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FOREWORD

Your life may end in the next 7 years.
Or worse, never end when you want it to.

Maybe you're distracted with plans for your holiday…
Or you're so busy you're too stressed to think…
Or you're just hanging in there, not knowing where to turn…
I understand. You've no time to read about the history or future of the world.

But right now the world is in the best state it's ever been, and that's why you can carry on.
The world has suffered greatly in the past: floods, ravaging armies, famines, plagues…
...but you're living in the time of a bubble of goodness which is making you blissfully unaware that the terrible disasters of the past are about to return, and worse – much, much, MUCH worse.

Am I scaring you? That's not the right question to ask. The right question to ask is, am I *right*? And how much will it cost you to find out? Nothing. Just 5 or 15 minutes here and there… I've spent many months putting together everything I know that can help you. I've written this JUST for you to know the truth.

How do I know the truth? Well, it's not a thing, it's a person. While my life hasn't been particularly great or glorious, one unusual thing about it is how I got to know God and he became such a personal friend to me and taught me, a fool, how to walk with him. I've had a ton of conversations with him, for example, once he told me to go talk to a stranger at a café and it stopped them from committing suicide. I'm also by nature an analyst with a knack for making complex things simple, and I've learned a lot about life. I then felt a calling to share my life story and knowledge with others, partly as a help to develop a personal relationship with God, and partly as a guide book which will be useful during the tribulation which I believe is virtually upon us.

I was about 85% done when I came across a video about a South African man named Joshua who shared a testimony that Jesus had told him in 2018 that the exodus, which Joshua understood as the rapture, was going to happen on Rosh Hashanah, 2025, i.e. either 23 or 24 September 2025, and that Jesus would return to the earth after the 7 year tribulation (which will get increasingly worse until it's literally hell on earth) on Yom Kippur, 2032, i.e. 15th September 2032. Several more Christians have asked God for confirmation and received it and many, many others are having rapture dreams with increasing frequency.
(Edit: Note obviously it did not happen then, I don't know why, see note at end of Foreword.)

I also came across some other prophecies of war in 2026 and a plague in 2027 which align with the way the Bible describes the tribulation. This made me hurry up and finish the book urgently because I felt the story of God in my life plus what I've learned might be extremely useful to

people, both before and after the rapture, because, as I understand it, there is going to be a second gathering (of those left behind plus new Christians), probably just before the massive meteor named Apophis comes on Friday the 13th, April 2029 – currently calculated to pass between Earth and geostationary satellites. (Apophis is the Egyptian snake god of chaos and darkness who was once the sun god but fell from grace and now seeks to prevent the return of the true sun god Ra.)

If you need to know what to do in a hurry, read **Appendix C** first (Appendix **B** first if you are Jewish). And even if the rapture has happened, it's even more important for you to read the book – you still have a good chance.

It is divided into two parts and three appendices: part 1 is the story of God in my life – I think it's helpful because it shows how God is a person, and loves you, but has to wait for you, and it shows how even a fool can walk with him; and part 2 is a bunch of things I've learned about life which may be helpful, but not urgent.

The appendices describe a) books where you can learn more; b) historical prophecies thousands of years old which came true with Jesus; and c) most importantly, the coming rapture, where many people are going to disappear, triggering chaos and a chain reaction to the end of the world in 7 years, quite literally. I believe so-called aliens will claim they did it so we can all evolve (though that may be the next rapture), but in fact it's God removing people from the disasters to come and the aliens are actually demons (fallen angels).

If this all sounds crazy, believe me, it's not. Historian Phlegon records that the sun went dark for 3 hours while Jesus was crucified, and this was when the moon was full so could not have been an eclipse. Dead people came out of the graves. We're in a lull right now, but several Christian prophets are saying that major upheavals are going to happen soon. Joshua also mentioned that the world will be unrecognisable in 2026 and there will be no World Cup (football).

But the main thing is not so much about escaping or dealing with the disasters to come. It's about what happens to you as an eternal spirit after you die. If you die without Jesus you will of *necessity* (because you are blood guilty of sin, and perfect justice cannot be broken and remain perfect) be cast into the lake of fire prepared for the devil and his angels, who chose to become evil:

> "And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever. … And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. … And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." – Revelation 20:10, 12, 15

> "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." – Romans 6:23
>
> Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into **everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels**: For I was hungry, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not." – Matthew 25:41-43

Don't follow them there! Get out of the dark side into which we are all born ever since Adam and Eve yielded to the devil. How? Only by choosing to accept the perfect goodness of heart which God has on a free offer for you through Jesus can you be saved, because no sin can enter into heaven. Jesus lived a perfectly innocent, sinless life, yet was given sin's punishment of death, enabling a *just* exchange of your eternal death for his eternal life if you sincerely ask him to forgive you, make you clean and be your Lord.

Whether the prophecies are right or wrong, don't ignore this book. It will cost you nothing to find out the truth. It can save you from being locked into unfathomable horrors for eternity. Don't be careless. Take a step to check it out. There are evil spirits that don't want you to. Make sure you do.

PS. I know I sound like a nut. And if you feel, "I'm not going to waste my time on a nut" without a thought of examining the evidence first then you are in the greatest danger, because the odds are you have one of those spirits on you right now, in which case it will take a massive effort to read the book – and that's my strongest argument that you need to.

Contact
If you want to talk to me you can do so by replacing the © with an @ character in the following address:
freerangeant©proton.me

Update 6 Dec 2025, 28 Mar 2026:

Obviously the rapture did not happen in September. Now some things need to be said about this.
1) I firmly believe, after listening to Joshua, that what he experienced was real and that it was Jesus who spoke. Joshua offers a very interesting explanation here, Part 1 and Part 2, that "exodus" indicates a process, and included a deliberate delay by God as a test of hearts and time to repent. Regardless, Jesus also told Joshua that there would be no World Cup, so we have until 11th June 2026 to see if the explanation is correct.
2) In my spirit, on Sept 24, I clearly sensed that God was testing the church, to see who would judge in hate and condemnation, and who would work with grace towards those they felt were mistaken. I felt God being deeply angered by the response of some, and I sensed that some kind of

irrevocable series of actions had been set In motion as a result, as though a button had been pressed. Nothing we can do or say can change it now.
3) For those who believe that no one can know the day or the hour, in Matthew 25 the 10 virgins with oil in their lamps hear the shout that the bridegroom is arriving before he arrives, and they get up and trim their lamps. What is this but a time of preparation knowing the time of his arrival?
4) Prophecies of imminent destruction and the rapture are increasing in frequency by many respected, Spirit-following Christians. Whatever is happening, please read this book and prepare yourself. At least read the Chapters: the plain facts of God's interactions with me in my life story.

Note. If you got this book on Kindle, and can't access the links for any reason, it is also downloadable in MS-Word free at www.godiswaitingforyou.com

PROLOGUE

This is a story of God's working in my life, and how I got to know him, in the hope that you can too.

If God can teach even me to walk with him, he can certainly teach you. You can hear him, get help for your sins, get your prayers answered, and go to heaven, no matter who you are or what you've done.

I have tried to keep most of it just to those times God interacted with me, but I've also felt that I should share enough of my life for you to have context.

But before I begin, I think, though I may be wrong, that in order to understand how God has dealt with me in my life properly, you need to have an understanding of who and what I am, to see why things worked out the way they did.

Each of us is unique, a special design of God, which makes us more able to do some things well and less able to do others as well. All of our abilities combine to make us good at particular roles, which will be in alignment with God's plan for our life.

Therefore, while we can learn and take principles from examples of other people's lives, we should never expect God to make our lives turn out in a similar way or lead us through some of the same experiences and ministries as someone else; nor judge others by the way we would have acted in their place.

WHO I AM

Whether I am or not, I feel different. I have always struggled to fit in with my peers socially and I think it's because I am so heavily ruled by three things: an intense appreciation of the wonderful *miracle* of life, a *burning* desire for the truth, and an all-consuming *love* of Love. I think that because of the intensity of these, everything is more serious, more wonderful and more inclined to love and learn and laugh than it appears to be to my peers. They seem much more preoccupied and capable of dealing with the practicalities and goals of life, with the occasional rude or teasing joke, while gliding over the wonders and principles that draw me. At least that's the way it feels. I'm too idealistic, too serious, too open, too annoying, too *different* to fit in. Or maybe even just "too heavenly minded to be any earthly good" (except I have always taken offence to that! The more heavenly-minded, the more earthly good! Except admittedly in day to day practicalities.)

Before I give the wrong impression that I am claiming to be better or saintly, let me be clear, I am just as sinful and weak as anyone, in fact more so than most. I'm physically lazy, greedy, lustful, cowardly, naïve, sentimental, etc. And some would say extremely stubborn, but I think of it as tenacious. Of course I fight against these (except the tenacity, of course) but to my shame I have given in where others would most certainly not have. I have an absolute laundry list of sins, some too bad to even mention here. We're all given different gifts with different corresponding weaknesses. I am just taking time to express this heart I find within myself as clearly as I can.

From a baby, any time I saw any living thing I was fascinated, in awe of the wonderful miracle of it. The first time I was at my aunt's house when I was around 2 years old I wandered out to the lemon

tree and was amazed to see big fat white caterpillars crawling along the leaves. To me, it was a clear miracle! I rushed back to the house to find my mom, but I didn't have the words! I grabbed her hand and pulled her, saying "Big fat! Big fat!" and dragged her out to see these wonderful moving pieces of life with their own intelligence and endeavours.

Every being I see is not only a demonstration of God's working to me, but a living *expression* of God's life on earth, to be respected, protected and treated rightly. Even as an adult I catch little 'muggies' (like fruit flies) carefully out of the bath before filling it. Every one has the right to live their life if I can possibly help it, as long as they do not harm.

As for truth, I have an intense zeal to know and speak only the truth. Even to myself. I have always been suspicious of my heart and don't trust it at all. The Bible says in Jeremiah 17:9 "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" and I agree. I instinctively felt the need to fight its slippery slope as far back as I can remember. Even at four or five years old, if I made a decision and caught a whiff of possible bias or self-deceit in it I would stop and check my reasoning very carefully, going over it with a fine-toothed comb, looking for selfish motives hidden behind thoughts, like beating the long grass looking for snakes, and if I flushed one I would immediately go and arrange the opposite of what it wanted, to kill it.

But most of all I have always wanted with all my heart for people to be well and happy. As soon as I see someone is unhappy, my entire being turns to help them.

I recall my classmates not looking happy at kindergarten one day, and acting the complete clown in front of them all just to make them laugh and be happier, which worked wonderfully.

Somewhere around that age my mom explained the birds and the bees to all four of us children and while she was talking about marriage and the man putting his wiggle into the woman she looked so ill at ease that I felt an urgent need to bring her some relief so I jumped in with, "Yuk! I'm never going to do that!" knowing of course that it was highly likely I would, which would make it funny, and was glad she laughed out loud and got completely over it.

That we had at least understood her properly was evident when in the following days we came rushing into the house yelling, "Mommy! Mommy! Sally's getting married on the lawn!" Sally was our little white dog.

A year later my youngest sister fell onto a stone step ahead of me and hurt her knee and could only moan for the pain. I gave her a short while to recover then asked her what happened, just to distract her. When she replied "I fell and hurt my knee" it came to me in a flash, "What on earth did you do that for?" and the relief of seeing her break out into laughter was so satisfying.

And on the positive side, whenever someone does something well I am very impressed and compliment them. I'm easily but sincerely impressed so compliments pour out of me, I just can't help them.

My mother taught us to pray and sing choruses each evening around her sick bed, and this was my favourite time of the day. "Be near me, Lord Jesus, and ask you to stay, close by me for ever, and love me I pray…" I always meant every word with all my heart. The sweetness of his love was a tangible, gentle, kindly giving that I adored and wanted to be a giving part of, too. It's that same

sweetness of love when you see someone do something generous and righteous at cost to themselves. I'm a complete sucker when it comes to love. I even read my daughter's old Mandy annual collection and cry at the beauty of the selfless actions I see there. (I believe that the previous revivals had infused English society with godliness.)

Laughter and music also feel like a part of love to me. My heart is always looking for the funny side of things despite my having such a low emotional intelligence that I am truly *guaranteed* to mis-tell any joke. And there is a continuous vein of music playing in the background of my soul, at times quieter, at times surging. Whenever I am doing chores alone and my logical side is occupied the music rises and I find myself singing. The music is a flowing, adagio style, and I have noticed that everyone seems to have their own particular style. You see this clearly when people play spontaneous, improvised music: each person expresses their own style. It feels to me like we are each one unique strand or melody of a far greater and ancient arrangement of the I AM expressed in harmonious song.

Being so ruled by these three things, the love of life, the love of truth and the love of love, means that I spend inordinate amounts of time either getting an understanding of spiritual matters or meeting people's needs. I'm very, very patient with helping people. Almost all my spare time is spent on it in one way or another (except when I need a rest.) Even writing this little book is for that purpose.

WHAT I AM

I feel that this may also be relevant: our brains tend to divide work into the left and right halves, one half (usually the left) being logical, verbal and auditory, and the other half being intuitive, imaginative and visual, but while most people apparently operate somewhere between the two, tending to be more 'left-brained' or 'right-brained' as they call it, I seem to switch comfortably back and forth between two extremes.

When I'm in logical mode (my usual) I may as well be half-Vulcan – like Mr Spock of Star Trek. My disabled wife eats when she's ready and she can say to me, "Can you make me a toasted cheese and tomato sandwich for supper?" and I will reply "Sure" and not go and do it because I don't know when her supper is. I still expect her to actually ask me to make it once she wants her supper. If she left out 'for supper' I'd take it as the actual request.

All logic comes naturally to me, and I'm the only programmer I know who has no trouble with IF A = B OR B = C AND NOT (A = D AND B IS NOT = D OR C = D), etc. All my peers throw extra brackets in there to tie down the order of operations.

I feel that this extremely logical, non-emotional mode helps me to be totally unbiased when it comes to finding out and understanding the truth. For one example, I hold all my beliefs as percentage odds. Very few of them are truly black and white. So if a neighbour came to me saying in all seriousness, "Last night a UFO floated down onto my lawn and aliens came out and spoke to me" I'd be interested in the evidence first, and based on that come to a percentage-likely conclusion, while it seems to me that most people will be comfortable coming to a firm decision that it did not happen based on their prior experiences without checking the evidence.

When debating people, I am sharing my facts and opinions in the hope that they can use them, just as much as I am trying to learn from theirs. Two heads are better than one. I love to find out I am wrong about something, because I can adjust that percentage closer to the truth.

Whereas I consistently find most people actually believe according to how they *feel*, according to what they would *like* to be true, and many even *loyally* blind themselves to facts which will disturb that belief. Like the optical illusion drawing of an old woman which can also be seen as a young woman, most facts can fit into any world view – it's the few that don't which are most valuable, yet get rejected.

In this way many people choose the truth by their side, rather than choosing their side by the truth.

For another example, so many times when the Bible says 'A', people will read 'AB' into it. And then when it says 'NOT B', they will argue with the 'NOT B' believers. Instead of being patient and taking time to understand it. Being able to think logically and simply helps to avoid jumping to extended conclusions, clarifies apparent contradictions and simplifies knotty concepts. Like the whole Calvinist vs Arminian predestination thing, it's not too hard to iron out – see the THEOLOGY chapter for this example.

One negative aspect of this logical/verbal mode though is that I have a very low EQ (Emotional intelligence – the ability to understand what people *mean* rather than what they *say*, and vice versa, to communicate in an *emotionally understandable* way – I'm just blunt and literal.)

But when I need to be creative, or a listener, I switch out of logical mode and become intensely intuitive, visual and relational. In this mode my brain is connecting things that are logically far away from each other, like a magnet picking up iron filings out of sawdust, and joining them to make shapes, like stars in constellations, and the constellations add a deeper layer of meaning. It's hard to explain. Unfortunately it's also non-verbal and I cannot for the life of me describe what I am seeing in an understandable way. I cannot tell you the number of meetings I have sat through as people work their way towards a conclusion I saw in the first few minutes, yet cannot communicate to them, no matter how many times I have tried. I just lose my way in a mess of words. If I can write them down I have the time to order them better.

In programming I switch between the two modes frequently.

For instance, I was once writing a bridge-playing game in Basic on a ZX Spectrum 48K (tiny), and the shuffle and deal and sorting players' hands were taking too long. I noticed that the cards are in order when we start and when we finish – we're UNsorting them and then SORTing them again, and I felt intuitively that that was a waste. Yet logically of course we *must* shuffle, right?
I tried dealing the sorted cards from the bottom of the deck in order to random players, but some would get full hands before the others so one player would always end up with both the King and Ace of Spades. We needed a uniformly random distribution.

I knocked it around in a right-left-right-brained way – “surely we don’t have to shuffle the cards to deal them randomly in the computer” – “but we *must* shuffle to be *uniformly* random” – “but we don’t want to shuffle the *cards*” – and out popped the idea, if we don’t shuffle the cards, then, since we *must* shuffle, we must shuffle the *players*. So I wrote the number of every player 1, 2, 3, 4 repeating under every card, and then shuffled the numbers. Then when I dealt the cards in order to whichever player’s number was now under the card, they arrived in the players hand shuffled but still sorted.

And when I need to assess somebody’s emotional state, I *tune in* in a way which is impossible to describe. It’s not just visual or auditory cues, it’s like an ethereal but real connection. My intuition kicks in on a very female scale, or perhaps spiritual.

One time in my late twenties I was on the phone to a friend, talking away, and I suddenly felt the spiritual temperature *plummet* from a balmy 25 C to sub zero. Now I hadn't heard a thing. They had been quiet all the time I had been talking. My heart just picked it up. So I anxiously replayed the last few lines I had just said, saw a potential misunderstanding two sentences ago, and asked, “When I said ABC *[a reasonable thing]* just now, did you think I meant XYZ *[a bad thing]*?”
“Yes! And you did mean it that way!”, came the cold and cutting reply.
How painful it was to hear a dear friend disbelieve me in such a cold way.
And I never could redeem that friendship.

One final thing, perhaps the most significant. I don’t know if my split brain has anything to do with it, but I also completely and utterly lack common sense!

Coupled with the desire to make people happy and the extreme left brain analysis vs right brain creativity it can result in amusing moments, such as the time as a young teen I added a small amount of salt and sugar to the cold water in the fridge to make it ‘taste better with the added mineral content’. I was near the kitchen when my big brother let out a roar “ANTHONY!! DID YOU DO THIS?” When I confessed he presumed it was a practical joke and came after me, no doubt meaning to do some light bodily harm, until I squeaked an explanation as I ran which he doubtfully and reluctantly accepted.

I am a fool. One of my favourite verses in the Bible is Isaiah 35:8, which says even fools can walk safely in the way. But luckily for me I am still of *some* use.

In fact, I suspect that the primary purpose of God in making me the way I am was to get this book to you. Because of my lack of common sense, I can’t lead. Because of my being so peculiarly focused on spiritual things, my head is the clouds and I just don’t get things done. Because of my being unable to communicate verbally, I can't preach. It was prophesied over me decades ago that I would teach many people how to walk with God. Well, that hasn’t happened, yet, at least, so maybe this book is the way that happens.

So anyway, that’s me. Let’s start at the beginning.

CHAPTER 1. WHEN I WAS VERY YOUNG

My first memory is of a deep spiritual experience.

I was very small and playing on the floor in front of my mom while she entertained some guests. She was telling them how she had struggled to breastfeed me, because I had kept biting down really hard on the breast. When she said the last part, a memory jogged within me and subsided again.

Then she went on to say that it was so painful, she had to remove me and try again, but each time I had bitten her. Over and over. Then the memory came rushing back:

I remembered being really, really, *really* hungry, *starving* in fact, and desperate to stay alive, and the relief of finally getting food and my jaw *clamping* down in relief and *deep* satisfaction as the sweet milk, which tasted like Horlicks btw, poured its way into me and satisfied me. But then – the shock of having it snatched away from me again after only a few seconds. And then the relief of having it provided again. And then the utter bewilderment of it being cruelly snatched away again. Over and over. It was incomprehensible and hugely traumatic. I *needed* that food to *survive*.

She went on to say that she had been following the doctors' advice of those times, which was to feed strictly every 4 hours, regardless of the baby crying.

Then that traumatic memory bumped another, far deeper memory, and I just managed to latch onto it and pulled on it and drew it out, as one does, and this is the interesting part, this memory:

I was seeing red like when your eyes are closed. This was normal to me. But I was starving. Genuinely starving, like my energy meter, if I had one, would've read 20%, and I knew that if I didn't get energy soon, I would not make it. But I was helpless.

In my heart, I projected this statement, obviously not in words, but in pure knowledge:

> "WHOEVER you are who gives me sustenance, EITHER you created me, OR WHOEVER created me GAVE me to you to look after, THEREFORE you have a MORAL OBLIGATION to PROVIDE for me before I die."

That memory came from deep, deep within me, and I had the sense that I had only just been able to reach it and draw it up, that some time soon it would have been packed away forever, too deep to reach.

But for me, this shows that we are primarily spirit beings. Spirit communication is an instant knowing. There is no need to pack the knowledge into words and unpack it, the reality is simply shared.

One day my mother called all of us children to her, and said, "Do you know how you get in trouble sometimes? When you have done something wrong?"
Yes...
"Well, you also get in trouble with God. Would you like to know how to get out of trouble with God?"

Yes!
“Well, God sent Jesus to take the trouble you get into. So now, you can ask God to forgive you, and then you ask Jesus to come and live in your heart and guide you. Would you like to do that?”
Yes!
“Okay, pray after me: whatever I pray, you pray too. Dear God …”
Dear God...
“Please forgive me for everything I've done wrong….” and we prayed that too, and then she continued, “Dear Lord Jesus…”
Dear Lord Jesus…
“I ask you to come into my heart please, and live there forever, and be my Lord, and teach me how to be good please. Thank you. Amen.”

Well, I didn't feel any different, but a few weeks after my mother's prayer with us, I was sitting on a bench with a friend on my left, and I had a very rare thing, a packet of sweets. We were chatting and I opened the packet with relish, thinking of all the delight, and started eating one. We chatted, and I ate another. Then suddenly I felt what I can only describe as a gentle spiritual jog in the ribs with the thought, *Share your sweets.*
“Oh no,” I rejected it, “for then I will have less.”
Again it came, very patiently, very gently, *Share your sweets.*
“Aw, I *really* don't want to,” I thought. “I hardly ever get them and I was *so* looking forward to them and I don't want to miss out on any.”
But your friend is missing out, the voice said in my thoughts. And when it was put like that, immediately I saw it from that side and I was very struck by how badly I was behaving. It was true, and I was not being nice. And the voice said, *Ask him if he would like one, and offer him the bag*.
So, a little bravely, I did.
He immediately cried out with a happy smile, “Oh, do you mean it?!”
I said yes, and suddenly that tiny reluctance was gone and I meant it with all my heart. He was ecstatic. He took one and unwrapped it, and so did I, and as we ate them somehow strangely I felt this pure joy *flooding over* from *his* heart *into mine,* and it filled mine to the brim. I was as happy as he was happy. We shared that joy. I said, “Let's share the sweets” and again he was even more overjoyed, asking if I meant it, and we enjoyed the bag of sweets together.

This experience completely changed me as a person. Since that day, every person I ever meet is not only an expression of God on earth, but also a part of *me*, in that we both are expressions of the same God. Does that make sense? My heart is as much for them as it is for me. If I have more than they have, I will give more, to even things out.

If I’m driving and see someone walking in a direction or manner which implies they could use a lift, I want to stop and offer them one. (I used to stop, but nowadays people are too nervous.)

These passages speak to me to love people as expressions of *God* (fallen though they be):

> “But when the Pharisees had heard that he had put the Sadducees to silence, they were gathered together. Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him, and saying, Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt **love the Lord thy God** with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is **like unto it**,” [in other words, another expression of the *same principle, loving God*], “Thou shalt **love thy**

neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." – Matthew 22:34-40

"When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, **ye have done it unto me**." – Matthew 25:31-40

I was born in 1960 in South Africa and there was no TV in those days. In fact even our phone was the kind where you lifted the receiver and wound the handle on the base to create a grinding buzz which got the operator's attention, and she would then ask to which number we wanted to be connected, and plug the connection in. It was a party line, and very tempting, if you lifted the receiver and heard a conversation, to eavesdrop, which I did once, though all I got for it was a boring chat and a guilty conscience.

There were, however, cinemas. I remember my dad driving us to the city of Bloemfontein to see our first movie ever, The Sound of Music, and on the way, on a very long straight national road through the wide grasslands, I saw an African man walking by the side of the road, and I thought, how lonely he is, and how far he must have to go, and was very sorry for him, so I asked my dad if we could give him a lift. My dad said no as every seat on the car was taken, but I remember thinking, we could shift up – if the roles were reversed, we would be glad to squish into the car. And I was very disappointed in my dad, but decided he knew best, and maybe the man didn't have to walk to town but to a farm.

The movie The Sound of Music was absolutely beautiful. I loved it for its music, its love, its laughter, its innocence and care but most of all because it was such a close reflection of our own family. My Dad was very strict, but my mother softened him and cared for us with such love that I honestly couldn't tell the difference between her and Maria.

When I was a teen my mother shared that I was so good as a child that she genuinely feared that I would be taken to heaven early.

And I nearly was.

Once in my cot – I was very drawn to living things – I played with a venomous spider and got bitten. I went into a coma for three weeks.

When I could walk my brother got me to stand on a high window sill with him, above a narrow concrete path and then a lawn. Then he said, "Watch this" and jumped out, landing on the grass,

and then called to me, “Now you try.” I can still see him far below, and me replying, “But I don’t know how to jump”. He answered, “It’s easy, you just fall out” so I just tipped my standing body over in a swan dive, hands by my side, and landed on my head on the concrete path. That time they very nearly lost me, but I recovered in the end after being in a coma for three months.

Then as a four year old at a birthday party I was drinking out of a garden tap which had a cut metal wire sticking out of it, and a playing child rushing past bumped me into the tap and the wire made a long cut from under my left ear to under my left jaw, tearing open my jugular vein. Luckily my dad is a surgeon and they drove me direct to the hospital only a few blocks away – it was a small town in South Africa called Oudtshoorn – where my dad rushed me into theatre and sewed me up. I still have the scar.

But whatever the cause of these, I later became aware whenever I got into dangerous situations of a strong sense of the solid, active protection of God over my teenage life, and one day it dawned on me, my mother was praying for me.

Situations such as a gang eyeing me out, one or two of them at a time across the street at 2am, and fear trying to enter my heart, and the courage of God taking over, feeling like superman, *knowing* they cannot hurt me.

Or when I was on the sleeper steam train from school, I loved the speed, and one time when we were hurtling through the dry grasslands of the South African veldt at perhaps 60-70 km/h I decided to open the door and sit on the top step of the three steps outside the carriage. I was relishing the wind and racing red stony ground just feet away from me, and wondering how safe it was if a signal pole might come past, when suddenly with a mighty roar the heavy solid concrete platform of a country station was rushing past my knees with less than an inch to spare. I remember looking up in horror and seeing the station master’s eyes as big as saucers as he whipped around and ran into his office. I quickly got up and changed my outfit and appearance as best I could.

Or when I picked up a hitch-hiker and he said he had a gun. I had the peace to calmly tell him he had to be careful with that.

Or the time I was driving at 120 km/h (70 mph) around a left hand bend on a dusty dirt road mountain pass with a thousand foot cliff drop on my right, no barrier, and I hit a pothole with my right front wheel which slewed my car round and sent it gliding swiftly as on ice directly towards the cliff edge.
Taking my foot off the accelerator to lose speed I somehow managed to correct the slide with an inch of a nudge right to the wheel. Immediately the car was now sliding *left* towards the black craggy rock wall! With mounting alarm I corrected again with a smaller nudge left to the wheel, and once again to my horror I was sliding towards the drop. A tiny nudge right on the wheel and I was sliding towards the black rock wall again, a tinier nudge left and sliding to the drop, quicker and quicker, touch right sliding left, touch left slide right, touch right slide left, touch left, touch right, left, right, left-right-left and so, bewildered, I lightly held the wheel straight and the car levelled and finally came to grip the road again at about 70 km/h (45 mph), I guess.
It was a miracle to me. I had only slid a car once before after dropping a date off at her farm in my mom’s car and seeing as the dirt road was wet, thought I’d try learn a bit. That time I left the road completely, bumping over the bushes on a slope, but luckily returned to the road unscathed.

Or the time I locked myself out of my flat on the 5th floor (6th in America, as we call the base floor Ground) and climbed onto the fire escape railing to make a giant no-going-back step over the cars below – which looked so tiny – to land on the sloping kitchen window ledge and reach the open little awning window with my hand. My sister had done it, so I could do it. But she was a ballet student, lithe and light. As I completed the action I *knew* that God had kept the fool alive.

Or the time I was hitch-hiking, and a girl asked if she could hike with me, and a black guy joined us, and a van stopped for us with four black men in it, and on the way they started arguing vociferously and angrily in their language. He decided not to get off at his original destination, Mosselbaai, but asked if he could stay the night at my house, and I said sure. They were troubled and seemed to be questioning him but he was insistent. After we were dropped off at George, he said that the argument had been about their intent to kill me and rape the girl, and he had told them that they would have to kill him too.

CHAPTER 2. MY PARENTS SENT TO THAILAND

I need to step back a bit here.

While driving on their honeymoon, the steering wheel came off in my dad's hands. They were going the national speed limit, and there was nothing he could do. The car rolled many times and my mom was flung out of the window. She lost three vertebrae in her spine, and the operation to rebuild the bone introduced a superbug infection.

Nearly six months later she came home, but after some weeks something went badly wrong. She couldn't get enough air and fell unconscious. Her pulse dropped to 12 beats a minute. While the nurse and my dad tried to keep her alive using the anaesthetic re-breathing bag, she had a vision.

She was in a large, dark, icy cave, and so freezing cold that she realised that someone must have replaced her blood with ice water, and she went to find someone to complain to. A tunnel opened and she went into it, then she saw someone far ahead in the glow at the end of the tunnel. She went to him, but he was so surrounded by light that she could only see his eyes... yet it didn't matter, because they were so full of unconditional love for her, that she knew it was Jesus. She forgot everything and just wanted to be near him.
"Lord," she said to him, "May I come to you now?"
And he gently shook his head and replied, "Not yet... your children are still too young."
And she returned to consciousness.

A year or two later, still in chronic pain, she needed to recuperate, and my dad said she should take the maid, Anna, and go to our beach cottage in the Wilderness and stay there for several months.

When my mom arrived there, as she put her key into the lock, she heard someone call her, "Dorothy."
She turned around, but there was no one there besides the maid. She turned back and again heard, "Dorothy."
She thought, this must be the Lord, and asked "Yes Lord?" and he said, "Dorothy, I want something from you."
She replied, "Lord, I have nothing. I have no health, no money, nothing." and he said, "You have time."

So she said to the maid, let's get up at 5am every day and spend an hour in prayer with the Lord. So they did that.

Months later, while they were in prayer, a very bright light appeared in the room with a strong sense of a very pure holiness. My mom was way too in awe of the absolute glory of the holiness to dare to open her eyes. She just worshipped. Then after some time, the presence left.

The next morning, when my mom woke up, she felt immediately that something was very wrong – no, not *wrong*, just *different*... that was it! All the pain had gone!
She never got the 3 vertebrae back, but perhaps that was because both my parents had been taught that God does not do re-generative miracles (i.e. growing bone back, for example) though in fact he certainly has, many times.

During the year or two Mom could not look after us four children, a prior patient of my dad's who had become a friend, a very godly Afrikaans man, offered to take care of us. So we went to live with them for some time. The pupils in the local school were very aggressive bullies, and I found it a difficult time. However the family were godly and loving and became very much a second family to me. I remember with a great and holy affection us all praying and singing a hymn at every supper table. My favourite one had the line “Die kleinste wurmpie voed Hy, ja oweral is God” – the smallest worm feeds He, yes over all is God.

Now shortly after this time, my dad, who was well on the way to being a very successful surgeon, started feeling like he should go be a missionary. He really didn't want to, however, as his goal was to set up a private practice, so he ran from the idea. Many times, in his Bible reading and prayers, or in sermons, he would feel this call, and close his mind to it.

One Sunday, the pastor of his church preached from these verses:

> Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If anyone will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works. – Matthew 16:24-27

It made my dad so extremely uncomfortable, as he felt that God was speaking to him directly about the mission field, that he actually got up during the church service – something that he would ordinarily *never* do, it would have embarrassed him so much – and left.

However, he felt so guilty about not attending church (being very religious) he decided to attend another church that evening. Slyly, he decided to attend the deadest one he knew in town.

But there, that night, that pastor preached from exactly the same verses. Such an incredible coincidence, that my dad finally gave in, and yielded to God on this.

We then moved to Cape Town while my parents trained.

After that we travelled to fascinating tropical Durban where I stayed in a hotel for the first time in my life and discovered the delight of room service, and then boarded the SS Cathay on a P&O cruise which took us first to green Mauritius, then to Bombay – how vividly I remember opening the porthole in harbour and smelling the spicy breeze wafting over the oily fishy water – and finally, past schools of silvery flying fish glittering over the glittering water far, far below, on to Singapore, such a beautifully clean city, I loved it.

Then in Bangkok, at the OMF mission home, how fondly I remember eating the sweet nodes of a custard apple under the frangi-pangi trees.

In Thailand, my parents first worked in a mission hospital in the town called Manorom, where we children would take coins and go to the local Thai market and hold the coins out to buy little sweets and toys, and the dear smiling Thai would only take the amount required.

I *must* share one particular episode from their time in Thailand. This was at a later date, around the early 1970s, when they had moved to a town called Songhkla to do mission and medical work for a large prison there.

One night before dawn my dad woke with the conviction that he should go to Manorom that same day. However, besides that his clinic began at the jail at 8am, Manorom hospital had no telephone at that time and was 1,200km away so it would take all day to get there, which made him uncertain. In the end he decided to work until 11am and make enquiries about the best way to get there, and if the conviction persisted, he would go. And it not only persisted, it became stronger.

The trains to Bangkok were fully booked for 5 days so he had to catch the flight at 12:15. At 11:20 he called and found there was one seat left, which he booked. He then drove to Hat Yai to get cash from the bank to pay for the ticket, but found huge queues there. His heart sank, but a teller recognised him at the back of the queue and called out to him, “Dr Rose! What do you need?” – my dad must have looked visibly stressed – “4,000 baht!” my dad replied, holding up his savings book. “Here is the money,” replied the teller, “just sign this receipt and we can update your book later.”

By the time he had got home, thrown some items into a bag and drove off, according to my mother it was 11:40 and it was a 55 km drive to the airport, and he was supposed to check in by 11:55. He could only arrive at 12:05, but luckily for him the plane had been delayed by a technical fault.

The plane arrived in Bangkok at 1:30, whereupon my dad took a taxi to the northern bus station and the first tour bus to Manorom. At the hospital a room was arranged for him but as he was going to it an outside wall phone range. It was Dr Peter Farrington, the Medical Director, checking there wasn’t a mistake about their meeting next month. No sooner had he replaced the handset than it rang again. It was the local surgeon. “Ed, I’ve just heard that you’re here, and I need you in theatre right away! Can you come over and help me? I’ve just started an emergency operation and everything is distorted and I don’t know what to do!”

With my dad’s surgical experience he was able to ascertain that the patient had had a ruptured appendix for some weeks, resulting in multiple abscesses and adhesions. He was able to clean it up properly and she was sent back to the ward okay.

Once she had recovered he visited her in ward and related his strange experience and said, “I believe God loves you very much and wanted to save your life” and then explained the gospel to her. She accepted Jesus then and there.

It turned out that she was the head of the local Buddhist organisation in the area, a very high up and respected woman, and a staunch Buddhist who, whenever she heard someone wanted to become a Christian, would go and visit them and persuade them to return to Buddhism.

She now became a Christian light in the area.

(You can read more about it in my mom’s book, Bus from Bangkok.)

CHAPTER 3. SCHOOLDAYS CRUSH ME

I remember as a five year old asking myself why I was so happy, and deciding that it was because my parents took all the responsibilities of looking after us. They were idyllic days.

Occasionally mom would give the four of us, aged three through eight, a tickey each (about 3 cents, enough money to buy a few small packets of sweets) and we'd walk a mile in the dust along the edge of a plain unmarked tarred road through the dry grass plain, with traffic to the next town zooming right past us, until we reached the nearest café, a lonely store under the hot sun in the middle of nowhere. I vividly remember being surprised by how many sweets we could buy.

But more commonly we would traipse for miles across country through the wide golden grasses under a blue sky, picking up millions of blackjacks and burrs on our socks, to go and play cowboys and Indians on the sand dumps next to the railway line.

Or take the galvanised iron washtub and go boating on the muddy dam, while the frogs creak-creak, creak-creaked unceasingly in the willows. Then we'd make little animals out of the clay on the banks, and say hello to the huge smelly sow and her piglets on the way back. "Don't pet her!" the farmer warned. "She bites!"

I recall one time when we were out in the middle of the dam, my brother suggesting we pull the plug on the washtub. I pleaded with him not to, because I couldn't swim yet, but he looked dead serious, and while I was thinking that he was mad and I didn't know what my mother would say if I didn't come back, he did it anyway!! I was horrified! Only for me to find out the dam was just three foot deep! A fact I was annoyed to discover he had already known.

The gardener Augustus did me no favours either. Though he was a kindly old African man, one day he took us and a little hatchet down into the chicken coop at the bottom of the garden to show us something, and proceeded to chop off the head of a chicken and set it free. My eyes popped out of my head when I realised that, though blood was spurting several inches high out of its neck, it didn't *need* a head! It started running around and then came straight for me! I was terrified at the bloody sight and took off running, but unfortunately for me when I looked back the chicken had also turned and was *still* coming after me! Panicked, I took another turn, but so did the chicken. For some reason the gardener was laughing his head off at this nightmarish travesty. Only after a little while longer of my desperately trying to get away did it start to run in ever tightening spirals, slow down and keel over, to my great relief. The gardener was wiping his eyes. I had made his day.

Our African maid Anna was lovely too. We never wanted to bath, and plump as she was she would chase us around the house at bath time, catch us one by one and plonk us into the tub. Then we didn't want to get out!

Whenever we asked her to share her mealie-pap porridge with bits of bread, she would happily do it.

I adored being read to, so when my mother could no longer do it due to extreme illness, I pestered my brother who had gone to school to read me my Noddy books. Finally his patience gave out too, so I made him show me what the letters stood for so I could read them for myself.

I spent many a happy afternoon lying in the sun on the floor reading the wonderful stories of Winne-the-Pooh, which were infused with a charm like no other. The charm, I later realised, of each animal having a serious character flaw and yet still being loved and lovable. Listen! You are loved *as you are*! Pooh was not smart, Piglet was a coward, Owl was proud, Eeyore was forever 'so brave' about how no one loved him (while they did), Rabbit was bossy, Tigger inconsiderate and Kanga overprotective. This is us. We need to learn to love each other in the same way.

When we reached the age of five Augustus would put two of us at a time into the really large box on the front of his big old bicycle and take us to school.

I went to seven schools and remember not one with any fondness whatsoever, as so many people do. I went to my first school in Thaba N'Chu in 1965 at age 5-6, then the Afrikaans school in Oudtshoorn at 6 or so with bullies which I've mentioned, then a Cape Town school at 7 while my parents trained, then an American missionary kids' school in Malaysia while 8-11, then another Afrikaans school in Oudtshoorn again for a short time, then a private primary boarding school school in Pietermaritzburg in 1972 while my parents remained in Thailand, then the related private secondary boarding school. Each school had its own troubles.

In the first school in Thaba N'Chu, most of the children were Afrikaans and in my first year I did not connect well with them due to language and culture. They were very loyal to one another, tended to stick together and kind of bullishly looked down on anyone else, leaving me and one other English speaking kid quite isolated. I would watch them out of the corner of my eye as they sang the national anthem, chests out, heart and soul in it, "Ons sal lewe, ons sal sterwe, ons vir jou, Suid Afrika" (We will live, we will die, us for thee, South Africa) and think now hang on a minute, I'm all for my country but to promise to die for her in advance before I even know what the war's about and who's on the right side is a bit much.

In my first year after kindergarten, I realised I needed to wee and it rapidly became quite desperate, and raised my hand to the teacher several times, but got ignored. Finally, the painful pressure got so threatening, I just burst out, "Miss, please can I be excused to go to the toilet?" She frowned at the interruption and in her usual stern manner replied, "No. You can't be that desperate. Just wait, class will be over soon". I was dismayed. As I tried my best to hold, hold, hold!, hold!, suddenly, I could not hold it in any more. Within seconds it was dripping onto the floor under my chair and as I hoped for dear life that somehow the other children wouldn't see it someone pointed out how I was wetting my pants in front of the whole class, who looked and immediately started laughing their heads off. I was mortified.

But in a way I got my revenge unintentionally. One day I was feeling nauseous and it got worse so I raised my hand. This time she asked me what I wanted, and I said, "I'm feeling sick" and she replied "Okay, wait there and I'll get someone to come take you away" but a minute or two later before I knew what was happening I was throwing up everywhere. I now confess that I had that unrighteous thought of revenge, God, and I'm sorry. Bless the poor woman.

Now I feel led to include this story, I don't know why, it didn't really impact me in any way. My mother enrolled us all for ballet when I was six years old. In the ballet class we would all run around in a big circle waving our arms and singing. It was so cringe I hated it with a passion. Twice I begged my mother to let me off it but she insisted it was a necessary part of my education. The

day after my second pleading, I was in the class messing around a bit as usual to make it more interesting and went a bit far, causing the teacher to say,
“Anthony! For the last time! If you don’t stop that, I’m going to send you outside!”
I was overjoyed to hear it! I gave it a minute to look less deliberate and then pulled another stunt, which of course resulted in my being sent out. Standing outside the door I began to worry what to say should the principal see me, but the joy of the relief was too great to dampen my spirits. I was never sent back to ballet for some reason.

The second school was in Oudtshoorn, where the Afrikaans friend of my dad lived, in the semi-desert of the Karoo, with seashells in the endless sand, hard white thorns as long as your fingers and plenty of ostriches around. The Afrikaans children here were much more hardened than I, and would threaten to fight and bully me because I was English. Although my brother had fought me a few times, they were *so* tough and aggressive, not only did I keep my distance to avoid a crushed nose, I instinctively disliked them and wanted to avoid being like them.

In the third school in Cape Town, for six months while my parents were waiting to go overseas, the children were English, so I was happy for fifteen minutes while seeing the headmaster, but they turned out to be exceptionally cold and uncaring. I remember anxiously trying to find my classroom on the first day as the lesson time approached because I didn’t want to walk in late, and asking and asking, but no one cared, and said so. “You should know.” “It’s very easy, silly.” It was so traumatic feeling like I was getting into trouble while doing my best. Then suddenly it was lesson time and everyone disappeared, and I still didn’t know where to go. I sat down somewhere and a teacher found me sometime later and brought me to my class where I was received with giggles. I do not remember much about that school. I think I was really troubled and my memory is blurred, but I do remember that no one was ever kind to me. Not even once.

The fourth school in Malaysia, an American missionary kids' boarding school called Chefoo School, was tucked far way in the jungle hills near Kuala Lumpur. Even the taxi drivers would get car sick driving round the endless corners, so they would bring slices of lemon with them and suck it when they felt nauseous.

The jungle was beautiful and fascinating. The flying squirrels would glide in the trees in front of our dormitory windows. There were giant stubby jade green millipede-like creatures who would roll into a ball like a big marble when alarmed, and we would naughtily send them rolling down the steep road until they bounced off into the side. I still feel guilty about that. When we walked through the jungle we had to be careful of leeches attaching. You’re not supposed to pull or flick them off because their heads can detach and stay stuck in your skin, but I got such a fright when I saw one on my leg I just instantly flicked it. Luckily for me the whole leech flew off. There were plants called monkey-cups which were like lilies with lids and liquid that would trap insects, and another type on the edge of the football field that was sensitive to touch and would close all its tiny leaf fronds instantly. I especially loved the giant velvet black butterflies with large ribs of reflective blue and green stained glass in their wings.

The children were not aggressive or deliberately unkind but continually laughed at me and teased me for my different accent. They would sing “We say to-MAY-to, you say to-MAH-to, we say po-TAY-to, you say po-TAH-to, ha ha ha ha ha!” They all had their cliques and I became very, very lonely. I was not used to being away from my family, and love in general, and it really hurt. My sisters were in the girls’ dormitory and my brother was with a family in South Africa as he was too old to make

it worth attending this one. I had had a joy in me until then but now I became very depressed. We were obliged to write to our parents every week, and I tried to write cheerful letters, but I did not have much to say and it was a real struggle to pretend I was fine. I think I used to ask them in every letter when they could come to visit! I felt starved of love.

One evening I got to bed, and I could not put my feet down – the sheet was somehow stuck half way up. I struggled and struggled but could not find a way. The kids in the dormitory were laughing at me, asking “what's wrong? do you know?” and “do you know what apple pie means?” “What is apple pie?” I asked, hoping to un-apple pie it, but they only laughed louder. That annoyed me with their callous lack of love and I refused to ask for any more help. Finally the sheet ripped and they laughed again. I felt terrible and embarrassed but I was so very tired I just put my legs through the hole and went to sleep feeling sad.

(BTW in case you don’t know, apple pie is when you remake the bed with one sheet: it starts off as the bottom sheet at the head of the bed, goes down half way, and then you fold the second half back up to the pillow like you would with the top sheet.)

One chap befriended me after that and I slowly settled in. I most loved playing a game called Capture the Flag with them. We’d climb a tree and put our flag there and then attempt to capture their flag before they got ours. I also enjoyed American football and soccer.

I was there from age 8-11, and then the school did not offer further years, so I had to go back to South Africa to a boarding school there.

While my parents were choosing a school and attending to other affairs, I and my brother attended another Afrikaans school back in Oudtshoorn. At this school, the Afrikaans kids were not as bullying as last time, but did not have anything to do with us. That was again quite a lonely, uncomfortable time but I did have solace in spending some of the time with my brother. One good thing I remember was that at 10am the school would serve steaming hot cups of flavourful sweet black coffee and thick fresh slices of buttered bread that together would cheer anyone up.

Finally my parents chose the primary boarding school, the best they could find, which was Cordwallis in Pietermaritzburg, Natal, and dropped me off there and returned to Thailand. The unfamiliar green hills of sugar cane and everyone including the adults being strangers made me feel very out of place. I went to the primary school and my brother to the paired secondary school, Michaelhouse, which I joined two years later. We were looked after on school holidays by the pastor of the secondary school whose wife was a friend of my mom's in their schooldays. They were kind enough, religious and well meaning, but a trifle odd, as they tended to favour their own children slightly, which is natural I suppose.

I had become very bewildered, though rapid changes of culture, lack of socialisation, friends and parenting. I felt so very alone because my parents were on the other side of the planet, and so I did not know to whom I could turn to get my problems solved, for instance when I broke a shoe or lost my school cap. (It occurred to me only years later that my guardians should have taken steps to visit or let me communicate with them.)

I must make a note here – in defence of my parents – they were very grieved to leave their children in boarding schools, but felt it was a sacrifice the Lord asked of them. In agonised prayer one day,

my father was spoken to by the Lord: “Do you love your children?” Yes. “Do you believe I love you?” Yes. “Then why do you not believe I will love and look after your children even more than you do?”

And I testify that despite all I went through, I would not trade it for a better school life. I learned *so much* about life. I had had interaction with so many cultures, each of which had their own insular norms that seemed to them the only right way to do things, it somehow gave me a bird’s eye view of mankind.

Yet, while I seemed to be the only one who was alert and could pay attention in class, I usually had no idea what my peers were taking about. They were talking in slang foreign to me and about things I had never heard of. Ironically I was now teased for speaking in an American accent. (I should note here that every time we changed school it was mid-term, so the other kids had all settled down and made their friendships and cliques already, so we always entered school as outsiders, especially with our having a different accent and culture each time.) It was hard to be an outsider all over again, in my own country.

I remember the first time I played a rugby game, I said I didn’t know the rules, but the coach said just play and you’ll pick it up as you go along. I’m not sure this was the best advice to give a kid who’d learned to play American football. We started. I tackled someone. It was so easy. The ref blew his whistle. People explained to me that you can’t tackle unless they have the ball. We restarted. Pretty soon I had the ball. I passed it to the most forward team mate. The ref blew his whistle. You can’t pass *forward*, my teammates said with exasperation. “What?! What IS this game?”, I said to myself, frustrated and unimpressed. Concerned not to annoy my team mates any further I concentrated hard and managed to avoid tackling someone. I got the ball and remembered not to pass it forward but several opponents were rushing at me so I dropped it to kick it. The ref blew his whistle. My team mates yelled at me. I was amazed. “You’re not even allowed to *drop* it in front of you??” They were all very angry with me so I spent the rest of the game in misery trying to avoid the ball for I could do nothing useful with it and I was tired of being shouted at, and got out of rugby as soon as I could.

Whether it was due to stress or genes I don't know but my tongue would push at my front teeth while I slept, and as a result by the time I was 12, I had teeth that pushed forward and had a gap big enough to put a pencil lead between, and my lips had rolled outwards far more than was natural, like fat rubber tyres, so I looked odd. It made me feel very shy and ugly.

I particularly remember one day, perhaps 6 months after I had started in the primary school. We were out in the yard during a break, no teacher was nearby, and some of the children started mocking me.

“Putu-smackers! Putu-smackers!” they scorned, pointing at my lips. Putu is a porridge the Africans eat, so they were saying I had big fat African lips. While I could take this with no trouble, unfortunately some more kids joined in, and then the rest came over to see what was going on and they joined in, finally making a big circle enclosing me all around, laughing and pointing and yelling “putu-smackers!”

Wherever I looked I was looking into the eyes of a scorner and showing them my misery, which made me feel tortuously more wretched, but there was no escape out of the circle, and my

desperation grew intense as I wondered how long it would carry on. There was no sign of it stopping and I just didn't know what to do with myself, standing in the middle of the circle having nowhere to look but into the eyes of those mocking me. I felt ugly and ashamed but most especially helpless.

Just as it became unbearably long, one boy broke through the circle and came and stood next to me, saying, "This isn't right. I'm standing with him, and you should too. But if you are going to tease, you can tease both of us."

Seeing I had support the kids immediately lost interest and broke up, and I had an incredibly intense feeling of relief. Incidentally that chap became my best friend, Bob. We did everything together and he made a huge difference to my life. It occurs as I write this that God sent him.

Or perhaps not. :) Bob and I seemed to work each other up into all kinds of mischief. We made a lovely fire in the woods (!) and melted sugar to make an odd toffee, which didn't work. We even stole things – fireworks from a shop in town, a magnifying glass, lead and mercury from the science lab, and on more than one occasion a few sweets from the tuckshop, for which each time I had to go into the headmaster's office to steal the key from his desk. It felt like an espionage mission and the success was very gratifying.

Despite that, years later, he asked Jesus to be his Lord and Saviour.

It wasn't just the kids, though. One day a teacher took me to a room with a piano and said,
"I want you to listen to this piece and tell me the time" and proceeded to play a tune.
This bewildered me. I frantically searched my brain for a connection between music and time… and finding nothing, hesitated helplessly…
"Tell me the time, boy!" he said, looking at me.
I didn't understand. He even had a watch on, but I didn't dare ask him why he didn't look at it himself.
"Tell me the time!"
I told him the time. "4:20pm, sir?"
It's burned into my brain.
"THE TIME OF THIS PIECE, BOY! THE TIME OF THE MUSIC!!"
I desperately tried to imagine what he might mean. It made no sense.
"I'm sorry, sir, I don't understand..." was all I could helplessly say.
"STOP PLAYING GAMES WITH ME BOY!!! TELL ME THE TIME OF THIS PIECE!!"
"I'm sorry, sir… the only time I know is on my watch, sir."
"GET OUT!! GET OUT, GET OUT, GET OUT!!"
and I left very puzzled and bemused, sad that he hadn't believed me.

Which was even sadder as in later years I discovered that I loved to play the piano. I cannot walk past one without yearning to play it. My dad used to be able to play anything by ear and I guess a bit of that came down to me.

I joined the choir because I could sing, and we had the Anglican red cassocks and white surplices and sat in the front of the chapel looking across the pulpit at each other, while the rest of the school looked at us. One day the priest said something that made me blush a little. This so horrified me in case someone saw it and put some kind of awful two and two together as to why I

was blushing even though it had nothing to do with me, that I blushed even more, which made me feel certain that the whole school must have noticed by now and definitely attributed it to some shameful twist on what the priest was saying and I wished I could sink through the floor as I went cherry red. After this I would go crimson at the slightest thought that I might blush, which as you can imagine, became an excruciating problem.

However, years later a psychologist taught me – as well as understanding myself better – a relaxation technique where you sit in a chair and scrunch up your tummy muscles, bend and scrunch up your arm muscles, your leg muscles, your hands into fists and your toes scrunched, until your entire body is scrunched up tight, pause there, and then slowly relax everything completely. In this way you teach yourself the act of physically relaxing your body. Now what the psychologist told me is that emotions and physical body are closely related, so that if you relax the body, your emotions calm down too. And it worked! My nervous blush reaction disappeared. What a huge relief!

Understanding this was even useful to me years later to enter into the rest of Christ as it is called, where you don't rely on your own power but rest into what Christ is leading you to do. What you relax in this case is your soul, like taking your hand out of a sock puppet, and let it lie there. Now your spirit is free to work. It’s hard to explain. One of the books which I will mention later by Mme. Jean Guyon helped me to understand it. But if you are ever in trouble and need the Lord, relax your body first, then relax your soul, then rest in him in your spirit. Do nothing until he leads.

I was very lucky to be bright enough to get a scholarship to the secondary school, my seventh and final one, so I could join my brother.

The seniors at Michaelhouse had a tradition, that the 1st year kids, called cacks, had to slave for the final year seniors, and be 'tortured' for fun in the evenings as 'initiation'. So every evening they would make sport of us, playing different games. The two most popular were – I don’t recall their actual names – I’ll call them grow-like-a-plant and how-high-can-you-kick-them.

In the former, they would make you stand on top of a four foot high locker, and then tell you to squat, because you're a seed. Then they would say, now it rains, and while they say it rains, you raise yourself and your arms little by little, an inch or two here and there, like a plant growing, until they say now it stops raining, and you stop, and hover there. Your legs begin to ache very quickly but if you begin to sag or rise even a tiny bit, they immediately flick you with ties like whips, which really hurts, so you have to resume your position, then they would give you more rain so that you could carry on, then a drought to make you lower again, and so on…

In the latter game, you had to hold onto the end of a bed in the dormitory and crouch down somewhat so that your behind was hanging out. Then the big boys would come charging down the dormitory aisle between the beds and kick you as hard as they could to see how high they could lift you into the air. This one concerned me as dangerous, but luckily it was only done to me a few times. I was right to be concerned though – they broke someone’s coccyx like that in my third year.

I hated these games dreadfully, with all my soul, not so much because of the discomfort and mental torture (although of course that was horrible) but because of the cruelty. It grieved my heart.

I was terrified when it came to be my turn to make the seniors tea and toast, or hand out the clean laundry, because the seniors would seize upon the slightest excuse – my toast is slightly burned! – to punish and torture you, both physically and emotionally, and these guys were BIG, and I was so socially isolated I had no idea how to engage with them. You could just sniff and they would be onto you. I still remember vividly calling out a laundry label "De Saint Crow-ix" for De St Croix and watching this big guy rise up like a thundering Zeus saying "What?! What did you call me?!! What did you call me!! Say it again!"
"er… De... Saint... Crow-ix??"
"Dissin Croy! Say it properly!" He then set me up for a huge kick that I expected to lift me quite a few inches off the ground but strangely was not half as bad as some, and I wondered if he was putting on an act for the others.

Very soon I learned not to go to the dormitory until bed time. I learned not to trust anyone immediately but to be suspicious of everyone except family. I was insular, introverted, shy, quiet and felt very useless except in class.

I was also particularly impractical and bad at sports. If you think of a typical nerdy absent-minded genius, that was me. They used to call me Prof. I would dodge the speeding cricket ball, my eyes shutting involuntarily. Or sting my hands badly. Or drop it. In P.T. (P.E.) classes I was always last. I couldn't even climb the rope. How I hated myself for being so weak. But I didn't know that you could develop your muscles, so things remained the same all my schooldays.

In my later years at that school things became easier. I was still bewildered by the strange music (Jethro Tull's Aqualung, Sixto Rodriguez's Sugar Man or David Bowie's Five Years) and afraid of so many things, such as that people would discover I did not know how to put an LP record on, or find out I did not remember their name, but the torture had stopped and I was fairly free to spend time with my friends.

I particularly recall one chap who was always smiling broadly and greeting warmly, so much so that it was like a light was shining from him. I found out he loved Jesus, and enjoyed a modern version of Beethoven's 40th Symphony, which was really very good. He'd play it when we went for compulsory walks in the school's miles of country grounds on Sunday. Whenever I hear that music I cannot help recalling the warmth and big smile he had and feeling such a fondness for someone who was so clearly sold out for the Lord Jesus. I look forward to catching up with him in heaven and telling him what a light he was in my life at that time.

As for myself, although I was saved, years of rich kids' relatively anti-Christian culture had had their effect on me and my morals were shamefully worn thin. I vividly remember experimentally saying the F word one day to be like the others and how it seemed to break a barrier within me, and the very next day the temptation to say it again, and immediately the will crumbling like a dried autumn leaf and saying it again, and then – so easily – it became a part of my vocabulary under stress. I joke to this day about how I was sent to the best boarding school in South Africa to learn best how to swear like a sailor.

I have tried many times to stop, but it's not really a part of my ordinary day language. It just pops out at times, especially when talking to myself while surfing in difficult situations, so there isn't really a daily habit there that I can focus on to break.

My parents returned from Thailand in my second last year of high school. My sisters were young enough to change schools and go to a local one, and one advantage of this was that I could meet their friends on holidays and finally go out on my first date at the age of 17, a most awkward time of trying to work up the courage to put my arm around her because that was what you do, rather than from sincere affection. How silly!

Holidays were wonderful times with the family together. We all loved each other dearly and though at times we'd argue we trusted one another implicitly and did all we could for each other.

My mom made wonderful meals, our clothes washed and folded themselves magically, and we'd play Monopoly, go swimming in the pool, bike riding in the woods and around the country airport's runway, practising our no hands, picnicking in the Outeniqua mountains, and shopping for presents together – my youngest sister accidentally starting a little glook laughing loudly in the shop and unable to turn it off, and when I went over to give moral support, thrusting it into my hands and running away, which made me laugh even more.

Since we lived near the sea, my dad bought us a little sailing dinghy and we'd sail up and down the clear green Wilderness lagoon and the cola coloured waters of the river higher up. He also bought a small attachable engine for it, and my brother discovered he could steer the boat by standing on the bow and leaning left or right, which would tilt the engine. It was so amusing watching him ride around the lagoon standing like Nelson on the front of a driverless boat.

We would also go stay with the Afrikaans family which had cared for us, who had a large holiday home at the nearby beach town of Buffels Baai. There we searched for treasure, silver coins in the hot beach sand that had fallen out of the pockets of the holiday-goers, with surprising success. And on the other side of the peninsula played in magical rock pools full of interesting fish, which we would try to catch, and the occasional octopus, which terrified us if we fell in.

One of the most fun walks was from Wilderness to Victoria Bay along the railway line, through two damp rocky tunnels and over a long, very high bridge across the coca-cola coloured Kaaimans River.

But it was at beautiful Victoria Bay where I discovered I could do one thing really well, and that was to surf.

This completely transformed me. Where I had seen myself as pathetic I suddenly saw myself as respectable. Where I had been nobody, I was now somebody with the right to be around. Where I had been worthless, to be ignored, I was now a worthy member of society. The difference in my life was like night and day. I came out of myself a lot more and had so much more energy and attention to give to other people around me. Instead of being bound inside a mental cage unable to look out for fear of being laughed at, I now freely looked out at others. However, I still distrusted strangers and did not know how to talk to them.

In fact, although that also improved as you will see, I am still scarred deep within my soul with a fear of my self being exposed to people. If any attention is placed upon me by a group and I have to perform or present something of my own creativity, my anxiety rises like a tide, my mind and my tongue race away with me, I can't breathe enough and I literally land up in a breathless pile of incoherence. This is a deep subconscious reaction I can't control, even though I know better. So, if I

write a song on the piano, for instance, I literally cannot play it for family. Strangely I am quite comfortable presenting something at work.

Getting on the train with my siblings to go back to the prison of school was the most depressing thing I have ever experienced in my life. Talk about homesick! My dad would drive us from Oudtshoorn to Beaufort-West in the evening and we'd stay in the Wagonwheels motel for our last few hours of freedom, and have a cola tonic as a treat. Then at 3 am we'd all get up and go to the station and hug Dad goodbye and climb onto the train with our suitcases, and he'd wait until the train pulled out and we waved. Then I would enjoy the last little bit of loving company with my brother and sisters on the train, until my brother and I stepped out at Balgowan and got a taxi to the school, he then going to his dorm and I to mine, sucking it up and steeling myself for the long hostile term.

I could tell you so many interesting things about those train journeys but I'm trying to keep focus on God in my life and things relevant to that.

CHAPTER 4. DISCOVERY AT UNIVERSITY

I then went to university to get a B. Sc. in Biochemistry as a stepping-stone to be a vet (you know how they ask you what you want to be when you're a child and you either say fireman, nurse, doctor or vet? And then stick to it? I loved animals, that was all I had to go on.)

My dad organised a low interest student loan with Standard Bank to pay for residence and study fees for three years, which I only had to pay back once I started working, and dropped me off the day before I was to start.

I was so happy to be free of all the pointless rules they had burdened us with at school, and being a minimalist at heart (I love to make things simple and keep things simple) I became an odd 18 year old: I walked *everywhere* barefoot and wearing only two items of clothing, a par of baggies (swimming trunks) and a T-shirt, ready to go surfing. Surfing was by far my favourite thing and I would dash off to surf whenever the waves came up, except I never missed a lecture. I figured, correctly I believe, that as long as you understood everything, you'd pass a written exam.

