the four Beatles, but many participants couldn’t recall even one commandment. (Houston Chronicle) The Barna Group has found that even born again American adults spend an average of seven times more hours each week watching television than they do reading the Bible, praying or in church worship. We wonder why the love for Christ has become frigid. Jesus foretold that in the last days; because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold (Matt 24:12). How tragic is this lack of Bible knowledge? More than half of all adults (54%) believe that if a person is generally good or does enough good things for others during their life, they will earn a place in Heaven (2005 Barna Research). This proves so clearly that the majority of church-going Americans, including preachers do not know the truths of God’s Word. (Eccl 7:20 “For there is not a just man upon earth that doeth good, and sinneth not” ...Eph 2:8-9 “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: and not of works lest any man should boast.”) ■



where do

little children

go when they die?

There are few things sadder than the loss of a baby or toddler. Over the years I've done a number of heartbreaking funerals involving babies who never lived to grow up. Many people have wondered what the Bible has to say about this matter. What happens to children who die without being able to receive Jesus as their Lord and Savior? The opinions of various people run the gamut. I've even heard from a protestant minister who felt that aborted babies wind up in hell because they were never baptized or confirmed. Of course this is cruel and outrageous theology if you consider what the Bible teaches. **Where Do Little Children Go When They Die?**

The requirement for getting to heaven is to be born again according to Jesus. He said in John 3:3, *"Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."* Of course this is impossible for a child who is not able to exercise the repentance and

faith necessary to be saved. So what is his fate? God has given us clues in the Bible to help us answer this question. In II Sam 12, a child is born to King David out of an adulterous relationship with a woman named Bathsheba. This was a scandal, and also an awful testimony to the heathen nations watching Israel. God could not allow this sin to go unchecked, and the baby boy ended up dying seven days after he was born (before being circumcised, which would have taken place on the eighth day). King David (also a prophet) made an important statement in verse 23; "But now he (the child) is dead...can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me." David spoke of going to be with the child one day. Where did the child go?...Wherever David would go one day. Was David going to heaven or hell? David is the most mentioned name in the whole Bible next to Jesus. In spite of his sin of adultery, David was still a saved man and testified in the famous twenty third Psalm "I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever" (i.e. - heaven). So David went to heaven when he died. What David was saying at the death of his baby is; "I will see him again in heaven one day." Notice that this baby didn't go to purgatory or some limbo type of place. There is no such place according to the Bible. The baby went to heaven, and he went there immediately according to the Bible (II Cor 5:8).

Some would argue that if a baby is not baptized, he can't go to heaven; but

a careful study of the Bible would show otherwise. There was a thief on a cross next to Jesus when He was crucified. In his dying hours that thief professed faith in Christ and trusted Jesus as his Savior. Jesus told the thief; *"Verily I say unto thee, today shalt thou be with me in paradise."* (Luke 23:43) The thief was never baptized, but according to Jesus he went to heaven at death. According to the Bible, baptism has never had anything to do with going to heaven. In 313 A.D. the Roman Emperor Constantine was the first one to embrace the false teaching of baptismal regeneration (i.e. - the teaching that baptism will make you a child of God and wash your sins away). By 370 A.D. they were baptizing infants and by 416 A.D. infant baptism had become mandatory in the Roman Empire. Yet it is a manmade tradition, not found anywhere in the Bible.

