

THE  
GREATEST



ALABI .T

# **THE GREATEST LOVE**



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All scripture quotations are from the Living Bible, except otherwise stated.

## **DEDICATION**

This book is dedicated to Dr Alabi whose teachings moulded my perspectives on the love of God.

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## INTRODUCTION

Every love story has a great or an unexpected beginning. Have you heard the greatest love story? It is about a girl who is a notorious criminal; she was known for all atrocious acts and was sentenced to death one day. Then, a just young man with high status who had loved her from the very beginning and had tried to help her live right said to her executors “do not harm her in any way, I know according to the law she ought to die because of her actions, but you all know I am a just and honorable man, I choose to die in her stead, I will receive the stripes and die the death of a criminal on her behalf only let her go free”. After much conversation, the notorious criminal was freed and when she saw what happened, she said to herself “he died in my stead for the atrocious acts I committed and now I am free, my past has been judged and my future is not determined by my past but by the path I choose to follow from now on, he took my shame and died in my place that I may live”. This just young man is similar to Jesus Christ and the notorious criminal is similar to the world. This is unquestionable the greatest love story. “And here is how to measure it – the greatest love is shown when a person lays down his life for his friends” – John 15:13.

Thank God the story did not end at His death. Let’s now go and enjoy the full story of the greatest love ever demonstrated.

## CHAPTER ONE

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### Who Is Jesus?

Let us begin this chapter by answering the question “who is Jesus?”

Many people have different opinions about Jesus even while He was here on earth; some called Him John the Baptist, others called Him Elijah or one of the prophets. Jesus then asked His disciples "Who do you think I am?" Simeon Peter answered, “The Christ, the Messiah, the son of the living God” - Matthew 16:16. Let’s take a look at Jesus’ response, he did not refute the answer Simeon Peter gave but agreed with it. He said, “God has blessed you Simeon, son of Jonah, Jesus said, “for my father in heaven has personally revealed this to you – this is not from any human source” –Matthew 16: 17.

Again when Jesus was arrested and taken to the high priest, the high priest asked him “are you the Messiah, the son of God?” Jesus said “I am and you will see me sitting at the right hand of God and returning to earth in the clouds of heaven” – Mark 14: 61-62.

Apostle John in John 1:1-5, 12 also wrote about the deity of Jesus.

“Before anything else existed, there was Christ, with God. He has always been alive and is himself God. He created everything there is – nothing exists that he didn’t make. Eternal life is in him, and this life gives light to all mankind. His life is the light that shines through the darkness- and the darkness can never extinguish it”.

In verse 12, he says “But to all who receive him, he gave the right to become children of God. All they needed to do was trust him to save them”.

So, is Jesus God? Yes. There is only one God but three persons. God has chosen to reveal Himself to us in three persons: God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. They are co-equal and have different responsibilities. Jesus is God the Son. It is not God the Father or God the Holy Spirit that died for our sins but Jesus. Phil 2: 5-6 says

“Your attitude should be the kind that was shown us by Christ, who though he was God, did not demand and cling to his rights as God, but laid aside his mighty power and glory, taking the disguise of a slave and becoming like men”

When Jesus was on earth, He was 100% God and 100% man. John 1:14 says

“And Christ became a human being and lived here on earth among us and was full of loving forgiveness and truth. And some of us have seen his glory – the glory of the only son of the heavenly Father”.

Since Jesus became a human being, does it mean He was born of a woman? Yes. Let’s now consider just two prophecies about the birth of Jesus.

### **Prophet Isaiah’s Prophecy about the Birth of Jesus**

Prophet Isaiah foretold the birth of Jesus when God sent him to King Ahaz to tell him not to worry about the Kings coming against his nation for their plan will not succeed. The Lord also told King Ahaz to ask for a sign however, the King refused and said he will not bother the Lord with anything like that (Isaiah 7:1-13). In Isaiah 7:14, Isaiah prophesied saying “all right then, the Lord himself will chose



the sign- a child shall be born to a virgin! And she shall call his name Immanuel (meaning God is with us)”. The fulfillment of this prophecy is seen in Matthew 1:18 – 25

“These are the facts concerning the birth of Jesus Christ. His mother, Mary, was engaged to be married to Joseph. But while she was still a virgin, she became pregnant by the Holy Spirit. Then Joseph her fiancé, being a man of stern principle decided to break the engagement but to do it quietly, as he did not want to publicly disgrace her. As he lay awake considering this, he fell into a dream, and saw an angel standing beside him. “Joseph, son of David”, the angel said, “Don’t hesitate to take Mary as your wife! For the child within her has been conceived by the Holy Spirit. And she will have a son and you shall name him Jesus (meaning ‘savior’) for he will save his people from their sins. This will fulfill God’s message through his prophets – Listen! The virgin shall conceive a child! She shall give birth to a son, and he shall be called “Emmanuel”(meaning “God is with us”). When Joseph awoke he did as the angel commanded, and brought Mary home to be his wife, but she remained a virgin until her son was born; and Joseph named him “Jesus”

### **Prophet Micah’s Prophecy about the Birth of Jesus**

Prophet Micah also prophesied about Jesus “O Bethlehem Ephrathah, you are but a small Judean village, yet you will be the birthplace of my king who is alive from ages past” –Micah 5:2. This prophecy was fulfilled when Christ was born in Bethlehem (Matthew 2:1). Some astrologers saw the star of Jesus and immediately followed the star which led them to Jerusalem. When they got to Jerusalem, they entered King Herod’s palace to inquire about the new born king,

but when King Herod heard that the king of the Jews was born he was greatly troubled because he did not want to be displaced as king. So king Herod called the Jewish leaders and asked "Did the prophets tell us where the Messiah will be born?" "Yes, in Bethlehem" they said "for this is what the prophet Micah wrote: "O little town of Bethlehem, you are not just an unimportant Judean village, for a Governor shall rise from you to rule my people Israel"- Matthew 2:5-6. After King Herod had confirmed the birthplace of the Messiah, he told the astrologers (who has come to inquire about the new born king so they can worship him) to search for the child and tell him where the child is, so he too can go and worship him. However, God warned the astrologers in a dream to go home another way and they obeyed (Matthew 2:7 -12).

### **The Baptism of Jesus and Beginning of His Ministry**

When Jesus was about thirty years old, He came from Galilee to Jordan to be baptized by John the Baptist and as soon as Jesus was baptized Matthew 3:16-17 recorded that "At that moment heaven was opened and he saw the spirit of God descending like a dove and lightening on him. And a voice from heaven said "This is my son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased ". After the baptism, Jesus was led to the desert by the Spirit where He fasted forty days and forty nights.

### **Temptation of Jesus**

After fasting forty days and forty nights, Jesus became very hungry. "Then Satan tempted Him to get food by changing stones to loaves of bread. "It will prove you are the son of God" he said, but Jesus told him "No! For the scriptures tell us that

bread won't feed men's souls: obedience to every word of God is what we need ". Then Satan took him to Jerusalem to the roof of the temple. "Jump off" he said "and prove you are the son of God; for the scriptures declare, " God will send his angels to keep you from harm", ...they will prevent you from smashing on the rocks below". Jesus retorted, "It also says not to put the Lord your God to a foolish test!" Next Satan took him to the peak of a very high mountain and showed him the nations of the world and all their glory. "I'll give it all to you", he said " If you will only kneel and worship me". "Get out of here, Satan" Jesus told him. "The scriptures say, worship only the Lord God. Obey only him". Then Satan went away and angels came and cared for Jesus" - Matthew 4: 3 - 11

We see from the story above that Satan claimed he would give Jesus the nations of the world and all their glory. Luke 4:5 - 7 puts it this way "Then Satan took him up and revealed to him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time and the devil told him, " I will give you all these splendid kingdoms and their glory- for they are mine to give to anyone I wish- if you will only get down on your knees and worship me". The King James Version of Luke 4:6 says "All this power will I give thee and the glory of them: for that is delivered into me, and to whomsoever I will I give it".