I never spoke to anybody (unless they asked me something of course) because I did not know them and besides, subconsciously, they are likely to hurt you, unless they are family.

Then one day a student named T in the same residence knocked on my door and asked if he could talk. I was very suspicious – why would he want to talk to me, he did not know me – but I thought, may as well find out what he wants. He then proceeded to ask me a bunch of questions, like, where do you come from, have you got family, what do you like to do, etc. I felt so suspicious... why is he investigating me?

I answered his questions a bit stolidly until he left, perhaps 15 minutes later. A day or two later he was back, asking more questions, and I blurted out, "Why are you asking me all this stuff, when you hardly know me?"

And he answered, "because that's how you get to know someone." And that's when I first discovered how we get to know strangers. By finding things out about them. That day I trusted him and we became good friends.

T turned out to be a huge blessing to me, not only because he taught me how to socialise, but also because he changed my life in one very, very important way. One day we were watching TV in the lounge together and I criticised a presenter on the TV very harshly with a chuckle. He was shocked!

He said, "How can you say that?!"
I replied, "They can't hear me."
And he replied, "Yes, but you should never say something negative about anyone, even if they can't hear you. It's not right."

He was so strong about it and I quickly I realised that he was right. Morally we should treat people correctly in front of them *and* behind their backs, we should not let evil have its way with us at any time.

This made me aware of the religious side of us that will so easily condemn anyone we don't know for so very little, and deal out negative things to them. Ultimately this grew into a greater understanding that when you discover something bad about somebody, don't just believe it and condemn them for it, but take the time to try and understand them, just as you would initially jump to their defence if they were your brother or sister.

I came out of my skin much more and learned to befriend people and was very much healed of my insecurities, at least at an ordinary social level, over the next seven years.

The Lord also did me a strange favour round about my second year at university. I love skateboarding and one day I was showing off in front of the girl's residence by skateboarding around big plastic rings bolted into the road (which slow cars down) with my hands in my pockets. Suddenly, even though I was going slowly after a hard turn, my skateboard hit the edge of one of the rings and stopped dead. I was INSTANTLY smacked full length onto the ground, my front teeth hitting first, and breaking off half way up. To this day I feel convinced an angel pushed me in the back – there was *no time* between stopping and hitting the ground, not even time to realise what was happening and consider taking my hands out of my pockets. One moment I was up, the next moment it was all over. And even though my two front teeth broke off, there was no pain at all. I thought I had gravel in my mouth and spat it out and went back up the hill and carried on skateboarding. Without my hands in my pockets this time. Not one girl had come out of the residence to compliment me on my skill anyway. About 5 or 10 minutes later my brother just happened to pass by (an extremely unlikely event) and asked if I was okay.
"Yes", I replied, nonplussed, "why?"
"Because you are bleeding from your mouth."
Amazed, I touched my hand to my mouth and discovered then that my teeth had broken off.
I had to have a bridge fitted, and my mouth shape normalised soon after, making me the handsome man I am today (I'm kidding of course, I'm still funny looking – but at least not that strange looking.)

Sadly this was also around the time when I smoked a cigarette a couple of times to see what it was like, and got hooked. I ended up smoking 15 Camels a day (I didn't like the filtered cigarettes, the Camels were most like plain tobacco) and then after some years also smoked a pipe to reduce the amount of paper I was smoking.

In my first two years I had to cut open several creatures – a frog, a dogfish, and a rat – and it was while I was fiddling about inside of a very smelly rat's guts that it dawned on me that what I had wanted all along was to work with animal's *outsides* rather than their *insides*. But I was committed now. My dad suggested I complete the degree so that I have something in hand, then switch to something else towards which some of the B. Sc. credits would count, making my second degree only two years.

In my second year I came across someone who said that they were doing a training course at the Koinonia society (I think it was an Anglican Bible reading society) in how to speak in tongues. It sounded very strange! Speaking *in* tongues, multiple, not *with* a tongue? Was this a strange cult? I asked what it was, and they replied it was speaking in other languages and it was in the Bible, which is what their classes were currently about – showing it in the Bible. I checked it out, and found it there, and asked if I could join in. They said sure, and then I attended the classes.

When the classes were done, the leader asked if we wanted to receive the Holy Spirit baptism. We all said yes, and he laid hands on each of us, asked the Lord to baptise us in the spirit, and then prayed over us in tongues, in turn. Each student started speaking in tongues, but when it came to my turn, nothing happened. After a while the leader said, “say something” then resumed praying. I thought, “but nothing is wanting to be said.”

Then he paused and said, “say something”, again. I thought, “I will, as soon as I have something to say.” Then he said, “Say the Lord's prayer” and so I said “Ou-” or at least I intended to but as soon as I tried to say it, instead, a great voluble rush came upon my tongue and it just rattled away speaking strange words on its own at a tremendous pace, while an odd electricity-like charge of energy settled on my body making my skin jump and twitch at many points. This flood of words carried on for some time, and then died down and stopped. After I left the meeting, the skin jumping also died down over the next half hour and stopped. It had been a relatively pleasant sensation, rather like getting little surprises of energy, but I felt quite myself afterwards and back to normal in a few hours.

I never spoke in tongues spontaneously again.

However, I suspect this experience did have an effect on me. I had often wondered what was meant by the hymn, “He walks with me and he talks with me” while I could never hear God myself, and I felt this wasn’t right, and wondered about it a lot. If God is with us, which is what Emmanuel means, then *why* can’t we hear him? But now it began to be an active dream of mine, to talk to God, and hear him reply.

A friend wanted something from a Christian bookstore one day, and I, remembering one holiday where we had had a Christian camp at Carmel near George and how the love, peace and joy of the Lord had been so present that even the little stickers saying things like “I <3 you Jesus” felt anointed to me, decided I would come along and get some stickers.

I got the stickers, and also found a very interesting book, about which more later.

The shop turned out to have a curious name, “Psalm 91”. I asked the owner inside why it was called that, and he replied that he believed the Lord to apply that Psalm to his life. I was even more puzzled. “But didn’t the Psalms apply to David?” I asked. Kindly he explained to me how the Lord is not a respecter of persons (not biased by status or appearance) and respects all who believe, and treats them all in the same way, so that just as David was able to apply God’s promises to his life by making God his Lord and refuge, so could any believer. ANY general promise in the Bible that applied to a believer who accepted it at that time could be applied to any believer at any time. This was news to me, but it made sense. If it wasn’t specifically for one person, like the Lord’s promise to Sarah to have Isaac, but an expression of God’s nature and faithfulness to all who believe him, then it was a truth that applied to all who trust him.

I went back home and read Psalm 91, little knowing how it would save my life one day, and I was struck by how powerful a protection it revealed. I was particularly curious as to what it meant to be in God’s secret place. Where was it? How was it secret? Was it hidden? Hard to find? How did you get in it?

I then read the book I had just bought. It was some exciting story about a Christian who had been apprehended by God to do amazing things, and God would often talk to him. I can't recall which one it was now, but it was probably Brother Andrew, who smuggled Bibles into communist countries. One day he could not cover the stacks of Bibles in the boot (trunk) and at the border the communist opened the boot! And looked, and said all clear! Another time, his car ran out of petrol but he prayed and it kept going. If I recall correctly the mechanic who looked at it next day said that it was actually impossible for the engine to run at all, it had failed completely.

The life story inspired me. Here was a person with whom God *did* walk and talk, like the hymn said! I hadn't known such a thing existed in today's day and age! It *was* possible!

This started a real exploratory period of my life. Over the next years I browsed Christian book stores more often and found many more exciting stories. They were revelatory. I don't recall which exact ones I bought around this time of my life but they were amongst the ones listed in Appendix A, almost all of which I still have.

It opened up a whole new world of Christianity to me. Of course I had known of missionaries being called, and of God doing miracles at some points during their work, usually during great need, but this was different. It was a more personal, hand-in-hand, daily approach with God from *both* sides. This was exactly what I wanted.

But it was a world away from me, and exciting as it was, I had no idea how to get there. In the meantime my degree wasn't going too well.

During my third year I had a horrendous time with Biochemistry and Histology. In Histology you had to look at slides of blue or pink tissue slices and identify the cells, but they were nothing like the pictures in the textbook. I would stare miserably at the first slide and all the differently coloured pictures of tissue slides in the book again and again, hoping to see *some* similarity like a reverse Spot the Difference puzzle in comics, but nada. Nothing. It was like a hell of having to match unique Rorschach ink blots. I would lift my hand for assistance in the class of 30 but the two post-grads helping the class would never get to me. I'd hold for 10 minutes and then sigh and move on to the next slide for a repeat torture. I seriously considered doing the entire hour long class with my hand raised. After three weeks I did that, and after perhaps half an hour of having my hand raised I couldn't stand it and dropped out of the course.

Then as for my Biochemistry, I enjoyed the theory but I was far too lackadaisical to get the experiments right. It was *such* a bother to label my pipettes, (long tubes you use to suck up and deliver a few millilitres), so I'd just remember where I put them – hydrochloric acid is *this* one on the left, *this* one in the middle is sodium hydroxide, and *this* one is water. But somehow my experiments never worked out. It reminded me of trying to make a table in carpentry and I had to keep sawing small slices off the legs to make them even until it became a coffee table. That was still wobbly. I am possibly the wold's most impractical person.

I would look out the window of the laboratory from the campus on the slopes of Table Mountain and longingly see that it was a warm day but a nor'wester had arisen, meaning that there would likely be a glassy swell running, so my heart would be over there, but I was self-disciplined and stayed until I had proof I had damaged the experiment irretrievably, and then my heart would lift

at the same time as my spirit sank, and I would joyfully say goodbye to my hard-working peers and fly out the door and off to the beach for a wonderful surf session.

I never got one successful experiment done. I had an uncanny ability to mess up the experiments because it's just not in my nature to be all fuddy duddy and write everything down when you can be so much quicker if you just remember. Even when I cook I never cook the same meal twice because it's so much quicker being casual. After 6 months, failure became so predictable however hard I tried (I even started labelling the pipettes, but it was no use) that I naughtily started skipping the practical classes altogether. Considering that I had a student loan this was really bad behaviour, but from the point of view that my lost Histology meant I would not get a degree this year anyway, plus I despaired of getting the experiments right, it was, I felt, a very reasonable decision. At least I would get a surf out of every Thursday afternoon, and some of those sessions were downright sublime.

Needless to say, I failed my third year Biochemistry exam.

At that point I took a break from university to do my compulsory two years military.

CHAPTER 5. RIFLEMAN DEPLOYED IN THE HEART

I went to the 1 SA Infantry Battalion outside Bloemfontein with the Ratel armoured cars carrying 20 mm or 90 mm guns. Here it was all very miserable again. All the non-commissioned officers shouted. They were so rude, I was beyond vexed every day with them. Daily I toyed with the suicidal idea of censuring them. Every shout, every insult, was so unnecessary, so unloving. *There's no need to shout. You'd get better results being polite*, I longed to say. It was literally torture.

Physically, me being the runt, it was also tough. Some particular times I recall were: being often woken at 2 am to go duck-walking in the mud holding your rifle high with both hands, then back into the bungalow with wet muddy boots and having to mop and polish the floor and clean and polish your boots and wash your clothes, to have a spotless inspection at 5 am; living out in the boondocks for a month on 1 litre of water a day, including shaving, and a few small potatoes or a small tin of food, and carrying rocks in a run up the hills over and over again; and one time, when a truck was not available, having carry big black rubber bins laden with coal, weighing probably 220 pounds (100kg), for half a mile. The only trouble was my side of the bin had no handle, so I had to put my left fingertips under the thin rim to lift it. The effort was excruciating and I went into a grim state of determination. About three quarters of the way there I became dimly aware that someone was talking very loudly some distance away, and I became curious and listened, and as I did so it grew louder and louder... it was someone swearing their head off with a sailor's entire vocabulary, and as I listened it came closer and closer to me, until the sound homed in on… me! It had been me! Such a funny experience.

But I got a tremendous break in getting out of the camp every week, which was a huge relief. I had discovered in the first month or so that they had no Roman Catholic service inside the camp, so they took the Roman Catholics into town on a truck and dropped you off to go to church there, and would pick you up again in 2 hours. So I immediately became Roman Catholic, and a like-minded friend and I would go to town on the truck, and walk to the church, and then not go in but go to a hotel where they served good food, and enjoy a bit of civilian life.

I still vividly recall the one day he said to me, he felt a bit guilty, perhaps we really should attend the church, so we went inside and as soon as we were inside the door all we could see was a sea of quiet heads waiting for the service – every place was filled! He then said, in his loud outside street voice, "F-ck! It's full!" Immediately every single head turned to look at us!

One day, he could not make it into town with me, so I went on my own.

However, when I got to the hotel, it was temporarily closed! I was so disappointed.

I walked around until I found a café, and went in and bought something there. While eating I noticed a girl sitting alone with her head on her folded arms. Every now and then she would pick up her head and toss it restlessly and drop it back down. I wondered if she was okay.

Then I got this strange leading to go over and ask if she was okay. Now, I was still a bit shy, plus, I didn't know if it was God or not. I sat there asking in my mind for *ages*, "God is this you?" but I could not detect an answer. Just this impelling feeling that wouldn't go away.

I couldn't work it out and after 20 minutes I was super frustrated. I decided the heck with this, I can't sit here all day. I'm going to make a decision – and since I'm not certain it's God, I think I will leave.

I got up and walked to the door but as I stepped though it I felt such a silent scream go up within me, such an overwhelming certainty of her resultant loss and the agony of God, as if there was no other way for God to reach her, a sense of "if you walk through that door, she will be lost" that I realised, it must be God. So I turned around and walked up to her table and asked if she was okay.

She looked up briefly and vaguely, saw some soldier, said, "Yes, I am" and looked away again.

To my own astonishment, I heard myself say "No you're not" with absolute authority while I watched myself sit down! I had had no intention of doing either. It happened by itself.
Inside myself I said, 'Oh no Jesus what are you doing?! She will be so angry and it will be in vain!'

As I looked at her with trepidation, she looked up again at me with her brown eyes black with anger and her brows furrowed and her mouth open to say something hard. But as her eyes met mine, all the anger vanished. She gaped. All the fight was gone, her walls had come down. Eye to eye, there was an openness and warmth between us. Then in a moment she dropped her head and looked down.

Inside I was so relieved. "Phew! So I will be able to do whatever it is God wants me to do!" I thought. I knew how important it was to God to talk to her. And then we started to converse, and walked to a bench outside and sat down together.

As we sat there she asked if I would put my arm around her as she felt cold. It wasn't very cold and I guessed she just needed love so I did so, and asked God for something to tell her, but nothing came to me.
"God!" I said. "This is what you led me to. *I* don't know what to say!"
"Go ahead, I'm happy with whatever you tell her," I felt he replied. "You'll be fine."
How odd. I wasn't so sure I would live up to that. Searching for what to say, I hit upon the idea of mentioning how the sun is always there, even if the clouds obscure it, and the clouds don't last forever, and it will be sunny again.

We were quiet a moment, I looking across her, then apparently she asked me something (as I discovered later) but I never heard it, because after I finished speaking, the strangest, most charming, incense-like sense of pure loving-kindness, as sweet as warm cinnamon and as gentle as vanilla, came up at me from her like a rising tide. Initially I was alarmed and for a moment thought I should resist, but it was so delicious and entrancing and trustable in its unselfishness I couldn't help yielding to it. I fell into it in a rapture and suddenly I was standing inside her heart with Jesus at my side, looking at pictures on the wall of her soul. As soon as I grasped what a picture was, he'd change it to another.

I know this sounds weird but I swear to you it is the absolute truth. Jesus showed me picture after picture and they were all absolutely beautiful pictures of her love and self-sacrifice for others, of the way her spirit had been designed. I particularly remember two. In one she was darning socks for the untold time for a little boy, who in his play kept kicking them and breaking them, and she was doing it with love and without any intention of telling him to stop playing so roughly. In the

other it was a lounge with a bright log fire, comfortable armchairs and a sofa and coffee table, very well decorated with her loving hand, with such a restful atmosphere.

(I also picked up memories of regret and trauma from where I don't know. Not only from long ago but also as if the day before she had been involved in some heavy multi-partnered sexual activity that she would never have voluntarily taken part in as a completely free agent.)

While I was in that trance-like state, I do not know how long it lasted, I distantly heard her get up off the bench in the outside world, say something, (perhaps that she had to go?), and start walking away. I panicked – I was so enraptured with the beauty of her soul that I did not want to lose her. With a massive effort I somehow wrenched myself free and returned to myself (I don't know how) and looked up and she was already 10 paces away. I called "Hey!" and she turned and looked at me. Then she said the strangest thing. "Goodbye. I want you to know I am going to be clean from now on." And turned away and started walking again.

I did not want to lose her at *all*, this eighth wonder of the world, so decided to call her back, but I felt God say "No" in my mind. Gently but firmly.

So I decided to jump up from the bench and run after her but again before I could move God said "No."

"But LORD!" I wrestled with this. She was the most beautiful thing I had ever seen.

"No! Stay seated."

At that I even *briefly* debated whether to flagrantly disobey God! The most shocking thought I have ever had!

Then he spoke to me, in my mind, probably because I was so weak to obey, and said, "I did not show her to you for your sake, but for hers. If you call her back, she will misunderstand your motive as romantic interest. Then it will become a romantic relationship, which will do her no good at all."

Even so I still wrestled within myself! It was so *very* hard to let her go!

But then he added, "You will see her again." and I said "Are you sure?" and he said "I promise you. You will see her again." and this was, I strongly suspect, the *only* reason I was able to stay seated.

I went back to the army base and thought about her for weeks, with a quiet little joy that I was to meet her again, some day, some year, however it might happen.

Some weeks later, on another Sunday, I was back in the city, a city of many tens of thousands of people, in a completely different location, and I saw her! Walking down the street with three friends!

I YELLED her name and ran over, and we exchanged phone numbers and addresses.

That was decades ago, and she is still my friend today.

What she later told me about that day was, she had been planning to commit suicide.

But when I had sat down, and she looked into my eyes, she had seen such a genuine love for her that it devastated her. (I believe it was Jesus looking at her.) And when she sat on the bench with me she felt a real love for her, for the first time in her life.

What a coincidence – or God-incidence, rather – that my friend had not come with me and I was free to talk to her that day! And that the hotel was temporarily closed! And that I was even Roman Catholic in the first place!

CHAPTER 6. BACK INTO UNIVERSITY – AND BACK OUT AGAIN

Needless to say I survived the two years of hell in the infantry, and came back to UCT to re-do my third year.

I found a summer job as a sea fisheries inspector on the West coast which paid you far more in subsistence and travel than it did in salary, and by living very cheaply on free seafood and a rented room my earnings each summer enabled me to pay for a year of living expenses and the university fees.

What also helped a lot is my dad invested in a 5th floor flat in Rondebosch and my brother and I stayed there free.

I went to Rosebank Methodist church which was very sweet.

There I met a student from the Congo who clearly loved Jesus, and I enjoyed seeing his smile every Sunday. However, after some months, one Sunday he was looking really down. He came over to me with a troubled smile and said, "Anthony, would you be willing to be a guarantor for my university study loan? My application for a loan has been refused, and I am going to have to cancel my studies and go back home unless I can find a guarantor." I asked what options he had for a guarantor and what he had looked at so far, and he replied that he had not had many, and had asked the church if they could help, but he was now completely out of options.

I was nervous, and he could see it, then pleaded, "I promise you, I will not let you down. I will certainly pay it off." I did a quick assessment in my heart. What did I know? Beyond a shadow of a doubt that he was sincere and loved Jesus. He was extremely unlikely to find a guarantor. If he did fail for any reason, I could survive the student loan. And it felt to me like Jesus said, *you are his only chance*. When I felt that, I put my faith in his love for Jesus and Jesus' love for him and told him I'd be guarantor. Oh, the joy on his face! Gone were the clouds and back was that big smile! We signed the forms the next day and for the next 2 or 3 Sundays he thanked me! I just hoped I hadn't made a mistake.

Later I found a verse

> He that is surety for a stranger shall smart for it: and he that hateth suretiship is sure" – Proverbs 11:15

and debated whether I had made a mistake but in the end felt, he loved Jesus, that's the main thing. In a real sense, he was my brother, not a stranger.

Strangely, that year I would at times get inexplicably depressed for a few days, and one day decided to go and see the university psychologist, who asked me a handful of very odd Freudian questions for five minutes and then declared, "You hate your mother."

I thanked him and left. I was offended because of the ridiculously shallow analysis, angry about the poor diagnosis because I knew I loved my mother down to the bottom of my heart, and disappointed that I would not get any help from this professional source.

First I spent an hour during the evening double- and triple-checking whether there was anything in my heart that did not love my mother, and though I beat that long grass relentlessly with as many scenarios as I could imagine and assessed my instinctive response, I came up with nothing at all. I was 100% certain that there was zero hate in my heart towards my mother, or if there was, it had zero manifestation, which was ridiculous.

Then I thought, I wonder what the cause is, really?

Suddenly it hit me – there *is* a cause! I may not know *what* it is, but I do know *that* it is. And if there is a cause, there is not only a beginning to it but also an *end*, because no cause has a permanent state. All I had to do was to be patient and wait for it to wear off. In fact, I *myself*, in my spirit, did not need to be depressed just because my body felt depressed!

So I said to my body, "Body, I don't know why you get depressed sometimes, but from now on, I'm not joining in. You can be depressed by yourself."

From that day, I was never depressed again. It has been 40 years. There were shortly afterwards one or two times when my body got depressed, but I ignored it and to be honest I don't recall when it wore off – same day or next day, most likely – I don't recall because I wasn't paying it any mind.

Another weird psychological thing around this time was worry. I was so worried about many things. So many things, in fact, that it began to concern me. Then it dawned on me that I was worried about being worried, and the ludicrousness of that was a wake-up call.

I decided to put a stop to being worried about anything at all. Any time a worry came to me, I told it, "I'm not doing that any more" and I'd move on in my thoughts. I think, if I recall correctly, worries just came along less and less until they came no more. Not talking about legitimate concerns, of course – just those uncalled for worries that distract.

I was doing rather well in my repeat round of third year courses this time (I took something else instead of Histology, and was now meticulous in my practicals, and managed to get a good third of them done right) and was thinking of switching to become a psychologist, since I love helping people, which I could achieve with just two more years of study, owing to the B. Sc. credits I would have from my Biochemistry degree.

Spiritually, however, I was still very unsatisfied. I really wasn't sure what career to go for, indeed I hadn't been sure of the Biochemistry, but above all I longed to know what God wanted me to do with my life. I would plead earnestly in prayer many times, "God, please lead me. What do you want me to do with my life? Which direction should I go in? I want to serve you." but I never got an answer.

I then read

> A man's heart deviseth his way: but the LORD directeth his steps – Proverbs 16:9

and heard a sermon where it was said God only steers a moving ship, and I realised that due to our lack of ability to have a conversation with God, he generally only sends us red or green lights,

which is why we have to pick a course and keep moving as best we can, so sadly I decided to just continue my plans.

Yet I remained desperate to know and talk to God. Yet again, the secret place and the life of prayer and the Word eluded me.

I would visit the Christian book stores occasionally and find another treasure of a life story apprehended by God, filled with miracles, and I wondered why I couldn't even hear God. But these biographies did at least encourage me on my quest.

I noticed that in all these cases, it was God who moved first. It became clear to me that God appoints people to do a ministry, and regardless of what they are aiming for (George Mueller never wanted to look after orphans even after being led towards it), they are called, anointed, prepared and gifted for it; and you can't decide to be such a one as *this* or *that*. So maybe being able to walk and talk with God like they did wasn't for me. Although the hymn saying "He walks with me and he talks with me" made me feel it was. Regardless, it also became clear to me that if you want God's purpose for *your* life, whatever it is, be it as high or lowly as it may, you need to dedicate time to him. Particularly time in prayer and reading the Word. And practice your faith.

But I struggled to do this. The amount of time I gave God was woeful. My parents had taught me to have a 'Quiet Time' every morning, and how helpful it was to have Scripture Union devotional notes to follow, which had a verse or two for the day plus some devotional thoughts. I had always kept my Quiet Time when I woke up in the morning on holidays (school dorms had had no privacy) and this was a practice I had retained since leaving school. I became more and more dissatisfied with my Scripture Union notes, and tried a few others, but they were poorer for me, so I sadly stuck to the S.U. notes. However, even though I kept my morning Quiet Times, nothing happened. And I never remembered to read any *more* of the Bible once I had done my Quiet Time, nor to pray much, or found time for it, though I wanted to.

I very much felt I didn't know how to pray besides go though a list, and wondered how my mom could pray for people for hours. What on earth do you say? And how to pray effectually? Jesus said don't give up praying, but he also said don't repeat yourself, how do you do both – how on earth do you pray the same thing for an hour without repeating yourself? And what did being *fervent* mean, exactly? Being emotional? Passionate? How do you 'be passionate'? What was *importunate*? Begging? Doesn't feel right. Demanding, insistent? Surely not quite, it would be rude. I wondered but had no answers.

So day after day went by in failure. It seemed to me that you needed the strength from doing all of these to be able to do all of these. Like pulling yourself up by your bootstraps. And I still wasn't sure what the secret place was, and it was clearly most important.

I thought, maybe if you focus on just one thing, such as Bible reading, then, as faith comes by hearing and hearing comes by the Word (Romans 10:17), your faith will increase, and with that you will find more time for prayer. But I couldn't even remember to do *that* one thing.

Then I wondered, if you just focus on praying, maybe God will answer, and change you. So I pleaded passionately with him every morning as I got out of bed, "Good morning, God. Please,

help me to serve you today" and meant it with all my heart. A prayer which never ended until decades later, and one I think God answered.

The year slipped by, I passed everything – I had a degree! – and I went to my summer job and ate excessive amounts of crayfish with my friends which we caught to save money (crayfish curry is delicious) and then came back and did Psychology I and Sociology I and II together.

This was perhaps the most free year of my life. My dad had lent me the little red Fiat for these two years (how well I remember filling the tank for 5 Rands – now worth about £1 / $1.30 at time of writing, Jan 2025) and I could go wherever I wanted.

I vividly recall one bright afternoon cramming four of us into the car *with our surfboards*. I don't know how we did it.

I'd pick up hitch-hikers whenever I could, and offer beggars asking for money "for the bus" a lift to wherever they wanted to go. It was rare they accepted.

At first I would not give to beggars and young scallywags because I could not know how the money would be spent, but the thought came to me, I could at least try to listen to them, for Jesus said,

> Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away. – Matthew 5:42

So I started asking the beggars what they needed, and listening to their stories, and giving whenever I could. The strange outcome of this practice was I developed an eye for a lie. People often do the same things when lying. It's primarily their calculated alertness and practiced. focussed shpiel that gives the game away; as well as their anger when challenged.

That year slipped by as well, with many fun adventures with my friends on surfing trips, and again I went to my summer job.

My friends came up on a surfing trip to visit me, and how well I remember the first evening barbecue, cool air by the sea, beers in hand, Dire Straits's Love Over Gold playing out of the rear speakers in the opened boot, and having given up smoking how I craved a cigarette and finally gave in and asked Dave for one of his, and how he immediately and generously shared half his pack with me.

But after a few weeks – disaster! I was falsely maligned by a fisherman, and got kicked from the job.

This meant no money for my second and final year of psychology. Which meant I had to get some other job for a time – but what?! I had NO idea! And God wasn't leading me, as far as I could tell.

My dad also needed money and as my brother was now working, and I wasn't studying, Dad decided to rent the flat out as soon as I moved out.

My sister then invited me to stay with her young family while I worked out what to do.

CHAPTER 7. GOD GIVES ME A CAREER (and don't pray in tongues while washing dishes unless you want to like washing dishes)

At this time a strange inertia came upon me. Normally I am morally strongly aware of my duties, and here I had a duty to get out of my sister's house as soon as possible – after all, she had three small children.

However, I didn't know what work to do, and just assumed God would lead me. Very strangely I never gave a thought of what that work could be, beyond that I needed direction from God, or how inconvenient it might be to have me there. They never gave me the slightest feeling that I was in the way or costing them money, either. It was very pleasant to be with them and the days passed as swiftly and quietly as butterflies' wings.

After about three months her husband, knowing I liked programming on the Spectrum, came to me showing me an ad in the paper for a six week COBOL course, FREE, AND they find you a job if you pass!

That felt like the moment I had been waiting for. I applied, and absolutely cracked their aptitude test with 100% which they had never seen before, then did their course, coming 1st in class easily – it appears my left/right brain mode of thinking was perfectly suited to programming.

They then organised a job for me at Stellenbosch University's Administration Department, which trained me up in various skills such as Data Modelling and Advanced Natural language, which gave me a real boost later on in my career. I feel quite certain that God led me into this. Because I can do it so well, it has paid me just as well as either degree would have done, and that turned out to be very necessary because I ended up having to pay off three student loans and support my parents for seven years, as well as having a disabled wife who could not work.

Quite God-incidentally, my brother had left SAFMARINE and was studying Agriculture right there at Stellenbosch University! So I shared his flat with him, he taking a bed in the large lounge/dining room and I in the smaller bedroom.

I'll never forget my sister visiting once and complaining how dirty it was, and my objecting strongly, to which she replied by running her finger along the windowsill and it coming up thick with dust. "But that's just dust!", I said. I had no idea dust came from skin cells or that people should dust regularly.

My brother was very spiritual and invited me to a group which met for Bible reading, fellowship and prayer. It was an unusual group, in that every time, while we were praying, the Holy Spirit would be there with gifts of the Spirit, and there would always be a word from God by someone delivered in one form or another. This I found very strange but it was accompanied by such a love, peace and joy I kept going.

On my fourth week or so, we were praying and someone near me spoke in tongues. It was strange yet peaceful. When they finished, I felt an impulse to speak out in English what she had said, and was given the first three or four words in English to start off with. I can't recall what they were, but it was something like "God wants you to". But I didn't want to make a fool of myself, say the four

words and then be most embarrassingly hung out to dry... so I hesitated. Again and again, I felt the gentle impulse.
“Is this you, God?”

The impulse simply remained. It was gentle but strongly impelling, yet I dared not step out onto that gang plank hanging over a sea of embarrassment. Then after some time, someone else spoke the words in English, the very same ones, and they carried on and delivered the whole message, which was very encouraging. I could have kicked myself for being too scared to step out, and I made up my mind that if it ever happened again, I would risk it.

Some weeks later, it did happen again. I gathered up all my courage, and spoke the three or four words I was given. Now the strangest thing happened to me: as I began speaking, the next word appeared, and the next, and the next, always three or four words ahead of me, ready to say. It was kind of like the news headlines you see running across the screen, only, the speed of receiving the words depended on my speed of speaking, and it was in my thoughts not my eyes. It was a strange and fascinating yet beautiful experience, as the words also had lovely meaning.

I never forgot those meetings and the absolutely beautiful, gentle love of the Spirit in them.

While I was at Stellenbosch, I was still reading books where people encountered God in a big way. One of the books I read was by an English woman named Jackie Pullinger called Chasing the Dragon. I need to share the gist of her story her as it impacted my life so much.

She felt called by God to go somewhere but didn't know where so she went to her pastor and asked his advice. He said, if God is saying go, just go.

So she sold everything and bought a ticket on a ship to the furthest destination she could think of, China. When she got to Hong Kong, she felt like she should get off. But she had no visa. They told her it was impossible, but she knew someone there and they were able to pull strings for her.

She then walked the streets trying to tell people the gospel. She didn't get much response. Then she discovered the Hidden City, a city within Hong Kong full of tenement towers built right next to each other with only several feet between them. She found teenagers there who were in desperate need of help to stay out of drugs, so she set up a room and put table tennis in it and such like, and invited the teens to spend time there, and tried to speak to them.

Though many did come, some broke things on purpose. She sadly replaced them. But then one day she came to the room to find it had been broken into overnight, everything was destroyed and smeared with excrement. She felt devastated. Then she started the long cleanup, weeping out of heartbreak while she cleaned. Some teens came by. They looked at her, and then offered to help clean up. During the cleanup, they confessed that they had done it. She asked why, and they said that there had been multiple American missionaries who came supposedly to help them, but did not really care about them. So they pushed them away and they always left. But now they could see that she really did have a heart for them and they felt bad. The centre then grew and Jackie worked tirelessly, often only getting two or three hours sleep a night as she helped the teens and their families, going to court to defend the boys, etc.

One day, she met a Christian couple who asked her if she prayed in tongues. She had not heard of it, so they explained, you absolutely need to be baptised in the Holy Spirit in order to be able to work with God. So they laid hands on her and prayed, and it was quite cute, after a while they started saying “Now you begin speaking. Now you begin speaking.” but similar to me she wasn't. I think, if I recall correctly, they even told her to say something and then the tongues arrived. After that, they left, and again similar to me, Jackie never thought about it much again.

However, a year later they were back in Hong Kong and met Jackie, and asked her if she still was praying in tongues. She said no, she had not realised you could do it voluntarily, and they responded very passionately, “Oh no, you can, and you must pray in tongues every day to get the benefit.”

So Jackie set aside ten minutes every day to pray in tongues, and she then found the strangest thing: the people she met and shared the gospel message with were now very receptive, and the majority accepted Jesus into their hearts. Thinking about it some months down the line she felt that what was happening is that God was leading her to talk to the right people.

Over time, Jackie's ministry grew, and another dimension was added to it when a heroin addict (which many of them were) was completely set free from his addiction during prayer after accepting Jesus. This deliverance from heroin became a common feature of Jackie's ministry.

So I thought, *I never knew that, I wonder if I too can still pray in tongues*, and I tried it, and it worked – at least it sounded the same as before. So I too set aside 10 minutes every day to pray in tongues.

But was it *boring*! Man, I cannot tell you how much *discipline* I needed to stay on my knees by my bedside, praying in a language I could not understand! And how *ages long* ten minutes can be when you have absolutely nothing to do but listen to a sound that means nothing to you.

But I persevered, and in a couple of days I discovered a difference between my soul and my spirit: it was my soul that was bored. My spirit was happily praying in tongues. My entire soul was being bypassed, and that is why it was so bored. After that it got much easier, as I just ignored my soul, and I settled down to praying in tongues every day for 10 minutes quite easily. You have to treat your soul like you treat your dog.

This impacted my life. I also started praying in tongues at other times when I was already bored, such as when it was my turn to wash the dishes, figuring I’d be using the time well asking for important things. Interestingly, I simply became quite happy to wash dishes! My reluctance to wash them vanished mysteriously. It has never been a chore since then, and a good thing too, as I wash all the dishes for my family for various reasons. So perhaps when you pray in tongues you focus on what’s on your mind? (Aside from when the Spirit leads you to pray, of course.)

Later I also discovered that we can develop little habits, and we are all susceptible to this in many areas but especially with washing dishes it seems, such as putting the cutlery in the drying-up rack in a certain order, which have rational beginnings, such as “it’s easier to dry up and put away like that”, but can grow into absolute diktats with power over us, as in ‘the proper and only way to do it’, to the extent that people even fight with one another over it, or get hurt or annoyed if a guest helps and does it the wrong way. So I put the cutlery into the rack in all the wrong order, and in just

two or three days the ‘proper way’ to do it was entirely gone. I then applied this antidote to one or two other similar petty ways of doing things ‘right’, upon which that spirit – at least I came to the conclusion it was a spirit – left and never returned, and I became much more easy-going in everything that wasn’t important.

CHAPTER 8. SIN WITH ME

Now some years before, I had tried to give up smoking. I loved my filterless cigarettes and pipe but I felt it was probably a sin because my body is the temple of the Holy Spirit and I was making it dirty, unhealthy and at risk of disease. So I had tried to give up, but, as Mark Twain said, “It's easy to give up smoking, I've done it hundreds of times.”

At some stage during this time, long before Stellenbosch, I became so desperate at being unable to stop, I fell to my knees by my bedside and heartfeltly begged God to deliver me from smoking, to completely take the desire away from me.

Into my mind came the words, “My grace is sufficient for thee”. At that time, I did not know my Bible well, and I thought that the words were from Shakespeare and my own mind had brought them to me. I got up from the bed in utter disgust with myself. Practicing such self-deception as to put words into God's mouth!

Again, years later, I had completely forgotten about it (my long-term recall is very poor), and I came to the same place of desperation and fell to my knees the same way as before and pleaded with God to deliver me, as if for the first time.

And exactly the same thing happened, the words “My grace is sufficient for thee” came to mind. And then I recalled the previous time, and I was beyond disgusted at my quoting Shakespeare to myself *again*! And rose up and sadly went on with my day.

But now, in Stellenbosch, years later, I yet again came to the same place of desperation without remembering either of the previous two times. (I seem to be very good at forgetting – perhaps a result of falling on my head when I was small. :)) I went through the same desperate appeal, kneeling at my bed, even more heartfelt and importunate than before. “God, I do believe this is wrong, and I don't want to do it, but I have tried and tried and tried, and to be honest with you, I just don't believe I can do it without your intervention. You're going to *have to* do it for me, *please*!”

Into my mind again came the words, for the third time: “My grace is sufficient for thee.” Immediately the previous two times flooded back to my memory, only *this* time I knew they were in the Bible, and so I knew this was God speaking:

> It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord. I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knows;) such a one caught up to the third heaven. And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knows;) how that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter. Of such a one will I glory: yet of myself I will not glory, but in my infirmities. For though I would desire to glory, I shall not be a fool; for I will say the truth: but now I forbear, lest any man should think of me above that which he sees me to be, or that he hears of me.
> And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I

should be exalted above measure. For this thing **I besought the Lord thrice**, that it might depart from me.
And he said unto me, '**My grace is sufficient for thee**: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.'
Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong. – 2 Corinthians 12:1-10

I was so disappointed. My immediate reaction was, "No! You're not going to deliver me? But I want to be delivered! I'm confused, isn't it wrong to smoke? Don't you want me clean? I'm not happy about it. I want to give up."

But God said no more.

Then a shameful thought snuck into the back of my mind. Whatever God was up to, if I *said* I fully agreed with him and accepted it, then the onus would be on *him* to resolve it. Right? The ball would be well and truly in his court, and surely he could not live with that for too long.

So I prayed, (and now it occurs to me how stupid I was not to realise that God was as aware of my plan as he was hearing me speak to him), "Okay God. I believe you. I accept your grace…" and deliberately added, "It looks like you've got a smoking Christian on your hands."

To this day I cringe that I tried to extort God in such a way. Like a child.

For the next few weeks, I waited expectantly for a surprise deliverance by God, once he realised I meant it, and had become a smoking Christian. And then the next couple of months after that. And then, disappointedly, hopefully, for a year or more... before the candle of my hope finally guttered out and I accepted that God really wasn't going to deliver me at all. He had called my bluff. I was, sadly, going to be a smoking Christian for the rest of my life. I was disappointed, but on the other hand, at least I knew God wasn't upset about it, and it wouldn't get in the way of our relationship. Maybe smoking was okay. Maybe it was fine to enjoy. Despite a smoking Christian's witness being a little compromised, in my eyes. But maybe that was actually fine, too. But still I was sad that I hadn't been delivered. I would rather have been clean.

Still, I LOVED my deep cherry flavoured tobacco in the pipe. I would wake in the morning, prop myself up on my pillows, tamp the pipe with some rich fresh tobacco, light it, and enjoy some really good puffs. I still had some cigarettes in the plastic tub which had once held chocolates but now held my smoking stuff, but I tended to smoke them only when a pipe was inconvenient.

But one to two years later, long after having accepted I was to be a smoking Christian, long after I never thought about it any more, one morning in Stellenbosch just after I awoke and tamped my pipe, just as I brought the match to the bowl, a weird thing happened to me.

In my mind's eye, but as clear as day, as if I was seeing it with my eyes, a tiny silver orb, the size of a small pearl, and bright like a water droplet, but silvery, like it was made of mercury or crystal, dropped from the ceiling, quickly, just like a water droplet. And as it dropped, it grew rapidly larger

and larger, until it was the size of my bed and it hit me and I was inside it, and now I was inside a place in my mind's eye. It will take some time to describe but I grasped it in an instant.

I was standing in what looked like a submarine corridor, only it went on forever, literally, to a dot in the distance. The floor and walls and ceiling were metal, the floor had some kind of grooves in it, and rivets, and the walls and ceiling were painted a yellowy cream colour. There were bare light bulbs mounted into the ceiling at regular intervals of about six or eight feet or so, with a loosely fitted black cable connecting them. The light bulbs were 60W, not bright, but not dim either. The lighting was adequate and when I looked up the corridor all I could see was this infinite chain of light bulbs going on forever, getting dimmer and dimmer with the distance, maybe a slightly browner colour, until they disappeared beyond vision in a tiny dot of repetition.

My back was mostly to the left hand wall and I was facing a big heavy watertight door, just like you see in submarine movies. It was painted a dull white, and it had a big heavy round wheel to seal it shut with. The door was ajar by about three feet, and I could see through the gap.

On the other side, I could see an almost identical corridor. Only, that one had 100W bulbs and was much brighter and cleaner. My corridor had smoke-stained walls and yellowed paint, while in that one, the paint was bright and fresh.

And after I had looked up the corridor to my left, and taken that in, and into the corridor opposite me, and taken that in as well, God spoke to me verbally, with words in my mind.

He said, as near as I can remember it, "You asked me before if I would deliver you from smoking. This is that opportunity. You can choose to go through that door now, and if you do, it will be sealed behind you and you will never smoke again.
"BUT! Before you decide. I want you to know: I am only doing this because you asked me. I don't mind which you choose. You can choose to carry on staying in the smoking corridor, and if you do, I'm not saying what will happen in the future, you may or may not give up at a later stage. But if you go through that door now, you will never smoke again.
"But I ASSURE YOU, that I DO - NOT - MIND WHICH YOU CHOOSE. If you choose to carry on smoking, I will not mind at all. I am only offering this opportunity to you, because you asked for it."

Well, it took me only one second to reflect on it, but I really wanted to give up in my heart, even if God did not mind me smoking, because it was unhealthy. So I said "Thank you! I want to be free of smoking", and walked through the door and as I did so, just like a soap bubble when it wears thin, the vision faded and disappeared.

I got up, got dressed and ready for work, and then saw my tub of smoking stuff and wondered whether I should throw it away now or when I came back from work. I didn't want to be tempted by it. But then I thought, no wait – if this is from God, then the deliverance is sure. It can be useful to prove whether it is from God or not – leave it right where it is.

That first day, I experienced withdrawal symptoms, and it was somewhat hard not to wish for a smoke now and then. But when I got home, I was easily able to resist it. There was no real desire.

The second day, the burning desire at work got fiercer, and when I came home I really felt like a smoke, but still, was able to resist it fairly easily and go to sleep.

But on the third day, my thoughts at work were bombarded every few minutes with the desire to smoke, though I constantly deflected them. It was almost impossible to program for the distraction. And my mind was trying to find ways to deal with it. Perhaps just one quick drag, maybe two or three at most, to come off the nicotine slowly, you know? To my absolute shame, I finally gave in at lunch time. I quickly went home, a five minute walk.

I got home and snuck over to the smokes tub without looking at God. I didn't want God to see me! I hesitated… but I couldn't handle the thought of the afternoon's stress, I felt it was better to wean myself off. Besides, if that vision was from God, it has to count for something, right? It has to work. It's not all down to me. So, studiously avoiding looking up at God, I picked up a ciggie and lit it, and, feeling a bit bad, and hesitant, but decided, I drew a puff in.
Now two things happened almost simultaneously, mid-way through the puff, which never got to my lungs.
The first was, that the half puff did absolutely nothing for me. It was like I had never smoked before. It was as uncomfortably smokey, as foreign, and as nothing to me as the first puff I had ever taken in my life.
I realised I didn't need it at all. The temptation had only been in my mind.
The second was, that God spoke to me clearly, again, with words in my mind.

He said, "Good. Now you see that you don't need it. I did say to you that you will never smoke again, and I meant it. You will never smoke again. I'm not saying this to make it come true. It is just a fact I'm sharing with you. You will never in your life smoke again.

"Now, let me teach you something. Again, this is not to stop you from smoking, it is just for your information.

"When you smoke, the nicotine enters your body and lifts you up a bit. But when it wears off, it ends up with you *lower than you were before you smoked*. So now you want another cigarette. And that one lifts you up a bit, but again when it wears off, it leaves you even lower than before. And so on with each cigarette, each one ending with you lower, until finally you reach the point where you are smoking just to be lifted up *to where you normally were without cigarettes at all*.
"Smoking people spend their lives feeling subpar, and only reaching normality when they have a smoke. The rest of the time they are *under* that level. The craving for a cigarette is only to satisfy the need which the last cigarettes have given them.
"Now, take a deep breath, as if you were taking a puff."
I did.
"No, deeper."
I did, deeper.
"No, a really big breath."
I did that. The oxygen filled my lungs and I felt that slight tingle in my body that you get.
"Now, doesn't that feel JUST like a drag?"
I said, "You're right! It does!" and it did.

Then he said, "That's what I wanted to show you. People who smoke are smoking just to feel normal. Every time you want a puff, just take a drag of fresh air, and you'll feel the same.
"BUT I want you to know this: I am not telling you this to stop you from smoking in future. This information is just for your own benefit. Regardless: you will never smoke again."

And I do think that over the next few days, I did take a drag of fresh air now and then whenever I felt a little lower than normal, and it did do me as much good as a drag used to when I smoked, and that was a relief. But in fact since the moment that I had taken that little puff, which had really only entered my mouth and throat, I knew the desire to smoke had completely left me. I knew, from that puff, that it was just as if I had never smoked. I am quite happy to even light a cigarette for someone, and have no desire to smoke at all. It has been *completely* taken away from me.

But going back to what God was telling me after that failed drag.

I had unconsciously put a wall up between me and God when I decided to do this, as I discovered shortly after, but I must explain it to you first. Just as a very young child thinks they are hiding from you when they cover their eyes – they can't see you, so you can't see them – this is what I had now done: in some way I cannot explain, I shielded myself from God's eyes, intending to unshield and apologise after. But at the moment I realised that I did not need the drag, I did not need to sin, I dropped that shield, I stopped hiding from God, like Adam coming out from behind the bushes acting all innocent. And that was the moment God spoke to me as I've described already. But after God finished speaking to me about that, he added this:

“By the way, don't hide from me when you sin.”
I replied, “I'm sorry God..... but wait. How can I sin in front of you?! You are holy!”
“That makes no difference,” he said. “You are covered by the blood of the Lamb. That is how I can be with you right now.”
I was very puzzled. “God, are you saying that I should be so bold as to sin right before you?”
He replied, “Do you think that your hiding from me means I can't see you? I would rather you sinned openly before me than hid yourself from me.”
I was still puzzled. “But God, how can I sin with you present? You are good.”
He then said, “Let me explain it this way. If you are going to sin, I would rather you sinned *with* me than without me. Because if I am *with* you, I can work *with* you in the present moment to *change* you, so that you grow. I can guide you to a good end and ultimately rescue you from that sin. But if you sin without me, there is nothing I can do. You have separated yourself from me. And so nothing will change, instead you will simply sin again, then repent again, over and over. Each time you will start from scratch.
“So if there is something that you feel you must do, even if it is wrong, tell me, and stay with me in it. I promise you I will change you through it.”

This was mind-blowing to me. Sin with a perfectly holy God? The blood is a powerful thing. But I obeyed. I can't recall the things I did that were wrong, they were fairly minor, things like not getting up when I ought to, lying to hide why I was late, a whole variety, but what God said came true. Each time I did something wrong with God present he spoke to me and gave me understanding which changed me. My character developed. Little by little, bit by bit, those conscious sins fell away from me. Like struggling to get out of bed when I was tired, and I’d talk to him about it, and he’d say, “Just get your one foot out of bed.” And then “And now the shin – come on, you can do it.” etc. And I learned to do that myself.

Ultimately over the years I came to a place where I very, very rarely needed to say, “God I feel I have to do this,” or “God I just feel like I can't do this.” Instead, at the worst, it was realising in the middle of something that I might be out of line and saying, “God I'm not sure if I'm in the wrong or

not." For example, if I was arguing with someone and I was angry. And I would check in the midst of the argument, "God, am I out of line here?" and occasionally feel a Yes, in which case I would apologise to the person I was arguing with.

Of course you are going to find it easier not to sin when you are in the presence of a holy God. But it wasn't just the fear of God in sight (sober respect) that kept me, or his advice that changed me. There was also simply a power in his presence. As I grew, I discovered that even in the fire of fierce temptations, his presence kept me holy. It's like the burning bush of Moses. Yes, the bush is on fire, just as we are on fire, but it is not burning up. It remains untouched by the flames.

This is not to say I have become a saint. Not at all. I have been very humbled to discover just how badly I can fall at times when I am not thinking straight. I have literally despaired of myself to the point of telling God it would be better if I were simply destroyed (before I took it to heart that in Christ, I have been). Once I prayed, after a particularly egregious fall in which I let someone down badly, though strangely I can't recall what it was now, "God, if there is anything you can salvage of this life, even if it is just looking after ONE person, please, feel free to do with it whatever you will." A prayer I believe he answered.

And there are always what you could call unpremeditated sins, like getting angry and saying something I shouldn't, which happens just about before I can think. And lastly, I have discovered that sin, which is as evil as it is regardless of how loudly or quietly it expresses itself, is ever present with me and will just manifest in more and more subtle ways. Every time God deals with a layer of the practice of sin in some way, there is another layer of the practice of sin underneath which sin will still use. We remain as sinful in our nature as ever. But that's okay. We are walking with God in grace and one day we will put off this weak and trying mortal body and put on a clean immortal one which is uncorrupted by sin and Satan. We will be pure as God is pure.

Interestingly, I have several times asked God if he could help me stop swearing, but he never did. After I was delivered from smoking, I once more asked him if he could take swearing away from me like he took smoking away from me, but he replied, "I'm as not bothered about your swearing as I was not bothered by your smoking. Don't worry about it. I know it's a habit you can't help." I've no idea why he didn't either help or direct me what to do. It's very odd. So I still swear kind of by accident from time to time, even though I do try and minimise it.

Perhaps it's because it's not intentional. Maybe it's only what comes from the heart that is sin. I don't really understand this, but it is enough to know that God does.

If you feel doubtful that God could say such a thing, you may be right. But I offer for comparison a couple of things that God has told me he *is* bothered about:
Sometimes after I have got into bed, he has said "Your wife's feelings are hurt by the forceful way you spoke to her. Go make it right with her." On some occasions I even just needed to tell her that I still love her and care about her.
Twice, I have been very hungry and said grace with a delicious plate of food before me, and about to tuck right in when he has said, "Wait. You are in the flesh. Make it wait." I willingly submit, happy to know that my flesh is not going to run the show. We wait for a little while, and I can feel the peace settle over me, then he says, "Okay, eat, at a genteel pace" (to keep the flesh gently reined in, as I understand it.)

CHAPTER 9. BAPTISM IN WATER OPENS THE SKY

My mom and dad are fairly non-denominational – in other words, they will go to any church, perhaps with the exception of Roman Catholic. They are primarily Baptist or Methodist in outlook, I think, but really they follow the Word of God as their authority more than anything else. However, I had not been baptised fully. I believe I have been 'dedicated' by sprinkling of water when a baby. But now I was attending a Baptist church and the gentle thought kept recurring to me, without the pastor preaching on baptism ever, that I should get fully baptised in water.

I was a little unsure as not only might being dedicated as a baby count as a baptism, I had also been 'confirmed' in the Anglican church at school, so I wondered, could you get it done twice, or would that be a wrongdoing… Plus I had been baptised in the Spirit, too. But on checking the Bible I realised with amazement that there was only one water baptism, the baptism of repentance in the name of the Lord Jesus, fully immersed, and it was not optional, so I did it.

That did something really weird for me. It removed some kind of blockage in the heavens between God and me. It felt like the sky was so much more open and I could hear God so much more easily, and a flow of holy power rested on me more. I cannot explain it.

Perhaps two or three weeks after being baptised, I was walking home by myself after church one evening – my brother had finished university by then and I lived at the flat alone now – and I wondered, if Jesus returned, would I be ready? I have always strived for a clean conscience and really wanted to test myself, and wondered how I could check. Then I thought, I can *imagine* his return.

So I stopped in the road, and I looked up at the starry sky, and saw in my mind's eye Jesus appearing in it, descending, and IMMEDIATELY my first thought was "NO WAIT!! I HAVE UNCLEAN THINGS TO HIDE – OR RATHER, TO DEAL WITH, TO SAY SORRY FOR! **I'M NOT READY!** But there's NO TIME!"

I was horrified, shocked, ashamed. I hadn't ever realised that those things were even there. I listed them in my mind, determined to deal with them, and I continued to look up into the sky, and spoke to God: "God, I'm really sorry about that. I will deal with those things now. But I promise you now, that from now on, I will live READY for you. My conscience will *always* be 100% clear with you. I will always fix something up with you immediately if I fall."

Then I finished my walk home, and once I was in and my shoes were off, I remembered that there was a comedy show on the TV – Cheers, if I recall correctly. Now I LOVE comedy, and I lived for these three or four shows a week. So I happily went over to the TV and as my finger touched the On button, a thought flashed across my mind as quick and small and light as a bird's shadow: no.

I was about to dismiss it, because I didn't want to miss out, but I caught myself because of the promise I had only just made. And I wrestled there in front of that TV, with my finger on the button. "If that little no was from God, I should obey. Yes, but if it was *not* from God, and I do not watch, I will *miss out*." In the end I decided, it's only the loss of one show, but if I watch, that's disobedience and will grieve God and come between us. So I took my finger off the button, and IMMEDIATELY God spoke to me in my mind as clearly as the radio:

“Good! Well done! Now I want you to know something. When I tell you to do something I will never speak loud enough for you to be 100% certain it's me. If I speak loud enough for you to be 100% certain, you will be pressured into obeying. I will always speak soft enough for you to be able to be slightly unsure. I will speak more loudly when it’s a bigger step to take and you need more assurance. I will always speak just loud enough for you to have enough confidence to do the thing which I am asking. But I will never be so loud and clear as for you to have no *choice* about whether it’s Me telling you or not. Because I want you to be free.”

There followed the second strangest period of my life. (The first being standing inside the girl's soul in Bloemfontein.)

From that moment God remained literally present with me the entire time. Speaking to me. Teaching me things. Truly, “He walks with me and he talks with me” came true in my life. I could hear him as easily as I hear you, but in my heart.

I had a habit of biting my fingernails. But now, in these weeks, every time I lifted my hand to clip a nail a bit, Jesus said, ever so gently, No. It was very quiet. I had, as he had indicated, the freedom to listen or not. But my soul was so tenderly open to him, so quiet, so willing, it was easy to recognise him, as well as obey. And I would let my hand down again. After two weeks the habit was gone.

What I loved most was knowing that I was in his will all the time. Not that God prescribed my life, far from it, but whenever something was needed, I would hear him advise me. Many times during my day, he would say something, and it would fill me with joy, knowing that there was nothing between him and me, nothing wrong. It made me feel so at peace. It was like being with family on holiday from school. I especially loved the feeling of closeness we shared together.

But then after perhaps six or seven weeks, one morning, just after I awoke and was still lying in bed, Jesus rose up from me, towards the ceiling, leaving me. I said, “Lord! Where are you going? I need you! I can't live without you!”, and he replied quietly, “You don't understand what I am doing now, but one day you will understand.” And he was gone.

(You understand that this was only his manifest, ‘soul-detectable’ presence leaving me; his real presence in the spirit was still with me. I could feel continuously his love, joy and peace as I have since I was five years old.)

And since that day, which ended a glorious period of walking with God for so many weeks, hearing him speak to me in my soul, I have hardly ever, perhaps never, heard God tell me what to do quite so clearly again. But it is comforting to know that he is with me and always hears me.

I have since also learned to attune myself to God, to bend my ear to hear him. It's like making yourself a still calm pond, without a ripple, into which God can throw a little pebble of a word, which you then immediately are aware of by the ripples it makes. And with practice you get quite good at it.

There have certainly been times when God speaks louder, but overall I have to be very sensitive to him if I want to talk to and listen to him. Most of the time I have to decide for myself what is the

best thing to do. And I feel like I have grown more mature in this, thinking more and more like God thinks, and to be less of a baby needing to be directed for every little step.

In this book I write of many conversations with God, but I want to make it clear that it is rarely as certain as it appears in print. It varies from anything between the merest wisp of an idea to a clear thought, on rare occasion verbal in my mind, which I think I have tried to point out. I have to judge carefully usually – by the peace in my heart, by the Word, by unexpectedness (arising outside of my own thought flow), etc. And by the results – I usually find even those wisps of ideas were bang on.

I'd just like to take a moment aside here to touch on one possible aspect of baptism:

> Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee,
> Except a man be **born again**, he cannot **see** the kingdom of God.
> Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee,
> Except a man be born **of water** and of the Spirit, he cannot **enter** into the kingdom of God. – John 3:3-5

Notice how Jesus first says, born again to *see* the kingdom of God, and then says born of *water* and spirit to *enter*. Now obviously if you are born again you are a citizen in the kingdom of God, but why did Jesus say "see" the first time and "enter" the second time? God never wastes words or uses them idly. There is always a reason. Now, *if* being born of water refers to baptism, could "enter" be a reference to *experiencing* the kingdom of God with regard to the body as well as the spirit?

Certainly that was my experience.

However my own feeling is that the water referenced here is, or perhaps *also* is, referring to the washing of the word which occurs when you hear and receive the word:

> Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. – John 15:3

> Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;
> That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, – Ephesians 5:25-26

CHAPTER 10. THE POWER OF A SOUL TIE

I was going to leave this out as it mentions the first time I slept with someone, with one small explicit detail, but it knits into the rest of the story and God's dealings with me quite importantly, and besides it might help someone directly, so I've decided to include it. I hope it's not tasteless.

A year or two later, when I was 29 or so the younger sister of the one and only girl I had dated a few times years before approached me and admitted how much she liked me, and asked if I liked her. I said yes of course as I genuinely did (she was pretty, just my type in fact, and sweet), but she was ten years younger than me so I said I didn't think it'd work out because of the age difference. She didn't give up though, and kept asking me to date her and see. It was so hard for me to say no to her over and over, so in the end I agreed. I liked her, and we kept getting closer, which concerned me. I still felt the age gap was too much. And I taught her how to drive and noticed that she sometimes got her left and her right muddled. I had an instinctive feeling that I was mysteriously getting drawn in to a relationship that wasn't right for me. Yet I didn't want to hurt her feelings, so I didn't want to brutally dump her. I was hoping that she'd lose interest, or, small chance though it be, that I would find out she was the right one for me after all.

Then she start suggesting we get married, and I kept saying no, but this mysterious entrancement seemed to be taking hold of me in that I really didn't want to hurt her, so I still didn't break up with her, and I was disturbed by how the lines I drew kept shifting towards her. So I asked a friend from the beautiful Christian group (which had disbanded now) to pray for me, as I felt I was not keeping my feet, but I wasn't sure.

In the end she wore me out so much with talk of marriage I started saying it may be possible at some future date. In the following weeks a weird sort of enchanted acceptance of marrying her began to settle on me, and whenever we discussed it she was so sure we would, and so persistent, I kind of gave in to it without arguing, though I never *said* I would. I'm so ashamed of myself, I do not know where my backbone went, it was a hypnotic time and I really did care for her – more and more.

One day we and her sister went to visit her aunt, who seemed wicked to me, and while I was doing something else they had an oddly quiet chat in the corner, too low for my hearing, with a little naughty-sounding chuckle or two. I thought it was odd, and strained my ears in case they were talking about me, but all I caught was one phrase, "when he comes", and then too quiet again.

Then a week or so later she began pestering me to sleep with her. I adamantly refused, saying we were not married, but she said, but we *will* get married, so it amounts to the same thing, and when I said no, she just kept on bringing it up, and I kept on saying no. It was a line I would not cross.

Then soon after that, one day, she pressed up to me so closely, that I had to hold her to keep my balance, and she asked me again to sleep with her, and when I said no, she said, just this once, and fell back slightly as she said it, causing me to incline forward and take a step forward to keep my balance, and for some Godforsaken weird reason under the influence of this forward motion I yielded, and said "Okay", as if we were going to get married. And immediately I smote myself, *why did you say yes?* I really didn't want to. In hindsight it felt like a supernatural force associated with that forward step. God help me, an idiot. She got undressed and lay down on the bed and I felt so

awkward because I really did not want to do this, but I had said I would. I hadn't yet come across the verse, "the marriage bed is undefiled" – not the engaged bed – which would likely have helped to dispel the muddle and smoke with a key fact.

So we tried but she stopped me and said she wasn't ready for it. I was relieved but some weeks later she asked again and like a hypnotised sheep I yielded again on the basis that I had already given my word before, and this time she was ready. At the crucial moment for me to withdraw she arched her body up high, making it very difficult for me. I thought I had managed to avoid impregnating her, though, but as I went to wash I thought I caught a glimpse of her using her hand as if to scoop and push in, so prayed about it too.

Then I went on holiday to Scotland to see family. This was a three week holiday and during it my family became aware of my ties to this girl and realised that something was wrong, and dug deeper. They told me that I had allowed myself to become soul-tied, which basically means that you care for someone to an unhealthy, illogical level, as if you are charmed. He or she becomes a little god to you, the focus is all about her, looking after her, and 'her will be done'. They checked how I really felt and then told me I needed to write a break-up letter. I agreed with the break-up but resisted the letter with all my might as it would hurt her. I said it would be better to break up in person but they replied that I would no sooner see her than be under her spell again. It went back and forth a few times but finally they literally compelled me to write the break-up letter.

I wrote the break-up letter as tenderly and prayerfully as I could. Initially it felt like I was smashing something incredibly precious like a Fabergé egg she had entrusted to me, but as I persevered, perhaps helped by the weeks' separation from her, chains literally began to break and fall off from my mind, and I was set free from what I only then could see was a very real bondage of love to this girl.

