

SCRIPTURE

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MATTHEW

CHAPTER 2

Fr Lk 2:38. **Mt 2:1.** Now when Jesus was born in **Bethlehem** of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem,

Mt 2:2. Saying, Where is he that is **born King of the Jews?** for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him (ref Mt 2:9).

COMMENTARY

CHAPTER 2

Mt 2:1. Christ, may have been born in the thirty-fifth year of the reign of Herod the king. Herod had rebuilt the Jewish Temple. About the time Jesus was born, men that **God called wise men** (or Magi) may have begun their journey from the east. Some believe they came from the area where Daniel was exiled hundreds of years previously. Perhaps because of a combination of believing Daniel's prophecy of 9:24-26, seeing the star, and perhaps having a dream, they departed. Who they were is only speculation. It would have been a long and slow trip. They finally came to Jerusalem. They did not go to Bethlehem. The number of them is not given. Some believe there were three, as three gifts were later given. Some scholars believe there were more. There is **no** mention of them being **kings**. There would have been a caravan of camels carrying many soldiers and supplies for the long journey and to protect the gifts they brought. The gifts they later gave indicate they were rich.

Contrary to popular belief, no wise men were at the manger. They may have been astrologers or magicians.

Mt 2:2. The wise men did not come to Herod the king, who was known as Herod the Great. Herod is reported to have been the son of Antipater and an Edomite. He was very evil.

They asked **the people** of Jerusalem about the **KING OF THE JEWS** in verse 2. They may have asked many. They stated that they had seen His star in the east. How they knew it was His star is unknown.

Jerusalem would be the likely place for people to come that were seeking one that was born the King of the Jews. However, the people knew nothing regarding what the wise men spoke.

KING OF THE JEWS

Truthfulness and Fearing God

Note, it said, "BORN KING OF THE JEWS."

Herod was not the rightful king of the Jews from the lineage of David or even of Jacob. He was an Edomite and from the lineage of Esau. However, Jesus was born king.

It is written, in Jn 18:37, at an event from a later date: PILATE THEREFORE SAID UNTO HIM, ART THOU A KING THEN? JESUS ANSWERED, THOU SAYEST THAT I AM A KING. *TO THIS END WAS I BORN*, AND FOR THIS CAUSE CAME I INTO THE WORLD, THAT I SHOULD BEAR WITNESS UNTO THE TRUTH.

KJV-Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice (or hears God's Word).

NIV-Everyone on the side of truth listens to me (or hears God's Word).

NAS-Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice (or hears God's Word).

The voice of Jesus is the Word of God, which is the Bible. Inner truthfulness in this latter day generation is a very rare thing. The fear of God is also a rare thing. It has been changed, in many cases, to mean nothing more than reverence, even though it is written: God is **greatly to be feared** in the assembly of the saints. It is a **fearful thing** to fall into the hands of the living God. Knowing the **terror of the Lord**, we persuade men. The words "fear of the Lord" appear in the Bible about 27 times. How many times is it taught in your church?

People that read the Bible when it is convenient usually fall away, as their commitment to Christ is often less than the commitment they have to some other things. Satan is able to distort the Scriptures in their thoughts.

Mt 2:3. It was no wonder Herod was troubled, or very agitated. He was the king, but was illegitimate.

Herod knew he could lose his position and authority. He should have hoped that his sons would succeed him. The fact that the one born *King of the Jews* had a star proclaimed clearly that this was of God.

When Herod and the people had heard these things, they would have realized the babe that the wise men talked about was not only the rightful King of Israel, but also the long awaited

Mt 2:3. When Herod the king had heard these things, he was **troubled**, and **all Jerusalem** with him.

Messiah. Many were expecting this because of Scripture.

Note the difference. Jesus came to save men's souls, but Herod was a murderer.

Were the people of Jerusalem rejoicing at the news that the wise men brought?—No. Why were they troubled? One reason was that they were living in sin. They were not seeking for the Messiah to reign over them.

It is the same today. The return of Jesus Christ to catch up (rapture, or translate) His people is not good news to most. The return of Jesus Christ causes them to be uptight, as they are not ready for His return. They want to eat, drink, and be merry. They want to see their kids or grand kids grow up. They want to enjoy life. Their heart is in this world. They are not willing to put Christ first in their life, above their children, and above their plans. They have little understanding of God's Word.

Then there are many that are positive they will be raptured, but will be left behind. They never understood totally surrendering to Christ in everything. They never understood being conformed to God's Word. When the Rapture comes, many churches will not lose one person, including the preacher. Many will be terrified, but it will be too late. We are trying to tell you that you cannot compromise your walk with Christ with the world.

If you are a person that reads God's Word only when you have time, you are not ready.

If Jesus is not **BY FAR** the most important thing in your life, you are not ready.

If you do not **love God** far beyond everything else, including your own family and possessions, you are not ready.

And if you have no time to serve God, you are not ready; for it is written: **Mal 3:18-Then shall ye return, and discern (or distinguish) between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not.**

Works cannot save you, but a lack of following Christ, obeying Christ, conforming to Christ, and serving Christ will condemn you.

(DESIRE)

Following Christ begins and ends with studying His Word.

If that **overwhelming** desire to learn more of Jesus is not there, then something is wrong inside that person. Only through trust or faith in Christ can a person be saved and follow Christ. That faith is usually in proportion to how much a person studies and obeys God's Word, and the condition of a person's heart. Little word, little faith and little growth. That is why two people can be saved together. Two years later, one is serving God full time despite overwhelming obstacles, hardships, and persecutions; while the other is barely holding on. Without faith, it is impossible to please God.

Note the contrast as one looks ahead in the Bible. The birth of the baby Jesus brought **joy** to the angel Gabriel, to Joseph and Mary, Zacharias and Elizabeth, to Simeon, and Anna, to the angels, shepherds, and to the wise men; yet it **troubled** Herod and those that were living in sin and rebellion to God. These included the religious leaders and the people of Jerusalem. Is it any different today?

Herod would have understood that the one that was "BORN KING OF THE JEWS" was the long awaited Messiah. Although they were troubled, it did not seem to surprise them. That is because of Daniel's prophecy in Dan 9:25. This was the time to expect the Christ (or Messiah). That Messiah is Jesus. A few now know that we are in the generation in which Christ will return. Yet very few even have a clue it is about to happen. This was also foretold.

No man can live a perfect life under the law of Moses without sin. Jesus did-Gal 4:4.

Mt 2:4. And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where **Christ** should be born.

Mt 2:4. Herod did not doubt what he had been told. He understood this would be the Messiah.

Mt 2:5. And they said unto him, In **Bethlehem** of Judaea: for thus **it is written** by the prophet,

Mt 2:5. They quoted from the Old Testament of a town that would exist in the future.

Mt 2:6. And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a **Governor**, that shall rule my people Israel.

Mt 2:6. The chief priests and scribes knew from the Scriptures that it was in Bethlehem that the Messiah should be born. This had been clearly prophesied by Micah (ref Mic 5:2) about

704 B.C.

Bethlehem means the “house of bread” in Hebrew. Jesus is the TRUE BREAD FROM HEAVEN and is the BREAD OF LIFE-Jn 6:32,35.

This is also where David was born. Jesus is the Son of David.

Because of the birth of Christ, Bethlehem is now famous throughout much of the world. It is about 5 miles south of Jerusalem and has a population of about 75,000. In the time of Jesus’ birth, it was a small village.

The people expected the Messiah would come forth and rule Israel. They did not understand that Jesus must first suffer and be killed, and then rise from the dead. They did not understand He would go to be with His Father for about 2000 years, and then return at the time of Armageddon.