The first question is where did Satan get the power from and who "delivered" it to him? Was it God? Was it man? Or where did he get the power from? The answer is simple; it was the power God gave to the first man Adam. And Adam gave it to the devil when he deceived them in the Garden of Eden. God said do not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil but they did after being deceived by Satan, the old serpent (Genesis 3). Then Satan usurped the power God man to

have dominion and authority in the earth. But when Jesus gave His life for us, He stripped the devil of all his powers and restored us back to God's original plan. So, if you are a Christian, Satan has no power over you. John 10:10 tells us the purpose of Satan, "The thief's purpose is to steal, kill and destroy ". Satan uses a lot of strategies to carry out his purpose; some of them are to distract, to kill and to offer shortcuts. From the temptation of Jesus we see that Satan also used these strategies. In the first temptation of Jesus, Satan tried to use the distraction strategy " turn these stones to bread, it will prove you are the son of God", but Jesus did not come to "prove that He is the son of God", He came that we might have life and have it more abundantly, He came to restore us back to God and to give us eternal life. In the second temptation, he wanted to kill Jesus, "Jump off" he said, he wanted Jesus to jump off from the highest point of the temple to prove He is the son of God, but Jesus told him, do not put God to a foolish test. In the third temptation, he offered Jesus a shortcut " kneel down and worship me and I'll give you all the power...for that is delivered unto me". Jesus came to restore back the power and authority man lost to Satan, so the devil tried to offer a shortcut. Even today, Satan still uses these strategies, he tries to use circumstances to distract people from God and their God given destinies, he tries to kill and offers a "shortcut" to victory. But as Jesus overcame the temptations of satan, we too can overcome him through God's word. James 4:7 says "so give yourself humbly to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you".

After Jesus overcame the temptations of satan, He began His ministry by calling the first disciples and they are Andrew, Simeon (peter), James and John. He later called Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James (the son of Alphaeus), Thaddaeus, Simeon and Judas Iscariot.

## CHAPTER TWO

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### THE TEACHINGS AND MIRACLES OF JESUS

Jesus is much more than a prophet, He is the Christ, the Messiah, the son of the living God.

Let's consider some of His teachings.

**On Anger** He says "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, "Thou shall not kill, and whosoever shall kill shall be in the danger of the judgment". But I say unto you, that whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire – Matthew 5: 21-22 KJV. From the verse above we see that anger without a cause is bad, but anger as an emotion is not evil unless it affects us negatively (for instance when we keep malice or seek revenge). Ephesians 4:26 says "If you are angry, don't sin by nursing your grudge, don't let the sun go down with you still angry – get over it quickly". So when next you feel angry, don't nurse your grudge, keep malice or seek revenge, get over it quickly.

**On Adultery** He says "The laws of Moses said "You shall not commit adultery". But I say: Anyone who even looks at a woman with lust in his eye has already committed adultery with her in his heart" – Matthew 5:27-28. Why is it so? Proverbs 23:7 (KJV) says- "For as a man thinketh in his heart so is he". That means what a man thinks in his heart or meditates on is who he really is. Proverbs 4:23(KJV) says "Keep your heart with all diligence for out of it are the issues of

life". This verse reinforces the fact that what you meditate on influences everything else in your life.

**On Divorce** He says "The laws of Moses says anyone who wants to be rid of his wife, he can divorce her by giving her a letter of dismissal. But I say a man who divorces his wife, except for fornication causes her to commit adultery if she remarries again, and he who marries her commits adultery – Matthew 5: 31-32. Some people believe that the verses above encourage a man to divorce his wife if she is unfaithful, but Jesus does not encourage divorce. Matthew 19:3-9 tells us more, it says "some Pharisees came to interview him, and tried to trap him into saying something that will ruin him. "Do you permit divorce?" they asked. "Don't you read the scriptures?" he replied. "In them it is written that at the beginning God created man and woman and that a man should leave his father and mother, and be forever united to his wife. The two shall become one – no longer two, but one! And no man may divorce what God has joined together". "Then why' they asked did Moses say a man may divorce his wife by merely writing her a letter of dismissal? Jesus replied, "Moses did that in recognition of your hard and evil hearts, but it was not what God has originally intended. And I tell you this, that anyone who divorces his wife except for fornication and marries another commits adultery.

**On Oaths** He says "Again the law of Moses says "You shall not break your vows to God, but must fulfill them all" But I say don't make any vows! And even to say, "By heavens!" is a sacred vow to God, for the heavens are God's throne. And if you say "By the earth!" it is a sacred vow, for the earth is his footstool. And don't swear "By Jerusalem!" for Jerusalem is the capital of the great king. Don't even

swear “By my head!” for you can’t turn one hair white or black. Say just a simple “Yes, I will” or “No, I won’t”. Your word is enough. To strengthen your promise with a vow shows that something is wrong” – Matthew 5:33 -37. This simply means let your yes be yes and your no be no, don’t go about swearing just say yes or no and be true to your words.

**On Retaliation** He says “The law of Moses says “If a man gouges out another’s eyes, he must pay with his own eye. If a tooth gets knocked out, knock out the tooth of the one who did it”. But I say: don’t resist violence! If you are slapped on one cheek, turn the other too. If you are ordered to court, and your shirt is taken away from you, give your coat too. If the military demand that you carry their gear for a mile, carry it two. Give to those who ask and don’t turn away from those who want to borrow” –Matthew 5: 38-42. This simply means we should not repay evil with evil or insults with insults, but we should repay evil with good and live generously. I like the way The Message Translation puts Matthew 5:38-42 it says “Here is another old saying that deserves a second look: “Eye for eye, tooth for tooth! Is that going to get us anywhere? Here’s what I propose: “don’t hit back at all” if someone strikes you stand there and take it. If someone drags you to court and sues for the shirt off your back, giftwrap your best coat and make a present of it. And if someone takes unfair advantage of you, use the occasion to practice the servant life. No more tit-for-tat stuff. Live generously.

**On Enemies** He says “There is a saying, ‘love your friends and hate your enemies”. But I say: love your enemies! Pray for those who persecute you! In that way you will be acting as true sons of your Father in heaven. For he gives his sunlight to both the evil and the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust too. If

you love those who love you, what good is that? Even the heathen do that. But you are to be perfect, even as your father in heaven is perfect (Matthew 5: 43-48). The Message translation of the same verses say “You are familiar with the old written law, “love your friend” and its unwritten companion “Hate your enemies”. I’m challenging that. I’m telling you to love your enemies. Let them bring out the best in you, not the worst. When someone gives you a hard time, respond with the energies of prayer, for then you are working out of your true selves, your God created selves. This is what God does. He gives his best- the sun to warm and the rain to nourish – to everyone, regardless: the good and bad, the nice and nasty. If all you do is love the lovable, do you expect a bonus? Anyone can do that. If you simply say hello to those who greet you, do you expect a medal? Any run-of-the-mill sinner does that. In a word, what am saying is, Grow up. You’re kingdom subjects. Now live like it. Live out your God created identity. Live generously and graciously toward others, the way God lives toward you”

**On Giving to the Needy** He says "Take care! Don't do your good deeds publicly, to be admired, for then you will lose the reward from your Father in heaven. When you give a gift to a beggar, don't shout about it as the hypocrites do--blowing trumpets in the synagogues and streets to call attention to their acts of charity! I tell you in all earnestness, they have received all the reward they will ever get. But when you do a kindness to someone, do it secretly--don't tell your left hand what your right hand is doing. And your Father, who knows all secrets, will reward you"- Matthew 6:1-4. Don't show off, don't give because you want the praise of men and don't seek to impress others with your giving.



**On Prayer** He says "And now about prayer. When you pray, don't be like the hypocrites who pretend piety by praying publicly on street corners and in the synagogues where everyone can see them. Truly, that is all the reward they will ever get. But when you pray, go away by yourself, all alone, and shut the door behind you and pray to your Father secretly, and your Father, who knows your secrets, will reward you. "Don't recite the same prayer over and over as the heathen do, who think prayers are answered only by repeating them again and again. "Remember, your Father knows exactly what you need even before you ask him!" Matthew 6:5-8. Again these verses tell us not to seek the praise of men and not to give a show of spirituality.

**On Fasting** He says "And now about fasting. When you fast, declining your food for a spiritual purpose, don't do it publicly, as the hypocrites do, who try to look wan and disheveled so people will feel sorry for them. Truly, that is the only reward they will ever get. But when you fast, put on festive clothing, so that no one will suspect you are hungry, except your Father who knows every secret. And he will reward you" -Matthew 6:16-18. This simply means seek to please God and not men

**On Treasures** He says "Don't store up treasures here on earth where they can erode away or may be stolen. Store them in heaven where they will never lose their value and are safe from thieves. If your profits are in heaven, your heart will be there too" - Matthew 6:19-21. How do we store up treasures in heaven? By being generous to others and helping the needy with aim of pleasing God and not men.