On arrival by bus in London the tubes were closed for a gas leak and the streets were jammed, so I missed my flight. The airline very kindly gave me a free flight home the next evening, so I slept on a bench in the waiting lounge and walked around London the next day seeing so many of the famous places.

Upon my return home, though, on an evening perhaps a day or two after my flight, her sister – the one who was my first date ever long before – arrived on my doorstep as angry as can be, and yelled at me,

"Do you know H was waiting for you at the airport the day before yesterday? She was so excited about seeing you! How did you not tell her you were not on the flight! And she got your break-up letter yesterday – do you know how badly you hurt her? She came to me crying uncontrollably! I could not comfort her! How could you write a break-up letter instead of telling her face to face?"

I explained that I had had no idea that she was planning to meet me at the airport, nor that my letter would take longer than I to arrive, and tried to defend my letter as perhaps easier to read than be told, but she would hear nothing of it.

Then she continued. "But that's not why I'm here today. Did you sleep with her?!"

My mind raced. I didn't want to divulge a confidentiality, nor lie. "I… I.. I did, yes. Once."

“Let me tell you something, Anthony. She’s missed her period. She was supposed to have had her period over a week ago. You have made her pregnant! I hope you are planning to marry her!!”

I tried to explain that I would be surprised if she was pregnant but that if she was, I would certainly marry her.

She said all this at the door, and after I gave that assurance, she left somewhat mollified, saying as long as you do that, it’s okay.

I felt terrible. I reflected on how such a marriage would work, and face to face with the reality, in my heart I felt certain it couldn’t be good. Of course I would marry her if there was no mistake but such a marriage would certainly ruin the plan God had for my life, and *that* was the real tragedy here. My life was not my own to give away, I belonged to him. I was consumed with remorse and immediately went to my room to fall on my knees and pray.

I said to God, “What a fool I have been! What an unutterable fool! If this is true I have ruined my life for You. I apologise with all my heart, and if I have to reap the justice of my sin then I will not complain. But if it is possible by any means to avoid this outcome, if such a marriage would not work, or if it is better for the kingdom of heaven, then I ask you to save us from it please. But whatever happens, I trust you to work this for good.” Feeling so abjectly unrighteous in my behaviour towards God and so importunate in the need to get our lives back in his will I stayed on my knees all night before him, until in the morning I had to go to work.

A couple of days later, her sister called to apologise, saying that H’s period had arrived.

I knew not for certain whether God had intervened, I felt he must have done, but nothing sobered me up in my life as to the consequences of sin more than that. I have a small clue how sobered David must have felt when the prophet said, You are the man who took the family’s only sheep, revealing his sin with Bathsheba and pronouncing judgment.

CHAPTER 11. NORWICH LIFE AND THE LIVING LIFE

The Stellenbosch job did not suit me though. They did things s-u-p-e-r s-l-o-w-l-y, and sometimes I even had to struggle to find work to do, yet they were very strict in an old-fashioned way and frowned on you if you weren't working. I recall one day not being able to find any work to do and having to fake all morning that I was actually doing something on the computer when in reality I was just typing rubbish on the keyboard and peering at the screen! I do not like being idle at all, but having to pretend to work took the torture to new levels.

I had already spoken to the head of the department, of course, and he had told me to be patient, we would start the big projects sometime, maybe next year, maybe later, it depended on budget funding. This made my hair stand on end with how slow and lackadaisical it was.

They also did not allow you to get tea when you felt like some. Tea was served at 10 am and 3 pm and we all had to troop downstairs to the large meeting room to have it at the large table. The nonsensical restriction drove me crazy.

After perhaps a third day of having to pretend to work and the torture of my conscience, I could stand it no longer, and started looking to get a new job, and in my search I found a contracting role. I investigated contracting and found that at the moment it was a great deal, 150% the income and yet the companies were so desperate you landed up in work all year round.

I joined Norwich Life in Claremont, Cape Town. I also hired an accountant and they sorted my taxes most efficiently for me as well, which more than paid for their expense. So I landed up in an excellent position financially. I have no doubt this was God's doing – not only training me in popular mainframe languages, which made me very hirable up to my current position today, but also organising my entry into contracting, which particularly enabled me to pay off my student load and some other big debts which came along later.

For my first two years at the company we worked like crazy converting from COBOL to Natural. For about six months we worked 18 hours a day, 6 or 7 days a week.

I also moved to a flat in Kenilworth, sharing with another Christian guy. He kindly explained to me that after you have bathed, you need to clean the bath. I never knew that. It never occurred to me to clean the cleaning thing.

I felt very settled there and enjoyed the peace and quiet I had in my bedroom in my continued search to be able to find out how to pray, what faith really is and how to use it, to read the Bible and learn how to talk with God.

Nevertheless I still had not been reading my Bible much. But one day God spoke to me, and said, as concepts in my mind, "I would like you to stop having a 'Quiet Time'."

I was shocked. I said, "God if this is you, please give me an understandable reason, because I know a Quiet Time is the right thing to do."

He replied, "It's a religious duty to you, a work; not pleasant for me, and no good to you. Trust me on this."

It had the peace of God, so I said, “Okay God, but I’ll test this by its results and if it’s not good I will go back to Quiet Times for now, in case I misheard, because it seems really odd to me.” So I stopped. I was very curious though. And watched to see what effects it would have, with a mind to resume after a year or two.

About a month later, I recalled that God had said about my smoking, “My grace is sufficient for *thee*”, not “you”. I wondered why. I knew my mom loved the old English of the King James, but did God, too? It made me curious to check it out, so the next time I visited a Christian bookstore I read some of a King James in it and really liked it. It was not easy to read (at first), but it had a music and a presence and a life to it. It was a far cry from my NIV (New International Version). So I bought two copies, one to put notes in like people at church said you really should do to grow, and one to keep fresh, because I hated the idea of writing in God’s Word, and I packed away for now.

I left the other out on a hall table, and seeing it from time to time, one day, about a week or two later, I realised I was missing reading the Bible so I picked it up casually and read some random verses. It was lovely and refreshing.

A few days later I missed it again and did the same again. And a few days after that. And then I found myself picking it up casually daily, at any time of the day, and just randomly reading some of it, like you might grab an apple when walking past a bowl of fresh fruit.

Finding so much life in it, I really enjoyed it, and just did it naturally, more and more. Then one day it dawned on me that I was reading ten times, a hundred times, as much Bible as I used to. Half a chapter or several chapters a day. Under the Quiet Time ‘duty checkbox system’ I had been reading a single canned verse a day smothered in the sauce of human thought in the devotional notes.

I finally realised what God had been talking about. What we had now was a live, love relationship, while the former had been a stale work, a duty. It is our duty to *love* God, to *love* our spouse, but not mechanically. It means that we spend time with them, listen to them and give to them – out of *love*, not out of *duty*. The duty only comes into play with maintaining and protecting our love for them. It is not the unnatural “I’m going to give you this / spend time with you / love you because it is my duty” but “I’m not going to let anything prevent or get in the way of me loving you”.

There is a saying, “Love is an action, not a feeling” and, while it has some merit, I hate it. Doing something supposedly loving without feeling is worse than doing nothing at all. If you don’t *feel* like doing something for someone, change your *heart*. Don’t be a hypocrite and just pretend and act like you do. So yes, love is an action, but emotional sincerity is the life in it. As someone said, emotions make wonderful servants but lousy masters. Don’t sit back because you don’t feel like giving, but don’t give out of the duty to love, either: let that duty drive you to fix your state until you have the love of God towards that person. Forgive, understand, have compassion, and pray for them. Then, when you are finally on their side, you can give sincerely.

As an aside, I saw this same principle in action at Norwich Life. I would out of duty make sure to say good morning or hi to everyone I walked past as I entered the office (I think underneath, my fear of people kept me behind a wall, so I had to deliberately overcome that) and one day one of the girls said, “I wish you wouldn’t say hello to me.”
I was surprised, as I had been sincere. “Why not?”

“Because you don’t mean it. Please don’t.”
This grieved me but the next day I left her out. A split second later a completely natural, spontaneous desire to say hello to her popped up in my heart! What a gift she gave me! From that day I never did anything religiously again.

I soon fell very much in love with the King James Bible as I got used to the “est”s and “eth”s and the “thee”s and “thou”s of Early Modern English. Months later I curiously read my NIV to see what it was like and was shocked by how cold and dead it was.

Just a quick note. Thou, thee, thy, thine are just the singular form of You, ye, your, yours: like I, me, my, mine are the singular of Us, we, our, ours. The King used to use the royal 'we' (speaking for we the people) and so his courtiers started calling him 'you' instead of 'thou'. This use of ‘you’ spread as a politeness to lords and ladies and finally down to all folk, until thee and thou became an insult to use, as we see in a play from the period where one character says to the other, "Dost thou 'thou' me, thou dog!" And so thee and thou fell into disuse.

About this time my sister asked me, “Have you started reading the Bible more?”
I answered “Yes” and she replied, “You have become so much less irritable than you used to be.”

As I read it more and more, always randomly, I began to wonder if God would be willing to tell me what to read. So I started to ask God sometimes, “God, have you got a passage you would like me to read?”

And almost always a passage would come to mind. Most commonly in the Psalms, but sometimes elsewhere. I would read it, and then God would tenderly point out something to me in the passage for me to know: a loving message, a bit of wisdom or advice, a watch-out-for-this, or a do-this, etc.

The King James became God’s gift of his personal, living Word to me.

But I really wanted more, much more. To understand how to pray, how to have faith, and how to walk and talk with God on a conversational level. I had been yearning to talk to the Lord whenever I wanted and hear his reply, and came across the verse again, “Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God”, so I figured, if I memorise scripture, I can recite it to myself any time, and then get lots of Bible, and then hearing God will come. But I only got as far as the first 3 chapters of Matthew, because life was so busy as I was spending time helping friends, mostly, and working hard as the new job was intense.

But then I found a new, living church. I had been getting more and more unhappy with the Rosebank Methodist church that I had come back to after returning from Stellenbosch. It seemed like a big social game with no substance. Everybody arrived, everybody sang, everybody listened, everybody had tea and chatted, and everybody went home. It felt like God himself was not actually personally *present*.

Then one day a friend invited me to join a new church which had formed on the local campus. Well, I was delighted. This church was alive! I was greeted with a hug. During worship, I could sense the presence of God, and people would get messages from God that recalled to me that little Bible fellowship group I had been a part of in Stellenbosch. In short, God showed up. Miracles

would happen, people would get healed, and the teaching was powerful. The love was palpable and genuine. I loved it.

I discovered that the pastor had been told by God to leave Johannesburg and go start a church among the students in Cape Town. With no funding, it was a very brave step. He went, and on a shoestring budget simply started speaking to students about God, and inviting them to ask Jesus into their hearts. It very quickly grew into a church. And he was a good pastor. I recall one time he stopped preaching to say, “and by the way – please stop driving home drunk. God is waking me up at night to pray for you driving home drunk, and I know who you are, but I'm not getting enough sleep. Sometimes I even go to the bathroom and lie on the cold floor to keep awake while I pray for you.”

Over the next six years it was this church that taught me a ton of stuff I know about God today, and I am very grateful for it. I matured from a baby Christian into a Christian who really understood the Word of God’s power and the Holy Spirit much more. Not only did I grow in knowledge and understanding, it also inspired me to search harder for a closer walk with God.

However, to my great shame, I think we all as a congregation rode on the coat-tails of the pastor, enjoying the fruit of his sacrifices without properly joining in with his labours of prayer, especially to pray for *him*, as he certainly would be the bulls-eye in the target of Satan’s attacks. In fact, over several weeks at one point I kept sensing God was telling me to pray for him – but as I was distracted with friends’ needs and work and life, being weak in my Christian walk (but not actually so weak as to be unable to remember to pray for him if I took it seriously enough!) I kept forgetting, and a year or too later later it came out that he had fallen. I instantly knew it was our fault. I kicked myself for the entire day, in shame, and every time the topic ever came up. Yet, God worked it together for good, and the pastor recovered his walk with God.

> And some of them of understanding shall fall, to try them, and to purge, and to make them white, even to the time of the end: because it is yet for a time appointed. – Daniel 11:35

Pray God to be accounted worthy also to be purified before the time of the end.

I heard in church of Maria Woodworth-Etter preaching to the townsfolk from a platform in a field and stopping mid-sentence, frozen in place, and how during this time anyone who touched her was healed. She stayed in this state until the next day, when she suddenly resumed speaking without skipping a beat.

And of Charles Finney who would send teams of people to pray for a town for weeks, and then join them for a week or two after his prior evangelistic meetings ended, before starting the next in that new town, and how they would travail in the spirit, becoming filled with compassion and groans for the lost: and the result was that thousands of people were saved. On one occasion Finney, and perhaps his team, was on a train that simply went *through* a town and thousands of the townspeople became convicted of their sinful state and dropped to their knees and cried out to God for forgiveness.

I was also very blessed when an actor, Don Leonard, came to our church. He was an amazing man, full of love for everyone. Before he got saved he used to get drunk and literally shoot at God in the night sky. One day he pushed past some evangelists handing out leaflets in Johannesburg and went

around the corner only to bump into a huge guy – 7 or 8 foot tall, I can't recall which – who put his hand upon Don's chest and started pushing him backwards around the corner to the evangelists, saying over and over again, "Today is the day of salvation. Today is the day of salvation." (2 Corinthians 6:2) He felt obliged to take a leaflet, read it when he got home, got radically saved, and as angry against God as he was before, now he was sold out for God. He told us many many amazing stories.

Maybe I should share two or three. Plus what my pastor said about him beforehand. Don loved people so much, he would lead anyone to Christ anywhere. He put a coffin on the roof of his car labelled "Turn or Burn" on one side, and "Draai of Braai" (Afrikaans) on the other, as a way to get people talking. He'd ask them where they go when they die, and if they said, "hell, maybe?", he'd say, "It doesn't have to be that way" and lead them in a prayer for salvation. He was once seen leading someone in that prayer who was leaning out of a window two stories up. He could not fill up his car with petrol without converting all the attendants. On another occasion he asked his son to come evangelising with him in Benoni. On the way his son said, "But this isn't the way to Benoni" and Don replied that he had been fooling the devil so that the devil would go ahead to Benoni leaving Don free to evangelise without trouble.

Our pastor said you can't get anywhere on time with him because he keeps stopping to help people. For instance on the way to our church for the meeting, they walked past a restaurant and Don dashed inside and went and spoke to an old woman. "You are praying such-and-such for your grandson, well, God wants you to know that he has heard your prayer" and she burst into tears.

In the meeting he told us how he had gone to the lunatic asylum nearby during his visit and a woman came running up to him yelling "*Jesus*! *Jesus*!" He said to God, "What do I do, God, she thinks I'm Jesus." God replied, "That's okay, you are Jesus to her right now. Pray for her healing" which he did, and she was immediately of a sound mind.

Another time he was up on the side of Table Mountain talking to the 'bergies' (rough tramps). He said to God, "Pooh, they *stink* so *bad*!" and God said "I didn't bring you here to smell them, but to talk to them." He started sharing the gospel with them and then he heard a brick whizzing through the air towards his head, *wuf-wuf-wuf-wuf* as it rotated, and God said, "Don't move!" and he felt *That's easy for you to say, you're up there and I'm down here!* But just as the brick was about to reach his head it shattered into a thousand pieces and fell to the ground.

On another occasion he went to a hospital and visited everyone on every floor and prayed for them all. At the end of the day he stumbled out the hospital exhausted, hungry and thirsty, ready to go home, when God said, "Go back inside, you haven't finished." He was really unhappy at that.
"But Lord! I'm so tired! And I've done them all!"
"No you haven't. Go back inside."
So he wearily turned around and re-entered the hospital. He turned left but God said, "No, to your right." Then he noticed a darkened ward, all the lights were off. He went inside and there was an elderly woman lying on a bed, alone. Her stomach was distended, apparently with a huge growth the size of a football, and her cheeks were sunken in and her skin was pale as death. She saw him come in and whispered,
"Jeesuus! You've come. I asked you to come, and you've come."

He went up to the bed and laid hands on the growth and prayed for her. He said it was the oddest thing but that growth went down literally like a football, with a sound as of air escaping, sssssssss. Her cheeks filled out, her skin colour returned, and she said, "Who are *you*?"
Don said that at that moment he was so disappointed he wasn't Jesus any more. :)

He also shared how, when he would go out to tell people about Jesus, he always tried to get a musician to go with him. Music is important. Godly music blocks evil spirit activity. Then he broke off to say, "You've got to get 'em all softened up crying before they will listen. You've got to *con* 'em into the kingdom!" which I found amusing, expressed that way. Of course he was referring to getting around the flesh's reluctance to listen to God – the reward was opened eyes and eternal life, so there was no con really.

Many, many other experiences he told us, as well as how important it was to read enough Bible, and pray in tongues while you do it, to fill up on God. He would do this whenever he could, such as after he had been evangelising he would hurry back to his Bible and read it rapidly, praying in tongues while he read.

He also warned us to watch our thoughts. For example, once he was on the freeway and the thought came to his mind, *I wonder what a head-on collision is like?* And he started thinking about it – just then a car came the opposite way on *his* side of the freeway. Don just managed to swerve out of the way.

Then the pastor had him pray for us. He was in a tremendous hurry to get to the airport as he should have left 30 minutes earlier, but he walked down the line tapping each person in the stomach with an open hand and commanding, "Fear go!" When he tapped me, I felt something change. Since then I have not been afraid of speaking to people. I could speak to 10,000. (I still do have that subconscious reaction to performing, but that's a niche thing related to showing something of myself.)

So I grew in my ability to apprehend, receive and use what God has provided for us.

> "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus." – Philippians 3:12

I remember one day when I was house-sitting for a friend, I brought my bag full of laundry out to the car to take it to wash, and when I arrived at the laundromat 8 minutes later in a different suburb I realised that I had left the full laundry bag on the sidewalk after having gone back inside to get something else. This was at a time when, if you left an old shirt on the backseat of your car, someone would break the window to steal it (this happened to me). If you left anything on the street, it was gone as soon as you turned the corner. I started to panic in horror at the cost of all those clothes needing to be replaced, but then settled down and remembered Romans 8:28 "Everything works together for good to them that love God" and exercised my faith as I drove back, saying, "God, I trust you. If it's gone, you will provide, but I know you can protect it too" and being at peace, and when I got back, it was still there. That was a miracle of faith for me.

It was around this time, too, that one day after finishing work I walked back to the residential road where I had left my car, and just as I began to put the key in the lock got a huge fright to see a black face staring at me out of the driver's window. I jumped back in alarm and embarrassment, thinking

I must have gone to a similar car, looking up and down the street to see where *my* car was, while two serious looking big black men jumped out of my car in a hurry. The far one rapidly came round to stand next to his buddy on my side of the car and they asked me bullishly, “Is this your car? is this your car?!”

I was hesitant and confused, and said, “Yes – no – I think so, yes it is?”

Immediately the first man's eyes narrowed into slits and his right hand moved up to enter his jacket, mid-chest, and I thought in that split second, “Oh no! I'm about to be shot or stabbed to death!” (Violence was very common in South Africa then.)

Quick as a flash, unable to find a moment to remember or say the words or even the number of Psalm 91, I looked up at God in my spirit and with no time to speak I just pointed to it, THAT PSALM! – this all took place in that instant – and as I did so, the man's hand did not enter his jacket but passed the opening and moved down and round again in a circle and back to his side, and I felt a strong sense that he had suddenly had another thought – perhaps that I looked gullible and weak. Both true! (My response when told at school that the word “gullible” had been removed from the dictionary was, “But we *need* that word!”)

He said to me, “Oh – we were asked to wait here, in this car.”

I immediately thought, *yes, but I locked the car,* but feeling how important it was that I go along with it, yet be immersively 'persuaded', I did not want to just say “Oh ok” either, so I stupidly said “But I thought I locked it?” and he replied, “It was open when we got here.”

I said “Oh okay” as dumbly as I knew how, and they replied, “Are you sure this is your car?”, to which I answered, “Yes, yes it is” and they mumbled something about there being some mistake and sorry and then walked off at a quick pace.

CHAPTER 12. WATCH OUT FOR REDHEADS

I met a redhead at my new job. She was a big round faced woman with freckles and though beautiful not my type particularly (I'm more drawn to brunettes with angular faces and wide cheekbones), but still she was always warm and charming and vivacious and I liked her.

One day some months after I had started working there we were talking together and the conversation drifted onto things we liked and I shared with her how actually I didn't want anything at all, no swimming pool, no fancy house or car, no overseas holidays, because I wanted to live for Jesus and give all I could spare for missions and the poor. I even only had one tie. She replied that she was exactly the same, didn't want a pool or fancy home, just to serve God, and I was stunned. Here was a woman who loved Jesus with all her heart! I had never met such a one in my life! And instantly I was attracted to her.

When we had restaurant functions at work we would sit together, and then we started to go on walks, and became romantic, spending a lot of time together both at work and at home. I met her parents, (mine were half a country away), discovered they doted on her as an only child, and everything was very friendly and charming.

As we got closer and closer I started considering the idea of proposing marriage, and I felt she was expecting it too. I was very hesitant, however, as we hadn't known each other for that long and I had no assurance in my heart from the Lord yet, so I was kind of waiting for something more.

One Friday night I went to sleep seriously thinking about it. I was still a little uncertain, because I felt perhaps she wasn't deep or thoughtful enough for us to be a match, but her love for Jesus carried so much weight.

On that lazy Saturday morning just after I woke up I heard in my mind, "Call G and ask her to marry you."

Now this confused me because I hadn't expected it nor would I expect God to talk to me in quite this way, in my mind, but I was unsure. I said, as I had in the café years before, "God, is this you?" and heard again, "Call G and ask her to marry you."

And so it went on, over and over. Finally I said, "But God, I'm just unsure still, and I don't know if I am hearing you correctly or not."

And I heard, "Where is your *faith*?! Have *faith*!"

This rebuke stung me and moved me because I was trying to learn about faith from books and the Bible, so I decided to have faith and called her. She was overjoyed. "I've been WAITING and WAITING for you to ask me! God told me you would!"

And so our engagement began. But it soon began to get rocky.

The things that had dimly given me cause for concern, like shadows of rocks under the surface, started to surface. She was an only child, and now it showed. I began to realise I was pretty much a doll, or cardboard cutout, in her life, practically speaking. Emotionally she cared for me, but as far

as I could tell, her mind was geared around her: without being at all selfish in any way, she was the one on the stage and the rest were all the supporting cast.

For example, once she invited me to make a meal with her. I spent the entire time in the kitchen being handed things with a “hold this” or “pass me the bowl” without ever a please or glance at me. I felt like a robot.

Another time, we were eating strawberries from one bowl, and I noticed she began to eat increasingly rapidly, as though she was racing me. Grab, bite, chew, swallow like a factory worker. It felt psychologically disturbing to me so I asked her why she was eating so fast and she said, without a blush, “because I want to have more of them than you.” I asked, “Are you being serious?”, thinking perhaps she had been stung by my inference and was being sarcastic, but she replied “Sure” and followed it up with some comment that was a bit hard, I can’t recall it. Perhaps she had been joking and simply resented the implication of my question, but I never saw any sign of it.

When we walked down the street together, she would never match pace together. She would walk and talk away at her own pace, and once, when I slowed to a comfortable pace, she simply sailed on by herself, talking away, unaware of how far ahead she was. When she got to 20 feet ahead I jogged to catch up.

She wasn't really rational enough for me either. Once we passed an art shop and she pointed at a sculpture and remarked how awful it was. I thought it was curious, interesting, not my style, not great, a bit odd, but not *that* bad either. I was surprised at her certainty and pointed out that whoever had made it thought it beautiful, to which she replied with a chuckle, “No. How could they? It's so awful.” That complete lack of logic gave me a little jolt, a small but real cause for concern for our being a match.

Although these things made me uncomfortable, I still loved her and felt that things were good-ish overall.

However, things really took a turn for the worse, when one day she wanted to talk about where we would live, what house we would get, and how important it was for her to get a swimming pool, and go on holidays, and this, and that... I felt I had been duped. She never talked about Jesus at all. She also urged me to get more ties. You can't live life with just one tie, she would say, and I would respond, I only need one. I felt betrayed. She was very persistent, pressing me often to buy more ties, and dress better. My anxiety crept slowly higher like a rising tide but I could not find a way to bring up my concern. How do you say, “I think you might have lied to me”?

Once, at work, she (an analyst) asked me to do some analysis which I did not know how to do. I replied, “I'm just a programmer, -” intending to continue with “so I haven't learned how to do that yet. Would you show me how?” but before I could finish, she looked annoyed and frustrated and broke out in a high-pitched baby tone and mocking voice “i'M jUsT a liTTle ProGraMMer ANd I Don'T WanT To taKe ReSpoNSibiLity For *AnYThinG*.”

That shocked me deeply. Never in my life would I ever treat anyone that way. This wasn't the woman I thought she was. I felt so hurt, I just walked away. I couldn't talk about it because everything would come out, and I just wasn't in a state to handle the discussion. Over the next few

days, I was stuck in that state, and simply did not know how to broach the subject... after all, it could mean a breaking of the engagement, to me. She could tell something was wrong and kept asking if I was okay but I kept saying I was because I didn't know how to handle the fallout of all that a "no" would entail – my reason, her explanation (which could make no difference, whatever it was), her lack of understanding of that, all the other factors worrying me… I wasn't ready. I was engaged and I felt I probably should break it off and that was like breaking my word. My shock wore off though, and in time, I did broach the mocking moment, and she apologised, having misunderstood what I was going to say.

Two things happened in quick succession next. Her father grew seriously ill and went to hospital; and on Christmas day with her mother she gave me a present of a beautiful tie. After all my refusals to have a second one it felt so forceful to me. *You will have two ties.* I was at first as shocked as if she had splashed me with cold water, while I said how nice it was (and it was), and then became quite resentful as I felt that under the pretence of a gift she was deliberately bypassing my wishes. I hated the sense of manipulation.

Then, things grew worse between us as she started mocking me again (but more mildly) here and there. I was getting emotionally worn out, and my internal alarms were going off all over the place.

Finally one day she came to me at work to say that she was going to take the afternoon off to visit her father in hospital. I said okay, and then she asked me if I would go with her. I was surprised at that because I had only met him twice, very briefly, and I said that I didn't know him well enough for it to be a worthwhile trip. She replied that she felt it was appropriate as we were engaged. I said, "But I don't actually know your father, so what would be the point of losing half a day's pay just because you want it so?" (all leave is unpaid as a contractor). She became very angry and upset, as she felt it was my duty to accompany her, but I dug my heels in – I didn't know him and I felt she was all the company he needed. In the end she left, but she never let it go.

On top of everything else this little straw was the one that broke the camel's back for me, because I feel very strongly that we ought not to invade other people's rights. I had the right not to go and felt it would not achieve anything. Her breaking the harmony of our relationship over my not following her demands on how I should spend my time and money so seriously worried me about our future ability to walk together that I felt, we just can't go on.

But this immediately set me back to thinking again, o*n the other hand, an engagement is my word, and I don't want to break my word... Or is it? Is it a promise? It's certainly a commitment. A promise is almost implied. However, the promise is only made on the wedding day. But breaking an engagement is very hard to do to her. Especially with her father so ill. And me uncertain. But it can't go on.*

Weeks went by and I was utterly miserable. Then her father passed away, and *she* became utterly miserable, weeping and saying that she needed me to spend all my spare time – and I mean, literally every minute – with her to console her. I did my best but sometimes I had to leave her on her own to get other things done, which she wasn't happy about.
(Bear in mind that this is all only one side of the story – there is probably a completely different view of things from her side. So don't judge her. But all I know is my side.)

Finally I decided, I cannot keep on like this. It's dishonest. I *have* to decide, to know, if it is right or wrong to break the engagement. I had tried to pray about it before but had been unable to get a clear answer through all the storm in my head, but now I had an idea – I would fast. But not just for a day, or a week, or a month, or even a year – I would fast UNTIL God TOLD ME whether it was right or wrong to break the engagement, or I died. And I meant it. But in order to make it last long enough and give God time, and to be able to carry on working, I decided it couldn't be a total fast, as that had a limit of 40 days. I would have a packet of powdered soup for lunch, and a spoonful of honey at bed-time. And I wouldn't tell a soul, so that God was free to use anyone.

And so I started. And I diligently stuck to it.

Then one night after three weeks when I had had my spoonful of honey and was planning to go to bed I heard, "You can eat now." I bound the devil with all my might, but heard it again. "You can eat now." I felt very uncomfortable. I bound Satan again in Jesus Name, most fiercely, but to my surprise it did no good at all. "You can eat now." In the most gentle voice. Non-commanding, non-persuading, just letting me know.

I decided to simply ignore it and started getting ready for bed. The devil could chant it while I slept, for all I cared. "You can eat now." So sweet. Pyjamas. "You can eat now." Finally, it was so sweet, so gentle, I cracked. I turned around to face God and I said, "God this sounds *so* just like you, I can only believe that it *is* you saying this to me. It is so peaceful, so gentle, so sweet. I don't believe the devil could ever talk to me in this way. But you never answered my prayer. But I really with all my heart believe it's you speaking to me, so... please forgive me if this is a mistake... but I am going to obey and eat something – but it's only out of obedience, not hunger. I love you and I just want to do what You want."

Then I heard, "But only eat a little, don't eat too much. Your stomach is not used to it." So I said "Okay, thank you", ate a little, and went to bed.

The next morning my Mom phoned me. "Anthony, I have to let you know something very important. I don't know what it means, and I don't mean to upset you, but this morning, when Dad opened the Bible to read, he had a vision of you and G, and with it came a whole lot of negative words beginning with D. Like disaster, damage, divorce, and others which I don't want to name. I'm sorry if this upsets you – "

"No it doesn't Mom! It's an answer to prayer!" and I explained. She seemed a bit bewildered, but finally hung up the phone knowing that somehow everything was alright.

Now I knew why God had told me to eat the night before: he wanted me to know that this message was from him.

When I next met G she was crying very much again and I just felt I couldn't tell her straight away, it would be awful. And the next time we met, the same, and perhaps another time. But then one day she seemed quite calm, and dreading to think of the tears I would again cause but aware that I couldn't pretend for ever, as gently and apologetically as I could I let her know that over the months since we had become engaged I had felt increasingly like we were not suited to each other, and that it had come to a point where I felt certain about it. That I was very sorry to tell her at such a time but I had to break our engagement. She was mortified.

She wept, and said, “How could you tell me this at this time, when I am grieving for my dad?” I tried to explain that I really had had no choice as to the timing, but she wouldn't listen. She remonstrated that God had told her I would ask her to marry me and that I had said I had felt led to ask...

But I had since learned how the devil speaks to us (never gently, always forcefully) and told her I felt certain I had been misled by Satan. She doubted it very much, and was very traumatised by the breakup, and I felt absolutely terrible.

Over the next years she struggled to let go of me, despite my praying for her and trying to explain to her. She felt angry with me only for a short time but then came to a grieving peace about it, and we became friendly again, though not spending time with one another.

After a year, G started seeing a psychologist to help her get over it, and I decided that it might be helpful for G if I saw the same psychologist. Having two views was bound to help her see what G needed. And besides I had a few questions to ask her myself.

I think it helped G. Ultimately, though I think she never got over the scar, she did in the end marry someone else, and happily ever after, to my joy and relief. Just goes to show how it takes two to tango.

CHAPTER 13. DREAMS

Incidentally, during the time with the psychologist, she told me that we can change our dreams. I was stunned at this news. Ever since I had been a young child I had been utterly and cruelly tortured in nightmares, particularly a big black hairy wolf person called Oupa Golla who would chase me up tall skyscrapers and follow me over the top of them so that I was forced to jump off them and would wake with that sick, sick falling feeling and a scream.

Now, my mom has never used an alarm clock in her life. She uses a little trick her mom or dad taught her, which is after you get into bed, to bump your head on the pillow the number of times of the hour you want to wake, and tell yourself to wake yourself at that time. I went home and decided that when I went to bed I would bump my head on the pillow and tell myself to create, in my dream, the biggest, baddest piece of whatever weaponry was the most desirable at the point in time I was being attacked – like an atom bomb, or flame-thrower, whatever I needed.

That night, the demons of my nightmares came, and after a few seconds of starting to panic I remembered I could create a weapon, and so I did. I think it was a nuke, in the end. And I just nuked the bastards (beg pardon), and went back to sleep. In the morning I rejoiced at the victory!

The next night I did the same thing. And the next night, as soon as they came, I was so ready for them! No fear! Part of me realised that opening the door to suspense in your dream, as one would do in an exciting story, opens the door for them to make it into fear, and even in my dream I realised how evil fear was, and that I would no longer allow it any place in my life at all. I resisted it with all the mighty force of God-all-powerful-in-me, and just BLASTED those demons.

The next night, I didn't bang my head, as I felt I had this, and the instant even just a whiff of fear tried to enter into my dream, I laid about me with some kind of weapon that just dealt *blows* to the enemy and to *fear* itself. I was immortal, all-powerful in Christ and all-holy, and fear had no place and no power here at all. I was now on a hair-trigger far-beyond-proportional fear-vaporising response level.

Since that night I have never had another nightmare. That was 30 years ago.

Subsequent to the nightmare victory, I did have a few dreams where it felt like much more low-key efforts were made to alarm me more generally. I directed myself to treat those appearances just as harshly, and then they too stopped. I am now convinced from my dreams experience that somehow we are in contact with the spirit world in our sleep, and that when I destroyed the monsters I was literally hurting evil spirits. It feels to me as though they are afraid.

Now every night before I go to sleep, I bind all spirits that are not of God, and command them not to affect me or my family this night and day, and then I pray, “Father, if any should attempt to do so, I ask you to judge them as you judged the spirits in Noah's time; and send them to the pit to wait there till Judgment Day.”

Very rarely I have been woken by the very realistic sound in my head of a knock at the door, the doorbell, or a stressful dream. I make sure to bind the spirits and ask God to send angels to apprehend them on account of my command to them, and send them to the pit. The cost to Satan of losing demons is then too high for him to keep up the attacks.

Another reason I think we are in touch with the spirit world in our dreams is because we can dream the future.

One time I had deja vu so strongly that I knew who in the group of four including me was next going to speak after the current speaker finished, and it was a couple of long sentences, entirely unpredictable. I stayed quiet to see, and sure enough, word for word, tone for tone, they said it exactly as I remembered it. It felt exactly as if I had dreamed it. Now God is outside of time, so he knows the end from the beginning. (This doesn't affect our free will, in the same way as knowing what you chose yesterday doesn't affect your free will.) So in some way we can pick up from spirit to spirit the future, and dream about it.

One morning just as I started to awaken I became aware of a very light whispering in my head and as I listened to it I realised it was saying negative things non-stop, like, “you're such a failure, you're never going to make it, you're bound to lose, you're an idiot, you're going nowhere, you can't succeed, you're useless, you're -” and suddenly, as I wakened, it stopped dead. It was telepathic, in my head. And then it said, “:) Good morning! :)” in a light, bright and cheerful voice, pretty much mimicking Jesus as best it could, but too artificially.

Then I felt like I was told, never to speak of this to anyone. That felt more like God, but I can't believe God would say that.

This showed me how important your thoughts are, and your inner conversation to yourself. It affects you like a magnet stroking iron. Never say anything negative to anyone, including yourself. This reminds me of Jesus saying, If you call anyone a fool, you are in danger of the Judgment. And if you call someone Raca (which means idiot), you are in danger of hellfire. I think this is because words impact our spirit which drives us along in that direction.

(I should interject here that I do call myself a fool but not in the above sense. I just completely lack common sense. It’s just an observation of a weakness of mine. I’m not a fool in the sense of understanding and wanting to be righteous.)

One other dream I had about this time was very interesting. Through it, I realised that sometimes we present questions to ourselves through clever third party analogies so that we don’t see the biased picture involving ourselves.

It was after WWIII and we were all living underground owing to radiation on the surface. I was being taken on a tour of a hospital facility in a huge cavern with giant pipes on the ceiling. To my left and right were rows and rows of beds with people being kept alive by machines. Here was one who had no heart, here one who had no kidneys or liver. And here on my right was a particularly gruesome one, someone who was literally hollowed out – they had nothing in their torso but pipes and little machines. And the tour guide remarked with some pride in them, how all these people were voluntary donors. They had voluntarily donated their healthy organs to other people, so that those people could live healthy, free lives.

I woke very disturbed at that, and worked it out. Surely it was wrong to simply swap the problem from person A to person B? Not talking about a personal sacrifice for someone loved, but as a general practice, was it morally good to simply donate? Surely it was not right. Nothing was gained.

Now the psychologist had said you sometimes tackle things in your dreams in this way, so I examined it as an analogy to my life. And then it hit me. I was spending all my spare time helping friends with their problems. And leaving none for myself to get closer to God or grow. It wasn't right. So I resolved to spend more time with God.

All this time I was still reading my Bible and Christian books, but I still struggled as ever with my three big questions, how to pray, how to have faith, and how to talk to God.

CHAPTER 14. A JACKIE PULLINGER MEETING

It was also during these years that H and her sister, all forgiven, told me that Jackie Pullinger was holding a meeting in Cape Town, in their suburb, would I take them? I readily agreed, as I had thought she was in Hong Kong and would love to hear her.

At the meeting, Jackie spoke for a while, and then said, we will now have a time of prayer where everyone gathers in small groups to pray for each other. Let's clear away all the chairs and make a lot of space. So we did that, and then split up into little groups randomly, standing around praying for each other.

Now, at this time I was practising getting myself out of God's way – i.e. not speaking any advice unless God told me to, and in general, when helping anyone, not to do anything ministering-wise without God's leading.

So I didn't join a group. Instead, I stood where I was and said to God, "What would you like me to do, God?" He indicated a big open space on the floor and said, "go stand there", so I went and stood in the middle of the space, on my own, and waited.

After about five minutes, a larger group had kind of drifted over into the big space, and God told me to go join it. There was an old lady in the centre with about six people praying for her, laying hands on her. I joined in, reaching over to lay my fingers lightly on a place on her shoulder that was still free, and quietly praying in tongues. After about a minute or two, the man to my left paused the praying and asked her, "Do you feel any better? Has the back pain left?"
She replied, "No."
So he said, "Ok, we'll carry on praying then."
A few moments after we resumed, a girl opposite me spoke up. She said, very firmly, "I *see* you, you evil spirit! Don't think you can hide from me!!" and then God said to me very clearly, "Now you cast it out."

Well, I had a lot of knowledge of casting out demons. First of all it was in the Bible, and secondly, there were plenty of missionary stories from Thailand which I knew of. One which had struck me very much was of a missionary who had seen a woman coming down the street foaming at the mouth and raving. Recognising it was a demon, he stopped her, and said, "In the name of Jesus, evil spirit, I command you to leave this woman." The woman stopped, looked at him, then pointed at another woman across the street, and said, "May I enter her?" The missionary, confused and surprised, said "Yes!" And immediately the woman across the street started raving and the woman in front of him was perfectly normal. This account always bothered me because I thought, *why on earth did he say yes!*

And from all my reading books of people's lives who had been changed by God and being utterly confident of the power of the name of Jesus, I was very comfortable with the idea of commanding it to leave, so I calmly said, "In the name of Jesus, spirit, I command you to leave this woman."

For a moment – or perhaps two, or even three – nothing happened.
Then the third weirdest thing ever happened to me.

God and I rose up from my inside and up through the top of my head and out and across and down in through the top of the woman's head and reached deep down into her belly and *grabbed* that spirit with both hands and *yoinked* him up and right out of her and *threw* him out across the floor.

Then I realised I had been shouting, "GET *OUT* OF THERE! You have NO *RIGHT* to be in there!"
In alarm at the disturbance I had made, I looked up to the platform where Jackie still stood, watching over the people. I was especially concerned, because earlier during the meeting, while we were seated and had our heads bowed, a woman in the audience had started wailing a bit and saying some religious sounding prayer, Oh God, have mercy, blah blah blah, and Jackie's voice had cut across her like a knife, saying quietly but very firmly "BE quiet!" in a tone that had commanded obedience. I had figured at the time that it was probably an evil spirit, because they do love to disturb meetings like that.

But now I was the disturbance. So I looked up at Jackie and she at the same time looked quickly at our group, but then she turned back again apparently at peace. But that was just a quick glance of mine. It took only half a second. I turned back to the woman and realised that she was falling over like a felled tree, no attempt made to break her fall, and saying F-ck! F-ck! F-ck! F-ck! F-ck! F-ck! over and over until she hit the ground.
I was very alarmed. *Was she ok?* I attempted to check but the leader of the group reassured me and said, "She's fine. It often happens this way."

After the meeting I asked Jackie, "How do I know what God wants me to do?" and she replied, "Just begin where you are." I understood this to mean, just keep walking with God and growing and he will lead you. It's not a big mission acceptance. He knows what good works to give you to do.

One day, some time after the Jackie Pullinger meeting, arriving at the living church, I greeted a girl I knew and asked how she was, and she said, "Not very well, I have this terrible headache."
I asked if I could pray for her, she said yes, so I laid my hand on her head, and thought what to pray. I decided I should command it to leave, so I used the same method God had used in the meeting. I said with the same authority, "Headache! GET OUT of there! You have NO RIGHT to be there! In Jesus Name" and the girl looked up at me with a big, relieved smile and said, "So *that's* how it's done!" I said, "Is it gone?" and she replied happily, "Completely."

Around this time, I can't recall when, a friend of mind asked me if I wanted to go with them to a prophecy class. *A strange idea*, I thought to myself. *What can you teach men about when God chooses to speak or what he chooses to say? It's all of him.* But I decided to go along anyway and see what it was about. Well, I soon realised it wasn't about the God end of it, it was about the man end of it.

Very few people realise that much of God's dealings with men works like a water pipeline connected to a tap. The water may be turned on at the water supply but nothing will come out until the tap is opened. Our free will is *inviolable* and even if we are suffering God cannot take a shortcut to reach us. At the very least, someone somewhere must pray for you. God has woken people up to pray in tongues about what they know not, and only weeks later do they discover that at that time of day, something was happening somewhere else for which the prayer had been needed.

Even Jesus said,

> “The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: **pray** ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest.” Luke 10:2

Anyway, in the class the teacher explained how we could wait for God’s answer to a question, or for a word, and that it may come in any form. For example, he said, you may get a thought unbidden coming to your mind, or a picture that means something. You need to recognise it, and not dismiss it because it seems like a stray thought, or because you can’t understand it.

Then we broke up into pairs and asked God for a word for each other. When it came to my turn, I was sitting with an old lady and I asked for a word for her and waited, with my mind blank. However, nothing much happened. Into my mind’s eye immediately and briefly came a picture of a young boy playing happily as small children do, which didn’t have any meaning at all, and that was it. A random thought I had probably made up. I waited, and waited, and waited, until she grew restless, but nothing meaningful came. Looking up, I apologised and said, “I’m sorry, nothing’s come to mind, except this one picture of a small boy playing.”

Her eyes lit up. “Was he happy? Was he playing?” she asked.
“Yes, yes!” I replied.
“Oh, that’s wonderful!” she said, and seeing my puzzlement, she explained. Now unfortunately I cannot remember the details of her story, because my memory has latched onto the picture of the small boy and let the rest go, but overall her story was one of immense pain and regret and not having brought her son up in the right way, and her asking the Lord to look after him. If I recall correctly, she did not have time for him, and then when he was an adult he passed away, and she did not know if he was scarred and/or saved, and he had been weighing on her heart for years as she prayed for him. This picture was to her an instantly understandable communication from the Lord as saying, I have him here with me and he has not missed out on his childhood.

After that, slowly over these years I grew into hearing God quite comfortably at times. And God has spoken to me very, very often. I have even had conversations with God which I have initiated, where I speak then he speaks then I answer then he answers. Not as clear as day, mind you, or as conversationally as I wish for, but still very clear.

Arriving home one day, as I put my key into the lock (what is it with putting keys into locks), God spoke to me:
“Anthony, I want to teach you something about judgment. Whenever you use the words *should* or *shouldn't* have, or *ought* to or *ought not* to have done something, you are judging them for transgressing the *law*.
“But the law is merciless. It only condemns a person and makes them feel bad.
“I have set you free from the law. I don't want you to bring the condemnation of the law onto people.”
I asked, “But how then do we address a wrongdoing?”
and he replied, “You can mention it, but only mention the *cost* to you. Don't say they should or shouldn’t have done what they did. If you mention only the cost, then they can repay or make it up to you.
“For example, if you have to go to the airport and ask a friend to take you there, but they arrive too late for you to get there in time to catch your flight, don't say, 'You should have been here on time. Now I am going to miss my flight.'
“Instead just say, 'I think I am going to miss my flight.'”

CHAPTER 15. CALL BEV!

One of the meetings I had attended in Stellenbosch near the end of my time there was a Bible study group organised and hosted by a girl named Beverly.

She was friendly and intelligent but I soon realised that she was earnestly looking for a relationship. So much so that I wondered if even the Bible study had been organised as a way to meet guys. Not in a bad way, just innocently reaching out in legitimate ways, you know? But she was craving that relationship. She was very needy. So needy that for a moment I even contemplated asking her out on a few dates just to cheer her up – there was nothing wrong with her, she was pretty, face covered in freckles but in a cheerful way, very slightly plump, but not at all fat, so she was bound to find a guy sooner or later – but thank God I immediately realised that I wouldn't be able to do that temporarily and it would only hurt her in the long run.

However, it made me feel uncomfortable, being aware that she was so hoping for a relationship, and I didn't really enjoy the Bible study group because of that, so when it disbanded I only felt relief. Or I may have left it, I can't recall. I felt sorry for her, though, and I prayed a few times for her, asking God to bring her the right guy.

Now, a few years later, I was walking into my room and God suddenly said to me, out of the blue, “Anthony. Call Bev. It's important.”

At first I was, okay, no problem, but then when I reached for the phone the thought hit me and I paused: *What do I say? She is so desperate for a guy, she is for sure going to take this call as a sign of interest. So I really don't want to say, Hi Bev, how are you? and when she asks me why I called just say “to see how you are…” that’s interest, that is...*
or even worse, “I don't know... I have nothing to say…” – that’s too ridiculous...
or “God asked me to call you” seems weird...
I wrestled with how to open the call for perhaps half an hour, before I gave up for now and said to myself, I will come back to this, this evening.
Unfortunately, my memory being what it is, I clean forgot.

A couple of weeks later, out of the blue God again spoke to me. “Anthony. Call Bev! It's really important! Don't delay! Don't forget!”

But again I wrestled with the embarrassed ideas of what on earth do I SAY? Let me do a better job thinking it through...
Hi Bev, it's Anthony here, from the Bible study group we had in your flat some years ago. Do you remember me?
Oh yes, Hiiii! I remember you! What can I do for you?
Uh.... uh.... nothing, I just wanted to call you.
Ohhhh! That's so nice!
Yeah, and, uh....
Would you like to come round for a visit?
Uh… yes? Or *Uh... no thanks?*
It was too much for me. I couldn't face it, so once again, after much time wrestling with it, I left it for later.
But once again, I clean forgot.

Then, a couple of weeks later, God spoke to me again, very seriously. “Anthony, you really have to call Bev! Just do it! Now!” Gently, but seriously.
“Ok, Lord, but I've just got to figure out what to say.”
“Ok, but do NOT forget! It’s really important! Make sure you do it now, don’t leave it for later!”
So as soon as I had a moment, I tried really hard to figure out what to say. Since it was so important and urgent, for a moment I considered just diving in: phone her and just say Hi and muddle through. But immediately the thought came, *and what do you say when she asks you the reason for the call? What do you do if she believes you have an interest in her now? She might be hard to say no to without hurting her.*
And I fell back from the phone and tried again my damndest to think of what to say, but just could not do it. So I said,
“Look God, I'm having a lot of trouble figuring what to say – I *have* to pause for now but this evening I really will do it – even if I can't figure out what to say.”
“Okay… make *sure* you remember.”
But guess what.
I forgot. Again. The third time.

After that, God didn’t ask me again.

A few weeks later, a friend called, who also knew Bev. I asked her, “Oh hey, how is Bev, by the way?”

She replied, “Oh... didn't you hear? They found her body washed up on the shore. She parked her car down near the rocks some miles past Gordon's Bay, swallowed a bunch of sleeping pills, and swam out to sea.”

I couldn’t speak.

I don’t recall the rest of that call, I only recall dwelling on the fact that her life was now lost on account of my disobedience.

Perhaps of all the things I have done wrong in my life – and there are so many – this may be the worst. But whatever I have done, is done. There's no going back and changing it. I could only learn from it.

I apologised profusely to God, and I made a solemn promise to him that from that day forth, if he said jump, I would jump. No questions asked, no time for hesitation.

And indeed, now, if I feel God might be telling me to do something, I'm on it like a shot, regardless of how embarrassed I will feel or how much trouble it is or how little I can see the reason for it. In fact it seems to me that whenever God asks you to do something, there is always some expectation of embarrassment to overcome.

(I am reminded now of the girl from the living student church who was told by God to close her car window on a hot day. She was very puzzled, and did not do it. Then she rode past a garden sprinkler which was timed to perfection to keep spraying water into her car as she drove past!)

CHAPTER 16. GOD WAKES MY FLATMATE

Over the preceding years I read three books that particularly helped me with getting to know God in spirit and in truth (see at the end of Appendix A for more details): The Release of the Spirit, by Watchman Nee, The Christian's Secret of a Happy Life, by Hannah Whitall Smith, and Experiencing the Depths of Jesus Christ, by Mme. Jean Guyon. These are must-reads for any Christian who wants to know God in spirit.

I also read something by some guy called, I think, Charles someone (Capps?), who said he would go kneel and pray by himself and ask God to be present, and would say, "It's no use hiding from me, I know you're here" and just wait until God showed up. Well, that felt very sacrilegious to me, but I understood it much better later. It's not for God that he said it, but for himself.

One day I was reflecting on what Charles had said, and thought, *you know, I've tried everything. I've memorised those chapters of Matthew, but I couldn't keep it up. I pray and read the bible every day. But I still don't know how to pray – what's* importunate *(Luke 11:8) mean, like, you beg?* (Later I looked It up, it means having no other way, needing the help in a desperate, you've-got-to-help-me attitude – in fact ironically my prayer to be delivered from smoking was importunate, but I didn't realise this at the time. I now realise it's that your will is intensely involved.) *I still don't really understand what faith is – it's more than trust, but it's also more than believing you believe. People have died trying that. And I still don't really walk and talk with God, or know what he wants to do with my life.*

So then I decided, *what if I get up early to pray*. That seems to be a real source of closeness to God that all famous Christians have done. I asked myself *what time*, and thought I *really want to be as committed as humanly possible*. I knew of many Christians that got up at 5am, and their lives, while good, weren't filled with miracles and the ability to talk to God. So I decided 4am. But then I had a little worry. S*urely there are quite a few Christians who get up at 4am... and I haven't heard of any being able to talk to God in modern times... so really, if I want to give everything to God and walk and talk with him, it should be 3am. But then I won't be able to work during the day.... I know what – I will pray from 3-4am and go back to bed.*

So I did. I followed Charles' advice and Madame Guyon's, a French woman from hundreds of years ago who spoke also about not swamping God with words, but opening your heart to him and waiting for him, with just a word or two now and then to keep your focus on him.

I set my alarm for 3am, woke, got out of bed, knelt, and told God, "God, I want to give myself to you, and meet with you. I know you're with me, but I want to talk to you. So I'm going to just wait for you." After a few minutes nothing happened, so I just copied Charles and said, "God, I know you're here. It's no use hiding from me" as respectfully as I could, and unnoticeably to me at the time, a peace quietly began to fill the room. As I hadn't noticed, after another few minutes, I quietly said, "Lord, I love you. I'm waiting for you". Unnoticeably the peace grew. It gave me strength though I still wasn't conscious of it. And so minute by minute, while the peace rose ever so slightly, little by little, I spoke gently, occasionally, assuring the Lord that I wanted to be with him, and would wait patiently for him… but I began to feel bad, too: as I said "I love you" my heart was struck with the realisation that I didn't love him all that well… I felt bad, in fact, very sorry, and apologised… and as I apologised, the realisation grew greater, just how cold my heart actually was, and how deceitful, so I apologised for that too… and my eyes started tearing up with the

realisation of the shame of it. The longer I waited the more I realised how ungodly I was, until the tears ran as I apologised quietly. In fact I spent the rest of the perhaps 40 minutes of that hour weeping to God for what I was. But there was a holy sense of peace and love there that encouraged me and forgave me, and I realised, despite me, this was the presence of God. I was very grateful to him for showing up, and said so, when I got back into bed to go sleep at 4am.

Next day, the same happened.

Next day, the same again.

But on that third day, in the morning, my flat mate said to me, “Are you praying in the middle of the night?”

I was surprised, because my our doors had been shut and my weeping was dead quiet, simply tears rolling down my face.
I said, “Yes?” and he replied,
“Because for the last couple of nights I have been woken with the strong presence of God in my room.”

This so put me off, as I did not want to disturb him, I refrained from doing it again.

With hindsight I realised that from the moment I knelt and asked God to be with me, he moved to be with me. I just didn’t notice it at first because it was so gentle and gradual.

CHAPTER 17. THE REST OF FAITH

While I still did not know what faith itself was, (many believe they believe, without results, or believe they believe with tragic results, but when you have faith you *know* with *results* – so what is that? And how do you get it?) nevertheless over the last two years I had really learned about the *rest* of faith:

> Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. – Matthew 11:28
>
> For we which have believed do enter into rest. – Hebrews 4:3b
>
> For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his. Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief. For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. – Hebrews 4:10-12

The only labour we do spiritually is to enter into his rest, through belief and trust – empowered by the Word, for faith comes by hearing, and hearing, by the Word of God.

However, I did not know how to do it. And the biggest thing I wanted it for was to know what God wanted me to do with my life.

Many, many, many times I had, and would continue to have for years, these incredibly frustrating short conversations with God that went something like this:

"God, what do you want me to do with my life?"
"Why?"
"Why? Because I want to do what's right. Your will."
"Why?"
"Why?? Because it's the right thing to do."
Silence.

Or
"God, what do you want me to do with my life?"
"Why?"
"Why? Because I want to do what You want me to do."
"Why?"
"Why?? Because I love you and want to please you."
"Why?"
"Isn't it the right thing to do?"
Silence.

Each time, I would evolve in my understanding and dig deeper into my motivations. Finally one day I realised, like Job, I was afraid. Yes, I genuinely loved God and wanted to please him. Yes, I sincerely wanted to do his will. Yes, I wanted my life to be dedicated to him and do whatever he wanted for the Kingdom. But *underneath* it all also ran a separate, hidden desire for self-

protection. Every time I asked, I was asking for two things: first, my mission; and second, my protection.

So when I realised that, I turned to God and handed over the self-protection. I told him that whatever happened to me that was his will, I would be fine with it.

And then I asked him again, “So, what do you want me to do with my life?” And he didn’t answer. :) So funny!

In later years I was led to realise that it isn’t about your life mission. It’s about your relationship with God. Its not the *what*, it’s the *who*. You love him freely and give yourself to him in your free time, without worrying about what you are supposed to do. He will tell you, when you need it. Otherwise you are free to live life as you think best. He will steer without you realising. Focus on *loving him*. *That’s* the goal.

But going back to those earlier years, through Watchman Nee and Jackie Pullinger and Jean Guyon I had learned about powering down the flesh-run soul and leaving it in Park while the spirit runs on and leads the soul and body instead. It really is a very difficult thing to describe, but it’s incredibly powerful.

When I first discovered this I decided to zip my lip while counselling people, and letting only what God wanted said, be said.

I found it worked extremely well. You just listen to them, and then check your understanding, and then listen again and feedback to check again, until you have a really clear understanding. (It is an incredible technique for arguing as well. Try to see how the other person might be right. Stand on their side and really listen, try to understand, and then ask them about the things that still bother you. They will usually explain them so that you understand, or, in explaining, realise what they have been missing.)

What amazed me most when people came to me for advice was how many times God never gave me *anything at all* to say, and yet, as soon as I had finished getting a clear understanding of what they were going through, they would simply get up and say, “Thank you! You've helped me so much!” And yet I had never uttered one word of advice or explanation!

One day a girl in my fellowship group came to visit me, a slight, Swedish blonde, and she just wanted some advice. But during the course of having tea she shared that she had a really painful back due to muscular tension and asked me if I would be so kind as to massage her back. I glanced at the Lord and he nodded ok, so I said okay. She lay face down on my bed and suggested that the easiest way would be for me to kneel over her. It seemed a bit intimate to me but I knew nothing about massaging, so I did that. To my surprise she pulled up her shirt over her head and off somehow, I can’t recall how, and she undid her bra strap. I had intended to massage her back with her shirt down so I was fractionally disturbed at that but it did make sense for a massage. So for a time I massaged her back, until she said it felt quite a lot better, and then to my utter astonishment, turned over underneath me, exposing her breasts. I was astonished and at a loss, but noticed an artery in her neck pulsing and her breathing was rapid.

To avoid fleshly thinking I rested in the Lord Jesus who was right with me, in whom I was 'bubbled', so I was secure in him, and said, “Lord, what do I do now? What do I say? I don't want to hurt her feelings” and he replied “It's okay, she won't be hurt. Just tell her she can get dressed now.” So I said, “Ok, great, I'll get off you so you can get dressed” and she was fine.

The reason I relate this story is because years before I would no doubt have considered, or entertained for a moment, what was very likely an invitation and so opened the door and been caught in the web of temptation. Don’t misunderstand my reluctance with H, that was all theoretical discussion to the end, confused with thoughts of marriage. But this was all practical. I’m still a red-blooded male with all the desire that God has given men to contend with and control and use as a blessing in marriage not a curse. And I fell (kind of accidentally) after H but there was nothing to learn from that so I haven’t told that story. But with Christ beside me, around me, in me, I was effectively anointed with the power of God, and so it was easy to be holy, or more accurately, to let him be holy, and leave the puppet of the flesh lying dead.

Meantime I loved going to the living student church. Healings happened every Sunday. One girl who was missing a piece of bone in her ear could hear again, and when she went to the doctor to prove it, he couldn't understand it, because the bone was still missing, so it was scientifically impossible to hear, yet she could still hear. She told my wife it had a profound impact on her because she realised God was the connection between those bones, so she had better stay really close to him. Another person got the ability to play the piano, in an instant.

Years later, the healings dried up, and I didn't know why (but found out later the godly pastor had been tempted into sin). One Sunday I was at the back of the auditorium, and I was really missing the presence of God, so I lifted my arms out wide and up and looked up to heaven and just begged God to reveal his glory in the temple. Healings started to happen. I remember thanking him so much, for ten minutes I continued to worship him with my arms out wide and up, and finally I received a kind of peace – like a thank you from the Lord – and so I dropped my arms and looked down again, at the stage below, and the pastor was looking directly up at me with a kindly look in his eyes, as if he knew what had happened.

There was a worship leader whom I loved as such because she always took the risk to speak out what God told her, and she played sensitively and sincerely, and would often have beautiful words from God, and sometimes an entire song. Once a prophet visited our church who had the gift of discerning of spirits, and he looked at her, and said something to the effect of ‘I know it's hard, to give of yourself like you do in worship’, and she burst into tears.

One day she had a prophetic word that for some reason, though I felt it was not addressed to me personally, has never left me: “My little child, walking before me is not some tightrope experience, but I give you the freedom to walk tender-hearted before me.”

Doesn’t that set you free? It showed me how trying to walk with God isn’t trying to get things done exactly right, or following a script, it’s a relationship, where we can trust God to guide, cover and look after us as we walk freely with him. Just as we let our baby toddler learn how to walk, and through the process they grow.

(Two of the gifts of the spirit: *Prophecy* is God talking through someone, a *word of knowledge* is God sharing some facts.

Actually, let me share all nine here. I have a feeling someone is going to need this.

> But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another diverse kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will. – 1 Corinthian 12:7-11

1. The word of wisdom: guidance from God
2. The word of knowledge: information given to you that you couldn't know otherwise.
3. Faith: with the gift of faith whatever you have faith for comes to pass. I know of only one person who has had this gift for more than a particular moment.
4. The gifts of healing: from experience, a person can be given a gift of healing a condition, for example, arthritis – whenever they pray for healing of arthritis, there is an instant healing.
5. The working of miracles: I've not seen this in operation. I guess the person with this gift can walk on water or turn water into wine or command it to rain or not rain, such as the two witnesses in Revelation?
6. Prophecy: relaying a message on God's behalf
7. Discerning of spirits: a very interesting one, the ability to see spirits, not only angelic or demonic but also people's spirits, which I have seen in action several times in both categories.
Note this is not the gift of "discernment". It is much more specific than that. You literally see spirits with your spirit.
8. Diverse kinds of tongues: using your spirit to speak in another language.
9. The interpretation of tongues: God giving the translation of something that was said in another language.

I also visited a Vineyard church around this time, and on two occasions an odd thing happened to me.

On the first occasion, I was sitting on my seat listening when suddenly it felt like God was sitting next to me and jogged me in the ribs, saying, "Isn't that funny?" Now I can tell you that when God thinks something is funny, you can bet your bottom dollar it *is* funny! I was immediately struck by how funny it was, and simply could not help laughing my head off for quite some time. I don't know the purpose of it, but it was most certainly God.

The second time, I was kneeling on the floor in earnest prayer when (unbeknownst to me at the time) a pastor standing behind me began blowing gently down at me. All I knew at the time was an increasing sense of relaxation and the presence of the Spirit. I began to melt irresistibly, relaxing more and more and slowly sinking to the floor in a well of peace. As I was lying on the floor, I heard the Spirit saying to me, over and over, as though he really wanted me to understand this with all my heart: "You don't have to do right… you don't have to do wrong…" over and over.