In the third chapter of the book of Job we find another example of babies going to heaven when they die. In verse eleven, the man Job describes a "still born birth" where the baby is dead when delivered. Many parents have agonized over this situation. In the next several verses Job describes how the baby is in a "better place" of bliss and rest (heaven). One of the greatest proofs that small children go to heaven when they die, came from the lips of Jesus Christ Himself. Speaking of children in Matt 18:14, He said plainly *"it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish"* (or go to hell). When the child is too young to decide, God

decides for them. He does not hold them accountable for their sin nature because they are not able to understand it spiritually. God takes great notice of children and has a special place in His heart for them. The Bible says in Psalm 127:3 *"Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD"*. Children are precious heirlooms given by God. When Eve had a baby, she said "I have gotten a man child from the Lord." Children are special and God loves them. Jesus Christ always made time for children. God does not hold them accountable until they are older. In the case of the prophet Jonah, God spared the city of Nineveh from destruction, partly because of all the children that were in it. God said in Jonah 4:11; *"should not I spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than six score thousand (120,000) persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand"* (small children). When God judged the rebellion of the Jews before bringing them into the Promised Land, He spared those age 20 and under and did not hold them accountable.

These examples from the Word of God point to an unmistakable truth: small children are not accountable and in the tragic event of their early death, they go straight to heaven. Millions of children throughout the world die yearly through famine or other causes. God has promised to take them all to heaven (Mt 18:14). This is a comfort to know. My daughter works as a volunteer to professionally photograph deceased babies as a keepsake for the parents. After many parents experience this tragedy, they ask "why?" Then the very next question is "where?"... "Where is my child now?" Like King David said, you cannot bring the child back to you, but you can one day go to be with the child by being truly born again (see pages 6-7 of Faith for Life). If you are currently reading this and you have experienced the loss of a child, my heart goes out to you. God cares as well, and can relate to your loss. He knows how it feels to lose a child, as He allowed His only Son to die for our sins. ■

*For a more in depth sermon on this subject, you can purchase a CD sermon for \$3 from Fargo Baptist Church, 3303, 23 Ave S, Fargo, ND 58103

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT HEAVEN?

"Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." 1 Corinthians 2:9

What do John Wayne, John Lennon and John Kennedy all have in common? They all once walked this earth, but have since died and are forever gone. But have they ceased to exist, or has their "never to die" soul just re-located?

The Bible is clear about the "after life." What does the Bible say about heaven? First of all, where does the Bible say heaven is located? The apostle Paul said (II Corinthians 12:4) that he was *"caught up"* into heaven, and the apostle John also spoke of going *"up"* in order to get to heaven (Revelation 4:1).

Evidently heaven is up in space somewhere at this time and the Bible hints that it is toward the north (Psalm 75:6). Someone asks, "How will we know how to get there when we die?" According to Luke 16, we will be escorted there by angels.

But how long after our death will it be before we can go there? If someone is truly saved (see pages 6-7), their soul will go to heaven immediately when they take their last breath (II Corinthians 5:8, Philippians 1:23). The Bible doesn't teach any such place as "limbo or purgatory." What will Heaven be like? We will be able to see each other, and

will still be known by the same name (Philippians 3:21, Luke 13:28). We will walk on literal streets of gold (Revelation 21:21). The saints in heaven will live in mansions according to Jesus. He said, *"In my Father's house are many mansions...I go to prepare a place for you"* (John 14:2).

An incredible description of the beauty of heaven is given in Revelation 21:10-21. Heaven will also be a place with perpetual wonder and excitement (Psalm 16:11). The greatest ten minutes you've ever lived on earth won't compare to it. Heaven will also be a place without suffering, pain, tears, crime, or death (Revelation 21:4). There will not be any sin or unsaved sinners there (Revelation 21:8).

The sad reality is that according to Jesus, not many will go to heaven. Matthew 7:14 says, *"narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life (heaven), and few there be that find it."* The Bible tells us that only truly saved believers will be there (Revelation 21:24). The good news is that getting to heaven is available to everyone (II Peter 3:9), and we can know for sure we are going to heaven when we die (I John 5:13). Do you have such assurance? Please see pages 6-7 for further information. ■

what is

Life
all about

"Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." | Corinthians 10:31



What are you living for? Why do you do what you do? What is your purpose in life, or actually ... what should be your purpose in life? As kids, we all sang the "Hokey Pokey" song which states ... "That's what it's all about." What is life all about?

