

All that we need in order to please our Lord is a little fruit of the vine, a little bread, and a Book. Because of the symbolism associated with drinking the fruit of the vine and eating the bread, we dig diligently into the Book in order to be held in awe at the revelation of the mystery of the gospel that was in the heart of God before the first words were uttered, "Let there be"¹ It is from this discovery that our lives are changed for the better. Living in response to this gospel message will take one right on into heaven. But while we are on our way on this earth, we can live with peace of mind in hope of that which lies before us. All this was made possible by the Son of God making His journey into our flesh in order to make an eternal sacrifice to take us out of this world.

The word "gospel" simply means "good news." What God has done for us through His Son is simply the greatest news that we could ever hear. It is about this news that we must rejoice!

The Bible Is An Exciting Book Of The History Of How God Has Worked In Order To Send His Son On A Journey Into This World.

1. T or **F**: The gospel is about events that began on earth when the Son of God began His gospel journey through the nation of Israel, and then in His incarnation to go to the cross, through the resurrection and ascension, and then on into heaven to the right hand of God.

The Bible is first about God's commentary and explanation of this good news. It is then about our response to the news and how we can walk in gratitude for what the incarnate Son of God came to do for us. It is about what He is yet to do for us in the future. The event of the journey of the Son of God into this world is thus a wonderful opportunity for celebration.

Though the early disciples were at first discouraged when they witnessed their friend—and our Savior—suffering on a cross outside Jerusalem two thousand years ago, that discouragement was soon turned into rejoicing. It was turned into rejoicing when the Holy Spirit came upon the apostles in Acts 2. The Spirit revealed to them that the death of their friend, Jesus, was actually the eternal redemptive plan of salvation for which people of faith had been waiting for centuries to be revealed.

When this salvation was finally revealed on a cross, resurrection, ascension, and finally, a coronation at the right hand of God, it was time to go into all the world and tell everyone. People of faith needed to know that God had given His only begotten Son for them. This good news spurred the early disciples on, even though they had to make their own journeys through the most difficult of times. Their example inspires us today to do the same. Regardless of the chaotic times in which we might find ourselves, the message of the gospel is so powerful that it transforms its messengers into messengers of hope.

Against all obstacles, the early disciples went forth and preached the gospel to the world. We seek to do the same. Our plea is motivated by Jesus' plea from the throne of God upon which He now reigns:

Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will sup with him, and he with Me.²

> Jesus Offers An Exciting Invitation To Go With Him On An Exciting Journey Of A Bold Adventure Into Discovering The Great News About Gospel Redemption!

- T or F: Though the first disciples were discouraged because of the crucifixion of Jesus, their discouragement was turned into joy and hope by His resurrection.
- **3.** T or F: The crucifixion of Jesus was not in the plan of God, and thus the kingdom of the Son that He was supposedly going to establish on earth was postponed until He comes again.

Let's get started on this adventurous journey. And where else can we start, but at the beginning. *"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.*" ³ *"Then God said, 'Let us make man in Our image.*"⁴ With this announcement, the gospel journey of the Son of God began.

We live in a world in which people have reversed what actually happened in the beginning. The Bible

says that we were created in the image of the God who created all things. However, since those first days of creation in the beginning, too many people have sought to imagine and create all sorts of gods after their own image. In other words, if we like our particular behavior,

then we will often create a god who approves of our behavior. We subsequently create a god after our own imagination. **This is the spirit of idolatry**, and thus nullifies the purpose for the gospel journey of the Son of God into this world.

So we need to take a moment here in order to reconsider our idolatrous inclinations. We now live in a world where everyone wants a god who agrees with their beliefs and behavior. People often want a religion that either conforms to their religious heritage, or conforms to their present customary religious expressions, or at least validates their current religious behavior. Some go as far as to sustain a religious belief that justifies their wars against other people of a different faith, all "in the name of religion." We thus live in a very religiously confused world; every person of faith seeking to validate his or her own faith through religious performances of ordered ceremonies. Others validate their faith by the armies



over which they have been victorious. Our world is thus a world of diverse religions wherein exists a diverse selection of religious imaginations from which one can make

a choice that suits one's own desires. Everyone can just "join the church" of their choice—or in some cases, the army of their choice—and then carry on with those religious ceremonies that make one feel that he or she is patriotic to a certain cause.