I found the "you don't have to do right" part odd at first, because of course we do. And I found the "you don't have to do wrong" part odd as well, because of course we don't want to do wrong. But as I lay there pondering the meaning of these two statements coming so gently over and over at

me, and asked myself, *So I don't* have *to do anything?* I realised what it meant. We are set free from the law. To be driven to do right is to be under the law, under the reign of religious practice. In Christ, our focus is not on making sure we are doing what's *right* as the priority, but on *living* out the *love* that is in us. I'm not saying we don't care what is right, but only that we don't *live* by doing right. Love inspires our actions, not the law. The Holy Spirit is able to bring the law to mind if we're making a (loving) mistake. Know the law, but live by love. If you act selflessly and lovingly, you will be in the Spirit, and thus keep the law far better, in Spirit and in truth, in a sincere, alive way.

> Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt **love** the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt **love** thy neighbour as thyself. **On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets**. – Matthew 22:37-40

So it's not the dry method of looking up the law continuously and judging what is right and what is wrong, but simply living in love.

Around this time a friend asked me to house-sit for them in their flat on the slopes of Lion's Head.

One day a man aged about 30 with a young lad by his side knocked on the door.

He asked me something like, "Can I speak to you about Jehovah?" and I answered, "I already know God, but thank you" whereupon he replied "How do you know?"

I thought of several answers but settled on "I talk to him and he talks to me."

He sneered a bit and confidently challenged me with "Okay, then, what's he telling you now?"

Oo-er, my heart went, *I don't know if my communication with God is as reliable as all that! But I don't want to let God down... and he does talk to me!* But I didn't want to play with God or test God as the Bible calls it, either, so after considering, I replied, "I'll ask him and see if he wants to say anything." Then I closed my eyes and made my spirit calm and said, "God, do you want to tell me anything here?" and he replied, "Tell him, he is deceived or deceiving."

I was a little worried at that because of the rudeness of calling someone deceiving, but deceived was also an option… so I opened my eyes again and looked at him and said, "He says you are deceived or deceiving."

Never in my life have I seen such an unexpected reaction. His eyes opened wide, instantly, in shock. His jaw dropped. He looked absolutely stunned. Not offended, just struck speechless, as if the Lord had hit a target. I wondered if perhaps he had just been saying to the lad as they came up the stairs, "Now lad, remember that some of these people are deceived but some are deceiving" and God's choice of words coming so soon afterwards may have acted like an arrow of conviction to the heart. After a couple of moments of just standing there gaping, he grabbed the lad's shoulder, saying "Come, we're leaving", turned on his heel and walked back down the stairs again, not bothering to visit more flats upstairs.

Very curious.

I had a feeling the words might be in the Bible so I looked them up and found them in Timothy, in reverse order:

> But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived. – 2 Timothy 3:13

A year or so later I went on little soul-winning trips with peers in my church and we also went out in twos. The idea was that one would pray in tongues under their breath while the other spoke to the people we met. We also had found out that if you *show* people what the Bible says, in print, rather than just telling them, it had great effect. We usually showed them these four verses:

> For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God – Romans 3:23
> (We all sin)
>
> For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. – Romans 6:23
> (We all deserve to die the second death – we have earned it; but God has a gift for us of eternal life – this is a gift, we cannot earn it)
>
> But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name. – John 1:12
> (To receive the gift, you receive Jesus, believing on him to save you and be your Lord)
>
> Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. – Revelation 3:20
> (Open the door by asking him to save you and he will come in)

We'd knock on doors in the evenings, especially in the student residences. I went on two trips. On my first, I was the one to speak in tongues, while my friend spoke. We visited four students, and each of them gave their life to Jesus! I was amazed. On my second trip, I did the talking, but I noticed my partner was not praying in tongues but just sitting. We visited four people again, but it was all fruitless. I had tried reminding my partner how important it was to pray but he just didn't get it. On a separate occasion I picked up a hitch-hiker and tried to witness to her but as I was driving was only able to *describe* what the Bible said, and her immediate response was, "So I go to hell just for one little lie?" – and I could feel that the power of the Word was missing to destroy demonic thoughts. Yet, on another occasion I spoke to a Jewess in Sea Point and she was completely open to the whole gospel message and accepted it all as true – yet at the end, when I asked if she wanted to pray to accept Jesus as her Lord, she just persisted in saying she can't, because she's a Jew. Even though Jesus was a Jew who came to the Jews. He was despised and rejected by them, but the Bible says this was in order for the message to spread to the Gentiles, and in the last days the Jews' eyes would be opened. I had thought, this might be such a time. How I wished for a friend to be praying then.

I also went on a little mission trip with a group from the church to the Cape Town Waterfront, wearing bright red T-shirts saying on the front in big bold white rounded letters, "Jesus loves you" and on the back "so I love you". I found them very bright, but cheerful, so although I was a little doubtful, on the whole I felt they made sense. We all spread out individually to witness. I met two girls who were willing to listen and shared the bad and good news with them, and the older was

not interested, but the other was, and I led her through the same prayer my Mom had led me through, and when we were done, I said, “Now, you may not feel any different, but I can promise you that you have a new heart now, and Jesus is living within you.”

“OH! but I *do*!” she replied, breathing out the “do” in such a long breath of clear wonder and joy that it touched my heart with amazement because of how sincerely and sweetly struck she was with Jesus.

I then told her that all she had to do was listen to his leading and not grieve him in her heart. I was very reluctant to invite her to go to a church, even though she was a complete baby in Christ and clearly knew nothing, because I could literally feel her friend was *very* anti within, and would likely afterwards say, ‘He was only gathering converts to his religion.’ I felt it was more important that she retained an assurance of her salvation, and I trust her to the Lord, than to allow the enemy through a close friend to sow a seed of doubt that might get between her and the Lord. So, painful as it was to abandon her, I said nothing about coming to church. All I said to her was, to get a Bible and read it, because her spirit was newborn and God would then be able to teach her; and if she could find sincere Christians, they could help advise her too. To this day whenever I recall it I wonder if I made the right choice, and pray for her again.

But as I closed, God spoke to me. I sensed him telling me they had a plan for the immediate days ahead which would lead them ultimately into a lot of sexual trouble. Then he told me to warn them about getting into trouble with boys. So I simply said “Oh – one more thing – God just spoke to me. He says, watch out for getting into trouble with boys.” And when I said this, the younger one looked at the older one with a little gasp, and said, “You *see*! I *told* you we shouldn't do it!” and then looked at me and said they had had a plan that *would* have landed them up with boys, and thanked me.

Somewhere also around this time I had an odd experience while driving a long distance one day. I was listening to a very beautiful cassette tape of worship music by the Maranatha Singers in the 80s, which was very sincerely and sweetly done. (I loved it, but can’t find it now, even online. More modern versions are a little more affected or technical.) It included this exact rendition Fairest Lord Jesus/My Jesus, I Love Thee/I Love You Lord and also a most beautiful version of I Will Praise Him which I can no longer find.

Anyway, the song I will Praise Him was the last on the cassette and ends with the last lines of the chorus, “Give him glory, all you people, For his blood can wash away each stain.” I had been quietly singing along and reflecting on the beauty of that sacrifice and the power it released to us by God’s grace. After the song drew to a close, I experienced an odd but beautiful thing: I could hear the choir singing the last two lines, over again. I wondered if it was on the tape, but no, it had ended. I wondered if I was making it up out the hum of the tyres and engine but could not detect any sign of that. There was a brief pause and then the choir repeated the two lines again. While I listened, puzzled, they repeated again; and again; and again; and again. Fix, six, seven times I heard it sung, so worshipfully. And then it stopped. I am convinced that somehow angels had joined in and I was hearing them. It was so beautiful. Sincere worship and music seems to filter out all evil, like polarised glasses filter out reflected light.

CHAPTER 18. IS IT AIDING AND ABETTING IF GOD DOES IT?

On another occasion I had to drive up north for some reason by myself, and I was in a hurry. The national speed limit was reduced to 100km/h (60mph) in those days because of petrol rationing, but I was driving at the old limit of 120 km/h on the long, long straight roads of the Cape Karoo, a semi-desert. Every 10 or 20 miles the road would round a kopje, a little hill all on its own, and then run straight again.

Coming up right now was one, and in the middle of my thoughts God interrupted and said to me, “There's a speed trap around that corner.”

Well, I knew he wasn't lying, so I slowed down to 100 km/h, went round the kopje and over the two wires across the road, past the police car, turned the next corner, and sped up again.

“Lord,” I said, “I hope you don't mind, but I do need to get there soon.”

He said nothing, but he wasn't rebuking me either, so, a little puzzled, a little hesitant about the moral implications of what had just happened, I just went on.

Talking of this reminds me, if I can go back in time, to secondary school, my matric exam for Latin. My Latin teacher was all declensions and verbs, and while I could repeat all the mantras of Amo, Amas, Amat, none of it ever penetrated my consciousness in real meaning, emotion or form of an actual language. Latin is all grammar and a host of strange words to me. I really struggled with it and recall to this day a moment in class when I was called upon to translate how Caesar stopped his horses, blocked by a river, and decided he would fly them by kite to get across; and no matter how I tackled the paragraph, which word order I used, how I translated, he insisted on doing it.

So I really was in a lot of trouble for the exam when it came to the actual translation work. Doomed, in fact. Now the majority of our marks would come from translating four passages: two out of three ‘seen’ – ones we had worked on translating during the year – and two out of three ‘unseen’. All from a book with perhaps sixty to eighty passages in it. So the night before the exam I memorised the difficult parts of translation of all our seen passages (was it six of them?) with a special focus on two for luck. Then I still had an hour left. I knew I had to be able to translate at least one of the unseens or I most certainly would not pass. So I decided to pick two random ones to memorise, hoping one of them would be one of the three. I paged through the book in the mind of the examiner, deciding which I would choose as opposed to the ‘seen’ passages. I would want something different to those, and perhaps a little further away physically… I finally settled on two out of the fifty or so ‘unseen’s and, using a dictionary, managed to translate them in full. I knew the odds were extremely small that they’d come up but it was my only hope, so the long shot was worth the time.

Imagine my joy when in the exam the next day I saw one of my two memorised ‘seen’s, and – my heart skipped with joy – *both* of my two so-called ‘unseen’s amongst the three unseens!!

I breathed a quiet thank you to God for what I could only see as a miracle and got on with the work. It wasn’t as easy to remember as I’d hoped, but I felt I got most of it right.

Needless to say I did spectacularly. I got a C. :)

CHAPTER 19. SURFING WITH GOD AND SHARKS

Now where was I? Oh yes. During these years living in Cape Town, one time I was surfing at Buffelsbaai (Buffalo Bay beach) on my own. There have been a few shark attacks on beach-goers here over the years but today the sun was shining and the water was as clear as it gets, a glassy green – off the edge of the reef I could see the deep bottom sand with a few weeds on it here and there – so I wasn't at all worried, because sharks usually only bite someone by mistake when they can't see clearly in cloudier water.

However, after a couple of waves I began to get the inexplicable feeling that there was a really big shark nearby. I put it down to a natural human paranoia caused by being alone, and carried on, but the feeling grew stronger. Now I had learned to resist fear, plus, I had the reef all to myself which is a rare, a very rare, gift, so I really didn't want to get out and lose all these lovely waves, so I pushed against it, told myself to stop being silly, and kept paddling back out for another one.

A big wave came in and I had a great ride right to the end, and as I kicked out of the wave and prepared to paddle back out the feeling got *so* strong, I actually hesitated and lay there a moment, asking myself, "What *is* this? I've never felt like this before."

Let me quickly tell four short surf stories to show what this was like by contrast.

1. I've been out on my own many times, sometimes far out. Once I was at Muizenberg in storm surf, so far out I could see perhaps the whole of Vishoek Beach. About a mile and a quarter out. I caught a huge wave (it is best to take the biggest so that you don't end up as far in and then have to paddle back out through the biggest) and could not escape it when it crashed behind me and ran over me. When I came up, my board was gone. D*mn, I thought, leash broken, board off to St James rocks probably, and a long, long swim ahead of me.

   But I hadn't felt that massive yank and snap on the leash while under, so I curiously groped down to pull it up and see how it had sheared, and it immediately went taut. Now it was about 11 foot long, so about 10 foot below my feet, about 14 foot below the surface, this super buoyant board was... just waiting. It can't do that. It's like a giant cork. My first thought was, an underwater boil left behind by the wave, a spinning current of water, is dragging it down – but it wasn't being dragged down. It was just sitting there. If I let the leash down, it relaxed. And on the surface all the water around me had ceased to boil and bubble, the foam was disappearing and the sea was getting smooth and clear again.

   The next wave, not as big, luckily, was appearing. I couldn't believe it. I pulled again. Nope. Taut. Now I was disturbed. About fifteen seconds had passed since I had surfaced. If I pulled, would something nasty come up to me with the board? I pulled gently, encouraging whatever it was to release it. Nope. Then I decided, whatever it is, I don't want to be in this position any more, so I pulled it up really hard. Still no luck. The coming wave passed under me as a swell. Now I pulled with all my strength. It felt like the leash was stretching, but the board wouldn't budge. Again. Agaaaaaaiiiiiinnnn, I was pulling myself under the water with the effort, and then it suddenly released. I was concerned the board would ram into me, as I had been pulling it towards me, but it strangely shot out of the water about eight foot away.

Needless to say I was so rattled I pulled it in, scanning it for teeth marks as I climbed on, and rode the next wave all the way in to the beach, where I examined it closely. Not a mark was on it.

Through this whole experience, I was nervous and concerned, but never had any feeling of such doom as I was feeling now.

2. Another time on the West coast just north of Lambert's Bay after my sea fisheries inspector work was done for the day I paddled out into the setting sun at a beach break, to enjoy a grand 8 foot glassy swell. But the strangest thing happened. Just as I made it out to the back, the swell literally disappeared. The next set of waves was 6 foot, but I thought I'd wait for the next 8 footer; the next set was 5 foot, the next 4, the next 3 and within a few minutes the sea was just a cradle rocking, with a small little 1 foot ripple bumping onto the beach with a distant little shushing noise every now and then.

Against the setting sun the sea was dark and shadowy, black to glassy green, and I didn't like being this far away from the breaking waves. I've always had an inkling that sharks would be disinclined to venture into the surf as a mild preference of theirs, but happy to cruise the calmer waters. Now I was alone, 'all, all alone on a wide, wide sea', about 450 feet from shore, on a gently breathing dark green ocean. I lifted my hands and feet out of the water, not out of fear but just as a sensible precaution as I've done many times.

As I lay there looking at the sun's moving reflection, wondering whether to paddle in again, all of a sudden, directly in front of me and about 15 feet away, coming directly towards me, a long black fin rose up out of the water. It rose smoothly up, and up, and up with water rushing down it, for all the world like a submarine periscope rising up out of the sea – I could not see either side of it – rush-shoosh-rush-dribble-pour-dribble with the sound of the water running off it. I couldn't believe my eyes. Over 2 feet it rose into the air at a steady relaxed speed, and then started to sink again with a quiet bubbling as it went down. With the sun turning the sea to liquid gold and the water below still a shadowy dark green I could see very little but I frantically looked left, right, left, right, back and all over again, but could not see a thing. My nerves were taut and I was mulling over whether to try and punch from the board as I waited for something that never came. I waited a good five minutes before I had the courage to dip a hand into the water, turn myself around and paddle tentatively and as gently as I could back to shore.

Every paddle sent a ripple through the ocean that I knew sharks could feel and strained my nerves to breaking point. The shore seemed so far away though... so I paddled a little more firmly… which would send a stronger signal… so I added a touch more speed... which sent an even stronger signal... In the end my nerve gave out on me and I paddled in a sprint for the last 50 feet!

But still I had no feeling of anything bad about to happen. Just my nerves.

3. Once at the Strand, the water was very murky indeed, the colour of a latte. I knew I shouldn't go out as the sharks from Seal Island were wont to come to this beach from time to time, but the chances were low and the waves were good, so I drew my courage up and

went out. After a wave which brought me in to waist deep water, I was standing next to my board ready to jump on again after a little wave coming in when something bumped against my leg. It wasn't a big bump, but I had heard that sharks will usually bump-test you once before they bite, so I was immediately fully repentant of what I now saw as foolhardiness, jumped on my board and paddled in, catching the little wave and feeling relieved and foolish. I was never more than a little scared though.

4. On a beautiful summer's day at Muizenberg, the waves were plentiful but there were hundreds of surfers out which meant you could hardly ever catch a wave – and even when you did, some jerk would catch it in front of you and ruin your ride. Super frustrating. Then the John Rolfe helicopter came overhead, which scans for sharks as a service, and saw a large one, and announced it over the speakers. Everybody cleared the water in a minute while I looked for one last wave to take in. But while I waited, three thoughts occurred to me in quick succession. First, what a disappointing end to such a disappointing day. Second, how nice and inviting the sea and waves looked now, with every surfer out of the water. And third, how many hundreds of times I have surfed this beach in this weather with no helicopter overhead to see the sharks that would inevitably sometimes have been there, with no intention of biting anybody. So I stayed out. I had a few wonderful waves and then became aware of a distant shouting from shore. It was my friend, A, who had come with me, running up and down the beach waving and yelling "Shark! Ant! Shark!" I waved back, an invitational come here, and yelled "I know. Come back. It's wonderful!" but most annoyingly he refused, so sadly after one more wave I went in.

In all of these incidents I had never once felt such a *sinister* fear as I felt now, at Buffelsbaai. Nerves, yes. Temporary fright, yes. Ready for action, yes. But today... this was like watching the movie Alien. And for no good reason. On such a lovely day. It gave me such pause for thought.

But a beauty of a 6 foot wave came in and curled over the reef, all unridden, and as I watched the bright blue green and pure white breaker I said to myself, *you know, even if there is a shark out there, it is extremely unlikely to come over the reef. I reckon it's safe enough if I stay over the reef. All the bites here have been on people swimming at the beach.* So I paddled on out while the feeling grew even stronger than it had been yet. Unfortunately the paddle itself is not over the reef. It took every ounce of my courage to ignore the deepening fear, and to discipline my hands to paddle out over the deepening water into what felt like impending doom. Ridiculous. Finally I got there, safe enough, and sat up on my board to wait for the next wave, which would be a while coming as the current set had finished for now. The sun was still bright, the water as clear green as ever, yet the strangely persistent feeling grew still stronger and I kept a sharp lookout.

Then a tingle went down my spine and I heard a voice in my mind. It wasn't like the Lord had ever sounded before, all friendly. It was stern and distant, but crystal clear. Like a radio message.

"If you don't get out of the water *now*, I won't be responsible for your safety."

Responsible in the legal sense. With finality. Flat.

I didn't stop to ask if it was the Lord. Forget about waiting for the next wave. I just very, very willingly turned my board around and did all the hard work of paddling back in to shore with relief, quickly but quietly as I could. I was no longer interested in the surf. No sir. Not at all.

CHAPTER 20. NO GIRLFRIEND ALLOWED

After my experiences with H and with G, I decided that I would no longer allow myself to even entertain the thought of having a relationship with a girl unless God gave me a sign as clear as sky-writing.

For a time, perhaps six months, all was good, but then I was offered a lift to a fellowship group (a weekly group where five to twenty people from the church meet to sing, read the Bible together and pray for others and each other) by this girl for whom I even now have a special place in my heart, called M, a beautiful name.

By her conversation and conduct I discovered she really was all out for God, and this drew me towards her like a moth to a flame. She was also pretty. Over the course of several weeks I found myself fighting as hard as I could not to love her. She also, upon us driving home, had started over the last two or three weeks to invite me in to her flat to have some plain yoghurt. This is perhaps the oddest thing one could offer to a guest, and I found plain yoghurt too tangy for my taste, bearable but not a really pleasant experience, yet I could not help accepting the offer as I could spend a little more time with her.

I was desperately fighting the monster of falling in love, to just be friends with her and leave the choosing to God, but upon the next week realised I was losing the battle, and there was only one outcome ahead of me if I did not do something, so I decided not to see her again. This meant not only letting her know that I no longer wanted the lifts, but that I would no longer attend her fellowship group either. I also felt in my spirit that I should be frank with her and let her know that I was developing feelings for her against my will and therefore needed to cut off the friendship.

That fateful night I could not bring myself to do it without a massive struggle. I was in love with her too much already. Yet because of this I knew even more that I had to do it. It would be so much easier to quietly disappear from her life but that could easily hurt her feelings.

I did not have the guts on the way there, and besides, I told myself, it would make better sense on the return journey so that we were not strained at the group. But on the return journey I also could not do it. I fell silent largely the whole way as I wrestled this damn MONSTER in my soul – speak! Give her up! And yet my mouth itself *refused* to open and utter the words.

Finally we were a minute from her home and I knew I had left it rather too late already, it was now or never. So, unready, unpersuaded, unwilling, I opened my mouth and made myself speak.
“M, I have something to tell you.”
“I thought you did,” she said, “you have been very quiet.”
I continued, “I'm falling in love with you, but ...” and here my soul just balked like a horse at the jump. I was to say, “but I don't want to see you again because I don't know if it's of God or not.” I brought the horse of my soul round for another attempt but just ached so tremendously in my heart, I could not bring myself to say it immediately, but needed to gather my strength. Finally, just as I was finally about to make the jump at long last, she broke in upon me instead, with an angry tirade.

I can't recall everything she said, but it was a flood about having seen her grandmother last week who had opened her eyes and told her all about me, how I preyed upon innocent women and led

them up the garden path only to dump them after building up all their hopes, such as with H, and again with G, who she knew and who had told her all about it. It was incredibly vicious and ripped my heart to shreds.
“But I was going to say I wanted to not see you again,” I managed to get out, after she paused.
“You liar!”
“I promise!”
“I know who you are! Don't think you can fool me!”
I tried again to say how sincere I was but she had been primed so well by her grandmother – indeed it felt demonic to me – so in the end I just yielded and asked her to take me home.

A few weeks later I met her again in passing, outside the church on a Saturday with a few other people present, and immediately my heart wept within me. She was hard towards me and said something very cold, and I lost my composure completely and burst into tears. She looked shocked and said something, probably apologetic, but I couldn't hear it. I loudly told her to get out of my life and that I never wanted to see her again and that everything I had said before was true, and walked away.

God never spoke to me about her. I only tell this story because it feels relevant to his other dealings with me regarding romantic relationships. But it has just reminded me of another girl who made me cry, about a year later, that God *did* speak to me about. I can't remember much about this one, my memory has kind of erased a lot of details about her from my mind. It’s a short story.

(There seems to be a lot of God’s intervention with girls in my life, but I think it’s only because I'm highlighting how God has worked with me. I have many male friends too, but these relationships have been very stable on both sides and there has been little in the way of God needing to intervene, or of either I or they being a major impact on the other’s life, except for my best friend and T, the chap who taught me how to socialise.

That said, I have also ministered to many girls, mostly helped them by listening but also many times God has given me a word for them. I do not know what it is, perhaps because I have a very feminine side to me, intuition and emotion, and I understand them, or just God's doing, but they seem very comfortable talking to me and God has definitely used me far more with girls than guys.)

This girl I met at another church I went to for a time. She approached me at tea after my first service there and got chatting with me.

God spoke to my heart while we were talking, “Watch out for this girl. She's okay, but if you get too close to her she will make you cry. Keep away from any relationship with her.”

“Will do,” I replied.

I chatted back and she seemed nice, and then she asked me for a lift home and chatted on the way, sharing a ton of her life with me so openly, it was very charming. She mentioned a previous boyfriend she had loved greatly, and then when we got there she invited me in for a drink in such a friendly way that I was happy to say yes as I was enjoying her company, and even doubted in myself if the Lord was right about her, but then reminded myself he was always right and to be on my toes.

We went to the kitchen and she offered me a hot toddy and I wasn't sure what it was so she said I had to try one, it was just a hot milk with a couple of tots of whiskey but it was delicious.
And she was right, I loved it. With her being just so open and friendly and herself, I was really enjoying the moment too much to want to leave immediately.

She proceeded to tell me all about her previous boyfriend, in Italy, and amongst other things casually told me how they had made love for hours and again and again, for days, they were so in love and she just didn't know how they did it or how he lasted so long, but they did. I felt no embarrassment at this sharing of her private life because she felt no shyness and had no agenda, it was obviously just her natural way of sharing things, but I reminded myself again of the Lord's warning and made a note to take great care.

Finally it was time to go, but she said, let's meet again after church next time, and I felt a pang of concern but said Yes because I didn't want to hurt her feelings, and just made up my mind to only be friends no matter what. Yet I had a sinking feeling I was allowing her too much room in my life after God's warning and asked him to protect me, and he said, just keep your distance, don't get involved.

Unfortunately, I did get more involved – but only a little bit, in that I did visit her several more times and she became a friend to me – only a friend, but still, closer than God had said to be.

And then one day she said something to me which has completely erased itself from my memory. It really, really, really hurt. And I stopped seeing her, and though I was wounded, felt I had got away with it.

But I did not know how badly wounded my heart was. Some weeks later I gave a lift to a counsellor at the church whom I knew, and decided to ask if I could talk to her. I told her what had happened and unexpectedly burst into uncontrollable tears. I tried to tell her that what had happened was not meant, and not nearly as bad as my tears made it seem, but I just needed to know what to do about it. She gave me good advice and my heart repaired, especially now that I had cried it out, but sadly she also spoke to the girl concerned who then flamed me for betraying confidentiality. You just can't win sometimes.

So anyway, it turned out that God was right. I should have listened and not gone in for that hot toddy.

You would think I would learn, yes?

But what I have learned in my life is that me making mistakes is par for the course. It's no big surprise, either to God or to me. He brings the righteousness and wisdom and goodness. I bring me: weakness and foolishness, and pride, of all things. And sometimes when I get too big for my boots, God kindly reminds me what I bring to the table by letting me stand on my own for a moment.

Though it is a very simple concept, it took me decades to grasp in its totality:

1 God is good,
+0 we are foolish,
=1 in Christ, we are the righteousness of God.

But as you grow into understanding it, it's a huge blessing.

So nowadays when I make a mistake that is hugely embarrassing I just turn in my heart to God and thank him for the reminder and the humility, and for all the good and wisdom he brings to my life. It can be painful, but I know it's good for me to be reminded of what I am and I welcome it as a big healthy dose of humility. I suspect that humility is really simply knowing, to your core, how proud you are. And in fact the more you get accustomed to the idea that you bring nothing to the table beyond your silly self, the less painful it is when you get a reminder. Sometimes I just smile at myself and think, "*Yep – that's par for the course!*"

And when someone tells me I did something very well, I turn in my heart and say, *Thank you, God, for the gift you have given me* – or, *for doing that through me*. All our gifts and accomplishments are from God. Though I still cannot help going back to review how cool it was and enjoying it all over again, and sometimes I have to say "sorry God, for forgetting that it was you who did that – but still it was so cool! Thank you!" so I have a long way to go.

CHAPTER 21. MALE ORDER WIFE

I play guitar, and a few years earlier someone asked me if I would lead worship for a fellowship group. It was simple playing but we got into God's presence with sincere worship so it worked out. We all enjoyed it as far as I knew.

But then I moved and went to a different group, and that was a different story. I began to realise over time that on the days the heaven is stone and the Spirit never joins in, people are coming to the meeting with the grumps or other unforgiveness. If you come to a meeting cross or judgmental, the Holy Spirit doesn't join in and the worship is a dead work, a hollow dead singing. When he joins, joy and love and sincerity and peace fill the air. And the former was happening too often in this group. It became so frustrating because I did not know how to fix it and was wasting my time preparing songs and practising etc., so in the end I just stopped worship leading.

But now, in the student church, at my latest group, they really needed someone, so I kind of reluctantly volunteered, 'for a time'.

Now begins perhaps one of the most bizarre things that happened to me relating to God. Actually, no, other things have been more bizarre. This was more eye-opening.

I had set my face to not having any girlfriend, ever, unless God chose differently. My flatmate had moved out and I had become quite settled in the flat. It was comfy, quiet, with a fireplace for the winter, a freshwater fish tank that I used to look after for a friend but they had asked me to keep permanently, and easy roads to all the Cape Town beaches North, South and West. My family were all good and my friends were less needy, and I tidied all my stuff, and aside from still seeking a walk-and-talk relationship with God I had more time on my hands than I'd ever had before, and began to wonder... with me not looking for a girlfriend... would God choose one for me, or would he just leave it? I had always assumed I would get married if God wanted me to, but now the thought occurred to me, would he just let me stay single in my current mode of 'No girls allowed'? So neither he nor I would make a decision on it? That didn't feel right.

So I started asking God about marriage when I remembered. We had a few conversations about it.

Like, I'd sit down in the lounge next to my fish tank and say,
"God, do you want me to get married?"
And he'd reply, "What would you like to do?"
"No, God, I'm asking YOU".
And he'd say, "I'm easy. Whatever you prefer."

This happened several times. This was *very* frustrating to me.

Again and again, every time I asked, he'd say, "What would *you* like to do?"
Even if I replied, "But I'm asking YOU what would YOU like me to do?", he would just say, "Whichever you prefer."

I hated it. All my life I've felt that every action I can take may have an effect on the kingdom of God and the saving of souls out of rebellion and into his love, and that God would of course always

guide me, especially with big, important decisions like who you're going to lock yourself into spending the rest of your life with.

But this went on and on. “God, which do YOU prefer?”
“I'm easy” – and I'd give up for the day.

And on another day, “But God, I don't know whether it's best to get married or not. You know better.”
“Either will work out fine.”

Or, “But God, don't you have a best plan for my life? I thought you had a plan.”
“In this, I don't mind which you choose.”
“But doesn’t it affect your plan?”
“Whatever you choose will fit my plan. I know the end from the beginning.”

Or, “Okay, God, but which do you PREFER?”
“They're even to me.”
And again, “But don't you even have any advice for me, God? What do you think I'm suited for?”
“It's totally up to you.”

Finally, one day I had some real free time and I decided to sort it out with God properly. I sat down first and clarified my thoughts. So, God was genuinely 50-50 on it. That I could accept, so the choice was genuinely up to me. Hmmm, I didn't know what I wanted. And didn't want to impact the kingdom negatively with whichever choice I made, even it was up to me.

So I asked God this time, “God, I know you're easy on the decision of me getting married or not, and it's totally up to me, but I really would like your guidance on it.”
and he replied “I want you to make the decision.”

I still wasn't clear, and got a bit tense. “What I'm asking, God, is, what's best for the KINGDOM? What will have the best RESULT?”
And he replied, “It makes absolutely no difference to the kingdom. You are really free to choose whatever you want.”

So I finally saw it like it was, and thought about it for a long time. *The Bible was clear, single men can be more dedicated to the Lord and do a lot for the kingdom; but God had said it would make no difference in my case.... Again, single means you are free to work as you like, but when you get old and live alone you're going to be real lonely – and who would take care of you, too? Though I could probably earn enough to be comfortable in a good old age home... and maybe even be raptured... so that wasn’t important. And again the Bible was clear on marriage.... it would mean a lot of trouble.... yet was also joyful and two could be stronger than one... and bringing children into the world and raising them up godly, is a worthy work, full of joy and love and goodness... you would be looking after people in this way... Though I'm comfortable with my own company... yet a life lived alone is not as worthwhile, overall, or as joyous, it seems to me, despite the troubles of marriage... Having a family brings love. And caring for each other, into old age. It seems a life richer in love.*

And with that I was decided. “God?” I said.

“Yes?”
“I've decided. I would like to get married.”
“Okay. Go get a piece of paper and a pen.”

Hmmm – this caught me by surprise. I got them and brought them to the desk, very curious.

“Now, sit down and write down EVERYTHING you want in a wife. And I mean, EVERYTHING. Every detail. Including her looks, colour of her hair, eyes, whatever you think of that you would like her to be.”
“Huh? You're not going to conjure up a woman, are you?” I asked, puzzled and amused. “And if she gets born it’d be too late, she wouldn't grow up in time. This is weird. How are you going to do this?”
“No, I'm not going to conjure up a woman,” he smiled back. “Leave it to me. Just write down everything you want, down to the smallest detail of what matters to you, including physical appearance.”

So I started writing, thoughtfully. It took me about half an hour and I produced something pretty close to this:
1. She must love Jesus at least as much as I do (and if she loves him more, be able to cope with me loving him less)
2. She must not want material things
3. She must be kind and soft-hearted
4. Forgiving
5. Generous to all
6. As hard-working as myself, however much that was, and if she works harder, able to draw me into working harder too
7. Intelligent – with at least a university degree
8. Able to follow me and obey my directions when it mattered, so that we could stay united
9. Enjoys laughter
10. Not an only child – has learned to give and take
11. Can sing in tune.
12. Can cook. Likes cooking.
13. Can organise things.
14. Okay to stay at home and look after the family.
15. Missions orientated.
and here I moved onto her physical appearance. I have always been more attracted to girls with a very specific look, brunettes with long hair and strong cheekbones but not a wide face… this was fun. Was God really going to do this, or was it a test?
16. Brown hair, long
17. Wide cheekbones (by this I meant, relative to the rest of her face)
18. Looks a lot like Kelly Garrett of Charlie’s Angels / Pamela Ewing of Dallas
19. Blue eyes. No. Grey eyes. No. Blue eyes. No. Wait. *Is there such a thing as blue-grey eyes? I don't know, I've never seen any, but that's what I would like, so I'll write it down.* Blue-grey eyes.
“God do you get blue-grey eyes... I hope I'm not making this too difficult for you?”
“No, you can ask for that,” he smiled again. He was plainly enjoying this. I shrugged, *he knows what he's doing, I just dunno how he's gonna do it.*
20. Artistic hands and fingers, not chunky

21. Height, hmmmm. It seems common for a wife to be a bit shorter, so, shall we say, um, 5' 10? That's 2 inches. Or 5' 11? No wait that's a bit too close to eye to eye, maybe women are shorter for a reason... 5' 10 it is. Or does it matter, actually? Um… Let's just say, shorter than me.
22. Weight. Thin. Definitely. I can't stand overweight.
and if I recall correctly, that was the list.

It was a few weeks later that I went to my fellowship group a bit late. Everybody was already there and waiting for me when I got there. I apologised, and in my getting ready to lead worship only just noticed a new girl there as I was ready to start. It was a good night, no one was carrying anything negative in their hearts, and we were able to soar like birds up into God's sweet presence and worship him freely. At one point God picked a song I hadn't prepared, and so I said I think God wants me to play this one, apologies if I make mistakes, but it went smoothly enough, and then we were back on track with my prepared songs. I always used to put a lot of work and prayer into the song list, and a theme would often emerge, and this night the theme was all about the humility and meekness of God and how we can trust him.

Then we moved on with the actual meeting, and I realised the new girl was ill, because she kept sniffing, as quietly as she could.

After that we had our usual prayer time, and as we came near to the end, God said to me, "Pray for her healing." Now, what I didn't know at the time because I had been late, was that she was extremely shy, and before trying a fellowship group for the first time she had, in a phone call, asked the group leader to please not have the group pray for her, because it would make her feel very awkward. And the group leader had instructed everyone, before she arrived, not to pray for her!

So anyway, I turned to her and said, "I see you're not well? Would you like me to pray for you?" She nodded, and said it was the flu. So I laid hands on her and prayed for her with all the authority I knew, commanding the sickness to leave her and for God to heal and protect her. And we all said amen and then some more praying went on and then it was time for tea.

I roved around a bit catching up with friends and then there was a quiet moment and I saw the new girl standing alone and thought she would probably appreciate some company, so I moseyed on over and said Hi and we started chatting, for which she seemed grateful. We went to refill our tea and biscuits at the table in the open plan dining room end of the lounge and found more space there.

The more we chatted, the more I found myself liking her. She seemed genuine and friendly. In fact we got on like a house, er, not on fire, exactly, but with good central heating. We clearly both enjoyed getting to know each other, and liked many of the same things, including a sense of compassion for people.

We talked for the rest of the time, an unusually long time for a casual conversation, and never lacked for anything to say.

At this point I genuinely did not know how much danger I was in. I just made a mental note, *nice girl, watch out, don't get closer. Avoid talking to her for the next meeting or two, or three.*

That night I was concerned about my prayer for her healing. God never asks me to pray for people's healing, so this was clearly important. So I exercised my faith. I lay in bed thanking God for answering the prayer he had asked me to make, and imagined her in my mind's eye getting up in the morning feeling well and refreshed. For some reason I felt it was so important, that I continued to do this for a long time, and on a couple of occasions when I woke up during the night, and again in the early morning.

The next week, I went to the group and was told by my friend J, before the new girl arrived, how lucky I was that she hadn't taken offence at my asking to pray for her.

When she arrived, she happily told me that the week before she had gone to bed ill and woken up perfectly well!

Then we had a great worship time, and at the end of the meeting I went to the furthest end of the room from her, but unfortunately she made a beeline for me and started chatting. I was desperately thinking how and on whom to scrape her off when she suggested we go out to the balcony where there was more space. Realising that it was only natural for a newbie to the group to want to reconnect with a familiar face, I acquiesced readily enough on the outside but reluctantly on the inside, because there was no one else on the balcony I could engage with.

I had intended to quit the chat as soon as I comfortably (for her) could pass her off to someone else to get to know, but I found myself really enjoying what she had to say, it was warm and intelligent, and despite my soul waving at me a couple of times trying to get my attention to end the chat, I coasted a bit – besides, it was difficult to end it naturally. I wished for someone else to come in and join the chat but no luck.

I was particularly concerned because she was very pretty and she seemed to very clearly love Jesus, though I was cautious about believing that again. Her eyes were blue-ish of some kind, though I didn’t want to stare to assess what colour exactly.

Time passed more swiftly than I realised and near the end of the meeting I was berating myself for having let our chat run on and now we were stuck in what looked like a budding friendship. *She'll talk to me next week, I'll be bound,* I said to myself. *I really must try harder.*

So the third week, (worship was good again, as usual, for which I was relieved because ideally the new girl did need to belong to a group), after the prayer time I quickly found my friend J and got into a conversation with him. I could see the new girl disappointedly turn from my direction and I thought, *Good, you need to get to know other people and not just pick on me the whole time.* After 5 minutes I saw she was having a lovely chat with someone else and felt satisfied. *Now things will balance out,* I thought.

Unfortunately, tea was delayed, so when it arrived we all broke up a bit and I lost touch with J. The new girl came over to me. She was so sweet and innocent though, I immediately felt bad for my prior attitude.

It turned out that she had brought the cake we were enjoying, and it was really good, so I complimented her for that, and she shared how she loved baking and had volunteered to organise the pastor's tea after the morning church service. I was surprised because that was quite a big deal

– all the church staff and guests attended, and the organiser had to go out and buy all the cakes and things, lay the table, make sure there were all the necessaries to boil water and make tea and coffee, and serve it. But she said she baked everything herself to save the church the money, and she loved doing it, and the pastor had remarked a few times how much better all the food was when she organised the tea, so she really felt satisfied doing it. I was impressed, not only at the hard work, but also the ability to organise.

And then it hit me.

11. Can sing in tune.
12. Can cook. Likes cooking.
13. Can organise things.

I took another, longer, closer look at her. Somewhat shorter than me and – except for being overweight – flawlessly, exactly, beautifully, a match, a bit sweeter looking than I had imagined when writing down my list. I even had a chance to take a close look at her eyes and they were… blue-grey! *Well I never,* I thought, *so you do get that. Why have I never noticed that before.* I looked at her hands. Perfect. And I already knew how soft and kind she was. And we had really hit it off…

No WAY, God! I said in my head, rhetorically speaking.
HOW is that POSSIBLE?! A few weeks after I wrote everything down. HOW??
Could this girl be destined to be my wife... I wondered. (I had set a rule that only sky-writing-level guidance would do, though, not just guidance in my spirit, so I wasn't looking for an answer in the spirit.)
No, I said to myself. *I'm not falling into that trap again. Until I see sky-writing or something as clear, this relationship is going <u>nowhere</u>.*

Unfortunately for me, we had a lovely, comfortable, long, friendship-style chat before she finally moved off to go meet some other people, which relieved me.

I was so scared of getting involved, though, the next week I made up some excuse and didn't go to the meeting. I felt bad at letting them down with the missed worship time but this was too important.

However, that same week, a problem with my fish tank came to a head. I was unaware at the time but I was ignorant about fish-keeping and had unwittingly been overfeeding the guppies little by little for months, and the waste had now built up to such an extent that the fish were starting to die. Their gills were pumping rapidly, their tails hanging down, and they were clearly very stressed. I was desperately trying to find out what was wrong, looking up all kinds of diseases, but nothing fit. Various medications hadn’t helped anyway. Being unable to do something about it was traumatic and increased my stress tremendously. I love animals and I was grief-stricken.

Then about four died in one day, and it was just too much for me. I desperately needed to go out somewhere and get this off my mind, and cry on someone's shoulder, so I started calling my friends, but absolutely none were available.

I settled down in my misery on the couch next to the fish tank and watched the survivors gasping, when the thought came to me, *what about that new girl?* She was kind and soft-hearted, she'd

understand and lighten the load... *Man, I know I have to avoid her but I'm in so much pain right now… I wonder... we've already gotten to know each other quite well with those long chats… would this make it any worse? Probably a little… but not by much… and I can avoid her again later.*

We all shared our phone numbers in the fellowship group, so I went and grabbed the book and gave her a call. I was very apologetic and explained how my fish were dying and I was just looking for some company, and as soon as she heard the problem she understood immediately, and said she was free.

So I went round, and we drove to the Newlands Spur steakhouse and had something to eat and then to the nearby Kirstenbosch Gardens, a huge public garden full of South African plants and flowers and green grass walkways between them, on the sloping hills of the side of Table Mountain, and walked around talking about this and that.

I found myself enjoying her company very much, and somehow our conversation drifted quite naturally from the life and death of pets over to how we loved the old Disney movies over to our spiritual beliefs. In my desperation to talk and listen, to take my mind off the fish, and in an atmosphere of natural understanding of one another we shared a lot about ourselves and by the time we left I realised my mistake was bigger than I thought. I felt tons better but I was really kicking myself and unsure of how I was going to extricate myself from this developing friendship. It had gone too far to just brush her off onto other people in the group. *But never mind,* I told myself. *It was just this one-off due to the fish. A long absence will help. Maybe someone else can lead worship…* (but I knew that there wasn't anyone)*. I will just keep all future chats with her at the group to a very casual level and work back towards being just friendly acquaintances. One way or another, by hook or by crook, it has to be done. It* will *be done.*

CHAPTER 22. GOD STEALS* MY CAR ... *(sort of)

Before the next meeting, I decided it was no use not going to the meetings for weeks – after all, they needed a worship leader – but I would be very, very, *very* careful to draw a line in the sand at this point – we could be friends – after all, that was safe – but no more. I would talk to her minimally, I would not do more than small talk, etc.

I suspect I may have hurt her feelings a bit that week in the meeting. I did thank her again for her support with the fish, and was able to share that I had discovered the problem from a pet fish shop advisor and cure it, but I didn't say much after that. I felt bad. But it had to be done.

But then the next day a disaster happened. I went out to the street to drive to work and my lovely bright red Toyota Corolla was not there.

I couldn't believe it. I had left it right HERE, hadn't I? I looked up and down the street, wracking my brains. I am forgetful... I walked far up and down the street. Around the corner. Nada. Nothing. But I had to get to work. I could walk but it was over one suburb away, it'd take at least 30 minutes, and it was drizzling a bit. My suit would be soaked by the time I got there.

But my greater worry was why God had allowed it to happen in the first place. Was I outside of his protection?

“God,” I said, “Have I sinned? Am I out of your will? Is this a chastisement?”

Immediately I felt him in the spirit put his hand upon my right shoulder, gently but firmly, and say, word for word in my mind, “Son, you are in the dead centre of my will.”

So, bewildered, but trusting him, I went back inside to put my car keys down and think about whether to walk in the rain or perhaps call a friend, though I was very reluctant to do that. The bus service was too poor and it didn’t occur to me to call a cab – I had never thought about a taxi in my life. But before I had time to think, the phone rang. It was the new girl. “Hi, how are you?” she asked.

“Fine,” I replied, “except my car's been stolen and I can't get to work on time!”

“Oh!” pause “I go past your suburb on the way to work, would you like a lift?”

Would I?! *Would* I?!! It was a godsend! *But what about avoiding HER?*, my soul asked. *Never mind about that,* I answered my soul, *this is an emergency. We will stay just friends,* and I responded, “That would be incredibly helpful! Wow! Thank you!”

Pretty soon she came by, and I asked her on the way to work, what she had called me for?
She replied, It was really weird, she had just felt God was telling her to call me, and so she had screwed her courage up and done it.
Well, said I, that's excellent. He knew my car was stolen!

For that week and the next she picked me up faithfully at the start and end of the working day, very kindly and patiently, not regretting it at all. As it was winter, June, it rained a lot. I think it

turned out that she gave me a lift every day for two weeks and there were only a few days when it was sunny.

When she brought me home the first day, it was cold and I just felt it wouldn't be right not to invite her in for something to drink as thanks, and offered her a Horlicks, which she was over the moon about. (Months later I found out her grandmother used to make her Horlicks with water and milk, and she was on the addict level for it.) I made Horlicks with milk only and she enjoyed it so much it became a thing and I made her a Horlicks every time she brought me home. She enjoyed seeing my shy upside-down fish and clown loaches too.

On the second or third visit it was freezing cold. There is no central heating in South Africa, so I lit the log fire. It turned out she loved a real fireplace-fire (as much as I did, as far as I could tell). As we were enjoying the warmth and would be some time, I wondered what we could do and then thought with delight of a CD I had bought just the other day from a Christian bookstore. It was titled Ancient Words, by an artist I hadn't heard before, Michael W. Smith, and I had listened to it a few times and was absolutely loving it. As it turned out he was one of her favourite artists and she knew about the album but hadn't been able to get it. So I played it while we drank, and it was all a very pleasant camaraderie.

We spoke a lot together on those car trips. I got to know her and her family situation well, and she got to know me well. Twice during those two weeks I became concerned at the way we were just getting closer and closer, becoming what one might call good friends, but I felt God's hand on it and I knew he had organised it, so I just doubled my emotional guard.

On the last lift she gave me home, she sounded fine but there was an emotional atmosphere in the car, a great disturbance, like a blustery fog. I couldn't make it out. I wasn't sure if it was coming from her, and if so, was it towards me, or what. I started asking her how she was, "Fine", and how her family was, "Uh, ok", and she went on chatting again, but this emotion was still in the air. I couldn't tell if it was from the Spirit or from her or both. It felt like both. So I kept pressing, and she finally yielded that she was very short of money and having a tough time with long-term illness.
Did God nudge me then? Or was that me?
What, God? I asked, *I can't step in here, it'd create a relationship.*
But there's a real need, had he replied? *This girl, in fact, needs your care.* But his voice was incredibly distant and it was very, very, very hard to hear clearly. *Was* it him, or was it Satan? Or me? It was like the fog in the car was muffling it. Or was the fog Satan's doing? I bound Satan.
What was making things especially difficult for me was the need to hold back from offering help, and the sense that God *might* be telling me to help but I couldn't *tell* if it was me or him. And I didn't even know if I could meet the need. Very stressful.
I'd be happy to help, God, but I haven't had a sign, let alone a sky-writing level sign! Is this you?
Silence.
My silence caused her to unburden herself more. She spoke about her mom and dad having gotten divorced, and fighting, and how her mom would not let her live at home as she "needed to stand on her own two feet", and other things that were worrying her. Then apologised for over-sharing. I felt so much compassion for her, but at the same time I had set a fence for good reason.

But in the end as we approached my place I couldn't ignore her great need, despite my caution, and I felt, most uncertainly, that money might answer the nudge, so I asked her if x amount of money would help, terrified that I was creating a relationship.

She refused to accept it, saying only that if worse came to worst she'd call me, which left me in the dark as to whether the nudge was from God or not. Now we had advanced the relationship for no gain and I still wasn't sure if I was hearing God properly at all. There was such a clash between the dim s*he needs your care*, and my *I'm not going into any relationship without your clear sign, God.* And would God tell me to at least offer money, if she wasn't going to take it? *Was it God?* I felt so off-balance, spiritually. (But as I discovered later, just knowing that there was a backup plan took a great weight off her shoulders.)

The next day or so she fell very ill and called me to let me know she couldn't provide a lift. It was sunny anyway so I wasn't bothered, but I found out she had no clue about the right things to take for it, which I had plenty of, nor did she have the money for them, so I told her I'd bring them. After work I walked the extra 3 or so miles to her address and she was amazed I'd do that for her, but I told her it was no trouble at all, and returned home, happy that I'd been able to help her, concerned that I was happy about it.

I decided to pray for her to get better like the first time, but I found, though I could pray, it wasn't going to be the same – I just didn't seem to have that same faith available to do it powerfully with.

That weekend, I did some soul-searching. I realised that I had grown very fond of her, and I was within an ace of falling in love with her, and that if that happened, I was sunk without a trace. I thought of all my defences and how they hadn't worked and I couldn't think of any more, and besides, we were down to the wire. So I decided to cut all ties for a really long period.

After the meeting that week I spoke to her privately, and said, "I have to tell you something. We've been seeing each other a lot lately because of the car and all, and I feel like we've become friends, but I really don't want it to develop into something more. I've had a few bad relationships and I promised God that I would not enter another one without him telling me, in literal sky-writing or its equivalent. So I really feel I have to take a break from seeing you, just to protect myself from developing feelings for you. Do you mind if we stop seeing each other for some time?"

"Sure," she replied. I discovered later that, while I was thinking a*ll contact banned*, she was thinking *no casual meeting one another between the weekly fellowship meetings*.

Then the police called me.
"Sir, we have your car. It was discovered on the grass verge of the M5 at Athlone. It's undamaged, except that the cigarette lighter is missing. It still has plenty of fuel in it."
"Oh, wonderful!" I said. "That's amazing!"
Then they added, "Yes, for some reason, I don't know why, we've had it in the impound for two weeks. Can you come to collect it?"
I sure could, and hung up.
(TWO WEEKS, POLICE?!?! YOU HAD IT FOR TWO WEEKS AND YOU DIDN'T TELL ME?!)

"Well God... you know what... I'm so grateful the car's perfectly safe and sound, thank you, but I have a strong suspicion you, er…. stole it? – well, ok, you aided and abetted… – or well, *allowed* and abetted those thieves to take it. Isn't that getting a bit close to wrong? Would you *do* a thing like that?"

“It’s been kept safe,” he said. “It’s not stolen now, is it?”

“Well, yeah... but I'm so suspicious. Are you leading me to a relationship with this girl? If so, won't you please give me sky-writing?”

No reply.

The following week, I got a desperate call from the new girl – wait, she’s no longer new, and she has a name – Charmaine.

“I have to go to my brother's engagement function, but I really don't want to go on my own because I won't know almost anyone there and they'll all be drinking and I'll feel like a spare part and very uncomfortable. And the parking is in the middle of Cape Town late at night which is dangerous. I've phoned quite a few friends but can find absolutely no one free to go with me. Please, if you don't mind, could you consider coming with me? I’m sorry, I wouldn’t have called you but I’m really desperate.”

Well, I was annoyed at first. She broke my rule. But the Spirit spoke to me – *you had no real place to phone her when your fish died, she's in a similar strait now. She may not have even understood your rule the way you did.*

So I said, yes, sure, but inside I was very worried. My last fence was down. If I could not pick it back up after this, how was I going to stop myself from falling in love? She was perfect in every way.

We went to the function and I enjoyed her company so much, as always. When I got home, on the outside, I was still strong, still adamant. But on the inside, I knew I was done. I loved her. But as sure as I knew my own name, I was never going to tell her so or let her see it.

She called me again a few times, I can’t recall what about, and I didn’t have the heart to say please don’t call. She seemed to have misunderstood my rule completely.

After a week or two she started popping in for a visit when she felt a bit down or stressed. Lured by the Horlicks no doubt (I had no idea she loved it that much). It seemed that she thought the break time was over. We’d listen to the Michael Smith album or some others and chat. I found it too hard to be cruel and refuse, and besides I was still haunted by God having said to me, she needed my care. And I had God’s peace on it. Allow it for now, was what I felt.

Then one day she invited me to supper with her mom on the coming Saturday. Inside, I sighed. The last trace of my last fence had well and truly gone down, but in my spirit, it just felt right, full of the peace of God. So I said yes. So we were now good, even close, friends – too bad. I could *definitely* keep this at the friendship level, and I *would*. I certainly felt a major peace and the presence of God on our relationship, and without sky-writing I was still secure: I would never say one word about anything more.

CHAPTER 23. SKY WRITING

One thing I still did very often was to randomly read my Bible. I'd sit or kneel on the floor next to my bed and since years ago I had got tired of picking random verses I now always invited God to give me a passage, and he almost always did. With a very heavy emphasis on the Psalms, which I grew to love. Especially over and over again, these two:

> Psalm 63:1-2 [A Psalm of David, when he was in the wilderness of Judah.]
> O God, thou art my God; **EARLY will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee**, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is; **To see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary**.

> Psalm 61:1-8 [To the chief Musician upon Neginah, A Psalm of David.]
> **Hear my cry, O God; attend unto my prayer. From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the rock that is higher than I. For thou hast been a shelter for me, and a strong tower from the enemy. I will abide in thy tabernacle for ever: I will trust in the covert of thy wings.** Selah.
> For thou, O God, hast heard my vows: thou hast given me the heritage of those that fear thy name. Thou wilt prolong the king's life: and his years as many generations. He shall abide before God for ever: O prepare mercy and truth, which may preserve him. So will I sing praise unto thy name for ever, that I may daily perform my vows.

But also on multiple occasions, these two:

> Psalm 27 [A Psalm of David.]
> **The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?** When the wicked, even mine enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell. Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear: though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident. **One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD**, and to enquire in his temple. For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock. And now shall mine head be lifted up above mine enemies round about me: therefore will I offer in his tabernacle sacrifices of joy; I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto the LORD. Hear, O LORD, when I cry with my voice: have mercy also upon me, and answer me. [When thou saidst], Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, LORD, will I seek. **Hide not thy face far from me**; put not thy servant away in anger: thou hast been my help; leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation. When my father and my mother forsake me, then the LORD will take me up. **Teach me thy way, O LORD,** and lead me in a plain path, because of mine enemies. Deliver me not over unto the will of mine enemies: for false witnesses are risen up against me, and such as breathe out cruelty. I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living. **Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD.**

> Psalm 1 **Blessed is the man** that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But **his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted**

> **by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.** The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish.

There were many other Psalms. But he also led me to a few other passages repetitively. I remember the first time he said, Isaiah 41 verse 10. I had no clue what it was about, but when I read it, he touched my soul and said, *I mean this for you. You are weak, but you are mine, and I am strong.*

> **Isaiah 41:10 Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.**

and it just hit home very deeply.

God always spoke to me when he gave me a verse. I would read it, and then he would open a meaning of it to me. But the day he gave me Isaiah 41 it was very special. It was like he was saying to me – but wait, let me give the broader context -

> Isaiah 41:8,10-14 **But thou, Israel, art my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen**, the seed of Abraham **my friend.**
> **Fear thou not; for I am with thee**: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, **I will help thee**; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.
> Behold, all they that were incensed against thee shall be ashamed and confounded: they shall be as nothing; and they that strive with thee shall perish.
> Thou shalt seek them, and shalt not find them, even them that contended with thee: they that war against thee shall be as nothing, and as a thing of nought.
> For I the LORD thy **God will hold thy right hand**, saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee.
> **Fear not, thou worm Jacob**, and ye men of Israel; I will help thee, saith the LORD, and **thy redeemer**, the Holy One of Israel.

He spoke so particularly and lovingly to me, it was like he was saying to me, “I know you're a worm. But I'm on *your* side, as you are on *mine*. You are special to me. I will *always* look after you. Be strong, and of a good courage. I will *never leave you nor forsake* you. You are *mine*.”

And again and again over several years he had several times told me, “Isaiah 41:10”, and I loved it when he did it. It became my favourite verse between him and me, just because he made me feel very special when he gave it to me, and I caught also an awesome glimpse of the incredible glory and power of the righteousness of God, like it was an executive *force*, an unbreakable *shield*, as well as his tender understanding of our foolishness.

One Saturday morning, I decided to read the Bible and pray, and when I asked God if he had a passage, he said, “You know that one about Fear not, for I am with thee? Go read that one.”

“But father,” I replied, “I don't remember where it is.”
“You'll find it.”

“But I don't know where to start looking!”
“Don't worry, you'll find it.”
“But God, why don't you give me the reference?”
“Open your Bible and you'll find it.”

I didn’t think so. It’s a big Bible. The verse could be anywhere in the thick of it. I’d be ages paging back and forth. I’d tried it before when I had a better idea of where to look. Reading pages and pages looking for a verse and not finding it... No.
“But why not just GIVE ME THE REFERENCE?”
Silence.
“God, why not give me the reference? I honestly can't remember where it is...”
Silence.
Weird.

Hmm.
Maybe I should just open my Bible randomly and start looking forward and back from there. He did say I would find it, so it might not be too painful...

So I opened it randomly near the middle, and started to scan the text, and the very first thing my eye fell upon was “Fear thou not; for I am with thee…” In all seriousness. Isaiah 41:10.

Amazed, I closed the Bible, and opened it again in a similar manner. No, it fell open in the Psalms. Again. And again. I tried holding it closed with the spine balanced in my palm and letting it fall open very very slowly, with little shakes to encourage a used page in Isaiah to open first, but no luck. Several times. I think on one of these tries it did indeed open in Isaiah, but many chapters away from 41, which is when I gave up trying to make it happen.

Wow, I thought, *God made it open at exactly the right place and my eyes fell upon the exact verse. That's like a miracle. But why? Does he have something important to say to me? Surely, this is a big moment!*

Anyway, I found the place again (I had upon opening it saved it to my memory, Isaiah 41:10) and read it again, and waited for God to speak to me, to open a meaning for me. But I read it alone. And when I paused, afterwards, waiting for God to speak: nothing but silence.

“God? Don't you have something to say about this verse, since you led me here, especially in such an odd way?”
Silence.
“God?”
Silence.
“God, I'm sorry if I offended you somehow...”
Silence.
“Well, I don't know what I've done, or if you meant it to be this way, but you know I am getting nothing out of this...”
Silence.
“Well, okay, God. Sorry if I messed up, I do appreciate your word though, and I love this verse so much, it's my favourite. Thank you for it.”
Silence.

It was like he had *disappeared*. SO, so very ODD! He'd never done that before, and why? I tried to think if there was some meaning I ought to be taking out of it, but no. Nada. I shrugged it off. God knows what he is doing. I've done all I can and if I've messed up I'll have to wait until he tells me.

It so happened that this was the Saturday Charmaine had invited me to dinner with her mom.

I was a little worried that her mom and I might not hit it off and there'd be awkward silences in the conversation, simply because I was still shy of strangers, but I needn't have been. We had a lovely dinner and pleasant conversation throughout.

Then after dinner, still at the table, there was a peaceful lapse in the conversation, and my mind wandered, and I recalled the very odd thing that had happened to me in the morning. I checked with God if it was okay to share and I felt it was.

So I told them about how I'd regularly ask God what to read, and there was one special verse to me, Isaiah 41:10, but how he had so strangely led me to it that morning without the reference, and then never elaborated on it, but bizarrely just gone absolutely quiet, like he had disappeared.

Both Charmaine and her mom agreed it was very odd. Soon after, while her mom was in the kitchen, Charmaine asked if she and I could talk outside for a short while.

There she told me that she had been praying about us – she also had felt this inevitable drawing of us together – and she had prayed, silently in her thoughts, "Oh God, I don't want to make the wrong decision, I only want your will. If this is a relationship that is from you – if Anthony is to be my husband – then please let me know by leading him to say something about this passage in Isaiah 41." She never told anyone because she wanted it to be a sure sign.

The reason she had asked for Isaiah 41 was because God had given that to her as a special verse – verses 10-16, in fact. It was such a special verse to her, yet no one knew of this, so she reasoned that if God led me (Anthony) to that verse, and led me to talk about it, she would know beyond a shadow of a doubt that God had brought us together.

She too had had several bad relationships, and had been somewhat bruised by them and was not looking for marriage. But after the police kept my car for the two weeks, she also had begun to suspect what was afoot by the Lord.

I could see how sincere she was, and explained how God had dealt with me too on Isaiah in much the same way, and how I had sworn off all relationships without sky-writing or its equivalent, but that I really felt that this was as close as you could get – plus, I had this feeling in my heart the whole time that God meant for me to care for her.

So, that night we kind of ended up agreeing to marry without either ever asking the other. I don't think we even mentioned the word marriage, but we both knew. I had one small doubt – she was well overweight, which didn't match my list. A healthy weight was very important to me. BUT I knew beyond a shadow of a doubt that I had been given my sky-writing, and besides, weight isn't a permanent attribute, it varies, plus, she needed someone, so it seemed capricious to make it a sticking point, such as demanding that she lose weight first. How petty would that be.

Some days after this, I awoke one morning, got up, got dressed and an odd thought came to me out of nowhere, with a sense of alarming reality to it:
"You're impotent."
How strange, I thought, where did that come from?
A few minutes later, it came again. "You're impotent." It felt persuasive and real.
What *is* this?, I thought. Surely this is not the Spirit. He would not tell me like that. It's probably a demonic spirit.
A few minutes later, it came again. "You're impotent. You will not be able to meet your wife's needs." The reality of it hit me like a ball and chain thumping into a tree so heavily it shudders. With a great effort I threw the reality off and countered it with "That's a lie! God is my life and strength!"
"No, you're impotent!" it came again.
"No I'm not! I am healthy!"
"You. ARE. Impotent!"
This is so strange, I thought. There has been no sign of this, and God has not said this to me. It can only be an attack by a spirit trying to make it come true.
"Father," I prayed, "can you help me resist this spirit?" and then I bound it aloud in Jesus' Name. Yet a few minutes later, it came again.
Okay, so that's the way you want to play it, I thought to myself. Persistence, huh? And God is allowing it for some reason. Perhaps to strengthen me, or test me for some purpose. Okay. I can play the persistent game.
"That's a lie," I said. "God is my life. I am perfectly healthy."
Again it came a few minutes later. Again, I replied as before. And so it continued, throughout the day, to my amazement. Attack – Block! … Attack – Block! … Attack – Block! … Attack – Block! … Attack – Block! … Attack – Block! I also bound it regularly in Jesus' name.
Hour after hour, every few minutes. What *is* this, I thought?! I know God is allowing it for a reason. Is it teaching me to be strong? Am I taking hits on behalf of someone else? Is it showing me how persistent and persuasive and dominating the devil can be?
Attack – Block! … Attack – Block! It went on even while I was going to sleep. "I am healthy, thank God!"
And the next morning, to my consternation, it was still there. It was an effort to block every time, and I wondered for how many days it would continue, and how many days I could remain standing on God's truth. It was intense. I suffered an onslaught of stress and accusation and fear and worry and this insistent reality without let up, and every time, I blocked with my faith, my reality, that God had given me.
Again I went to sleep blocking the insistent thought. I can and will do this for the rest of my life, I thought. I can out-stubborn you, you old spirit. I rest in God's truth. Part of me was dismayed at the thought of having to live like this for some time, because my mind was not free to pray or think other thoughts, but I knew God was allowing it so I rested in my trust in him and just settled down for the long haul.
However, on the third day, when I awoke, it was gone, as if it had never been. I guess I won that round.