The average person is clueless as to why they were put on this earth. They are living for things like: fun, money, sex, vice, entertainment, sports, or pleasure. Sadly these things are as shallow as the Hokey Pokey in light of "the big picture." The Bible says in Proverbs 21:17, *"He that loveth pleasure shall be a poor man"* (in more ways than one). Then there are some who live for power, fame, recognition or attention. They are 'applause junkies' and don't even know it. They desire credit or honor. They are 'in their glory' when they are getting the attention. Ironically, this is the exact opposite of the Bible verse above. God's Word says *"Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God"* (1 Cor 10:31). That means that God should always get the credit and honor. Do you wake up every day to exalt your Creator and please Him with your life? Do you live to deflect all the applause back toward God? Thomas Edison was a genius with many inventions and over

1000 patents. When his wife asked him one day "Where do you get all of your ideas?", Edison just smiled and pointed to heaven! That's called 'giving God the glory.' In 1808, when the famous Austrian composer Haydn was a fragile old man, he attended a grand performance of his composition "The Creation." The crowd was electrified by the presence of such a legend. When the concert was over the crowd gave a thunderous applause for the composer. Haydn was deeply disturbed by the recognition. He mustered up all his strength to rise to his feet and then pointed to heaven and shouted "Give Him the glory, give Him the glory!" He then collapsed back into his seat totally exhausted and was wheeled out of the concert hall, never to be seen in public again. The Bible says; *"Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name"* (1 Chron 16:29). How concerned are you about glorifying God as you were created to do?

Self Reverence

"To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen" (Rom 16:27).

We do God a great disservice when we proudly take the credit. How would you feel if someone stole your honor? Jerry and Joe were two skinny, shy youths with glasses back in 1930 when they came up with the concept of Superman, the "Man of Steel." In need of money a few years later, they signed over the rights to Superman for \$130. Superman went on to be a multi-million dollar superhero in movies,

television, and comics. Jerry and Joe said that in 1966 they stood on the sidewalk on the opening night of the Broadway musical, "Superman" unable to afford a ticket to the premiere of their own creation! Someone had stolen their 'glory.' How does God feel when we seize His glory? The Apostle Paul said; *"But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ"* (Gal 6:14). Why do we do what we do? Why does a man try to make money? Why does a woman try to look sexy? Why do we set out to accomplish something? Is it for God's glory or ours? This can be a serious indictment against our motives. If God created us and gave us our talents, looks, and abilities, how can we take any credit? The Bible says; *"What hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?"* (1Co 4:7) One day a woodpecker was banging away at a tree when lightning struck it and blew it into a thousand splinters. The dazed woodpecker got back on his feet, looked at the tree and said, "Wow ...I'm really something!" The Bible says: "Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory" (Ps 115:1).

The Sobering Responsibility

"For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Cor 6:20)

Many boxing fans may remember the classic match in 1971 between Mohammed Ali and Joe Frazier. Ali said beforehand, "There's not a man alive who can whip me...I'm too smart (he tapped his head), I'm too pretty (he lifted the head high in a profile), I am the greatest. I am the king! I should be a postage stamp...that's the only way I could get licked!" Ali however found himself eating his words when Frazier won the match! The verse above mentions glorifying God with our body (looks and abilities) and spirit (our soul which includes our personality and talents). Why does God give us certain abilities? The Bible says, *"Unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required"* (Lu 12:48). The ex-Beatle song writing team of Lennon and McCartney had talent, but it wasn't used for God's glory. Elvis had a beautiful baritone voice, but it wasn't used for God's glory.

Napolean was a great leader, but his ability wasn't used for God's glory. Maybe you have the ability to sing, play an instrument, make money, administrate or lead. Maybe you have a great personality or the gift of gab. Whatever abilities you may possess ...could God get some glory from them? After all, it is the very reason we were put on this earth. That's what life is all about. The Bible says, *"If any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified"* (I Pet 4:11).