**On Worry** He says "So my counsel is: Don't worry about things--food, drink, and clothes. For you already have life and a body--and they are far more important than what to eat and wear. Look at the birds! They don't worry about what to eat--they don't need to sow or reap or store up food--for your heavenly Father feeds them. And you are far more valuable to him than they are. Will all your worries add a single moment to your life? "And why worry about your clothes? Look at the field lilies! They don't worry about theirs. Yet King Solomon in all his glory was not clothed as beautifully as they. And if God cares so wonderfully for flowers that are here today and gone tomorrow, won't he more surely care for you, O men of little faith? "So don't worry at all about having enough food and clothing. Why be like the heathen? For they take pride in all these things and are deeply concerned about them. But your heavenly Father already knows perfectly well that you need them, and he will give them to you if you give him first place in your life and live as he wants you to. "So don't be anxious about tomorrow. God will take care of your tomorrow too. Live one day at a time" - Matthew 6:25-34. God wants us to relax and not be preoccupied with getting so we can respond to God's giving. He doesn't want us to be afraid of missing out because he will meet our needs every day. God wants us to focus and live in the now, we are to give our attention to what God is doing today and not worry about our yesterday or our tomorrow. Focusing on the past or the future will steal your "now", your today. Instead of focusing on yesterday or tomorrow, focus on today and make the best out of it with God's help. Your yesterday is over, your tomorrow is not here yet; don't get worked up about what may or may not happen tomorrow. Live in the now and trust God to take care of your tomorrow. Live one day at a time.

**On Judging others** He says "Don't criticize, and then you won't be criticized. For others will treat you as you treat them. And why worry about a speck in the eye of a brother when you have a board in your own? Should you say, 'Friend, let me help you get that speck out of your eye,' when you can't even see because of the board in your own? Hypocrite! First get rid of the board. Then you can see to help your brother" - Matthew 7:1-5. This simply means we should not condemn people, pick on them or jump on their failures. We should not seek to put others down because we will receive the same treatment not only from them but also from others. When we are kind hearted and easy on people, life will be a lot better. It's easy to see the faults of others but ignore ours. But in order to help someone, we need to remove the "plank" in our own eye before offering to help get rid of the "saw dust" in the person's eye. The Message Translation of Luke 6:42 says "It is again the I know better than you mentality playing the holier than thou part instead of just living your own part".

**On Asking** He says "Ask, and you will be given what you ask for. Seek, and you will find. Knock, and the door will be opened. For everyone who asks, receives. Anyone who seeks, finds. If only you will knock, the door will open. If a child asks his father for a loaf of bread, will he be given a stone instead? If he asks for fish, will he be given a poisonous snake? Of course not! And if you hardhearted, sinful men know how to give good gifts to your children, won't your Father in heaven even more certainly give good gifts to those who ask him for them? "Do for others what you want them to do for you. This is the teaching of the laws of Moses in a nutshell" - Matthew 7:7-12. When we ask God for anything, we should ask with confidence, expecting Him to answer us; we should ask believing He has heard and answered, then we will receive. Also, do unto others what you want them to

do unto you. Why is this so important? It's because of the law of sowing and reaping. Whatever you sow, you will reap. If you sow goodness, you will reap goodness; if you sow wickedness you will reap wickedness. It's a seed and it will bring forth harvest in due season. If you want people to be kind to you, take the initiative and be kind to them, soon you will realize that people, even complete strangers will be kind to you.

**On False Teachers** He says "Beware of false teachers who come disguised as harmless sheep, but are wolves and will tear you apart. You can detect them by the way they act, just as you can identify a tree by its fruit. You need never confuse grapevines with thorn bushes or figs with thistles. Different kinds of fruit trees can quickly be identified by examining their fruit. A variety that produces delicious fruit never produces an inedible kind. And a tree producing an inedible kind can't produce what is good. So the trees having the inedible fruit are chopped down and thrown on the fire. Yes, the way to identify a tree or a person is by the kind of fruit produced. "Not all who sound religious are really godly people. They may refer to me as 'Lord,' but still won't get to heaven. For the decisive question is whether they obey my Father in heaven. At the Judgment many will tell me, 'Lord, Lord, we told others about you and used your name to cast out demons and to do many other great miracles.' But I will reply, 'You have never been mine. Go away, for your deeds are evil' - Matthew 7:15-23. We are to examine the teachings we receive based on the word of God. If it's in line with God's word, put it into practice, else discard it fast. False teachers won't necessarily come with horns, hoofs and a red cape, but will come as an "angel of light", thus we ought to examine the teachings we receive.

On Putting His Teachings to Practice He says "All who listen to my instructions and follow them are wise, like a man who builds his house on solid rock. Though the rain comes in torrents, and the floods rise and the storm winds beat against his house, it won't collapse, for it is built on rock. "But those who hear my instructions and ignore them are foolish, like a man who builds his house on sand" Matthew 7:24-26. This means a person who has worked the word of God into his life will not be shaken when the challenges of life come. A person who has not worked the words of Jesus into his life will be destabilized when the challenges of life come. We are to put into practice the teachings of Jesus in our lives, with patience and perseverance.

### **The Miracles of Jesus**

When Jesus was on earth, He worked a lot of miracles. In this book, only a few miracles will be discussed.

The book of Matthew tells the story of a leper who Jesus healed.

"Large crowds followed Jesus as he came down the hillside. Look! A leper is approaching. He kneels before him, worshiping. "Sir," the leper pleads, "if you want to, you can heal me." Jesus touches the man. "I want to," he says. "Be healed." And instantly the leprosy disappears. Then Jesus says to him, "Don't stop to talk to anyone; go right over to the priest to be examined; and take with you the offering required by Moses' law for lepers who are healed--a public testimony of your cure" -Matthew 8:1-4.

Firstly, from the Law of Moses, people with infectious diseases for instance lepers, were to be pronounced unclean by the priest and separated from others

(Leviticus 13). So, this man not only had leprosy, but was also separated from other “clean” people. When the leper was approaching Jesus, Jesus didn’t say “Don’t you know the law; you are to be separated from clean people, what then are you doing here” No, definitely not, He did not say that. Then the leper said “if you want to, you can heal me” Jesus touched the leper and said “I want to” “be healed” and instantly the leprosy disappeared. From Jesus’ response, we see that He is always willing to help us in time of need. Now the leper had been separated from others for a long time thus he may not have had frequent contacts with “clean” people. But Jesus touched him before the leprosy disappeared; Jesus healed the leper both emotionally and physically. You may have been rejected and labeled a “sinner”, Jesus does not condemn you neither does He asks you to clean up your acts before you come to Him, He wants you to come as you are and he will make you clean. For He said in John 3:37 “But some will come to me-- those the Father has given me--and I will never, never reject them”. Come to Jesus today, come just as you are and He will make all things new. No matter the names people have called you or the name you have given yourself, even if people have called you “unclean”, Jesus can make you clean today. He is always willing. Jesus loves the sinner but hates the sin and one thing is certain, if you come to Jesus, he will never ever reject you. He longs to heal you, He longs to make you whole and most importantly, He longs to save you and give you eternal life.

Matthew 8: 5-13 records another miracle of Jesus. “When Jesus arrived in Capernaum, a Roman army captain came and pled with him to come to his home and heal his servant boy who was in bed paralyzed and racked with pain. "Yes," Jesus said, "I will come and heal him." Then the officer said, "Sir, I am not worthy

to have you in my home; and it isn't necessary for you to come. If you will only stand here and say, 'Be healed,' my servant will get well! I know, because I am under the authority of my superior officers and I have authority over my soldiers, and I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes, and to another, 'Come,' and he comes, and to my slave boy, 'Do this or that,' and he does it. And I know you have authority to tell his sickness to go--and it will go!" Jesus stood there amazed! Turning to the crowd he said, "I haven't seen faith like this in all the land of Israel! And I tell you this, that many Gentiles like this Roman officer, shall come from all over the world and sit down in the Kingdom of Heaven with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. And many an Israelite--those for whom the Kingdom was prepared--shall be cast into outer darkness, into the place of weeping and torment." Then Jesus said to the Roman officer, "Go on home. What you have believed has happened!" And the boy was healed that same hour!"-Matthew 8:5-13. When the Roman army captain asked Jesus for help, He said "I will come and heal him". Jesus does not segregate, whether you are a servant or king, He is always willing to help. The Roman captain realized the authority of Jesus thus he said just say a word and my servant will be healed. Anytime we realize the authority of Jesus our situations change for good.