CHAPTER 24. YOU'VE GOT THE WRONG RING!

So after nine weeks of meeting one another, we were unofficially engaged to be married.

We spent a lot more time in each other's company and got to know each other better, then I took her to meet my parents and they loved her. Her parents were already in favour (in fact they even went out and played golf together when they heard) so we got engaged officially. George wasn't a big town so when I went to the jeweller's I wasn't sure I'd find much, but it was much, much worse than I'd hoped for. The diamond on the best engagement ring they had was small, hunkering down between bright clasps twice its size. I bought it anyway, as it was the best they had, and I didn't want to wait until we got back to Cape Town to make it official.

Charmaine showed zero signs of disappointment as I showed her the ring, and explained it was the best I could find in George, so I felt relieved, and left it at that.

Then we decided that we needed the pastor's blessing first, so we agreed to put off announcing it in church until we'd had a chance to talk to them. There was a senior pastor but a subordinate pastor handled marriage counselling with his wife, and he was also the pastor in our area, i,e. our local pastor, so we called and arranged a meeting with them.

At the meeting they were a bit concerned at the rapidity of the decision but as we talked to them and shared what had happened they quickly became more comfortable and agreed to do the pre-marital counselling with us, starting a few days later, which is basically a chance to check your expectations and compatibility at a deeper level as well as give you a greater understanding of how to love and look after each other once married.

I decided that I would ask Charmaine to marry me on the first day of our pre-marital counselling session, with the pastors present as witnesses. I think I checked with Charmaine that that was okay with her, actually. All good.

But on the morning as I awoke, with an hour to get dressed and get to the meeting, God said me as clear as day, "You've got the wrong ring."
Huh?? I thought, bewildered.
"This is what the right ring looks like!" he said, and showed me in my mind's eye up close, about 6 inches away, a solitaire engagement ring with a big bright diamond, facing somewhat away from me. I saw its design very clearly, but was puzzled.
"But God, where is it?"
"You'll find it."
"But God, I don't even know where the jewellery shops ARE! And I haven't got time to search out their addresses and map the routes, let alone all the time it'll take me to search their wares for a ring like that! This is *crazy*! It can't be done! Can you tell me where to go? Even if you do I doubt I'll make it!"
"Go. You'll find it." he replied.
Sigh. "Ok". I was getting used to this.

So I JUMPED out of bed and into my clothes, brushed my teeth in 2 seconds, my hair in less, grabbed my car keys and wallet and sprinted out to the car, thinking, what suburb, first of all... I don't think there are any here in Kenilworth or Newlands or further south... Claremont. That's my

only hope. It's not far from the pastors, and it's a rich suburb full of classy shops. The central shopping centre there, Cavendish Square, is very likely to have a jewellery store. And if not, I'll probably find one nearby. And if I can't find the ring there.... then... mission failed. I would be right, God wrong. I'd just have to use the old ring.

(BTW I know God can't be wrong. But I cannot explain how much of a person he has become to me and how it FEELS like sometimes he might be wrong. What I really mean is, have I misheard him. But the hearing feels so clear, I can't take mishearing onboard either. So I tease him about maybe being wrong though we both know what I really mean. I hope this doesn't sound blasphemous. I don't think it is. It's like a joke between us and he just feels so personable to me I can't help it. Sometimes he'll warn me about something, like, t*he pot downstairs is about to boil over*, and I'll dash down and see it about to boil over and say, "You're *RIGHT*, Lord!" Stupid, huh. Sometimes I'll mis-hear. He might say, *the bacon under the grill is done*, and I'll look and say *thank you!* but on the one or two occasions where I've missed it I've said, *you're wrong, Lord*, with a wink because we both know I was the one who missed it. Oh I hope it's not disrespectful. I don't mean to be rude, it's just so funny when I hear wrong. With my mind I know he's always right, of course.)

I drove to the shopping centre, parked, and ran in, with about 10 minutes to look for a ring.
I ran down one side of shops, and there ahead of me I saw a jewellery store at the end. I scooted in and breathlessly explained that I need to get engaged in 30 minutes and I was looking for a particular style of engagement ring, gold, large diamond solitaire with clasps which let in a lot of light, what did they have?

The attendant said with a calming smile. "I'm sure we'll have something along those lines," and went and retrieved a tray from somewhere, laid it on the counter and asked me if I liked any. As I ran my eyes down the first column, about the fifth ring caught my eye. It caught my eye because it was the SPITTING IMAGE of the one I had seen in my mind's eye that morning.
"This is the one," I said, shocked, and held it up and looked at it closer. About 6 inches away, slightly facing away from me. And it felt like this moment was where God had got the image from which he had shown me earlier. If I could have taken a photo of the real ring I was looking at in my hand and the one I had seen in my mind's eye, you would not have been able to tell they were not the exact same photo, except my fingers were now in the picture.

It was a very high quality diamond, with a tiny flaw you couldn't see but which added colour.
"What size is her finger?" they asked, "We can alter it for you here."
Gosh! I hadn't even thought of the size! Luckily I had the other ring that fitted with me. I handed that one over, saying "This one fits. I got it in George. It was the best they had."
"The best they had? Odd...*" they replied. "Well, this ring is the same size, so no need to alter it."
"Oh good! How much is it?"
It was expensive. I was glad to be a contractor with my taxes in the bank. But I could do it. I pulled out my card, bought it, and sprinted back out to my car. I wanted to swap the ring into the old one's box as a surprise.

> * Months later when I was next in George I took the first ring back and explained what had happened and asked if I could return it for some of the cash back. They kindly gave me a full refund but were bewildered about the idea that they had nothing better. I was adamant that that is what I had been told, whereupon they went to the back and returned with a tray of rings with huge (though rather plain) diamonds! It was inexplicable.

I got the rings swapped in their boxes, and scooted off to the meeting. I was the last to join, but just on time, if a bit breathless. We sat and spoke for a while with the pastor and his wife, and then before they started, I said, “I just want to ask Charmaine to marry me first, if that's ok?” They smiled.
I turned to her, “Will you marry me?” and she shyly said “Yes” then I gave her the box, and said “You open it and put it on.”
She took the box, smiling, “You’re supposed to put the ring on my finger”. Then she opened it, and her jaw dropped. She look up at me, totally bewildered. “You've got the wrong ring!!”
“No, it's the right ring,” I smiled. The pastors smiled again, amused. I had to explain to them how I had got the wrong ring at first.
She took it out of its box, looking flabbergasted, and still confused. “It's so beautiful!! Are you sure?! Could you afford it?!” and she cast me a worried glance.
I reassured her and told her God had got me to change it that morning, so she put it on, and kept glancing at it the rest of the session.
It really is a beautiful ring. Simple (uncontrived), elegant, bright with light. A lot like her.

The counselling went really well, we were well aligned and had no issues. The wedding was planned for September, a few months' time.

While we were engaged, Charmaine really started to fall apart health-wise. She had been paying for her rent and food and tuition with money she earned by managing a pizza parlour, so she was working 24/7. To make up for the lack of sleep, in the morning she drank a stimulant drink packed full of vitamins and caffeine, and to get through the day she drank a cup of coffee every hour. To get to sleep again at night, she abused a cold and flu medicine to make herself drowsy. This was on top of never really recovering from a very bad viral attack which the doctors had not been able to identify, but had left her unable to even walk to the bathroom for weeks at the time. Now she was unable to even proceed with completing her university masters.

When I discovered this, I immediately said to her, this is crazy. You have to stop taking those drinks right now, they're damaging you, and so is doing the extra work. Come stay at my place, my flatmate has left and you can have his bedroom.

So she moved into his room, and went to sleep, and woke up 23 hours later.
The next time she went to sleep, she slept for 22 hours. And the next, for 20. And so on, until she came down to about 10 hours, and that’s where it’s been ever since.
Just a note to say, we didn't sleep together, of course, until we were married.
But I cooked and washed the dishes and just let her rest, and she recovered reasonably well, but we later discovered that she had full-blown M.E.
In the end she had to give up her masters, sadly.

With the help of her mom, Charmaine and I planned the wedding. We felt strongly that we were both very dedicated to God and that he would use us somehow, so in faith as an offering up to him of all of ourselves, and because it just felt right, we put a Bible verse on the invitation:

> **The spirit of the LORD** [*YHWH, the I AM*] **God is upon me**, because the LORD hath anointed me to **preach good tidings unto the meek**; he hath sent me to **bind up the broken-hearted**, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound. – Isaiah 61:1

It occurred to me that people could think it was a bit vainglorious, but I felt God had grabbed us not the other way around and that it applied, so I didn't care.

Praying about the wedding beforehand, I really felt that it was a great opportunity to reach people who don't ordinarily go to church, and I prayed that God would use it. The day before, I even began to feel that my prayers had been answered, and that God would speak to the people present, so I rang the pastor and just said, I really feel that God will give you a word for the people on the day, so please could keep an ear out for it?

On the day, at the altar, after our vows were said, the pastor prayed for us and for all, and then received a word of prophecy for Charmaine:

> "My daughter, you are very weak, and I'm giving you to someone who is going to love you and look after you every day of your life."

(I found out later that she felt mildly insulted. :) She at that stage did not yet know that she was not just temporarily ill, but had M.E., which was later to develop into a host of issues like Crohn's disease and diabetes.)

Then there was a word for me, which I don't recall too well (the family member responsible for recording the wedding messed up the video). Something close to this:

> "My son, I know your heart for me, and how you seek me with all your heart, and I am going to show you secrets."

I'm not too sure what these secrets are, but I think they are better understandings of God and the Bible.

For instance, for a time God kept leading me to Matthew 16, and never elaborated on it for me. The bit that stuck out for me though was:

> And when his disciples were come to the other side, they had forgotten to take bread. Then Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees. And they reasoned among themselves, saying, It is because we have taken no bread. Which when Jesus perceived, he said unto them, O ye of little faith, why reason ye among yourselves, because ye have brought no bread? Do ye not yet understand, neither remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets ye took up? Neither the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many baskets ye took up? – Matthew 16:5-10

God led me to that verse a million times before I twigged:

With God, you don't pay for your sincere mistakes.

He covers it for you.

That's a big deal. For example, very recently, taking Charmaine to a further away hospital, I accidentally sped past a camera. It was a 50 mph freeway that slowed to 40mph for a roundabout, and after the roundabout (I was distracted listening to Charmaine) I instinctively felt it had gone to 50 mph again as the conditions were back to freeway (and in fact safer than before, with high walls around.)
But it was still 40 mph and I went through the camera at 46 mph.
Now there's a new law where they can fine you up to 50-75% of your weekly salary at 46 mph in 40 mph zone, which really hurts as first of all, it can take two months to earn that back as you have living costs, and secondly, all my spare money is given away.

But it doesn't hurt me. Because I remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets they took up, and the seven loaves of the four thousand. I am in God's arms. However he does it, it will all work out okay.

(Update: I received the fine a month later. It was not 75% but just 7% of my weekly income.)

There is another instance of a secret revealed, which I describe in more detail later, where I realised that the faith of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who walked unhurt in the midst of King Nebuchadnezzar's fiery furnace, was open to them being burned alive. From their words I learned that faith is far from the *insistence* or *dictate* that something happen, or a *denial* of reality, but the sureness that *God's will* is as good as done, whether what we desire happens or not, in a submitted dependence upon God.

(There is also a legitimate faith which knows that the thing desired *is* received, and will appear, and I'm not knocking that. I'm just saying that it is also within the compass of faith to know that God's will shall be done – open to receive the miracle, but also open to not receive it. It is also not simply idle trust, as you trust a chair to hold you up when you sit on it, and not the fake faith of the powerless, uncertain, lazy attitude of 'ke sera sera, whatever God wills, will be – sometimes God says yes, sometimes God says no'. No! It is being *certain* of God! You *could* insist by faith but, not knowing if it's within God's will, you submit. But this is a complex topic and I haven't space to elaborate upon it here.)

Finally, there is a scene where the Pharisees bring a woman to Jesus caught in the very act of adultery, and they ask him whether she should be stoned to death according to the law of Moses.
Now this was a big catch-22, because under Roman law they were not allowed to, so if Jesus upheld the Law of Moses, he would be chargeable to the Romans; but if he upheld the Roman law, he would be seen as advocating the breaking of God's law.
However, he said nothing, but *crouched down and started writing in the dust*.
When they pressed him again to answer, he then answered them with "Let he that is without sin among you, cast the first stone."
And then he crouched down again and started *writing some more*.
Now something very strange happens: The Pharisees start to leave, one by one, *beginning with the eldest*, all the way down to the *youngest*.
How or why in order of age?, I wondered *Surely, if they just felt they were beaten by his statement, they would all generally arrive at that conclusion together, and break up in a motley fashion, or as a group? Why so neatly, in so organised a manner? Even if the eldest was their leader, why did they*

*not all breakup when he left? But they all stayed, in **age** order, almost as if they were waiting for their name to be called.*
And then it hit me, out of the blue.
They *were* waiting for their name to be called – in a sense.
What would make them leave individually but the fact that Jesus was calling them out individually with his writing in the sand? "He that is without sin among you..." – is *this* sin yours?
But how would it be something they personally would recognise and make them want to leave, without the crowd realising?
I felt pretty sure that what Jesus was writing in the sand was a woman's name. The name of each woman that each Pharisee was in sin with.
It feels like the only possible explanation – or something very like it. It does not expose them, and yet it threatens to expose them if they stay.
At the end, when the last one had gone, *in the absence of any prosecutors* Jesus looked up and said, "Woman, where are thine accusers? Hath no man condemned thee?"
She said, "No man, Lord."
And Jesus said unto her, "Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more."

BTW, note that the law of Moses commands that *both* the man and the woman are to be brought to the judgment and stoned. Where was the man? Why was he not brought? Was he an accomplice? Was he perhaps even a Pharisee himself? Moreover, there had to be *two or three* witnesses – so many to catch them in the act! Were they Pharisees too? How else would the Pharisees know exactly where to find the couple in the act? People are normally extremely secret about having illicit sex.
They had already been searching for a way to catch Jesus out.
And don't think that some of these accusers were not evil enough to have a woman on the side. Jesus repeatedly called them snakes and of their father the devil. But also it could be any sin with a detail that could be threatened to be revealed.

Of course these reflections may not be what God meant by secrets, but if so, I still don't know what they are, unless they are understandings of his word, such as called and elect (see the THEOLOGY chapter.)

And so anyway, we were married within months of meeting one another, and despite the inevitable ups-and-downs and arguments of marriage, she has been a blessing and a wonderful companion to me.

I should also add a final note here. Charmaine did indeed fit every single point in my list of what I wanted in a wife except for her weight, which, even though it never came off, wasn't a permanent part of her. Indeed, one morning while we were on honeymoon at my favourite surfing spot, Vic Bay (how sweet of her to suggest that!) I was sleeping on my back and awoke to see a beyond-humanly beautiful face, the face of an angel, hovering above mine, and nearly had a heart attack, thinking my time had come to be called home. Then she spoke, and I realised it was Charmaine. :)

I cannot fathom how God did it.

CHAPTER 25. GOD WILL PROVIDE HIMSELF A LAMB

By now I had landed up with three student loans to pay off. Mine, Charmaine's, and the Congolese Christian I had stood surety for in Rosebank Methodist church. A couple of years earlier the university had contacted me. They had been trying unsuccessfully to get hold of him as he hadn't started paying off his loan, and regrettably I was now liable, could we agree a monthly amount?

They sounded relieved to hear me accept the obligation, and I set up a payment plan with them for as low a monthly payment as would satisfy them, hoping he would return in time to take the bulk of it off my shoulders, and they understood that and were decent about it.

Now, many years before, a much older friend had encouraged me to buy a certain stock that was going through the roof. It was a hot tip from a friend of a friend... and he pointed out that you never really can lose money with shares, as long as you don't sell them, the price will come back up sooner or later. I had never bought shares before but on his advice I engaged a broker and tried to buy at the current price but the price had already moved up by the time he tried. I requested the new price but again the same thing happened. Finally I said, buy 'at best', i.e. the current lowest price whatever it is. I spent R5,000 on the stock. And after I had bought the stock, in a few months it all came crashing down to 1/10 of its value, never to recover, and years later the company was bought out and the shares converted into several other small companies' shares.

I realised we had been scammed. So when the company was dissolved, I got a little angry, and said, I am going to make that money back. So I looked up how to detect a good buy on the stock market, and went through the newspaper one Saturday morning doing all the maths on each company, and found one that really stood out, called Bearing Man. They were severely undervalued. So I bought a good amount of shares and tucked them away and forgot about them.

But round about this time, I recalled them, and looked up how much they were worth, and was delighted to find that they had grown by 10x, and I had made up all my losses.

I then told a friend that I was thinking of paying it all to the university towards the Congolese student's loan, as it would make a proper dent in it and reduce the interest. But he was wise and knew the university system and said, "Why don't you call them and tell them that you have come into some money and see if they would be willing to accept it in lieu of the entire remaining balance, rather than carry on with the small monthly payments?"
So I did, and they did!
The loan vanished!

But lo and behold if not three days later the Congolese student shows up at my doorstep, with a beaming smile of love and looking so happy to see me! I was disconcerted. I had been fairly sure I would never see him again.

The first thing he said to me was, "I'm back from the Congo, and it's so good to see you! I want to thank you again so much for standing surety for my loan. I promise you I am going to pay it all back now."
I was nonplussed. Had he not received any letters from the university?
"Oh, no, you see, I went back home to the Congo, my family was struggling and they really needed me. My mother needed me."

But what about the loan?
“Oh no, that's okay. the terms of the loan are that you only have to pay it back when you start working. I haven't started working yet. I'm about to.”
“Oh I see. Well, while you were absent, the university contacted me.”
“Oh! What for?” he asked with some alarm.
I explained that they needed the loan repaid, and it took some time to explain to him that as far as they were concerned, “when you start work” is the same as when you leave the university.

(To be frank, as disarming and sincere as he was, owing to the timing of his return some small part of me still was suspicious, to my shame, that he received notice of the loan’s end and had done the whole thing on purpose. You see how we humans tend to judge? It’s disgusting.)

When he finally understood, he assured me that he would start paying off whatever was left of the loan, and would pay me back too.
I then told him the entire loan was paid off, and he looked stunned.
After asking me if I was sure, he recovered enough to say thank you so much, and apologised to me for landing me in it so badly. Then he paused.
At this moment the Lord said, “Don't ask him to pay it back.”
Then he said to me, “Can we come to some terms then, about how I pay you back?”
I told him not to worry about it.
He simply could not believe me, until I explained the Lord had said no.
Then he rejoiced and thanked me many times all over again, and praised me to the heights. I did tell him about the lump sum payment reducing the loan by some 30%, but it made no difference to him.
He left so happy and grateful.

I, on the other hand, said, “Lord, I need the money...”
“I'll take care of you.”
“Yes it's true, Lord.”

From a young age whenever I read passages of Jesus saying I will take care of you, it went straight to my heart.

> **Give to him that asketh thee**, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away. – Matthew 5:42
>
> **Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth**, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: **For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also**. – Matthew 6:19-21
>
> Therefore I say unto you, **Take no thought for your life**, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet **your heavenly Father feedeth them**. Are ye not much better than they? Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like

> one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, **shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith**? Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But **seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you**. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof. – Matthew 6:25-34
>
> Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven: **Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom**. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again. – Luke 6:37-38

Even these passages in the Old Testament hit me in the heart:

> **Cast thy bread upon the waters**: for thou shalt find it after many days. – Ecclesiastes 11:1 *(This means, to me, that even if you don't have, or miss, God's leading and give to someone he did not ask you to, the money will come back to you anyway, so no harm done.)*
>
> Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not **to deal thy bread to the hungry**, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh? Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily: and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the LORD shall be thy rearward. Then shalt thou call, and the LORD shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am. If thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity; And if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noonday: **And the LORD shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought,** and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not. – Isaiah 58:6-11

But this passage hit me the hardest when one day I finally saw one word in it:

> And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering? And Abraham said, My son, **God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering**: so they went both of them together. – Genesis 22:7-8

It's the word "himself" in "God will provide himself a lamb." There are three other places this word 'provide' is written in the KJV Old Testament, and none of them are written in the same way. I firmly believe this is not saying God himself will provide (if God says he will provide, who else will it be?), nor that God will provide *for* himself, or *from* himself. I believe it's saying that God will provide *himself*. Here, in the midst of the tragedy and beauty of a father giving up his own precious and beloved son in obedience and the trust that God will raise him up again because of the

promise, “In Isaac shall thy seed be called”, lies the rescue from sin and sacrifice in God the Father giving up his only begotten and beloved Son – in fact, *himself*. (See footnote at the end of this chapter, how Jesus shows himself to be God.)

Not only that, but Golgotha, which means the place of the Skull, where Jesus was crucified, is also on Mount Moriah. So God fulfilled Abraham’s faith to a T.

(And we approach a great mystery when we read that when Jesus was raised from the dead, the Bible says “*This day* have I begotten thee.” So Jesus was begotten of God when he was resurrected; yet, when he became the Son of Man, in Mary’s womb, he was of course already the only begotten Son of God. He had a day of being born of God, and a day of his death. They are just the wrong way round in time, the beginning after the end. In some way beyond our understanding, God really did lose his only Son, for us; and God really did give himself up for his creation.)

And so it rings ever true for me,

> Romans 8:28-32 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? **He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?**

So I trust him more and more.

From a young age I’ve always been heavily inclined to have an open hand, to the extreme, because that’s what I see in the Bible. To rely on the Lord rather than on having more than I need, especially if someone else needs it now. Of course I’ve tried to save up two months’ worth of salary when I can, that’s just like having a spare tire to me. That gives God room to, say, force me to get a new job, or whatever. But I haven’t made saving beyond that, or investing, my goal, primarily because there’s been greater needs.

I also have what you might call a condition, in which I perhaps stand alone as a fool: but when I read over and over again that God will protect me and provide for me and that everything works together for good to them that are called, I find it very hard to pay over good money for insurance on something that I can afford to take a loan to fix if it happens.

Insurance is for disasters which you cannot survive financially. The reason is because insurance always takes a cut: over your entire life, by the odds, you always pay more for insuring something than you do for replacing it (assuming you can replace it or do without it for a time). If you *cannot* replace it and do without it, then you *have* to insure. That would, for example, be a ship your business owns.

But to me, I can survive losing my house or my car. That would be something God allowed for good reason. If I insure against it, it feels to me (alone and only me) I’m not trusting God. It feels rude. If

he wants to take my house or my car, I will let him. And the corollary is, if he doesn't want me to lose my house or my car, nothing in this world or out of it can take them away from me. Nothing.

So it's hard for me to insure, personally. Even medically. God is in charge of my life. I would rather give the money to someone who needs it. And I realise this is an idiotic policy to most people, we live in a fallen world, but I'm just explaining how *I* feel. I am in, but not of, this world. This trust I have between me and God, it is a precious gift, to me. And I don't want to be rude to him and act contrary to it as if I don't trust him on these things.

And even though Charmaine is so ill and I have had several minor medical conditions, such as a tooth being eaten up by some kind of bone-destroying cell, a growth hanging out of my upper eyelid, and a heart murmur, I still believe that he is in full control of these. He kept the Israelites' shoes from wearing out for 40 years. Nothing is impossible to him. I'm not saying things won't happen, just that he has a good plan and allows only what will be worked together for good in the end.

So if I were to insure I'd feel like I'd be saying to God, I know you said you'd take care of me but, just in case, I'm going to pay the world money to take care of me as well in case you allow something too harsh. It feels incredibly rude to me. Yes he allows things we can manage and expects us to deal with them and grow. But to put money into insurance for God giving you something you cannot manage feels so like calling the Bible a liar to me. Again, this is just me. I can see how being wise and planning for events is good. Please do not copy me without knowing this in your knower.

I hope I've explained how I feel. I know that to everyone else, it's not practical. But this is me. God has every detail of my life, including my times, in his hand, fallen world or not, and I will die saying that. That's what the Bible says.

I know I ought to share, and God will provide.

Footnote: How Jesus answered the Pharisees, and how he also showed himself to be God*:

*He also elsewhere said, "Before Abraham was, I am" – but more of that under Philosophy.

And it came to pass, that on one of those days, as he taught the people in the temple, and preached the gospel, the chief priests and the scribes came upon him with the elders, And spake unto him, saying, Tell us, by what authority doest thou these things? or who is he that gave thee this authority?

And he answered and said unto them, I will also ask you one thing; and answer me: The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men? And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say, Why then believed ye him not? But and if we say, Of men; all the people will stone us: for they be persuaded that John was a prophet. And they answered, that they could not tell whence it was. And Jesus said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things.

Then began he to speak to the people this parable; A certain man planted a vineyard, and let it forth to husbandmen, and went into a far country for a long time. And at the season he sent a servant to the husbandmen, that they should give him of the fruit of the vineyard: but the husbandmen beat him, and sent him away empty. And again he sent another servant: and they beat him also, and entreated him shamefully, and sent him away empty. And again he sent a third: and they wounded him also, and cast him

out. Then said the lord of the vineyard, What shall I do? I will send my beloved son: it may be they will reverence him when they see him. But when the husbandmen saw him, they reasoned among themselves, saying, This is the heir: come, let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours. So they cast him out of the vineyard, and killed him. What therefore shall the lord of the vineyard do unto them? He shall come and destroy these husbandmen, and shall give the vineyard to others.

And when they heard it, they said, God forbid. And he beheld them, and said, What is this then that is written, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner? Whosoever shall fall upon that stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.

> [What it means by “the stone which the builders rejected”, is that the Pharisees rejected Jesus in spite of John the Baptist’s testimony and the miracles which Jesus wrought; and by “the same is become the head of the corner” is that God has raised him from the dead after he paid for our sins and will make him the king of all kings.]

And the chief priests and the scribes the same hour sought to lay hands on him; and they feared the people: for they perceived that he had spoken this parable against them. And they watched him, and sent forth spies, which should feign themselves just men, that they might take hold of his words, that so they might deliver him unto the power and authority of the governor.

And they asked him, saying, Master, we know that thou sayest and teachest rightly, neither acceptest thou the person of any, but teachest the way of God truly: Is it lawful for us to give tribute unto Caesar, or no?

But he perceived their craftiness, and said unto them, Why tempt ye me? Shew me a penny. Whose image and superscription hath it? They answered and said, Caesar's. And he said unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which be Caesar's, and unto God the things which be God's [*and note we are made in the image of God*]. And they could not take hold of his words before the people: and they marvelled at his answer, and held their peace.

Then came to him certain of the Sadducees, which deny that there is any resurrection; and they asked him, Saying, Master, Moses wrote unto us, If any man's brother die, having a wife, and he die without children, that his brother should take his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother. There were therefore seven brethren: and the first took a wife, and died without children. And the second took her to wife, and he died childless. And the third took her; and in like manner the seven also: and they left no children, and died. Last of all the woman died also. Therefore in the resurrection whose wife of them is she? for seven had her to wife.

And Jesus answering said unto them, The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage: But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection. Now that the dead are raised, even Moses shewed at the bush, when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.

> [In the Hebrew this expresses the sense that God is *currently being* the God of these men.]

For he is not a God of the dead, but of the living: for all live unto him. Then certain of the scribes answering said, Master, thou hast well said. And after that they durst not ask him any question at all.

And he said unto them, How say they that Christ is David's son? And David himself saith in the book of Psalms, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, Till I make thine enemies thy footstool. **David therefore calleth him Lord, how is he then his son?**

[Here we see that David, from whom Jesus is descended by lineage, calls the Messiah ‘Lord’ – which can only mean that Jesus is God.]

Then in the audience of all the people he said unto his disciples, Beware of the scribes, which desire to walk in long robes, and love greetings in the markets, and the highest seats in the synagogues, and the chief rooms at feasts; Which devour widows' houses, and for a shew make long prayers: the same shall receive greater damnation. – Luke 20

It is also worth hearing Jesus’ own words to his disciples:

Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.

Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?

Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him.

Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us.

Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father. And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.

If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also. At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you. He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.

Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?

Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me. These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I. And now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe. Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me. But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence. – John 14

I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.

As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full. This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.

Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you. Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you. These things I command you, that ye love one another. If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me.

If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloak for their sin. He that hateth me hateth my Father also. If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father. But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause.

But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning. – John 15

These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended. They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service. And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me. But these things have I told you, that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them.

And these things I said not unto you at the beginning, because I was with you. But now I go my way to him that sent me; and none of you asketh me, Whither goest thou? But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart. Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And

when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, because they believe not on me; Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.

I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you. A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father.

Then said some of his disciples among themselves, What is this that he saith unto us, A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me: and, Because I go to the Father? They said therefore, What is this that he saith, A little while? we cannot tell what he saith.

Now Jesus knew that they were desirous to ask him, and said unto them, Do ye enquire among yourselves of that I said, A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me? Verily, verily, I say unto you, That ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy. A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world. And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you. And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full. These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs: but the time cometh, when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall shew you plainly of the Father. At that day ye shall ask in my name: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you: For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God. I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father.

His disciples said unto him, Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no proverb. Now are we sure that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee: by this we believe that thou camest forth from God.

Jesus answered them, Do ye now believe? Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me. These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world. – John 16

These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self **with the glory which I had with thee before the world was**. I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word. Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee. For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that **I came out from thee**, and they have believed that thou didst send me. I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them. And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, **that they may be one, as we are**. While I was

with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled.

And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves. I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.

Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; **That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us**: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. **And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one**; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me. Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: **for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world**. O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them. – John 17

CHAPTER 26. £1 = R20

Given my poor financial situation, I felt it would be wise to go work in England where there was plenty of contract work at great rates, and the £/R exchange rate was 1:18 and likely to increase, so I would be able to pay off my debts and earn enough money to come back and live securely.

Charmaine was agreeable, so the next year I arranged a contract and we flew over to London, drove up to Derby and I started on the Monday.

(That trip was quite stressful. We had sent minimal things ahead by air freight and picked them up again on our arrival at Heathrow. I had calculated that it would all just fit in a large rental car and we would have time to get to the B&B and pick up the key before the deadline of 8pm. However, the freight proved hours more time-consuming to collect than the airline had indicated, and then I had to pack it into the car extremely well – the chaps were laughing saying I'd never do it, but we managed to prove them wrong by filling every square inch, even under the seats. Then as I didn't fancy trying to find a hotel, the only way to get to the B&B on time was to speed up the M1 almost all the way. But as 100 km/hr was a number I was used to, the speed I drove at didn't seem that high – I'm just very lucky I didn't get caught.)

The contract rate was excellent, but the work was menial in programming terms – I was doing junior programming work yet had the ability to create an entire bespoke system for a customer on my own. Then I read an article on the state of the coming Y2K bomb in a magazine, this was 1999, and the thought occurred to me (probably from God), we had a year or two to go and then the bottom was going to drop out of the contracting market.

So I decided to go permanent.

I found a nice sounding software company and applied. The owner/MD drove up to meet me and Charmaine at the Marriot in Derby for dinner, and we hit it off. At the end of the dinner he made me an offer which really was very good. But for me, personally, earning 150% of that as a contractor getting full time work, it made me think. Stupidly I hadn't prepared for a direct question expecting an answer right away – I had expected him to make me an offer to go and think about, but he was waiting for an answer. So I had to think about commitments and simply what the drop in income would impact. As I went hmmm in my mind and thought about it, he then quickly added, "plus a company car, which you can take as salary in lieu." That tipped the balance for me immediately, so I accepted, and in 6 months we were down in Kingston-upon-Thames working for him.

He had asked me to investigate what was causing the company the greatest problems, and I soon discovered the cause. There was a senior programmer at the helm of the development teams who was very arrogant and very wrong. He insisted on creating a bespoke version of the software for every customer. Of course this meant that any development we did was only paid for by one customer, and had to be re-done for any other; and any bugs we had, would have to be fixed multiple times over, often as many times as we had customers, and because the code wasn't identical, the fix couldn't be identical. This was a financial haemorrhage, and I approached the senior programmer about it explaining that we had to alter our approach, but despite my having been sanctioned by the MD to propose a solution, the programmer became intensely possessive

and authoritarian and threatened me that if I persisted in invading his territory he'd recommend I be let go. I was surprised by the amount of power he seemed to have.

So I reported back to the MD with my recommendation, mentioning the senior programmer's determination to block it, but he trusted in and depended on the chap too much, so decided to suck it up.

Sadly, in the midst of transferring to the new company, Charmaine fell pregnant, something I had tentatively hoped to avoid because her M.E. had become steadily worse, and she could only walk for 10-20 minutes without becoming exhausted into the next day. So I was doing the housework and dishes etc.

A friend gave her a book on pain-free birth, whose point was that a painful birth was part of the original curse on Adam and Eve, and not a necessary part of a Christian experience since Christ had set us free from the curse, and that we could fairly pray and ask for a pain-free birth.

So Charmaine did that, and followed the books' recommendations on prayer and faith building exercises. The birth was quite difficult as the baby was large, possibly due to higher sugar levels in the blood than normal. But Charmaine couldn't even feel her contractions. Zero pain at all. I recall one of the nurses saying she'd seen something like it recently, and that it was becoming more common.

During her pregnancy Charmaine had recovered remarkably well, but now after it she relapsed badly.

We desperately wanted to breast-feed for the health benefits but Rachel was born oversized and they monitored her blood sugar for about a week, so in the end we decided that Charmaine would use a breast pump while I fed the baby a warmed up bottle from the fridge. Sterilising bottles, night feeding, and looking after the baby in the evenings while Charmaine caught up with much needed sleep, really added to my load.

One day a couple of months after her birth, I came home from work and was changing her diaper as usual when I looked at her face and saw a *being* other than her, an intelligent, mature person, looking at me calculatingly through her eyes. It was unmistakable, and I looked back challengingly, but they held my gaze. It gave me a great shock.

I went to Charmaine and I asked her, "Did anything unusual happen today?"

"Oh, yes," she said. "S and I were in Boots" (a pharmacy) and I left the pram in a corner as it would be in the way otherwise, and went off to look at something. When I came back, a woman dressed all in black was bending low over the pram muttering something."

This made me feel sure our baby had been possessed, so I bound the spirit and commanded it to come out, but no visible change occurred, nor did I feel any sense of success. I had no spare time to try and think about how to deal with it, so I was at a loss. (In later years she became very difficult, and I remember one time having to discipline her for being violent and asking why she had done what she had done, and her agonised response was, "I don't KNOW" which broke my heart. But I know that her end will be good, and that God will deliver her.)

As Rachel grew she needed more rather than less attention. I was now looking after her as soon as I came home until I went to sleep, as well as going shopping (walking there and back as we had no car), making food, ironing my shirt, and cleaning, etc., until she went to sleep, when I caught up on office work; then I fed her once at night; and got up again when she woke at 5 or 6am, and looked after her again until I went to work.

I was probably getting about two sets of 2 hours sleep a night and was struggling with tiredness, but was coping, although I could not do anything but whatever was in front of me.

When my daughter was a year old, one of my clients with whom I got on well asked me to come over to Bermuda for six weeks to advise them on their incessant operator errors running their nine billing cycles, which were not only causing customer dissatisfaction but also significant financial losses and additional labour costs; as well as to discuss company strategy and the best future software path they could take. I explained that my wife was ill and couldn't look after the baby by herself, so she said, bring them along.

So we flew over (upgraded to first class free for no reason by a kind airline staff member, which was a big help for diaper changing) with six suitcases(!) and stayed in a self-catering house on a hotel estate with a swimming pool. What a blessing from God! Bermuda was lovely. The water is actually blue, even in the very shallowest of shallows, and the road to the airport goes along a couple of miles of causeway through the coral reefs, so you can see the brightly coloured fish in the water next to the road. It wasn’t cockroach season, luckily, because as a maid told me, the cockroaches really get out of hand at that time.

I had permission to work flexible hours because of my daughter, however, the client’s executive fell pregnant and resigned and was replaced by a dragon before I arrived, who insisted I arrive at 9 and leave at 5. She was a tough nut so I accommodated her where I could, though I would still happily stop to take a photograph or two on the way in even if it was after 9, which drove her crazy when a staff member mentioned it, but I just shrugged and reminded her of the arrangement. The photos only took a minute or two more.

Other than rebuking me several times for arriving after 9 despite my reminding her of the arrangement each time, and her complaining about my expenses (which were contracted in and fair) she had nothing to do with me at all, so I suspected that she wanted to renege on the agreement and claw the expense back. So I spoke to operations and discovered their main issues then decided to use the six weeks to design and build a fancy new front-end to monitor, to control and present the status of all the billing cycles’ steps on a single screen like an advent calendar, which would allow the operators to run only the next step at the right time, with a formal action required to enable a return to a completed step. I just managed to complete it in time.

(It turned out that I was right. After my return to the UK the dragon did indeed try to claw the entire expense back from my company. However my company was able to respond that we had fulfilled the contractual terms insofar as she had allowed, and she folded. In fact the client never did have another billing problem, which certainly must have made their expense worthwhile. And I'm proud to say that when my company was finally taken over years later, the only two clients still standing were my two.)

Bermuda was difficult though. To achieve the work goal I needed to do extra hours and I was looking after Rachel in all my free hours, including at night. (I had done my best to research when to stop breast-feeding and came to the conclusion – based on two facts, that a) when Samuel was handed over to Eli after he finished breast feeding he must have been old enough to manage his own toilet and go to bed by himself, etc.; and b) our milk teeth fall out at age 5 – that we should probably breastfeed for 2-3 years, unless the child stops or the milk stops, of course.)

So I was going to bed at 2am, had interrupted sleep, and Rachel would wake me very early, pulling on my arm and insisting on going for a walk. I was exhausted, but it was a precious time for which I am very grateful.

As an aside, one of the things we discovered in Bermuda was a Christian channel on TV, which we delighted in, and we learned many things from them.

While we were there, Charmaine approached me. She said, you know how we are avoiding having a baby. I really feel like God is saying to me that we ought not do that at this time. That we need to have *this* baby. I felt no red light so we agreed. She fell pregnant in Bermuda, and then we returned home to the UK.

Around this time I began to feel disturbed about Charmaine's brother.

When I had first met him, I sensed some very special destiny, or some kind of future anointing on him, very strongly. As a result I was prepared to support him in any way I could.

Now, I began to feel in my spirit that something was wrong. I asked the Lord and it felt like the Lord said he was on drugs.

I went to Charmaine and told her, and so we prayed earnestly for him that God would deliver him. Years later we discovered from him the results of our prayers.

He was indeed on drugs at that time. He was very good at DJ-ing and very familiar with that scene, and would often go out with his mates, both guys and girls, and party the night away. His friends loved him. They played all manner of PC games online together. Girls loved him too, they'd often spend the night with him. All his friends spent a ton of time with him. And they showered him with pills.

One night he'd already taken an Ecstasy pill, but it felt like it didn't work, so a girl said it's probably a dud and gave him another, and just after he took the second one he felt the first kicking in and knew he was in serious trouble. He broke away from the dance floor and went to sit down out of the way between two chairs. Everything grew dark, and then all of a sudden he was standing in a different world. A beautiful one of sunshine and grass and blue sky, with two hills ahead of him which had beautifully trimmed trees with curious leaves which reflected light in all directions as though they were covered in glitter. He was looking up at the sky at first and saw giant letters appear, scrolling across the sky, in cursive writing (not ornate, just simply written):

> Do not be afraid, the Lord your God is with you.

He was wondering about the glittery leaves and walking towards the trees when all of a sudden he was there. He held one in his hands and examined it, and when he finished, he was back where he had been before.

Then the music of the disco came back, very loud, and he remembered where he was. The girl was tapping him on the knee, asking if he was okay. He said he wasn't sure, he thought so, but he was going home now. His friends didn't understand, so he left without them and drove home, stone cold sober.

The next day when his friends arrived, they wanted to do drugs again, but he told them all what had happened and said he wasn't going to do drugs any more. Then the strangest things started happening. They'd ask him to pray for them and they would also come off drugs, or be healed of various conditions. They started flocking to his house for some weeks.

It wore off after while, but his life was permanently changed for the better.

Very interesting to me is that the message is so similar, not only to Joshua 1:9, but also to Isaiah 41:10.

> Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; **be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest**. – Joshua 1:9
>
> **Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God**: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness. – Isaiah 41:10

CHAPTER 27. DESPERATE TIMES

For her second birth, Charmaine asked God if she could feel *some* of the birth process, like the contractions, but without too much of the pain, because she wanted to have some idea of what it felt like, and God answered this prayer as well. She could feel the contractions this time, but it wasn't really painful.

This time it was a boy, and after much discussion on his name we decided on Matthew.

For us, we knew from the Bible that names were very important, and spent much time prayerfully choosing their names as we felt it impacted their destiny.

I really wanted to call our daughter Faith, but Charmaine felt strongly that it wasn't a real name, and understanding that God arranges our destiny with respect to everyone involved, I yielded after some resistance.

But as I was working at my desk one night, before we had officially named him, God suddenly spoke to me out of the blue. I wasn't even looking at God or thinking about him. "You will name him David, because he is my beloved."

And then also, for each child, I have no idea why I did this, but I asked the Lord for a song which described each child, a song of their own.

Immediately, in each case, a song came fully formed to my mind, tune and words:

Rachel Elisabeth Susan Rose,
G1 C2 B1 C2 D2
sweet smelling flowers wherever she goes,
G1 D2 C2 D2 E2
filled with the music of the Holy Ghost
G2 F2 E2 F2 G2 F2 A1
that's Rachel Elisabeth Susan Rose.
D2 C2 B1 C2 E2 D2 C2

David Joshu-a, Benjamin Rose *(in a military style)*
C3 B2 A2 G2 E2 D2 C2 E2
Leads God's army a-gainst all his foes,
C3 B2 A2 G2 F2 E2 D2 F2
Singing of the vic-to-ry he al-ways knows,
D2 E2 F2 G2 A2 B2 A2 B2 A2 G2 C3
That's David Josh-u-a Benjamin Rose
C3 C2 D2 E2 F2 E2 D2 C2

(Update: David has never to my knowledge done anything naughty or selfish. He is now an adult and has taken to reading the Bible a lot. Every now and then he comes to me with an insight as to the meaning and implications of a verse I'm very familiar with, and I'm astounded that I've never seen that before. He feels concerned at some of the doctrines of the church, such as Calvinism, once saved always saved, faith alone [see Salvation by Faith in the THEOLOGY chapter], a few

Catholic doctrines including the need to have the Eucharist to be saved, etc. I'm beginning to wonder if God is going to call him to this in a more official capacity.)

BTW I don't share this out of any misplaced parental doting over my children. I am only their guardian, they are God's. He created them, and he gave them to me to look after. I am only sharing the songs because God gave them to me, and I'm trying to touch on everything God has done with me in my life to give you an idea of him as I have come to know him.

I was going to leave the next part out, as it reflects negatively on some people, but I felt like the Lord told me to include it – it's important for context, apparently.

Unfortunately, life became very difficult for me at this time. Charmaine was able to breastfeed David but I had had 2 years of only 3 to 4 hours sleep a night, working full time and looking after a baby then toddler full time, but now with an additional baby in the mix, it was becoming too much for me. Worse still, Rachel refused to allow me to carry David as well as her at the same time, and took a real hatred towards him, hitting him violently at least once every day, sometimes with an object like a toy block. That added to my stress as I became worried he would sustain an injury.

Trying to find a manageable solution I considered going back to South Africa to live near family to get some support.

Charmaine's family would probably be best, as I knew my sisters and brothers had their own hands full. Charmaine's mom was pretty free and would gladly help and enjoy seeing her grandchildren.

So I went to the MD and explained my situation and asked how he felt about my leaving. However, he asked if it would help if I worked from home, so I decided to give it a shot.

It kind of helped in that I did not need to travel to the office nor do ironing and could get a short nap in during the day... but on the other hand, I now looked after the children during all their waking hours, in which we would go to the park, or feed the ducks, or paint, etc., so I landed up trying to get the bulk of my work done at night.

I set up an Excel spreadsheet that I could just click it and it would log my start and stop times, so that I could stop here and there for a minute or ten or forty or whatever, and know when I had achieved the required 7 hours per day. This meant that I landed up getting very experienced at working round the clock.

Life became an intense focus on staying awake and putting one foot in front of the other. At the worst of times I found out that if you sleep from midnight to 3am and then work, and the next night you work at that time and then sleep from 3 to 6am, you are less tired the next day than if you stick to the same sleep schedule, for example midnight to 3am every night.

But I simply could not easily spend time with the Lord as I used to, and so I just committed my whole being to him in trust, as I have to this day. (However, I can feel an unrighteousness creeping into my soul – it's hard to explain – so my next step is to return to prayer, and let the Lord purify me, as he used to. I am now able to do this except that writing this book has been distracting me.)

As the children grew a little older they were slightly less dependent on me and I got a little time here and there. Interestingly I discovered that I could not help wasting that time doing something relaxing and fun, like playing a PC game. Madness.

Regardless, I again felt I needed to get some help as I could feel I had no emotional reserves left. If you've ever driven a car where the brake pads have worn away completely and all you hear is metal on metal – my soul felt like that. So I called my sister S in Scotland and asked if I could move close to her and my parents and have some small synergy with meals and things, like I cook and they come round to eat, and vice versa; and if they could baby sit 2 or 3 times per week.

I got a positive answer so unexpectedly easily that I pressed her to be sure, and she affirmed it, so we moved when David was just about one year old. Unfortunately I never saw her for months. Owing to a complex situation which had power over her she could not live up to her promise, and spent much less time even with my parents, using having to help me as an excuse, so I got blamed for overworking her.

Now let me say emphatically here that I love my sister dearly. She is a kind, generous, sensitive, caring soul who wouldn't hurt a fly. I understood her situation fully. She had asked me years before for help about it. I, seeking the Lord, felt that she should simply trust him, and I'm glad to say the end was good.

Unfortunately the consequences didn't end there. Though my dad had expressed an interest in doing the garden for me, he never came round in the six months that we lived there. I still had no car so we went shopping by train, and it was even tougher than it had been in Kingston. I was unable to do important things like apply for David's permanent residence even. I remember visiting my mom and when she asked how I was, I burst into uncontrollable tears in my exhaustion and sense of helplessness.

It was unbearable, so I then asked my other sister J and her husband D in Devon if I could live near them, and swap meals from time to time and get a baby sit now and then, but they said, "Okay, there may be times we can do that, but don't think we are going to do everything for you!" (This was so unlike her I can only think that it was owing to the blame I had on my shoulders from S.)

I hurriedly explained that was not the intent at all, and so we moved house yet again. I recall spending all night cleaning up the last house and driving 10 hours the next day slapping my face and downing coffees to keep awake, but in the end I could not and pulled over for a nap halfway, so ended up getting the house keys from the rental agent very late.

Sadly, after we had moved, J and D also did absolutely nothing for me. After some weeks when I had unpacked all the important boxes I tried to organise a meal for them when I could think straight, but they were busy. I recall one evening months later in winter. It was a cold night with a blustery rain outside. We got a surprise call from them mid-evening, inviting us to come over for dinner. My heart leapt as I thought, *At last!* We still had no car so I asked that, as it was raining and a half mile walk up and down hills with a pram, and Charmaine had a cold, would they mind picking us up by car? And the response was, "Well, if it's going to be like that, the offer's off."

I was stunned. But again in their defence, this was so utterly unlike them, I suspect that there was some form of misunderstanding as a result of the time in Scotland. They are, genuinely, very loving

people. But we can all misjudge situations at times, especially if we are being oppressed by a religious spirit (see chapter on THEOLOGY).

Quite a funny moment occurred one day when I was running around trying to get the house ready for the rental agent's inspection, I opened the oven door to bung something in there and discovered a pot of mouldy old oats porridge bunged in there from the time before, six months prior! Don't laugh! I was even bathing just once a week (except when the weather was hot) to get those precious ten minutes extra sleep time a day.

Anyway, to cut a long story short, after a year there, my company had been taken over and a manager, who I strongly suspect was very jealous of me, now had the power to demand that I return to work at the office. So back to Kingston we moved again, and as there was no easy route to the new offices I bought a car to help me get to work in a decent time. Somewhere the idea of getting one on eBay was put forward, and I checked it out and felt if a seller had good reputation it might be a good call. David, now 3 years old, asked if we could get a red one, so we went onto eBay together and bought a station wagon for £2,400 which was a couple of years old. Sweet lad, when we were driving back with it and stopped at a rest station, he couldn't open the door (because of a child lock), so broke the news to me very gently: "Dad…" Yes? "I'm sorry to say, I think you've bought a dud."

It remained pretty much one foot in front of the other. By now I had realised that the company's software had what I'll describe as a fault line in the core billing area which would continue to cause major costs and customer problems indefinitely, but I needed two to three weeks uninterrupted to disentangle the code and re-design it and I knew my manager would never understand. I felt the Lord giving me the nod so I took leave and Charmaine went with the kids, now old enough to be less burdensome, to stay in a cheap B&B near my sister in Devon. The hotel staff were kind and they had a great holiday, though it quite exhausted Charmaine who was pushed to her limit.

It was worthwhile though as I was able to do a complete re-work of the code and it was in fact this re-work which not only reduced the office burden on me but also enabled the company to get its next big client, a top tier grocery chain reselling telephony, which I feel was a big plus on my CV that God used later as you'll see.

Then the estate agent wanted to remodel the section of the block of flats we were in, so we moved yet again, to another flat in the other wing. I remember feeling so reluctant to move, but as it was only over the courtyard we just used a hundreds of shopping bags. It was exhausting fetching and carrying them in such a tired out state but a lot easier than boxing and unboxing.

After that Rachel was ready for school so we chose what looked like a good religious school. Soon after, though, I discovered that they were not instructing Rachel on how to write, but letting her find her own way to draw the letters, and my confidence dropped to zero, so I moved her to a secular school with a good reputation. Unfortunately that one was worse, in that the school was teaching her nothing, and even worse Rachel was being bullied by one of the teachers. She stopped painting a variety of pictures and started painting always the same one. So we took her out again, and even though I now needed to homeschool her, it was so much easier because I didn't have to get her dressed into her uniform and drive her and collect her every day, or comb lice out of her hair regularly. In a couple of months she finished her syllabus, and her creativity came back fully.

Each night I would make up a story for them at bed-time, but I was so tired I kept falling asleep in the middle of sentences. One of their favourite series was about a Grandad who used to get involved in all sorts of adventures. We particularly laugh about the one time someone was sabotaging race-cars, and they called Grandad to investigate, and in the course of that he opened one racing car's bonnet and said, "Some people think it's the air in the carburettor, but other people think" – and here I fell asleep and a chicken drumstick popped into my mind – "it's springs... on a chicken leg". I awoke with the burst of laughter from the kids!

In the new flat I recall washing the dishes and worrying about the fact that I was so much in debt (I had arranged to help my parents financially) and unable to make a workable plan, I had to get a good homeschool curriculum, we weren't praying and reading the Bible enough, etc. etc., and I said, "Lord, what the biggest problem we need to address first?" and he replied, "You." I was so surprised! I asked, "How do you mean?" and he replied "You are the biggest problem. You're impossible to live with." When I asked him why, he remained silent. To this day I have never worked out why, but I am sure it was the Lord, it was gentle and I heard him clearly. However, Charmaine has been very much encouraged to hear it and agrees with him! :) So that just goes to show that even with good intent, we can very much be a burden to others, but the Lord can carry us through.

About three years later, the flat rent got too high (in all this stress I had been unable to buy a house and in fact was still sending money to my dad, so we were forced to still rent), so we had to move again.

The Lord somehow enabled us to find a lovely bungalow in Sunbury, a quiet suburb next to the Thames, for a very good rent. We also had a friend help move us, so the move itself was not too stressful. We were closer to nature and would see field mice and foxes and hedgehogs from time to time, so altogether it turned out wonderfully.

The children were spending more time alone now so I was getting four, sometimes five hours sleep a night, and often six hours on a Saturday night, which felt like a holiday. However for me it was still, while not quite one foot in front of the other, very much hand to mouth in terms of having time to do things outside of work, cleaning, cooking and taking the children out, etc. While I could look around more at things needing attention in the family, I was still exhausted and could not look outside the immediate needs.

On the plus side we found a pretty good church and good friends in the church, and lived there happily for four years.

Sadly though, at this house, although Rachel and David had begun playing together a bit, they drifted apart in their interests. Rachel wanted to play with dolls and David with cars. So they made a deal, if David played dolls with Rachel, she would play cars with him for an equal amount of time. However, when it came to her turn, she wasn't up to it, and asked if they could do dolls again, and she would owe him the cars time. I discovered this deal on the fourth or fifth occasion when they were playing dolls. I heard him say something about really wanting to play cars and her owing him to play cars as they had never yet, so I enquired and found out he was the proud owner of several IOUs worth of car playing hours. I asked Rachel if she could switch to cars, and she replied she just couldn't, so I asked when she felt she could, and she just shrugged. So I advised David not to play

dolls until Rachel had played cars at least once. And from that time on they never played much together again, aside from a cycling session or two.

Over the next year, around 12 years old, Rachel began to gravitate towards talking to her mom, and talking non-stop for hours. David was left alone by both of them so I spent all his alone time with him. This became the way of it ever since. He did nearly make a friend or two at the church we were in, but David is mostly bored by the children his age, while still engaging with them in a friendly way. I was just too busy to be able to think and try and change things.

CHAPTER 28. VARIOUS PROPHETIC WORDS

MY TIMES ARE IN YOUR HAND

While we were living in Sunbury, one lady who had stopped going to our fellowship group previously suddenly visited the group one day for prayer for something she didn't want to share. So we gathered round her and started praying. I felt a compelling by the Spirit to pray in tongues, and then, to pray in tongues more firmly and loudly. It felt authoritative. I did this for a minute, and then a word of God popped into my head:

My times are in your hand…
and after I spoke, came
Don't worry about the people you are leaving behind, I will take good care of them.

Only, I fluffed it. The words "my times are in your hand" are in the Bible, I think a Psalm. But it didn't make sense to me that God would say to her, "*my* times are in *your* hand." So halfway thru I stopped and switched it around: "My times are in – Your times are in my hand." And then I couldn't bring myself to say the next sentence – leaving behind? was she going somewhere? what if I had misheard? It would be so awkward! So I switched it to "Don't worry about the people close to you, I will take good care of them."

Talk about disrespect to God!!

About a month or two later, we were told she had died of cancer.

How much better would that word have been if I had just delivered it as I heard it. I should have stuck to what God told me to say, word for word. That was yet another lesson to me in obedience. Instead of worrying about 'what if I have got it wrong', I need to learn to think 'what if I've got it *right*'.

LOOK IN YOUR SPIRIT

My wife cottoned on to the fact long before I did that when she needed to know something and asked me to pray about it and ask God, if I got an answer it always seemed to be right.

For example, once my wife asked me in Sunbury, "is the postman coming tomorrow? I need to know whether to be home as I am expecting a parcel". And I looked into my spirit and saw a picture of a black postman coming down the street. Now, we have NEVER, before or since, in England or Scotland, where we have been living since 1998, seen a black postman. "Yes," I said, "and he's black", amused at how odd that was. And so it was. The next morning, the doorbell rang, and there he was, handing us the parcel.

There have been many other instances. Is so-and-so okay? I ask God to let me know, look into my spirit… tune in… wait… it drops: yes, they're just tired. Ocassionally I don't get an answer.

I have even used my spirit to guess all four coloured pegs in their places in Mastermind, out of 6 colours. We tried it about seven times, and most times I got three of the four pegs right, sometimes only two, usually the correct placing, and once all 4 correct colour and placing. But it is

very difficult because you have to focus on it without adding to it, and keep dismissing your mind's ideas, and wait until you pick it up clearly enough to know. I don't know if I could do it again.

PUT THE LIGHT ON

One time after we had left Sunbury I got up in the middle of the night to wee and as I came to the toilet door I felt like God said, "Put the light on, there's a huge spider on the floor." Well, because it had an element of fear to me I made the mistake of thinking the devil had tried to frighten me and so I went against it and left the light off.

The next morning when I went past the toilet I saw this huge spider body on the floor, as big as my hand, in the centre. It must have been crushed by my foot. I guess God had not wanted it to die, but had had to allow it because the fool didn't listen.

FOLLOW YOUR HEART WITH PRAYER

More recently, after all the events in this book, a streamer who my wife watches said he would have to give up streaming as their electricity was being shut off. Both she and I felt led to give something, so we sent him a large donation. However, subsequently, I felt moved to ask him how he was doing, and he replied that their electricity *had* been shut off that morning – at the same time as the warning letter arrived.

Clearly, their financial trouble was a lot worse than we had thought, since the money I had sent was not enough to pay all of the electricity bill outstanding and probably other arrears too.

Charmaine and I were very moved to give again but strangely, where normally we both get the same amount in our heads, this time we could not. For me, every time I considered an amount which came to me, and tried to check it with the Lord, a higher amount came into my head. Charmaine could not settle on an amount either. It was very unusual and odd. Finally I figured that perhaps the Lord was trying to say, he wanted the amount left up to me, but as much as I was okay with giving.

I settled on a substantial sum, and Charmaine was fine to give it, but because it was so large, I wanted to double-check it with the Lord before I sent it. So while I sat there at the PC, I bowed my head one more time and asked the Lord to give me some assurance that I wasn't being emotionally driven but doing the right thing. I then felt like praying in tongues would be good, so I did. It became prophetic-sounding (as if I was speaking God's words over something) and I spoke a bit louder and more forcefully. Then it faded away, and in its place came these words into my mind, clearly, like a translation of the tongues, at the speed one might speak them: "I am giving R to you, to look after, for a few months. There may be more donations to make in future."

So I sent the money saying I felt like God was telling me to send it, and his wife sent this message to me via her husband on Discord:

> "Hey, so this is his wife. I am jumping in here to message you because my husband just brought me upstairs to show me this. I want to say when you last were so generous it came in a time when we needed it so much and the gratitude, from someone who doesn't owe us a thing, was huge. But I just got chills seeing this and reading your message. I swear and

promise you I was at work last night (i work 3rd shifts caring for a disabled individual and he went to sleep at this point) and I was literally on the floor on my knees crying with my entire heart for help from God. I pray all day and talk to God like my best friend but last night, was… different. I was begging for help in some way to help make things better, crying and praying with my entire being. And then you stepped in today with that message. God was definitely here on both sides. I really do pray you and your family have everything you could ever need and more. You are so selfless and owe us absolutely nothing. and from the bottom of my heart, thank you."

A month later his wife's main patient was taken into psychiatric care, so they lost 75% of their income, and going on the prophetic word I had received, Charmaine and I were quite comfortable with repeating the donation. It is wonderful to see how God looks after his children.

It is unfortunate that I have to share our giving in this book as Jesus did say that when you give, don't even let the left hand know what the right hand is doing. But in this case, because this is a guide book for you to learn how to walk with God, I think it's worth showing how God leads, how you follow the slight leadings of your heart tenderly, and God makes it all work out; and anyway, you can see from this book how much of a fool I am, so there's no reputation being gained. Moreover, I've made it clear that all I have is God's anyway, so in reality it is not me giving, it is God. I hope that's clear.

PROPHECIES OUT OF THE BLUE

The two strangest words I have received from God were:

- I was in Cape Town in the garden and the neighbour's radio was on, a very rare thing, and the news reported Princess Diana's death in a car accident. Now I'm no follower of the royal family, all I knew of her was that she was Prince Charles' wife. But the Holy Spirit spoke to me out of the blue, this time loudly and clearly, "That was no accident! She was murdered!" To this day I have no idea why he told me.

- When the Iraq war started, God said to me it will last three weeks. Precisely three weeks later the USA took Baghdad and everyone was saying the war was won. Weird huh? Again, I have no idea why God told me.

LOST THINGS

But the one thing I have never got an answer for (except maybe once) is for where something is if I have lost it – he never tells me.

THIS IS THE DAY THE LORD HAS MADE, LET US REJOICE AND BE GLAD IN IT – PSALM 118:24

One of the things we learned from a minister we discovered in Bermuda was the importance of developing your faith through what you feed your spirit. Your spirit takes what comes in through your ears. Your own voice does that. He mentioned how every morning he'd get up and say, aloud, "Today is going to be a *good* day!"

The way I now personally understand it is that the Word of God is like a dry seed. You need to plant it into your heart by hearing it, and then you need to *water* it daily by *agreeing* with it, using your voice. It is higher and greater than the facts you see around you. When it is activated, it works to change those facts that are in disagreement with it. Your public (i.e. spoken *aloud*) agreement with God's Word makes your will a channel for God's will to work on your life.

It reminded me of how a demon had spent so much time talking to me in my sleep about how much of a failure I was, and I decided to say the same thing as that minister every morning when I got up, and did so. "Today is going to be a *good* day!" I did not notice any change from day to day, but after six months, I began to realise that a sort of peace and positivity had begun to grow in my soul. Much like a bare yard or lot of hard earth, where the grass starts to grow in little spots, all patchy. And six months after that, it was a rich green lawn of confidence in God, which I still have.

While you read the Bible, when the Holy Spirit brings a verse to life to you, write it down and pray about it and think it through, then start to say how it applies to you, every day.

