

I Have

# TWELVE QUESTIONS ABOUT GOD

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# PREFACE

I would like to preface this book so as to honestly meet the expectations of any reader. Some may say, “oh this is probably another ludicrous book about God OR you don’t believe in God OR whatever”. If that is your personal reason/decision for not reading any further that is absolutely acceptable and I respect it. Then **PLEASE STOP DO NOT READ ANY FURTHER AND BEST WISHES!**

If on the other hand you are willing to maintain an “open mind” about God, I believe this book will be of value regardless of where you are or are not in relationship with Him. Why? Because it is not just another “religious” book that force feeds God into your mind and heart. It is not a fire and brimstone approach to God. Rather this book will take you on a logical journey by challenging you to answer 12 penetrating questions about God. These questions will help you better understand how the world got to where it is today. But more importantly how YOU personally fit into life’s flow. I must warn you; it uses the Bible as my supporting reference document, but does NOT contain any biblical verses to intimidate or puzzle you. Rather it takes a step by step intellectual and logical approach between you the reader; and your hopeful desire to seek TRUTH in a world of chaos and distraction. If you are not up for this challenge, please go no further.

I like you believe everyone is entitled to their opinion about God. However, the focal point of the book is to arrive at ABSOLUTE TRUTH. In order for that to happen an “open mind” is required! You may be thinking that there is no such thing as ABSOLUTE TRUTH. Please allow me to try to present my attempt, and you are certainly welcome to refute it.

## **QUESTION ONE**

### **IS THERE A GOD?**

Over the course of human history people have been asking the most captivating question, “Is there a God”? The question of the existence of a true God is not as unpretentious as it might appear. Not everyone can agree on the answer. But what we can agree on is there is no central ground. Answering this depends on your frame of reference, culture or source of information. For example, if you believe the Bible as the source, the answer is obviously yes; if you use most secular references, the answer most likely will be no.

Let us go back to the beginning of recorded human history by briefly examining the past six kingdoms into the present day. This is not an exercise to debate how long the earth has spun on its axis, the length of the various ice ages, etc. For the purpose of this book, I would like to focus on recorded human history, starting with the periods BC starting with the Egyptians, followed by the Assyrians, Babylonians, Media Persians, Greeks and into the Roman Kingdom. Following with the current AD period right up to our present 21<sup>st</sup> century. Understandably, there were other “minor” world empires like the British or Ottoman that also existed over time as well.

All of those “major” kingdoms named above that appeared on the world stage, have one common denominator, namely that of some type of “deity worship”. The “object or person” of their deity worship may range from a human to an animal, or any inanimate imagined object in-between. In most instances these kingdom religions were polytheistic so as to not neglect one at the expense of another. So why the fuss over a deity? The point I am making, right or wrong, is that each “object” of worship exhibits man’s basic confidence / reliance on someone or something other than himself for worship, guidance, strength or support. In some cases, these “deities” were sought to bring leaders and their followers favor because of their need for appeasement or approval. These “deities” served more or less as a type of “good luck charm” that people worshiped to gain indulgence or to satisfy in some way. That philosophy sometimes

holds true today as well. In some religions people strive to reach deity. Man has always been searching for something greater than him/her self. In accordance with this belief, I have done some on-line Google research on the 15 most worshiped “deities” over time. They are, Coatlicue (Aztec), Zeus (Greeks). Athena (Greeks), Odin (Norse / Viking Mythology), Hanuman (Hindus), Krishna (Hindus), Durga (Hindus), Vishnu (Hindus), Mahavira (Jainism), Ganesha (Hindus), Brahma (Hindus) Buddha (Buddhism), Shiva (Hindus), Allah (Muslim) and finally Jesus Christ (Christianity). And lest we forget, the 12 Roman deities such as Jupiter, Juno, Mars, Mercury, Neptune, Venus, Apollo, Diana, Minerva, Ceres, Vulcan, and Vesta. I’m sure there are countless others I have omitted. As noble an endeavor as it is, it doesn’t answer the question ‘is there a God”?

Let us explore this question with some good old fashion secular logic, “if God exists”, how does one go about proving it? A tall order for sure, so allow me to start with these 5 truth statements.

The late apologist Ravi Zaharias interestingly responded to the question “Must the Moral Law Have a Lawgiver?” with the following response:

- 1. It follows that there is both good and evil in the world today*
- 2. Then it stands to reason that there must be a moral law upon which to base whether an action is good or evil*
- 3. Since there is a moral law there must be a moral law giver; because if there is no moral law then there is no moral law giver*
- 4. If there is no moral law then there is no good*
- 5. If there is no good then there is no evil*

Thus, by logical circular reasoning, we must conclude that both a moral law and moral law giver must exist. This moral law giver must be greater than man because each human is capable of reasoning to both good and evil in the world. So, let us give a name to this moral law giver or “superior being or deity”, God. It is obvious that this “superior being” or God must possess attributes greater than those who can reason to moral law and their surroundings. Let us further research information from several sources.

#### **HUMAN and / or PHILOSOPHICAL DATA:**

The father of Philosophy Socrates defined it as the rational search for truth. Let us continue in our search for God using that definition with a secular data path of logic. It is interesting to note that the burden of proof of God’s existence always lies with those who believe he exists; but not with those who do not. Why is that? Perhaps in an age of “scientism” only scientific proof is the accepted norm. There are countless other secular illustrations that I will cite to further explain the existence of God. However, while I can cite an abundance of sources that support the God’s existence, I am sure there are others who have their logic or philosophy to support quite the opposite. In the spirit of being fair and balanced, let us explore those who do NOT support the existence of God based on their philosophical beliefs. There are many in this camp but I will only choose three of the more renowned, namely Bertrand Russell, Fredrich Nietzsche and Richard Dawkins.

Mr. Russell was a notable 20<sup>th</sup> century Welch philosopher and atheist. He has been credited with writing many articles, books and essays on his position that God does not exist. In essence, Bertrand believes in something, but not the God of the Bible. He doesn’t fault anyone else for their beliefs in “*fiction and fairy tales*”. He goes on to claim that he can’t ignore that there is “*some force*” at work in the universe causing creation and evolution. Much of his philosophical and intellectual reasoning is best outlined in his essay, “*Why I am not a Christian*”, published in 1927. In it, Mr. Russell uses five basic

arguments to support his position. While I will not go into great detail on each, I will instead try to accurately present them at a high level:

- **The First Cause Argument:** Stipulates that everything we see in the world has a cause. And as you go back in the chain of causes over time there must be a First Cause. He contends that it lacks validity. Why, because it leads him to the conclusion that if the First Cause is God, then who made God? Furthermore, he rests his argument that there is no reason to suppose that the world had a beginning.
- **The Natural Law Argument:** Stipulates for example, that people like Newton, who discovered the law of gravity that explains planets going around the sun; was just a convenient and simple explanation. Bertrand basically ties laws of nature to games of chance; and as such, they do not behave in an orderly or predictable manner. Again, staging his position on the absence of a law giver.
- **The Argument from Design:** Stipulates that everything in the world is made just so that we can manage to live in the world. And if the world was little different, we could not manage to live in it. Russell also supports the Darwinian theory that living creatures adapted to their environment because their environment was not suitable to them.
- **The Moral Argument for Deity:** Stipulates an intellectual decent that there is no difference between right or wrong. Why, because Russell presents the question, “*is that difference due to God’s fiat or not?*”? He further substantiates his conclusion by reasoning that if God is good, how can both right and wrong exist simultaneously.

- **The Argument for the Remediating of Injustice:** Stipulates a moral corollary argument above that the existence of God is required in order to bring justice into the world, and we know there is great injustice in our world. He postulates that if you look from a scientific point of view that there is injustice in the only world he knows, then the probability of injustice exists in the universe. Thus, how can a good God create or tolerate injustice everywhere.

Mr. Russell has other Christ related writings that support his atheistic position, which I will not reference because they are somewhat redundant, and are based on his opinion that Christ was not the best and wisest person. Note that this is his ungrounded opinion which does not quite fit the definition of a “search for rational truth”. I chose Bertrand Russell, Fredrich Nietzsche and Richard Dawkins as representative of all the atheistic advocates throughout human history. Their similar suppositions / arguments are comparable to the likes Epicurus, Knutson, Diderot, Hitchens to name a few. The point I’m trying to emphasize is that all these men have no time-tested documented source for grounding their philosophical or religious position statements. Better still, most on the atheist list depend on either a personal experience, a philosophical idea or those of others. At times these atheistic philosophies are very much unsubstantiated and somewhat irrational.

Nineteenth century philosopher Fredrich Nietzsche declared that God is dead. If true, is it reasonable to challenge him by asking two logical questions: 1) How long was God alive before Frederick declared Him dead? 2) Who killed Him and how? So, what, where and how did he prove his declaration of God’s death? Is it because Nietzsche said so? What he says needs to be balanced against some type of truth; or else it remains speculation or opinion. It needs to pass some tenet of relational truth to be somewhat credible. A personal declaration does not automatically equate to truth! I like to think that who you are is

where you were when! Many of these brilliant men may have grounded their positions on cultural or other influences during their lifetimes. It is obvious they all lack two common ingredients in their “philosophical” pronouncements, that of faith and hope. Pessimism may have permeated their outlooks during their lifetime. They obviously also lack faith as well. Perhaps their worlds were infused with a darkened gloom that could not be overcome by someone that exists beyond their mere human philosophical wisdom.

I will relate Mr. Dawkins’ basic philosophical advocacy that belief in God is “*belief without evidence*”. This does not seem reasonable based on the evidence of observable creation. He supports this position in an “Editorial dated April 20, 1992: “*A Scientist case against God*” by declaring that “*faith is the great excuse to evade the need to think and evaluate evidence*”. Mr. Dawkins positions himself a scientist, an evolutionary scientist at that. In his book “*The Selfish Gene*”, he emphasizes that the “gene” as the key unit of biological evolution. He builds upon the theory of George C. Williams view of adaptation and natural selection. While Mr. Dawkin’s acknowledges the roll of the gene in evolution, he doesn’t provide evidence as to where or how it came into existence. How convenient, so where is gene evolution in Mr. Dawkins’ theoretical mind? I love science! But I was always understood that scientist bases results or conclusions on factual observations and evidence; and not theory, personal opinion or hearsay. May I ask where Mr. Dawkins’ evidence exists? Or is he allowed a pass based solely on his opinions and Oxford education? There are several other books about “God” written by Richard. And so, I leave you the reader with two questions. If God doesn’t exist, why is he so intrigued by his fascination about God? Could this be a pretense for his search for God? As previously stated by Richard, “*faith is a great excuse to evade the need to think and evaluate evidence*”. Then if he cannot support his declarations, isn’t he acting on a “faith” excuse also? Two can swing from the same branch!

I trust I have adequately presented and refuted the “philosophies” of Messrs. Russell, Nietzsche and Dawkins along with fellow atheists. They were grounded on both secular and non-secular logic that God doesn’t exist. This will hopefully seem all the more plausible as you read further. My reasonableness will be supported by observation of empirical phenomena and reason such as the universe, and all contained and sustained therein. But more importantly, on time tested documentary grounding and not whimsical philosophical hypotheses. Why? Because it is a “no brainer” to accept that man, left to his own imperfect mind, is hopelessly incapable of such a creational phenomenon and sustainment feat. The probability for example of a “big bang” like theory of creation is somewhat irrational, bizarre and highly improbable. All know it takes a human sperm and egg to unite to form life. Yet how do two uncertain, undefined and unintellectual pieces of matter randomly collide to usher in such a mammoth ever-expanding universe? Where did the matter originate to commence the collision if there was no other created matter available in the first place? Thus, it is very reasonable to accept the existence of “some superior being” greater than man. Someone whose attributes are infinitely superior to man’s. We must logically eliminate a “superior thing” as well, since things while humanly programable, are void of intellectual reasoning. One can either place their credence in a pre-existent God or a pre-existent thing, particle or unreasonable theory. Your choice.

## **RESEARCH or STATISTICAL DATA:**

I took the liberty to further investigate our search as to why people don't believe in God with a 2017 Pew Research Center poll of adults in the US who claim to "believe in God". The results are as follows:

- 1. 90% said they believe in some kind of "higher power"**
- 2. 99% of Christians are particularly likely to believe in God or a higher power, with 80 percent claiming faith in the God of the Bible**
- 3. Almost half or 48% believe God determines what happens to them most or all the time**
- 4. Those adults under the age of 50 are less inclined to believe in a Biblical God and more likely to say they don't believe in any higher power or spiritual force**
- 5. 84 % of college educated adults are less likely to believe in the God or a higher power compared to high schoolers at 94%**
- 6. Finally, the survey finds that 45% of Democrats vs 70% of Republicans say they believe in the God of the Bible**

*Note: The only problem with the above 6 statements is what do people actually mean when they say the word "believe"?*

I then went on to investigate a 2017 adult Gallop poll study which asked a high level yes or no question, "Do you believe in God"? 87% said yes and 13% no. The online site VOX claims 20% of Christian adults don't believe in the God of the Bible, but in a "higher power". The most interesting statistic from that online site is that 18% of self-described atheists believe in a "higher power" as well. An interesting oxymoron arises. Are the 20% of "Christians" somewhat atheists, or are the 18% of "atheists" somewhat Christian?

## PROBABILITY DATA:

I enjoy the branch of mathematics called probability that concerns the numerical descriptions of how likely an event is to occur. I used it to research a renowned probability theory about God's existence. I came across an on-line article produced by Stewart Maclean, Catherine Bolsover and Polly Curtis regarding physicist and author Dr. Stephen Unwin, Ph D. A graduate from Manchester University working as a risk assessor in Ohio. In his book "*The Probability of God*", Mr. Unwin uses a 200-year-old formula called Bayer's Theory to calculate the probability of the existence of an "omnipotent being". Dr. Unwin starts with a 50/50 chance that a higher being exists. He then factors evidence both for and against. He was trying to bridge the gap between science and religion by stating that the question of God's existence is a matter of probability. On page 63 of his book he says, "*in the Bayesian world this is precisely what a probability represents: a degree of belief or level of confidence that some proposition is true*". And so, Dr. Unwin's ultimate conclusion is that there is a 95% certainty that God exists. Not to be a pessimist or a sceptic, but why would any sane human place their faith / trust in a god that is less than 100% existent? When was the last time you bought food with a sticker that read "95% probability of being non-toxic"? When I was in high school my Biology teacher stated that the probability that there is no God would be the same as if you could place every nut, bolt, steering wheel, battery, lights, seats, engine, etc. in a giant box, shake it up and out pops a working car. I sincerely hope I made my point for the science of probability dictating that God exists.