In verse 6, two reasons are given for the coming of Jesus. These are Millennium verses, which occur after Armageddon. First, is that He shall be a governor, and second that He shall rule Israel, which is God’s people.

Even the Pharisees and scribes (of which many were unrighteous before God) **did not doubt the authenticity of the Scriptures**, as many do today. They knew this was the time for the Messiah to be born, and they knew the place He would be born. Herod undoubtedly felt threatened. He was the king, but now another king, ordained of God to rule Israel, had been born. Did the religious leaders seem to have any interest in finding and worshipping the Messiah? No. God’s only begotten Son had been born perhaps a year ago. The greatest event in history had taken place only about 5 miles away, yet the religious leaders knew nothing of it.

Mt 2:7. Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, inquired of them diligently **what time the star** appeared.

Mt 2:7. Herod had reigned at this point about 35 years.

This is the first and only recorded visit that the wise men had with Herod. Herod seemingly did not want the people to know that he had called the wise men and what he had said to them. Underneath his secrecy was the most wicked deed—that of trying to kill God Himself.

Mt 2:8. And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search diligently for the **young child**; and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also.

Mt 2:9. When they had heard the king, they departed; and, lo, **the star**, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was (ref Mt 2:2).

Mt 2:10. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.

Mt 2:8. Herod did not speak of the Messiah as one that should yet be born, but as one that had *already been born*—*THE YOUNG CHILD*.

Herod's wicked treachery had begun. He had no intention of coming to worship the young child, Who was the Anointed of God to be King of the Jews. Herod lied. Mt 2:13 shows, Herod planned to kill the Messiah. He was a threat to his throne.

He was not afraid to try to fight against God.

The religious leaders also planned to kill Jesus some thirty years later. As Herod was deceitful and wanted to kill Jesus, so it is today. Today many seek to stop, discredit, or destroy those very few that do follow and serve Jesus.

In this 21st century, many people in certain countries of the world are being tortured and killed for their faith in Christ and for possessing or teaching the Gospel. In the United States and around the world, those few people that obey God are often tempted and hindered in numerous ways by unbelievers, as well as other (so-called) professing believers. However, "do nothing" Christians are usually not persecuted.

Herod hid his intent to kill the Messiah with the words *THAT I MAY COME AND WORSHIP HIM*. The greatest wickedness often tries to hide itself under a mask of something that looks good.

It appears God had confused Herod. It appears he had not thought to have his own trusted servants go find the King of the Jews. It appears he had not thought to have the wise men followed. It had not occurred to him that God would warn the wise men not to return to Herod.

Mt 2:9. Note, not one person from Jerusalem went with them to seek and worship the Messiah. Not one of His kinsmen (the Jews) even seemed curious enough to go to a nearby town, yet the wise men came from a distant land.

Mt 2:10. Note, first they departed from Herod. They continued their journey in faith.

Did the wise men begin to doubt, when no one in Jerusalem seemed to know that the birth of

the King of the Jews had taken place? Did they give up, as many Christians do when the path God lays out for them to follow becomes difficult? No.

But now, they see the star again. It seems that they had not seen the star since they left the east and started their long journey to Jerusalem. They were overjoyed.

Now this (seemingly) bright object goes southward toward Bethlehem. Which is about 5 miles or 8 km from Jerusalem.

Then the star stopped moving, when it was directly over the place where the young child, Jesus, was. We are reminded how the Lord led the children in the wilderness. It appears that the star (or light) was at a **very low altitude**, as it would be hard for a distant star or even something as close as the moon to pinpoint being over a certain building or even a city from distant space. Plus, as the earth turns, the stars are constantly moving in one direction.

God's Word now calls the babe a young child, not a newborn infant or babe as in Lk 2:12. It appears His age was under 2 years.

As we observe at night, the stars and moon move from **east to west** across the sky as the earth rotates. Likewise, the sun follows its course from **east to west**.

Exactly what this star was is not specified.

It was at a low altitude in Bethlehem.

It seems it could appear and disappear.

It could change direction.

It could move slowly.

It could stop.

It could hover directly over a house.

It was some kind of a light.

It may have been so bright it could be seen in the day time, so the wise men would not stumble.

Somehow the wise men knew it was the star of He that is born King of the Jews. Many times the Bible uses the term "an angel of the Lord."

The word *star* in the Scriptures does not always denote a star in the sense that we think of it—that is, a distant sun, or, in the case of a falling star, a meteoroid. Many times God's Word uses the word "**star**" to denote other

Mt 2:11. And when they were come into the house, they saw the **young child** with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.

things, such as “wormwood” or an **angel**. The bright and morning star denotes Jesus-ref Rev 9:1; Rev 22:16.

2 Pe 1:19 does refer to Jesus with the words—day star.

Conclusion. It was not a star in the heavens many light years away. It was not even something as close to the earth as the moon.

The biblical evidence is strong that it was an angel guiding them, as the word **star** has been used in such instances. Some believe that the wise men had a knowledge of Daniel’s prophecy (ref Dan 9: 25), which set a time, or Balaam’s prophecy in Num 24:17. God had not revealed to the well-known religious leaders or even Herod the king about the birth of the Messiah.

Rather, He revealed it to the wise men, which were highly favored with God, as were the shepherds, and Simeon and Anna.

Mt 2:11. Contrary to popular tradition, the wise men did not come to a stable, but to a house. The Messiah had already been born and was a **young child** of perhaps over 1, but less than 2 years old-ref Mt 2:16. All indications were that the house was located somewhere in the vicinity of Bethlehem, as noted in verse Mt 2:16. Note that Mt 2:8 had shown that the wise men came to Jerusalem and then on to Bethlehem sometime *AFTER* Jesus had been born. We know of no Biblical evidence that the wise men traveled to Nazareth as a few believe. The verse continues—

Mary is mentioned, but not Joseph. Perhaps he was working. The verse continues—

Immediately, the wise men fell down and worshipped the young child. Regretfully, few in this latter day generation will do this. Rather, many curse His name. In most churches today, Jesus is not feared, and neither is He even held in great reverence.

They were fully persuaded and recognized that this was the long awaited Messiah, the King of the Jews, and He is Deity.

There is no mention that they gave any such honor to Herod, when they were in Jerusalem.

Afterward, they gave gifts.

The gifts that were presented were fitting for the King and showed their love. First was given—

GOLD. Gold is presented to the Messiah—the King of the Jews. Gold can represent divinity (note Hag 2:7,8). All indications are that Joseph and Mary were very poor. The gold may have been used to sustain the family in their travels to come. The verse continues—

AND FRANKINCENSE (or incense). This is a fragrance or spice, a reflection of His life.

Further references to frankincense in the Bible can be found in Ex 30:34; Lev 2:1, 2, 15, 16; 5:11; 6:15; 24:7; Num 5:15; 1 Chr 9:29; Neh 13:5,9; SOS 3:6; 4:6, 14; and Rev 18:13. The verse continues—

AND MYRRH. This is something that is used in burial. This is a reflection of His coming death.

Further references to myrrh can be found in Gen 37:25; 43:11; Ex 30:23; Es 20:23; Ps 45:8; Pv 7:17; SOS 1:13; 3:6; 4:6, 14; 5:1,5,13; Mk 15:23.

Note that the wise men were seeking a person, the Messiah, not a religion.

Salvation does not come through a religion, a denomination, a church, or some priest, preacher or evangelist, or some fancy building, synagogue, or temple, or through a ritual, ceremony, or a special service. It comes only through trusting in the person of Jesus. Once they departed, they may have planned to return to Herod and tell him the location of the King of the Jews. However, God took steps to insure this would not happen.

Mt 2:12. There are times when God speaks to a person in their dreams. However, all such things need to be filtered through the Word of God. Satan can and often times does try to make himself appear to be God to deceive people.