There is hope revealed in the Bible for a better relationship with God than what we can invent for ourselves through our own invented religious behavior. The same is true in reference to our relationships with our fellow man.

- **4. T** or **F**: Idolatry is the creation of a god in our own minds who will condone our often immoral behavior and false beliefs.
- 5. T or F: Religion is inspired by obedience to the truth of the gospel.

But we must ask, Is God satisfied with our efforts to direct our own lives? Certainly not! God is the Creator. It is He who has the right to determine the way we should live. And, it is He who prescribes how He should be served and worshiped. God therefore cautions, *"There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death."*⁵

We may convince ourselves that our particular religious "cause" is correct. Since we reveal our sincerity by obediently performing our many religious ceremonies that identify our particular cause (church), we assume that God is also pleased with us. However, when we study God's ways in His word, we often discover that our religious ways are actually the product of our own invention, or at least, the product of religious traditions that have been handed down to us by our forefathers. Therefore, it would



certainly be advisable to do what God exhorted in the following statement: "Search from the book of the Lord, and read." ⁶ In other words, read your Bible!

We must remember that though we may feel comfortable with our life-style, or satisfied to live according to the religious traditions of our past and present, such



may not be acceptable to God. Such living can sometimes be contrary to His will. Even more critical, we may find comfort in being carried away by our own religious hysteria, and thus have

convinced ourselves that if we feel right after a moment of emotional hysteria, then certainly we must be right. However, we must always remember what God said through the prophet Isaiah to a society of people who had gone astray into their own manufactured religion: *"My ways are not your ways.*"⁷

In fellowship with the prophet Isaiah, the prophet Jeremiah would continue to caution us: *"It is not in man who walks to direct his own steps."*⁸ Now that statement certainly brings us to attention. God says that we cannot determine our own ways because we often develop behavior that is self-centered (narcissistic), and thus, destructive to our social well-being. But more important, such ways are sometimes destructive to our relationship with God. For this reason, we must allow God to determine our moral values. He must be allowed to determine the foundation of our faith. King David explained how to do this: *"Your word is a lamp*"

to my feet and a light to my path." 9

Since God is our Creator, He has the right to give us laws that direct our lives and define our faith. And thus, He has the right to hold us accountable for keeping those laws.

- 6. T or F: The faith of our forefathers must always be the final authority of our faith.
- T or F: Those who prove their faith by emotional outbursts are more sincere than those who sit in quite meditation.
- T or F: As light delivers one from stumbling through darkness, so the word of God enlightens our walk of faith in order that we not stumble through the darkness of false religion.

~ A Book Of Hope ~

The Bible is a book of sixty-six (66) inspired documents that were written between about 1400 B.C. and the latter part of the first century.¹⁰ The first thirty-nine

(39) books were written primarily in the Hebrew language between 1400 and 400 B.C. Though initially given to the Israelites to preserve them as a society of people until the Savior of the world journeyed into this world,



we also study the Old Testament books in order to discover the prophecies of the incarnation (coming in the flesh) of the Son of God. We study how God preserved the nation of Israel throughout history until the Son arrived on the scene in order to fulfill the hundreds of prophecies that were uttered concerning His coming.¹¹

There are twenty-seven (27) documents in the New Testament. These documents were written in the com-

The New Testament Reveals The Gospel Journey Of The Son In The World And Through The Church. mon Greek language of the first century. The Old Testament documents were directed specifically to the nation of Israel.¹² They were written to preserve Israel according to the will of God,¹³ and to prepare the world for the journey of the Son of God into this world. The New Testament, on the other hand, was written in order to validate Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah, and then explain how those who believed in Him affected the first century world, and subsequently, our world today. There are over three hundred (300) prophecies in the Old Testament that were made concerning the coming of the Messiah. All these prophecies were fulfilled by Jesus, and thus, we are compelled to conclude that He was actually the prophesied Messiah, and the Son of God in whom we must believe.¹⁴ No individual could by chance have fulfilled all these prophecies. Therefore, we believe that Jesus of Nazareth was who He said He was, the incarnation of God in the flesh of man.