## **ANECDOTAL DATA:**

Lastly, I exhausted my quest for why people don't believe in God by visiting a site called [cityonahillstudio.com](http://cityonahillstudio.com). I thought I would get some good old-fashion anecdotal explanations from ordinary folks. Instead, I found mostly hyperbole. Their nine reasons for not believing in God are summed up as follows:

- 1. Grew up in a faithless family**
- 2. Stopped believing in religious teachings**
- 3. Experiences at College**
- 4. Intellectual Challenges**
- 5. Emotional Challenges**
- 6. Desiring Unity**
- 7. Wanting Moral Independence**
- 8. Issues about sex**
- 9. Politics**

## **MY CONCLUSIONS/EXTRAPOLATIONS:**

After collecting and cataloging all the above data, it can be summarized into five basic "*isms*" of human behavior, philosophy, logic, nature and intelligence that have been around since the dawn of creation.

- **Secular *ism*** – there is no god
- **Relativ *ism*** – there is no truth
- **Self *ism*** – there is no one who matters but me
- **Material *ism*** – there is nothing more valuable than more stuff
- **Mystic *ism*** – self-delusion or dreamy confusion of thought that cancels out the search for truth i.e., a cancel culture of sorts

All the data collected indicates a somewhat confusing depiction as to why some believe there is no God. What I fail to understand is, if God has endowed us with senses, reason and intellect would he not wish us to use them more prudently in search of truth about who made us? Opinion, conjecture and ungrounded assessments may be acceptable in games of chance, but not in an accurate search for truth about God's existence. Needed is something more tangible that can withstand the fluctuation of unintended consequences. I'm alluding to fixed or constant truth results that always prove reliable regardless of how, when or where they are applied. For example, we may ask why the natural world "obeys laws" like those of mathematics and natural order like gravity. Let's start with physics and science and the observing of the more obvious like the universe, planets, stars, oceans, animals, plants, etc. We can turn to the observable or empirical world which our five human faculties or senses can observe or grasp. Ever since the 15<sup>th</sup> century, scientist Nicolaus Copernicus observed and declared a bold statement that the earth orbits around the sun. Sir Isaac Newton, the famed 17<sup>th</sup> century mathematician and scientist is credited with the discovery of the *universal*/law of gravity. Are these forces of gravity and the earth's rotation a mere coincidence, chance or accident? Or was it perhaps designed by a "super natural being" with a prearranged purpose in mind? Notice the word *universal*. It denotes perfection and truth regardless of where you may be on the planet. Other searchers for truth can further substantiate the existence of "a superior being". Albert Einstein one of the most brilliant minds of the 20<sup>th</sup> century questioned, "*how can physical atoms and molecules create something that exists in a separate domain that has no physical existence, namely human consciousness*"? And finally, Rene Descartes, a famous 17<sup>th</sup> French mathematician summed it best with the explanation that "*the existence of a benevolent God is logically necessary for the evidence of the human senses to be meaningful*".

**Let us safely assume that these four famous scientists are correct in their beliefs; it still doesn't explain who God is, and why He acts the way He does. It gives us some insight into who this God may be like and why He creates. Question: Should I just accept and marvel at the genius of all I can observe in creation and walk away without searching for more material about the Creator or His "motivation"? I hope not. Please keep reading this gets more interesting.**

## QUESTION TWO

### WHO IS GOD?

I hope you will at least agree that there must exist a “supreme being”. If so, perhaps we can achieve some closure about who this “supreme being” is? Throughout time multitudes have attempted to define the sources for describing attributes to this “supreme being” I will call God. It seems only fair to define who God is by approaching it from both secular and non-secular truth paths. In other words, let’s attempt to ground our sources in our search for “truth”. My favorite axiom is from 20<sup>th</sup> century screen playwright David Stevens, “*the truth is the truth even if no one believes it; and a lie is a lie even if everyone believes it*”. Let us commence with a simple dictionary definition of truth, “truth is the property of being in accord with fact or reality”. In the court of public opinion that will be easier said than done. The secular scientific world supports four of the more basic principles for “truth” namely, congruence, coherence, consistency and usefulness. As an aside, an historically whimsical search for “truth” was initiated by a Roman Pontius Pilate over 2,000 years ago when he asked Jesus mockingly, “*and what is truth*”. So before describing who God is, the first hurdle we must overcome is how and where we go to determine the above principles for both fact and reality about Him?

#### A SECULAR TRUTH PATH:

We examined some peoples’ philosophies and theories about God. Let us continue to look at human history and apply the above four secular criteria (congruence or *agreeing*, coherence or *logical*, consistency or *adherence to same principles* and usefulness or *practicality*) in our search for truth. If we look back at those major kingdoms up to the present, I outlined in QUESTION ONE, it’s not difficult to spot some obvious shortfalls they employed using the criteria above. We can easily see the *consistency* criteria in history for the basis of power to rule. That seems to be the most often criteria for truth throughout all of modern history. That likewise raises the criteria of being *logical*. While I am certain there were a good number of “upright” yet imperfect leaders throughout history;

they were many other failures we could sight. And in their attempt to lead or govern truthfully, I would bet against their exactness in that quest, especially when measured against all four stringent criteria established above. Thus, I do not believe it difficult to conclude that any human endeavor produced throughout history, fall short in search for perfect truth.

Knowing that the human path for total truth is often imperfect and fraught with failure, our search for God needs to continue elsewhere. We must continue to ground ourselves in the criteria we established. We established that these phenomena function very consistently, congruently and usefully. But are they within themselves coherent or logical? These empirical phenomena don't possess the ability to be logical, while they may operate on a very consistent basis. But are they logical? No, why? Because they don't possess a "mind" with choice in which to exercise logic or reasoning. Said another way, being logical implies the ability to apply "sound reasoning" to a problem or situation. And since non-human creation like animals, lack rational capacity they are incapable of being logical. Predictable to a great degree, but not logical. They operate on innate ability. For example, birds do not follow a rational set of instructions / plans to build their nests. But yet their nest building technique and accomplishments are amazingly successful and unvarying wherever they build on the planet. The same can be said for others in the animal kingdom. Instead, they follow some type of instinctive blueprint that was fused into their being by their Creator. So, it is reasonable to conclude that all empirical creation could not have "reasoned" itself into existence, and further capable of self-sustainment.

#### **A NON-SECULAR TRUTH PATH:**

Based on the above, is it fair to conclude that the natural (human and non-human) secular path, as measured against our established secular criteria, is not acceptable in our quest of "perfect truth"? I believe the only avenue left to explore is a non-secular path. This path encompasses that which is above the realm of the human creation or possibility that of a super natural realm. This will lead us

into the realm of some type of a “non-human” or “non-created” or “super natural” being capable of governing over all empirical entities both created and sustained by its characteristics. We attempted to prove previously that all these empirical entities lack perfect truth based on any one or more of our established criteria. So, let us apply our truth criteria to our “non-human” “non-secular” supernatural being, we have called God for now. Since our five senses cannot easily observe this supernatural being or force, it is reasonable to assume that our attempt to further define God needs to be based primarily on what is created and sustained. And this may help us to discover what God can tell us about who He says He is. We will not get into what God says about Himself until later; but first, this supernatural being must pass the same vigorous truth criteria we applied to all empirical entities and laws applied earlier. Philip T. Dunwoody – Juniata College, “*Judgement and Decision Making*, vol. 4 no. 2, March 2009, pp 116-125 presents four theories of truth as an assessment criterion.

**Congruent or *agreeing*** – this criterion is a bit difficult to support, but safe to say God always is in agreement with that He creates even if what He creates is not in agreement with Him (we will explore the cause for this later in the book). He agrees that whatever being or thing He places on our observable path must serve some purpose to justify its existence and point back to Him in some way.

**Coherent or *logical*** - this criterion is somewhat easy, if He can bring or create other entries into existence, it is not reasonable to conclude that only a perfectly logical mind is capable of this type of a feat. We showed that humans or animals cannot create / bring themselves into existence, they can only procreate based on the gifts given them to do so. And non-human entities certainly cannot willfully bring themselves into existence nor sustain themselves.

**Consistent or *adhering to same principles*** – I believe this criterion is very easy, if we judge by the two types of created beings (human and animal); and the consistent principles found in the unseen micro and scientific realms. This is explainable based on unswerving, unfailing and reliable receptiveness.

**Useful or *practical*** - I believe this criterion is also very easy, again judging by His logic of sustainment for the entities created. He provides the necessary nourishment to sustain humans, animals and plants by a simple exchange of oxygen and carbon dioxide for starters, not to mention the other abundances like food, rain, sun & moon light, etc.

This hopefully supports defining God simply as **“ABSOLUTE TRUTH”!** In other words, there can be no other truth that supersedes or surpasses **“ABSOLUTE TRUTH”**. This goes against the norm of some who declare that there is no such thing as **“ABSOLUTE TRUTH”**. But we haven't as yet explored the rest of God's attribute resume. Suffice it to say for now that this God must possess additional attributes beyond those of His creation that qualify Him as **“ABSOLUTE TRUTH”**. Let us try to justify this label with additional attributes again based again on observable creation phenomenon and only our 5 senses and intellect. For starters He must be:

- All Knowing / Omniscient
- Omnipresent (everywhere)
- Loving / Giving
- Uncreated
- Powerful
- Just

This consignment of attributes certainly needs to be amplified, justified, personified and further explained. Again, looking at God's empirical creation, His perfectly logical mind is obviously equaled by His All-Knowing attribute. Logic requires knowledge, and perfect logic obviously requires perfect knowledge. It also makes perfect sense that this God must be everywhere simultaneously and oblivious to what we call time. How else can these created beings and empirical processes perform and be sustained in exactly the same manner all over creation simultaneously? As far as wisdom goes, we again need a secular definition. A decent one might be **“knowing what to do with what you know”**. As an example, I have knowledge that a fire can only survive with air, heat and a

combustible substance. So, if I wish to extinguish that fire all I need do is remove one or more of these vital components. That is acting wisely!

His ability to give is also quite obvious in that He affords sustenance to that which He created. Then one may ask why is there so much evil and suffering in our world like hunger? He is a giving provider, and there is certainly enough food on the planet to go around, so why do people die of starvation if food is plentiful? Is it possible to assume that He expects the “haves” to distribute it to the “have-nots”? We will address this and other man-made anomalies later on. Is it a stretch to say that God fulfills His desire to give, shouldn't the beneficiaries be responsible for sharing what is given too? In other words, creation should reflect their Creator's gifts. Always easier said than done!

The attribute that this God always existed and was not created should not be too difficult to prove and assimilate. If He was created, then who created Him and so on? Thus, logic dictates that we can keep playing that scenario just so long as we don't come to any resolution that satisfies the human desire for truth. Hopefully every reasonable civil being will need some type of closure on their search as to how and why they came into existence. I know I do, wouldn't you?

As for His power, that too can be established by His empirical feats in nature, the universe and all in between. I'm sure no human could compete with God's power to create and sustain. It is feasible to arrive at some type of agreement that this God is obviously incapable of mistakes, exceptions, or changes in the beings, laws and processes He created in order to reveal who He is? He therefore must be a God of order and not disorder. To say otherwise flies in the face of seeking another perfect being, since we already demonstrated the existence of the “highest” being. God created everything in an orderly sequence. The above attributes are once more observable by close examination of just a few examples such as the universe where by the planets, sun, moon and stars regulate times and seasons and operate with precise predictability. The

human anatomy in itself is a well-organized, complex and integrated set of systems that reflect the perfect creative attributes of its Creator. There are numerous additional examples that can be cited in physical phenomenon as it relates to animals, oceans, atmosphere, etc. And I haven't discussed the precise predictability within the non-physical world of molecular and sub atomic particles within elements and compounds that compose all creation. After all, how else would we be able to utilize our conscious mind? It would be quite an accomplishment if some created being could duplicate itself or such complex laws and systems. To keep everything sustained and holistically integrated is well beyond the capability and intellect of any other created being. I hopefully demonstrated by now that there is a God. However, we have not as yet established why God creates.

### **QUESTION THREE**

#### **WHY DID GOD CREATE?**

By now I hope I have shed sufficient light on both God's existence and creative attributes to advance us as to who He is. But I feel it necessary to explore God's reason for creating in the first place. Perhaps we can validate an answer to that question by looking at a list of possible reasons:

A. He was bored and had nothing else to do? - Since we hopefully reasoned that God always existed, it would seem practical that his infinite existence supplants the element of time. Time (past, present and future) can only exist within a finite mind that cannot comprehend infinity or eternity. If God had nothing else to do, why create? His perfectness implies He is self-fulfilled and sufficient. He doesn't need to create anything incremental to satisfy Himself if He is totally perfect. Imperfection in and of itself logically requires something or someone that is necessary to fulfill an imperfect void. So, it seems impractical to assume that God created out of a sense of boredom or His need to satisfy something missing in His realm or domain.

#### **OR PERHAPS**

B. He did not or cannot create? – I think I sufficiently covered this from our earlier QUESTIONS ONE and TWO. In other words, observable creation could have come into existence by some other “means” outside that of a “supreme being” Creator we call God. There is a scientific law called the “*Conservation of Mass*” that declares, “matter can neither be created or destroyed”. In other words, the total amount of mass and energy in the universe is constant. I do not claim to be a scientist or physicist to be able to refute or dispute that law.

However, as a human I can certainly reason that the “constant mass” had to have come into existence somehow or in some way, either by other “matter” or by a supernatural Creator. Well, if by “other matter” from where and who did that originate? How did it just arrive on the scene? My only logical conclusion and belief is a Creator, and a perfectly truthful one at that.