The word *country* is singular, indicating they were all from the same place.

What a tragedy it is that so few seek the Jesus of the Bible, as these wise men did.

Mt 2:13. It appears that it was but a short time after the wise men had gone that **Joseph** was

Mt 2:12. And being warned of God in a **dream** that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way.

Mt 2:13. And when they were departed, behold, the **angel of the Lord** appeareth to

Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him.

warned in a dream to flee to Egypt. This was the second of four dreams he had. No time period was given on how long he would be there. The instructions **were not** given to Mary, even though she was highly favored by God. Joseph was to take Jesus and his mother and flee to Egypt. God can warn His saints of danger ahead. God knows all things in advance. He can warn his saints what will happen.

The young child is always mentioned before His mother Mary. A scholar has said: what a rebuke to the Roman church, which puts the mother before the child.

HUSBANDS AND WIVES

God ordained the husband to be the head of the family, followed by the wife and then the children. Even if the wife is saved and the husband is not, he is still the head. However, such is not the case in some families in this latter day generation.

Eph 5:22-25-Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, **as** unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even **as Christ is the head of the church**: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands **in EVERY THING. Husbands, LOVE YOUR WIVES, even as Christ also loved the church**, and gave himself for it.

In many families in this biblically mixed up generation, the wife is equal to or even the head of the husband, or she sometimes tries to be. This is contrary to God's Word, and it is **sin and pride**.

In doing so, her lack of humbleness comes through very clearly as **she exalts herself**. God does resist the proud. Sometimes sickness can come on such to try to get them to repent.

How can such a marriage contrary to the Bible be blessed of the Lord? Sometimes in such a marriage, the husband may give in and submit to the wife, so there may be peace.

This is not a good arrangement.

Some women will even go so far as to close themselves off from their husbands in bed to get

their own way. The fact that a wife may be more intelligent than the husband does not negate this command.

Such women are in danger of the Judgment, if they do not repent.

Mary and Joseph had a biblical marriage.

Commentary on Mt 2:13 continues. God normally speaks to us through His Word (the Bible) and in other ways also. However, in some cases, God does speak to us in a dream.

Satan also can speak to us in **dreams**. **Thus, the Scriptures must always be the final and ultimate source of authority**, proving or disproving what we believe God would have us to do.

This is the second time that God appeared to Joseph in a dream (ref Mt 1:20; 2:13; 2:19; and 2:22).

How wonderful it is that those that belong to Christ through trust have a direct line to God in heaven to communicate both ways.

God is telling Joseph to go with haste and do not hesitate.

Egypt was chosen to fulfill the prophecy of Hos 11:1-When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt. This prophecy is referring to Israel, but also implications are that it is also of Jesus, as seen in Mt 2:15.

God tells Joseph several things.

1-In the dream, He says, "*Get up.*"

2-God tells Joseph whom to take,

3-how to do it—*flee*,

4-where to go, and

5-how long to stay there. God did not leave Joseph and Mary without hope. God shows Joseph that he will hear from Him again, when the time is right.

God will sometimes warn us of impending danger and make a way for us to escape. He tells Joseph what Herod intends to do and the reason. God could have struck Herod dead at this time. He could have sent angels to stop Herod and the soldiers. He did not. He used

natural means to escape the problem.

This is an example of what Satan will sometimes try to do to those whose light shines brightly for Jesus, and those that will not back down from proclaiming the full Gospel.

Satan knew, from Gen 3:15, that the seed of the woman would one day bruise his head. Satan wanted to kill the Messiah, the King of the Jews.

Rev 12:4 tells of Satan ready to kill Jesus.

And his tail (Satan) drew the third part of the stars of heaven (the angels of heaven), and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon (which is Satan) stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born. Satan was ready to kill Jesus as soon as He was born.

Satan put into the mind of Herod to accomplish what he wanted to do. He gave Herod the reasons to do it. The reasons may have been that he could lose his throne, and his sons would not be successors to the throne he occupied.

The next 12 pages, the commentary uses both columns.

THE LIFE OF A CHRISTIAN

Many are positive they are saved. Of these, only a few totally commit to Christ and obey Him. It is these very few that will dwell with Christ forever.

The lukewarm, those that try to follow both Christ and this world, will perish.

Did I hear a voice saying, I do not believe this?

Christ came to save those that will **follow Him**.

But most want to compromise. They want heaven without having to give up anything on the earth.

If you choose to follow Christ, you can no longer do the things that you wish.

That is a stumbling block that very few people overcome, and thus, they perish in unbelief.

It is not a matter of, if you accept Christ. Many do.

It is a matter of, if He will accept you.

Most, He does not. Many are left behind.

Whenever you choose to **obey Christ**, expect an opposing voice in your head that says you can do it another way. Then your heart chooses, which directs your decisions—God's Word or self?

Which is your master—God's Word or you?

(JOSEPH, MARY AND THE LIFE OF JESUS)

From the very beginning, there appeared to be **problems**, but God was in control. Joseph and Mary were poor. When Mary's time to deliver a child was almost at hand, they had to travel from Nazareth to Bethlehem (app. 66 to 90 miles, depending on which path they took). This was a problem.

There was no easy transport to take them there. The journey was long and difficult.

Then, when they arrived, there was no place for them at the inn, even though Mary was about to bring forth a child. It seemed like there was one **problem** after another.

The King of the Jews was born in an area that housed animals and would have smelled as such.

Not long after (within 2 years) Herod, **prompted** by Satan, sought to kill the young child, and they had to flee to another country. This was another **problem**. Meanwhile, many babies and young children were killed, as Herod tried to kill Jesus, but He had escaped. Then they had to stay there for an indefinite time. Finally Herod died, and they moved back to Nazareth. Now they again

had to start over from scratch. This was a **problem**.

When Jesus first proclaimed He was the fulfillment of Isa 61, neighbors tried to kill Him. This was the beginning of His ministry.

The life of Jesus, once He began teaching, was filled with threats, persecutions, false accusations, religious leaders openly trying to discredit Him, and they challenged what He taught. In addition, He had no where to lay His head—ref Mt 8:20. He did only good. He healed the sick and raised the dead. Yet He was hated by much of the religious establishment. **He laid up no possessions.**

He totally trusted in God, his Father, to provide. Ultimately, He was arrested like a criminal and falsely accused.

Are you sure you want to **follow Jesus**?

He was beaten, marred more than any man—ref Isa 52:14, and hung on a cross. He suffered terribly. He was mocked. His beard was ripped off His face. He came to save mankind, but mankind chose to kill Him.

He died an agonizing death.

Indeed, Jesus was tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin—ref Heb 4:15.

(Jesus [that is, God's Word] Commands) (Forsake All) (Children)

Now this same Jesus commands any and everyone that seeks His forgiveness for their sins to **repent** and be baptized.

He commands them to **deny themselves** and pick up their cross and **follow Him**. This becomes an obstacle for most, and most do not do it, or they do it sparingly.

This is not an option. Most just will not do this, or they compromise. They lie to themselves and say they are saved, yet **they forsake and give up nothing for Christ**. The teaching of most churches is far from what you are reading. People cling to the false teaching that Jesus wants to bless you and prosper you in every way.

Jesus commands any that want to follow Him to get rid of anything that has a hold on them. Nothing of this world, not any possession, not any person, not anything are they to love like they love Jesus. The message is clear. As the

apostles and followers of Christ left all to follow Jesus, so you are to do the same. This is not a message that is at all popular in this generation of comfort and obtaining nice possessions. The result is that only a few, a very few are biblically saved and will be raptured.

By far, most professing Christians will be left behind in disbelief.

If you choose to follow Jesus, you can expect to go through some of the same things that Jesus went through.

Hear the Word of the Lord.