- 9. T or F: There are 27 books in the Old Testament, and 39 books in the New Testament.
- 10. T or F: The common language that was used to write the Old Testament was Hebrew, whereas the common language to write the New Testament was Greek.

~ Hope Of A Better Life ~

When God created humanity, He knew that most people would seek to go their own way in reference

to their religious yearnings. He gave us the right to make choices, which right He embedded in our emotional and mental framework. Because He gave us the right to



make choices, He knew that we would inevitably go astray in the following two ways:

- We would sin by following after our own fleshly desires.¹⁵
- We would sin by thinking that we can sanctify ourselves by keeping our own religious laws, as opposed to His instructions.¹⁶

Because we usually sin morally by selfishly living as we so choose, and religiously by rejecting God's word in order to maintain our own religious desires, or attempts to meritoriously self-sanctify ourselves



of sin through good works and the performance of religious rites and ceremonies, God calls us back to the good news of His Son. **He calls us out of the bondage of our own**

religiosity into the freedom of His grace. The Holy Spirit thus reminds us, *"God, who at various times and in different ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son."*¹⁷

The Son of God calls us to Himself and the truth of His good news of the sacrificial cross, resurrection, and present reign over all things. For this reason, the Son journeyed into this world. When He arrived He explained, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." 18 In other words, no person of faith or religion today can approach God the Father without going through Jesus. For this reason Jesus added, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me will not walk in darkness, but have the light of life." ¹⁹ "And you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free." ²⁰ Upon the basis of these promises, Jesus pleads that we be reassured in Him: "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." 21 We all need rest from this socially chaotic world. Unfortunately, in order to find this rest we often wake up one day and find ourselves in the bondage of our own emotions, or some misguided cult, or the bondage of various religious rites and ceremonies of some religion.

There are thousands of practiced religions in the world today. Adherents of these religions claim to be

teaching the truth of the gospel. However, we must keep in mind that through the Bible, the Holy Spirit warned that we should be careful not to be led astray by the religious craftiness of dynamic leaders, or even our own misguided emotions.²²

Since there is in the world today numerous religious people who are calling sincere people of faith away after their own desires and teachings, then it is very important that we turn directly to the word of God for guidance. This is our only hope to escape the chaos of this world. Therefore, we are asking people to give the Bible a chance to direct their beliefs and behavior.

The Bible is our only safe guide to find the Jesus who says, *"He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him—the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day."*²³ It is important, therefore, that we listen to the Lord Jesus. He only is the One by whom God will judge all people when He comes again.²⁴

All those who have submitted to the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ are inherently united in Christ on the foundation of their belief in and obedience of the gospel.

The Bible Is Our Only Trustworthy Road Map To Lead Us On Our Journey To Find The Lord Jesus.

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- **11. T or F:** No one can be saved unless he or she approaches the Father through the incarnate Son of God.
- **12. T or F:** As well as the truth of the gospel, we can learn from science that which is necessary to be saved.
- **13. T or F:** We can validate the truth that sets us free by trusting in the religious heritage of our forefathers.

~ Prophecy Of A New Hope ~

Prophecy is not prediction. Predictions are made by those who base their thinking on surrounding circumstances that indicate the high probability that something in particular will happen. But with prophecy, there are no current circumstances that indicate future events. This is the nature of biblical prophecy, and the only prophecy on which we must build our faith.

If we find in our study of the Bible just **one valid prophecy** that was fulfilled, then the Bible is proved to be from God, for only God can know the future.²⁵ Amazingly, the Bible is filled with prophecies about peoples, cities, nations, and specifically, the revelation of the Son of God, His earthly ministry, crucifixion, resurrection, ascension and coronation over all things. All that Jesus was two thousand years ago was a fulfillment of hundreds of prophecies that were made in the Old Testament Scriptures centuries before He lived.