### **OR PERHAPS**

C. To make Himself known? – He certainly would not be making Himself known before creation since there was no necessity to do so. However, after creation seems the more likely possibility. But if God is so perfect, why is that not reflected in His created beings from the start? After all, why or how would a perfect being like God not create other perfect beings reflective of himself? Great question! I will explore this in more detail in the next two QUESTIONS. Actually, His perfection was reflected and transmitted. So, what went wrong? It is perfectly logical to assume “something” took place after creation that no doubt interrupted the perfection originally transmitted by this perfect God to His creation. In other words, a “disruptive flow” did not originate in or from the perfect Creator. If it had, then the Creator also lacks perfection which is illogical. What attribute was given to created beings that could possibly account for the occurrence of this “disruptive flow”? That attribute is free will or choice. That “disruptive flow” is briefly introduced here as transgression or “sin”. And what is a secular dictionary definition of sin? “An immoral act considered to be a transgression against divine law”. You may recall, I alluded to divine law in QUESTION ONE. Divine law implies a divine law giver. Thus, for the sake of answering the initial question again as to why God created, namely to hopefully show His transgressed

human creation who He really is. And why would He do this? For starters, to try to help enlighten their mind darkened by “sin” because it was corrupted by their freedom and ability to erroneously choose.

*(To be sure this subject matter must and will be treated in much more detail later on.)*

## **QUESTION FOUR**

### **IS CREATION THE ONLY WAY TO KNOW THAT GOD EXISTS?**

Until now I requested that you trust me almost entirely on creational evidence to rationally reveal that God exists, who He is, and why He created. But you may ask is there any truthful and tangible reference document, book or material I can acquire to further help me know that God exists? Can we discover any other “revealed proof” that God may utilize to disclose His desire to make Himself known? If God is so perfect that shouldn’t be too challenging for Him. Let’s inspect some written books to see if we can answer that. Hopefully there is some type of combined historical and morally truthful written instructional manual / book or guide that helps in our quest to know about God further. This assignment will not be easy. Why? Because solely producing such a “perfect” book by an imperfect human author is doomed to failure and must somehow be flawed. So, good luck with that! Let us step back a moment. If I wish to build house and I did not have a clue how, I may try to find someone trustworthy who has both built and can instruct me as to how to build one. That instruction guide must be somewhat impeccable or else I could easily fail in my endeavor to build a good house. However, that would be easier than finding a perfect book revealing God in a world full of imperfect creatures. And besides, if God is so perfect how could any human perfectly understand what God desires to make known about Himself? That would take a mind greater than that of God. It again appears our task becomes impossible since every written book, parchment, and piece of literature on the planet is penned by an imperfect human author or group of authors. We can forget that idea; unless this perfect God can somehow guide, influence or inspire imperfect author(s) to record His revealed truth. Is this all knowing, wise, omnipresent, and giving perfect Creator capable of such an undertaking? Can God slip Himself into the mind of these authors to affect objective truth? Or is that just too much for even Him to achieve, or better still, humans to believe? Is this wishful thinking? Does it border on the incredulous or ridiculous? Are we giving Him much too much ability and control to succeed? All the above questions merit more scrutiny in our attempt to answer.

But even if such a book exists, that is inspired by God and penned in cooperation with human authors, how can we evaluate its truthfulness? Perhaps we could use the non-secular logic criteria for truth we utilized in earlier QUESTIONS in search of such a document. Now that is a lofty directive because that God inspired document penned by humans must again be:

**Congruent** or *agreeing*

**Coherent** or *logical*

**Consistent** or *adhering to same principles*

**Useful** or *practical*

I initiated my quest for such a book by examining a list of the most read. For the sake of expediency, I chose to use a random on-line site to help me produce a list of books most published over the last 50 years. And here are the top ten read books in the world, and their respective number of published copies, low (10) to high (1):

10. The Diary of Anne Frank – 27 million
9. Think and Grow Rich – 30 million
8. Gone with the Wind – 33 million
7. The Twilight Saga – 43 million
6. The DaVinci Code - 57 million
5. The Alchemist – 65 million
4. Lord of the Rings – 103 million
3. Harry Potter – 400 million
2. Quotations from Chairman Mao Tso-Tung – 820 million
1. The Bible – 3.9 Billion

I also made one other inquiry. According to Guinness World Records of 1995, the Bible was the best-selling book of all time with an estimated 5 Billion copies sold and distributed; followed by 800 Million for the Quran and 120 Million for the Book of Mormon. Please understand that no two sources for this list will ever be in total agreement considering the number of books written and those who judge their ranking.

As you can see there is a very wide range of subject matter on that list, ranging from classics to religion and everything in between. While this is certainly not an exhaustive list, it represents a reasonable sampling for my purpose. This will sound prejudiced, but I chose the Bible. Why? Because of its numerous historical and moral nuances and references to God. It also possesses a long differentiation of characters and characteristics that helped it withstand the test of time:

1. The Bible has out published its closest competitor by almost 5 to 1
2. The Bible has been around the longest about 1500 years
3. The Bible has 40 authors compiling the collection of 66 books
4. The Bible has been translated into about 700 multiple languages
5. The Bible conservatively contains over 3,100 characters
6. The Bible is the only book that contains the most subject matter on God

And so, we begin our exploration into this book we call the Bible, by seeing if it can pass the truth criteria. By the way, the Bible is not just a book, but a collection of 66 books.

Is it obviously perfectly congruent, why? Because any one topic discussed in any book, is agreed upon in any other book that addresses that particular topic. This is more intriguing and fascinating notwithstanding the number of divergent topics dealing with the number of characters. Conflicts over right and wrong, life and death, truth and untruth, beginnings and endings, etc.

It certainly is perfectly coherent or logical in that exploits of its characters represent an insightful view into humankind with its successes and failures. The first half of the book or the Old Testament consists of some 39 smaller “books” that speak to a perfect yet *unseen* Creator God that loves His creation in spite their persistent disobedience; and the battle over good vs. evil. It reflects God’s constant pursuit and promise to “rescue” His people, despite their repeated “ups and downs” using a number of protagonists that sometimes support or hinder His hopeful promise and message of rescue.

The second half or New Testament consists of some 27 smaller “books” that continue to speak to a perfect yet *seen* God in the flesh. Again, the story of good vs. evil continues. But God demonstrate His ultimate love for His creation, by keeping His personal rescue promise from the Old Testament. He fulfills His promise to rescue humanity from that which habitually separates them from Him in what we termed earlier as a “disruptive flow”. This is accomplished by sacrificing Himself in death for His people and then rising to life again as a sign of His control over a soiled world. The New Testament ends with God destroying the “disruptive flow” and its protagonists; and sharing another promise of everlasting life with those who choose to accept and follow Him.

There is no doubt about its perfect symmetry and consistency as it obeys the same ethics and truths on any topic from book to book and author to author.

Its usefulness & practicality is also obvious, since it translated into many languages, over many years over billions of publications throughout the planet. I can exemplify its practicality in many ways but the most outstanding one is reflected in our judicial and moral laws, systems and courts established for the humane treatment of God’s creation

In a “nut shell”, I am saying that the book called the Bible reflects the antiquated struggle of good vs. evil; and which one will dominate at the end of time. The Bible conveniently functions as both a map and / or a compass that faithfully shows or guides humanity to God. Its map functionality demonstrates the exact direction or path to take to God should you choose to follow immediately. However, when you don’t necessarily see the exact road or are doubtful along the journey, it serves as a compass that always points “true north” to its Author God. In either case the Bible, like all other instruments of direction require something called faith. We will address this topic in a future QUESTION.

Now one would ask, so the Bible may be the most read and published book, but how can it be a work of divinely inspired truth by God? How does God orchestrate so many different authors, over so long a span of time to perfectly agree on any one topical subject matter without contradicting each other? How was this feat accomplished in the compilation of the 66 books over 1500 years that comprise the entire Bible? Remember, all one needs to demonstrate in any one book is just one inconsistency or un-truth, and the entire Bible falls on its truth face. All these authors were human, and certainly subject to intellectual and moral limitation of truth. So again, we must ask how is this possible? The only reasonable conclusion is some type of divinely inspired intervention. What I am NOT saying is that God put these authors in some kind of trance, spell or stupor, and proceeded to move their pen over parchment to record what He desired. That would be mind control or robotic, and thus violate God's gift of "free will" and creative genius, as well as several truth criteria that we established earlier. So how could God balance His willful desire to make Himself and ABSOLUTE TRUTH known without violating man's choice? Is it possible that the Bible is a collaborative product by God yet penned in cooperation with human authors in different languages over many years? In other words, can God inspire the thought process of these 40 human authors while respectfully using their individual backgrounds, languages, diverse occupations, selected purposes and unique personalities? They all collaborated to write such a perfect collection of books we collectively reference as the Bible. While the Bible can certainly be misinterpreted, misused, misrepresented, and misaligned by anyone, that should not disqualify it as perfect truth. Why, because as we have seen its Author is ABSOLUTE TRUTH, and incapable of error. From this point forward I will take some license in using the Bible as the foundational tool for the rest of this book. The Bible will thus become my primary reference document to support or defend the many statements and questions I ask or answer henceforth. I welcome any challenge to my choice of the Bible, as long as you can produce yours in rebuttal. That is not only because of what the Bible says, but because of its authenticity. It doesn't seem instinctive that God would leave humankind without some type of instruction manual about who He is, how to live and pursuit of Him. That seems plausible since the Bible

establishes that He is the giver and sustainer of all life. You the reader will be constantly reminded of this from time to time; since I assume you are a diligent searcher of truth. Now some might say you give no special attention to other books that address “God”, like the Quran. Correct, forgive me for again being prejudice, but I cannot accept the Quran as neither a time-tested or perfectly divinely inspired document that we discussed earlier. It lacks ethical consistency with respect to creation and human relationship. It also advocates a god called Allah that must be constantly appeased not out of love, but out of a strict sense of duty. The latter disqualifying it as a perfect document anchored in love.

Let us explore some observations about the Bible in more detail to help us support its usefulness. Can it be trusted as both a compass and a map on a non-secular level too? Can it withstand both historical and futuristic accuracy? Does it have something for everyone? What do people say about it? What is so intriguing about the Bible that holds the interests of so many? That’s an ambitious laundry list of questions so let’s begin.

Famous author Mark Twain is credited with saying, “*most people are bothered by Bible passages they do not understand, but the passages that bother me are those I do understand*”. D.L. Moody a famous Christian preacher is credited with saying, “*the Bible was not only given for information but for transformation*”. Both men and others shed light on truth from two different stations in life.

That led me to investigate the Bible first on a secular level. As mentioned, I discovered that there are over 3,100 characters in the Bible. And believe it or not, not all 3,100 are decent, respectable, honest and Godlike. Does that surprise you? Not me, because that would make for a boring read. As a true book, the Bible is a virtual smorgasbord of drama, death, mystery, love, comedy, betrayal, intrigue, history, all draped in storylines of truth as revealed by its Author. So, it would seem obvious that there must be some stories and characters in the Bible that should appeal to any human reader searching for the realities of life on a purely secular level. I cannot

get into the detail of all the topics mentioned above, but allow me to dwell on two, namely history past and the future.

From a practical historical research perspective, the Bible blends coherently with those of you who enjoy studying past events. A Jewish historian named Flavius Josephus was a factual reporter of the first century. He was born in 34AD and died in 100AD. His non partial works are a chief source for the history and antiquity of ancient Palestine. They provide an independent extra-Biblical account of such men as Pontius Pilot, Herod the Great, John the Baptist and Jesus Christ. For example, he recorded the destruction of the last Jewish temple by the Romans in 70AD, which was exactly foretold by Jesus some 40 years before. This is not just coincidental but authenticates the Bible's rendition of that true occurrence. Is that such a big deal? Yes, because it again marries truth from not only God's Bible but also from an eye witness to history who has no axe to grind. Are you starting to get a bit curious? Later on I will relate how the Bible will account how human history will culminate. Can you stay seated for that?

Up until now I basically implied reading the Bible should be based on its history, human interest and curiosity to pique ones' interest. Like many authors, the Bible's author projects Himself into His work. Authors sometime invite us to "walk in their shoes" by trying to capture our interest by injecting a personal frame of reference. That takes a "little faith" on behalf of the reader. Weather we realize it or not we exercise some degree of faith every day. For example, we place faith in people like doctors, dentists or airplane pilots when the need arises. Often without requiring credentials, it is more or less "blind faith". Is it asking too much of anyone to place faith in the Creator God of the Bible? God, the Author of Biblical truth, takes a similar approach with His frame of reference. Thus, we too would need to inject an element of "faith" into our reading strategy if we desire to attain a further knowledge of its Author and His purpose for our life.?