When Jesus arrived at Peter's house, Peter's mother-in-law was in bed with a high fever. But when Jesus touched her hand, the fever left her; and she got up and prepared a meal for them! That evening several demon-possessed people were brought to Jesus; and when he spoke a single word, all the demons fled; and all the sick were healed. This fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah, "He took our sicknesses and bore our diseases"- Matthew 8:14-17. From these stories we see that Jesus is always able and willing to save and help us, all we have to do is trust Him.

Matthew 8:24-27 tells the story of how Jesus calms the storm.

“Suddenly a terrible storm came up, with waves higher than the boat. But Jesus was asleep. The disciples went to him and wakened him, shouting, "Lord, save us! We're sinking!" But Jesus answered, "O you men of little faith! Why are you so frightened?" Then he stood up and rebuked the wind and waves, and the storm subsided and all was calm. The disciples just sat there, awed! "Who is this," they asked themselves, "that even the winds and the sea obey him?" -Matthew 8:24-27. Jesus and His disciples were in the same boat when the storm came, but their responses to the storm was very different.

### The Disciples Response

They went to Jesus, woke Him up shouting, Lord, save us! We're sinking.

### Jesus' Response

Initially Jesus was asleep and unshaken. When His disciples went to Him saying “Lord, save us! We're sinking”, Jesus answered “O you men of little faith! Why are you so frightened?” – meaning where is your faith? Why can't you trust me? Then He stood up and rebuked the wind and waves and all became calm.

“When they arrived on the other side of the lake, in the country of the Gadarenes, two men with demons in them met him. They lived in a cemetery and were so dangerous that no one could go through that area. They began screaming at him, "What do you want with us, O Son of God? You have no right to torment us yet." A herd of pigs was feeding in the distance, so the demons begged, "If you cast us out, send us into that herd of pigs." "All right," Jesus told them. "Be gone." And they came out of the men and entered the pigs, and the whole herd rushed over a



cliff and drowned in the water below. The herdsmen fled to the nearest city with the story of what had happened, and the entire population came rushing out to see Jesus and begged him to go away and leave them alone”- Matthew 8:28-34.

It is amazing that demons know who Jesus is more than most people do. In verse 29 above, they said “What do you want with us O son of God?” have you come to torment us before our time? In verse 34 we see that Jesus does not impose himself on anyone, if we reject Him, He won’t force us; if we receive Him, He will abide with us forever.

After Jesus got back to His own town Capernaum, “Soon some men brought him a paralyzed boy on a mat. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the sick boy, "Cheer up, son! For I have forgiven your sins!" "Blasphemy! This man is saying he is God!" exclaimed some of the religious leaders to themselves. Jesus knew what they were thinking and asked them, "Why are you thinking such evil thoughts? I, the Messiah, have the authority on earth to forgive sins. But talk is cheap-- anybody could say that. "So I'll prove it to you by healing this man." Then, turning to the paralyzed man, he commanded, "Pick up your stretcher and go on home, for you are healed." And the boy jumped up and left! A chill of fear swept through the crowd as they saw this happen right before their eyes. How they praised God for giving such authority to a man!”- Matthew 9:2-8. The religious leaders did not know that Jesus is, so they were angry at the words of Jesus, but that did not stop Jesus from healing the sick boy. At another time a rabbi came to Jesus saying “As he was saying this, the rabbi of the local synagogue came and worshiped him. "My little daughter has just died," he said, "but you can bring her back to life again if you will only come and touch her." As Jesus and the disciples were going

to the rabbi's home, a woman who had been sick for twelve years with internal bleeding came up behind him and touched a tassel of his robe, for she thought, "If I only touch him, I will be healed." Jesus turned around and spoke to her.

"Daughter," he said, "all is well! Your faith has healed you." And the woman was well from that moment. When Jesus arrived at the rabbi's home and saw the noisy crowds and heard the funeral music, he said, "Get them out, for the little girl isn't dead; she is only sleeping!" Then how they all scoffed and sneered at him! When the crowd was finally outside, Jesus went in where the little girl was lying and took her by the hand, and she jumped up and was all right again! The report of this wonderful miracle swept the entire countryside" -Matthew 9:18-26.

From the story above we see that Jesus is always able and willing, he always has time for us and has more than enough blessings to give us. Matthew 9: 27-33 records the healing of the blind and the dumb. "As Jesus was leaving her home, two blind men followed along behind, shouting, "O Son of King David, have mercy on us." They went right into the house where he was staying, and Jesus asked them, "Do you believe I can make you see?" "Yes, Lord," they told him, "we do." Then he touched their eyes and said, "Because of your faith it will happen." And suddenly they could see! Jesus sternly warned them not to tell anyone about it, but instead they spread his fame all over the town. Leaving that place, Jesus met a man who couldn't speak because a demon was inside him. So Jesus cast out the demon, and instantly the man could talk. How the crowds marveled! "Never in all our lives have we seen anything like this," they exclaimed" Matthew 9:27-33. One important thing we notice from all these miracles is that faith opens the door for us to receive from God. Faith (trust and confidence in God) is the door through which we receive from God.

Matthew 14:14-21 tells the story of how Jesus used five loaves of bread and two fish to feed five thousand people. "So when Jesus came out of the wilderness, a vast crowd was waiting for him, and he pitied them and healed their sick. That evening the disciples came to him and said, "It is already past time for supper, and there is nothing to eat here in the desert; send the crowds away so they can go to the villages and buy some food." But Jesus replied, "That isn't necessary--you feed them!" "What!" they exclaimed. "We have exactly five small loaves of bread and two fish!" "Bring them here," he said. Then he told the people to sit down on the grass; and he took the five loaves and two fish, looked up into the sky, and asked God's blessing on the meal, then broke the loaves apart and gave them to the disciples to place before the people. And everyone ate until full! And when the scraps were picked up afterwards, there were twelve basketfuls left over! (About five thousand men were in the crowd that day, besides all the women and children.)" - Matthew 14:14-21. Jesus is not only interested in us walking in divine health; He also wants to provide for all our needs. There are many more miracles that Jesus performed, to learn more study the four gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John).

## CHAPTER THREE

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### THE DEATH AND RESSURECTION OF JESUS

If Jesus is God, how and why did He die? Can God die?

Jesus is God, the second person in the Godhead as explained in Chapter One. John 1:1-5 says "Before anything else existed, there was Christ, with God. He has always been alive and is himself God. He created everything there is--nothing exists that he didn't make. Eternal life is in him, and this life gives light to all mankind. His life is the light that shines through the darkness--and the darkness can never extinguish it"-John 1:1-5. Jesus is God but He became a human being "And Christ became a human being and lived here on earth among us and was full of loving forgiveness and truth. And some of us have seen his glory -the glory of the only Son of the heavenly Father!"-John 1:14. "These are the facts concerning the birth of Jesus Christ: His mother, Mary, was engaged to be married to Joseph. But while she was still a virgin she became pregnant by the Holy Spirit. Then Joseph, her fiance, being a man of stern principle, decided to break the engagement but to do it quietly, as he didn't want to publicly disgrace her. As he lay awake considering this, he fell into a dream, and saw an angel standing beside him. "Joseph, son of David," the angel said, "don't hesitate to take Mary as your wife! For the child within her has been conceived by the Holy Spirit. And she will have a Son, and you shall name him Jesus (meaning 'Savior'), for he will save his people from their sins. This will fulfill God's message through his prophets-- 'Listen! The virgin shall conceive a child! She shall give birth to a Son, and he shall be called "Emmanuel" (meaning "God is with us")"- Matthew 1:18-23.

Because He became a human being, it was possible for him to die in our stead. Jesus died so that we can have eternal life and dominion over all things, our fellowship with God is also restored and we regained what the first Adam lost (see more about this in Chapter Four). In this chapter, we will learn about the death and resurrection of Jesus.

In John 10:18 "No one can kill me without my consent--I lay down my life voluntarily. For I have the right and power to lay it down when I want to and also the right and power to take it again. For the Father has given me this right." From the verse above we see that Jesus laid down His life voluntarily. He also predicted His death on many occasions as seen in the verses below

"From then on Jesus began to speak plainly to his disciples about going to Jerusalem, and what would happen to him there--that he would suffer at the hands of the Jewish leaders, that he would be killed, and that three days later he would be raised to life again" - Matthew 16:21

"One day while they were still in Galilee, Jesus told them, "I am going to be betrayed into the power of those who will kill me, and on the third day afterwards I will be brought back to life again." And the disciples' hearts were filled with sorrow and dread"- Matthew 17:22-23

"As Jesus was on the way to Jerusalem, he took the twelve disciples aside and talked to them about what would happen to him when they arrived. "I will be betrayed to the chief priests and other Jewish leaders, and they will condemn me to die. And they will hand me over to the Roman government, and I will be mocked and crucified, and the third day I will rise to life again" - Matthew 20:17-19.