Mt 10:37-39-He that loveth father or mother more than me is **not worthy** of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is **not worthy of me**. Most parents do not want to hear that. Many parents might die to save their children, but scarcely will they die to themselves so they can follow Jesus.

Any parent that loves their children like they love Jesus is on a wrong path. Any parent that puts their children before Jesus is on a wrong path. Most people never treat Jesus with the fear, reverence, and respect they would give to a king.

If you are in a country that had a king, and that king decides to come to your home, what would you do? You would certainly get rid of any and all objects that would displease him. You would do many things, so the king would not be displeased. How is it then, that you will not do this for Jesus who is the King of kings and Lord of lords? Is it that He is not real to you as He ought to be? Are you so deceived that you believe Jesus accepts compromising Christians?

Is it that you do not really believe He sees and hears everything you say and do?

Is it that you do not believe He knows the kind of attitude that you really have under that cloak of being a Christian?

Is it that you do not believe He knows your most secret thoughts?

Is it that you do not understand the day is coming when you shall be judged, and nearly everyone perishes and does not go to heaven?

Perhaps you do not really greatly fear God?

Is it that you are willingly ignorant of what the Bible says, because you do not spend nearly the

time in His Word that you ought?

1 Cor 7:23. If you are saved, you have been purchased with the precious blood of Christ. You are now to **be a servant of Christ**, not of men.

Mt 10:38. It is written: And he that taketh not his cross, and **followeth after me**, is **not worthy of me**. You are to follow God's Word. How does a person do this that studies His Word sparingly?

Some of the following are paraphrased.

Heb 12:1. **Lay aside every obstacle** and run the race, or do what God has ordained.

Mt 16:24. Deny what you want to do and follow Jesus (which is God's Word).

Num 15:39. Obey God's Word. **Do not seek worldly things** that are in your heart.

Luke 14:33. Anyone that does not **forsake all** he has, he cannot be a disciple of Christ.

2 Cor 5:15. Jesus died for those that would no longer live for themselves, but would **live for Him**.

2 Tim 2:21. If a man free himself from worldly things, he shall **be ready for God to use**. Few ever reach this point in their growth.

1 John 2:6. If a person claims to be saved, he is to **walk like Jesus did**.

Ro 8:29. You are to **conform to the image of Jesus**. You are to conform **to God's Word**.

1 John 4:17. You are to **be as Jesus** was in this world.

John 3:30. **You must decrease, and Jesus in you must increase**.

Luke 14:27. Everyone that does not **forsake himself** and **follow Jesus** (or the Word) cannot be a disciple of Jesus.

Mt 6:19. Do not lay up treasures on the earth, for where they are, your heart will also be. Some hate this verse as their heart is with some possession they own, and they would not give it up even to inherit eternal life, as they believe they do not have to.

Luke 16:13. You **cannot serve** both God and **money** (or things).

Acts 20:24. Nothing should move or stop a person from testifying of the grace of God.

Ro 12:1. If you are saved (or a brethren), you are no longer to conform to the world's ways.

Your **mind and thoughts are to be transformed to be in line with God's Word.** That does not happen for people that read God's Word now and then. Reading God's Word sparingly, produces Christians that are sick and weak in their walk with Jesus.

1 Thes 2:12. Walk worthy of Christ.

Ro 15:1. You are not here to please yourself, but to help the spiritually weak, that is, if you have grown in Christ.

(Children)

Are you walking worthy of God? Did He die for you to go and serve the world?

Did He die for you to **serve your children first and Him second**? Are you not to bring up your children in God's ways, but you are far from being an example of Christ? Is it God's way to go out and follow the world's ways? Have you been bought by the precious blood of Christ only to sparingly be in His Word? Are you that deceived? God forbid.

Do you not know, if you really do love your children and understand the Bible, this is what you ought to do?

You would be an example of Christ in every way. You would not become involved with worldly activities. God's Word would be the center of your life. You would bring up your children in His Word. You would forsake the world and its activities (children included) and use that time to be in God's Word, for indeed time is short before the Rapture comes.

By what you do, it will show your children that you love Jesus above everything. Would they rebel? Probably, yes. **Few parents** will do this as they are weak, worldly, and uncommitted to God's Word, and the children may see this. Most are a "now and then" Christian. They obey rules rather than simply die to themselves and humbly follow Christ. They ought to devour the Word of God every day, like they haven't eaten for a long time and God's Word is the only thing that can satisfy that hunger. Devour means many chapters.

What does the Bible say? Pv 22:6-Train (or bring) up a child in the way he should go: (the way of God's Word), and when he is old, he will not depart from it. How can you bring up a child

according to God's Word when you, yourself, only sparingly read it?

You might wonder if that means to put aside everything possible that takes you time? Yes. Have you not read to lay aside every weight or everything that hinders you from following God all the time and studying His Word?

Children are to be **spanked** when it is needed. It is written: Pv 22:15-Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him.

A child that is not disciplined in the manner God directs, is **lest likely to ever be saved.** And if he is saved, it is very likely he will fall.

Spare the child and send his soul to hell is what some parents do.

NEVER play games with children regarding discipline, and never delay the discipline that is needed. Never do things like count to 10, or keep telling a child to stop over and over. As God's judgment is swift in coming, so should your discipline be.

God does not play games with you regarding discipline. If a child does wrong and will not stop, a spanking follows. How can a child ever understand the Lord's discipline, if you do not do it God's way?

And if you will not obey God in all things, why should you think your children will obey you?

A child not disciplined for doing wrong, when he grows up, will have a more difficult time understanding the discipline of the Lord when it comes. All that follow Jesus will be disciplined and corrected. Those that cannot be corrected will not be with the Lord. People that despise correction are in deep spiritual trouble-ref Pv 3:11. It is never too late to start doing things God's way.

(A Person's Attitude)

A person's attitude regarding Christ should be this. **God is greatly to be feared** in the assembly of the saints.

Also Mark 1:7-John the Baptist said: There cometh one mightier than I after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose. Regretfully, this attitude and kind

of Bible teaching is rare.

When a person comes to Jesus, pride has to go. Humbleness is required; for God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.

Luke 21:36-Jesus said: pray always, that ye may be **accounted worthy** to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man. Yes, a person needs to pray and **do** God's Word.

Since some teach once you are saved, it is eternal, how is it that you need to pray this—that is, that you be accounted worthy?

(Attitude and Not Denying Oneself)

The life of a follower of Christ is not one of getting riches and the better things of this life. It is not acquiring rare postage stamps and paintings, Rolls Royce's, huge elaborate houses. It is not a life of laying up precious things, such as collectibles of certain items, as many in this deceived generation seem to teach and believe.

It is just the opposite. So likewise, whosoever he be of you that **forsaketh** not **all** that he hath, he cannot be My disciple. Nearly all compromise this verse and do not take it seriously, that is, until they perish.

In this latter day generation of so much new and enticing technology, and so many nice things to own, few follow Christ.

Some teach God wants to bless you with wonderful things like expensive cars, big and elaborate houses, and the better things of this life.

Be not deceived. God is not mocked. The Word of God teaches quite the opposite of these things.

Again, it needs to be stated. Any object or possession that you own and love, that has any kind of hold on you **at all, YOU NEED TO GET RID OF IT.** You covet this object. **IS COVETOUSNESS sin?** You can refuse, but you will not have the answer of a good conscience before God. And, day by day, you should be convicted by God's Word and the Spirit of God that you have not obeyed His Word.