**I have hopefully tried to demonstrate God's existence based on both created empirical data and His written word the Bible. But is there a more compelling reason to pursuit a way to relate to this God on a more personal level, or vice versa? For example, is there anything I may share with God that would help persuade me to accept who He is; beyond what my five senses can observe, and what I can read in the Bible? Am I meant to engage with God on a personal level if I knew the commonalities we possess? Better still does He wish to engage me in relationship because of our common traits?**

## QUESTION FIVE

### ARE WE MADE IN GOD'S IMAGE?

I believe I sufficiently answered in QUESTION THREE as to why God created. I certainly hope we arrived at the compelling answer to make Himself known to all. If we proceed with this answer, it might be wise to investigate if humanity bears any resemblance to its Creator. Allow me to examine the human composition, since that appears to be the most important of all creation discussed thus far. It is apparent that:

o WE HAVE A BODY - made of flesh that can see, hear, taste, touch, and smell to help him relate to the physical world created around him. I believe that needs no further detailed explanation, although some could challenge me on the animal world having a body too. True, but let us continue.

o WE HAVE A SOUL (Mind, Will & Emotions) – these three components allow “man” to relate to others and him/herself and his Creator, after observing and experiencing stimuli presented to the body. This term is commonly accepted as a substitute for a person. Example, she is a jolly old soul. I choose to define it in more precise components, First, the MIND could be defined as a set of faculties including the cognitive aspects, such as consciousness, imagination, perception, thinking, intelligence, judgement, language and memory. The WILL may be simply defined as a persons’ given ability to choose or decide, again possibly based on what the mind and body have absorbed. And EMOTION, while there are many types and definitions, I will use “an instinctive or intuitive feeling as distinguished from the reasoning of the mind”. A partial list of emotions consists of fear, anger, disgust, anticipation, joy, surprise, etc. Should I include love, despite the argument that love may be considered an action? It is a noun when one experiences it emotionally, or a verb if one acts on it observably. The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot always be seen or touched, they must be felt with the heart. So, let’s keep a close eye on love since it can be a noun or a verb. On the other hand, I do not believe the

animals are endowed with a soul, but rather act more or less instinctively. True, animals can be taught, know hunger, react emotionally to stimuli, etc. but lack the ability to mindfully reason and thus the ability to cognitively choose based on rational thought. I know what you may be thinking. Man, too acts quite irrationally at times as we will confirm later on. The most important Biblical fact about a soul is that it will live as long as its creator God, forever.

o WE HAVE A SPIRIT – this is not as apparent as the first two and a bit difficult to prove; so please allow me some flexibility. Man has a spirit which is different from his soul, what is the spirit? A person's spirit may be Biblically defined as that part of his/her persona that allows them to relate to, or be cognizant of God, by allowing them to commune with his Creator. The spirit is our "inner person". We agreed that the best and most beautiful things in the world cannot always be seen or touched, they must be felt with the heart. So why can't that special feeling extend between man and his Creator? In other words, our spirit is deeper than our soul. It's deeper than our random thoughts. It's deeper than our outward emotions which we project to others. A place to which we can retreat and always find joy in God regardless of the outward circumstances experienced in our soul. This is what I will introduce as true Godliness. It's not about learning formulas from "how to" books promoted by psychologists and counselors. It's about beholding God in our spirit and reflecting on Him through our soul to the world which surrounds us. Our need isn't for more books and seminars, our need is to behold God in our spirit and reflect Him to those who touch us in our daily lives. There is much more mention of man's spirit in the Bible if you care to investigate. Based on the above, is it reasonable to ask, if God has obviously endowed us with senses, reason and intellect would he not wish us to use them in pursuit of Him?

**You may be saying that is a lot to swallow, like drinking from a fire hose! And you are quite right there is much information to absorb. However, if we circle back to that perfect book the Bible it will do the necessary demonstrating if you seek truth. What I am about to discuss is straight from that book. Without it, my or anyone's personal efforts, opinions or philosophies are useless, fruitless, pale and a waste time. Why? Because what I am about to share requires something that we talked about in the previous QUESTION. It transcends sight, reason, logic and even empirical evidence. An intangible gift called "faith". Without getting overly involved in that gift now, suffice it to say that it is like a bodily muscle, the more it is exercised the stronger it gets. I promise to address the subject of faith in more detail later on. For now, allow me to return to the Bible, God's inerrant Word, to see what He has communicated about Himself. Furthermore, what I will try to share cannot be explained or comprehended in human terms, because it is an incomprehensible belief mystery requiring the gift of faith. And well beyond anyone's intellectual or spiritual pay grade.**

**You may recall some of those "for starters" attributes I asserted about God way back in QUESTION TWO, namely All Knowing / Wise, Omnipresent, Giving, Uncreated and Powerful. This may be a good place to assign additional attributes to God that are not based on reason but rather on faith.**

- **He is ONE GOD consisting of THREE distinct, unique and perfect persons or beings**
- **Each of these three persons is and of Himself God**
- **Each of these three persons are co-equal in all the attributes the Bible has assigned**
- **Each of these three persons are co-Creators and sustainers of all seen and unseen**
- **Each of these three persons are majestic in Their Love**
- **Each of these three persons have no beginning or end, and are eternal and transcend time**
- **Each of these three persons are holy and divine and lack any form of impurity or sin**

- Each of these three persons coincide in perfect harmony within what the Bible calls the Godhead
- And best of all, each of these three persons poses unconditional love for themselves and their creation

I will introduce them via their Biblical names, The Father, The Son and The Holy Spirit. Again, these three distinct and unique persons or entities will be given much more scrutiny later on. My only mention of them here is to fulfill the goal as to how and why we humans were made in the image of this “TRIUNE” God or “Trinity”. God the Father is imaged to our Body, God the Son is imaged to our Soul and God the Holy Spirit is imaged to our spirit. An impossible mystery to explain but I will try with a poor analogy. I am one human being. However, my children see me as their father, my mom sees me as her son and my wife sees me as her husband. To all of them I represent a different person, yet only one human being. A very famous 4th – 5th century believer in God named Augustine of Hippo is credited with saying, *“if you don’t believe in the Trinity you lose your soul, if you try to explain the Trinity, you lose your mind”*. Sound advice if you are diligently searching for truth about the image of God and His relation to us.

## QUESTION SIX

### WHAT IS THE “DISRUPTIVE FLOW” SEPERATING US FROM GOD?

And so, the question, if man is made in God’s image then why isn’t he/she perfect too? If you recall in QUESTION THREE, I briefly talked about what caused the “disrupted flow” from God to created human beings. The Bible labeled it as sin and briefly alluded to how humanity fell out of favor or relationship with God because of it. I will now pursue this topic in more detail, and address the reason why or how the “disrupted flow” was transmitted to humans. Again, it was due to the fact that humanity was given what other physical creation was not, namely “choice” or “free will”. It is the ability to choose freely to remain perfect in obedience to God or not. This begs several logical questions. First, why did a perfect God give human creation the ability to choose if He knew in advance it would lead to disruption in relationship? Secondly, we initially did not choose to disobey God our first parents did; so why are we stuck paying the price for being imperfect because of them? Isn’t God unfairly and unjustly including us in this muddled and imperfect scenario? All good questions!

To answer question one above, we need to ask how it all began? It started with God creating humans in His image as we discussed. A huge part of that image is the ability to choose. God chose to give His human creation the same ability of choice as He possessed. To not give them choice would be to create beings that are more or less robotic and in the total control of the Creator. While that may seem fine from one point, it isn’t from God’s. You see if God made us totally unfeeling without any choice, we could never disappoint Him. But what does man and God gain from such a scenario? Well, if we don’t introduce something into the equation, that scenario is basically pointless not to mention boring. So, there is one attribute of God that we only somewhat alluded to in the QUESTION Five but never covered with any detail, that of perfect love. We previously defined love as both a noun and a verb. A noun to the recipient (created beings) but a verb to the initiator (Creator). In this case God, the

Creator, initiated His perfect love by allowing us, His creation, opportunities to love Him in return. Love is commonly a two-way street. Robots, like a computer, would not be able to reciprocate such a gift of love, since they don't possess it and it cannot be hardwired into their being. That is the reason the Trinity we talked about is so perfect; each person is perfectly in love and agreement with the other, no exceptions and all the time. So, without choice given to creation the sharing of His perfect love would not be possible. Without choice, it would be as if God created without purpose or reason, which violates one of the perfect criteria we outlined earlier for Him. Humanly speaking, it seems as if God constantly leaves Himself vulnerable to human disappointment. However, when we don't return His gift of love it never surprises Him. But isn't that what perfect love is truly all about, giving without expecting or demanding anything in return? It must be an act of the will. God gives despite our inability to always return that love. He knows this all too well, and that is why He always waits for our return to Him in order to forgive and reestablish relationship.

Questions two and three above can both be hopefully explained here. God created our first human parents perfectly as He did all the rest of creation that was entrusted to them. The Bible refers to them as Adam and Eve. They were gifted with choice or free will as part of God's love gift. Placed in a perfect environment, they were conspicuously deceived into believing that there was "something" more satisfying and perfect than what was given them by their perfect Creator. In fact, their deception actually led them to believe they could be like or possibly be greater than their Creator. We showed that it was totally illogical as well as disobedient. The choice they freely made, in spite of the warning by God, clearly demonstrated no love in return for love. Their collective covetousness and pride led to their disobedience and rebellion against their perfect Creator God. More importantly it broke their relationship. As a result, this "disrupted the flow" of love from Creator to creation, making them instantaneously imperfect. Are you saying that this one unpretentious lapse in judgment caused them and their future children (us) perfection? Yes, furthermore it contaminated all of creation which was under their responsibility as well. So why not

ignore it God, after all you are perfect love? You could “sweep it under a rug cloud” and give them another try. The simple answer is if God ignored it, how could He remain lovingly perfect? Remember, He is incapable of making mistakes since that is the definition of perfection. And ignoring disobedience would qualify as an imperfection. But what about me, I didn't have a chance to choose like our first parents? That sounds like a reasonable question. But when they disobeyed and broke relationship with God, their spiritual “gene pool” was contaminated henceforth, down through time. And so even if God had made each human “perfect” after them, we would still choose to disobey because we are all tarred with the same imperfect brush. This natural propensity to disobey in each human is Biblically called “original sin”. It originated from our first parents. More on sin and its effects as we progress. While it is true some disobediences are far worse than others, it's important to note that ALL disobedience (sin) is totally repulsive and revolting to a perfect God. Choice or free will that God gives us may be considered a “double edge sword”; we can use it to honor or dishonor God. It is the only way to express true love by “decision”. I leave this QUESTION with three subtle sayings about sin and its disruptive nature :

- It will take you farther then you want to go, keep you longer than you want to stay, and will cost you more then you want to pay
- Either the Bible will keep you away from sin, or sin will keep you away from the Bible
- Excuses are an effort to make sin more comfortable, don't fall for them

## **QUESTION SEVEN**

### **DOES GOD HAVE A “PLAN” TO FIX THE SEPERATEATION BETWEEN HIMSELF AND HIS HUMAN CREATION?**

The short answer is thankfully yes, and as we will see, He does all the heavy lifting too . I do not take pleasure in saying that God has or makes “plans” in the human sense. We humans plan either in advance or on the spot because we do not know the likely outcomes to any given unknown possibility. Unlike us, God does not have to react to any unknown situation. He knows the past, present and future and has control of them in an all-in-one view. In that sense “planning” is not an impulsive reaction because He is infinitely and pro-actively wise. If it were up to man to reconcile himself to God, he would fail miserably. Why? Because man has no concept of God’s justice nor is capable of satisfying it even if he knew. In today’s imperfect world, man might resort to God’s reconciliation or justice by “coping a plea” or by rationalizing sin as an offense that he could somehow plan to “work off” by performing some good work(s) like community service as a justifiable substitute. Jewish wit says, “man plans but God laughs”. We discussed earlier that God in His perfect love cannot “sweep sin under a cloud or rug”. It is safe to say God is so infinitely wise and loving and does nothing whimsical or randomly. If He creates perfectly in love, then you can be sure He has a lovingly perfect “plan” to help us “reconcile” and to get back to Him, if we choose. Without one, we are hopelessly lost! This “plan” is Biblically referred to as reconciliation or salvation. And it may surprise you to learn that His “plan” existed even before He created. Way before disobedience or sin entered the scene. As we already stated, God didn’t create a “plan” to react to mans’ disobedience. God never has to react; He can only act in advance because He knows everything in advance. This salvation “plan” was already in place waiting for the right time to bring it to usage. It is an elaborately loving way God sends us His ONLY life Preserver in the hope that all will accept it.

**Again, I nor anyone can possibly over emphasize how much God is absolutely repulsed by sin or disobedience. If, however you somehow reason that you are not a sinner, then you don't need saving. If you are not sick you don't need a doctor. But God knows that man is limited, and infinitely incapable to redeem himself even if he could never sin for only a second time. How could imperfect man possibly know or comprehend God's perfect justice? God's plan of salvation must be both radical and yet lovingly perfect and satisfying to gratify His justice. In other words, only God can satisfy God's demand for perfect justice. It's that simple. But how?**

**This is where God demonstrates His infinite intelligence and love. The Bible explains that God's justice demands a perfect sinless human flesh substitute sacrifice as the only way to satisfy His original plan of perfect obedience that our first parents failed to accomplish. And since God's justice is impossible for man to ever satisfy, He must depend on Himself to provide a perfect substitutionary replacement of His own. This perfect substitute must be perfectly obedient, yet be punished by death to atone for and pay the penalty for ALL sin throughout recorded time. That sounds quite atrocious and over the top. How does He manage that since the Bible clearly says God is spirit not flesh? The only way He can is by GOD taking on flesh. But again, how does He do that? By sending another perfect God person, another member of the Trinity we discussed earlier as that perfect ransom for sin. God's atonement demands a blood sacrifice because life is in the blood. The only condition is it must be perfect or sinless sacrifice. So, God promises and delivers that ransom in none other the second person of the Godhead or Trinity, Jesus Christ. Now allow me to reiterate and re-emphasize that title given Jesus as "The Son of God" does not imply that He in any way shape or form is inferior or takes a "back seat" or is lesser to the two remaining persons of the Trinity, namely the Father or Holy Spirit. As we discussed in QUESTION FIVE, Jesus is a co-equal spiritual being, and therefore not a product or created from the Father or Holy Spirit. Rather Jesus always existed as an independent spirit being or person within the Godhead with no beginning or end just as the other two persons. But how can God Jesus take on flesh if**

He too is a Spirit being? Furthermore, accomplish this feat without being tainted like any other “humans”? Because He is not created, Jesus is God from God. We established that man’s sinful gene pool will always remain tainted, so man’s sperm could never be good in creating a perfect human being. Thus, God must find another perfect way for Jesus to be both fully human and fully God simultaneously. He must be born like us, grow to become a “man” yet not sin. Now that my reader would take a miracle to accomplish. God solves this impediment by impregnating a virgin through the power of God the Holy Spirit. What a brilliant idea! This takes man out of the picture but utilizes a willing and special female who was never penetrated by a man. But wait a minute, that human virgin is human and can only produce another tainted man? Not necessarily you see sin is transmitted by the male, not the female. Why? Because Adam was the first human male created, and thus holds responsibility for all future transmission of sin to his male successors. Beside the women God especially chose in advance, was a pure and willing vessel for His special purpose of salvation. Jesus thus becomes the only Being in the universe with two natures, both fully God and fully man. That’s like drawing a square circle, neither I nor anyone explain it. If we could, we would have the mind of God. Again, Jesus is God from God, begotten not made as stated in the Creed and human simultaneously. I know this is a lot of information to absorb. I am making you drink from a fire hose, but what perfect mind could ever conceive of such a plan and accomplish it? One might ask is there another way or plan? The short and truthful answer is a resounding no! If there were, God would have revealed it. Beside God cannot improve upon anything more than His originally conceived plan. But did God reveal His glorious plan long ago. Yes, though people the Bible calls prophets, whom God foretold of His gracious plan of reconciliation or salvation. So why didn’t God make His “plan” of salvation more apparent to a darkened world sooner? As we have pointed out earlier and will see again, one must make an effort to seek in finding the “Truth”. God doesn’t feed birds by putting worms in their nest, they too must seek food for survival. One reads secular articles to learn how, perhaps man should read God’s Word the Bible to also learn why.