It's not all about us, but God!

The Sacred Reality

"And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God" (Col 3:17)

When Samuel Morse was working on his telegraph invention he would often hit a dead end not knowing what to do. He later testified that at such times he would pray for God to give him wisdom, and without fail the next step would come to him. When he finally tested the invention in 1844 his first words in Morse code were "What hath God wrought!" The Bible says: *"Give unto the LORD, ye kindreds of the people, give unto the LORD glory"* (I Chron 16:28) Again we are reminded to *"do all to the glory of God"* (I Cor 10:31). Can a person get drunk to the glory of God? Can someone view pornography to the glory of God? Can you watch trashy TV about housewives cheating on their husbands, to the glory of God? Can you selfishly scope out the biggest piece of pizza to the glory of God? How about taking God's name in vain, or cussing? Can this be done to the glory of God? Can you rent a dirty movie or go on a smutty website to the glory of God? Can we read the National Enquirer, or another magazine to find out who's shacking up with who, and having a baby out of wedlock? God says *"Yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil"* (Rom 16:19). Can we lose our temper in anger to the glory of God? Can we listen to lewd or sensual music to the glory of God?

The Salvation Realization

"Every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil 2:11).

Without being born-again (as Jesus mentioned in Jn 3:3), we cannot glorify God. The Bible says, *"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God"* (Rom 3:23). For the first 20 years of my life I was trying to do good and please God. Unfortunately, it was all in vain. The Bible says, *"They that are in the flesh (unsaved) cannot please God"* (Rom 8:8).

Back in the spring of 1999, God dealt with my heart and I finally understood what it meant to make Jesus the Lord of my life! (Phil 2:11). I was willing to turn from my sins in repentance, and place all of my faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. That is the only thing that can save us from our sin and take us to heaven. Now I want to glorify my Creator with my life as a Christian. Sometimes glorifying the Lord may mean going through rough times. Peter

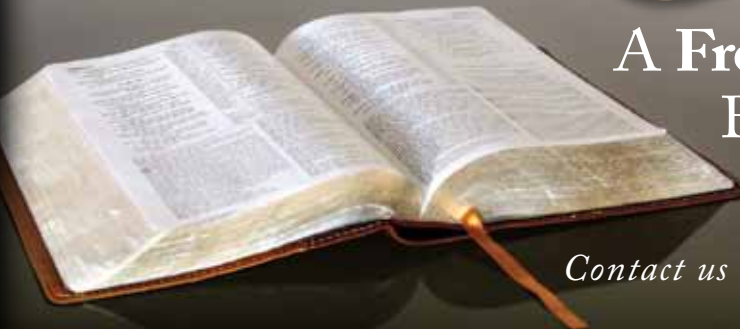
said, "If any man suffer as a Christian ...let him glorify God on this behalf." Whatever it may be in life; our goals, dreams, desires, and schemes should all be to glorify God. It is what life is all about. Sadly, there are very few who really live life this way. Many years ago Pastor Earl Cannon organized a parade to honor God in Chicago. He was expecting a crowd of around 15,000. Sadly,

all that showed up was a handful of people and 200 policemen to direct traffic. What a different world it would be if every human finally realized why they were put on this earth.

Glorifying God

was the burning desire of Jesus. Before going to the cross to die for us he said to his Father, *"I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do"* (Jn 14:7). From this point on and for the rest of our lives, may born-again Christians make it the desire of their heart*"Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God"* (1 Cor 10:31).

How concerned are you about glorifying God as you were created to do?



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Pastor's Perspective

GROW IN GRACE

"But Grow in Grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ..."

-II Peter 3:18

Growing up in the state of Minnesota, I enjoyed the average life of any person. I lived in a small farming community in the west central part of the state, went to school, played sports and hung out with friends. During my senior year of high school, our school had an outstanding year athletically; both girls and boys basketball teams winning the Minnesota Class A State Championship. Though the memories and excitement were terrific, deep within my heart, I still felt an emptiness I could not explain.