And if you are not convicted by the Word of God, then regarding sin, God forbid, perhaps **your conscience is seared like with a hot iron.**

This can happen, if a person resists repenting for too long. If that conviction for sin is absent, you are in very deep spiritual trouble. Can just one thing take a person to hell? Absolutely, yes. When you face the Creator, woe to you. You will be terrified. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. It may be said, those that justify themselves, yet do contrary to what God says, they are in spiritual trouble. They distort God's Word and say in their mind that it does not mean what it clearly says. Why do they do this? They do not want to conform to the ways of Christ in certain areas.

Because they resist doing what God ordains, the day is coming when they will wish they had not been so **stubborn**, which **is as the sin of witchcraft and idolatry**-1 Sam 15:23.

Any sport, any activity, anything in your life that has a hold on you, needs to be forsaken. **That is part of repentance**, and it is an obstacle for many that choose to follow Jesus. So they compromise and say to themselves that this is not what the Bible teaches. They say, God would not send me to hell, because I love or crave a certain thing and I refuse to get rid of it or give it up.

Many people now in hell have found out the hard way that God's Word means exactly what it says. Compromising God's Word is death. It is the actual Word of God, the Bible, that shall be your judge, and woe to those that will not obey it! Woe unto those that put aside being in God's Word as they ought to be. How can a person know what is sin and what is God's will apart from His Word?

(It All Comes Down To **Two Voices**)

The first voice is the voice of God's Word, which says—This is the way. Walk ye in it.

The second voice is that of the devil that understands perfectly what is in the hearts of people and what they desire. His voice says—You can compromise God's Word. You can go a little to the left or a little to the right. It will be all right. The end result is this. A person's heart, that is, their desires, will choose which voice they follow. Be it known unto you again. If any object, or any desire, has any kind

of hold on you, forsake it. Repentance leads to heaven. Self-centeredness leads to hell. Wanting to possess things is **self-centeredness** and can also be **COVETOUSNESS**. The only thing you might want to possess is that which will help you grow in faith and reach others for Jesus.

**(LIFE IS A TEST)
(Rewards) (The Lake of Fire)**

The life of a person that follows Jesus is often filled with what appears to be difficult situations. Look, for example, at what Joseph and Mary went through. Look at what Jesus and the apostles went through. Some of these situations seem to have no solution. God is in control, but understand—**LIFE IS A TEST**.

God forbid, very, very few ministers understand the reason we are on this earth is to be tested.

The test started with Adam and Eve. Would they obey the voice of God or the devil? They obeyed the devil and fell, and so all mankind is under the curse. Jesus was **tested** three times by the devil, plus more later. **You are being tested. That is why you are here.** The test is simple. Will you follow God or the devil? And then the test includes to what degree you will follow Jesus or the devil. As a result of these tests, if you perish, you will receive either a few stripes or many **stripes** before being cast into the lake of fire. This occurs at the Great White Throne **Judgment**. These stripes will add greatly to the eternal torment and suffering a person will have to endure, time without end, and with no hope of escape.

The terror of the eternal lake of fire should scare every person enough that they would receive Jesus Christ as their only hope of salvation. In addition, it should scare every person to make sure they are in the faith. For it is written: 2 Peter 1:10-brethren, give diligence to **make your calling and election sure:** for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall.

If you follow Jesus, the test includes **rewards** and crowns. Some may be called the least in the kingdom of heaven, while others may be called great. It also includes the positions of authority

you should have during the Millennium.

How foolish people are in delaying to **forsake everything now**, and then may suffer the loss of great and eternal rewards later. Why is it so hard for people to understand eternity is forever, but their time on earth is not even a second of time in comparison? How hard it is for unspiritual people to forsake all they now have, just because Jesus commands them to do so; and they shall have much more later.

Regarding that **life is a test**, note the following. Ex 16:4. Then said the LORD unto Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day, that I may prove (**or test**) them, whether they will walk in my law, or no.

Ex 20:20-And Moses said unto the people, Fear not: for God is come to prove (**or test**) you, and that his fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not.

Deut 8:2-And thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove (**or test**) thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no.

Ps 26:2-Examine me, O LORD, and prove (**or test**) me; try my reins and my heart.

John 6:6-And this He said to prove (**or test**) him: for He Himself knew what He would do.

2 Cor 8:8-I speak not by commandment, but by occasion of the forwardness of others, and to prove (**or test**) the sincerity of your love.

2 Cor 13:5-Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove (or test) your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?

Other verses include: Deut 8:16; Jdg 2:22; 3:1.

Life is a test. The devil was created to do exactly what he is doing. He was given powers that are beyond man's understanding to deceive humanity. When a seal is put upon him and he is cast into the bottomless pit for 1000 years, he will no longer be able to deceive the people of the world. This happens when Jesus returns.

But now, **whenever** you choose to follow and obey Jesus (or God's Word), there are two

voices in your head. One says obey God. The other says you do not need to, and then gives you a reason. Your **heart** chooses which voice to follow. This may be difficult to believe, yet it is true. God wants you to draw closer to Him. Satan wants you to follow the things of the world. Whenever a person chooses to draw **closer to Jesus**, the gate they have to go through is usually called sacrifice, giving up something your worldly mind does not want to give up, denying yourself, and then **conforming more to the image of Christ-Ro 8:29. Doing so is not an option** for those that inherit eternal life. This is the road Jesus **requires** a person to take, but few will do it, and few will be raptured. A person that does not grow in Jesus, will not be with Jesus.

(THE RACE AND GOD'S WORD)

Regretfully, few finish the race and course that God has set before them. They just quit, or they fall by the wayside, or they become "do nothing" Christians when it comes to the works of Christ. They compromise regarding time spent in God's Word, and, thus, their faith is not strong; and **without faith, it is impossible to please God**. How much time is enough? There is no limit. Being in God's Word comes first, before all other things. Very, very few will do this anymore. As a result, most people are left behind, and many that make it have few rewards and crowns for eternity. The hardships and problems that confront most as they follow Christ are just too much for many, and their faith fails. The more a person obeys God's Word and reaches out to others with the Gospel, the more resistance that may confront them.

Many compromise and water down the teachings of the Bible in these latter days. Good Philadelphia-type of teaching from God's Word has almost all disappeared from this generation. **Do you know what Philadelphia teaching is?**

When a person repents and surrenders to Jesus, he is also surrendering to God's Word. God's Word is to reign over you. Indeed, at the Judgment, you will be judged by this very same word. A person needs to **immerse** themselves in the Bible. The faith to stand comes only from reading God's Word. Stories that many churches

preach sound nice, but produce **no faith** in the hearer.

Sound doctrine is rare anymore in the churches, on the radio and television, or even on the Internet. A person is **commanded** by the Bible to read and hear the Word of God. Thus, this is where Satan attacks. Open your Bible. Do you have DVDs or cassette tapes playing God's Word as you go about your work at home? Are they consistently playing in your house? No? Why not?

God made it plain that the food you eat is not as important as God's Word.

Let us say: You begin to study your Bible. Then the telephone rings.

People you have not seen in 10 years come and knock on your door.

The baby begins crying.

The children in your house begin fighting. All of a sudden, there are loud noises outside of your window. So you put away your Bible and then, a short time later, all the distractions may stop.

Those people that are in the Bible only a little usually fall when the spiritual battle picks up. Their faith fails. Faith can only come as a result of being in God's Word.

It is a very foolish person that says yes to Jesus, but then does not **immediately** immerse themselves in the Word of Him that saved them. The Bible is God's instructions to you.

If you go to work for a business, they may give you a manual on what and how to do things. If you fail to read and obey that manual, you can expect to be fired.

Jesus needs to teach you immediately after you say yes to Christ. There is a spiritual battle ahead. The only weapons you have, the only armour you have to protect yourself and fight this battle comes from God's Word. So Satan will use every possible means, even your children, to keep you away from God's Word as much as possible.