Ok, so God has this “plan” of reconciliation or salvation but how was it actually implemented? We briefly discussed how Jesus, the power of His Holy Spirit and His creation help bring it to fruition. It started with the entrance of Jesus’ birth or incarnation (taking on flesh) a little over 2000 years ago, and eventually culminates in His eventual sacrificial death, and resurrection and ascension back to His rightful home in a span of some 33 years later. All of these events were foretold by several divinely inspired men the Bible referred to as prophets. These men were entrusted with this foreknowledge in the Old Testament of the Bible thousands of years before they happened. They foretold the exact circumstances of how, where, to whom and when Jesus was to be born and named. The Bible foretold this and more during the historic Roman occupation of the Jews in Palestine. For the sake of brevity, I will omit the other 40 birth prophecies by several different prophets mentioned in the Bible. If you are curious please be my guest and read the Bible yourself, you too will be astonished. By the way the statistical probability outlined in Empower International site estimates that anyone fulfilling just 8 of those 40 prophecies about Jesus is 1 in 100,000,000,000,000,000 or 1 in a 100 quadrillion. Mind boggling to say the least! This certainly is a faith enabler about Jesus being exactly who the Bible claims He is, God in the flesh! You might ask why did God give us such a huge “heads-up” with all these clues? To make absolutely positively sure man could validate His Old Testament promises of a Savior when they came to fruition in the second half of the Bible or New Testament. But clues are just that if they are not utilized to discover truth. How is that for leaving a perfectly loving breadcrumb trail? God always performs what he prophesies. God is not a soothsayer looking into a crystal ball and infallibly foretelling the future. He sees the past, present and future as one. Someone once referred to this as the “Golden Stitches of Sovereignty”.

**As we discussed earlier the penalty for sin is a tremendously impossible burden to satisfy except for God. Again, someone must atone for ALL sin to satisfy God's justice or it remains unfulfilled. Furthermore, we concluded that only God can satisfy His justice through God Jesus. But exactly how? The penalty must be paid by crucifixion, again one more prophecy outlined in the Bible. While crucifixion was invented by the Assyrians or Babylonians, it was certainly perfected by the Romans. This "coincidence" of crucifixion in the time of Jesus is quite intriguing. The Biblical fact that Jesus died by way of crucifixion is supported as well by the Jewish historian Josephus. We will talk more about the life of Jesus later on in the book.**

**God's chosen people the Jews, have long used animal blood sacrifice to atone for sin in the Biblical Old Testament as a means of reconciliation to God. As well intentioned and temporary as that was, it could not fully please or satisfy God's justice. His requirement involved a perfect "fully human" blood sacrifice once for all. Why blood? Again, because life is in the blood of all human creation. Jesus, God's sacrificial lamb died between two thieves on a cross on Calvary: one thief dying in his sin, one thief dying to his sin and Jesus dying for both their sin. Why is this significant? It gets to the heart of reconciliation. Since Jesus is the perfect sacrifice that satisfied God's demand for justice, He becomes the Savior of the world. So, all is right with God? No, not so fast. This Savior is only your personal Savior for those who willfully chose to accept and follow Him in a lifetime commitment. Jesus is Savior for those who acknowledge and confess or agree that they are sinners/transgressors, and are in need of reconciliation. How does God do that? He applies a "not guilty" verdict to us in exchange for a guilty verdict on Jesus. In other words, Jesus tells His Father I paid for that person's sin. They are now pronounced not guilty as charged. In essence each gets what they don't deserve. We become justified by the blood atonement of Jesus which we don't deserve, and Jesus pays the penalty through His crucifixion for our sin which He certainly doesn't**

deserve. That hardly seems fair! Tell that to God and He will say that's because I love you. This salvation experience is sometimes communicated as the "new birth". Our souls and spirits which were dead in sin, become alive again through the love and mercy of God. In essence the Bible sums it up nicely "*a person may die unsaved, but cannot die unloved*". The real validation that Jesus atonement satisfied God's perfect demand for justice is proved in His resurrection from the dead and ascension back to His rightful place as God. If Jesus's life and death did not satisfy God's justice in every detail, Jesus would still remain entombed as many other famously good people like Washington, Lincoln, Mother Thresa, MLK, etc. However, the Bible records many witnesses to Jesus' resurrection and the empty tomb. These witnesses were not only followers. The non-believer and non-biblical historian Josephus assure us that people he interviewed further attest to Jesus resurrection following His crucifixion. There is much more evidence in that perfectly authored and best published book the Bible. You are welcome to read it for yourself.

## QUESTION EIGHT

### HOW DO WE COOPERATE WITH GOD'S "FIXIT" PLAN?

Does God say goodbye, good luck and leave us to fend for ourselves after accepting Him? No! Instead a very "special process" which I will detail at the end of this QUESTION begins. As a Christian (believer in Jesus Christ) God makes you "right" with Him. You are "born again" spiritually via a "Baptism" of the Holy Spirit who takes up residency in your soul. In most Christian church fellowships the ceremony / celebration of Baptism represents a water cleansing from our sins. It is a public acclimation that we are baptized into the life of Christ. You might say the two most important days of one's life are the day you were born and the day you are "born again"! You begin to see and work for those things God created you to do. There are two meaningful biblical words I need to introduce into our explanation of God's "plan" to reconcile us to Himself. I have used words like love and mercy, both very true, but I would like to examine this deeper if I may. The first word I would like to introduce is grace. The Bible basically defines grace as "unmerited favor". I touched upon this in QUESTION SEVEN when I said both Jesus and us get what we each don't deserve when we accept Him. *GRACE* is a free gift that we can't earn nor deserve. How can anyone "earn" a gift, else it wouldn't be called a gift. This is important to note because if we could earn salvation without God's grace, that would say we can reconcile ourselves to God without any help from Him, which makes us our own saviors. That is ridiculously illogical. His grace continues forever and is inexhaustible. The second word we need to further discuss is faith or belief. It is one thing to say I believe, but quite another to actually believe in something or someone. Without faith we cannot please God who demands and deserves our trust. These two gifts act in series and not parallel. One can't accept the gift of grace without first accepting God's second gift, faith. We could use an illustration to help solidify this point. Think of God's grace as a well with an endless supply of water, gift one. Without a bucket, gift two, that water remains at the bottom of the well and won't ever satisfy your thirst. The water (grace) needs a channel (faith) to bring

it to the surface to drink. Until now I have more or less avoided the efforts of the third person of the Trinity, God the Holy Spirit, who indwells those true “faith filled” acceptors of God’s graceful gift of salvation through faith in Jesus. For now, the Holy Spirit may be considered the Life Force of God who affects the powerful will of God in the life of a believer. We will discuss more of His role as we move further along.

Many Christians have a difficult time with the concept of grace because they think it’s a license to sin. It just seems too easy to believe in Jesus and then just do as you please with your freedom. Just because you belong to God doesn’t mean that you NEVER sin again, that is wishful thinking. God doesn’t inject you with some spiritual chemical that prevents you from sinning. It doesn’t work that way, because you still have choice or free will. As you mature in Jesus you become more aware of when you sin and seek God’s forgiveness to maintain your relationship with Him. A sensible definition of a Christian is not someone who is “sinless”, but someone who “sins less”. But shouldn’t believers still be required to always live a “certain way” in order to please God? The problem with this reasoning is that it mixes legalism (following a rigid set of laws) with grace (freedom). By saying sure, we are saved by God’s grace through faith but, “you better follow manmade rules to stay in God’s favor or else”. Such thinking cuts the heart out of grace and poisons the message of hope. What we need to realize is that grace is a greater motivator than law. When you have to perform in order to please God, guilt becomes your constant companion because you can never be good enough. Every time you fail to live up to your own expectations you may question whether He loves you or maybe even whether you’re really reconciled or saved. God doesn’t want us to live in bondage to performance. We’ve already received His acceptance, and there is nothing more we can do add to it. Grace not only sets us free from guilt, but should also motivate us to obey and serve God out of love and gratitude for everything He has done for us. Instead of feeling burned out in our service, we will have a burning passion for Him. If you are working harder and harder to please God, you’re probably worn out. When you truly learn to understand and live in His grace, you’ll be energized because

obedience and service will be a natural result of His overflowing love. Instead of guilt, you'll have joy. Please drink this in as much and as often as you can! This cannot be over emphasized.

When a person has true faith in Christ he is united in Him and kept by God the Holy Spirit. But there are several times in the Bible where someone appears to have true faith, yet this "faith" is later proved to be false. Probably the best-known example of this in the Bible is Judas Iscariot. He "followed" Jesus for several years as a "friend" before betraying him, attesting that his faith was never genuine. Could Judas have been forgiven for betraying Jesus? Absolutely, but because of his lack of genuine faith he chose not to. Jesus is constantly teaching through the Holy Spirit that our external actions and our inward motivation must line up with each other.

This may probably be a good time to discuss some ways to grow in God's grace to become more like Jesus. Remember we said earlier that grace was like a well of endless water. And God lovingly invites us to place our bucket of faith into the well to draw from. This communion with God is dynamic. The key again is relationship. It is a responsive relationship; it is not robotic or mechanical. And like husband-and-wife relationships, it needs to grow. God responds to our obedience or disobedience in that relationship. Like any parent our obedience pleases him, and our disobedience displeases him. We experience the ramifications for our choices at the relational level. We can experience intimacy with God, or we can feel distanced from God. The ups and downs of this relationship are not owing to any iniquity on God's part of the relationship. He never fails us or forsakes us. Even God's displeasure takes place in the context of His loving acceptance of us in Jesus. He disciplines his children in love, not in anger just as you would discipline your children. While union with Jesus does not ebb and flow, one's experience of communion with Jesus can fluctuate. This distinction protects the biblical truth that the children of God have a relationship with Him, and that there are things they can do that either help or hinder it. For example, if a believer in Jesus grows comfortable with sin (whether sins of commission or omission), this invariably affects the level of intimacy this person feels with God. It is not that the Father's love grows and

diminishes for his children in accordance with their actions, for his love is unflinching. It is not that God turns from us, but that we run from him as our first parents did. As we discussed earlier, sin isolates the believer making him feel distant from God.

The phrase “all I need is God” captures the cornerstone of Christian hope, but it is not the only word God himself speaks over the Christian life. To be sure, God alone in Jesus Christ is our greatest and final need. He is the one we need in order to be “born again”, justified, forgiven, adopted, declared not guilty and placed on the road to glory. God is also the only one in this world that we cannot truly live without.

You can research how many biblical characters often call God “the Father of mercies and God of all comfort”. The Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is a God of comfort, a God who tracks us down in the wasteland of our fears and anxieties, wraps his arm around us, and leads us back home. But how does God deliver his comfort? Sometimes, God comforts us directly through his word the Bible and its comforting Author the Holy Spirit. God comforts the downcast. Often, God sends comfort to his people by sending them a friend. It is well to remember that God the Holy Spirit resides in each true believer. He sees us in our affliction, taps one of his image bearers on the shoulder, and says, “*go and show him what I’m like.*” So, we get a knock on our door and friends ask how they can help us. And through them we feel our Father’s comfort. Again, the Trinity of God working together to help us on the road of life. I can be absolutely positive about these next two statements concerning coincidence. Nothing, I mean nothing happens coincidentally with God. Albert Einstein is credited with saying, “*coincidence is God’s way of remaining anonymous*”. We may ignore or deny but never evade God’s presence. How true! Throughout the Bible, and throughout our lives, God often ministers to us incognito. He wraps the world he has made like a cloak around him, he masks himself with his creation, and he walks about the earth on a mission to bless his people. So, when we find help from more than God alone, we should not be surprised. All of God’s created gifts are medicine from our Physician God. We may think we need more than God alone, but he alone is the

fountain from whom all blessings flow, the giver of every good gift. So, he alone deserves the glory for all the strength and hope and comfort we find wherever we may find it. Speaking of ways to find God's gifts through cooperation, He gives us a body of followers of Jesus called "The Church". Jesus didn't just tolerate sinners, he accepted their humanity and allowed them to feel relaxed in his presence. Many religious leaders today, just as in Jesus day, are more concerned with the "business of religion", enforcing laws vs being witness to Jesus presence through God the Holy Spirit. Jesus never asked people if they were saved or forced religion on anyone. He wasn't into religion but rather focused on relationships with His Father and people. That's why many religious leaders in His day reviled and despised Him, because he undermined their God given authority to teach. Jesus had a happy, playful and optimistic social side yet wasn't politically correct when confronted by teachers who emphasized manmade commandments and de-emphasized God. He wasn't against the commandments or observance of law, but in the way they led to more burdens placed on peoples' back. Church is supposed to be medium for Jesus message to His followers. Sometime it gets overly rule oriented, and becomes the message. This frightens His followers and the person of Jesus gets lost. Every responsible organization usually has some type of charter or creed that presents its reason for existence or united beliefs. Well, "the Church" is no exception. The essence of God's Biblical truth can be summarized in one concise, cohesive faith document. That one-page document may be presented as the "Bullseye" of uncompromising faith for ALL followers of Jesus Christ. It is called the Creed. If I could take all 66 books of the Bible (New and Old Testaments) and summarize them for a person on one page that page would read as follows:

*I believe in one God,  
the **Father** almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth,  
of all things visible and invisible.*

*I believe in one Lord **Jesus Christ**,  
the Only Begotten **Son** of God  
born of the Father before all ages.  
God from God, Light from Light,  
true God from true God,  
begotten, not made,  
consubstantial with the Father;  
through him all things were made.  
For us men and for our salvation  
he came down from heaven, and by the Holy Spirit  
was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man.  
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilot  
he suffered death and was buried  
and rose again on the third day  
He ascended into heaven  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again in glory  
to judge the living and the dead  
and his kingdom will have no end. I*

*I believe in the **Holy Spirit**, the Lord  
And Giver of Life, who proceeds from the Father  
and the Son who is adored and glorified.  
Who has spoken through the prophets.*

*I believe in one holy  
catholic (universal) and apostolic Church.  
I confess one baptism  
for the forgiveness of sins  
and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead  
and the life of the world to come.*

You mentioned most of the above previously, but where did you ever talk about the statements on judgement, kingdom, a world to come and resurrection of the dead? Again, I must request your patience. I will explain them in subsequent QUESTIONS.