When the Pharisees asked Jesus for a sign to prove He is the Messiah, He said He will only give them the sign of Jonah. Here is how it happened.

“One day the Pharisees and Sadducees came to test Jesus' claim of being the Messiah by asking him to show them some great demonstrations in the skies. He replied, "You are good at reading the weather signs of the skies--red sky tonight means fair weather tomorrow; red sky in the morning means foul weather all day--but you can't read the obvious signs of the times! This evil, unbelieving nation is asking for some strange sign in the heavens, but no further proof will be given except the miracle that happened to Jonah." Then Jesus walked out on them” - Matthew 16:1-4. What is the sign of Jonah? The sign of Jonah signifies the death and resurrection of Jesus. Prophet Jonah was in the belly of a fish for three days (Jonah 1:1-17, 2:1-10) and there was a three days period between the death and resurrection of Jesus.

### **The Death of Jesus**

When the time of His death approached, Jesus took His disciples to Gethsemane. “Then Jesus brought them to a garden grove, Gethsemane, and told them to sit down and wait while he went on ahead to pray. He took Peter with him and Zebedee's two sons James and John, and began to be filled with anguish and despair. Then he told them, "My soul is crushed with horror and sadness to the point of death. . . stay here. . . stay awake with me." He went forward a little, and fell face downward on the ground, and prayed, "My Father! If it is possible, let this cup be taken away from me. But I want your will, not mine." Then he returned to the three disciples and found them asleep. "Peter," he called, "couldn't you even stay awake with me one hour? Keep alert and pray. Otherwise

temptation will overpower you. For the spirit indeed is willing, but how weak the body is!" Again he left them and prayed, "My Father! If this cup cannot go away until I drink it all, your will be done." He returned to them again and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy, so he went back to prayer the third time, saying the same things again. Then he came to the disciples and said, "Sleep on now and take your rest. . . but no! The time has come! I am betrayed into the hands of evil men! Up! Let's be going! Look! Here comes the man who is betraying me!" At that very moment while he was still speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, arrived with a great crowd armed with swords and clubs, sent by the Jewish leaders. Judas had told them to arrest the man he greeted, for that would be the one they were after. So now Judas came straight to Jesus and said, "Hello, Master!" and embraced him in friendly fashion. Jesus said, "My friend, go ahead and do what you have come for." Then the others grabbed him" - Matthew 26:36-50. Then Jesus was taken to the high priest when He got there, the chief priests looked for people who would lie against Jesus but their words were contradicting each other. Then the high priest said to Him "I demand in the name of the living God that you tell us whether you claim to be the Messiah, the Son of God." "Yes," Jesus said, "I am. And in the future you will see me, the Messiah, sitting at the right hand of God and returning on the clouds of heaven"- Matthew 26:63-64. With that the high priest tore his clothes shouting Blasphemy! And the other shouted that Jesus should be put to death. Jesus was then taken to Pilate, the Governor, "Now Jesus was standing before Pilate, the Roman governor. "Are you the Jews' Messiah?" the governor asked him. "Yes," Jesus replied. But when the chief priests and other Jewish leaders made their many accusations against him, Jesus remained silent. "Don't you hear what they are saying?" Pilate demanded.

But Jesus said nothing, much to the governor's surprise. Now the governor's custom was to release one Jewish prisoner each year during the Passover celebration--anyone they wanted. This year there was a particularly notorious criminal in jail named Barabbas, and as the crowds gathered before Pilate's house that morning he asked them, "Which shall I release to you--Barabbas, or Jesus your Messiah?" For he knew very well that the Jewish leaders had arrested Jesus out of envy because of his popularity with the people. Just then, as he was presiding over the court, Pilate's wife sent him this message: "Leave that good man alone; for I had a terrible nightmare concerning him last night." Meanwhile the chief priests and Jewish officials persuaded the crowds to ask for Barabbas' release, and for Jesus' death. So when the governor asked again, "Which of these two shall I release to you?" the crowd shouted back their reply: "Barabbas!" "Then what shall I do with Jesus, your Messiah?" Pilate asked. And they shouted, "Crucify him!" "Why?" Pilate demanded. "What has he done wrong?" But they kept shouting, "Crucify! Crucify!" When Pilate saw that he wasn't getting anywhere and that a riot was developing, he sent for a bowl of water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, "I am innocent of the blood of this good man. The responsibility is yours!" And the mob yelled back, "His blood be on us and on our children!" - Matthew 27:11-25. Now since the people asked Pilate to release Barabbas instead of Jesus, Jesus was taken away to be crucified. "Then Pilate released Barabbas to them. And after he had whipped Jesus, he gave him to the Roman soldiers to take away and crucify. But first they took him into the armory and called out the entire contingent. They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, and made a crown from long thorns and put it on his head, and placed a stick in his right hand as a scepter and knelt before him in mockery. "Hail, King of the



Jews," they yelled. And they spat on him and grabbed the stick and beat him on the head with it. After the mockery, they took off the robe and put his own garment on him again, and took him out to crucify him. As they were on the way to the execution grounds they came across a man from Cyrene, in Africa--Simon was his name--and forced him to carry Jesus' cross. Then they went out to an area known as Golgotha, that is, "Skull Hill," where the soldiers gave him drugged wine to drink; but when he had tasted it, he refused. After the crucifixion, the soldiers threw dice to divide up his clothes among themselves. Then they sat around and watched him as he hung there. And they put a sign above his head, "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews." Two robbers were also crucified there that morning, one on either side of him. And the people passing by hurled abuse, shaking their heads at him and saying, "So! You can destroy the Temple and build it again in three days, can you? Well, then, come on down from the cross if you are the Son of God!" And the chief priests and Jewish leaders also mocked him. "He saved others," they scoffed, "but he can't save himself! So you are the King of Israel, are you? Come down from the cross and we'll believe you! He trusted God--let God show his approval by delivering him! Didn't he say, 'I am God's Son'?" And the robbers also threw the same in his teeth. That afternoon, the whole earth was covered with darkness for three hours, from noon until three o'clock. About three o'clock, Jesus shouted, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" Some of the bystanders misunderstood and thought he was calling for Elijah. One of them ran and filled a sponge with sour wine and put it on a stick and held it up to him to drink. But the rest said, "Leave him alone. Let's see whether Elijah will come and save him." Then Jesus shouted out again, dismissed his spirit, and died. And look! The curtain secluding the Holiest Place in the

Temple was split apart from top to bottom; and the earth shook, and rocks broke, and tombs opened, and many godly men and women who had died came back to life again. After Jesus' resurrection, they left the cemetery and went into Jerusalem, and appeared to many people there. The soldiers at the crucifixion and their sergeant were terribly frightened by the earthquake and all that happened. They exclaimed, "Surely this was God's Son"- Matthew 27:26-54. Jesus died for the whole world so that we can be finished with sin and have eternal life (this includes even His murders), the only requirement was and is still to believe and accept His sacrifice. The whole incidence that happened at His death was to fulfill the words God gave to His prophets concerning the Messiah as seen below.

“They divide my clothes among themselves by a toss of the dice”- Psalms 22:18

“Yet it was our grief he bore, our sorrows that weighed him down. And we thought his troubles were a punishment from God, for his own sins! But he was wounded and bruised for our sins. He was beaten that we might have peace; he was lashed--and we were healed!”- Isaiah 53:4-5.