Any person that allows their children, situations, or anything to keep them from being in God's Word a lot, I said a lot, is setting them-

selves up for a fall. They usually never grow beyond being a worldly (or carnal) Christian. And then when the floods come, the rains fall, and the winds blow, their walk with God that is built on sand crumbles.

Any professing Christian that has not completed reading the entire New Testament in less than a month after being saved, in this author's opinion, has made a big mistake. That is only about 10 pages a day.

Any person that chooses to stand around and talk to people, rather than immersing themselves more and more in God's Word makes a big mistake. The more you are in God's Word, the more God can use you. The more you make excuses, the less God can use you. Your heart will direct what you do. Regretfully, the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?-Jere 17:9.

Your heart needs to be purified. Quit making excuses. Once and for all, put God's Word first, lest you perish from the way.

Any hindrances or distractions, or diversions to you growing through God's Word need to be dealt with. The best way a person can teach their children to put God's Word first is to set an example. Parents that put their children first and God's Word second **make a fatal mistake**. The Bible is as clear as it can be. If you do this, do not expect to inherit eternal life. If you love your children as much as God, you are dead even while you live. Such a person's understanding of God's Word is extremely shallow. When the Bible tells you personally to follow Jesus that is exactly what it means. No compromise, no excuses. But if you are a compromiser, much of what you read will probably go flying over head like a jet plane. It has no root in your heart as things in your heart block it.

THE FALL OF ADAM
THE TWO ADAMS: ONE BEFORE HE SINNED
ONE AFTER HE SINNED.
MAN'S FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD
WAS BROKEN

Adam was created in the image of God.
When he was created, God pronounced all He

made was "very good."

Adam and Eve had fellowship with God.

Then Eve was tested by Satan. She gave in to Satan's temptation and sinned. Then she tempted Adam, and he sinned and fell. Please read the following slowly and carefully.

Adam had changed from a follower of God, to a follower of Satan. His fellowship with God had ended.

Then God sent the second Person of the Godhead to the earth.

*His purpose was to restore the fellowship that man had lost with God because of Adam. *That could only be accomplished* **IF SINFUL MAN BECAME SINLESS** as Adam was originally. How could this be accomplished?

*Jesus was made under the law. He lived under the law of Moses. He lived a perfect life.

He was tempted in every way imaginable by Satan, plus Satan working through people. He never sinned.

***Therefore, because He was without sin, He could take the people's sins upon Himself. He could forgive mankind. He could forgive those that believed and trusted in Him, and Him alone, that had repented.** Repentance means to stop disobeying God's Word. This also involved being **baptized into Christ**, and washing away their sins, and then as they come out of the water, they come into **the newness of life**-Acts 22:16. As Jesus received the Holy Spirit when He came out of the water, so it is even now. Repentant man comes out of the water, and he shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. He is now born again.

Jesus came to this earth. He loved people. He healed the sick. He raised the dead. He did miracles which no other man had ever done.

Then He was arrested. The price God, Who had come in the flesh, paid was horrible. He was mocked. He was ridiculed. He was laughed at. He was challenged. He was falsely accused. He was terribly whipped. The flesh was ripped off His body. His beard was ripped off His face. A crown of huge thorns was embedded into His head. He was hung on a

cross. He was marred worse than any man. Nails were hammered through His hands and feet. He was a bloody mess. His face was grossly disfigured. The pain must have been beyond comprehension. As He hung on the cross with His life slowly slipping away, there was no compassion. All there was, was laughing and mocking, as mankind had vented their hate upon their Creator. A spear pierced His side. Then, finally, He died. His last words toward those that hated and killed Him were incredible. He said **FATHER, FORGIVE THEM FOR THEY KNOW NOT WHAT THEY DO.** Then, it was finished. Then Jesus said: **FOLLOW ME.** Few will, especially in this pleasure and comfort-filled society.

The impossible had been accomplished. There was now a way for man to be reunited to and have fellowship with His Creator, as Adam once had, but he had lost it.

He had taken the sins of mankind upon Himself. He had paid the penalty for their sins—death. However, it was not for all mankind that He died. It was for those that would trust in Him for the forgiveness of their sins. It was for those that would **pick up their cross daily, deny themselves, and follow Him.** Few are willing. Many accept Him, but most refuse to follow Him.

He **died for** all those that should not henceforth **live** unto themselves, but **unto Him** which died for them—ref 2 Cor 5:15.

He died for them that would **repent** of their sins, then **obey** His Word, including to **be baptized** by immersion, and live a life according to His Word.

TROUBLING NEWS

The churches preach what Christ did for us. But they totally **leave out that the forgiven sinner has an obligation to Christ. That is, to take up his cross, deny themselves, and follow Him.**

The Gospel that is preached in the churches today is far, far different than the Gospel John the Baptist, Jesus, and the apostles taught. Some preach man's psychology.

Many today say all you need to do is say a sinner's prayer. Sometimes even believing on

Jesus is now omitted. Repentance, which is required, is seldom mentioned, as well as what repentance means. People leave churches and believe they **ARE ETERNALLY SAVED** and **SECURE**, no matter what they do.

Many churches leave out that it is by **faith** we are saved, and that it takes faith to be able to forsake all to follow Jesus.

They leave out that the kind of faith that saves must be built upon the Rock, which is God's Word.

A survey revealed that only two percent of all professing Christians had ever read the entire Bible even once. Our own survey revealed that at a crusade, about 100 people said a sinner's prayer. Sometime after, they were visited. Not one showed any sign of repentance.

MAN'S FALL AND RESTORATION

God's plan for humanity is this.

FIRST a person will be **BORN AGAIN** through receiving the **SPIRIT OF GOD.** This occurs as a result of faith in Christ, repenting, and obeying God in water baptism. However, he still is very worldly \emptyset a baby Christian.

SECOND a process of **TRANSFORMATION** begins to take place in the born again person's life through faith, resulting from being heavily in the Bible, and by the **POWER** of the Holy Ghost. The Christian cannot remain the same, for if he does, he will perish. He must grow, as a child must grow. Many growing pains occur as his worldly nature fights and resists certain changes.

A person begins to **GROW AND OVERCOME** through **THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD'S WORD,**

and through "strong" faith, and through humbling and dying to himself, by the power of the Holy Ghost.

He overcomes his worldly, fallen nature that he was born with because of Adam's fall.

Christ needs to be formed in the born again person. The same mind that is in Christ needs to be in you-ref Phil 2:5. The Word of God needs to work inside of a person. It cannot work in a person that is heavily engaged in the world, and little engaged in God's Word.

By faith a person begins to understand. With a lack of God's Word, there is a lack of understanding.

During this transforming process, many turn back and fall. However, they do not recognize they have fallen or gone back to their wallowing in the mud. They do not understand that God is trying to change them from a worldly-centered person to a Christ-centered person.

THIRD. For those few that continue to grow in yielding to GOD'S WORD, in dying to themselves daily, in obeying GOD'S WORD, in obeying what GOD SAYS TO DO in every situation, these finally reach maturity. The sin that the person had was dealt with at the cross. Now the Christian is finally CONFORMED to the image of Christ. This is what the Bible calls "PERFECTION." They have reached what the Bible calls FULL AGE. This Christian can now use the strong meat of the Word. Their senses have been exercised to understand good and evil, right and wrong in accordance with God's Word.

This is the process. Hear it again. He becomes born again. Then he goes through much testing and tears, denying himself, hardships, and people hating him as he follows Christ (that is, GOD'S WORD). The world thinks he is crazy. He was being tested and TRANSFORMED. Then he reaches a point of being CONFORMED to Christ through strong faith. Note the key, GOD'S WORD. Those that do not immerse themselves in GOD'S WORD have little hope of ever even coming close to this, and they just kind of fade away, never being anything more than lukewarm. These are rejected when the Rapture comes. The foolish and those that are rejected find good excuses to put the Bible

second. Those that are transformed and grow strong in faith do not do this. As already clearly stated, no faith and weak faith are not acceptable. The lukewarm are rejected-Rev 3:16.