At the beginning of this QUESTION, I emphasized God's "special process" of reconciliation or salvation. This process is God's "fix it plan" over the course of a believer's lifetime. This is outlined in the New Testament of the Bible. This "fixit plan" may be synoptically outlined in 4 lifetime steps:

**Step 1 – *Election*:** God's initiates and chooses anyone for His purpose of salvation by His grace. We saw this above in those He chooses willing to participate in His "fixit plan". This is His sovereign right as God.

**Step 2 – *Justification*:** In this step I mentioned that God declares us not guilty and removes punishment (propitiation) of sin because of what Jesus Christ has completed at the cross, by paying for our transgressions (redemption or reconciliation) - we hopefully begin to mature in the fruits of the third person of the trinity God, the Holy Spirit, namely love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness and gentleness. Through justification, the penalty of sin has been eternally eliminated. However, our journey as followers of Jesus and our battle against sin is just beginning.

**Step 3 – *Sanctification*:** Even though we are declared justified, we still wrestle with our sinful nature that wages war inside of us. In this ongoing step God's sanctification is Christ freeing us from the power of sin in our everyday lives via the Holy Spirit. It is the process by which God the Father is working in our lives to conform us to the image of His Son. God's sanctifying work in our lives begins the moment we are justified, and He continues to sanctify us until this lifetime process is completed by helping us perform the works, He has planned in advance.

**Step 4 – *Glorification*:** The most God satisfying step in making us just like Jesus. This gives the ultimate glory to God (Father, Son and Holy Spirit). Glorification may be viewed as the day when we will one day be totally free from the presence of sin in our physical body. It's the fulfillment of our salvation or the end of our Christian life on earth. We will be given an everlasting or glorified body in the presence of Christ. One day we will see and know all things in Jesus. At this point

I would be remiss if I didn't discuss "good works" in more detail. QUESTION 3 above implies that once we choose to accept and follow Jesus as Savior, our life's focus also changes thanks to the Holy Spirit. He shines light on the path to emulate God's and not our desires. These "good works" are preordained by God that we may fulfill them in our future lifetime walk He has "planned" for us well in advance. Here is God with His advance "planning" again! Notice that we are God's workmanship. The Greek word for "workmanship" in the Bible is "POIEMA", from which we get our word "poem." It means "a work of art, a master piece" that God dwells upon through eternity on His "Kingdom wall". In Jesus, we receive God's grace through our faith and become His work of art by the prompting of the Holy Spirit. We are God's workmanship to do His good works. God has saved us for a purpose namely to serve and give Him glory. People should be able to see our good works and glorify our Father. Lastly, I am compelled to say that "good works" apart from God, become hollow attempts to override His perfect "plan" of reconciliation or salvation because they promote us, not Him. As we will see later on following Jesus doesn't mean our life will be rosy, or we will hit the lottery or have no pain or sorrow as we walk with Him. We are not above suffering. If Jesus suffered and we wish to follow Him, it becomes obvious that we will as well.

## QUESTION NINE

### IS GOD TELLING US THERE IS LIFE AFTER DEATH?

Like it or not, want it or not, know it or not the answer is yes! In QUESTION EIGHT I discussed how one can fully cooperate with God's "fixit plan", but not specifically why. As outlined in the previous QUESTION, God has saved us to serve and give Him glory now and in eternity. Period! He desires us to live in eternity or "forever" with Him. We live physically in the medium or measurement of time. We mentioned earlier that finite beings like us need a measure of reference as to where they are along life's path (past, present or future. God solves this by giving each person a gift, a measuring tool of sorts, called time. I am sure you know the only problem with this gift of time is that it is not inexhaustible. It is safe to say that, "over time we all run out of time". We all know the gift of time is limited to our physical existence on the planet. You are born at some time and at some point, your body ceases to function and you expire. If you cannot accept the inevitability of death, as unpleasant as it may sound, then you are not passing the litmus test of seeking truth. Many people think this life is all that remains. Is it reasonable to assume there is something to follow this life on earth? After all we are made in God's image, and He will live forever; perhaps we too as well. Most people are rightfully afraid of the unknown, and death certainly qualifies as the "greatest unknown". It would be wise to challenge those who believe that after death you can come back as someone like Abe Lincoln or something else like a bird. Or, you keep coming back until you get your life perfectly correct. That is irrational wishful thinking. I could accept that belief if someone can show me who, where and in what book that can be substantiated. Sad to say life is not a dress rehearsal, you only go around once. It's not difficult to again understand that our birth bodies are imperfect and tainted with that "disruptive flow" called sin. I need to substantiate the continuance of life after death. However, the Bible does an outstanding job in many places in both the Old and New Testaments.

**What about an infinitely perfect being like God? Well, He doesn't need a duration measurement like time or any other tool. It is both impractical and useless to a perfect all-knowing God. Allow me to re-introduce a word we called eternal or eternity. It is one of God's many attributes we mentioned earlier. I tried showing that God had no beginning or end. For if He did have both we would again need to ask who made Him. He transcends the measure of time and is therefore eternal.**

**In QUESTION FIVE I discussed that our souls are made in God's image. And how the Bible speaks to it living on into eternity as does its Creator God. Are you suggesting that our mind, will and emotions and spirit, defined in QUESTION FIVE, are all that's left after death? For now, the answer is yes, but it doesn't end there. There is a point in eternity that God remedies that predicament by giving us "another" body that will never die and last through eternity. Our soul or our inner person will once again be reunited and housed in a non-decayable eternal body. This should prompt an immensely important Biblical question. Where or with whom do you spend eternity? Is this a trick question you might ask? No! It is a question of infinite consequence. The Bible emphatically emphasizes in a New Testament that each person dies once and then they are judged by God. Are you saying we don't get a second chance at physical life on earth, I'm afraid not? What about God's love and mercy that we discussed; doesn't He want to see us happy by having another go at life? Oh Yes, but not in a more permanent or eternal sense. One and done is all our finite physical body can withstand. So, it certainly behooves us to plan and choose wisely while we enjoy the gift of time. Because where we spend eternity is at stake. If you are like most people, you spend more time planning their vacations than their "eternal one". We need to use our gift of choice wisely to cooperate with God's "fixit plan" of gracious reconciliation or salvation. While that is Biblically assertive, the other question is why do we have to be judged? Doesn't God know everything we have ever done? Of course, He does, but do you? The choice to accept or reject His plan of reconciliation or salvation in Jesus rests entirely**

with us; despite what He knows in advance. It allows a soul the opportunity to justify him or herself before a righteous and sovereign God. The Bible emphasizes it in 20 of the 27 New Testament books. It is based solely on the rightlessness by which God can judge any human being. It is based on the substitutionary forgiveness of His grace in and through the finished work of Jesus' death on the cross. It is not based on anything else, like good works done for our glory, we may wish to bring before the Judge. Remember we established that God never forces His will on us, we have the gift of choice which He will never retract. We are not robots programmed to either accept or reject Him into eternity.

The above scenario may seem narrow and you are quite right. Let us again recall the most important attribute of God, that of Love. God is love. Now this may seem unrelated but a facet of God's perfect love is His perfect justice. He is incapable of judging partially or erroneously as I tried to establish because He is ABSOLUTELY perfect. Thus, God has the sovereign right to judge all according to the standards He established for perfect justice. Which again is based on His plan of reconciliation or salvation. It isn't as if God judges haphazardly or with any degree of partiality or favoritism. Unlike man who is certainly capable of judging partially. For example, God does not judge based on balancing or comparing a 50,000 lifetime of "good works" against only 9,000 "sins". He doesn't then depend on a weight scale of justice to tip in your favor due solely on the numbers. No! Nor does He allow you to bring your own lawyer to help plead your case when we come before Him. Man may meter justice that way, but not a perfect God. We saw God's justice based on His terms with Jesus paying our penalty for even one sin. We also saw how choosing to accept Jesus atonement for our sins satisfies God's justice. It is not an overly complicated scenario, but perhaps too simple for us to accept. Why? In our world you can never get something for nothing. There must be a catch. Again, we are not thinking like God but like imperfect beings. One alternative to accepting God's "fixit plan" is to devise our own proposal. Let me say emphatically and categorically, the Bible supports God's declaration that no matter your rational, defense, and no matter how wise your substitute for God's "fixit plan" may be, it will fail. And why, because

it can never satisfy God's sovereign justice. That justice was paid for in full with the death of Jesus in the flesh. And It certainly didn't come without pain to the righteous Judge. He scarified His only begotten Son for you. Would you be willing to sacrifice someone you love for a stranger? A simple analogy may help. A drowning man in the middle of the ocean is awaiting rescue. Someone with a life preserves comes along and tosses it to him. He says, "no thanks, I'm waiting for something better and bigger, perhaps a boat with more capabilities to come along to save me". Or perhaps he can swim himself to safety. Have you stopped to consider the fact that nowhere, including the Bible does it say God is obligated to throw any of us a life preserver? It is out of His divine mercy and love that He does so.

The Bible certainly brings all that really matters into an eternal focus. All humans must face a crossroad in this life. We can choose to freely accept or reject God's "fixit plan" to reconcile or save ourself, sadly with no third choice. Again, that sounds so unsympathetic, insensitive, not to mention arrogant and unpleasant. Why is God being too narrow minded? Perhaps to the average person who doesn't know or believe His attributes it may seem that way. But let us examine this from a different angle, shall we? Suppose you offered an orphan child the gift of lifetime adoption into your loving family. If they choose to reject your offer what are they really conveying? Essentially, that they choose not to be with you, but rather stay where they are, with someone else or perhaps no one else. You know in your heart you cannot force that person to accept your love gift of adoption. Because if you did, it would be a controlled and unpleasant type of forced relationship for all concerned. It would not be love at all. Do not expect God to function out of controlled love as well. Since God is love, and we are made in His image, it follows that God would act in the same way as we when offered a gift. You can say what you will, but that won't change His righteous justice requirement based on love.

Decisions have consequences, and this once and a lifetime choice of ours has very serious eternal consequence. That consequence is whether we spend eternity with or without God, no third choice. God

makes the choices simple and direct. We can spend eternity in the love God planned from before He created in His kingdom or not. The Bible tells us in just about all of the 27 New Testament books, that the fulfilment of God's kingdom of love to come is called Heaven. No one who has ever lived can depict heaven because no one knows what God has in store for those who love Him. Few people have claimed to have died, seen Jesus in heaven and have come back to give us a true indication of what it is like. While that may be true, it doesn't begin to scratch the surface of what heaven is really like. That will be God's good pleasure to reveal should we choose to accept His loving plan of reconciliation or salvation. As mentioned earlier, God accomplishes His gift giving by giving us a body that will live throughout eternity.

Sadly, that door of choice of eternal consequence can also swing in the opposite direction as well. No one will ever be able to accurately convey the unforgivable and irrevocable choice of separation from God in a place the Bible calls Hell. Eternally separated from a God who takes no pleasure in that choice, but cannot ignore it either. A famous quote that I have heard is, "*the door to Hell is locked from the inside*". In other words, it is possible for one to hate God so much that they are actually happy to be in hell and don't want out! They somehow rationalize that they wish to be separated from their Creator. Again, I honestly do not know who to credit for the saying, "*a person can certainly die unsaved, but never unloved*". To me that resonates. The Bible talks of Hell as an inextinguishable pain of "fire" that torments the eternal soul (mind, will and emotion) through eternity. I nor anyone else have adjectives or superlatives to describe the horror that awaits that choice. I say that not to scare but to prepare. I stub my toe and can't wait for the pain to subside. Can you imagine that there is never any relief from pain and darkness of being separated from God and His light? I sure can't, especially after being subjected to the beauty and enjoyment of what God has created and displayed within our universe.

**I will now sound like I am talking out both sides of my Biblical mouth. But belief in Jesus is relevant and accountable to all those who have reached the “age of reason”. Those whose mind is responsibly formed to know / understand good from evil, and the choices of each. No one can specifically quantify the exact age that occurs. It very much applies to those who have heard the Biblical message of the “Good News” of Jesus Christ through the efforts of others who have shared Him as God’s offer of reconciliation or salvation. And if you haven’t heard the message of God, you are still accountable per the Bible because of what God has created. God’s creation cries out as a witness to the Creator we call God. We may never hear the word Jesus, but our intellect can reason to a God via what surrounds us.**

## QUESTION TEN

### WHY DOES GOD HAVE TO RETURN?

The Bible clearly showed that Christ was born, died, risen and will return. The Biblical answer is because He is a covental God. He has demonstrated this in several covenants or promises He made to His faith filled believers throughout Biblical history. Both the Bible, and the creed from which it was derived in the year 325, undoubtedly agree that God in the person of Jesus will return in glory. Does that surprise or confuse you? Previously I stated that Jesus lived a sinless life, preached forgiveness, atoned for sin (disruptive flow) via His crucifixion, was raised from the dead (thus defeating death) and ascended into Heaven. Why is a second return trip from Heaven necessary? Why couldn't Jesus finish the work God the Father desired on the His first trip to earth? Great question! To answer that we need to understand Jesus' mission as two-fold. As a review, we saw that our first parents failed to obey God. And that every human thereafter carried that "sinful gene in their spiritual DNA". Thus, defeating sin and death became job one, namely to restore the souls of God's created human beings with their Creator. We saw that from the first half of the Bible, called the Old Testament. No one could accomplish that but God Himself. And God kept His promise by sending Jesus (also God) in the flesh the first time 2020 years ago as the savior for humankind. We also talked about the 40 plus prophecies in the Bible that bear witness to God's promise to send a savior via several prophets. So mission one is accomplished by establishing His kingdom in the hearts of believers.