14. T or **F**: Prophecy is based on existing circumstances that indicate a certain outcome in the future.

Jesus In Prophecy

In reference to the kingship of Jesus, there are hundreds of prophecies in the Old Testament concerning the Messiah ("the anointed One") who would reign as a King. Jesus of Nazareth fulfilled all these Old Testament prophecies.²⁶ We must keep in mind that the prophecies were written centuries before their fulfillment. It is for this reason that they could not have been fulfilled by accident. The following are just a few of the key prophecies that Jesus fulfilled when He journeyed into this world in order to reveal the good news about His purpose for coming:

Evidence Of Fulfilled Prophecy

- He would be born of the seed of Abraham (Genesis 12:1-3).
- ▶ He would be born of the tribe of Judah (Genesis 49:10).
- ▶ He would be born of the seed of David (2 Samuel 7:12,13,16).

- ▶ He would be born in the city of Bethlehem (Micah 5:2).
- He would have a forerunner (Malachi 3:1; 4:5).
- He would be King on David's throne (2 Samuel 7:12,13,16).
- ▶ He would be a priest on His throne (Zechariah 6:12,13).



Galatians 3:16; Hebrews 7:14; Matthew 1:1-17; Matthew 2:1,8; Matthew 3:1-3; Acts 2:29-31; Hebrews 8:1

Since the Old Testament documents (with their prophecies of the Messiah) were written centuries before the birth of Jesus, then it is conclusive that this one person, Jesus, must be the Son of God who journeyed into this world for our salvation.

15. T or F: It was prophesied that Jesus would be born of the tribe of Ephraim during the reign of King David.

Reign Of The Messiah

It was prophesied that the Messiah would come and reign as King, not on this earth, but from heaven above.²⁷ He would be given a universal reign over all things that would not be limited to the physical con-



straints of this world. His reign would be galactic in the since that regardless of what the kingdoms of this world would do in their senseless conflicts with one another, the Messiah would a all worldly conflicts

reign supreme above all worldly conflicts.

The fulfillment of all the Old Testament prophecies in reference to the Messiah would take place in the days of the Roman Empire. The prophet Daniel spoke of this fulfillment: "And in the days of these kings [the Roman kings] the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed."²⁸ This heavenly coronation transpired when Jesus ascended to sit at the right hand of the Father, just as Daniel prophesied in Daniel 7:13,14:

I was in the night visions, and behold, one like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven! And He came to the Ancient of Days [God]. And they brought Him near before Him. And there was given to Him dominion and glory and sovereignty so that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away. And His sovereignty will not be destroyed.

Jesus has already ascended to the right hand of the Father!²⁹ He is now reigning as King of kings and Lord of lords.³⁰ All people should bow to His authority that He now has over all things!³¹ Everyone should submit to Him as their King and Lord!³²

Since the Bible contains the fulfillment of hundreds of prophecies that validate the sovereign reign of the Lord Jesus Christ, then it is imperative that every human being on earth should respond to this gospel of the incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection, ascension and coronation of King Jesus.

God Worked Powerfully To Provide Evidence God Worked Powerfully To Provide Evidence

- **16. T** or **F**: Jesus does not now reign over all things, but He will in the future when He comes again to set up His kingdom on earth.
- **17. T** or **F**: Jesus cannot have more authority over all things than what He presently has as King of kings and Lord of lords.

There are thousands of religions in the world today. In some ways, all these religions are different, though the adherents to these religions claim that their religion was revealed by a higher power. This is something that is certainly confusing for those who seek to believe in and submit to King Jesus. They accuse the religious world that the great diversity of religions in the world is evidence that religion is only the invention of people who have fertile imaginations, especially, they note, those religions that encourage one to harm his fellow human being. Religions are conceived by people who are eager to develop religious beliefs today as the idolatrous Greeks of yesteryear.

It is true that people invent their own religions, as well as imagine their own gods whom they will worship. However, we must believe that God would not accept the worship of people who do whatever they think or feel when it comes to worshiping and pleasing Him. We must conclude that a true God would demand true worship. It is necessary that every person, therefore, should search for this true worship. In order to fulfil our search, God has revealed Himself throughout history. He has revealed His will to us in a way that will produce unity among all those who seek to worship Him in spirit and truth.