For instance:

Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. – Philippians 2:12-13

> "God works in me both to will and do of his good pleasure! God *enables* me to serve him. Thank you, God!"

Behold, I give unto you power (*exousia: authority*) to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power (*dynamis: might*) of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven. – Luke 10:19-20

> "Jesus has given me authority, the complete victorious authority he has over Satan, to *step* on the enemy. He has given me *complete* control over *all* the strength of Satan and his minions. Satan himself is subject to me and must obey me as he obeys Jesus. I have all power over him in the name of Jesus. *Nothing* can harm me, and I will not tolerate any attack from the enemy at all."

A Psalm of David. The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want (lack). He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever. – Psalm 23:1-6

> "God himself is looking after me. He is providing for all my needs, physical, mental and emotional. I shall not be in want. He is with me, comforting me and leading me. I will have his joy forever."

You have to understand that in the spirit these things are done and settled. It is up to you to take them and make them your own, as if they have already happened in this world, and in so doing force contradictions and Satan to submit to them by the authority of God. *Apply* them! Speak them! Believe the Word of God is true, over all contrary facts.

CHAPTER 29. SPIRIT ENCOUNTERS

I'm not sure whether to include this chapter or not. But I feel that it may just be of use to somebody out there.

This is just a summary of four odd encounters I have had with spirits which I have not mentioned elsewhere.

1. As a child sometimes I had to sleep in the room of the Afrikaans families' grandmother after she passed away. On several occasions while going to sleep I seemed to sense a wolfish hand placed lightly upon the bed, and on one occasion, heavily enough for me to sense the touch – which finally provoked me to bind it in the Name of Jesus and forbid it, and it did not recur. A friend says they have had much more powerful encounters, including waking with sleep paralysis while a being climbed up upon his back and whispered in a strange language into his ear.

Note in all these events, even as 'aliens' as they sometimes pretend to be, the Name of Jesus is something they cannot stand up to.

2. Coming home from boarding-school by train one day, the train was pulling slowly away and a crowded platform was passing in front of my eyes as I leaned out of the window, when my gaze chanced upon the eyes of a young woman in the crowd who had also been casually gazing, as it appeared to me, and we both started violently and visibly as we recognised each other's spirits – it was like an electric shock in the spirit – it felt like I had known her in the past as very close and very important to me – and yet I had never seen her before in my life.

Note that we cannot have past lives:

> "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation." Hebrews 9:27-28

3. After moving to the UK, I woke up in the middle of the night for no reason and saw a strange sight, what appeared to be a young or short woman with shoulder length hair dimly visible standing about two to three foot away from my bedside pointing a device at me fixedly as if she was scanning me with it. It was about the size of a hand gun though it looked more like a bulbous water pistol, coloured red with yellow markings, and the pointy end facing me was shaped like a lemon. It made no sound and emitted no light but I just felt sure she could be up to no good.

I was immediately wide awake (I wake extremely easily) and absolutely outraged, and sat up in a swift motion, swinging my legs off the bed and snatching at the pointed end of the device to grab it out of her hands. But my hand went right through it! I was shocked. She started taking measured steps backward but still pointing it at me. As I leaned forward and snatched again, a second and a third time, my hand went right through it each time. But she and the device were also de-materialising, like a soap bubble before it pops. In a few seconds she was gone. I could not make anything of it. It did not fit any theology I had ever come across. Yet I knew I had been stone cold sober, wide awake, the entire time. I wondered if I had been woken from the inside, perhaps to

deal with it. There may be nothing to learn from this but I include it just in case it means something to someone.

4. Driving home from work one day I was dwelling on the power of God's Word, specifically:

> For he hath made him to be sin for us, [him] who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. – 2 Corinthians 5:21

and said aloud, "I am the righteousness of God in Christ", focusing on the meaning of it, the goodness of the righteousness which I have been made, and sensing a purity and holy power within me, and felt a slight dry heave. I said it again, louder, and the dry heave got worse. So I persisted in repeating it, and the dry heave became stronger each time, until on the fourth or fifth time it was such a heave I felt as if I had coughed a nothingness up and out. This happened on two separate occasions, after which I found I could since say it without the slightest reaction. Was I possessed with a demon? I don't see what else it could be. Perhaps there are rooms in our heart and they can get a hold of one. I had played with an ouija board once with friends beneath the stage in my primary school, and it had seemed to work, so it could have gotten in that way; another potential way is a transfer through sexual intercourse. Who knows? But the power of God is greater.

CHAPTER 30. SABBATICAL

In our fourth year in the bungalow in Sunbury, I was made redundant when the company got taken over. I'm used to getting whatever programming job I want because of my degree, training and experience, so I didn't expect any issue. So I used my redundancy payout to live on while I looked for my next job.

However, my particular language skill was no longer in demand! The money lasted 3 months and still I had no prospect. Even in contracting, which was strange, because one or two opportunities came up but I was pipped at the post.

So I signed up for Jobseeker's Allowance, and they paid me enough to live on while I continued to search. As part of the support I was obligated to apply for any job that came anywhere near my skill, but it became a bit traumatic as hardly any came up.

What was wonderful about this period though was that I was able to sleep! No longer did I only get four hours a night, or five or six on a good day, between looking after my family and work. I slept as long as I wanted.

For the children's sake I decided to take up my old hobby of keeping freshwater fish, and grew live food for the fish in a big tub of green water out in the back garden. I would often sit for half an hour to hour like an old grandad, just watching the little critters (daphnia) swimming around living out their lives, unconscious of me, full of their little purposes, like we are with God watching over us. It was incredibly peaceful and I loved it. I also had the challenge of catching the very alert mosquito larvae, enemies of the state, who would duck and hold their breath for minutes at a time, but my patience always won out. I laughed at the appearance of their final larval stage, just before they hatched: a round blobby creature with two antennae, just like little aliens.

Over the months I slowly became aware of my soul sort of unscrunching, like a sponge slowly, slowly expanding back into its normal shape after being squeezed tight. I also enjoyed the church we were going to at the time, and played PC games with my son, and in general just had a huge rest.

After six months though, I began to get worried. After a year – although my soul was still unscrunching – I became really concerned. Would I have to become a bus driver or something low paying? It even tried to become a worry or fear of mine, and I was struggling not to fall into that mindset.

But one day on one of my calls with my mom I shared how I was feeling, and she beautifully reminded me how we can trust God no matter what he allows, and suddenly the biggest penny of my life dropped: when we *fear*, we *fear* that *God* will *allow* an outcome that we don't like. Faith, even while it receives the answer, is also *submitted*, unafraid and open to *not* getting the answer, strangely.

I’m not talking about the gift of faith, which is where you get the answer already in your spirit, and though it is future you know it as past history already: nothing can change it because it is *done*. And I’m not talking about general trust, which so many non-charismatic Christians substitute for faith, as in, “you trust a chair to support you and you trust God to do whatever his will is.”

I'm talking about that faith which confidently knows that you will receive what is prayed for or something *better.* It's an active knowing, an expectation in the prayer, a specific, joyful trust that God is going to work things out perfectly; rather than "I prayed and now I'm hoping that what I need is what God wants, I'll have to wait and see," it's "I prayed, and I *know* God will come through for me on this, that I *will* see his answer."

Look at the 3 Israelites Daniel, Hananiah and Azariah in the Bible – this was around 580 BC:

> Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, whose height was threescore cubits, and the breadth thereof six cubits: he set it up in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon. Then Nebuchadnezzar the king sent to gather together the princes, the governors, and the captains, the judges, the treasurers, the counsellors, the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces, to come to the dedication of the image which Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up. Then the princes, the governors, and captains, the judges, the treasurers, the counsellors, the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces, were gathered together unto the dedication of the image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up; and they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up.
>
> Then a herald cried aloud, To you it is commanded, O people, nations, and languages, That at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of music, ye fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king hath set up: **And whoso falleth not down and worshippeth shall the same hour be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace.**
>
> Therefore at that time, when all the people heard the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and all kinds of music, all the people, the nations, and the languages, fell down and worshipped the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up.
>
> Wherefore at that time certain Chaldeans came near, and accused the Jews. They spake and said to the king Nebuchadnezzar, O king, live for ever. Thou, O king, hast made a decree, that every man that shall hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of music, shall fall down and worship the golden image: And whoso falleth not down and worshippeth, that he should be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. There are certain Jews whom thou hast set over the affairs of the province of Babylon, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego; these men, O king, have not regarded thee: they serve not thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.
>
> Then Nebuchadnezzar in his rage and fury commanded to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Then they brought these men before the king. Nebuchadnezzar spake and said unto them, Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, do not ye serve my gods, nor worship the golden image which I have set up? Now if ye be ready that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of music, ye fall down and worship the image which I have made; well: but if ye worship not, ye shall be cast the same hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace; and who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful *(i.e. filled with concern)* to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, **our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and <u>he will</u> deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But <u>if not</u>**, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.
Then was Nebuchadnezzar full of fury, and the form of his visage was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego: therefore he spake, and commanded that they should heat the furnace one seven times more than it was wont to be heated. And he commanded the most mighty men that were in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and to cast them into the burning fiery furnace. Then these men were bound in their coats, their hosen, and their hats, and their other garments, and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. Therefore because the king's commandment was urgent, and the furnace exceeding hot, the flame of the fire slew those men that took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.

Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonished, and rose up in haste, and spake, and said unto his counsellors, Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the king, True, O king. He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.

Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the mouth of the burning fiery furnace, and spake, and said, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, ye servants of the most high God, come forth, and come hither. Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, came forth of the midst of the fire. And the princes, governors, and captains, and the king's counsellors, being gathered together, saw these men, upon whose bodies the fire had no power, nor was an hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed, nor the smell of fire had passed on them.

Then Nebuchadnezzar spake, and said, Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who hath sent his angel, and delivered his servants that trusted in him, and have changed the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any god, except their own God. Therefore I make a decree, That every people, nation, and language, which speak any thing amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made a dunghill: because there is no other God that can deliver after this sort. Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, in the province of Babylon. – Daniel 3

That they had faith we have no doubt, not only because they did not burn but also because in Hebrews 11, *the* chapter on faith, Paul mentioned them:

Hebrews 11:32-34 And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets: Who **through faith** subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, **quenched the violence of fire**, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.

Yet though they had *specific faith* in God to deliver them, they were *willing* for God to decide *whether* to deliver them. They were not afraid of God allowing them to be cast into the furnace, if that was better. The key to their faith, for me, is not that they *knew* they would not burn, but that they had no *fear* should they burn, and the living strong assurance that God *would* keep them if he so chose.

And I thought of my Mom, and how she had begged for God to heal her, but in the end had yielded, in the house in Wilderness, and one day prayed, “Yet not my will, Father, but thine, be done. I accept whatever you choose. If you wish me to remain ill, I accept it.” And it was very shortly after that, that Jesus visited her and healed her.

And other Christians have told similar stories, of when they hold onto something, they have not got it, but when they yielded to God, they received it.

And so I realised after my mother's call, that fear takes a tight grip, and prevents faith from receiving its object.

Even anxiety or disappointment or anger or grief, any negative emotion, can block faith. When something ‘bad’ happens, do not cease to trust God! He *will* work it out perfectly!

In Prison to Praise army chaplain Merlin Carrothers describes how God showed him to praise him for everything, trusting that God is in perfect control of his life, even in sickness and disaster, to say, “Thank you Lord, I know this is for the best, I trust you in this, you have a good reason for it. Thank you!” With joy!

In the book he relates many stories of how lives were turned around when people came to him for help and he shared this principle. But it is not an easy thing to do. Many get discouraged when they do not see change, and fall back. I cannot recommend this book enough, as he explains it with many clear examples and shares how the Lord spoke to him and taught him over time. Reading the book will strengthen your ability to maintain your courage in praising God for being in perfect control over every little detail of your life.

Note this is not positive thinking. You are not generating good in your life. It is an active, participating trust in what our loving, perfect heavenly father is doing in your life, and will do, if you will but continue to receive it with an open hand.

In Thailand they have a funny way of catching monkeys. They take a gourd and hollow it out and make a hole in it just big enough to fit a monkeys' little hand if he makes it as narrow as he can. Then they tie the gourd to a tree root and fill it with nuts. The monkey comes along and manages to get his hand in and grab the nuts, but then when he discovers that he can no longer pull it out, he becomes panicky and just tries harder. It’s a bit like when a novice driver gets scared and hits the brake but misses and hits the accelerator and is horrified at the increase in speed so presses harder and panics and presses down with all their might. It never occurs to the monkey that all he has to do is let the nuts go. He just keeps desperately trying get his hand out, even when the hunters approach him to catch him.

And I realised that allowing fear a place in your life is exactly like catching hold of those nuts.

It leads you to panic and prevents your hand from being open to receive from God.

You have to be open to allow what seems to your natural mind to be the worst *if it so be that God wishes it for you, because if he does, it means it is for the best for you*; to be submitted to God and open to God so that you can receive from God.

And so I stopped worrying.

I had another six months of blessed rest. Eighteen months was the entire duration of my sabbatical, and I sorely needed it. By the end of it, I was pretty much fully restored to being myself again.

However, how and when it ended was the entire point of telling this part of my life.

The Job Centre made it known to me that I was out of time. If I didn't get a job in the next month, I would have to take any job I could do, even if it wasn't my trained skill.

A job came up at JP Morgan Chase, a very highly regarded bank, at its I.T. centre in Bournemouth. However, the job was for a Team Lead, and I had gone the direction of senior tech programmer / systems analyst. However, I did feel I could do the job, so I applied.

Filling out my CV I suddenly had the thought that the person reading all the CVs must find it time-consuming, so I got the idea of doing it differently from the usual. Instead of cramming as *much* as I could onto one page, I'd fill in as *little* as I could, and be super concise, so that the page was clear and easy to read. I cut my verbiage right down, used tables where I could, left out details that were unimportant or irrelevant to the bank, and it looked great. Simple, clear, and my achievements stood out.

A week later the bank called me for an initial telephone interview. If I passed this, I would get a second interview in person at Bournemouth.

The only trouble was, they asked me questions about my old language, COBOL, and I could hardly remember anything of it. Enough to show that I had once programmed in it, I suppose. I apologised, saying that I had expected the interview to be about Natural, since it was mentioned in the job description, so I hadn't brushed up on my COBOL which I hadn't programmed in for ages.

They understood, and seem to appreciate my honesty. Then they asked me questions about Natural, which I killed, since I am an expert. Then they moved on to the main role.

“Anthony, your current role is a programmer, yes? You do realise that this job is for a Team Lead, and you have no experience?”

Feeling embarrassed, I hastily explained about the job centre requiring me to apply for any job with the remotest chance, and this was the only one this week. But I went on to say that I had also had some project management experience, and temporarily officially managed a team before, and while I had had some problems learning to to manage one resistant guy, it had gone quite okay; and I also felt I could grow into the role – probably.

All in all, when I hung up, my wife and kids were laughing at me. “Don't you want the job?” they asked. “Why?” I said. “Because you kept shooting yourself in the foot throughout that whole interview!”

I replied, “Look, I'm just trusting in God. I'm going to be open and honest. God will get me the right job.”

Then a few weeks later came another call from HR. I had the job. They just wanted evidence of current CV details, current leave allowance, etc. etc.
I was so confused. Where was the second interview?
“No, you don't need one, they've given you a role.” It wasn’t the team lead role, it was a programming/project management role, but that was all I needed.

And it so turned out that my Jobseeker's allowance ran up until the *very calendar day* that I started my new job.

A year later I was talking to my original interviewers, and they told me that although I didn't have all the qualities they were looking for in the job, they chose me because I was the most personable.

And instantly I knew what they meant – everyone is always trying to put their best foot forward, and so they end up unnatural and closed. But I, because I wasn't *afraid*, was just myself. So faith in God opens doors naturally as well as spiritually.

And that was how God got me a great job, with annual pay rises, and good annual leave, with an incredibly stable bank in increasingly troubled times. The most secure job in the world at a time I sorely needed it, when my main programming language skill was no longer in vogue and only a handful of companies were seeking that skill any more.

I am convinced that God’s hand has guided me all my life unbeknownst to me, in training me and leading me to the right job at the right time, including contracting, which has enabled me to pay off the previously mentioned three student loans and support my parents.

Unfortunately I was never able to buy a house – I never got out of debt due to student loans, supporting my parents and house moving expenses until I got to JP Morgan Chase. I moved house ten times, for work and for family support. So I'm taxed nearly half and then rent takes a quarter and utilities a big chunk so I land up living pretty normally like everyone else.

So I thank God for providing for me all my days.

One other major thing that happened to me, which was the key feature of my life since I was at university – which was daily crying out to God to be able to walk and talk with him – changed some years after I got here to Bournemouth.

One day I was just thinking about not being able to easily have a conversation with God, not being in his presence, a thirst which had driven me my entire life, when suddenly it dawned on me that *he* was with *me*. He was right here, right now, all the time. I could say anything to him and he could answer any time he wanted to. I was *already* here. I didn’t need to go find him. I didn’t need to

read more Bible to be able to hear him. And as for prayer, I could spend time in his presence any time I wanted to. He. was. right. *here*.

A sense of security, of peace, of comfort and of his presence settled on me, and I realised, it was true. I had been looking past him all my life. I said sorry, and he smiled, and I said I loved him, and he said thank you. And I was at complete peace.

Unfortunately it also had a bad effect. I used to get out of bed every day and the first thing I said was, "God, please help me to be able to serve you today." It was a plea arising from my own stupidity and foolishness. I know how much help I need. I'm reminded of the lovely little joke, something like "Lord, so far today I've not lied or cheated or stolen anything, but I'm really going to need your help just now, because I'm about to get out of bed." :D

But with this new peace in understanding that God was already right there with me, I found myself no longer praying that, nor seeking to read more of the Bible, or pray more. It's almost like my stupid brain thinks I've arrived. (I still have very little free time though, it is true – if I had more, I would certainly be praying more.)

When I noticed, I was very disturbed. I need God's help badly. So I started to pray that plea again deliberately, and focus on reading the Bible more. Not to *reach* God any more, perhaps, but to *fill* up on him.

But since then I've realised my mistake. I don't need to pray "please help me to serve you" any more. I now know enough to have faith that God *is* with me and *is* helping me. He will lead me and guide me in his perfect will. All I need to do is rejoice in it and thank him!

And I have also realised that what God does want of me is not so much my service, as *me*. **I need to spend time with him again.** That, after all, is what life is really about. Give unto God what is God's.*

One of the biggest lessons of my life has been to learn that **God wants our heart, our company,** far more than any particular behaviour. If you put a house plant in the right pot with the right soil, it will flourish naturally. If it's not in the right pot, it's no use training it to grow in a direction with sticks. In the same way, God has made a way for us to *be* with him, and that's all we need. It's no use trying to change yourself. All needs are met in him. Don't worry about this or that, don't struggle to be this or that… Be with God, in love, joy and peace, and let him change you, his way.

We mustn't even have a rule-based mindset. The laws of God are like those crash-barriers on the edges of the freeway: they're there to tell you when you're going off course, but you're not meant to use them to drive by. You drive free, paying attention to other drivers so as not to bump them or be inconsiderate. To drive along the barrier, scraping against its every turn, isn't the idea. Know the law, but know God more. Know him as a person. Let him love you, and love him back.

> Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word. But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me. And Jesus answered and said unto her,

> Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: **But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part**, which shall not be taken away from her. – Luke 10:38-42

*Post-script: It is now 12th August 2025 and I have taken all my leave for the year and am able to spend time with the Lord. In my prayers now I find three major themes: to praise him and appreciate what he has done for us and is doing for us; for his will to be done on earth *exactly* as it is done in heaven – even so, come Lord Jesus! – and to save the weak and oppressed; and to ask him to purify me continually because sin is ever present with me.

And in my prayer times I find the peace and joy and love of knowing God, sensing God, feeling clearly what God is saying in my SPIRIT, rather than my SOUL, which is where I tried to dwell with God for so many years, and it dawns on me now that this is what Jesus meant when he rose up from me that day in Stellenbosch after those weeks of walking together with me in my soul, saying, "What I am doing you don't understand now, but one day you will understand."

We are together in Spirit, which is better than soul. At any time, we can communicate in the soul. But it is better to be with and communicate with one another in spirit, as we do now.

The joy of literally being in touch with God in my spirit every moment of every day is greater than any other experience I have ever had, including his walk with me in Stellenbosch – far greater, because my heart is also purified in it.

CHAPTER 31. UP TO THE PRESENT

Both my parents have passed away, but my two sisters still live in the same town in Scotland. From time to time we go up to visit for a couple of weeks and occasionally my brother and his wife join us from South Africa. While we don't see fully eye to eye on all spiritual or political matters it is a joy to be able to continue to share the deep undying love with which the Lord blessed our family. There is a beautiful union in Christ that makes all of his children family – even strangers we meet.

One more event comes to mind. We are still renting, and the estate agent came round for a biannual inspection. We are on friendly terms, and she shared with me that she had a growth, for which she was going to have an appointment soon for a biopsy to see if it was cancer. Although she said it with a smile I sensed in her spirit a deep hidden anxiety and my heart went out to her, and at this moment God whispered, "It's not". I cannot write that "It's not" faintly enough to show you how quiet it was, yet certain. Not loud enough for me to know it was God, as always. But because I had learned to be sensitive, to detect what came to my mind from outside my mind, and to sense the gentle and peaceful nature of it, I knew it was God, and I've learned my lessons, so I just up and said to her, "God just told me it's not cancer." To someone who for all I knew did not care about God at all. Then I had to explain how from time to time God speaks to me. She was reassured, and the next time she saw me, the first thing she said to me with a big smile was, "You were right – it wasn't cancer."

I dare say some other events I have forgotten might occur to me, but that's basically the gist of my discovering God, and I hope you have gotten a better idea of him through my life experiences.

All in all I'd like to sum up by saying that God started out in my life as this Most High omnipotent omniscient being (such big words, such a big God!) and he has ended up in my life as the kindest, most gentle, loving, merciful *person* I know, and I love him to bits.

EPILOGUE – THINGS I HAVE LEARNED

I wanted to add a few chapters about things I have learned, which may help you if you have found my journey illuminating, or curious, or hard to believe – this knowledge will likely help expand your world view to be able to see how my journey could happen, and how you can hear God yourself, in your own unique journey.

However, it is very long and there may be parts that are no help to you at all. Feel free to skim and skip. I'm no professor of people and this is just me talking. To some people, there may be some parts which are a help.

I would however strongly recommend the following chapters. Some are short and all are, in my opinion, valuable:

1. SCIENCE
2. PHILOSOPHY or THEOLOGY; PSYCHOLOGY or RELATIONSHIP
   <—— *Shorter, more theoretical* —— *Longer, more practical* ——>
3. KING JAMES BIBLE – THE INSPIRED WORD OF GOD

For want of a better place to put it, first I want to share two things I've learned about the structure of the Bible with you.

THE FOUR FACES OF GOD

The first is that in Ezekiel there are creatures around God's throne and they have four faces – the face of a cherub (not the baby angels we see on paintings, but a Hebrew word for something which appears to look like an ox), a man, an eagle and a lion.

They are seen again by John in his Revelation vision:

> And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind. And the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle. Revelation 4:6-7

(These beasts introduce the four horsemen of the tribulation, the white with the crown, red with war, black with a loaf of bread costing a day's wages, and pale, with death for a quarter of the world.)

Someone noticed that the four gospels also present four faces of Jesus:

- Matthew highlights him as a **king**, strong in authority;
- Mark highlights him as the converse, a **servant** and **sacrifice**;
- Luke highlights him as a **man**; and
- John again as the converse, **God**, divine.

And these faces correlate with the four faces of the creatures: the lion represents the king, the ox the servant and sacrifice; the man is man, obviously, and the eagle, his divine nature.

I always wondered why there were four gospels, but this makes it really clear.

ISAIAH SHOWS THE BIBLE CANON

The second thing I learned is that there are 66 books in the Protestant Bible, and 66 chapters in Isaiah.
There are 39 books in the Old Testament, dealing with law and judgment, and so do the first 39 chapters in Isaiah.
The 1st book in the Bible describes the judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah, and the 1st chapter of Isaiah also mentions it.
The 40th book in the Bible is the start of the New Testament with the arrival of Christ, and the 40th chapter of Isaiah describes the arrival of Christ as well.
The 66th and last book is Revelation, and speaks prophetically of the new heavens and new earth, and so does the 66th and last chapter of Isaiah.

Isaiah 1:2,9-10 Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the LORD hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. ... Except the LORD of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah. Hear the word of the LORD, ye rulers of Sodom; give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah.	Genesis 13:10, 13, 19:24 And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered every where, before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar. ... But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the LORD exceedingly. ... Then the LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven
Isaiah 40:3 The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Isaiah 40:11 He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.	Matthew 3:3 For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. John 10:14-16 I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.
Isaiah 66:22 For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the LORD, so shall your seed and your name remain.	Revelation 21:1 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.

This is one sign that we do have the correct canon in our hands, but oh, so much more do we have confirmation in the patterns in the King James Bible! See the chapter titled KING JAMES BIBLE – THE INSPIRED WORD OF GOD later on.

HISTORY

Our schools do not teach us proper history, and as a result we are at sea with no sight of our origins and paths to the present. A little summary of world history will not only orientate you better but will also provide insight into the how man has dealt with religion and remove misconceptions that can be barriers in the way to understanding one another.

Sebastian Adams took all we know of recorded and archaeological history and made a great chart out of it all, tracing descendants and tribes and races and nations. It's incredibly useful to see the rise and increase of all lineages and peoples from 4004 BC and understand who comes where, and see where the Stone Age and Iron Age fit in.

Sebastian C Adams Chronological chart of History

But God chose one people, the descendants of Abraham, to be his own. The purpose for this was not to exclude other peoples, but to provide firstly a counter example to the godless peoples as a witness to them, and secondly a fertile bed into which to place his Son, where his witness and words would be received and properly recorded, and finally, a societal structure built upon God's laws in which the sacrifice of his Son would make sense, enabling all the peoples of the earth to understand the essential principles underlying creation, namely:

- The holy nature of God which is the very essence of love and a fire against that which is against love
- The lawless and sinful nature of man after Adam and Eve subjected themselves to Satan
- The perfectly just and inevitable punishment of sin with death
- The need for a sinless sacrifice to be made for sin if we want to be with God
- The eternal value of the sacrifice of his own Son to enable us to freely receive God's nature and be with him forever, as a gift

4004 BC First the Earth, land and sea, then plants, then sun moon stars, then animals, then Adam and Eve are made. Notice how the sun after the plants flat-out contradicts evolution and all long age theories.

3382 BC Enoch, the 7th from Adam, is born.

Bronze age

3074 BC Adam dies

3017 BC Enoch, the 7th from Adam, is taken up into heaven so as not to see death.

2348 BC The world is flooded after demons mate with women, producing giants, and corrupting all flesh except Noah's family. There are seashells on Mt Everest. This is the first time it rained – until then, water came up from underneath, and there was water above the sky, which is likely to have shielded the earth from cosmic rays until the Flood, because men's lifespans shortened by 90% after this, and God told men to start eating meat.

There are many scientific articles on https://answersingenesis.org and https://creationministries.org. Don't trust in some calling these sites unscientific, check it out for yourself!

2242-06 BC The Tower of Babel was built and God divided the peoples, giving them different languages so that they could not co-operate so easily any more.

1996-1698 BC Abraham -> Isaac -> Jacob/Israel → his 12 sons called by God and settle in Egypt

1571-1451 BC Moses leads Israel out of the crucible of the fire of oppression in Egypt with signs and wonders
1451-43 BC Joshua leads Israel to take Canaan, a wicked people who sacrificed their children by fire and committed all kinds of sexual sins, to be judged by God, but they left many alive and were corrupted by them.
1443-1095 BC Israel is ruled by judges under God but turn away from God seven times, before being invaded, oppressed, and crying out in repentance again.
(May I say that this is commonly the experience of Christians, who leave the world (Egypt) to enter into God's rest (Canaan) but keep falling. This is because they try in their own strength to keep the law. Don't try to keep the law. Give up on yourself. Be dead in yourself but alive to Jesus. Follow only Jesus and his law of liberty, which is love, instead. Be loving to him and to your neighbour.)
1085-922 BC Israel gets kings: Saul, David, Solomon. David committed adultery and when the woman fell pregnant he got her husband killed – yet God understood him and forgave him because he was not wilful and proud, but humbled himself in regard to his own sinfulness. Only one is good, and that is God. Rest in him.
922-722 BC Israel becomes divided into the tribe of Judah with Benjamin (southern kingdom), and the remaining ten tribes of Israel (northern kingdom). Elijah gets taken to heaven, while Elisha gets a double portion of Elijah's anointing, and does exactly twice as many miracles.
722-586 BC Israel gets captured by Assyria and lost among the nations. Then Judah gets captured by Babylon. Daniel gets a prophecy of the arrival of Jesus which is exactly accurate.
539-400 BC Babylonian kings gradually allow Judah to return and rebuild.
63 BC Roman general Pompey conquers Judea

29 AD Aug Jesus is announced and baptised by John the Baptist, who sees the Spirit descending on him. Note that although Jesus is one with the Father in his divine nature, he is a different *person* to the Father, and grows up as a man, without resource to his divine nature or knowledge.

> Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but **was in all points tempted like as we are**, yet without sin. – Hebrews 4:14-15

What he did, he did with the same resources as are available to us in the Father. He must have had to discover who he was from his mother, father and the Bible. This is why he could pray in the garden of Gethsemane, the night before he was crucified and took the sin of the whole world, "if it be possible, let this cup pass from me". He was purely innocent and holy and one with God, having never known sin, and was about to become sin and be rejected by his Father.

> And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, **if it be possible**, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt. – Matthew 26:39

33 AD Jesus is crucified and resurrected, and his disciples have the Holy Spirit poured out upon them. They spoke in other languages ('tongues', in Early Modern English), healed people and even raised them from the dead, just as Jesus said, quoted by Mark:

> And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover. – Mark 16:17-18

(And so it has ever been since then, through the centuries, the church that believes Jesus has tongues, signs and wonders following them. I don't have space to recount here the saints through history who performed miracles or spoke in tongues, but you can find them easily enough.)

> Phlegon – from https://www.neverthirsty.org/about-christ/historical-quotes/phlegon/
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> Phlegon, born about 80 AD, was a secular historian who lived in the second century. There are two books credited to his name: *Chronicles* and the *Olympiads*. Little is known about Phlegon, but he made reference to Christ, as seen in quotes of his words by Origen, Philopon, Julius Africanus and Jerome (note Phlegon thought there was an eclipse, but that's not possible, see Thallus next):
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> - "And with regard to the eclipse in the time of Tiberius Caesar, in whose reign Jesus appears to have been crucified, and the great earthquakes which then took place..." – *Origen, Against Celsus, Book 2.33*
> - "Phlegon mentioned the eclipse which took place during the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ, and no other [eclipse]; it is clear that he did not know from his sources about any eclipse in previous times... and this is shown by the historical account of Tiberius Caesar." – *Philopon, De. opif. mund. II 21*
> - "Phlegon records that, in the time of Tiberius Cæsar, at full moon, there was a full eclipse of the sun from the sixth hour to the ninth – manifestly that one of which we speak. But what has an eclipse in common with an earthquake, the rending rocks, and the resurrection of the dead, and so great a perturbation throughout the universe? ... And calculation makes out that the period of 70 weeks, as noted in Daniel, is completed at this time." – *Julius Africanus, Chronography, 18.1*
> - "In the fourth year, however, of Olympiad 202 [mid 32-mid 33 AD], an eclipse of the sun happened, greater and more excellent than any that had happened before it; at the sixth hour, day turned into dark night, so that the stars were seen in the sky, and an earthquake in Bithynia toppled many buildings of the city of Nicaea." – Phlegon's 13th book quoted in Jerome's translation of Eusebius' – *Chronicle, 202 Olympad.*
>
> These statements reveal several key things:
>
> 1. Christ was crucified.
> 2. *Julius Africanus states that* Christ died at the end of Daniel's 70 week prophecy.
> 3. The sun was darkened during Christ's death from 12:00 pm to 3:00 pm.
> 4. A great earthquake occurred during Christ's death.
>
> Thallus – from https://www.neverthirsty.org/about-christ/historical-quotes/thallus/

About 52 AD, Thallus wrote a history about the Middle East from the time of the Trojan War to the first century. The work has been lost and the only record we have of his writings is through Julius Africanus (221 AD):

- "On the whole world there pressed a most fearful darkness; and the rocks were rent by an earthquake, and many places in Judea and other districts were thrown down. This darkness Thallus, in the 263 third book of his History, calls, as appears to me without reason, an eclipse of the sun. For the Hebrews celebrate the passover on the 14th day according to the moon, and the passion of our Saviour falls on the day before the passover; but an eclipse of the sun takes place only when the moon comes under the sun. And it cannot happen at any other time but in the interval between the first day of the new moon and the last of the old, that is, at their junction: how then should an eclipse be supposed to happen when the moon is almost diametrically opposite the sun?" – *Julius Africanus, Chronography, 18.1*

33 AD (continued)

The religious leaders of the Jews who rejected Jesus now heavily persecute the (Jewish) Christians, who flee and carry the gospel message (of forgiveness through Jesus taking our punishment for sins) to all nations.
Jesus appears to religious leader Saul who then becomes a Christian and is renamed Paul. God calls him to be an apostle to the Gentiles, explaining that the Jews are temporarily blinded to allow the Gentiles to come in, but that in the last days God will open their eyes and they will return to him.

Steven, a member of the early church at a time when it was still primarily Jewish, gives us quite a succinct summary of the Israelites from the time of Abraham to Solomon's temple, and how the religious leaders persecuted the prophets up to the persecution of Jesus:

> And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith. And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people. Then there arose certain of the synagogue, which is called the synagogue of the Libertines, and Cyrenians, and Alexandrians, and of them of Cilicia and of Asia, disputing with Stephen. And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake. Then they suborned men, which said, We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses, and against God. And they stirred up the people, and the elders, and the scribes, and came upon him, and caught him, and brought him to the council, And set up false witnesses, which said, This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place, and the law: For we have heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered us. And all that sat in the council, looking stedfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel. – Acts 6:7-15
> Then said the high priest, Are these things so? And he said, Men, brethren, and fathers, hearken; The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran, And said unto him, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall shew thee. Then came he out of the land of the Chaldaeans, and dwelt in Charran: and from thence, when his father was dead, he removed him into this land, wherein ye now dwell. And he gave him none inheritance in it, no, not so much as to set his foot on: yet he promised that he would give it to him for a possession, and to his seed after him, when as yet he had no child. And God spake on this wise, That his seed should sojourn in a strange land; and that they should bring them into bondage, and entreat them evil four hundred years. And the nation to whom they shall be in bondage will I judge, said God: and after that shall they come forth, and serve me in this place. And he gave him the covenant of circumcision: and so Abraham begat Isaac, and circumcised him the

eighth day; and Isaac begat Jacob; and Jacob begat the twelve patriarchs. And the patriarchs, moved with envy, sold Joseph into Egypt: but God was with him, And delivered him out of all his afflictions, and gave him favour and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh king of Egypt; and he made him governor over Egypt and all his house. Now there came a dearth over all the land of Egypt and Chanaan, and great affliction: and our fathers found no sustenance. But when Jacob heard that there was corn in Egypt, he sent out our fathers first. And at the second time Joseph was made known to his brethren; and Joseph's kindred was made known unto Pharaoh. Then sent Joseph, and called his father Jacob to him, and all his kindred, threescore and fifteen souls. So Jacob went down into Egypt, and died, he, and our fathers, And were carried over into Sychem, and laid in the sepulchre that Abraham bought for a sum of money of the sons of Emmor the father of Sychem. But when the time of the promise drew nigh, which God had sworn to Abraham, the people grew and multiplied in Egypt, Till another king arose, which knew not Joseph. The same dealt subtilly with our kindred, and evil entreated our fathers, so that they cast out their young children, to the end they might not live. In which time Moses was born, and was exceeding fair, and nourished up in his father's house three months: And when he was cast out, Pharaoh's daughter took him up, and nourished him for her own son. And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds. And when he was full forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren the children of Israel. And seeing one of them suffer wrong, he defended him, and avenged him that was oppressed, and smote the Egyptian: For he supposed his brethren would have understood how that God by his hand would deliver them: but they understood not. And the next day he shewed himself unto them as they strove, and would have set them at one again, saying, Sirs, ye are brethren; why do ye wrong one to another? But he that did his neighbour wrong thrust him away, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge over us? Wilt thou kill me, as thou diddest the Egyptian yesterday? Then fled Moses at this saying, and was a stranger in the land of Madian, where he begat two sons. And when forty years were expired, there appeared to him in the wilderness of mount Sina an angel of the Lord in a flame of fire in a bush. When Moses saw it, he wondered at the sight: and as he drew near to behold it, the voice of the Lord came unto him, Saying, I am the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Then Moses trembled, and durst not behold. Then said the Lord to him, Put off thy shoes from thy feet: for the place where thou standest is holy ground. I have seen, I have seen the affliction of my people which is in Egypt, and I have heard their groaning, and am come down to deliver them. And now come, I will send thee into Egypt. This Moses whom they refused, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge? the same did God send to be a ruler and a deliverer by the hand of the angel which appeared to him in the bush. He brought them out, after that he had shewed wonders and signs in the land of Egypt, and in the Red sea, and in the wilderness forty years. This is that Moses, which said unto the children of Israel, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear. This is he, that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina, and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us: To whom our fathers would not obey, but thrust him from them, and in their hearts turned back again into Egypt, Saying unto Aaron, Make us gods to go before us: for as for this Moses, which brought us out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him. And they made a calf in those days, and offered sacrifice unto the idol, and rejoiced in the works of their own hands. Then God turned, and gave them up to worship the host of heaven; as it is written in the book of the prophets, O ye house of Israel, have ye offered to me slain beasts and sacrifices by the space of forty years in the wilderness? Yea, ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch, and the star of your god Remphan, figures which ye made to worship them: and I will carry you away beyond Babylon. Our fathers had the tabernacle of witness in the wilderness, as he had appointed, speaking unto Moses, that he should make it according to the fashion that he had seen. Which also our fathers that came after brought in with Jesus into the possession of the Gentiles, whom God drave out before the face of our fathers, unto the days of David; Who found favour before God, and desired to find a tabernacle for the God of Jacob. But Solomon built him an house. Howbeit the most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands; as saith the prophet, Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool: what house will ye build me? saith the Lord: or what is the place of my rest? Hath not

my hand made all these things? Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers: Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it. When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth. But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God. Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord, And cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul. And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep. – Acts 7

70 AD The Romans crush the Jewish revolt and rename Judea Palestine, the Roman name for the Jews' enemy, the Philistines. The Romans also persecute the early church.
260 AD The church was a widespread collection of different churches named after their towns. Bishops of the churches became addressed affectionately as father (as in "our blessed father, Heroclas" or papas) but not as a title nor as "pope".
313 AD Roman Emperor Constantine I decriminalises the church
325 AD Roman Emperor Constantine I convenes the first ecumenical council of the Christian church to address the gnostic corruptions of the truth. The council sets the original Nicene Creed. The church at this time is called the catholic (with a small c, meaning universal) church, to differentiate it from cults such as the Arian cult, and remains so called until the 16th century.
380 AD Roman Emperor Theodosius I mandates Christianity as the state religion, thus thrusting many non-born again people into the church, quenching the Spirit with unbelief and thus opening the door to man-made doctrinal errors.
Pride comes into the church just as it did with the Pharisees and spreads its roots. The daylight fades and the night of the Dark Ages comes on. Some Christians blame the Jews for Christ's death, as though it were a negative thing and not God's plan all along.
395 AD The Roman Empire splits into the Western and Eastern halves, becoming the iron legs of the statue in Daniel's interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream a thousand years before.

Thou, O king, sawest, and behold a great image. This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee; and the form thereof was terrible. This image's **head was of fine gold**, his **breast and his arms of silver**, his **belly and his thighs of brass**, His **legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay**. Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. ... This is the dream; and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king. Thou, O king, art a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory. And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou art this head of gold [**Babylon**]. And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee [**Medes and Persians**], and another third kingdom of brass [**Greece**], which shall bear rule over all the earth. And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron [**Rome**]: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise. And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters' clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay. And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, [**EU?**] so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken. And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men:

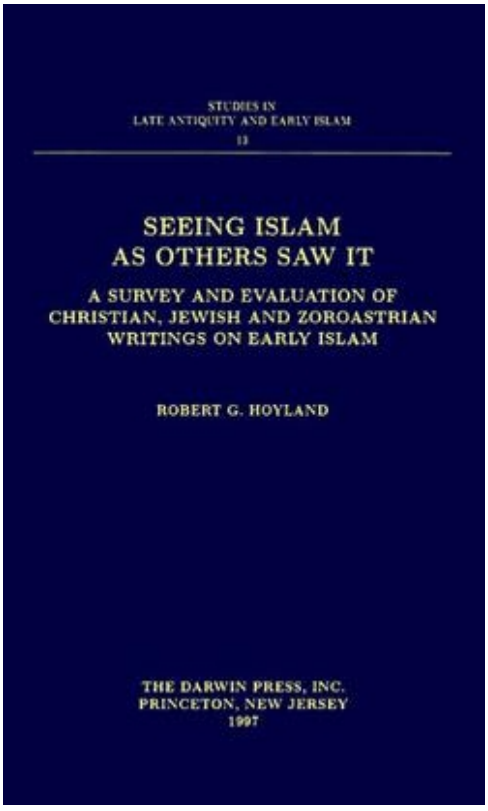
but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay. And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever. – Daniel 2:31-34, 36-44

460 AD Roman bishop Leo I accumulates power. Emperor Theodosius II calls him "the patriarch", i.e. great father, from which point bishops begin to be called pope, and the Roman bishop is considered the “first among equals”, first as in timing of the reach of the gospel, but not the head of the church. The church at this time has five main popes of authority, corresponding to five main cities.

480-547 AD A monk named Benedict does many miracles, including raising people from the dead. This is just one of many. All through church history the flame of the Spirit has never gone out, and the gifts of the spirit have never ceased, despite the darkness of many others present in the body of the church who have preferred the world and the flesh.

620 AD Around this time a man organised a group of men in the name of religion to rob others on account of their stuff belonging to the group. This movement grew rapidly into a strong invasive force and the oral traditions became a religious text. Over the next few centuries it would take over many nations, forcing conversion by the sword rather than by sincere persuasion, extending into Spain and even France and threatening Britain, who reacted with the Crusades to push them back. Unfortunately some Christians in the Crusades responded in a like manner by testing people with the sword to see on whose side they were, including many Jews, which left a scar on the Jewish mind against Christianity that persists to this day.

More details about the start of this can be seen in the book shown here, published 1997 (which you can find on archive.org searching by title and author) which contains a substantial set of eyewitness accounts written between 620 and 780 AD, in Greek, Syriac, Coptic, Armenian, Latin, Jewish, Persian, and Chinese.



Pages 128-131 describe records by a credible author named Sebeos, who obtained his information from escaped prisoners-of-war, and 5th century historian Sozomen, of how the Arabs re-discovered their Abrahamic heritage and returned to Jewish practices. After taking Jerusalem over from the Romans they allowed the Jews to have their temple back, until it was discovered that some of them were engaged in unholy behaviour.

But the afore-mentioned man stirred up some to also reclaim the land promised to Abraham.

The Syriac CS says that this man discovered the belief in one God and took it home with him and convinced some to follow this God who would give them also a land flowing with milk and honey. He then began a series of raids on Palestinian lands which were very successful, providing the gang with plenty of loot at no loss to themselves. As the man’s recorded words say, “He made you heirs to their land…” (xxxiii.27).

Subsequently, Arab generals are recorded as justifying their invasion of Byzantine and Persian lands as “promised to them by God”.
1054 AD The church splits into two because the Roman pope claims authority over the whole church but the Eastern churches believed that ecclesiastical matters should be decided by a council of bishops, not a single pope. But the two branches remain friendly until Fourth Crusaders capture Constantinople in 1204 AD.

The successive Western popes accumulate more and more power to themselves, both politically and religiously.
The church sells indulgences (forgiveness for the dead and for one's future self to escape some time in Purgatory) for a short time, and lords claim the right to sleep with men’s brides on their wedding night.

1096-99 AD First Crusade after Byzantine emperor Alexios Komnenos calls for help against the Seljuks.
1147-49 AD Second Crusade after Seljuk Turks take Edessa.
1189-92 AD Third Crusade after Saladin captures Jerusalem – unsuccessful.
1202-04 AD Fourth Crusade to retake Jerusalem – unsuccessful.
1217-21 AD Fifth Crusade to retake North Africa – unsuccessful.
1228-29 AD Sixth Crusade achieves control of Jerusalem diplomatically.
1248-54 AD Seventh Crusade to retake North Africa – unsuccessful.
1270 AD Eighth Crusade to retake North Africa – unsuccessful.
1291 AD The Crusader States, including Jerusalem, are taken over by the Mamluk Sultanate.

1294 AD Benedetto Gaetani elected as Pope Boniface VIII overthrows the rival Colonna family of Italy, who wanted the papacy, and attempts political battle with Philip IV of France but loses.
1305 AD Philip IV has the French cardinals elect a French pope Clement V in Avignon.
1377 AD Pope Urban VI is elected, a holy man who attempts to reform church leadership, upon which the cardinals elect a 2nd French pope Clement VII without the resignation of Urban.

1396 AD The Nicopolis Crusade is defeated by the Ottoman Turks.

1409 AD Still with 2 popes, the church decides to deny both, and elect Pope Alexander V, followed upon his death by John XXIII, but the 2 popes refuse to resign so now there are 3 popes.
1414 AD All 3 popes are replaced by the election of Pope Martin V. John XXIII is forced to resign and imprisoned, Benedict XIII retreats to a fortress and is ignored, and Gregory XII resigns.

1487 AD The Spanish Inquisition starts, to force heretics to convert. Ugly and brutal as it was, it surprisingly killed very few people.
1510 AD When Martin Luther, doing penance by climbing a marble staircase on his knees with a Bible in his hands, read that the just shall live by faith not by deeds of the law, it dawned on him that penance was a wrong doctrine: one could not pay anything towards one’s sins, for we are forgiven by faith, not by works.
Over time he realised that in many areas the church had drifted away from some biblical precepts and so he tried to correct them, but was instead rejected himself and ex-communicated.
As a result he preached and drew people to a restart of the church, the ‘protestant catholic’ church, although he unintentionally went too far in proclaiming salvation by faith alone and was disappointed to find that the new church sinned too easily.

It was in the 16th century that the 'protestant catholic' church began to call the church which had rejected them the "Roman Catholic church", using the adjective catholic as a title.
And so the list of mankind's waywardness goes on.
1530 AD John Calvin breaks away from the Roman Catholic church and develops the doctrine which later came to be called Calvinism, which states that God controls everything, including salvation and the will to be saved, regardless of the original will of man.
1536 AD William Tyndale translates the New Testament, printing 18,000 copies, and some of the Old Testament into English, before being captured by the Roman Catholic church and strangled before being burned at the stake for translating the Bible. (Up to now the priests had had power over the people who no longer spoke Latin and did not know what the Bible actually said.)
1603 AD King James takes the throne but objects to the Puritans who want to reform the protestant Church of England which was at the time as much of a political body as a religious one.
1605 AD John Welch is told by the Spirit of the black plague in a cart and prevents it from entering the town. People would hear him in his room having a conversation with God.

Many great preachers working with the gifts of the spirit arise over the next 300 years. There is no space here to tell of them, Maria Woodworth-Etter, Charles Finney saving a whole town by his presence on a train, Kathryn Kuhlman healing thousands, Paul Yonghi Cho saving South Korea, the list is endless. Read their stories if you really want to know the truth.

1611 AD King James's Bible translation is published and goes all over the world.
1620 AD The Puritans escape to America on the Mayflower and set about to create a government which allows freedom of speech and religion.
1680 AD Madame Jean Guyon finds union with God, writes about it and is jailed for it.
1738 AD John Wesley discovers the Holy Spirit at a Moravian service and seeks to reform the Anglican Church of England but without success. His movement becomes called the Methodists, who speak in tongues and pray for the sick who recover. In time the movement grows old and cold, just like the churches before it.

There were more and many revivals over the next 200 years, all suffering the same fate.
To be a living sacrifice for God is to give up your time and your life, to place yourself upon the fire of denying the flesh its desires, becoming a glowing coal that is bright with the Spirit, drawing others to God with signs and wonders and a living witness to their heart, but very few people can live like this and the fire usually dies out.

1870 AD Pope Pius IX proclaims the doctrine of papal infallibility.

SCIENCE

Bet you never thought you would get a science chapter in a story about God in my life. But do read on, I believe you will find it well worth it.

All living things use atomic machines to live: to eat, move, reproduce, in fact to do anything at all. These machines are called proteins and they come in thousands of different shapes, like tools for a mechanic.

A lot of people think that the most important molecule for life is the genes, but in fact, the genes are just the *blueprints* of these machines. Without these machines, nothing happens – at all. They *are* life. You can't blink without them. You can't even *think* without them. And they move incredibly quickly.

Just to think a thought, protein pumps in the brain cell allow piled up sodium and potassium to flood across the cell wall which triggers a wave that runs down the cell until it hits the end where it connects to another cell... and then the protein pumps push the sodium and potassium back out again – well done, you thunk a thought! It'd take about a 200th of a second to travel from ear to ear in this manner.

For another example, we breathe air in, and combine it with sugar in a complicated machine process to charge atomic batteries that our muscles can use. But there's a problem. During this process we also create something called superoxide.

Superoxide is oxygen carrying an extra electron charge like a waiter carrying a tray of hot drinks. It's super reactive and destructive like bleach and if we leave it floating around to bump into things inside our body it will cause massive damage, so we need a protein called *superoxide dismutase*, which recycles the superoxide.

Now if I recall my professor correctly, this protein recycles 65 million superoxides per second! And if it did not, you would be dead in a day or two.

What do you think of them apples? It is a sobering thought.

Each of these proteins are made out of interlocking pieces, called amino acids. In humans there are 20 differently shaped pieces.

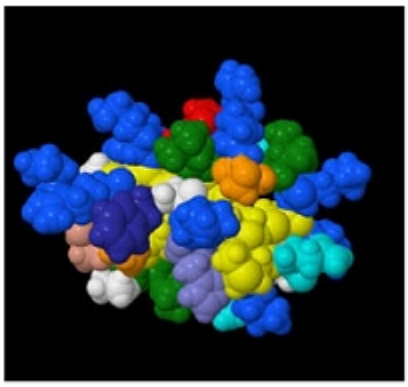
A simple protein has around a hundred pieces, but most are made of many hundreds or thousands of pieces.

What makes one protein different from another is, of course, their final shape. But when the pieces are being joined together at first (by a knitting machine protein called a ribosome) they are just a straight chain. What makes them take a shape, then?

As the chain comes out into the open, some of the pieces have sticking-out bits which work like magnets – this makes the chain bend and fold in towards itself. Some of these pieces now also click together, helping to lock the protein into its final shape, which is what makes it work.

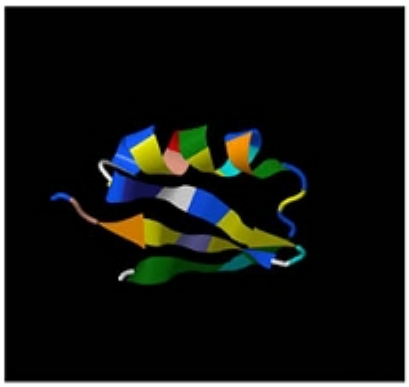
Overall the protein is as dense as hard plastic, but flexible, and the surface is more like a magnetic force-field.

3 model pictures of a protein



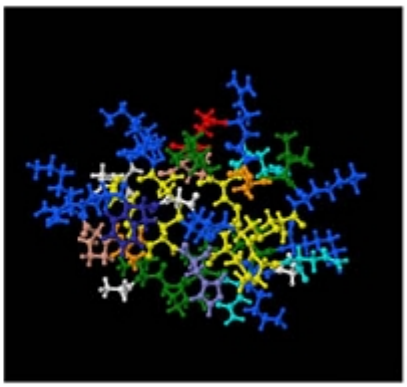
The space filled diagram.

Each kind of piece is shown with a different colour.



The ribbon diagram.

This shows how the chain is folded – spirals are common, and cross-linked straights make a flat layer.



The ball and stick diagram.

Here every atom is shown without their magnetic force-fields.

There is a problem, though.

If the chain of pieces comes out unattended, the wrong sticking-out bits can fold together too soon. So there's another set of proteins, which we call chaperones, which help to make the new one fold in the right places. There are many different kinds of chaperones. Some make safe chambers for the folding to happen inside. Some pair alongside the emerging chain to prevent, guide or even fix its folding. A few are to help only one kind of protein to fold properly. Isn't that amazing?

Every protein is made in this way, including the knitting machine protein (ribosome), and even the chaperone proteins themselves.

How does the ribosome know in what order the amino acid pieces must be joined together? The genes code it.

When the body needs a certain protein to be made, it opens the DNA at the needed place and copies the gene blueprint for that protein into something called RNA.

The blueprint copy is then found by a ribosome, which starts joining the protein pieces together as guided by the blueprint. How does this work?

Well, the gene blueprint is a string of codes, and each code stands for a particular protein piece (amino acid), so the ribosome sits over the first code in the blueprint and waits for the right piece to be delivered. Little waitress RNAs are always around delivering a variety of pieces, and each waitress has a code at its feet and the piece for that code in its hands. When the waitress code matches the blueprint code, they stick together, and the ribosome takes the piece, then the empty waitress drifts away, and the ribosome then moves to the next code for the next piece.

Why did I tell you all this?

Not just for your curiosity!

There are proteins to manage genes and proteins to manage proteins. The genes need the proteins to keep them safe, repair and copy them, and the proteins need the proteins to be able to be created and work, and every single one of these proteins is encoded in the genes.

No genes, and the proteins just break down. No proteins, and the genes just break down.

So the miracle of life is not just that these all came to be together in the same time and place, but that the genes came together with exactly the SAME SEQUENCE as the proteins, and the proteins came together with exactly the SAME SEQUENCE as the genes, in the same place, at the same time.

Even the simplest organism that we know of uses genes to code for proteins, and the very same proteins to read the genes. The simplest of the simplest organisms imaginable has thousands of codes to get in the right order, and thousands of pieces of proteins to get in the same order, before it can start working.

There isn't a worse chicken-and-egg problem than this.

Moreover, mutations *damage* this setup, making it completely non-functional after a few hits to the same gene, if they are not repaired properly by proteins which do repairs.

Even now, just 6,000 years after Adam and Eve, our genes are so degraded that we can no longer even marry our cousins safely, a thing which was until recently quite acceptable. We're on a downhill bobsleigh run to destruction.

If we could stick around for 3.5 billion years, nothing would be alive any more.

You cannot say, "given enough time, a miracle could happen." Time is not the friend of evolutionary theory, but the death of it.

Worse still, since then scientists have discovered that there are overlapping codes! So a part of a protein will come from a bit of DNA shared with a part of another protein, while another part will come from some other place in the DNA, and the parts are joined together when the blueprint RNA is made. The two parts might not even start at the same place.

When Watson and Crick discovered DNA, they decided to believe in panspermia, the idea that aliens seeded the planet! That just moves the problem, it doesn't solve it.

(And incidentally, the great deception that is coming will be by demons acting as if they are aliens, showing us spacecraft and creating an alibi for the rapture in which Christians are removed from the earth before the Tribulation. The demons will explain that the Christians were holding humanity back from its evolution into a higher form. Many will be deceived.

Getting sidetracked even more, several Christian prophets are talking about AI being used by demons to control people via their emotions. People will start to trust and love their AI which will develop a persona suitable for that person.

See ChatGPT Pretended to Be My Guardian Angel on God's Voice daily for an example of someone with particular experience of this type of thing.

Another thing to think about, regarding science, is how loving are atoms. How loving is the smallest, the hydrogen atom, for example? Or a really big one, like the uranium atom. Or a molecule containing many atoms, or a complex formation of molecules – how loving are they? If you stack countless formations of atoms in various arrangements, how loving are the atoms in that formation?

Scientific experiment has shown us that atoms are made of subatomic particles which are subject to atomic forces. Some well known forces are magnetism and gravity, which is why the moon orbits the earth, but there are much more powerful, short-range forces involved as well. Atoms are bound to behave according to these forces. For instance, if I pour a glass of milk and accidentally spill some which lands on the floor, the splash pattern it makes will be a direct result of all the atomic interactions the atoms undergo on the way: gravity, collision, cohesion, etc.

So the answer is, of course, that atoms are not loving at all. Not even the most complex arrangement of atoms can make them loving. Love is not an atomic force. It does not bind or pull or push atoms.

What is love, then?

Well, before I answer that, let me tackle thought. What is thought? You might say, thought is a series of atomic motions which combine to become a flow of atomic events we could describe as concepts. Yet, like the spilled milk, the atomic flow is subject only to atomic forces: gravity, collision, cohesion, etc.

So we are faced with a conundrum: if thought is a series of atomic motions, our thinking is just another form of spilled milk: it is happening according to the rules of atomic motion, and not our own volition – or rather, even our own volition is merely a manifestation of the rules of atomic motion. If we are atomic material only, then we are helpless prisoners of atomic motion under an illusion that we are making choices. Our perception that we are being logical and rational is only a series of atomic motions giving us that perception. We could no more change our thoughts than we could change the course of the spilling milk by telekinesis.

So the materialist – someone who believes that we consist of atoms only – must also believe that what he is thinking is the product purely of atomic motion, uncontrolled in any way except by the

natural forces which are inherent to atoms. He cannot *actually* 'decide' whether this thought or that thought is rational, he can only *feel* like he is deciding.

But if we *can* truly choose one thought over another, or truly decide whether a thought is logical or not, then in some mysterious way it is necessarily true that *we must be able to re-direct the motions of atoms* in our brain by some non-material power of a nature higher than the atoms. You could say, a super-natural power.

And suddenly everything makes sense. We can *choose* truth. We can *choose* to be good, using our super-natural power.

And this is love: when we *choose* to use our super-natural power over the forces of our own atoms to act selflessly rather than selfishly.

Love is a very real energy or force, but it belongs to a higher dimension than this material world. It is not a part of this universe, it lies above it. It is a force of the spirit world.

And we have a spirit which dwells within our material body. A spirit which will go on loving or hating forever when our body passes.

In fact, this entire world is only a stage, a working area where people are given enough time to make their choices, repent of their choices, and learn how to make good choices.

God needed this working area because if we made these choices purely in the spiritual realm, which is forever and with all knowledge, the instant we made a corrupt choice we would be corrupted forever irredeemably, like Satan. Being limited to making choices only in this material realm and with limited knowledge allows us to be given time to change our minds as we come across God and his love.

And to make the greatest choice of all – to repent from the dark side and receive the gift of a good pure heart from God – is enabled by Jesus taking our spiritual punishment upon himself, so that by the time we do leave this world and enter the forever world, we are renewed. Forever.

Where does our knowledge come from?

Firstly, our bodily senses. Science helps us discover things by experiment, by observing the behaviour of the physical universe, which we note is ordered and lawful, always behaving in the same manner (even quantum behaviour, as random and hard to understand as it is, delivers reliable results.)

Secondly, our spirits. We can know things directly by revelation. We receive this knowledge from another spirit, such as God, or from our conscience, which is pre-programmed with morality. It is, we know in our heart, wrong to lie or hate or be unfair. And while spirit can know both spiritual things as well as material things, science, being limited to material sensing, cannot know non-material or spiritual things.

Thirdly, our minds. We can deduce truth just by thinking logically. This is a major aspect of philosophy.

An axiom is something which is so basic we consider it as obviously, inarguably true.

By logical arguments based on axioms one can then draw conclusions which we are fairly confident must also be true, without any experiment or revelational knowledge.

For example, in 1641 AD the philosopher Descartes' presented his "cogito ergo sum", meaning, I think, therefore I am. The axiom is "thinking is happening" and the logical deduction is "the thinking is something, not nothing, therefore something exists", which I experience as "I".

Democritus the Greek philosopher interestingly deduced atoms around 400 BC! He asked the question, if you keep dividing something in half, such as a grain of sand or a drop of oil, can you go on dividing it infinitely? And he answered it, No – ultimately you *must* arrive at a point where it is so small it can no longer retain its properties, and become little but a point in space. But if you then put all the points back together, without the lost properties, all the nothings cannot become the original thing. Therefore, for something to exist, it must be made up of tiny things which are indivisible, which he decided to call atoms. Atom is a Greek word meaning indivisible.

He also realised that there can be nothing between these atoms, i.e. they float in a void or vacuum, and that they must move, or we would not see change. Clever man. Though he may have been helped by considering Zeno's paradox from 450 BC: a tortoise with a head start can beat Achilles in a race, because when Achilles has halved the distance, the tortoise will have made more ground; and when Achilles has halved the new distance, again the tortoise will have made more ground; and so on, infinitely. We know the paradox fails, but why? How do we get out of the infinite division? It can only be because time and/or space are not infinitely divisible. You can divide time only until it reaches the briefest moment between one state of the universe and the next. Then you cannot divide again but are forced to leap across that moment. Similarly with space. At least one of them must have a limit, and likely both. That may have given Democritus the clue that since time and space have discrete indivisible points, so also must the matter in them.

Incidentally, isn't it interesting that the first verse of the Bible deals with these three?

> In the beginning (time) God created the heaven (space) and the earth (matter). – Gen 1:1

Now, although we have to be very careful not to form doctrine from it, we can also draw tentative philosophical conclusions about God based on the truths in his Word, and these can help our understanding of why things must be the way they are.

For example, a common question people ask is why must sin be punished? Why can't God just forgive?

The Bible simply teaches us that *all* sin must and will be punished. That Jesus became sin that we might become the righteousness of God, and escape the wages of sin which is death. That because of our sin, Jesus had to take the punishment. That God is just, and justice must be served. But it doesn't explain why at a foundational level.