This could be looked at in several ways.

A baby is born. If fed good food, he grows from a baby, to a young child, to a child, to a teenager, and then to adulthood or maturity.

During this app. 20 year period, he goes through many changes, problems, sickness, and difficulties. However, along the way, if he quits eating, he could die.

BIBLE READING AND FAITH

(Where Most People Fail, and Perish)

In this world, there is family, friends, children, your job, possessions & things to do.

Then there is God, Who is revealed through His Word.

Which of these is your God?

What is faith? Why is it important? How do we get it? Are there different kinds of faith, and why is faith in Jesus Christ an absolute for salvation?

Why is faith important? It is because there is absolutely no hope of being saved at all, except through faith in the Jesus Christ of the Bible.

It is important, because the only way a person can remain standing in the Lord is by faith.

It is very important, because all Christians must overcome the world, its temptations, its distractions, even its hardships.

It is important, because a Christian needs to grow up in the Lord and not remain a baby Christian. This is only accomplished by faith or trust. It is important, because it is impossible to please God without faith; and without faith, a person has no chance of being saved.

There is: no faith, little faith, wavering faith, strong in faith, overcoming faith.

No faith is not pleasing to God.

Little faith or wavering faith is also not pleasing to God. Ja 1:6-8-But let him ask in faith,

nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea **driven** with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord. A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.

Self-centered, worldly-minded Christians are those that put the things of this world before Christ. They read the Bible when convenient. They have little faith, and little obedience to God's Word. They are ignorant of many things in the Bible. These represent most Christians now. What people need and eventually must have is strong faith, which is overcoming faith. Life is that testing time to see if they will **fully** repent, I said **FULLY** repent, or stay in their present lukewarm state and be left behind.

What is Faith?

Heb 11:1-Now faith is the **substance** of things hoped for, the **evidence** of things not seen. KJV

Now faith is **being sure** of what we hope for and **certain** of what we do not see. NIV

Now faith is the **assurance** of things hoped for, the **conviction** of things not seen. NAS

Heb 11:3-By faith we understand...NAS

A person is born with no faith. Then as a person **devours** God's Word, he grows in faith, if his heart is right, and he obeys the Gospel. A lack of obeying God's Word is *evidence* of little or no faith.

Faith, Satan, and Other Gods

A person that hears God's Word on a subject is usually confronted with a voice from Satan in their head contradicting God's Word. His **heart**, coupled with the amount of **faith** he has, chooses which he will follow.

A person begins to read God's Word. God is opening up the Scriptures to him. The telephone rings. The person is an old friend that wants to talk. **Life is a test**. Will the person through faith put God's Word first, or their old friend? If their faith is small or a wavering faith, they will lean toward their friend. If their faith is strong they will, without hesitation, politely tell their friend they will

return the call. Then they return quickly to the Scriptures.

The importance of faith is **beyond measure**. You cannot overcome the world and its distractions apart from faith. You cannot stand in the Lord apart from faith. You cannot please God apart from strong faith. You cannot understand much of the Bible without faith.

Faith that is centered in Jesus Christ is the very foundation of a Christian's life. Both with no faith and lukewarm faith in Christ, the lake of fire is a certainty.

HOW DO WE ACQUIRE FAITH?

FAITH comes from one source only.

Ro 10:17-So then **faith cometh by hearing**, and hearing by **the word of God**. KJV

Consequently, faith comes from **hearing the message**, and the **message is heard through the word of Christ**. NIV

v.16-However, they did not all heed (or **obey**, or pay attention to) the glad tidings? They have not all obeyed the gospel.

The conclusion of God's Word is easy to understand. You acquire faith from one source only. **The Bible, the Bible, the Bible**.

With little faith, the things of the world will take priority.

Your heart directs what you will do regarding time spent in God's Word. And what you do will determine the amount of faith you may have, and **where you will spend eternity**.

What are some of the obstacles or distractions that may confront you when you try to read the Bible? Many indeed. These include the **cares** of this life, the **lusts** or desires of many **things**, the deceitfulness of **riches**, and the **pleasures** of this life.

The cares of this life are almost beyond number. The chief of these, for some, is family and paying bills. A person's spouse can be a distraction. Children are often a distraction. They demand your attention. They may constantly interfere with your Bible study. You may read 10 chapters, but afterward you cannot remember one word. Do you want the truth? If

a person loves anything like their spouse, their **children**, pleasures, sports, material possessions, houses, automobiles or their job, as they love God (which is His Word), they should have **no hope** of eternal life unless they totally repent. A person cannot follow two masters. Any person that loves the things God created as they love God, is headed for damnation. It is written—Thou shalt have no other gods before Me. Regretfully, a job, money, certain possessions, and children are a god to many people. For others it may be a hobby, cooking, or even excessive talking can be an obsession. God tells us to let thy words be few. If God's Word is not your one and only God, that is, Jesus Christ, Who is the Word, then you need to repent. Do not deceive yourself and be left behind as most will, when the soon coming Rapture comes. This world is not a Christian's home. Heaven is.

Most people are nearly totally ignorant regarding Satan. So what does Satan do? What may happen? Many times, as you seek to read your Bible, obstacles appear. Your boss calls you into work immediately. Your children want you to take them somewhere. With **strong faith**, there is no hesitation. The Bible comes before all.

With weak faith, the person is like a wave.

A person that understands the Bible can recognize what Satan is doing, whereas a person that has little faith may not.

The WORD OF GOD is not just an important book. **It is life. It is Jesus. It is His Word.** And when you disobey it, you are in sin. When you disobey it, you **are running from Jesus**, not toward Jesus. Did you know this?

The conclusion of the matter is this. **To put God's Word second place in your life is sin.** Did you know that? Do you confess it as sin and then repent? Probably not, because you may be ignorant of what the Scriptures say. Then your sin remains. If you intend to grow in faith and survive the spiritual battles set before you, you **must** begin forsaking this present world. The

Bible (which is Jesus) **MUST BECOME YOUR LIFE AHEAD OF EVERYTHING, before your kids, before the cares of this life, before the pleasures of this life, before money, before the lusts of other things.** If your excuses stop the Bible from being the center of your life—then **crucify your excuses.** Begin immediately spending 2, 3, or 4 hours or more a day devouring God's Word and don't look back. Excuses lead to hell. Obedience leads to life. Did I hear the excuses already? Billions of people already in hell right now could be screaming out to you—**THE BIBLE FIRST, THE BIBLE FIRST**, and have no other gods before the God of the Bible. Little Bible reading, little faith, little obedience, can result in you joining all the others in hell that believed just as you may right now.

Any person that has said yes to Christ, but does not jump into the Bible with both feet and spend hours a day, every day, in His Word (plus obey it) in this lukewarm generation, is making what could be a fatal and eternal mistake.

Every time you read the Bible through, God opens it up more, and more, and more. In the beginning, much is hard to understand.

That does change for the repentant, the faithful, and obedient.

Learning what the Bible says never ends. Its eternal rewards are beyond human understanding.

The next breath you take is not possible without Christ. Your faith needs to increase—ref 2 Cor 10:15.

THE THREE PEOPLE'S LIVES IN 800 WORDS THEY CAN BE A FATHER OR MOTHER

God calls 3 people. They repent and are baptized. Each attends a better than average teaching church. All three are told to go home and begin devouring God's Word, as they need to learn of Christ. Only through much Bible reading can their faith grow as it needs to. Attending Sunday school and church is not enough they learn.