We must also affirm that **God has miraculously proved Jesus to be His Son and that His message of the gospel brings all believers together into one body of true worshipers**. If Jesus is indeed the revealed Son of God, then it is only logical to make this conclusion. We would correctly request, therefore, some proof that Jesus is truly the incarnate Son of God. We would also conclude that this proof has somewhere been recorded for our research.

- **18. T** or **F**: Because the world defines Christianity as a religion, people concluded that Christianity was just the invention of men.
- **19. T or F:** God revealed Himself in a way that when honest people believe in Him and His Son, they will come together in unity.

~ Supernatural Evidence From God ~

In the midst of a religious world today that promotes so many "miraculous events" to validate one's personal faith—even those "faiths" that are misguidedwe would think that it would be a hopeless effort to validate Jesus as the Son of God. But to validate the sonship of Jesus on the basis of the true "confirming miracles" of the Bible is much easier than we might think.

It is not difficult to separate the "fake miracles" of those today who seek members and money in order to increase the contributions of their respective churches. But when we correctly define a true miraculous work according to the record of such events that are recorded in the Bible, then proving that Jesus is actually the Son of God is a thrilling experience. Consider the following preliminary thoughts:

- True confirming miraculous works of God are referred to in the Bible as wonders,³³ signs,³⁴ powers,³⁵ and works.³⁶
- True confirming miracles could be recognized through the senses of people; they were not hidden from unbelievers;³⁷ unbelievers could not deny them.³⁸
- True confirming miracles were recognized to be something that was not considered an ordinary occurrence of natural laws.³⁹ When God miraculously worked through a true confirming miracle, witnesses realized that because the miracle was instantaneous, it was not something that was an occurrence of any natural laws of this world, nor generated by the trickery of crafty people. Miracles were not, therefore, the result of over-excited people who were craving for a "miracle" from God. On the contrary, when a true miracle did actually occur in the presence of people, it was a surreal moment in their lives that they really did not fully comprehend.
- **20.** T or F: God would never allow a miracle to occur that would in any way contradict the truth of the gospel.
- **21. T or F:** True confirming miracles of the Bible could be perceived through one or more of the five senses.
- 22. T or F: True confirming miracles are such because there is always a purpose for which a confirming miracle occurred.

Purpose Of Miracles

There is a specific reason why we must make a difference between the superficial "miraculous works" that are often promoted today from the actual confirming miracles that are recorded in the Bible. If we do not make this distinction, **then we will marginalize the true confirming miracles that are recorded in the Bible**. And if we weaken the confirming nature of the confirming miracles of the Bible, then we will weaken our faith by what the biblically recorded confirming miracles were to accomplish in validating our faith. And if we do this, according to **Romans 10:17**, our faith in the testimony of the word of God will be weakened. Our personal faith will be weakened.

Some have even denied the sonship of Jesus because of the "miraculous trickery" that is broadcast around the world through the news media. Instead of leading people to the confirming miracles of the Bible, they have actually led people away from faith with their superficial "miraculous wonders." They have led people away from the true purpose of the confirming miracles that are recorded in the Bible.

- True confirming miracles proved that Jesus was the Son of God.⁴⁰
- True confirming miracles proved the messengers sent out by Jesus actually came from Him.⁴¹
- True confirming miracles proved the gospel message of Jesus and His apostles.⁴²
- **23. T** or **F**: God expects that our faith be established on the foundation of His written word.
- **24. T** or **F**: The early disciples believed in Jesus simply because they were frustrated with the prevailing religion of Judaism that existed among the Jews in the first century.

BEWARE!