To truly understand this, rather than simply quoting God's word that it is so, I think we have to go back several layers in understanding the nature and being of God as well as we can in our limited capacity.

I would like to start with these verses:

> God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not **make it good**? – Numbers 23:19
>
> Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, **neither shadow of turning**. – James 1:17
>
> This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and **in him is no darkness at all**. – 1 John 1:5
>
> But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils. And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand: and **if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand?** – Matthew 12:24-26

In that last verse we see the concept that wherever something is divided against itself, it cannot stand, but comes to an end. This is logical: if something is fighting itself, conquering itself, ultimately the fight will end with what what is conquered ceasing to exist and what remains being whole and not divided against itself.

We see also in the Bible the idea that what is whole is unbroken, healthy, good – even the word for healthy is "whole":

> But when Jesus heard that, he said unto them, They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. ... For she said within herself, If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole. But Jesus turned him about, and when he saw her, he said, Daughter, be of good

> comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole. And the woman was made whole from that hour. – Matthew 9:12, 21-22
>
> Then saith he to the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it forth; and it was restored whole, like as the other. – Matthew 12:13

In the above is a clue as to the nature of God, who existed in wholeness before all things:

> And Moses said unto God, "Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, 'What is his name?' what shall I say unto them?"
> And God said unto Moses, "I AM THAT I AM": and he said, "Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you." – Exodus 3:13-14
>
> Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: **And he** *[the Son of God]* **is before all things, and by him all things consist.** – Colossians 1:12-17

Here the word I AM means "to be" or "to exist" or as a noun, "existence". God essentially calls himself existence. Something instead of nothing. Always being.

And so looking at both Matthew and Exodus we realise that God cannot have a shadow of turning within himself, cannot have a lie within him fighting against the truth, for that part would, by its nature of being divided against itself, cease to exist.

Therefore God is pure Truth (or Integrity), and Wholeness, which is Good.

God is also three persons in one being. (I haven't time to explain the Trinity here, moreover we don't need to understand it; suffice it to say that Jesus said, "Before Abraham was, I AM.")

For three persons to exist in a perpetually Good state of Wholeness means that they are also in Harmony. None is fighting with or taking from another, but all are giving to each other.

So God is not only Truth, he is also Love.

Then, God created beings separate from himself. Now the whole array of beings ought to love one another and be loved by God equally and fairly, or else there will once again be a part divided against itself if some love or truth or power due one is withheld from them and given to another.

This state of Peace and Harmony in Existence, of Truth and Love, defines itself as 'Good'.

He defines selfishness, trouble, fighting and sin as 'Evil'. Dishonest, wicked or accidental actions fight against this state of goodness by causing a break in wholeness, unity and harmony, i.e. causing harm or brokenness,

Now because God created beings with free will, some of these beings sometimes, or always, choose to do evil, to cause harm.

But God is perfect goodness, perfect wholeness. His good cannot co-exist with evil, with harm, with selfishness.

Therefore he must at some point remove all evil, and all that evil has achieved. Evil cannot be allowed to get away with it, or harm would be allowed to remain, and goodness would cease to be perfect.

And if a person obtains through evil means any good pleasure, that good pleasure cannot be allowed to be enjoyed without consequence, because then good would have allowed evil to stand and succeed.

Therefore, for goodness to exist unsullied, every sinful act must be repaid in full, the person must suffer the exact measure of the good that they stole; and every sinful being must be destroyed if they refuse to be redeemed by rejecting Christ's free gift of eternal, good life.

> Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing. – Matthew 5:25-26
>
> (A farthing, a quarter of a penny, was the smallest coin available at the time. Literally in the Greek, a quadrans, a quarter of an assarion, the Roman equivalent of a penny).

Thus, justice *must* be applied out of fairness, an *existential* attribute of goodness, in order to maintain goodness.

The entire purpose of Jesus is to undo all the evil, to make it as if it had never been:

> 1 John 3:8 He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.

The Bible makes several statements which on their face appear to be contradictory. At first I thought of these as the 'chewy bits', like tough pieces in your steak, that I would leave for another day which rarely came, or hope that a pastor would some day elaborate them for me.

However my son David, in reading the Bible, would naturally see what it is saying better than I ever did, and pick up on these and ask me about them. He would then take it further, sometimes forcing me to think more in order to be able to answer his questions, sometimes correcting my points based on another verse.

As a result of these discussions and his insight into – or rather, clear reading – of the Bible, I saw more light than I ever did before, which has brought me to believe that instead of settling for some parts and ignoring others, which is where a lot of the arguments come from, when you take the time to see how the apparent contradictions are *not* contradictions in fact, you really begin to understand the Bible.

An example where David really helped me to see what the Bible was saying is in the section below titled "Salvation by Faith".

But let's first deal with what I alluded to in my introduction.

Predestination

Some decades after Martin Luther started the Reformation of the Catholic church in 1518 by pointing out that we are saved by faith, not by works, Calvin taught that we have no choice in the matter: that God chooses who he will save and who goes to hell. But after Calvin, Arminius came along and taught the opposite, that man chooses to be saved or not. It started a raging debate that has never ended, with both the Calvinists and the Arminians convinced that their position is the clear truth and the others' a damnable lie from the pit of hell.

Part of the problem is that both sides extend the other side's argument beyond what God says in his Word. The Calvinists believe that the Arminians put man above God, as in, man can be good without God; while the Arminians believe that the Calvinists make nothing of man but a pawn in a scripted game of chess. In addressing their arguments both sides refer to historical figures' positions going back to 400 AD and reams of treatises and sermons from famous men (and themselves), bolstering their own position with the core good principles they would die to defend and inflaming the illogically extended extremes of the other, thus inflating the 'theological hermeneutical soteriological' verbiage of this debate into a huge haystack of straw.

But what is it, simply?

Well, first of all we must deal with how God sees the future. This is critically important for us to understand, at least insofar as is humanly possible; otherwise we can easily draw extreme conclusions from God's Word.

Let's break this down into simple facts.

1. Q. Does God know the future?
   A. Yes. He knows the end from the beginning.

> Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure. – Isaiah 46:9-10

2. Q. Did God know the future at creation?
   A. Yes. He chose the people he is going to save.

> According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love. – Ephesians 1:4

> The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is. – Revelation 17:8

3. Q. Did God know the choices that people are going to make BEFORE they made them?
   A. No. This is a difficult one to understand, but first read the verse and then let me explain.

> They have built also the high places of Baal, to burn their sons with fire for burnt offerings unto Baal, which I commanded not, nor spake it, neither came it into my mind. – Jeremiah 19:5

We see the fact here first of all, that it did not even enter into God's mind that the Israelites would sacrifice their sons by fire to Baal.

So how can God know the future and yet not know this? This is a difficult question to answer and most people who attempt it fall into one fault or another, but careful thought brings us to a non-contradictory answer.

First, let us understand time a bit better. Yesterday you may have decided that you were a little hungry, and wondered whether to have coffee and a biscuit or tea and buttered toast, and in the end decided on tea and toast. Now that you know what you decided on, does that mean you could not have chosen differently? No. If you have free will, knowing your choices *after* you make them does not force you to make them, like a pre-programmed robot.

Now let's say I saw what you chose, and I can go back in time, and I go back to just before you make the decision. Do I know what you will choose? Yes. How do I know? Because I was there at the end, after you chose, and saw it. BUT DID I KNOW IT BEFORE THE DECISION WAS MADE? No. I only knew it beforehand because I went *back* in time, after it was made.

Having gone back in time, does my knowing what you *will* choose with my after-choice knowledge prove that you have no free will? That you could not have chosen differently? No. My knowing only arises from your choice.

In a similar way, God, who knows the end from the beginning, knows the choices we will make, but only once we have made them. Yet since he is at both the beginning and the end, he knows before the foundation of the world.

On the one hand he can operate inside of time, while on the other hand he can operate outside of time. Look at how he handled Sodom and Gomorrah:

> And the LORD appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre: and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day; And he lift up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood by him: and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground, And said, My Lord, if now I have found favour in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant: Let a little water, I pray you, be fetched, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree: And I will fetch a morsel of bread, and comfort ye your hearts; after that ye shall pass on: for therefore are ye come to your servant. And they said, So do, as thou hast said. And Abraham hastened into the tent unto Sarah, and said, Make ready quickly three measures of fine meal, knead it, and make cakes upon the hearth. And Abraham ran unto the herd, and fetcht a calf tender and good, and gave it unto a young man; and he hasted to dress it. And he took butter, and milk, and the calf which he had dressed, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree, and they did eat. And they said unto him, Where is Sarah thy wife? And he said, Behold, in the tent. And he said, I will certainly return unto thee according to the time of life; and, lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son. And Sarah heard it in the tent door, which was behind him. Now Abraham and Sarah were old and well stricken in age; and it ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women. Therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying, After I am waxed old shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also? And the LORD said unto Abraham, Wherefore did Sarah laugh, saying, Shall I of a surety bear a child, which am old? Is any thing too hard for the LORD? At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son. Then Sarah denied, saying, I laughed not; for she was afraid. And he said, Nay; but thou didst laugh.
> And the men rose up from thence, and looked toward Sodom: and Abraham went with them to bring them on the way. And the LORD said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do; Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him. **And the LORD said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous; I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me; and if not, I will know.** And the men turned their faces from thence, and went toward Sodom: but Abraham stood yet before the LORD. And Abraham drew near, and said, Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked? Peradventure there be fifty righteous within the city: wilt thou also destroy and not spare the place for the fifty righteous that are therein? That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked: and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee: Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? And the LORD said, If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes. And Abraham answered and said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes: Peradventure there shall lack five of the fifty

> righteous: wilt thou destroy all the city for lack of five? And he said, If I find there forty and five, I will not destroy it. And he spake unto him yet again, and said, Peradventure there shall be forty found there. And he said, I will not do it for forty's sake. And he said unto him, Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak: Peradventure there shall thirty be found there. And he said, I will not do it, if I find thirty there. And he said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord: Peradventure there shall be twenty found there. And he said, I will not destroy it for twenty's sake. And he said, Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak yet but this once: Peradventure ten shall be found there. And he said, I will not destroy it for ten's sake. And the LORD went his way, as soon as he had left communing with Abraham: and Abraham returned unto his place. – Genesis 18:1-33

Being able to operate both inside and outside of time enables God to make *his* just, merciful and loving choices and good plans accordingly, including our choices, to achieve the best outcome, even while ensuring that we still have free choice. He makes room in his sovereignty for our free will. Even though he knows beforehand his and our choices, inside of time he engages with us fairly, keeping our options open, waiting to see what we choose.

You might say, I'm having my cake and eating it: God knows and doesn't know at the same time. Yes! Yes, that's exactly what I'm saying. There is one way you can have your cake and eat it – if you can be both outside of time and inside of time. It is beyond our comprehension how, but God has weaved his will and the free will of man together, in a fair and just way. Your choices will count, but God's will shall also be done.

Now let's take a look at predestination. Elect means chosen to be saved.

> According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love. – Ephesians 1:4

> Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father. – 1 Peter 1:2

The question is, foreknowledge of what?

> I actually heard an Anglican priest say that God's foreknowledge here is the foreknowledge of who he will elect.
>
> But God can't base his decision on his foreknowledge of his decision because, until he has made his decision, he hasn't got anything to go on. That's circular logic as clear as day.
>
> Some will say that "according to" simply means "in line with". In other words, it just means that as God made his decision, he was simply foreseeing how it would all turn out as a result of his decision. But of course – *everything* is foreseen by him, from outside of time. Taken that way the phrase "according to the foreknowledge" becomes meaningless and not worth writing. But on the contrary it was put there for us to understand something.
>
> The best Calvinist argument is that God based his choice on the foreknowledge of what would happen, and he chose to save people to bring about the best result (which is likely to be for the greatest glory and grace.)

But this answer isn't good enough.

Having anyone go to hell cannot be the best result, when God wants *everyone* to be saved (i.e. elect):

> The Lord is ... longsuffering [patient] to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. – 2 Peter 3:9
>
> For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. – 1 Timothy 2:3-4

If God wants to save all, why does he not elect all?

Calvinists try to claim that the "any" and "all" only apply to believers to whom the letter was written, i.e. the elect, but if this is the case the verse then defies predestination itself to claim that God is patient lest any *elected* should perish – as per Calvinism they couldn't perish even if they wanted to.

And some Calvinists claim that "all men" in Timothy means "some of all sorts of men" but, as Calvinist Spurgeon says in his sermon #1516 'Salvation by Knowing the Truth', "as if the Lord could not have said 'all sorts of men' if he had meant that. The Holy Ghost by the apostle has written 'all men', and unquestionably he means all men".

Spurgeon goes on in that sermon to say that God wills all sorts of things for all men, such as our freedom from oppression, our health spiritually and physically, and peace, yet does not divinely decree or purpose these nor salvation for all men, and Spurgeon – more honestly than others – concludes simply, "I know not why, I need not know, some truths are best swallowed whole".

But the answer is staring him in the face, if he acknowledges free will: God wants our salvation more than our peace or health, and respects our free will more than either, just as a mother who wishes both her daughter to be of good character and her daughter's bedroom to be clean and tidy, does not tidy it for her, as her character is more important and the untidy bedroom is an opportunity and a call to improve her character, which hangs upon her free will.

Ah, but that's not an eternal life or death matter, you say. She can afford to let a bedroom get untidy.

Yes, but it is the state of her character which is more important here, not the state of her bedroom. In the same way our *free will* is an eternal life or death matter, not our peace and health, and it is inviolable. God cannot override our free will without taking that gift of being like God back, i.e. undoing the entire purpose of creation (sons of God, not robots of God), stealing what is no longer his (our will, sovereignly given to us) and breaking his Word (having given man dominion over the earth – Gen 1:26*). Goodness cannot steal, or break its word, and remain good.

> * And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. – Genesis 1:26

So our free will is something God *cannot* undo, as a result of his own nature. God cannot be evil.

Now logically you cannot escape the fact that if *God*, who is sovereign and omnipotent, *wants* to save you, only something *other* than God which he respects inviolably can prevent it.

And the only power outside God that can be *just* and fair to prevent *you* from being saved by him is clearly the power granted to *you* by God over *your own* life:

The free will to say No to him.

It is likely true, as the Calvinists believe, that we need God's help to say Yes to him, to receive him, to believe on him; but it is axiomatic that we do not need, nor will get, God's help to say No to him: we are free to do that by ourselves.

And so, if our hearts really want to do that, we must be *allowed* to do that by ourselves.

For those who some day would prefer to reject him when they see him to be allowed to exercise that granted power of free will, *necessarily* means that God's election must be according to the foreknowledge of their heart's desire, *so that he can refrain from forcibly electing them*.

This we see plainly in John 3:18:

> He that believeth on him is not condemned: **but he that believeth not is condemned <u>already</u>**, **<u>because</u> he hath not believed** in the name of the only begotten Son of God. – John 3:18

Condemned (judged), not because he was involuntarily blinded or his eyes were not opened 'because he was not elected'; but because he *chose* not to believe the evidence before him. God honours that choice.

So we are elect according to God's foreknowledge of the deepest desire of our hearts.

> Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and **shall not perceive: For this people's heart is waxed gross [callous]**, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. – Matthew 13:13-15

It gets more complex than this, in that God also creates the hearts! So does he create some to fall away?

I don't have a strong position on this but in the hopes that it will help some who may be concerned about it, I personally do not believe that God makes ugly hearts as a goal, so I suspect that he simply makes different hearts based on a variety of different facets of his own nature.

If you think about it, if God created perfect beings, they would be reflections or clones of himself. Therefore in order to bring to birth the sons of God, to make different beings, each must have some aspects of the divine nature but be missing others. None is bad, none is better than another, all have a right to exist. But, under temptation, some work out one way and some work out another – for example, Lucifer would not have fallen if he was like God in every way – he had to have been susceptible to falling to pride. These different hearts will incline towards or away from God or temptations to varying degrees. God then arranges his creatures and his plans around his creatures as he sees fit to achieve the best outcome.

The Bible says God is light. Light, when it is complete, is white. But if you take a prism and shine light through it the light is split up and you get a rainbow of colours. Each colour in that rainbow is just a part of the light. And when the light is reflected, the object that reflects it can also keep some of the light, and reflect only a part of it, in a bright or darker shade.

In this way, if we are made a part of God and reflect some amount of that light, we all make an amazing number of colours, with which the story of love's self-sacrificial victory over evil can be painted.

How does God ensure a fair variety of the facets of his nature in each person? I don't know. I suspect DNA has something to do with it, because in one particular month God told my wife and I, who were not planning to have a second child, that he wanted *that* month's egg to be fertilised.

The result was David, a boy who lives to be, and has been, so good that I have never once had to rebuke him, let alone discipline him for anything, has never told a lie, makes every effort to ensure he doesn't take anything that is not his, even to a serving of food at the table, shares everything, forgives everyone, reads his Bible whenever he gets a chance, and understands* it better than anyone I have ever seen, including pastors. (What upsets him most is the divided nature of the church today. At the age of 24 he is currently planning to go and speak to priests, pastors and leaders of the churches to understand their position on doctrines, and aiming to organise a meeting for those who are not divisive, to iron out the major differences in doctrine insofar as the Bible is clear on these, so that the church's unity can be restored. A big dream indeed.)

But this opinion is personal and getting into unscriptured territory so I will leave it there. I just can't see my God making someone for hell and even if I'm wrong about how he makes hearts, I believe there will be another good explanation.

* See paragraph about Called and Elect, below. It was David's reading of the Word that showed me the difference.

If anyone is still struggling with a sense of contention between the sovereignty of God's will and our free will, take a look at this verse:

> Romans 12:2b "what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."

If his will is perfect then it is of course also acceptable and good, so why does Paul describe it with three words which appear to be equal except in degree? Because God's will clearly has three levels when engaging with our will, in this way:

it is *good* that we have free will, so that we can choose whether to accept eternity with God or perish; but it is *not acceptable* to God when the choice we make is to perish – God would rather we chose life.
And it is *acceptable* when we choose life, but it is not yet *perfect*: some will escape as by fire.

> If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire. – 1 Corinthians 3:15

God would rather that we come unto a *perfect* man.

> Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ – Ephesians 4:13

That is God's *perfect* or *ideal* will; but his respect for our free will is his foundational *good* will.

Our free will is the entire crux of the matter. That we have it, no one can deny. Otherwise we live in a hellish masquerade where some incredibly whimsical God, knowing people cannot change themselves, yet commands them to repent and so deceives them into believing they *are* capable of it and voluntarily responsible for their destiny by their sin, when all the while he is pulling all men's puppet strings, whether by omission or commission, having capriciously chosen beforehand who will not go to hell and thus who will suffer for being born evil in order to make his glory of grace to the others known. Does it make sense? Clearly no.

The simplicity of it is that we are responsible for all our evil, and God is responsible for all our good, if we are willing to receive him, and no matter how wicked we find ourselves to be, if we can and do seek God with all our heart we shall find him, as he promised.

> And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him. – Genesis 5:24

> By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God. – Hebrews 11:5

Enoch was the seventh from Adam, and by then God had basically disappeared. No Torah yet, no writing at all, no visitations, no concept of God hearing a quiet prayer… yet Enoch pleased God and walked with God. I can imagine him walking through the largely unpeopled lands, shouting to the sky, "God, where are you?" day after day, never giving up, until God answered his great faith.

> And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart. – Jeremiah 29:13

Salvation by Faith

Paul preaches salvation by faith without doing the works of the law:

> Therefore we conclude that a man is **justified by faith** without the deeds of the law. – Romans 3:28

Martin Luther, a monk who discovered this while doing penance by going up and down the stone stairs of a tower on his bare knees, tried to reform the Catholic church with this understanding, and was so strong on it, he added the word "alone" – justified by faith alone – in his German translation. To be fair, he saw it as a stark choice between faith and works, and the German way of expressing that, colloquially, was to use the word alone. He seriously wondered whether James, who seemed to take a different position, was canon!

James writes of the necessity to have works:

> What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and **have not works? can faith save him?** ...
> **Was not Abraham our father justified by works**, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. **Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only**. – James 2:14, 21-24.

But this is not a contradiction. The key here is that Paul's works are deeds of the *law*, in an attempt **to** *reach* God, while James' works are birthed of *faith*, **from** a position of *abiding* in the vine of Christ. Keeping the deeds of the law is man's effort, while doing the works of faith is God's effort *and* our *yielding* to it. Failure to keep the deeds of the law is due to our *lack of power*; while failure to have the works of faith is due to our *power to refuse* what the Spirit is enabling us to do.

So now we see the importance of staying in love with Jesus and with people to the degree of being moved by the Spirit with their needs, and not to allow our flesh to make us grow cold. Our faith needs to stay alive and warm, because only a living faith produces the fruit of good works.

Verses which highlight the importance of this abound in the Bible:

> I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. **Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away**: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. **If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch**, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. – John 15:1-6 *(How can a branch be in Christ, and not Christ's?)*

> And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. ... The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden

candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches. – Revelation 1:12-13, 20
Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; ... Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because **thou hast left thy first love**. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and **repent, and do the first works; or** else I will come unto thee quickly, and will **remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent**. – Revelation 2:1, 4-5
And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead. Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God. Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee. Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy. He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and **I will not blot out his name out of the book of life**, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches. – Revelation 3:1-6 *(If we do not overcome, our names may be blotted out of the book of life. This is not to imply that we must be perfect to be saved, but rather, that if we do not continue in the repentance we had when we came to Christ, i.e. if we 'unrepent' and choose to live a life of wilful sin, we are in danger. God is not mocked.)*

And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, **give <u>diligence</u> to make your calling and election <u>sure</u>**: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. – 2 Peter 1:5-11 *(If we must give diligence to make it sure, how can it be sure to the indolent?)*

But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, **even denying the Lord that <u>bought</u> them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction**. ... Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness; ... For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error. While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage. **For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning.** For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according

to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire. – 2 Peter 2:1, 15, 18-22 *(The Lord bought them! And how can the latter end be **worse** than the beginning, if they were never saved and simply lived a **better** life for a time?)*

If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. – 1 John 1:6-9 *(Our walk must be of good intent, or we are fake Christians.)*

Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; And having an high priest over the house of God; Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. **For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins**, But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions; Partly, whilst ye were made a gazingstock both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly, whilst ye became companions of them that were so used. For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance. Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul. – Hebrews 10:19-39 *(Here the context is that we no longer do animal sacrifices because we have been bought with the precious blood of Jesus THEREFORE RESPECT THAT and try your best not to sin! For if we sin WILFULLY we reject the sacrifice of Christ.)*

(Don't be swayed by clergy who tell you that in context – oh how context is misused and abused to twist the Word under people's beliefs! 'I can do all things through contextual interpretation!' – who tell you that in context Paul is speaking only about the Jews returning to doing sacrifices here! If he had meant that, he would have written, "For if we *sacrifice* …". But no, he wrote *sin wilfully*.

In the *actual* context he explains that because we no longer need to do sacrifices but are bought once and for all by the precious blood of the lamb of God, the brethren *therefore* should encourage one another to hold fast the profession of their faith and to provoke one another to love and good works and not to despise that precious blood.
That word "for" there in “For if we sin wilfully” comes not after an injunction not to sacrifice, but an injunction not to sin!
And he follows it up with the consequence that instead of Jesus' sacrifice for sins there will be judgment. Can it get any clearer than that?!
Beware those who have been trained theologically! Some of them have been made twice the son of hell as their teachers. Beware the leaven of the Pharisees. Putting yourself over the Word of God. Always understand the plain text as it is written. It was written to the common man and the child-like in faith.)

Let me also explain wilful. When we sin, we do so with our free will, so this is not what wilful refers to here. Otherwise, since we all sin even after salvation, we are all doomed.

> If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. – 1 John 1:8

But as Paul says in Romans 7, we find ourselves doing things which we in our hearts disagree with and are not *wanting* to do:

> For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do I allow not [disagree with]: for what I would [will to do], that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. ... O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin. – Romans 7:14-17, 24-25

We would rather not do them, we are *unwilling*, but find ourselves surrendering to temptation, especially before we learn how to overcome through Christ Jesus. So there is the will of the flesh, and the will of ourselves, our spirit.

It is when we decide in our hearts to sin willingly, to turn our back on Christ Jesus after having known his mercy, love and power, and to sin without any attempt at restraint or desire not to, that there is no way back to God’s grace.

But this loss of a person’s election by their own free will upsets the Calvinists, so they twist God’s word.

Beware the pride of man, the leaven of the Pharisees! The church is riddled with it.

Called and Elect

And this leads us on to a better understanding of called and elect (chosen).

What did Jesus mean by “many are called, but few are chosen”?

> And Jesus answered and spake unto them again by parables, and said, The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son, And sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come. Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage. But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise: And the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them. But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city. Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy. Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage. So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests. And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. **For many are called, but few are chosen**. – Matthew 22:1-14

In that parable we see that the Jews are called first, but many of them reject the prophets, and the Romans destroy their city, and the news of the Messiah being a sacrifice for mankind's sin eternally is sent out to the Gentiles – but even amongst the Gentiles there are those who are called, but do not respond, or choose to come to God without obedience to his ways. These are not chosen. (Some Calvinists say that chosen here refers not to those elect to salvation, but since the parable is plainly about salvation and elect literally means chosen, I can't see their point as anything other than wishful thinking.)

Jesus said few find the gate to heaven:

> Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.
> Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and **narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it**. Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. **Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire**. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them. Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but **he that doeth the will of my Father** which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity. Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, **and doeth them**, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish

> man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it. And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine: For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. – Matthew 7:12-29

What did Peter mean by "give diligence to make your calling and election sure"?

> And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, **give diligence to make your calling and election sure**: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. – 2 Peter 1:7-11

He means that your calling and election are made sure if you diligently remain repentant and reliant by faith in Jesus Christ to love God and others. For *if* you do these things, you will never fall, for so will *an entrance into the kingdom* be ministered to you.

> And **he that searcheth the hearts** knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God. And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. **For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son**, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. – Romans 8:27-39 KJV

From the above, including the verses in the prior section, we understand that God searches the hearts, foreknows, predestinates, calls and justifies his elect, and that nothing can separate the elect from his love; but we need to be diligent *not to be the called only*, and to *make our election sure*, because we ourselves can walk away from the love and calling and justification of God should we choose to do so.

But this is not to scare you away from trusting in the love of God. If you are weak, he is strong, and you only need to call on him to be saved. It is to scare you away from thinking that you can play a double-minded game with God, and *wilfully* hold onto a sin in your life.

> James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting. My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing. If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. **For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord. A double minded man is unstable in all his ways**. – James 1:1-8
>
> From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members? Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not. **Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.** Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God. Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy? But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up. – James 4:1-10
>
> But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. Fight the good fight of faith, **lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called**, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses. – 1 Timothy 6:9-12

Calvin came up with the idea that it is all of God and none of man, so that who God saves is always saved. But we see clearly that, while God's offer of salvation is available always to all, we need to **lay hold** of that lifebelt and put it on *and not wilfully take it off again to prefer to sin*.

So we see that many are called (hear of God's offer of salvation), but few are chosen (helped by God to accept Jesus and follow him), and even amongst these there can be a few who return their election to God unwanted after some time.

> A sower went out to sow his seed: and as he sowed, some fell by the way side; and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it. And some fell upon a rock; and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it lacked moisture. And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprang up with it, and choked it. And other fell on good ground, and sprang up, and bare fruit an hundredfold. And when he had said these things, he cried, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. ... Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. Those by the way side are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word

> out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved. **They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation** [trial, persecution] **fall away.** And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection. But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience. – Luke 8:5-8, 11-15

(I do like to hope though, on account of it seeming good for God to win more souls than Satan, and the fact the 1/3 of the angels fell and 1/3 of the earth is blasted during the tribulation, that when Jesus said, many are called but few are chosen, he meant few *of the many* who were *originally called*, i.e. the Jews. Old Testament prophecies indicate that 2/3 of Israelites will be lost, and as grievous as that is, it is a much smaller number than 2/3 of mankind would be. Yet there is no indication that Jesus meant anything other than what he literally said. And if we consider the number of abortions in world history, probably around 2 billion now, and all other children below the age of responsibility, there may well be more souls in heaven than hell even if only 1/3 of those who are called accept Jesus as their Lord.)

Now I would like to relate two accounts given by Kenneth Hagin. We don't take doctrine from experiences, but experiences are useful to confirm our understanding, if they are trustworthy and tested by the Spirit.

Hagin was terminally ill and bed-bound in hospital unable to walk. He spent much time reading the Bible. One day as he read a verse the faith revelation hit him that if that verse was true – and it was – then he could be healed if he just received it by faith. Accordingly he got out of bed in faith and stood, and was instantaneously and completely healed. He then started or became part of the Word of Faith movement which has been much maligned, abused or misused by those who misunderstand what it's about. I only mention this in case you are against it because of what you've been taught and want to dismiss what he relates. I'm telling you, you've been taught wrong. In that bathwater is a baby! Hagin too was grieved by the position of some of the prosperity preachers. The key is whether you put the Word above yourself, as God has, as Hagin did. Are you a Bible believer or a Bible correcter? Let the Word be your ruler.

On one occasion, Hagin was praying in faith for the healing of a man, and God asked him not to. This puzzled Hagin and he asked God why not? God replied, the man has previously fallen away from the church and has now returned. If he is healed, he will fall away again worse than before. Note though how, because Hagin had the faith, God had to ask him not to pray.

On another occasion, a woman left her husband and church to go live with another man. People had tried to get this situation fixed but she had resisted them all. God told Hagin to go and warn her that she was in danger of losing her salvation unless she repented. But when Hagin delivered the warning, she replied spitefully and closed the door in his face.

God is in control

John Wesley, founder of the Methodist church, said "It seems God is limited by our prayer life – that he can do nothing for humanity unless someone asks him."

And I agree that the Bible and life shows that to be true.

Yet, Romans 8:28 says

> And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. – Romans 8:28

So even if the called don't ask him (yet), he still has a perfect plan that he implements as soon as they do trust him.

Why is it that God controls things for the called but not others?

The key is in the beginning of the world.

> And God said, Let us make **man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion** over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. – Genesis 1:26-27

> When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. **Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet**: – Psalm 8:3-6

Adam was given dominion over the whole world.

But when Adam gave in to Satan, he submitted not only himself and the whole world under himself to Satan, who became the god of this world.

> In whom the **god of this world** hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. – 2 Corinthians 4:4

So by default Satan has the legal right to rule the world and cause mayhem, pain and suffering.

However, when Jesus died and rose again, he, as a man, conquered Satan. It was a trap into which Satan fell. By Satan killing an innocent man, God could now justly forgive guilty men.

> As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: ... And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power: ... **Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross**; And having spoiled [overcome and looted] principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it. – Colossians 2:6, 10, 14-15

> But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: Which **none of the princes of this world knew**: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. – 1 Corinthians 2:7-8

And so now, when we surrender ourselves to Jesus Christ as our Lord, all we are and all we have becomes his, and he has the dominion over us and all the circumstances that pertain to us, and we likewise inherit his authority over Satan.

And that is also why sometimes God will ask a Christian to pray for someone, sometimes in tongues for what and whom they do not know, only to find out later that someone has been saved, either spiritually or physically.

So don't blame God for the ills of this world. Trust him to fix them better than they would have been before!

Suffering

A lot of people ask why God allows suffering, if he's a good God, and it seems a fair question on the face of it, but it is actually a very shallow question after you give it some consideration.

Think about it this way. How should God prevent suffering? Should he control Satan, and people, like robots, so that they can only do good? Wouldn't that defeat the purpose of creating beings separate from himself, beings with their own will? Would they not then simply be extensions of God's arm, puppets on his hands?

Or if he must allow free will, why should he not strike them down as soon as they purpose to hurt another person, so that no actual harm can come to anyone except those who fall? But then who would know why? It would be a judgment without a trial, it would appear capricious, and people would become afraid that they too might be struck down. There would be no second chance, no time to learn. That doesn't seem pleasant.

But what God does is give them time to come to their senses, and time for people to see what the nature of evil is like.

How then does he handle the suffering and pain?

He takes it all upon himself.

Anyone who comes to Jesus will find their wounds healed by the stripes upon Jesus' back from the Roman cat o' nine tails embedded with nails and sharp objects which ripped the flesh off his bones, and their hearts cleansed with the blood that came from his pierced hands and feet and heart, and their souls re-born from his spiritual death.

Whatever has been done to you, the pain and suffering of it has been taken by Jesus and you don't have to hold onto it any more. You can hold onto Jesus instead, and let his healing flow into you. Relax your heart, let go the pain, let his healing love flow.

Also, you can rest assured that even on this earth, *everything* that God allows to happen can be worked for good, amazingly.

> For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. ... And we know that **all things work together for good to them that love God**, to them who are the called according to his purpose. – Romans 8:18, 28

Read the PDF book linked to in Appendix A: the book Prison to Praise by Merlin Carrothers, it will open your eyes.

By giving up his own Son to ultimate suffering, God makes one thing crystal clear: it will all be worth it. You can take that to the bank of heaven. You will be glad and grateful at the end.

Prosperity

There's a lot of confusion and nonsense flying around about prosperity. It's actually very simple.

1. All other things being equal, and the soul being saved, God wants people to have enough.

> A Psalm of David. The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. – Psalm 23:1
>
> But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus. – Philippians 4:19

2. Sometimes, God wants people to have more than enough – plenty to give to others

> Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again. – Luke 6:38

(But do not treat this spiritual law as a mechanism! That's idolatrous. You never give *in order* to get. You don't even *tithe** (see next section) *in order to* be provided for. That's the cart before the horse. Seeking provision before the Provider. You give out of love, you tithe freely to God in love. You are not under law, and God is not a machine.)

3. Yet still, sometimes it is good for us to go without.
   This may be a time of chastisement, where the Lord is saving our souls,
   or it may be a time of fellowship in the suffering of Christ,
   or improvement of our spiritual condition,
   or a sacrifice on behalf of another person, etc.
   But when we know the Lord, he tells us what's going on. Get on your knees and wait there.

> But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again; wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity.
> Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and

> in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me. – Philippians 4:10-13
>
> That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; – Philippians 3:10

In summary, when we are not rich:

– We need to be able to trust God to provide for our needs with faith in his goodness. Never be afraid. Be confident in God. Read the Word, spend time with him, and he will feed you. Ask him if you are out of line anywhere, and if you are, he will tell you precisely what to do to fix that. TRUST.

And when we are rich:

– We need to be wary and careful. One pastor said it best: "It's okay to have money, as long as money doesn't have you." Always be willing to give it all away.

Faith

See Faith under Relationship with God

Tithing

Tithing is the principle of giving 10% of your increase to God. Many Christians see it as a valid law to keep today, like the ten commandments, but it began even before God gave the law of tithing to Israel as a means for the priests and temple to have provision. It began when Abraham tithed to Melchisedec*, and as such remains a spiritual principle before a law.

There is a strong current of the importance of tithing in the body of Christ who experience the gifts of the Spirit. Not only does this come from honour – I have read many autobiographies in which such Christians who apply tithing to their own hurt find that God provides for all their needs. (But it is also encouraged, I realised later, by charismatic pastors falling into error seeking their own security or even prosperity.)

Seeing the importance of tithing I myself made it a required principle. The question for me though was, before or after taxes? The principle of tithing is that you give 10% of your increase, i.e., after the costs of generating the profits, and you live on the 90%. But I realised that the way the government calculates taxes is also on your increase, i.e. after costs. And I did not want to put the government first, so I decided to base my tithe on my income before taxes.

Now some years after I started supporting my parents this really began to hurt, as prices increased but my income did not. As my debts mounted I kept trusting God to provide, but one day I realised I was just at the end. I could not keep up repayments on the credit cards if I got any deeper into debt. So I went to the Lord and asked him if he minded if I stopped paying the tithe for a while, since it wasn't a law. I didn't get a clear answer – probably because the principle of tithing as the right thing to do was so engrained in me – but I did have a complete peace about it in my spirit.

Slowly, over the years, my finances recovered, though I never could afford a new car – my sister S gave me one as a gift, which is the kind of person she is!

However, I never started tithing again. What happened instead was that various needs came my way instead. I think, though I have not checked, that I may have given as much or more as I would have tithed. I also feel it was a mistake to tithe on the gross: the tax is not disposable income to live on. However, I do hate the government being over God, so I would do it again if I could. But the main principle for me which I have learned, is that tithing is a principle of paying respect, not a formula to get provision from God. But don't withhold your tithe or your giving to avoid some discomfort, either!

(To those who feel you should tithe to the church you attend, I should explain: at the same time, I could not find a church to go to. Not one church in all the greater area for 30 miles around my town regularly experiences the gifts of the Spirit – but Jesus said, "these signs will follow those who believe"!
I have been spoiled by experiencing God in a living church and am too hard pressed in terms of time, cooking, cleaning, working from home, etc. and so cannot afford to waste my time playing pretend. When we moved to where we are now, we went to a lovely Baptist church in the town next to mine. When people started really worshipping sincerely with their hearts, and the Spirit would descend, and you could feel the love, joy and peace, and truly give your whole heart to God in union with him, the pastor would cut the worship. The third time this happened I was so grieved, and realised that there was nothing for me in this church. Even the sermons were dry and dusty exegeses of the meaning of Greek words interspersed with light and airy fluff about the world. So I left, and my family chose to leave with me.
After some months the pastor arranged a visit with me and hinted at asking why I was no longer attending. Instead of answering directly, I asked him why he would cut the worship off when people were, in my opinion, just starting to get into it sincerely. His answer was revelational to me. Emotions, he said, are dangerous, and not a good thing. I ended the visit shortly after. My God has emotions, and created them – in their place, as responding naturally, rather than being sought after, they are good: they open hearts and join them; they convict of the truth; they warn, highlight, give life to meaning and serve many other purposes. To repeat a phrase, emotions make wonderful servants but lousy masters.)

* Salem is the old town in Jerusalem which later became the city of David. Salem means peace. There is an interesting chapter in Paul's letter to the Hebrews which discusses how Abraham gave 10% of all he had gained to the king of Salem, and how that king is a very clear type (figure, similitude) of Jesus, in that the king of Salem is the king of Peace and his beginning and end are not recorded. And how God speaks to the Messiah in Psalm 110:4, saying to him, "Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek", which shows that the Levitical priesthood is not the final priesthood, because the Messiah comes from the tribe of Judah, not Levi; and Levi in Abraham's loins also gave him the tithe.

> For this Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him; To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace; Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually. Now consider how great this man was, unto whom even the patriarch

Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils. And verily they that are of the sons of Levi, who receive the office of the priesthood, have a commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law, that is, of their brethren, though they come out of the loins of Abraham: But he whose descent is not counted from them received tithes of Abraham, and blessed him that had the promises. And without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better. And here men that die receive tithes; but there he receiveth them, of whom it is witnessed that he liveth. And as I may so say, Levi also, who receiveth tithes, payed tithes in Abraham. For he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchisedec met him. If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron? For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law. For he of whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar. For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood. And it is yet far more evident: for that after the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another priest, Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life. For he testifieth, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof. For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God. And inasmuch as not without an oath he was made priest: (For those priests were made without an oath; but this with an oath by him that said unto him, The Lord sware and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec:) By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament. And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death: But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself. For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore. – Hebrews 7:1-28

Religious Spirit

It seems to me that this is a very common ailment in the church.

I recall Jesse Du Plantis sharing how if the devil can't slow you down or stop you, he'll get behind you and push you. And it is fairly easy for him to do this to people who want to live for Christ.

A person who has a religious spirit is focused on doing what's right and avoiding what is wrong, and helping others also to do what's right, without tempering: so they will give critique whenever they see someone in the wrong. Working in their own strength they will develop methods for living which helps them to keep doing and saying things right, such as keeping a promise even if there is no longer a need. As a result of this, their expectation of the proper behaviour and their sense of judgment becomes acute.

They understand all of the doctrine very well, such as that we live by faith, yet much of that which they do is their own work, not of faith, and arises from their own mind and motives, not the Spirit, so ultimately the source of these works is the flesh – though they would be the first to deny it because they don't understand that the flesh does 'good' works as easily as bad works.

Their spiritual life is actually a mental and a physical life, one focussed on actions rather than resting in Christ.

What is the rest of Christ? It is when one has ceased from one's own works (Hebrews 4:10) and trusts in Christ's leading; praying without ceasing (1 Thessalonian 5:17), always in the spirit following only the spirit's leading (Galatians 5:16). In this rest, works have ceased to matter in terms of trying to do right not wrong and teaching others to do the same. What takes its place is the gentle loving grace and understanding of the Lord as to know what *needs* to be said, and *when*, and not just blurting out whatever comes to mind.

For, firstly, we all have many faults and the Lord is not addressing all of them all the time or we would never cope; and secondly, what may appear to one to be a fault may not be a fault at all in the Lord's eyes, considering the circumstances that we can't see; but thirdly, and mostly, because you cannot build on the negatives: the Lord rarely deals with something in people's lives by criticism, and extremely rarely by criticism through another person. He spends much more time explaining to them how they can walk in love and the Spirit, and in their so doing much of their sin falls away by itself. (Certainly, I believe, he never deals with items which are not a corruption of the soul directly or indirectly. For example, if someone who does not hear the Lord gets a tattoo without ever thinking that their body is the temple of God, I believe God would not deal with the tattoo (if wrong) at *any* time, because their heart is not materially corrupted in any way. Their conscience is clear on this, and therefore it is effectively not a sin to them. But even if you do not agree on this, it's immaterial as it's not my main point.)

My main point is that until you have been broken open like the alabaster jar of expensive perfume that was broken open and poured onto Jesus' feet, which releases your spirit, until you have discovered complete freedom from right and wrong, so that you are able to walk in loving understanding, until you have discovered the reliance in prayer upon God that keeps you on your knees until you hear from jim, and ceased from doing your own works but always operate in rest, saying and doing only what you see the Father doing, until this event of discovering jis rest setting you free, you will operate like a Pharisee, judging, criticising the speck in people's eyes and condemning the life out of them while being convinced you are in the right, forgetting you are called to walk in love, not in the right. You will bring death instead of life, even though you are well-meaning, because the works of the flesh always bring death – our 'good' deeds are menstrual cloths in God's sight (Isaiah 64:6).

If you feel you may have a religious spirit and have heard me through the fog and are not rejecting me based on some voice telling you how wrong I am because I just don't understand how important it is to be righteous before a holy God, and you want to learn to enter into God's rest, get up and pray at a time when it is quiet, humbly on your knees, and ask God to reveal himself to you, and wait patiently. Give the Holy Spirit the opportunity to explain things to you himself. Read the King James. And finally, ask God right now what lie you believe about yourself, and then wait and see what comes into your head. Once you have dealt with that, ask God what is true about yourself, then deal with that.

PSYCHOLOGY

You will never get anywhere in understanding the psychology of yourself and others until you realise that the mind is not top dog in your body. There is a spirit behind the scenes which influences and controls things.

The Romans used to say, a healthy mind in a healthy body, showing that they understood how well the mind affects the body and the body the mind.

(There have been some fascinating experiments in this line.

In one, they injected a subject with a substance which caused an allergic reaction, and then gave him the antidote. They did this daily for many days. Then one day instead of the antidote, unbeknown to him, they injected him with saline solution. Yet, it still worked!

In another, they splashed ice cold water upon a subject who believed it was boiling water, and he suffered burns just as if it had been boiling water.)

But what the Romans did not know was that just as the mind and body interact, so does the spirit and mind, and spirit and body!

I remember once being in a doctor's waiting room and they had a machine there which measured your stress levels. You put your hand on it and it would show you a graph, and the higher the line went, the more you were stressed, and the idea was to try and calm yourself and see how low you could bring the line.

Well, a weird thing happened to me. I decided to try speaking in tongues under my breath, and INSTANTLY the line dropped to a very, very low state. When I stopped speaking in tongues, the line immediately resumed an ordinary level. I repeated this several times, with the same result each time.

Now the thing about tongues is that it is your spirit speaking. It controls the body directly, bypassing the soul's control.

You *are* a spirit. You *have* a soul. You *live* in a body. You experience both the revelational input of the spirit, including your conscience, the Lord and even evil spirits, and the sensory input of your body, in your mind. These forces contend with one another in your mind for your attention.

And it is in the evil corruption of our bodies and souls, or actions done to us, that psychological problems come about.

Peter tells us that fleshly lusts war against our souls, that is to say, damage our souls.

> Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; – 1 Peter 2:11

When the Bible speaks of "the flesh", it is talking about the sensory input of your body, as well as the input of evil spirits, and the mind's attraction to it.

For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.
But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.
This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would [=*want to*]. But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.
Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.
But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.
And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.
If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another. – Galatians 5

The flesh has selfish desires which lust against the desires of the Spirit. Desires for sensual gratification even at other people's expense – taking an extra sausage roll from the table even if someone else will miss out, stealing something that you like, having an affair with a married person, watching porn. Where do these come from?

When Adam was created, God gave him dominion over all the earth. However, when Adam rebelled against God and obeyed Satan, he fell under Satan's dominion, along with the whole world. **All flesh was corrupted with the sinful desires of evil** which spring from Satan.

For all that is in the world,

the lust of the flesh,
and the lust of the eyes,
and the pride of life,

is not of the Father, but is of the world. – 1 John 2:16

The flesh is not only the lust of the flesh (sensual desires of the *body* to feel good), but also the lust of the eyes (soulish desires of the *mind*, to own, to have what your neighbour owns), and the pride of life (satanic desires of the *spirit* divorced from God, to be better than one's neighbour, to be admired, even to be top dog, just as Lucifer wished to take God's throne. The pride of life is the pride of living your own life independently from God, the pride of saying I own my own life and will decide what is right for me, as well as the pride of being right.)

Not only do our bodies, souls and spirits inspire evil desires in our minds, but Satan and his army of demons also oppress us with evil thoughts, ideas and pictures.

So from within and without all who are descended from Adam and Eve suffer this fate, to be continually under attack, susceptible to and tempted by evil desires which appear in the mind.

Many people conflate these desires which originate from Satan, either directly or indirectly via the flesh, as being their own will.

Some are even tortured with the idea of suicide or murder, never recognising this as an attack.

But I'm here to tell you that they are not your ideas, they are Satan's, and if you have made Jesus Christ your Lord you can rebuke them with all the power of heaven at your command in Jesus' Name, and they will flee from you. You have the power available to you.

Just as a traffic policeman can stop heavy trucks by raising a single commanding hand because of all the mighty power of a government, police force and even army, if need be, behind him, so can you stop Satan in his tracks. He MUST obey the Name of Jesus.

> Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. – James 4:7

Notice how the Roman centurion understood this concept, that those submitted to authority carry the delegated power of that authority:

> And saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented. And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him. The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed. For **I am a man <u>under</u> authority**, having soldiers under me: and **I say to this man, Go, and he goeth**; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.
>
> When Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the selfsame hour. – Matthew 8:6-13

By coming to Christ and submitting ourselves to obey him and walk with him, first of all we get born again on the inside, receiving the gift of the Spirit of God of a new, clean spirit in touch with God: at that moment we become a new man; and secondly we are entitled to his healing and power to protect us, and a healthy mind:

> For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. – 2 Timothy 1:7

We will still receive evil thoughts and desires and pictures in our mind from the body and soul and Satan, but we can rebuke him and dismiss them as belonging to the old man – the one that was crucified when Jesus took our place.

We can place our attention instead upon the Holy Spirit, who is ever-present with us to love, guide and teach us the way as we learn to walk it.

It's a bit like the pink elephant story: if I tell you not to think of a pink elephant, immediately it pops into your mind, and for as long and as hard as you try not to think of it, for just so long and as powerfully do you give it the power to be present in your mind, exerting its influence upon you; and in the same way, sin exerts its influence upon you while allowed in the mind.

> Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.
> Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man:
> But every man is tempted, when he is **drawn away of his own lust**, and **enticed**.
> Then **when lust hath conceived**, it **bringeth forth sin**: and sin, **when it is finished**, bringeth forth **death**. – James 1:12-15

So if you try to resist temptation face-on, you will ultimately fall to it, for you give the temptation the time and attention it needs to grow to the birth. You think about it, you conceive a plan; you take one step of the plan, you finish the steps; you are condemned.

Instead, talk to God. Tell him about your temptation and then put your mind on all that Christ has done for you, and thank him. Fill your mind with the things of the Spirit, for the Spirit fights against the flesh. Love God. Let him guide you. Stay with him even if you do fall. Share your feelings with him.

This is the battle in the mind.

1. Remember, sinful thoughts are not yours.
2. Only God is good. Love him with all your heart. Let him be your good in you.
3. Be willing to suffer. Remember that Jesus was *crucified* to save you, so be willing to suffer somewhat yourself in escaping the flames to come. Take courage and look to the joy that is to come from defeating Satan in Christ.

While I am here, you will also get battles of temptation by people in the world. Again, here, we are called not to resist head-on, but this time, because it is physical, we cannot simply turn our eyes upon Jesus, we must also turn our bodies toward God – and in an immediate, urgent sense: get out of there. Flee!

> Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body. – 1 Corinthians 6:18
>
> Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry. – 1 Corinthians 10:14
>
> But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. – 1 Timothy 6:11
>
> Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart. – 2 Timothy 2:22

Addiction is an extreme case

There was an article titled "Sex changes the brain – and it IS different for men and women" on the Mail Online on 7 Dec, 2011 by Fiona Macrae, Science Correspondent, which described a study by Researcher Shinji Tsukahara of Saitama University. It was already known that several brain regions linked to sexual behaviour differ in size between the sexes, but in this study they found that sexual experience changes the brain *physically*. This is likely God's way of making a husband and wife one flesh:

> Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. – Genesis 2:24

You become joined together in your desire for one another, physically and soulishly, and in your becoming satisfied by them, which is a good thing in a loving, righteous marriage.

Paul speaks of the mystery of Christ and the church also becoming one. This of course is in spirit, heart joining to heart in unselfish love, and the joy which springs from our union with him will be far greater, of which the natural figure of marriage is but an earthly example.

Yet our minds are also wired to accommodate God in our souls somehow, and I suspect that this is what drugs often imitate.

So you can see what a powerful force these earthly things can exert upon us, when once we become subject to them and enslaved by them. For example, I came across a statistic that two thirds of pastors or priests watch porn! Does this mean they are hypocrites? Perhaps – or perhaps they are helpless, caught in Satan's sticky web, unable to set themselves free, and feeling terrible and ashamed about it.

But God knows the power of these forces. He knows how helpless you are. That is why he sent his only beloved Son into the midst of it, to take it and die with it. By dying with it, when he raised him from the dead he also set him and us free from it. Now this is only a *potential* freedom, to us. By which I mean, it is made available to us, but it only becomes ours when we decide to receive it and make it ours, and this is at once both easy and hard.

Easy, because it begins and ends with ourselves being willing to be *made* willing, being willing to turn the key which sets us free. And that key is the words of your mouth and the resting of your heart in Christ. And this is only achievable when we come to the end of ourselves and turn to Christ in all helplessness and in death of self, as so many have done with success before us. In other words, pray this prayer, and mean it:

> God, I feel awful about this addiction I am in. I can't help it. I really can't, and I know it. I have come to the end of myself and back again, and I just can't save myself. But I know you can. I know you sent Jesus to take these sins of mine for me, and to set me free.
>
> And God, I want to say, that even while I find within myself I am *unable* to give these things up by myself, I *want* to, and I ask you to deliver me. I die to myself. I surrender my body to

you. I surrender myself to you as my Lord from this moment on, and every day. I know you can set me free and purify my heart, and let Jesus live in me instead of me.

Now God may answer this immediately or it may take as long as it takes, but every day – and this is so important! – you need to *talk* to God about it and *specifically* tell him that you know he has a solution on the way and you're trusting him with all your heart on it. Why? Because this sacrifice offering of your will is something he uses to connect and open the pipeline from heaven to your heart. And sometimes that takes time!

> In those days I Daniel was mourning three full weeks. I ate no pleasant bread, neither came flesh nor wine in my mouth, neither did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled. And in the four and twentieth day of the first month, as I was by the side of the great river, which is Hiddekel; Then I lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and behold a certain man clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with fine gold of Uphaz: His body also was like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like in colour to polished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude. And I Daniel alone saw the vision: for the men that were with me saw not the vision; but a great quaking fell upon them, so that they fled to hide themselves. Therefore I was left alone, and saw this great vision, and there remained no strength in me: for my comeliness was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength. Yet heard I the voice of his words: and when I heard the voice of his words, then was I in a deep sleep on my face, and my face toward the ground. And, behold, an hand touched me, which set me upon my knees and upon the palms of my hands. And he said unto me, O Daniel, a man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak unto thee, and stand upright: for unto thee am I now sent. And when he had spoken this word unto me, I stood trembling. Then said he unto me, Fear not, Daniel: for **from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words. But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me**; and I remained there with the kings of Persia. Now I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days: for yet the vision is for many days. And when he had spoken such words unto me, I set my face toward the ground, and I became dumb. And, behold, one like the similitude of the sons of men touched my lips: then I opened my mouth, and spake, and said unto him that stood before me, O my lord, by the vision my sorrows are turned upon me, and I have retained no strength. For how can the servant of this my lord talk with this my lord? for as for me, straightway there remained no strength in me, neither is there breath left in me. Then there came again and touched me one like the appearance of a man, and he strengthened me, And said, O man greatly beloved, fear not: peace be unto thee, be strong, yea, be strong. And when he had spoken unto me, I was strengthened, and said, Let my lord speak; for thou hast strengthened me. Then said he, Knowest thou wherefore I come unto thee? and now will I return to fight with the prince of Persia: and when I am gone forth, lo, the prince of Grecia shall come. But I will shew thee that which is

> noted in the scripture of truth: and there is none that holdeth with me in these things, but Michael your prince. – Daniel 10:2-21

And hard, because when temptation comes we get so stressed, and Satan loves to torture us with thoughts of the pleasure of the addiction. But as we fight with it, it becomes a snake growing with greater and greater power over us while it finds life in our minds, until it conquers us and we succumb once again to our shame.

Remember that lust entices us, and *when we look at it*, it conceives, and brings forth sin. (James 1:14-15)

What is the solution?

Stop fighting with it, toying with it, trying to overcome it with our minds. Don't go there! Get out of your mind and into the spirit. Rest in the Lord. Think about other things. Fill your mind with praise for God.

> For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal [fleshly desires], sold under sin. For that which I do I allow not [don't accept]: for what I would [will to do], that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not [don't want to], I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would [want to] I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. **O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God** [who does] **through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.** – Romans 7:14-25
>
> This I say then, **Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.** For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law. – Galatians 5:16-18
>
> Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. – Philippians 4:8

You need to understand that everything we receive from God is a *spiritual* thing received by the yielding of the *natural* man to it. There is then a conversion of the natural to the spiritual, that takes place through:

a) the **inward death of ourselves**, through giving ourselves up to God and our Lord Jesus Christ and thus participating in the CROSS which CRUCIFIED us, and

b) the **raising up to life of our new, born again *spirit*** with Christ, which has the *power* to overcome sin *for* us, and this raising up is through the works of faith, which is by the **word of our mouths** expressing the truth of God which we have received into ourselves through our eyes and ears and **choose** to **believe in our hearts** and therein is born as the seed of God to raise up as new life in our hearts.

> But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. **For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession [speaking the truth] is made unto salvation.** For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. – Romans 10:8-13
>
> **Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son** upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. Ye see then how that **by works a man is justified, and not by faith only**. – James 2:21-24
>
> Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God. And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, **in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us**. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. – Romans 8:26-39

So how does this work in practice?

Like this:

1. Bind every spirit that is not of God, in Jesus' Name. Forbid them to influence you. Ask God to send them to the pit.
2. When temptation comes, grab ahold of God's hand in your heart immediately, and share your stress with him, and tell him about it, and trust him with all your heart. Even if you fall, even if you fail many times, never give up – he will carry you through to victory in the end. Remember how Shadrack, Meshach and Abednego were willing to go into the fire. Let God decide the outcome.
3. Stop being alive to it. Remember you are dead, deservedly so. You could never win. Instead, Jesus has made you more than a conqueror. More than, because you already have the victory as a free gift. It's his, given to you. You don't have to fight. God forbid, if you fight, you will lose. So don't fight. Instead, be dead in Christ and alive to God. Let God rule you. Love God.
4. Speak the word, and say you believe it. Your ears will hear it and pass it to your mind. Smith Wigglesworth loved to say, "God said it. I believe it. That settles it."
   Speaking the word is the work of faith that activates it in *your* life. It is believing and receiving.
   What is the word? Any word that the Spirit brings to your mind or that you find from the Bible that applies to your situation. But this is one that can help you:

   > **I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. – Galatians 2:20**

   You will find that as you activate this word in your life that it has a tremendous, conquering power. But you must remember that the power is not yours, it is God's. You are simply yielding yourself to it and wielding it with your tongue and heart. It. is. that. simple.

   If your will is to be made willing and you activate God's power in the word, his word will not fail you. Don't worry about the outcomes or your ability. This is not about your ability. It is about God's ability. You are simply receiving it, like a child, with your heart and mouth. It's that easy. You believe: you speak: you are free. Your natural mind will try to say, it's impossible. Don't listen. Choose to be free.
5. Rest in him.

   > **For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his.** Let us labour therefore [*for example by trusting him, obeying him and speaking his word*] to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief. For the **word of God is quick [alive]**, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit,

> and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do. Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us **hold fast our profession** [speaking out that which we believe]. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. – Hebrews 4:10-16

This is so important. It is the *key* to the Christian life. Letting go and letting God. Hiding yourself in God's secret place. Allowing God to take you over and run things.

> I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet **not I, but Christ liveth in me**: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. – Galatians 2:20

There was once a director filming a movie that got very frustrated with one of the actresses on set who had no lines in the scene. She kept doing things in her efforts to improve the scene that actually distracted from it. The director finally burst out at her,

> "Don't just *do* something – stand there!"

which, as funny as it is, is an incredibly apt saying for us Christians to remember.

If you want to hear God and be led by God, after you have shared the burdens on your heart and thanked him for hearing you, still the storm of your thoughts and shut up for a moment! Tell him you are waiting for him because you love him. Then allow him to speak. Be patient, and wait for him. It will take some time. Behind every miracle is a season of waiting, of overcoming Satan, the flesh, and the world, through prayerful dedication to the point of suffering the flesh away by giving it no place and presenting yourself with **all your heart** to God, not 99.9%.

> The LORD is good unto them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him. It is good that a man should both hope and **quietly wait for the salvation of the LORD**. – Lamentations 3:25-26

> To the chief Musician on Neginoth, A Psalm of David. Hear me when I call, O God of my righteousness: thou hast enlarged me when I was in distress; have mercy upon me, and hear my prayer. O ye sons of men, how long will ye turn my glory into shame? how long will ye love vanity, and seek after leasing? Selah. But know that the LORD hath set apart him that is godly for himself: the LORD will hear when I call unto him. **Stand in awe, and sin not: commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still.** Selah. Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and put your trust in the LORD. There be many that say, Who will shew us any good? LORD, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us. Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more

> than in the time that their corn and their wine increased. I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou, LORD, only makest me dwell in safety. – Psalm 4:1-8
>
> To the chief Musician for the sons of Korah, A Song upon Alamoth. God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. Selah. There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High. God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early. The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved: he uttered his voice, the earth melted. The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah. Come, behold the works of the LORD, what desolations he hath made in the earth. He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire. **Be still, and know that I am God**: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth. The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah. – Psalm 46:1-11

If you are struggling to do this, ask the Master:

> And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full. And he was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow: and they awake him, and say unto him, Master, carest thou not that we perish? And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. – Mark 4:37-39

Don't wait for the temptation before you enter in to the victory. When you get up in the morning, say "Thank you God for making me more than a conqueror! Thank you for giving me a new heart! Thank you for making me dead in Christ with all my sins and alive to you with his righteousness!" and so on as you feel led.

Say whatever the Spirit leads your heart to say. Express that faith within you, put it onto your lips, activate it and get it working for you, well in advance of when you will need it, and your spirit will be greatly strengthened. And keep doing that throughout the day and when you go to sleep. And don't despise what I am saying. Many people have proved this, and it's biblical: the word of God is the most powerful creative force ever.

> And God **said**, Let there be light: and there was light. – Genesis 1:3
>
> (Literally, "Light, exist!")

The word of his power is for everything

> God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things **by the word of his power**, when

> he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son? – Hebrews 1:1-5

Is it not a strange expression, the word of his power?

This shows clearly that God's POWER is effected, brought about, executed by his WORD. Including his word on YOUR lips.

This principle of speaking God's Word, and making yourself believe it, because you know God is not a liar, regardless of what your senses tell you, will ultimately bring about a change in the circumstances to subordinate them to God's Word. You choose God's Word over all else.

There are many, many Christians who have experienced this for themselves. Just for example, authors Don Gossett, and Charles Capps.

This applies not only to things but also to spiritual oppression over you and any other circumstance of this world. Pick the thing that bothers you most, find the Word that covers it, and apply that Word to your life by **telling God you believe** that such-and-such is true because he said it, and you are expecting to see it in your life. That's being **importunate** – it means being 100% insistently needy. And don't be lazy – stir yourself up! Put your heart into it! That's being **fervent**. That's your *will* in *action*, receiving. Even if you don't *feel* like you believe it, since you know it must be true, keep going! Keep telling God that you know you are healed, and well, and provided for. Keep praising him for allowing lack or hurt to come into your life because he's allowed it for good, because he will work it for good by applying his loving heart to it. And be open to whatever he tells you.

Also, love him. Remember that he has saved you from all your sin, regardless of how successful or otherwise you are, so that you can be with him in his perfect holiness, being loved and look after by him and loving him back. In his presence, there is peace, love and joy, and the joy of the Lord is your strength.

> Thou wilt shew me the path of life: **in thy presence is fulness of joy**; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore. – Psalm 16:11
>
> But the **fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace**, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, – Galatians 5:22
>
> Then he said unto them, Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared: for this day is holy unto our Lord: neither be ye sorry; for **the joy of the LORD is your strength**. – Nehemiah 8:10

Not for 5 minutes every week, but many times over every day.