We see that the verses above about Jesus were fulfilled on the cross. It is believed that Jesus quoted from Psalms 22 on the cross because it begins with “my God my God why hast thou forsaken me” (Matthew 27:46) and ends with “he hath done this” (that is, it is finished John 19:30). Here is what Psalms 22 says

“To the chief Musician upon Aijeleth Shahar, A Psalm of David. My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring? O my God, I cry in the daytime, but thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent. But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel. Our fathers trusted in thee: they trusted, and thou didst deliver

them. They cried unto thee, and were delivered: they trusted in thee, and were not confounded. But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people. All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, He trusted on the LORD that he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him. But thou art he that took me out of the womb: thou didst make me hope when I was upon my mother's breasts. I was cast upon thee from the womb: thou art my God from my mother's belly. Be not far from me; for trouble is near; for there is none to help. Many bulls have compassed me: strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round. They gaped upon me with their mouths, as a ravening and a roaring lion. I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels. My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death. For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet. I may tell all my bones: they look and stare upon me. They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture. But be not thou far from me, O LORD: O my strength, haste thee to help me. Deliver my soul from the sword; my darling from the power of the dog. Save me from the lion's mouth: for thou hast heard me from the horns of the unicorns. I will declare thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee. Ye that fear the LORD, praise him; all ye the seed of Jacob, glorify him; and fear him, all ye the seed of Israel. For he hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; neither hath he hid his face from him; but when he cried unto him, he heard. My praise shall be of thee in the great congregation: I will pay my vows before them that fear him. The meek shall eat and be satisfied: they shall praise

the LORD that seek him: your heart shall live for ever. All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the LORD: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee. For the kingdom is the LORD'S: and he is the governor among the nations. All they that be fat upon earth shall eat and worship: all they that go down to the dust shall bow before him: and none can keep alive his own soul. A seed shall serve him; it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation. They shall come, and shall declare his righteousness unto a people that shall be born, that he hath done this" - Psalms 22:1-31.

Isaiah 53:1-12 is also about the death and resurrection of Jesus "But, oh, how few believe it! Who will listen? To whom will God reveal his saving power? In God's eyes he was like a tender green shoot, sprouting from a root in dry and sterile ground. But in our eyes there was no attractiveness at all, nothing to make us want him. We despised him and rejected him--a man of sorrows, acquainted with bitterest grief. We turned our backs on him and looked the other way when he went by. He was despised, and we didn't care. Yet it was our grief he bore, our sorrows that weighed him down. And we thought his troubles were a punishment from God, for his own sins! But he was wounded and bruised for our sins. He was beaten that we might have peace; he was lashed--and we were healed! We--every one of us--have strayed away like sheep! We, who left God's paths to follow our own. Yet God laid on him the guilt and sins of every one of us! He was oppressed and he was afflicted, yet he never said a word. He was brought as a lamb to the slaughter; and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he stood silent before the ones condemning him. From prison and trial they led him away to his death. But who among the people of that day realized it was their sins that he was dying for--that he was suffering their punishment? He was buried like a

criminal, but in a rich man's grave; but he had done no wrong and had never spoken an evil word. But it was the Lord's good plan to bruise him and fill him with grief. However, when his soul has been made an offering for sin, then he shall have a multitude of children, many heirs. He shall live again, and God's program shall prosper in his hands. And when he sees all that is accomplished by the anguish of his soul, he shall be satisfied; and because of what he has experienced, my righteous Servant shall make many to be counted righteous before God, for he shall bear all their sins. Therefore, I will give him the honors of one who is mighty and great because he has poured out his soul unto death. He was counted as a sinner, and he bore the sins of many, and he pled with God for sinners". These scriptures summaries what happened on the cross.

### **The Resurrection of Jesus**

"And many women who had come down from Galilee with Jesus to care for him were watching from a distance. Among them were Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of James and John (the sons of Zebedee). When evening came, a rich man from Arimathea named Joseph, one of Jesus' followers, went to Pilate and asked for Jesus' body. And Pilate issued an order to release it to him. Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and placed it in his own new rock-hewn tomb, and rolled a great stone across the entrance as he left. Both Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were sitting nearby watching. The next day--at the close of the first day of the Passover ceremonies --the chief priests and Pharisees went to Pilate, and told him, "Sir, that liar once said, 'After three days I will come back to life again.' So we request an order from you sealing the tomb until the third day, to prevent his disciples

from coming and stealing his body and then telling everyone he came back to life! If that happens, we'll be worse off than we were at first." "Use your own Temple police," Pilate told them. "They can guard it safely enough." So they sealed the stone and posted guards to protect it from intrusion"- Matthew 27:55-66.

Jesus took all our sins on Himself and gave us His righteousness; an exchange took place on the cross. On the cross, Jesus became sin in our place. In Zachariah 3, God gave us an illustration which represents Christ when He took our sins upon Himself. "Then the Angel showed me (in my vision) Joshua the High Priest standing before the Angel of the Lord; and Satan was there too, at the Angel's right hand, accusing Joshua of many things. And the Lord said to Satan, "I reject your accusations, Satan; yes, I, the Lord, for I have decided to be merciful to Jerusalem--I rebuke you. I have decreed mercy to Joshua and his nation; they are like a burning stick pulled out of the fire." Joshua's clothing was filthy as he stood before the Angel of the Lord. Then the Angel said to the others standing there, "Remove his filthy clothing." And turning to Joshua he said, "See, I have taken away your sins, and now I am giving you these fine new clothes." Then I said, "Please, could he also have a clean turban on his head?" So they gave him one. Then the Angel of the Lord spoke very solemnly to Joshua and said, "The Lord Almighty declares: 'If you will follow the paths I set for you and do all I tell you to, then I will put you in charge of my Temple, to keep it holy; and I will let you walk in and out of my presence with these angels. Listen to me, O Joshua the High Priest, and all you other priests, you are illustrations of the good things to come. Don't you see?--Joshua represents my servant the Branch whom I will send. He will be the Foundation Stone of the Temple that Joshua is standing beside, and I will engrave this inscription on it seven times: I will remove the sins of this land in

a single day. And after that,' the Lord Almighty declares, 'you will all live in peace and prosperity, and each of you will own a home of your own where you can invite your neighbors" - Zechariah 3:1-10.

Jesus paid for our sins fully through His death, He died in our stead and justified us, then He rose again. Matthew 28 records His resurrection. "Early on Sunday morning, as the new day was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went out to the tomb. Suddenly there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and rolled aside the stone and sat on it. His face shone like lightning and his clothing was a brilliant white. The guards shook with fear when they saw him, and fell into a dead faint. Then the angel spoke to the women. "Don't be frightened!" he said. "I know you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified, but he isn't here! For he has come back to life again, just as he said he would. Come in and see where his body was lying. . . . And now, go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead, and that he is going to Galilee to meet them there. That is my message to them." The women ran from the tomb, badly frightened, but also filled with joy, and rushed to find the disciples to give them the angel's message. And as they were running, suddenly Jesus was there in front of them! "Good morning!" he said. And they fell to the ground before him, holding his feet and worshiping him. Then Jesus said to them, "Don't be frightened! Go tell my brothers to leave at once for Galilee, to meet me there." As the women were on the way into the city, some of the Temple police who had been guarding the tomb went to the chief priests and told them what had happened. A meeting of all the Jewish leaders was called, and it was decided to bribe the police to say they had all been asleep when Jesus' disciples came during the night and stole his body. "If the governor hears about it," the Council

promised, "we'll stand up for you and everything will be all right." So the police accepted the bribe and said what they were told to. Their story spread widely among the Jews and is still believed by them to this very day. Then the eleven disciples left for Galilee, going to the mountain where Jesus had said they would find him. There they met him and worshiped him--but some of them weren't sure it really was Jesus! He told his disciples, "I have been given all authority in heaven and earth. Therefore go and make disciples in all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and then teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you; and be sure of this--that I am with you always, even to the end of the world"- Matthew 28:1-20.

Luke's account of the resurrection is written in more details "But very early on Sunday morning they took the ointments to the tomb-- and found that the huge stone covering the entrance had been rolled aside. So they went in--but the Lord Jesus' body was gone. They stood there puzzled, trying to think what could have happened to it. Suddenly two men appeared before them, clothed in shining robes so bright their eyes were dazzled. The women were terrified and bowed low before them. Then the men asked, "Why are you looking in a tomb for someone who is alive? He isn't here! He has come back to life again! Don't you remember what he told you back in Galilee-- that the Messiah must be betrayed into the power of evil men and be crucified and that he would rise again the third day?" Then they remembered and rushed back to Jerusalem to tell his eleven disciples--and everyone else--what had happened. (The women who went to the tomb were Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary the mother of James, and several others.) But the story sounded like a fairy tale to the men--they didn't believe it. However, Peter ran to the tomb to look. Stooping, he peered in and