Since the miracles of the Bible are true, then we would assume that God would warn us about believing anything that would counterfeit a true miracle. The Bible, therefore, contains many warnings against being led astray by false miraculous works. At the end of His earthly ministry, even Jesus warned about this: *"For false christs and false prophets will arise and show great signs and wonders, so as to deceive, if possible, even the elect."*⁴³

One must not be deceived into believing to be miraculous that which he or she does not fully understand. Our eagerness to believe in any unexplainable event may indicate that we suffer from a lack of love for the truth of the gospel. Or worse, such belief may reveal that we have little faith in the word of God that was inspired by the Holy Spirit to build our faith.⁴⁴ Therefore, when considering something today to be "miraculous," but actually it is not, then think of the following warning that is given in the Bible to caution us about accepting the works of false prophets:

The presence of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan with all deceiving power and signs and wonders, and with all deception of wickedness among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so that they might be saved. And for this reason God will send them strong delusion so that they should believe a lie, that they all might be condemned who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness.⁴⁵

Since God miraculously proved the gospel to be true in the first century, then He does not have to prove it miraculously again today in order to convince us to believe and obey the gospel. We must trust in the written testimony—the Bible—of those who actually witnessed the supernatural work of God.

- **25.** T or F: One is being led astray if he or she believes an event today to be miraculous, which event contradicts the truth of the gospel.
- **26. T** or **F**: It is the work of Satan to lead people astray from the gospel by allowing them to believe that certain events are miraculous.
- 27. T or F: Since it is possible for one to believe that an event is miraculous, when it is not, then we must assume that Satan works to confirm the misguided faith of those who do not believe the word of God, but have pleasure in believing a lie.

Encouraging Research: 1. Genesis 1:3, 2. Revelation 3:20, 3. Genesis 1:1, 4. Genesis 1:26, 5. Proverbs 14:12, 6. Isaiah 34:16, 7. Isaiah 55:8, 8. Jeremiah 10:23, 9. Psalm 119:105, 10. See 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20, 11. Romans 15:4, 12. Deuteronomy 4:1,2, 13. Romans 3:1,2, 14. Luke 24:44, 15. Romans 3:9,10, 16. Mark 7:1-9; Colossians 2:20-23, 17. Hebrews 1:1,2, 18. John 14:6, 19. John 8:12, 20. John 8:32, 21. Matthew 11:28, 22. See 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12; 1 Timothy 4:1-3; 2 Peter 2:1,2, 23. John 12:48, 24. Acts 17:30,31, 25. Isaiah 42:9; 44:6-8, 26. Luke 24:44, 27. Psalm 110:1; Isaiah 9:6,7; 22:20-25, 28. Daniel 2:44, 29. Acts 1:9,10, 30. Ephesians 1:20-23; 1 Timothy 6:15, 31. Philippians 2:9-11, 32. James 4:6-10, 33. John 4:48; Acts 2:19,43; 4:30, 34. Mark 16:20; Hebrews 2:4, 35. Acts 19:11, 36. John 5:36, 37. Acts 26:26, 38. Acts 4:14-16, 39. See 1 Kings 18:17-46; John 11:43-45, 40. John 20:30,31, 41. 2 Corinthians 12:12; Hebrews 2:1-4, 42. Mark 16:20, 43. Matthew 24:24, 44. See Romans 10:17, 45. 2 Thessalonians 2:9-12



CLASSROOM DISCUSSION

- 1. Why must one understand, and thus believe in the events of the gospel in order to be a Christian?
- 2. Why were the first disciples discouraged when Jesus was crucified?
- 3. Why must the incarnation and present kingdom reign of Jesus be believed as part of the events of the gospel?
- 4. What is the spirit and practice of idolatry?
- 5. What is the definition of religion?
- 6. How do people usually prove the their religion is true?
- 7. How does gospel prove that Christianity is not a religion?
- 8. How did Jesus as the Messiah first begin His ministry through the nation of Israel?
- **9.** Why do people turn away from the instructions of the word of God?
- **10.** What are the historical events that make up the truth of the gospel?

- **11.** Why does Jesus have the right to call all people unto Himself for salvation?
- **12.** How does fulfilled prophecy prove that Jesus of Nazareth was the Son of God?
- **13.** Why must one believe in the present reign of Jesus over all things in order to be a Christian?
- 14. How does the present reign of Jesus over all things bring all Christians together as one body?
- 15. What is the definition of a true confirming miracle?
- **16.** What is the purpose behind Jesus' warning that we not be deceived?

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