Each is married, has a job, and 2 children. **The first** turns off the TV, gives excellent children's Bibles to each, and then begins to study a lot. The **second** begins to study, but not very long. The kids go and lay down. The **third** goes home, as if nothing had transpired.

Time passes. Through Sunday school, church, and Bible study, **number one** grows in faith and knowledge. His kids also, seeing his example, have a serious attitude about the Bible, plus they also have their own. **Number two** is growing some, but not as number one, as Bible study time is much shorter, and the kids are more rebellious. **Number three** has done little since coming to Christ. No change is taking place in his life.

Time passes. **Number one** realizes that many things (he) is involved in are hindering his Bible study time. He stops participating in worldly activities and does so with the kids also. Certain people are not happy with his decision. The kids are upset. **Number two** continues Bible study, but does not have as much time as number one. This is because he is involved in some very needful community activities, as are his kids. The kids are happy. **Number three** continues to go to Sunday school, church, and once in a while might dust off his Bible. He is a very good, community-minded person.

Meanwhile, the kids of **number one** have partially gotten over having to quit their after school activities. Their Bible reading is going so, so. Dad brings them some Bible DVDs to listen to about the Bible. The kids like this. **Number two** is still reading his Bible. Some days more than others. His kids are still doing well playing sports, and one even got an award. **Number three**, no change.

Two years have passed. **Number one** has grown greatly in faith and in understanding the Bible, which at first had been hard to understand. His kids have also grown, although they still miss what most of the other kids are doing, and there is some resentment.

Number two has grown some, but not to be compared to number one. Both of his children have done well in sports and are well liked.

Number three, no change. He is now a pillar in the community. His kids are doing well, and one

became president of a school club. All go to church, but there is no change in their lives.

Five years have passed.

Number one is strong in faith. He has a good knowledge of God's Word. One of his **children now goes to a Bible college**. Both have grown in faith and wisdom of God's Word.

Number two has not grown much. His kids are still rebellious a bit. But they do well at sports and are popular.

Number three is elected to the town council. One of his children is considering Harvard. Both have grown into good young men.

Two more years pass. **Number one** all of a sudden has a thought. About the same time, there is a knock on his door. A person somehow, some way has heard about him. He is asked to forsake everything, and then wait. How can I survive, he wonders? But he does so. In the meantime, he had been witnessing to about everything that moved. Then God gave him his own ministry, to which he was faithful, as he had been all along. Some time before this, his younger son received Christ as his Savior. What joy was in his heart! **Number two** had grown some, but was still lukewarm. He was a good person, but shallow in God's Word. He never quite got to the point of letting Jesus (the Word) direct his life. His two sons were unsaved.

Number three was loved by the community as were his two sons, which were now enrolled in the Ivy League college.

Then, somewhat expected by **number one**, but not by **number two** or **three**, the event happened. **Number one** was raptured and **both his children**. Oh, what a joy! They were with Christ. **Number two** thought he would be raptured, but he was not. He cried out, Lord, Lord, and then he heard a voice: I do not know you. He was terrified and cried bitterly, but it was too late. God does not take the lukewarm. Both children were also left. Neither was **number three** or his children taken. He did not know the Rapture was coming. Only **number one and his sons** had put God first and had conformed to the image of Christ.

Mt 2:14. When **he** arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt.

Mt 2:15. And was there until the death of Herod: that it **might be fulfilled** which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son.

Mt 2:16. Then **Herod**, when he saw that he was mocked (or outwitted) of the wise men, was exceeding wroth (or furious), and sent forth, and slew all the children (or boys) that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts (or vicinity) thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the wise men.

Mt 2:14. Joseph obeyed God without hesitation, even though it was night. Joseph sets an example of obedience to God without contending.

Even though Mary would have been tired, she obeyed without hesitation or arguing, or doubting.

She sets an example of how a wife that fears God is to be.

This indicates that when they left, no one may have seen or even known that they departed or where they were going. They were to leave in secrecy, insuring there would be no one to tell the soldiers that would soon be coming. Joseph is mentioned first, then the young child, then his mother. There is no indication that any neighbors knew this was the Son of God.

Joseph, as with Abraham, appeared to go forth, yet not knowing where he was going. It has been stated that there was a large Jewish population in a certain area in Egypt at this time. They undoubtedly would have been welcomed by their own people and blended in.

Nearly all Christians greatly underestimate the lengths Satan will go, to try and stop those that follow Jesus.

Mt 2:15. They stayed in Egypt till Herod died.

Joseph obeyed God. It does not appear that **Herod** lived very much longer after he had many children killed, hoping that the king that had been born might be among them.

Mt 2:16. The birth of Jesus may have taken place in 4 or 5BC. This certifies that the young child would have been under two years old at this time.

Herod's determination to kill the King of the Jews knew no bounds. Satan had put it into his heart to destroy Jesus no matter what the cost. The areas that the children were killed included areas outside of Bethlehem also.

Those that follow Christ as they ought, without compromise, will often find those that follow Satan trying to do the same to them. This is especially true in some Moslem countries.

Mt 2:17. Then **was fulfilled** that which was spoken by Jeremy (or Jeremiah) the prophet, saying,

Mt 2:18. In Rama (or Ramah) was there a voice heard, lamentation (or great mourning), and weeping, and great mourning, **Rachel** weeping for her **children**, and would not be comforted, because they **are not** (or were no more).

Mt 2:19. But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeareth **in a dream** to Joseph in Egypt,

Mt 2:20. Saying, Arise (or get up), and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel: for **they are dead** which sought the young child's life.

Mt 2:21. And **he** arose (or got up), and took the young child and his mother, and came into the land of Israel.

Mt 2:22. But when he heard that Archelaus did reign in Judaea in the room (or in place) of his father Herod, he was afraid to go thither (or there): notwithstanding, being **warned of God** in a dream, he turned aside into the parts (or district) of Galilee:

In the near future, a time period called the tribulation will begin. About 3 ½ years from the end of that time, there will be a mass execution of those that follow Christ. Many will be beheaded.

Mt 2:17. The book of Jeremiah covers from app. 628-561BC

Mt 2:18. Christians greatly underestimate their enemy the devil, and the powers he has to deceive people. It "appears" that once he (Herod) had accomplished his mission directed by Satan, his usefulness was over, and he died soon after.

Excavations recently in Israel have led experts to believe Herod died about 4BC.

Mt 2:19. This was dream 3.

After King Herod died, his kingdom was divided. His son Herod Antipas ruled over Galilee and Perea. His son Archelias ruled over Judaea and Samaria. He was succeeded by Herod Agrippa.

The name of Jesus provokes different reactions in people. A few love that name, and will worship Him. Others are indifferent. Others will curse His name. People do not curse the name of the dead, but of the living. They curse the name of God and Jesus because they are alive. Do people curse the name of Buddha? No, he is not alive.

Mt 2:20. Estimates of how long they stayed in Egypt range from a few weeks to two years. The scripture still calls Jesus the young child.

Mt 2:21. Direction regarding the family was given to the the Joseph. He obeyed God.

Mt 2:22. Even though God was with Joseph, he still had fears. He was afraid to go to Judea because a son of Herod reigned there. God warned him in a dream so he returned to the Galilee. This was dream 4.

Mt 2:23. And he came and dwelt in a city (or town) called **Nazareth**: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene. To Lk 2:39.

Mt 2:23. Joseph returned to Nazareth in the Galilee. This is where he had been before the birth of Jesus. Population estimates of Nazareth during the times of Jesus ranged from 480 to 2000. The current population is app. 210,000 with 59% being Israeli Arabs, and 41% being Jews. The age of Jesus is estimated to have been 2 to 3 years old at this time.

[Click here for Mt. Chapter 3](#)

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