saw the empty linen wrappings; and then he went back home again, wondering what had happened. That same day, Sunday, two of Jesus' followers were walking to the village of Emmaus, seven miles out of Jerusalem. As they walked along they were talking of Jesus' death, when suddenly Jesus himself came along and joined them and began walking beside them. But they didn't recognize him, for God kept them from it. "You seem to be in a deep discussion about something," he said. "What are you so concerned about?" They stopped short, sadness written across their faces. And one of them, Cleopas, replied, "You must be the only person in Jerusalem who hasn't heard about the terrible things that happened there last week." "What things?" Jesus asked. "The things that happened to Jesus, the Man from Nazareth," they said. "He was a Prophet who did incredible miracles and was a mighty Teacher, highly regarded by both God and man. But the chief priests and our religious leaders arrested him and handed him over to the Roman government to be condemned to death, and they crucified him. We had thought he was the glorious Messiah and that he had come to rescue Israel. "And now, besides all this--which happened three days ago-- some women from our group of his followers were at his tomb early this morning and came back with an amazing report that his body was missing, and that they had seen some angels there who told them Jesus is alive! Some of our men ran out to see, and sure enough, Jesus' body was gone, just as the women had said." Then Jesus said to them, "You are such foolish, foolish people! You find it so hard to believe all that the prophets wrote in the Scriptures! Wasn't it clearly predicted by the prophets that the Messiah would have to suffer all these things before entering his time of glory?" Then Jesus quoted them passage after passage from the writings of the prophets, beginning with the book of Genesis and going right on through the Scriptures,

explaining what the passages meant and what they said about himself. By this time they were nearing Emmaus and the end of their journey. Jesus would have gone on, but they begged him to stay the night with them, as it was getting late. So he went home with them. As they sat down to eat, he asked God's blessing on the food and then took a small loaf of bread and broke it and was passing it over to them, when suddenly--it was as though their eyes were opened--they recognized him! And at that moment he disappeared! They began telling each other how their hearts had felt strangely warm as he talked with them and explained the Scriptures during the walk down the road. Within the hour they were on their way back to Jerusalem, where the eleven disciples and the other followers of Jesus greeted them with these words, "The Lord has really risen! He appeared to Peter!" Then the two from Emmaus told their story of how Jesus had appeared to them as they were walking along the road and how they had recognized him as he was breaking the bread. And just as they were telling about it, Jesus himself was suddenly standing there among them, and greeted them. But the whole group was terribly frightened, thinking they were seeing a ghost! "Why are you frightened?" he asked. "Why do you doubt that it is really I? Look at my hands! Look at my feet! You can see that it is I, myself! Touch me and make sure that I am not a ghost! For ghosts don't have bodies, as you see that I do!" As he spoke, he held out his hands for them to see the marks of the nails, and showed them the wounds in his feet. Still they stood there undecided, filled with joy and doubt. Then he asked them, "Do you have anything here to eat?" They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he ate it as they watched! Then he said, "When I was with you before, don't you remember my telling you that everything written about me by Moses and the prophets and in the Psalms must all come true?"

Then he opened their minds to understand at last these many Scriptures! And he said, "Yes, it was written long ago that the Messiah must suffer and die and rise again from the dead on the third day; and that this message of salvation should be taken from Jerusalem to all the nations: There is forgiveness of sins for all who turn to me. You have seen these prophecies come true. "And now I will send the Holy Spirit upon you, just as my Father promised. Don't begin telling others yet-- stay here in the city until the Holy Spirit comes and fills you with power from heaven." Then Jesus led them out along the road to Bethany, and lifting his hands to heaven, he blessed them, and then began rising into the sky, and went on to heaven. And they worshiped him, and returned to Jerusalem filled with mighty joy, and were continually in the Temple, praising God"- Luke 24:1-53

## CHAPTER FOUR

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### WHY JESUS HAD TO DIE

Jesus died because of our sins. 1Peter 2:24 says “He personally carried the load of our sins in his own body when he died on the cross so that we can be finished with sin and live a good life from now on. For his wounds have healed ours!”. Why did he have to take the load of our sins in His own body? Why did Jesus die in our stead? In Romans 3:23 the Bible says “Yes, all have sinned; all fall short of God's glorious ideal”. 1John 1:8 also says “If we say that we have no sin, we are only fooling ourselves and refusing to accept the truth”. And Romans 6:23 tells us the consequence of sin “For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord”. Jesus took our sins in His own body so that we can have eternal life and become the righteousness of God in Him while on earth. We also regained our dominion which Adam gave to Satan and though we die physically, we know that a new life has begun, where we will be with Christ forever. If we die without accepting the sacrifice of Christ on our behalf, that is if we don't confess with our mouth that Jesus is our Lord and don't believe that God raised Him from the dead (Romans 10:8-10), then we will be judged according to the Law, and we know from Romans 3:23 that all have sinned and in Romans 6:23 the wages of sin is death, therefore eternal damnation is inevitable. But “When someone becomes a Christian, he becomes a brand new person inside. He is not the same anymore. A new life has begun! All these new things are from God who brought us back to himself through what Christ Jesus did. And God has given us the privilege of urging everyone to come into his favor and be reconciled to him. For God was in Christ, restoring the world to himself, no longer

counting men's sins against them but blotting them out. This is the wonderful message he has given us to tell others. We are Christ's ambassadors. God is using us to speak to you: we beg you, as though Christ himself were here pleading with you, receive the love he offers you--be reconciled to God. For God took the sinless Christ and poured into him our sins. Then, in exchange, he poured God's goodness into us!" - 2 Corinthians 5:17-21. Verse 21(KJV) of the scripture above says "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him". And John 3:16-21 says "For God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son so that anyone who believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. God did not send his Son into the world to condemn it, but to save it. "There is no eternal doom awaiting those who trust him to save them. But those who don't trust him have already been tried and condemned for not believing in the only Son of God. Their sentence is based on this fact: that the Light from heaven came into the world, but they loved the darkness more than the Light, for their deeds were evil. They hated the heavenly Light because they wanted to sin in the darkness. They stayed away from that Light for fear their sins would be exposed and they would be punished. But those doing right come gladly to the Light to let everyone see that they are doing what God wants them to"- John 3:16-21. Accepting the sacrifice of Jesus is the only way to have eternal life and be free from damnation. "Now God says he will accept and acquit us--declare us "not guilty"--if we trust Jesus Christ to take away our sins. And we all can be saved in this same way, by coming to Christ, no matter who we are or what we have been like"- Romans 3:22. Hallelujah!

## How Sin Came Into Existence and Entered Into the World

God created the heavens and the earth (Genesis 1:1) and everything within them such as man, angels, animals, plants, stars, moon, sun and every other thing. So did God create evil? No, all that God made was very good. Sin/evil came into existence through Lucifer (an angel of light God created and called the son of the morning), now known as Satan or the devil. Ezekiel 28:12-15 gives us an illustration of who Lucifer was before iniquity/sin was found in him. "'Son of dust, weep for the king of Tyre. Tell him, 'The Lord God says: You were the perfection of wisdom and beauty. You were in Eden, the garden of God; your clothing was bejeweled with every precious stone--ruby, topaz, diamond, chrysolite, onyx, jasper, sapphire, carbuncle, and emerald--all in beautiful settings of finest gold. They were given to you on the day you were created. I appointed you to be the anointed Guardian Angel. You had access to the holy mountain of God. You walked among the stones of fire. 'You were perfect in all you did from the day you were created until that time when wrong was found in you"- Ezekiel 28:12-15. We see that God ordained Lucifer an anointed cherub and he was full of wisdom, perfect in beauty and had access to the holy mountain of God, because God so anointed him. But then iniquity was found in him, the iniquity found in him is written in Isaiah 14:12-14 "How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground--mighty though you were against the nations of the world. For you said to yourself, "I will ascend to heaven and rule the angels. I will take the highest throne. I will preside on the Mount of Assembly far away in the north. I will climb to the highest heavens and be like the Most High." This was how sin came into existence, before this time there was no sin. Then how did sin enter into the world? It is seen in Genesis 2:15-17, 3:1-13

“The Lord God placed the man in the Garden of Eden as its gardener, to tend and care for it. But the Lord God gave the man this warning: "You may eat any fruit in the garden except fruit from the Tree of Conscience--for its fruit will open your eyes to make you aware of right and wrong, good and bad. If you eat its fruit, you will be doomed to die" - Genesis 2:15-17. “The serpent was the craftiest of all the creatures the Lord God had made. So the serpent came to the woman. "Really?" he asked. "None of the fruit in the garden? God says you mustn't eat any of it?" "Of course we may eat it," the woman told him. "It's only the fruit from the tree at the center of the garden that we are not to eat. God says we mustn't eat it or even touch it, or we will die." "That's a lie!" the serpent hissed. "You'll not die! God knows very well that the instant you eat it you will become like him, for your eyes will be opened--you will be able to distinguish good from evil!" The woman was convinced. How lovely and fresh looking it was! And it would make her so wise! So she ate some of the fruit and gave some to her husband, and he ate it too. And as they ate it, suddenly they became aware of their nakedness, and were embarrassed. So they strung fig leaves together to cover themselves around the hips. That evening they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden; and they hid themselves among the trees. The Lord God called to Adam, "Why are you hiding?" And Adam replied, "I heard you coming and didn't want you to see me naked. So I hid." "Who told you you were naked?" the Lord God asked. "Have you eaten fruit from the tree I warned you about?" "Yes," Adam admitted, "but it was the woman you gave me who brought me some, and I ate it." Then the Lord God asked the woman, "How could you do such a thing?" "The serpent tricked me," she replied”- Genesis 3:1-13. This is how sin entered into the world. When Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit, they did not die physically but fellowship

with God was seared, they became spiritually dead. They also lost their dominion and authority to Satan. So from then on, sin was atoned by shedding the blood of animals every year until Jesus paid the full penalty for our sins. "In fact we can say that under the old agreement almost everything was cleansed by sprinkling it with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins"- Hebrews 9:22.