But what is mission two for Jesus? Establishing His kingdom on earth by defeating the ravages and vestiges of sin and evil initiated by a character the Bible calls Satan or the devil. More about him in a minute. It is somewhat analogous to doctors first having to heal those having a disease. This hopefully gives time for science to find an eventual cure or vaccine for the disease. In God's total "fixit plan" He must both overcome and defeat the effects of the disease (sin) and those who initiated the disease (sin originator). Now let me take

a brief moment to outline some of the ravages of the disease called sin. The Bible records Jesus ascension back to Heaven over 2020 years ago. Let us try to imagine all the murders, deaths, carnage, destruction, illness, hate, strife, bitterness, etc. that has befallen humankind since then. For example, an online search for war deaths in just the 20<sup>th</sup> century alone, it discloses approximately 108 million. Now multiply that by the billions of people who have passed through our world since our first parents. On top of that, include all the death, carnage, destruction, imperfection to the animal kingdom, plants, and our environment as well. What a mess! Only someone with supernatural powers such as God is capable of a necessary “clean up”. The Bible tells us that our world will one day be restored to its originally perfect state. Do you have any idea who may be up to such an enormous job? God does, He entrusted the work to the second person of the Trinity, God Jesus. Keep in mind the original purpose of all creation was to give glory to the perfect Creator. That is certainly not totally possible now, given that sin and its effects have permeated and contaminated our world. Please explain how we know for sure Jesus will return? The simple answer is because He Himself said so in His Word the Bible. And since the Bible represents the covenantal truths of a perfect God, it should not be too difficult to accept. And God Jesus like God the Father cannot default on His promise and still remain a perfect God. Another reason is because dozens of prophets in the Bible from the first to the last book references Jesus’s second return. Based on some Biblical research, I can safely say that the exact number far exceeds the prophecies of His first coming 2020 years ago. Thus, the probability of the second return is well beyond any human numerical comprehension. I know what you may be thinking at this point, I lost all sense of reality by trusting so much in the Bible. Perhaps, but can you please find any other book that could devise such a plot? If so, you are certainly welcome to challenge the Bible for yourself, or any other book for that matter.

**This is an appropriate time to re-introduce the Biblical character known as Satan, “Destroyer” or the Devil in more detail. This will hopefully enlighten you as to how sin originally entered the Biblical creation story. Up until now we have only discussed the creation story starting with human beings namely our first parents. We concluded that since they first disobeyed God, we inherited their propensity to do likewise. What I neglected to mention is that God created another type of being before humans called angelic or pure spirit beings. These angelic beings were created by God with vastly superior intellects, skills and abilities far beyond that of humans. The Bible gives us no clue as to their exact number. They were created, like humans, to give glory to their Creator and be God’s messengers and serve. They too were made in the image of their Creator with a soul, spirit but having a spirit body instead of flesh like us. That spirit or angelic form made them invisible to all but God. The Bible tells of the most beautiful one that God created named Lucifer (aka Satan) or “light bearer”. For a reason the Bible calls envy, pride or jealousy, he desired to be greater than his Creator. He wanted to rule Heaven, God’s domain. He became so envious in his disobedience that he rebelled against God and was banished from Heaven along with his followers. And as a result of his sinful choice, Satan receives the dubious distinction of committing the very first sin. Despite Satan’s hatred for God, he is banished from Heaven and cast down and permitted by God, to take up residency on the earth to further spread evil along with his fellow rebelling angles or demons. So much for having a superior intellect, which proves the point that intelligence does not equate to wisdom. Satan’s hatred for God grows worse as eternity progresses. It is extremely noteworthy to mention that the vast majority of God’s angles do remain faithful to God and continue to this day in obedience and servanthood. Satan however, further projects his hatred on all God subsequently creates.**

**Enter our first parents into the creation scenario. They are given all they could possibly need or want in a perfectly sinless environment too. Sadly, they soon fall prey into believing Satan’s lie about how they too can become like God. They dreadfully believe the “father of**

lies”, Satan. I am sure you can now understand how lying has exponentially multiplied over time right through the present. It seems to be the norm rather than the exception. Mark Twain once said, “*a lie goes halfway around the world before the truth can put on its shoes*”. Sin may also be defined as the absence of truth which is a seriously diminishing commodity nowadays. Hopefully this explanation answers the question as to why a second return to earth by Jesus’ is absolutely necessary. Again, God needs to “clean-up” the mess that Satan and all that follow him in unrepentant sin have left in his wake.

## QUESTION ELEVEN

### HOW DOES GOD RETURN?

As promised at the end of QUESTION four, I will give you the Bible's answer of the culmination of human history. We explored the why, but not the how of the return of Jesus. It is quite obvious that evil has and will never diminish if left alone. Thus, if God does not intervene to defeat and restore all of His creation by crushing Satan and all that follow him, it would give the appearance that Satan is victorious over God. In other words, Satan would run a victory lap and have the last laugh over his Creator. And that is without a doubt simply impossible because evil cannot ultimately triumph over good. The Bible further communicates that God's plan of reconciliation or salvation is NOT available to Satan and his squad of demons. Why? Because Satan and his evil angelic posse fall prey to their own double-edge sword of super intellect and choice. Their act will eventually lead to their eternal damnation in hell, and any human imprudent enough to follow his lie. The Bible makes two very valid and valuable points. First, "to whom much is given, much is expected". And secondly, "pride goes before a fall". Those truths stand the test of time even today! Satan and our first parents clearly proved both quotes.

Are you going to keep us in suspense with respect to the major particulars of Jesus' return? Not much longer. The attractiveness of the Bible rests not only on God's perfect truths, but on its divinely inspired ability to tell us exactly what has, is and will happen in God's eternal "plan". It is not written from a human time perspective but from an eternal one. I said earlier that time as we know it, is a very limited product compared to eternity of which it is a subset. The Bible's hundreds of prophecies have all come to fruition except for those surrounding the imminent second return of God Jesus to earth. Let me get this important aspect off the table once and for all, NO ONE knows the exact date of Jesus' return, except God Himself. There have been and will continue to be multiple "religious and Bible clairvoyants" who have been predicting His return for centuries. And all have been or

will continue to be incorrect! So please don't read anything I write henceforth as a clue as to the timing of Jesus' return into human history! This much is absolutely true, Jesus came the first time under God's perfect intervention into human history. There is no doubt that His second return will likely follow the same method as recorded in so many places in the Bible. Many people missed Jesus on His first visit to earth. I dare say many more will miss Him on His return trip. There are many other prophetic details and signs that the Bible references that will precede the fulfillment of Jesus' return to the planet. Most details center around His chosen people Israel. Yes, the people who were originally entrusted, promised and continually rejected God's "fix it plan" in Jesus we discussed earlier in QUESTIONS SEVEN and EIGHT. Despite their continued rejection, God will keep His promise to a remnant of those people, along with His true Church. Jesus created His Church to pick up the ball of His "fix it" message in Jesus His promised people fumbled. I will share the major prophetic details here, the rest you can gather on your own by reading the Bible yourself if you are interested. Since we are talking about time, one obvious concern everyone has centers around why God is taking His "sweet time" sending His Son Jesus again? To help answer this we might revert back to QUESTION SEVEN. There we talked about God reconciling Himself to humanity. It makes perfect sense to admit that God desires all of humanity to share in His love gift of salvation. He desires this with as many people as He can for as long as He can. And every human would do well to accept that gracious gift. Please remember He did not have to make the gift available in the first place through His abounding grace in Jesus' sacrificial death. It is therefore logical to assume that the day of God's Justice and earth's restoration must arrive at some point. However, there is no precise "timeframe" as to how long the gift of reconciliation or salvation will remain in effect to the world. We already dialoged how the world is continually imploding due to sin, and how it very much needs restoration. So, it becomes abundantly obvious that the longer the true gift remains available, the longer God displays His love and mercy to humankind by keeping the door open! God certainly has the sovereign right to revoke His gracious gifts of reconciliation or salvation at any time in order to begin the "clean-up" process necessary in a sin darkened world under Satan's domain.

How does the restoration process proceed? Very slowly I'm afraid utilizing God's "eternal clock". I will attempt to share some detail since the process is somewhat complex and multi-layered. I will no doubt sound like a pessimist, but I am only trying to be a messenger of Biblical truth. So please tolerate these future truths that follow from what God is lovingly telling us in advance from the Bible. We said it is no secret that this imploding sin filled world will continually plunge into much, much more worldwide catastrophic evil and lawlessness. I think it safe to say we didn't arrive at this point overnight. There are forces of evil continually at work. The very nature of immorality is to always expand. This has grown worse with the exponential growth of liberalism in the US since the 1930s. The liberal infiltration into academia, entertainment and government is astounding. This resulted in removing of God and Biblical truth from our country. They supplanted God's Biblical truth that was engraved into our constitution originally founded on Christian ideals. Our second president John Adams, who helped write the constitution, is credited with saying, "*our constitution was made for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other*". Peter Marshall a mid-20<sup>th</sup> century US preacher notes that Americans "*live in a moral fog*". He goes on to say, "*their modified immorality, perversion and dishonesty, on the basis of cleverness, guides millions of people*". Allow me to take you on an extremely gloomy 53-year journey on the moral decline in our country as appropriated and supported by various liberal governmental policies.

1962 – The US removed prayer from schools

1963 – The US removed Bible reading from schools

1973 – The US legalized abortions

1980 – The US removed the 10 Commandments from schools

2003 – 13 states struck down the sodomy law

2013 – The US struck down the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA)

2015 – The US approved same sex marriage

**It is quite obvious that morality has deteriorated exponentially in a little over half the half century as delineated above. This what happens when we move God out of our country, and say our good-byes to Him. You don't need a degree in rocket science to see the probability of this deteriorating; and it did.**

**I write this book at a time of presidential transition from Trump to Biden. In just the last 6 years, since 2015, the ravages of abortion, rampant drug use, homosexuality, transgenderism, disrespect for authority, euthanasia, pornography, manmade disease, anarchy, selective media news omissions, hatred and disrespect of country, child and sex slavery and perversion, gender dysphoria to name just a few, have greatly intensified. The assault on our sensibilities is so unrelenting that we often grow numb and tend to accept them as the "new norm". While I am predominantly talking about the US what could I say about the rest of the world?**

**Now may be a good time to introduce God's typical Biblical remedy for dealing with humanity's systemic sin problems. He will tolerate gross disobedience without repentance on the part of any person or nation up to a point. He may then follow a pattern where he first directs people, like prophets in His church, to do His moral awakening. If that doesn't work well, he allows some catastrophic signals like fires, earthquakes, floods, strife, or disease to help awake people and nations. If they continue to ignore Him, He will drop His "protective hedge" leaving these deviants to their depravity until He returns. And the Bible illustrates that God is not above allowing evil to work for good. By this I mean He will allow things to continually progressively implode at His pace and well under His control. I respectfully challenge any reader to produce any book known to man that can reflect the past and present and predict the future with the accuracy of God's Word the Bible.**

And so, the downward spiral continues. Past, current and no doubt future political, social and economic events will further deteriorate and plunge the world into incremental evil. Couple that with a further turning away from God and His Biblical truths. This will eventually result in the progression of cataclysmic destruction, persecution, suffering and death worldwide. This “global reset” of sorts will continue to march forward will be discussed later. By the way, the Bible tells us that God is very accustomed in dealing with a depraved world caused by sin for thousands of years. Again, it is essential to recall the “believe in God” statistics mentioned in QUESTION ONE will also grow worse.

Is there any hope, perhaps there is a “God squad” that He uses to rescue this depraved world? The short answer is not really. That God squad biblically known as the Church cannot tackle the task without the return of its leader Jesus. Those special people of believers set aside that follow and proclaim Jesus’ message will eventually need their Savior’s help. And for the most part, this Church of Christ Jesus has struggled itself to accomplish its light bearing mission, but not without much persecution for the last 2020 years. Since its inception, the church made up of imperfect humans with choice, has been subjected to evil infiltrators. This body of believers in Jesus was entrusted to be his watchdog bringing the light of His message of God’s truth and love to the world. Well, it seems that over the last 90 to 100 years part of the church has sought popular approval; and in the process has gotten into bed with the world’s “isms” listed in QUESTION ONE. Despite all its efforts, this “body of believers” by itself will fall short in defeating evil. This failure is due in part to “false believers” or “wolves in sheep’s clothing” who infected the church and determined to see its demise. And so, the church too must be purged or go through trial as well to rid itself of the evil within. However, that will not discourage Jesus from eventually coming to rescue the “true believers” within the “true Church”. But not before His message of reconciliation or salvation has reached all people to include a remnant of God’s chosen people Israel. All this in accord with God’s perfect timing in prophecy. This current expanse of time is Biblically referred to appropriately enough as the “end times”.

In combination with these events, the Bible tells us about a future man claiming to be a world genius and charismatic “peace maker” that enters onto the world stage. He will have solutions to all the world’s economic, political, social and religious problems. His initial success will be extolled by countless people as a victory under the guise of peace, safety and prosperity. This will catapult him into further worldwide prominence and deserving of world leadership. But after several years, he retreats to his planned evil “power-grab” for world dominance and control. He will eventually bring the nations of the world against God’s chosen people Israel and future believers. And this will eventually lead to his demanding divine worship. Yes, this pseudo-messianic man will claim to be god and demand world-wide worship. Where have we heard this story before? This will lead to further death, persecution and destruction for those believers in Jesus unwilling to follow him. The Bible refers to this man as the “anti-Christ” or “son of perdition”. As the Bible chronicles, he will be charlatan and counterfeit of Jesus Christ. He is supported by another evil religious accomplice called “the false prophet”. These two evil, lying and murderously wicked people go on a worldwide rampage as they receive their diabolical power from Satan himself. All three will get so far along with their demonic plans before Jesus takes matters in hand with His return. While these three “evil masterminds” think they are completing the greatest coup in the universe against God, they are instead playing into God’s prophetic plan for world restoration via the return of Jesus. The “anti-christ” will finally marshal all the evil world leaders against Jesus in a great worldwide battle. What a mess that will be to clean-up! The Bible further declares Jesus’ swift and resounding victory and eternal confinement, of Satan, “anti-christ”, and the “false prophet”. This will usher in the promised restoration process for both His Father and His true followers. Jesus will then reign as LORD of Lords and KING of Kings from His kingdom seat of justice in Jerusalem the capitol of the world. Justice held captive by sin will once again flourish in a world that languished in hopelessness, death, injustice and despair. God again is the only One who can use evil to accomplish His perfect good! This is why the Bible is God’s Word of hope. There is no other book that can perfectly devise, articulate and prove such truth. I nor anyone else

**can make this scenario up. God always seems to draw straight with crooked lines; and this will be no exception.**

## QUESTION TWELVE

### HOW DOES GOD'S RETURN IMPACT ME PERSONALLY?

I am so glad this question is asked? Note that this is both the FINAL and most difficult question to answer because it is personal. As I discussed in the previous QUESTION, we in 2021 are in the period the Bible refers to as the “end times”. Without a foundational knowledge of Biblical truth, people will no doubt make themselves susceptible to “leaders” both political and religious, who will be lead away from God and His redemptive “fix it plan”. For the most part these “leaders” are most often fraught with satanic lies, scandal, hypocrisy, gross negligence and unrepentance. By way of recent past history, the famous 20<sup>th</sup> century Nazi propagandist Joseph Goebbels said, *“if you tell a big lie enough and keep repeating it, people will eventually come to believe it”*. This same strategy was used on our first parents and is a favorite of Satan throughout human history. Why? Because it works and makes great sense. If you are continually presented with a one-sided statement, set of facts or argument, and do not “fact check” it yourself by searching for truth, you have no choice but to believe it. There is no other opposing side or choice to consider. Lying or deception is probably the most common offence against God; and even a half-truth is still a lie.