The following year, I attended Moorhead State University in Moorhead, MN and walked onto the college's basketball team. Miraculously, I made the team and red-shirted my first year. While I thought making the team had fulfilled a life-long dream of mine to play college sports, the Lord had other plans. I had a teammate that had been recently born-again and he would go around talking to other team members about the Lord. One day, we got into a conversation about spiritual matters and he asked me questions I had never considered about my own standing with God. His understanding of the scriptures intrigued me. He eventually invited me to visit the church he attended in Fargo, ND and I agreed to go. I went to services at Fargo Baptist Church and began learning things about the Bible I had never learned before that made practical sense. My interest grew in the Bible and I started attending the church's on-campus Bible studies as well. Through those Bible studies and church services, I began to realize something was not right with my life. The word of God spoke to my heart and showed me that I was not as good of a person as I thought and not going to heaven like I had hoped. As I listened and

studied the scriptures for myself, I came to understand that I needed to be born-again the Bible way through repenting of my sin and placing my faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross (Acts 20:21). I did that on April 4, 1999 and my life has never been the same (II Corinthians 5:17). I truly began to Grow in Grace spiritually.

After a few years passed, I finished my degree at Moorhead State and agreed to work for Fargo Baptist on its building project. It was during that time I had the opportunity to participate in a few missions trips abroad. God got a hold of my heart during that time and I surrendered to full-time Christian service. I had already begun some Bible college classes at Masters Baptist College, but determined to complete the courses and seek God's direction on where He wanted me to serve. During that time, the Lord gave me a wonderful wife, Kari, who had a similar background as I did. She had been part of a volleyball team that won the North Dakota Class A Championship in 2000. Amidst a successful high school sports career however, she had developed two very serious eating disorders, anorexia and bulimia, and was struggling with them. The struggles continued until her college days. She met a friend who invited her to the on-campus Bible studies I went to at Moorhead State University. After attending the Bible studies and eventually church services at Fargo Baptist Church, she was born-again on June 10, 2001. Shortly after that, through prayer and Biblical counsel, she gained victory over anorexia and bulimia, something she had desired for so long. We were married a year and a half later and continue to Grow in Grace together.

I completed Masters Baptist College in the spring of 2007 and sought the Lord's direction for my family's life. After shutting many doors, God impressed upon my heart the need to stay in America and start a church in the Minneapolis/St. Paul, MN metro area. God directed us through prayer and research to begin the church more specifically in Bloomington, MN. My wife and I quit our jobs, trusted God to meet our needs, and began traveling full time in August 2008 to various churches across the country raising prayer and financial support. We have literally traveled 85,000+ miles and visited over 200 churches in 43 states. During that time

as well, the Lord blessed us with the birth of our son, Peyton. We ended our travels this past January having had the Lord meet all our financial needs and teaching us many spiritual lessons. We have since moved to the Twin Cities and look forward to Metropolitan Baptist Church's Grand Opening service on April 18th, 2010.

Metropolitan Baptist Church will be more than "church as usual." We desire that people who visit know the God of the Bible. Many churches today have resorted to worldly fads and religious trends that neglect God's Word and have not helped the ailing spiritual condition of our country. Our goal as a church will be to put focus back on where it should be, the Bible. We want to share the same message that transformed our lives with others in the Twin Cities metro area and beyond. We believe the Gospel of Jesus Christ is the greatest message on Earth, one that can give assurance of a home in heaven in the future (I John 5:13) and a purposeful and meaningful life now (John 10:10). God desires a relationship with every individual; one that fills that void so many people are trying to fill with the things of this world. God and His Word will be the center of what Metropolitan Baptist is and what it does. We hope that you'll find the time to join us for our Grand Opening and Grow in Grace with us! ■

May God richly bless you,