### **How Sin Was Dealt With Before and After the Death and Resurrection of Jesus**

Sin was dealt with in the Old Testament (that is before Jesus died in our stead) by shedding the blood of an animal and the priest was to cleanse himself before entering the tabernacle. "Here are the conditions for his entering there: He must bring a young bull for a sin offering, and a ram for a burnt offering. He must bathe himself and put on the sacred linen coat, shorts, belt, and turban. The people of Israel shall then bring him two male goats for their sin offering, and a ram for their burnt offering. First he shall present to the Lord the young bull as a sin offering for himself, making atonement for himself and his family. Then he shall bring the two goats before the Lord at the entrance of the Tabernacle, and cast lots to determine which is the Lord's and which is to be sent away. The goat allotted to the Lord shall then be sacrificed by Aaron as a sin offering. The other goat shall be kept alive and placed before the Lord. The rite of atonement shall be performed over it, and it shall then be sent out into the desert as a scapegoat. "After Aaron has sacrificed the young bull as a sin offering for himself and his family, he shall take a censer full of live coals from the altar of the Lord, and fill his hands with sweet incense beaten into fine powder, and bring it inside the veil. There before the Lord he shall put the incense upon the coals, so that a cloud of



incense will cover the mercy place above the Ark (containing the stone tablets of the Ten Commandments); thus he will not die. And he shall bring some of the blood of the young bull and sprinkle it with his finger upon the east side of the mercy place, and then seven times in front of it. "Then he must go out and sacrifice the people's sin offering goat, and bring its blood within the veil, and sprinkle it upon the place of mercy and in front of it, just as he did with the blood of the young bull. Thus he shall make atonement for the holy place because it is defiled by the sins of the people of Israel, and for the Tabernacle, located right among them and surrounded by their defilement. Not another soul shall be inside the Tabernacle when Aaron enters to make atonement in the Holy Place--not until after he comes out again and has made atonement for himself and his household and for all the people of Israel. Then he shall go out to the altar before the Lord and make atonement for it. He must smear the blood of the young bull and the goat on the horns of the altar, and sprinkle blood upon the altar seven times with his finger, thus cleansing it from the sinfulness of Israel and making it holy. "When he has completed the rite of atonement for the Holy Place, the entire Tabernacle, and the altar, he shall bring the live goat and, laying both hands upon its head, confess over it all the sins of the people of Israel. He shall lay all their sins upon the head of the goat and send it into the desert, led by a man appointed for the task. So the goat shall carry all the sins of the people into a land where no one lives, and the man shall let it loose in the wilderness. "Then Aaron shall go into the Tabernacle again and take off the linen garments he wore when he went behind the veil, and leave them there in the Tabernacle"-Leviticus 16:3-23. But the blood of bulls and goats can only cover sins, "For it is not possible for the blood of bulls and goats really to take away sins" - Hebrews 10:4, but Jesus

shed His own blood which took our sins away forever. “Now, when sins have once been forever forgiven and forgotten, there is no need to offer more sacrifices to get rid of them” - Hebrews 10:18, because died once and for all. “For Christ has entered into heaven itself to appear now before God as our Friend. It was not in the earthly place of worship that he did this, for that was merely a copy of the real temple in heaven. Nor has he offered himself again and again, as the high priest down here on earth offers animal blood in the Holy of Holies each year. If that had been necessary, then he would have had to die again and again, ever since the world began. But no! He came once for all, at the end of the age, to put away the power of sin forever by dying for us. And just as it is destined that men die only once, and after that comes judgment, so also Christ died only once as an offering for the sins of many people; and he will come again, but not to deal again with our sins. This time he will come bringing salvation to all those who are eagerly and patiently waiting for him” - Hebrews 9:24-28. So now, when we receive Jesus as our Lord and savior, our past is cleansed, we become the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus, we regain what Adam lost to Satan- our dominion and authority on earth, our fellowship with God is restored and we have eternal life. All our sins have been forgiven and cancelled forever. So when God looks at us, he sees us as holy and righteous people because of the finished works of Christ.

## CHAPTER FIVE

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### THE IMPORTANCE OF JESUS' DEATH AND RESURRECTION

Here are some benefits of His death and resurrection.

Jesus' death and resurrection gave us eternal life (John 3:16). Our fellowship with God has also been restored. Jesus' death and resurrection restored to us what Adam lost to Satan and made us the righteousness of God in Him (1 Corinthians 5:21). Romans 5:17-19 says "The sin of this one man, Adam, caused death to be king over all, but all who will take God's gift of forgiveness and acquittal are kings of life because of this one man, Jesus Christ. Yes, Adam's sin brought punishment to all, but Christ's righteousness makes men right with God, so that they can live. Adam caused many to be sinners because he disobeyed God, and Christ caused many to be made acceptable to God because he obeyed".

Through the death and resurrection of Jesus we have a new covenant Hebrew 8:6-13 says "But Christ, as a Minister in heaven, has been rewarded with a far more important work than those who serve under the old laws because the new agreement that he passes on to us from God contains far more wonderful promises. The old agreement didn't even work. If it had, there would have been no need for another to replace it. But God himself found fault with the old one, for he said, "The day will come when I will make a new agreement with the people of Israel and the people of Judah. This new agreement will not be like the old one I gave to their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; they did not keep their part in that agreement, so I had to cancel it. But this is the new agreement I will make with the people of

Israel, says the Lord: I will write my laws in their minds so that they will know what I want them to do without my even telling them, and these laws will be in their hearts so that they will want to obey them, and I will be their God and they shall be my people. And no one then will need to speak to his friend or neighbor or brother, saying, 'You, too, should know the Lord,' because everyone, great and small, will know me already. And I will be merciful to them in their wrongdoings, and I will remember their sins no more." God speaks of these new promises, of this new agreement, as taking the place of the old one; for the old one is out of date now and has been put aside forever"-Hebrews 8:6-13.

Our past, present and future sins have also been forgiven and the sacrifice of Jesus makes it easy for us to serve the living God "And if under the old system the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of young cows could cleanse men's bodies from sin, just think how much more surely the blood of Christ will transform our lives and hearts. His sacrifice frees us from the worry of having to obey the old rules and makes us want to serve the living God. For by the help of the eternal Holy Spirit, Christ willingly gave himself to God to die for our sins--he being perfect, without a single sin or fault. Christ came with this new agreement so that all who are invited may come and have forever all the wonders God has promised them. For Christ died to rescue them from the penalty of the sins they had committed while still under that old system"- Hebrews 9:13-15. And as a result of the blood that Jesus shed on our behalf, we are cleansed from all unrighteousness 1John1:7 says "But if we are living in the light of God's presence, just as Christ does, then we have wonderful fellowship and joy with each other, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from every sin".

Therefore, when we receive Jesus as our Lord and Savior, all our past, present and future sins are gone forever. We become the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus. If you want to receive Jesus as your Lord and savior, please pray out loud the prayer below.

### **Prayer of Salvation**

Dear Lord, I come to you in the name of Jesus, I ask that you forgive and wash away all my sins because of Christ's finished works. You said in your word that whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved (Romans 10:13). I ask Jesus to come into my life and be my Lord, I surrender all to him. I thank you for I am now saved, justified, forgiven and born again. I thank you Father for I have eternal life, Amen.

Welcome to God's kingdom, If you prayed the prayer above, you are now a child of the Most High God.