Throughout this book I tried to emphasize three basic Biblical truths. First, there is an ABSOLUTE God the Creator of all that is seen and unseen. Second, the Bible as originally inspired and recorded by this ABSOLUTE God is ultimate Truth and therefore accurate and inerrant. God is not capable of leaving humanity with a dysfunctional “user manual” (Bible) to simply collect dust in the library or perhaps on your book shelf. God does nothing without a loving purpose in mind. Lastly, God has a unique plan for each person’s life, if and only if they are willing to choose to seek Him. Once again God does not create haphazardly. To put this succinctly, the God of all truth wants the very best for my life. I earnestly hope that appeals to you.

The first 2 tenets I hopefully tried to present in detail throughout the book in the hope that you would be honest enough to recognize the need for the third. The first two become somewhat valueless to you personally unless you agree to search for the third. If you decide to abandon the third truth you have sadly missed the boat. And what a boat you will miss. Way back in QUESTION FOUR we discussed the purpose of why God created which is to make Himself known. I sincerely hope I have sufficiently addressed why God making Himself known was of paramount importance on a personal level. And by known, I don't mean just head knowledge, but a transforming heart knowledge as well. Certainly, take comfort in the fact that God created you for the purpose of loving you. What a life changer in receiving His love and returning love back to Him and others. Let us see if we can once more connect several dots. We saw a moment ago that He has a plan for each person He creates. If you doubt this then you need to seriously ask yourself why you are here? The only other question that remains is what is that ultimate personal plan for you? Without becoming overly mysterious, that plan is to eventually exist with Him in His Kingdom both on earth and ultimately in heaven for eternity. Again, we must reflect on the free gift God has lovingly bestowed upon humanity called choice or free will. We further discussed that God never forces His will on anyone regardless of who or where on earth they may reside. We further discussed that to accept God's choice of reconciliation or salvation it must be on His terms through the finished work of Jesus on the cross as the only way to God. Again, *"the truth is the truth even if no one believes it; and a lie is a lie even if everyone believes it"*.

This book was written for one major purpose, to help you seek God and His truth by asking and answering the 12 QUESTIONS above for yourself. These QUESTIONS were assembled to help you understand the truth about this personal God. More importantly in QUESTION NINE, I addressed where you will ultimately spend eternity at judgment, with or without Him. I have tried to emphasize the personal impact of that decision over the last several questions. And the best way I have to make you aware is by appealing to you to read the Bible for yourself. I ask this before you go any further with the remaining time God has given you in this life. Should you find another

way to God outside the one He designed, I encourage you to explore it. What have you got to lose? Only your soul! Jesus said it best, *“what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his own soul”*. It reminds me of a bumper sticker that read, *“whoever dies with the most toys wins”*. The prudent question is what exactly do they win in eternity? That is the essence of this book. “Fact check” what others say or write about God compared to what God says about Himself and His truths. Speaking of “fact-checking”, I highly recommend a book written by a former atheistic investigative reporter from the Chicago Tribune Lee Strobel. In his exceptionally best-selling book, “The Case for Christ”, Lee sets out as a hardened atheist determined to disprove that his wife’s Christian faith in Jesus Christ is both baseless and foolish. His journalistic and investigative techniques take him on trips across the US. It details Lee’s vigorous challenges of 13 Biblical subject matter experts on the details of Christ’s life, death and resurrection from the dead. Lee’s main focus was on the biographical relevance within the four Bible Gospel writings of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. He also sought documents from anyone who was a historical eyewitness to Christ or his disciples. The historian Josephus that we mentioned earlier was one example. I am confident you will enjoy this book. It is an absolute page turner for anyone who is a seeker for God’s truth. The book has since been turned into a movie if you wish to go that route.

Again, the 12 QUESTIONS about God have enormous eternal personal consequences. I am NOT asking you to believe what I write herein on face value. Instead, I am challenging you to again “fact check” God in the Bible for yourself. I have endeavored to lead you with truth as God does. I will not insult you by coercion or intimidation, but rather by using the only two pieces of evidence, namely creation and the Bible. I can no more instruct you on the exact “how-to” of a relationship with God than I can on your relationship with your wife, family members or friends. That is too personal and not reasonable.

There are several other purposes for writing this book, not the least of which is that as “true Christians” we should all become one as Jesus prayed. I dare say there are hundreds of organized Christian denominations and churches throughout the world. But there is only one common belief articulated among them in the uncompromising Creed of all true Christians found in QUESTION EIGHT. If any church disputes or faults any statement within that creed then it should not be labeled Christian and be avoided at all costs. So, one may ask why are there so many different Christian denominations and churches seeking personal truth? It started in 1517 with a Catholic monk named Martin Luther who contradicted the Catholic Church on matters of faith in biblical doctrine. He further protested certain practices the Catholic Church burdened its believers for organizational gain. While that splintering was somewhat regrettable, it was necessary for the preservation of mans’ continuing search for personal Biblical truth and necessary for reform. It is very important to note that Luther did NOT in any way protest any article of faith from the creed derived from the Bible, that is outlined in QUESTION FOUR. Luther like all genuine personal truth seekers, wanted to help people understand more about the teachings of Jesus and worship of God as he interpreted in the Bible. I do not believe that Luther, or any denomination or person can contain ALL Biblical truth. Why? If that were possible, then that person, church or denomination would totally and comprehensively know the mind of its Author God the Holy Spirit. And I am doubtful that can be accomplished since all humans currently possess an imperfect spiritual intellect. I find it unacceptable that any one human or group posses an “infallible lock” on every single aspect of Biblical truth beyond the centrality of that of the Creed, as well intentioned as they may be. All personal truth seekers are given a certain amount of light; but not all are given all the light. If so, it would serve as a temptation of pride thinking they know more than God who is ABSOLUTE TRUTH. After all that is how disobedience entered the world.

No doubt there are Biblical interpretational differences that are divergent among all Christian denominations. If each claim perfect insight from God the Holy Spirit about their denominational pronouncements, isn't it possible that one or more could be wrong? I fully agree that we need the Holy Spirit to interpret the Bible. The potential problem centers around THE correct interpretation of what the Holy Spirit may be telling each believer. This is especially possible in light of the fact that there are so many Biblical translations, teacher commentaries in circulation since the Bible was originally penned in Greek, Hebrew and Aramaic. That number is exponential in both print and on the internet. No doubt, some interpretive differences are so negligently glaring and erroneous that they certainly require Biblical correction immediately. There are instances where even some Biblical characters challenge fellow believers on some interpretive topics. There must be a lesson in there somewhere. Many of the same challenges have continued through Biblical and church history. Again, heretical differences as outlined in the creed must be rooted out immediately. But some differences and challenges are so petty and divisive that they have no impact on the eternal truth the Bible extols.

Where am I going with petty divisive Biblical differences and challenges? Again, Jesus prayed that we ALL become ONE. So why are all these hundreds of Christian denominations and churches focused on petty differences vs. the infallible truths in the Creed that bind us? For example, who is in the business of telling or criticizing a true believer in Christ how to worship God? How does anyone know the heart of the worshiper as they partake in their denominational worship service? The importance of worship should be focused on giving God glory and the worshiper enhancing his/her relationship to Jesus. Who am I to argue or debate how that personal relationship is fostered? Only God can judge the heart! Jesus gave a wonderful blueprint of how worship should be followed in His ultimate prayer the "Our Father". Jesus was never dogmatic in His how, when or where He worshiped the Father. Why would He expect or burden His followers with any specific rules to follow? More importantly, why would anyone or denomination dare to do so? The Bible certainly encourages worship because God is worthy. It doesn't necessarily

give precise instructions as to how or where to worship. Once again, the Bible acts as a compass pointing “true north” without serving as a map to specifically tell us how to get there.

Allow me to validate my point further. One day Jesus was walking with His apostles when one of them said, “*we saw someone driving out demons in your name and we told him to stop because he was not one of us*”. Jesus’ reply was profound. “*He who is not against us is for us*”. Was Jesus pointing out differences as denominations sometime do because others are not following their interpretation of Jesus’s teaching? Was Jesus upset, jealous or concerned that the obedient follower was not part of His apostolic “inner circle”? The important point Jesus was illustrating is that the person was following Him by emulating Him. At times all Christians tend to employ a degree of self-righteous judgement only because they think certain Biblical truths have been bestowed only on them. If those closest to Jesus could not fully understand God in the flesh, what makes any person or denomination think they can totally understand God in the Spirit?

Allow me to return to an important point, namely waiting for Jesus' return to earth. People have been waiting for over 2020 years and will no doubt continue for an unknown number of years more. One thing is certain, one needs to always be prepared for His return. Why? Most of us will no doubt meet Jesus face-to-face after death long before He ever returns. A healthy attitude while waiting for Jesus' physical return centers around another purpose of writing this book, namely a better understanding of how Jesus taught.

The following excerpts are taken directly from one of my favorite and least known authors Joseph F. Girzone. In one of his many books about relationship with Jesus, "Never Alone" – A personal Way to God, Joseph wisely exemplifies key behaviors to improve a personal relationship with his best friend Jesus.

*"At times pure Biblical theological facts can be somewhat cold and impersonal in its intellectual expression. If Christianity only boils down to a theological system it could produce highly educated elites that do not resemble Jesus. Bible theology alone in any Christian walk can make people tired of "religion". Instead, it should make you hunger for a personal relationship with God. Some people think they grow closer to God by "religious activities and pious exercises" because of what they know and try to impress God with. They see spirituality as pressuring themselves to do more and more good works. Ultimately, spirituality is just simply recognizing the need for God in our lives. It doesn't necessarily spring from any goodness He sees in us, but rather from His overflowing goodness of His own. Many who come to Christ feel the need to become spiritual giants overnight. We don't grow physically or mentally overnight so why think we can grow spiritually overnight. Each grows as God has planned. Beside the Bible we foster a personal spiritual relationship with God through prayer. Most people get very frustrated with prayer because they look for an instant response. Like most people they look to be in control, and when it doesn't happen, they get discouraged. The kind of prayer we need to practice is detached. It should be where you are not looking for anything, but rather just put yourself in His presence sharing your feelings just as you would do in any other relationship. Our hearts need to be humbled and open to*

*what God the Holy Spirit might whisper to our spirit. The more practical and independent we are the more difficult to be reliant on God. After all one might say, look at what I have done in my lifetime. I have fallen and failed so many times and never let God be a part of my past. Most of us come back to God late in life carrying burdens of guilt, pain and anguish after wasting most of what God entrusted to me. Our past sins can be beneficial as they remind us of who we really are and Who we need. God is not shocked or deterred by our weakness and failures. He is concerned by our efforts and struggle to be good once we have come to Him in repentance and dependence. As much as we want to grow and become perfect in His eyes, our progress must follow the sanctification path. God will lead us to a set of experiences that prepares us for the special work He planned beforehand”.*

The above excerpts from the book “Never Alone” may seem next to impossible to accomplish. And without God’s help they will be. It requires much practice and patience. So, don’t expect instantaneous results. And don’t let discouragement dampen your progress. This is to be expected. Satan will do his best to keep you as far away from God as possible. The secret to overcoming Satan’s discouragement is personal prayer and God’s promises in the Bible. It is not asking for what we want in prayer, but rather finding out what God wants from us.

I decided to prayerfully end this book with some suggestions to hopefully enrich your life in a faith walk with Jesus should you choose:

- Find a Christian church and pastor you can trust be it denominational or non-denominational
- Receive the Holy Spirit in a Christian church acceptance display called Baptism – an outward public sign of your inward commitment to Christ
- Find time in prayer to ask God to lead you into His Truth
- Search and examine the Bible diligently for continued “fact checking” against what you have heard or read elsewhere. And if you cannot do this on your own rely on sound pastoral guidance from the church you have chosen
- Join a Christian Faith Formation or Bible study group to help you and others share and grow in relationship with Jesus

I mentioned in Question One that in some religions people reach after or try to become deity. But Christianity is the only faith where God has reached down to humanity. I have tried to reiterate God’s major desire that everyone come to Him in repentant salvation and not perish. For some that may happen in comfort, for others in discomfort. Either way it is the “Good News”. Why? Because God never ceases to find ways to attract us to Himself. Ask yourself this question, would you prefer God’s relentless searching technique, or that He be passive, uncaring and give-up on humanity? Throughout history many people were willing to die for a cause, even it was wrong; but how many are willing to die for a lie? Again, it all boils down to personal choice in response to a personal invitation from a personal God who desires a personal relationship.

And now I will leave you with a seemingly paradoxical statement you may not fully comprehend. *“A person who is only born once will die twice; a person who is born twice will only die once.”* May God richly bless you as you diligently search for Him in truth by asking and answering the “12 QUESTIONS about God” for yourself. Maranatha Lord Jesus!