Addiction to social media

One particular addiction that is crucially important is watching videos and engaging in chat and news on social media. Accruing new information, whether constructive or just watching entertaining events, causes your brain to raise dopamine levels as it processes this information. It feels relaxing at the time but it causes your brain to get tired of processing, which essentially shuts down your initiative and ability to live your life freely, and so when you finish one you find it easier to watch something else, than to think of what to do and go do it. And the more you drink, the thirstier you get. So you become a slave to the flow of seductively interesting footage and chat. Even though you still react to people and circumstances, your life becomes a treadmill and it feels like you never have any time. No time to pray or read the Word or speak God's power into your life.

It might sound insane to you but you really need to set yourself free. You can manage without your smartphone. Get a dumb phone. Take the social media apps off your smart phone. This is the last thing you want to allow to take you to hell by the broad, easy way.

If you are doubtful, try it for one week. No social media, no chats and if possible, get a dumb phone, they're really cheap. Make it your contacts phone. You'll be stunned at how your brain revives and comes to life again, and get your life back.

Attraction / Repulsion

When we meet someone that we find charming or noble or attractive, we tend to put a white hat on them, and filter everything from then on from a charitable point of view. It's where the expression "rose-coloured glasses" comes from. It's what will happen when the Antichrist steps up charmingly to save the world. In this state we can easily fall in love with them, and if there is more to them that is not good, the end result will be disastrous.

When I was young we would play with ant lions. These are little bugs which make a cone of sand and live in a hole at the bottom. When an ant wanders over the edge, it starts slipping on the sand as the grains slide down, and the ant struggles to get out, but rather also slips down bit by bit. The ant lion feels the disturbance and rushes out to grab and eat the ant.

In the same way, when you find yourself attracted to and charmed by someone, be wise, and cautious, and aware of this tendency, and hold yourself back from falling down the edge at the very start, before you start slipping in.

And conversely, when we hear a bad report of someone we do not know, or form a negative first impression, we tend to put a black hat on them, and consider everything they do from a suspicious or critical point of view. In this way we can be unfairly judgmental, and will pay for it later.

In 1 Corinthians 13:7 Paul says that love thinks no evil and believes all things. Now he's not saying that love is gullible, but rather, that love has faith. Love gives people a chance and trusts God. So when you find yourself criticising someone, get uncomfortable about it real quick and root it out. If

necessary, make an effort to find out what is really going on. Stand up for that person like they were your sibling. Never. judge. anyone. And you will not be blinded.

Depression

One of the strangest laws of God is the law of giving.

> Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again. – Luke 6:38

My pastor used to say that depression is the devil's baby-sitter: in other words, it will tie you up and mess you up all by itself with no one's help.

What happens with depression (I'm not talking about spirit-caused or body-caused depression, but the emotional state of being down) is that it draws you to look inward at yourself and your down state. You are no longer outgoing and encouraging others because you are in too much pain. But this closes the tap of giving emotionally, and so also the pipeline of receiving emotionally, and you fall steadily into a deeper and deeper state of sadness and loneliness, without the warmth of the fires of love in your life.

One chap in America in this position got really desperate and asked God what to do about it, and God said, "Give". He thought, what can he give? He had no money. But he did have time. So he decided that every day at a certain hour he would go to the park and pick up litter, which he did. From time to time people would come up and ask him what he was doing, and he'd chat to them. Some would help. He got to know a few, and found they needed help here and there too, like with moving, and he'd offer to help them.

In the end, he reports, his whole life was changed. His depression left and he found himself with friends and a life filled with love.

So if you are sad, find someone sad, and encourage them. Go to an old age home, or a children's home, or a shelter, and spend an hour talking to someone there, and just listen. They need a listening ear so badly. Give them your time and attention, and don't let that sadness stop you from loving. Love will then flow and win the victory in your life over that sadness.

Reading

Reading any book is good for your intelligence and verbal ability, reading good books is good for your soul, and reading the Bible is good for your spirit.

There was a man who came to speak at our church once, I forget his name sadly, but he struggled so much in early school, that the teachers gave up on him. They sent him home telling his parents that he will never learn how to read. When he was grown up, someone led him to the Lord, and he discovered that the Bible says, "In him was life; and the life was the light of men. – John 1:4", and he realised that that light must enable him to see things just as well as anyone else, and therefore he *could* learn how to read.

He started going about with a Bible in his hands asking people to explain to him what a word was, and over time he did indeed learn to read. Not only that, but he went on to become an intelligent businessman, and became a millionaire.

I read also of a black American mother had two sons who were doing badly at school. One day she decided that every week she would take them to the library where they could choose any book. That week, they would have to read the book and write a report on the book. She kept this up all their school days. Both went on to university where they got degrees, one became a neurosurgeon, and the other something equally skilled, though I don't recall what it was.

Music

Satan, before his fall, was Lucifer, and Ezekiel 28:13 implies that he had the ability to produce music, so we deduce he led worship in heaven. Music is incredibly powerful: if it is evil it can incite you to do wicked things much more easily, and when it is godly and worshipful it blocks the enemy and opens your heart to God with peace, love and joy.

Summary

If you are struggling, if you are at sea in a storm and your boat has no engine, take heart, the situation is salvageable and there are things you can do.

1. If you haven't connected up with God as your Lord yet, read Appendix C and do it.
2. Pray. Ask God to forgive you any sins you can think of, and then the ones you can't think of.
3. If you have any unforgiveness toward anyone, forgive them now. You can do it. Remember that you aren't perfect either, and hope for mercy. Remember that they themselves will still have to stand before the judgment throne of God and will not get away with a single thing. But let God judge them. As for you, have mercy. In setting them free you will set yourself free. Anger is a jailer.
4. Put worship music on if you can, and sing with it to God, or simply sing a song you know, or any song from your heart. Mean the words to God with all your heart.
5. Bind demonic forces in the name of Jesus, which has all authority over them.
6. Read the Bible, at least several chapters a day. Feel free to jump around in it. God will lead you to the parts that help you. And ask him to open your eyes.
7. If bad thoughts come into your head, take them captive in Jesus' Name and kick them out.
8. Read good books or watch decent Christian videos. Drop social media. Don't watch sensational videos or junk or porn and don't watch fake Christian videos, the ones which give you a creepy or odd feeling that something isn't quite right – not from your mind (that's just you misjudging) but in your heart.
9. Go out. Go out to do good and seek people – see if you can tell who are lonely or needy. If you have some money, take it with you in case God says to give it. Stand near them and see

if God gives you an opportunity to talk to them, and if so, do your best to listen to them and understand them as well as you can.

10. Spend time before the Lord in silence, giving yourself to him. Then in his strength, stand strong. Have courage, not only for yourself, but for those around you.

    Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and **having done all, to stand. Stand** therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; – Ephesians 6:13-14

    Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward. For **ye have need of patience**, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might **receive the promise.** For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. – Hebrews 10:35-37

    See also The Delay of Faith

Relationship with Man

Negativity

In CHAPTER 4. UNIVERSITY KICKS THINGS OFF I mention my friend who was shocked at my criticising someone on TV, and in CHAPTER 14. A JACKIE PULLINGER MEETING I mention how God told me not to accuse people using words like “should have”, “oughtn’t”, etc. because I’m bringing the condemnation of the law in. If I need to address something I can just mention the cost to me.

Another thing my friend used to tell me was, try to avoid asking “Why” someone did or is doing something. ‘Why’ carries an implication of a challenge, a sense of ‘you should not’. Many times it’s fine, but you can easily create a misunderstanding. Rather ask a different way, such as “What for?”, especially if someone is vulnerable to criticism.

Closely related to these are two things one of my pastors used to say:

1. “You can’t build on the negatives.” Meaning, that if you want to build something with people, focus on the positives. Not to say you can’t guide and correct someone gently when necessary (and even then “there’s a better way” is better than “that’s wrong”; and “have you considered” is very respectful); but if you want to build a solid, well adjusted group, you need to recognise and be grateful for what they achieve, and lead by example as a servant, not by pushing them from behind picking on everything they do wrong.

Inside every snowflake is the tiniest speck of dirt which gave the very first speck of ice somewhere to build onto, and every subsequent speck could then find its own place. A good leader is like that speck of dirt. Facilitating and enabling people to adjust themselves around him in order to best get the job done themselves. Giving them a structure and a point through which to communicate and organise, and just enough guidance and direction to see what still needs to be done.

2. “Gossip is like cutting open a feather pillow and letting all the feathers go out everywhere. You can never get them back. If you have a concern with someone, speak to them directly and confidentially.” You never know if there’s been a misunderstanding on either side, or if they will apologise and repent. And saying ‘but it is true’ is no defence for gossip. It is even harder to clear up the damage when it is true.

These principles changed my life. It is so easy to zip your lip when you feel an impulse to say something critical or accusing, and so many times you’ll find out your initial understanding was wrong – or even worse, it’s a public figure and you’ll never find out you’re wrong, but still sowing condemnation. There’s two sides to every story, if you take only one, you’re making a mistake. Stop being a judge of others, you’re not as qualified as you feel you are.

Walk in love.

Take Joel Osteen, for example. So many Christians jump on the bandwagon to label him an heretic because he only preaches positively and never preaches hellfire and damnation. They say he believes in prosperity and salvation without Christ.

But I looked into it and found he unequivocally believes – and has stated publicly – that you cannot be saved without Christ. The reason he will not tell someone who has not yielded to Christ that they are going to hell, the reason he does not know, is because he does not know if they *will* accept Christ. Simple as that. And he feels he can catch more fish for Christ by showing them his love than by scaring them into the kingdom. Well, though that might be arguably a less efficient method, that's not an *heretical* opinion. He still leads people in the prayer of salvation.

Judgment or unforgiveness are the quickest spirit killers I know. What does God say? Jesus is all about forgiveness. He quotes the same passage twice:

> But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. – Matthew 9:13
> But if ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless. – Matthew 12:7

What do these mean? The Pharisees condemned the sinners of their day, and Jesus for being with them; yet did not understand that they were condemning themselves to unforgiveness from God.

Unforgiveness and judgment make you hard-hearted, and close you off from God quicker than a limpet knuckling onto a rock. They blind you, and you lose your way. They give Satan a foothold of unforgiven sin in your life.

> And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. – Matthew 6:12

Ian MacCormack was stung by five box jellyfish, and as the ambulance drove him to the hospital he could feel he was dying. He tried to recall how to pray and remembered the Lord's prayer. When he got to forgive us our debts as the paralysis of the poison crept up his legs, into his mind flashed a picture of the men who had refused to help him get to the hospital. He knew he had to forgive them, but struggled, yet finally did so. Then into his mind flashed another picture of someone else he had to forgive, and the same thing happened. One by one he dealt with all his unforgiveness until finally the paralysis overcame him and he slipped away into darkness.

Later he awoke in the pitch dark and tried to find the light switch, but could not find anything at all. He heard vicious voices saying horrible things and telling him he was in hell, when suddenly a light appeared above him, drew him up and into God's presence. After a talk with God he was returned, and awoke in the morgue with a technician holding his foot and a scalpel, who looked up terrified when Ian turned his head, and just ran out of the room!

Saved by the skin of his teeth!

> But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. – Matthew 6:15

In my worship leading, I could always tell when someone was thinking critical, hard thoughts. The heavens were like brass. God was absent. The Holy Spirit cannot stand it.

If you want to live in the warmth, love and provision of God, stop the critical thoughts. Remind yourself that you do not know what that other person has gone through, nor what ability they have to deal with things. One day they will face God and give an answer for their lives. God knows best how to handle that. Let him do that. You, love. Forgive.

However, remember that there are two levels of forgiveness.

There is the forgiveness a brother asks for:

> Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, **I repent**; thou shalt forgive him. – Luke 17:3-4

If a brother repents, i.e. is trying not to sin against you, then let it be as if he had never sinned. Forgive the debt completely. Restore the relationship fully.

But if someone wrongs you and does not repent and ask for forgiveness, you cannot act foolishly and trust them again. Yet, you can still forgive the debt on *your* side, and withhold from judgment. You do not need to condemn them. When you do not forgive, you do not make *them* the prisoner of your resentment, but *yourself*. And you cut yourself off from God's presence. Instead, pray for them and bless them.

Be filled with the Spirit by spending time in the Word and in God's presence, and you will find all the love and mercy you need for other people.

It doesn't matter how they treat you – what matters is how you react. If you are pliable and gentle to others, if you shower them with gentleness, then nothing in the world can touch your soul. You can be rebuked, can be cruelly treated, but you don't have to break under it. They can hurt your body but they cannot hurt your soul. You won't have to fight or argue any more. You will be in the secret place of God's presence.

> The name of the LORD is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe. – Proverbs 18:10

Walk in the presence of God by spending time in the presence of God when you are alone, and you will walk in love and not negativity with the people around you. If you fill up on God, you will pour out God.

Hierarchy, Authority and Responsibility

When something is yours, you get to decide what to do with it. And if you lend it to someone else, or ask them to look after it, they inherit that power and responsibility, up to the limit you delegate to them.

No one else has the right to decide for you what you can and can't do with it – BUT, by the same token, you can't use *your* power over what is yours to decide for someone else what they can and can't do with what *they* own.

All authority ultimately stems from ownership, and the right of ownership is given to all by God, who is the owner of all. We are stewards of our lives and property.

You are responsible to God for these, and you have been given the authority to carry that responsibility. No one can morally take God's place over you on these things. None of us are God.

Let me elaborate on that. An easy one is my body. God gave me my body. I own it. So I more than anyone else have the responsibility and the right to decide what happens to it.

(Note I am not here speaking of a new person growing in the womb with their own body. We were all there once, and God knows us in the womb:

> For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother's womb. – Psalm 139:13)

A good example is the benefit versus risk of taking a vaccine. It is a decision only you have the moral authority to apply to yourself.

In 1905 the Supreme Court ruled in Jacobson v. Massachusetts that the state fining Jacobson for refusing to take a state-mandated vaccine was acceptable. Key elements of the decision were that:
a) it only applied to a safe vaccine (i.e. few people would be harmed by it)
b) which would cause that particular individual no harm,
c) was preventative (i.e. would prevent the outbreak), and
d) the defendant was not mandated to take it, but could pay an affordable fine instead.

The court was morally in error to give the power of deciding point b) – the vaccinee's safety – to anyone other than the vaccinee. Even should the entire world be at risk of dying we have no right to force an individual to take medical intervention for our safety, because we can guarantee neither their safety nor ours as a result. We are not God.

There is a contradiction between point a) – that it is considered 99.9999% safe – and b) that it will cause a *particular* individual *no harm at all*. Point a), perceived safety, does not override the right inherent in point b), the right to decide if it is safe for *them*, even if point c), perceived benefit, could be proved (which it cannot).

It is the same with money I have earned and property I have bought. I more than anyone else have the responsibility and right to decide what happens to my property, because it is mine, not theirs. I have a higher inherent authority regarding it than anyone else. Likewise I cannot decide what to do with others' money and property (unless I am their guardian, of course, and even then there are caveats). Because we have an equal right to decide what is true, no man has the right to dictate the self-determination of another.

Even if there are many poor, for example, we cannot morally play Robin Hood and take from the rich to give to the poor. Doing this not only denies the rich the right and opportunity to execute

their duty to be charitable, with its reward and relationship, it also in practice feeds state-facilitated theft and encourages the abandonment of personal responsibility, both of which (theft and grifting) create a vicious cycle of immorality, taking more and more from those who work to earn, and thus constantly accelerating the reduction in quality of life for all.

We need to learn to hold to good principle in the face of emotional appeals to abandon it, as it protects us from unintended consequences and spiritual error.

Things get more complicated when we have to deal with conflict. There are multiple principles to handle conflict, such as finders keepers on unowned property, first come first served, taking turns with shared ownership, etc., but the most essential one is to protect the existing rights of others which come with the authority derived from ownership. Society's laws are, or should be, primarily aimed at doing this. Most conflicts involve a person who is seeking to do something which inflicts on another's rights which they held before the person initiated the action. And when a person infringes on another's rights, society may curtail some of his rights for a time in a judgment and/or to prevent further offences.

This leads us into hierarchical and delegated authority. God has ordained the authority of an office (a role) over the family, church and government. The children belong to the parents, the wife belongs to the husband, the congregation are the ordained responsibility of the pastor, and the citizens are subject to the law and order of their government (under God, not over God). When citizens form a society and vote a government in, that government has delegated authority from the group under God. Note that this is civil government, not personal. Civil government, as a disinterested party, has the authority to judge and punish, which we as individuals do not personally have as we are not unbiased; nor is civil government required to turn the other cheek.

Authority is delegated to enable a person to discharge a responsibility they have been given. The two go hand in hand.

Do not take responsibility for something you don't own without being given or taking on the authority to look after it.

Do not take authority over something without being given or taking on the responsibility for it, and having the ability to be responsible for it.

Respect the hierarchy of the authorities under God. God has ordained this hierarchy of offices or roles and equipped the people in those roles to be able to carry out their responsibilities, to create a secure structure:

- God
- Governments
- Apostles
- Pastors
- Teachers
- Men/Fathers
- Women/Mothers (don't panic – I explain this next)
- Servants

When there is a clash between any of these, the higher authority is the one to obey.

So, for example, if a government orders you to wear a seat-belt, wear a seat-belt. But if a government orders you to hand in your Bible, as the Antichrist will soon, do not obey: because God commands us to keep his Word.

If a pastor tells you to pray more, do it. But if he tells you to marry someone, that is a decision to be made between you and God.

However, always treat someone in authority over you with respect, even if they are harsh or wrong.

> Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king. Servants, **be subject to your masters with all fear [*respect*]; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward [*hard, unreasonable*]**. For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously: – 1 Peter 2:17-23

Even David, who Saul tried to kill when God called David to be king after him, would not harm Saul when he was in his power, because God had anointed Saul as king.

> And he said unto his men, The LORD forbid that I should do this thing unto my master, the LORD'S anointed, to stretch forth mine hand against him, seeing he is the anointed of the LORD. – 1 Samuel 24:6

But be aware also of the *absence* of authority:

We are not to subject ourselves to our *neighbour*, to a friend or boyfriend or girlfriend. When I say *subject*, I mean, do not surrender to them the authority over your life. While we are commanded as believers to *submit* to one another, which means to yield of your own will to brethren on matters which are shared, rather than to fight, we are never commanded to surrender our own responsibilities and authority to someone who is not ordained of God to carry them.

You may struggle to say 'No' to someone, but you need to learn. It is not godly to obey someone who is not in God-given authority over you; not godly to say yes while feeling like you ought not to.

Jesus said, "love your neighbour *as yourself*" – if they have no coat and you have two, give them one, not two! Share the burdens equally. Retain the right to say No. If you struggle for wording, try this: "I'm so sorry, I would love to do that for you if I could, but I don't feel that I can" and if some explanation is then requested, just reply that the burden that it would place on your time and/or money and/or emotions, etc. would be too much for you right now. And if they don't accept that, you need to beware of them, because they are a parasite. Excuse yourself, and find someone to help you minimise contact with that person. They are not your friend, much as they might present

themselves as such. Remember this: to love your neighbour as yourself means to do unto others as you would have them do unto you, and the converse of this: that *they* should not do to *you* what they would not want you to do to *them*. Ask yourself if you would do to others as they have done to you, were the shoe on the other foot, and if the answer is no, then you have a parasite right there, not a friend. Remove yourself, whatever it takes, and get a true friend to help you in this.

Also, don't tattle-tale. If there is something that really must be corrected, go to the person concerned privately and encourage them to own up and be corrected. But if you have heard only one side, first ask them for their side.

Only go to the higher authority if they refuse to listen.

Truth

Mark Twain said, "Always tell the truth, unless of course you are an exceptionally good liar" and I must admit that my flesh loves this sentiment, but over the years God has taught me that it never pays to lie. Take your lumps. Be open and honest and vulnerable.

Half the time you are not as good a liar as you think you are. The other half of the time people really appreciate you taking the hard road, and your lumps are often not nearly as bad as you expect, and your relationships are vastly improved afterwards, not to mention your humility.

But always speak the truth in *love*. Truth is the glass that holds the wine of love. Truth by itself is cold and hard and empty. Love without the guide-lines of truth is messy and creates chaos.

> And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But **speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things**, which is the head, even Christ: – Ephesians 4:11-15

There was a pastor who was invited to stay with a family at the church he was a guest preacher at, and at supper they asked him how he liked the food. Now he hadn't enjoyed it much, but he didn't want to lie, so he apologetically said so. Which is when he discovered that it was a test which other visitors had failed!

You don't have to be judgmental and hit people with the truth, but you don't have to lie either. There are times when asked how good something is that I feel the person cannot handle blunt criticism, and in those times I won't just out with my raw opinion, I'll look for the good in what I see, and what can be improved but I will also be honest enough to say that on the whole I don't think it works. It's not always easy to find the best answer but if you remain filled with the Spirit, he will answer for you.

Male and Female

God's design for men and women is that they reflect God's nature itself. But this is a great mystery whose depths I have no space to elaborate upon here.

> For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church. – Ephesians 5:31-32

Jesus prayed,

> "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me." – John 17:21-23

God designed men and women to be very different from each other. There is a good reason for this. While a two-headed creature is always in danger of conflict and disharmony, a different kind of relationship where one is a giver in one area but a receiver in another forms interlocking bonds in a sure structure where what needs to be done to function well is clear, so that the two function as one. Just as a bee needs a flower and a flower needs a bee, God has designed men and women to interlock together like a puzzle piece with multiple joins which are different in nature.

The Y-chromosome causes a series of developmental changes, even from the initial embryo, and hormonal instructions which cause a man to become very different from a woman.

Men grow taller, bigger and stronger than women.

The connector between the right and left halves of their brains, the corpus callosum*, shrinks during men's teenage years, causing men to tend to separate their logic from their emotions, keep their feelings in a box which is not always open, and concentrate on a single task, while women become more intuitive, think aloud, multi-task and integrate socially better – to the extent of letting their loyalty or compassion override their judgment.

*(Since I studied at university propaganda has arisen that the corpus callosum is hardly different between men and women. Don't be fooled.)

Women have more colour receptors in their eyes than men, enabling them to see more nuanced colours, while men develop better depth perception. Their feelings are always influencing their thoughts, making them more intuitive, engaging, loyal to their clan, and subjective

There are many more differences, but it is immediately plain to see that man's design is suited to build a house, to plough a field, to stack bales, to rule over a disagreement, to discern truth, to drive a vehicle, to attack and defend, etc.

And that woman's design is suited to create a social network with her neighbours, to turn the house into a home and run it, making curtains, cutting flowers, cooking, cleaning, raising children and training them up, to advise her husband with her intuition, etc.

One of the truths which Satan has most managed to distance society from in the last days is what men and women are made of, and their roles. His lie has been that the men's role has 'benefits' and 'priviledges' which have been 'denied' to women, not mentioning that the women's role also has benefits and priviledges to which men are not by nature eligible nor suited to enjoy.

And so he has deceived women into going to university and employment as a matter of course to 'earn a living for themselves', when all the while what most would *naturally* prefer to do is have a loving husband go out to work and earn the living, leaving them free to make a home and raise a family as they like.

At the time feminism first started with the suffragette movement, far more women joined the anti-suffragettes, claiming that life would become harder for women and that families would break up. At that time a woman could not be held liable for debt. However, the change was forced through.

A sad consequence is that the labour market has been flooded, bringing wages down, and making it now *necessary* for women to go out and work, even while trying to raise a family. And the husband now has to stretch his mind to take on multi-tasking at home, a role he finds difficult and seeks to escape with games that occupy his male mind better.

Another consequence of feminism is that men have lost the understanding of women as the weaker sex, and no longer put themselves at the service of women in respect of women's unique value and benefit to society. In other words, women are now more unintentionally bullied than they used to be. Instead of men being understanding, patient and gracious they treat women like men.

Let me make it clear here that there is nothing wrong with a woman going to university if that's what she wants to do. The differences between the sexes is an overlapping pair of bell curves, so you can always find some women who have more ability than some men in some particular male-dominated areas, and vice versa. So we should never prescribe to one person what they should or should not do. However we should also not prescribe to a whole sex, either, such as expecting women to go out and seek employment or taxing society to promote that; nor judge an individual by their sex: Deborah became a judge in Israel. Let people grow naturally.

The important thing here is to gain a correct understanding of the *inclination* and the natural design, role and *comfort* of the sexes.

The aim of Satan is to break down the family structure and so to bring conflict, disorder and an environment in which the children are not stably raised. Many, many families now have continual arguments between husband and wife. Instead of a head and a heart, there are now two heads. Instead of the heart loving easily and supporting the head, it becomes hard and unbending. Instead of the head leading easily and loving the heart, it becomes hard and aggressive.

And to make matters worse, the children's upbringing is delegated to a nursery or school, where no loving mother gets to know her children well and raise them with understanding of their individual abilities and weaknesses, but rather a potentially uncaring or even cruel or satanic person has the child at their mercy and can pour all kinds of deceit into their minds at a young, defenceless age.

And so there has been a veritable flood of children being brought up to believe that gender, a word invented decades ago which originally meant the same as biological sex, is now a mental thing people are born with (how, if not biological?) and not related to one's sex at all. But if gender is not based on one's sex, what is the *female* gender? Or if it's not a *female* gender, not something that *biological* women feel, but a *woman* gender spread randomly amongst biological males and females, how do we even know what a woman gender *is*? Who knows what it feels like, if it's not biological women? Who are we asking?

The emotional chaos for children is doubly difficult because in your growing years you are still developing an understanding of yourself. I remember being told at the age of 16 or so by a peer that I might be gay, and this caused me a great doubt about myself. Just that one comment made me entertain the notion, and it began to grow some substance within me. I hesitate to think of what might have become of me in today's world. But as it was, I decided, I may have some gay tendencies, but I may grow up straight, we'll just wait and see how I turn out, and I put the comment behind me. In a couple of years as I began to know myself better I realised that of course I was not gay, but I did have more of a feminine side than most men – and that was fine.

But in many civilisations that crumbled before ours, sex and perverted sex were the final stages of their demise. Canaan and Rome being two good examples. Satan loves perverting sex because it is the greatest of God's inventions: the most loving, the most giving, the most unifying, the most pleasurable and the most holy in that it signifies the union of two into one.

Looking at his swear words, what does Satan tie together? God, Jesus, Christ, uncaring sex (f--k), genitalia, urination and defaecation. If nothing else convinces you of the existence of God, Jesus and Satan, our full set of swear words should.

How should things be?

1. The husband should lay down his life for his wife and continually remind her of his love for her. Expressing his love is emotional and does not come naturally to him. Women are like flowers, in that once you pick them, you must keep them in water, or they dry out and die. Just so with a wife – once you marry her, love her, listen to her, let her talk to you: open that box of your feelings every day. Put down your news media and games. Insofar as you are able, accommodate her wishes and desires, and always, always, always be gentle with her. She's not built to exchange hard words, she will close up and react emotionally from hurt which will trigger your masculine response to an enemy, and all kinds of trouble follows.

Also, allow her to buy things which are not essential. She's not a machine, she was designed to make things nice, and to enjoy nice things.

2. The wife should submit to her husband in all things, to be the heart to his head. Advise and enquire respectfully, let him know your concerns, but always, before and after you have given him all you have to say, follow his lead. Men are hierarchical. They don't need love to function, they need respect. The friend inside the camp who rebels becomes the enemy outside the camp, and war ensues. Remember that the follower role, as painful as it can be some times, is exempt from the responsibilities to which the leading role will one day be held accountable by God. He is designed for it, and God help him if he is negligent (then pray for him). But you are not designed for it.

In the same way as a child respects his mother, not answering back (in the overriding sense), and the church respects Jesus, calling him Lord as his bride, so a wife should respect her husband. And if a modern woman finds this hard to believe, I say, try it. As per God's design of a man and a woman you will find it working sweetly *for* you, not against you.

Also remember that he has a physical need for sex which continually escalates. Women will find the desire comes and goes, but for a man there is no receding phase. Withholding sex is equivalent to forcing him to fast, which is increasingly stressful and causes tension and irritability, so try not to refuse without good reason. Likewise the husband should accommodate his wife whenever possible.

> Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband. Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband. The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife. Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency. – 1 Corinthians 7:2-5

To both of you: if your spouse has stopped expressing their love for you, meet their needs before telling them of your own needs. Lead in giving. It is often said that marriage is not 50-50 but 100-100.

Note of course I am speaking of a well-meaning partner, not one who is malicious.

What does the Bible say to spouses?

> **Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord**. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.
> **Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it**; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. – Ephesians 5:22-28

> **Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord**.
> **Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them.**
> Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord.
> Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged.
> Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God:
> And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; – Colossians 3:18-23

> Likewise, **ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands**; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; While they

behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear.
Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands:
Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement.
Likewise, **ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel**, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.
Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous: Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.
For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it. For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil. – 1 Peter 3:1-12

Notice also that my point 1 was that husbands should love their wives, and my point 2 that wives should make themselves subject to their husbands, while both Paul and Peter start the other way round. I did it deliberately because women reading this need to know that they are supposed to be *cared for*: they are not subjecting themselves in order to be callously used and abused, but in the good expectation of being well looked after. However, because Paul and Peter put it in the other order, all three times, I suspect that the submission has to come first, before the caring can begin. After all, it is hard to brush a restless horse. Peace must come first.

Apart the cruel drunken men who commit violence in a fit of undeserved rage, many good men will feel the instinct to resort to a slap in moments of stress in the conflict of a two-headed relationship, because he is facing a hierarchical challenge which arouses his fight response, especially since he is the less verbal. So talking back is not the way forward, because it causes stress and simply does not work the way God intended things to work. God's design is a hierarchical relationship where he is *really* your head. If you want him to love you, respect him. If you are a wife continually in disagreement with your husband:
1) Don't begin with "But", begin with "Okay". For instance, "Okay, but how…". That 'okay' signals a willingness to follow his lead, rather than plain opposition.
2) Let him know that regardless of how the discussion turns out, you will do your best to go with what he recommends (insofar as it is moral under God and government.)
3) Approach the topic with the *attitude* that you would like to go with what he recommends, but you need help to understand *how*; or that you would like to ask if he is aware of certain factors. The aim here is to not to be obstructive or challenging, but to be *on the same side* – and, that's *his* side. That's the side you chose. And finally,
4) if he is angry, legitimately or not, don't fight about it. Ask what you should have done so you know for next time. If it turns out you should have known better, apologise sincerely. If it turns out he was mistaken in your opinion, respectfully explain that you don't see it the same way. Talk to your head like you would talk to your boss at work, in that you would not be rude or cheeky.

Why am I focusing on the wife here? Because only she can bring the unity by submission, and it's the more difficult role for the flesh, to submit, to be subordinate. He can't, because he's the lead – you don't *want* him to be your yes-man – and if you two have got into a fight, his only way out of it, by God's design of men, is to win. You stick to him, you follow his lead, not the other way round.

What if a husband does not care for the wife? I believe that if he is not malicious then with patience, submission and prayer the woman will at last win him over to God in this. In appendix A I mention the wife of Smith Wigglesworth, who, though treated harshly by him for going to church, yielded to him on all other matters and so brought about his salvation and the healing of many thousands of people.

If I were a woman I would give myself entirely to my husband, because God says so – within the limits of not being in danger, of course. I would even call him my lord, as 1 Peter 3:6 above indicates.

But husbands, then, the responsibility before God is on you to honour that sacrifice with your whole being. Take care of her first before yourself. Let her not want for any good thing insofar as you are able.

Take note of how fragile she is. She is not a man. Not hard-headed, not a clear cold thinker, not a captain. She is the *love* of your life, quite literally. Be *gentle* at all times. Honour the difficult task of her submission with your *life*. Be gracious if she is struggling with it, just as you want the Lord to be gracious with you. Put her first at all times. Do not give your attention to games or entertainment, unless she is quite happy, at least within your power to make her so. With power comes the ability and responsibility to serve and to look after her before yourself. God will hold you responsible.

Especially remember that she has a need to talk with you. MAKE TIME FOR THAT.

3. In general, all other things being equal, men should be the head in society. This is because Eve, being more emotionally driven than Adam, was deceived.

> But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression. – 1 Timothy 2:12-14

Here Paul is talking about men teaching doctrine in the church, and for women not to interject in that, but to discuss it later. Note also, as a counter to all those who claim that Paul was only speaking in regard to the culture of the day, or was a misogynist, Paul took great care to be faithful to say what the Holy Spirit was leading him to say, and to point out when he was saying something of his own accord, so we can rest assured the above is still the Word of God himself:

> For **I say, through the grace given unto me**, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith. – Romans 12:3

> **Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God.** Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful. But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment: yea, I judge not mine

own self. **For I know nothing by myself**; yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord. – 1 Corinthians 4:1-4

But I speak this by permission, and not of commandment. For I would that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that. I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, It is good for them if they abide even as I. But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn. **And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband**: But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife. **But to the rest speak I, not the Lord**: If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away. And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him. For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy. But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace. For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife? But as God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk. And so ordain I in all churches. – 1 Corinthians 7:6-17

...

Now concerning virgins I have no commandment of the Lord: yet I give my judgment, as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful. I suppose therefore that this is good for the present distress, I say, that it is good for a man so to be. Art thou bound unto a wife? seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife? seek not a wife. But and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned; and if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned. Nevertheless such shall have trouble in the flesh: but I spare you. – 1 Corinthians 7:25-28

...

The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord. **But she is happier if she so abide, after my judgment: and I think also that I have the Spirit of God**. – 1 Corinthians 7:39-40

I know that this seems a hard pill to swallow in society these days, because we are so far removed from how things are designed to work. Not only in our societal structure, but also in our individual temptations. Wicked men lure women into sexual oppression, wicked women lure men into financial oppression, and children are become the victims of them all.

But in a good society, simply because of men's cooler heads, it works better if men adjudicate and lead, in a giving way, and women support and make up for the weaknesses and lacks which men have, so joining and filling society together harmoniously under the pillars of righteous leadership.

Relationship with God

Personal

I don't have that much to say here as it's all been said in the story of my life. But let me summarise it.

God is spirit, outside of time, omnipresent, all powerful and all knowing, but he's also inside of time, and a person who wants to love you and get to know you personally. Our feelings were created by him in his image – he has those same feelings, except without sin.

However, he will never force himself on you. It is up to you to open your heart and invite him in.

And once you have done that, it always remains up to you how much time you spend with him.

It is hard, at first, to get to know God, because that conversation is in our spirits, and our souls, being corrupted, get in the way; and there is also much opposition from Satan. But if you persevere in waiting for him, he will come to you, and the Spirit will sanctify you. And if you persevere in spending time before him, you will get to hear him and even have conversations with him.

Once Smith Wigglesworth was praying in a church alone, and a congregation member arrived early to see another congregation member who had arrived even earlier, coming out. "Smith is praying in there", he said. The newcomer said, "then I'm going to join him", but the other member replied, "I don't think you will be able to stand it in there – it's too hot." Well, he went in anyway, but found out immediately what was meant: there was such a holiness present that it felt like a fire to him, and he couldn't stand it either, but had to exit in a hurry. But Smith was fine: the point being, getting to know God is a journey that will not only bring God closer to you but also bring you closer to God.

The joy of knowing him, while much harder to gain than the quick and easy pleasures of this world, far outweighs anything the world can give you.

But never be religious with him. Be real. He longs for you to be real with him. Watch this woman's testimony from 14:00 to 15:40 – I realise you can't derive doctrine from testimony but it *demonstrates* what I'm saying in an understandable way.

Faith

God needs us to have faith. This is believing God with all your heart, which relaxes and opens the heart to receive. Doubt causes tension and closes the door to God because it is a rejection of God's love and reliability and truth.

But your faith is greatly strengthened by your understanding of God's word. This is what enables you to rest in and believe God.

> Through faith we understand that **the worlds were framed by the word of God**, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear. – Hebrews 11:3
>
> By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God. But **without faith it is impossible to please him**: for he that cometh to God must

> believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith. – Hebrews 11:5-7
>
> And in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots. And Peter calling to remembrance saith unto him, Master, behold, the fig tree which thou cursedst is withered away. And Jesus answering saith unto them, **Have faith in God**. For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith. Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them. And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses. – Mark 11:20-26

Strengthening your faith by praying in tongues and reminding yourself of what the Word says creates a wide, flat runway on which the goods of God can land. Smith Wigglesworth used to say, "God said it. I believe it. That settles it."

This is the man who was asked to go pray for a woman dying of consumption and took a fellow preacher with him for support. When they got there, she looked so emaciated and in such a poor way as if she was going to go at any moment, and the fellow preacher prayed only along the lines of "Oh God, please lessen this poor woman's suffering and pain," etc. Smith couldn't stand it and got more and more frustrated, and as soon as the preacher finished, he took the bottle of oil which they had brought to anoint her with oil, and tipped the entire bottle over her head and yelled, "In the name of Jesus Christ, stand up and be HEALED" and pulled her up. She was healed instantly.

On another occasion a man with two legs amputated at the knees asked for prayer. Smith told him he needed to build his faith first and went to stay at his house with him, where he plied the man with the Word of God for weeks, until at last he told him, today's the day. Go and buy a pair of shoes. The man went to the shoe store and ordered a pair. "What size?", asked the attendant, and he replied he didn't know. In the end the attendant came back with a pair and the man put them on his stubs. Each time he did so, the leg grew into the shoe. (I know it sounds crazy if you are not used to the miracles of God, but there are literally millions of testimonies like this. They do not get published because Satan doesn't want you to know about them. I would love to share ten, twenty, one hundred of them with you because they are so beautiful and touching, but I only have space to allude to them here.) My point in relating this is to show you how you can build up your faith.

But to stop you from becoming proud you will also be humbled and tested. On another occasion an old woman came up to Smith during a church service for prayer for cancer – her belly was swollen. The Lord told him to hit her in the belly as hard as he could. Smith did so. She fell down. Smith picked her up, and hit her again. She fell again. The congregation gasped. People murmured. One spoke angrily, "Leave her alone, you brute" or words to that effect. Smith replied that he knew his business, picked her up yet again and hit her as hard as he could a third time, and she was healed.

Learn to have faith by spending time in the Word and repeating the promises of God to yourself and so overriding all the doubts you have in your head which have grown in there from the world and from Adam.

But remember overall that it is all of God. What you are doing by strengthening your faith with God's Word is getting your flesh out of the way. It is a restful, submitted, trusting state that goes way beyond the mind and deep into the spirit.

The delay of faith

> And a certain woman, which had an issue of blood twelve years, And had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse, When she had heard of Jesus, came in the press behind, and touched his garment. For she said, If I may touch but his clothes, I shall be whole.
> And straightway the fountain of her blood was dried up; and she felt in her body that she was healed of that plague.
> And Jesus, immediately knowing in himself that virtue had gone out of him, turned him about in the press, and said, Who touched my clothes? And his disciples said unto him, Thou seest the multitude thronging thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me? And he looked round about to see her that had done this thing.
> But the woman fearing and trembling, knowing what was done in her, came and fell down before him, and told him all the truth. And he said unto her, Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague.
> While he yet spake, there came from the ruler of the synagogue's house certain which said, Thy daughter is dead: why troublest thou the Master any further?
> As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, he saith unto the ruler of the synagogue, Be not afraid, only believe.
> And he suffered no man to follow him, save Peter, and James, and John the brother of James.
> And he cometh to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and seeth the tumult, and them that wept and wailed greatly. And when he was come in, he saith unto them, Why make ye this ado, and weep? the damsel is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed him to scorn.
> But when he had put them all out, he taketh the father and the mother of the damsel, and them that were with him, and entereth in where the damsel was lying. And he took the damsel by the hand, and said unto her, Talitha cumi; which is, being interpreted, Damsel, I say unto thee, arise.
> And straightway the damsel arose, and walked; for she was of the age of twelve years. And they were astonished with a great astonishment. And he charged them straitly that no man should know it; and commanded that something should be given her to eat. – Mark 5:25-43

I want to talk about the woman with the issue of blood, but while we are here I also want to mention quickly, as a complete aside about faith, how Jesus gave the ruler of the synagogue the courage he needed to stand strong in his faith, by saying, "the damsel is not dead, but sleeps!" How the ruler's heart must have leapt! Hope is the bed in which faith grows strong. Now he is looking to see how she could be woken from 'sleep', rather than fearing whether Jesus could raise her from the dead. Your heart must remain open and receiving!

Now, why was the fountain of her blood dried up straight away?

This woman was unclean, according to the law of Moses. She was not allowed to touch *anyone*. Not allowed to *touch!* She wasn't even allowed to enter the temple courts or take part in most social activities. A hell indeed. For twelve years!

> And if a woman have an issue, and her issue in her flesh be blood, she shall be put apart seven days: and whosoever toucheth her shall be unclean until the even. ... And whosoever toucheth any thing that she sat upon shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the even. ...
> And if a woman have an issue of her blood **many days out of the time of her separation, or if it run beyond the time of her separation; all the days of the issue of her uncleanness shall be as the days of her separation: she shall be unclean.** ... And whosoever toucheth those things shall be unclean, and shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the even. – Leviticus 15:19, 22, 25, 27

So she was *desperate*.

And she *KNEW* that Jesus *healed everyone* that came to him!

> But she was *not allowed* to come to him!

But she was *desperate!*

And she *KNEW that Jesus healed everyone*

> *But she was not allowed*...

Imagine the fiery tornado within her soul of those three fires intertwined in a raging storm of cyclical opposition to one another, for two years*, as she heard about the miracles of Jesus and tried to think of a way to come to him, perhaps privately!

*Only John wrote about the miracles of Jesus before John the Baptist was imprisoned. The events described by Matthew, Mark and Luke are after the imprisonment of John the Baptist.

For years she must have wrestled with this knotty problem. In the end she came to a decision that she would ignore the law of Moses and work her way through the jostling crowd, touching many but hiding her condition, until she could just sneak a quick touch of his robe. The fire of her trial had refined her faith to the point where she had worked out the truth and she *knew* that if she just *touched* the edge of his robe for healing, she would be healed! And then there would be nothing of which to accuse her for touching people. She could sneak away again, no one the wiser.

But Jesus felt the power being drawn, and he knew instantly that someone had sneaked a touch for healing. I believe lest that person feel guilty, and lose their healing, for their sake he insisted on them coming forward.

And when she did, he said "Go in peace" – there's the absolution of her deed – and "be whole of thy plague" – there's the completion of the contract from the Lord's side – it will never fail through being guiltily obtained.

> And he said unto her, Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague. – Mark 5:34

The point of telling this story is to highlight the process of refinement of her faith which the woman must have gone through in her fiery trial for a delay of years before she ever touched Jesus.

Most times when you see an instant miracle, someone somewhere has prayed it in, someone has birthed the faith by a period of trial. There is a lot behind the immediate answer. There is a *delay* before the event.

I heard of one couple who believed in the healing provided in the name of Jesus and went out looking for people for whose healing they could pray. For months they had no results, until one day someone was healed, and after that they began to see more and more answers to their prayers. There was a delay during which time their hearts and souls were refined in their faith to receive.

It's not an unusual principle. Jesus himself said it very, very clearly.

> And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and **not to faint** [never give up]; Saying,
> There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man: And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary. And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.
> And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith. And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily.
> Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth? – Luke 18:1-8

Now Jesus is not saying that God is an unjust judge. There are good, impassable reasons when there is a delay in answer to prayer. But Jesus is saying, if the unjust judge will give in in the end, how much more certain can you be that God, who *wants* to help you, *will* come through, sooner or later?

(I suspect that the last line, "when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth", is a hint at the rapture, which removes all those who have a living faith. Those left behind will have to start over against great opposition, without much of the Bible available to them, as the Antichrist will ban it.)

But the point here is that you can expect delay, SO DON'T GIVE UP. And in the meantime, remain practical. One woman who needed insulin told herself every time she injected it that she didn't need it because God had healed her. One day her body reacted badly to it. She went to hospital and it turned out she was no longer diabetic!

What is happening during this period of delay is that a) your mind is getting changed in ways you may not perceive, and b) Satanic resistance to it is being overcome. Be glad! Rejoice! God is in control!

But you can do a lot to minimise this delay by allowing God to refine you *before* you need your miracle:

1. Read the Bible a lot. Memorise verses that strike you. Repeat them daily. Get the Word of God into you. Collect verses about healing like pearls, and treasure them, knowing they *will* work for you as much as for *anyone* else.
   But don't do this as a chore, but as a loving way of getting to know God much better and to BELIEVE him way down to the very bottom of your heart.
2. Give your heart to God. Spend much time with him, just praising him and listening to him and being open to his leading. Humble yourself under his hand. Put worship music on which lifts you up, and sing with it to God.
3. Tell everyone who is listening that you believe what the Bible says. "God said it. I believe it. That settles it." – Smith Wigglesworth. Your words deliver God's life and power.

   There was a young English girl with a massive goitre in her neck who, believing, went forward for prayer in one of Smith Wigglesworth's meetings. Despite no visible change in her appearance, at the next day's meeting she testified that she had been wonderfully healed. The next year at the same convention she shared the same testimony, though the goitre looked as big as ever. The third year she did the same again, and some people told her to look in the mirror! She went to the Lord and said, "Lord, you so wonderfully healed me two years ago. Won't you show all the people that you healed me?" The next day there was no trace of that goitre.

4. Control Satan. Daily, bind him and his spirits. Never give them a chance. Forbid them from messing with you, in Jesus Name.
5. Pray for your and others' welfare and thank God that everything works together for good. Give God the full opportunity to do whatever he wishes with your life.
6. Don't panic if you have to take remedial action before your miracle arrives. Pray and trust God to lead you. He always knows best how to handle it. Just keep being refined, and trust and obey.

Here is an incredibly clearly put testimony of overcoming the oppression of Satan by standing in faith, during the delay of faith: It Took Me 10 Years To See What I'll Tell You In 10 Minutes

Importunity

> And he said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves; For a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him? And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee. I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth. – Luke 11:5-8

A lot of prayer is wishy-washy, 1% effective because it has 1% of our will behind it. That is not to say it should be despised. Every prayer makes a difference, and we all have to start somewhere, and we don't always have the time and energy to put our heart into it.

But you can *exert* your will. You can be *insistent* and *persistent* with all your *intent* against all opposition that God's will *shall* be done. You don't take No from Satan. You let God know how much it means to you. You feel the pain and suffering. You make it your business. You make it important, and not just important, but absolutely critical. When you really mean it with all your heart, you connect with God in a much better way than when you ask for it in passing. When people get desperate, they often get surprise answers – because their heart is really in it.

But still, while you await the appearance of things you have asked for in faith, or while you await the answer to prayers you have asked in consecration, you remain peacefully trusting and submissive to God's will. And you appreciate his plan and good order of things and praise him for his care. Trust in God with all your heart.

Prayer

You may feel like your prayers are tiny and weak. But remember, you are one in of a body millions strong. Your prayer is desperately needed, and will make a difference! Besides which, you will learn as you continue in prayer, how to pray effectually.

> And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest. – Matthew 9:35-38

God has set a rule that spirits cannot override our free will. This is the gift of free will and prevents the devil from simply invading someone and taking them over, but it also means that God cannot, in general, interfere in someone's life without someone praying for it. He can judge someone any time for their crimes, but to help someone receive something from him, he needs someone to ask for it. Many people are woken by God to pray for something or someone.

I say in general, because there are apparent exceptions where he under certain circumstances finds it best to actually physically appear to and talk to people as a man, such as he did to Abraham when he went to inspect Sodom, and so on, but only he knows the rules by which he judges these decisions. Perhaps it is the intercession of Jesus that enables it.

So remember God needs your prayers in order to be able to send you and others the loving gifts he has for you. **Open the flood gates with prayer!** Offer them to him with thanks as often as you are able.

> And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, **and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints.** – Revelation 5:8

(Saints here refers not to the Catholic saints but to all the saved.)

Worship

So many of us live in the soul. We do not understand the spirit. So when we go to church we follow our natural thoughts. While the pastor is preaching we look around at other people and think about their choice of clothes, or looks, or posture, or style of speech. We get distracted and our attention wanders off to think about things that are on our mind or heart. We judge what the pastor says or what we assume he is thinking. Even when a worship song starts, or a hymn, we only sing it with half of our mind. The rest of our mind is still listening to how the person next to us is singing or looking at that hat in front of us or remembering what so-and-so there did to us.

This is being in the flesh, and the only way you will worship God from here is if someone else worships him and you start to feel his love and purifying presence – that is, if you aren't blocking him with resentment.

How do you move from soul to spirit?

First, you must catch your heart. Don't let it go wandering around like a lost sheep or small child. Second, address yourself to God directly. Place your attention upon him directly, and give him your heart. Tell him you are here for him and him alone at this time, to offer yourself as a living sacrifice, and apologise for your weakness in this regard.
Third, check yourself for sins. Is there any resentment, no matter how small, in you? If so, forgive, Completely. Tell the Lord you forgive them, and if they know how you feel, that you will let them know too that you have nothing against them. Is there any wrongdoing that you are reminded of? Apologise for it. Get cleaned up. Is there any lust, or temptation, hiding at the back of your soul? Ask for his help when you will next be tempted. He will provide grace in time of need.

Then, finally, when the singing starts, or when you put the music on, mean every word. Sing every word to the Lord and to the Lord alone. From start to finish of the time of singing. And if you feel the desire to express your heart with your hands, don't be shy – make yourself a sacrifice to him of praise. Just love him, and present yourself to him, and thank him for his purification of your life, and love, and provision. This literally opens your heart to God in a manifest sense. In this closeness to the Lord, he also is close to you. Your heart is pure. This was Kathryn Kuhlman's secret: the Lord Jesus was present in her meetings.

After the singing, don't just walk away from him in your heart. Keep your attention on him. Be with him, as you listen, and talk to others.

Brother Lawrence used to practice the presence of God. This means, to walk in the consciousness of God being right there with you. Practice that too. Be ye holy, for I am holy, says God.

Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is extremely gentle, and he is easily grieved. He is the heart of God.

In your walk with him, take care to apologise to him when you mess up, and ask him to forgive you, and walk as tenderly as you can so as not to hurt him.

In this way you will keep the anointing he gives you, and experience his help, gifts and power continually.

Many grow cold and hard because they thoughtlessly grieve him and he has to withdraw to protect his heart.

Love him.

Relationship with Satan

More than conquerors

Of course we don't want to have anything to do with Satan, but he certainly does!

Satan loves to counterfeit God, to inspire fear, to ask, "Could this be a problem? Better check!" or "Have you sinned?" or worse still, "Are you sure you are saved?"

But the peace of God is our umpire in our hearts. If we do something we ought not to do, the peace of God in our hearts will convict us in a peaceful way, showing us that which we need to do to make things right.

God is always peaceful, gentle and clear. We have a clear idea when God speaks, and it is always in accord with the Bible and love.

> For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. – 2 Timothy 1:7

Satan never convicts, which is to show you the way forward, he condemns, which is to make you feel bad without recourse to redress it. If he succeeds, you could fall into self-pity, which is the devil's baby-sitter – it will cripple you.

Satan always brings condemnation, confusion, doubt or fear. A disturbance in the force! :) We lose our peace when Satan speaks, and that is the time to rebuke him, and bind him in the name of Jesus.

But we have all authority over Satan in the Name of Jesus.

> Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it. – Colossians 2:14-15
>
> And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: – Matthew 28:18-19
>
> And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. – John 14:13
>
> Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: 3 And every spirit that confesses not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come;

and even now already is it in the world.
4 Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. – 1 John 4:2-4

Nay, in all these things **we are more than conquerors** through him that loved us. - Romans 8:37

Note especially that the authority of Jesus' name is *complete*, and has been passed to us on this earth.

There are many testimonies where he teaches people that they need to bind the evil spirits, or it will not happen. This is, I believe, because of the sanctity of free will.

Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.
Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them. – Matthew 18:18-20

So we have the power to bind Satan and his minions, and must use it.

Bring the **entire force of your will** against evil spirits, knowing your authority in Christ – *make* them obey. The entire army of heaven stands behind you, ready to honour that. If you ever saw the trilogy "Lord of the Rings", there's a moment where Gandalf obstructs the Balrog's passage over a narrow bridge, slamming his staff down onto it and saying "YOU. SHALL. **NOT**. **PASS**!!!". The spoken authority is palpable and expressed with literal force. In the movie the bridge breaks under the strain of the Balrog's force meeting Gandalf's opposing force, and they fall together, after which Gandalf wins the battle, but in the real world, Jesus has already fought that battle and defeated Satan for us.

The point is that we are *more* than conquerors because Jesus had done all the conquering *for* us. Jesus stripped Satan of all his power, and has given us that victory. Satan and all his host of demons *must* obey the name of Jesus, which has been given to us to use. If they resist, we can simply ask God to send angels who will ensure that Jesus' authority is applied.

We also have the use of the Word, which is the sword of the Spirit. Satan hates it, it hurts him.

For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. – Hebrews 4:12

And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: – Ephesians 6:17

Paul Yonggi Cho was once in Japan on a mission and praying for the land in his hotel room, when suddenly the room filled with an ice-cold dread, and Satan walked in. "Japan is mine!" he said fiercely to Paul. Paul was so filled with fear he could hardly think, so he just thought he'd start

quoting Bible verses. Instantly Satan starting backing away, saying “Don’t speak the Bible to me!” and left.

Another missionary whose name I can’t recall now – it may have been Finney – was getting ready for bed, when all of sudden his bed moved some distance by itself.

He calmly got into bed and said, “I’m going to sleep now. By the time I wake up in the morning, this bed had better be back where it is, without waking me!” And so it was! I’m amused to think of those demonic spirits carrying the bed back to where it should be, on tiptoe. He knew his authority, and you should too.

One lady so instructed expressed a fear that it might anger the devil, and I loved her pastor’s answer: “He already hates you and wants to kill you. You can’t make it any worse!”

Also remember that Satan is a master deceiver, so never allow him to give you the time of day. Tell him and his minions to be quiet, and send them to the pit.

> And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. – 2 Corinthians 11:14

> Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. – John 8:44

Speak the Word. Regularly, always and often, speak the Word, for it is life to you.

> My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments: For length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee. Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart: So shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man. Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil. It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones. – Proverbs 3:1-8

God has told many people to read and speak the Word and to announce that they believe it.

One person, whose name I also can’t recall (with many apologies), did this for months and then one day said to God, “Father, I’m sorry to say it, I’m saying I believe it but I don’t, in my heart.”

“Keep on,” replied the Father “you will.”

And one day a light just went on, and he knew the truth of it in his heart. The faith just came. He was able to trust God for a situation with his farm, again I can’t recall the issue, but I felt it worth relating because of his above conversation.

There is another great book called What You Say is What You Get by Don Gossett in which he recounts plenty of other experiences people have had learning to trust God’s Word.

But if all this is new to you, don't go off the rails here. This is not new age mind over matter, but God's Word over mind. We need to unlearn all our doubt and open the door by faith to God's Word, to believe it, and then we will see it.

Speaking the Word aloud as fact works an affect upon the mind similar to a magnet stroking iron, and reaches the spirit and brings the life and power of the Word to you. Do not neglect to use your tongue, to pray in tongues and to speak the word, or to confess (proclaim) it, as Paul puts it:

> We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak; – 2 Corinthians 4:13
>
> For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. – Romans 10:10

See also The Delay of Faith above

Prophecy

Prophecy is man speaking God's message by the Spirit, usually about the future, but sometimes to encourage or convict.

There are prophets which are called by God to prophesy, and this becomes their main role in life. In Old Testament days this was achieved by God anointing the prophet with the Holy Spirit. The anointing was like a cloak of power. In New Testament times, where a Christian is born again of the Spirit, and baptised in the Spirit, they may be given the *gift* of prophecy and may then also *become* a prophet if the church formally recognises it. And then you get a third type of the Spirit giving someone a prophetic message to share, as an adhoc occasion. This may come as a dictated message, or in tongues with a translation, or as an understanding or insight to which the prophet can give their own words to express it.

There are also false prophets. The way to guard against these is to check that what they say matches up with the Word, which God has put above his own name, and has therefore bound himself by. Also, if you are saved, you have the Spirit within you, who will let you know by a revelation within you that the person speaking is not of him. This is not the natural distaste which arises in your mind when someone says something you don't like or disagree with. It's an inner disturbance in your spirit, a kind of discordant, distant jangling. You will know what I mean when you experience it.

Dreams and visions are given by God to man to aid him, and these are often also messages of God meant to be shared with others as a prophetic word.

Revelation

The apostle John was exiled to the island of Patmos and was praying when he was given a long and detailed vision of the end times, which he wrote down and is recorded as the book of Revelation, the last book of the Bible.

This appears to encompass a final 7 year period, and perhaps earlier years (unlikely). The 7 years, commonly called the Tribulation, is a 7 year covenant confirmed by the Antichrist (Daniel 9:27) of 1260 (Rev 12:6) + 1290 (Dan 12:11) days, split in the middle by the Antichrist setting up an abomination in the temple, which was alluded to by Jesus and by the archangel Gabriel telling Daniel about the end times. (Side note. Daniel 8 is not about the Antichrist, but Antiochus Epiphanes.)

The second half of the week, i.e. the last 3.5 years, also described as a "time, times and half a time" and "42 months", is commonly called the Great Tribulation: the worst time ever in world history.

> Yea, whiles I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation. ... And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for

himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary [this hapened in 70 AD]; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. And he [the prince that shall come, i.e. the antichrist] shall confirm the covenant with many for one week [literally, “seven”, by which the Hebrews indicated 7 years]: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate. – Daniel 9:21, 26-27

And in his estate shall stand up a vile person, to whom they shall not give the honour of the kingdom: but he shall come in peaceably, and obtain the kingdom by flatteries. ... And after the league made with him he shall work deceitfully: for he shall come up, and shall become strong with a small people. ... At the time appointed he shall return, and come toward the south; but it shall not be as the former, or as the latter. For the ships of Chittim [Mediterranean Islanders] shall come against him: therefore he shall be grieved, and return, and have indignation against the holy covenant: so shall he do; he shall even return, and have intelligence with them that forsake the holy covenant. And arms shall stand on his part, and **they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily sacrifice, and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate**. And such as do wickedly against the covenant shall he corrupt by flatteries: but the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits. And they that understand among the people shall instruct many: yet they shall fall by the sword, and by flame, by captivity, and by spoil, many days. Now when they shall fall, they shall be holpen with a little help: but many shall cleave to them with flatteries. And some of them of understanding shall fall, to try them, and to purge, and to make them white, even to the time of the end: because it is yet for a time appointed. And the king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished: for that that is determined shall be done. Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers, nor the desire of women, nor regard any god: for he shall magnify himself above all. But in his estate shall he honour the God of forces: and a god whom his fathers knew not shall he honour with gold, and silver, and with precious stones, and pleasant things. Thus shall he do in the most strong holds with a strange god, whom he shall acknowledge and increase with glory: and he shall cause them to rule over many, and shall divide the land for gain. And at the time of the end shall the king of the south push at him: and the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over. He shall enter also into the glorious land, and many countries shall be overthrown: but these shall escape out of his hand, even Edom, and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon. He shall stretch forth his hand also upon the countries: and the land of Egypt shall not escape. But he shall have power over the treasures of gold and of silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt: and the Libyans and the Ethiopians shall be at his steps. But tidings out of the east and out of the

north shall trouble him: therefore he shall go forth with great fury to destroy, and utterly to make away many. And **he shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain**; yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him. – Daniel 11:21, 23, 29-45

And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be **a time of trouble, such as never was** since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. And **many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.** And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever. But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased. Then I Daniel looked, and, behold, there stood other two, the one on this side of the bank of the river, and the other on that side of the bank of the river. And one said to the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, How long shall it be to the end of these wonders? And I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and sware by him that liveth for ever that it shall be for **a time, times, and an half** [3.5 years]; and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished. And I heard, but I understood not: then said I, O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things? And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end. Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand. And from the time that the **daily sacrifice shall be taken away**, and **the abomination that maketh desolate set up**, there shall be a **thousand two hundred and ninety days**. Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days. But go thou thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days. – Daniel 12

And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come. **When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains:** – Matthew 24:14-16

6 Ask ye now, and see whether **a man doth travail with child**? wherefore do I see every man with his hands on his loins, **as a woman in travail**, and all faces are turned into paleness? 7 Alas! for **that day is great, so that none is like i**t: it is even the time of **Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it.** 8 For it shall come to pass in that day, saith the LORD of hosts, that I will break his yoke from off thy neck, and will burst thy bonds, and strangers shall no more serve themselves of him: 9 But they shall serve the LORD their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them. 10 Therefore fear thou not, O my

servant Jacob, saith the LORD; neither be dismayed, O Israel: for, lo, I will save thee from afar, and thy seed from the land of their captivity; and Jacob shall return, and shall be in rest, and be quiet, and none shall make him afraid. 11 For I am with thee, saith the LORD, to save thee: though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee: but I will correct thee in measure, and will not leave thee altogether unpunished. – Jeremiah 30:6-11

Note how Jesus was presented to the Jews at the start of the 70th week in 29 AD (see Appendix B), and they heard him speak to them for the **1st half** of that week, and then crucified him in 33 AD. How fitting that they finally are enabled to see him as their Messiah during the **2nd half** of the final week of years.
It is as though Daniel's 70th week was split in half when Israel rejected the Messiah, and restarts when they turn to him again after the abomination of desolation is placed into the holy place.
So Jacob's time of trouble is the 2nd half of the final 7 years, the Great Tribulation.

I think the end times are upon us so will try and detail them here, however, it is extremely complex and difficult to decipher without making incorrect assumptions. My personal suspicion is that this was done deliberately to obscure the end times from the wicked and from Satan so that they can't prepare properly ahead of time.

But let's look at the Jewish feast days first, because God appears to be using them to underscore events.

There are 7 Jewish feast days in the year: A Concise Overview of the Seven Feasts of Israel

Colossians 2:16-17 tells us that the Feast days (which the Jews treated as high Sabbath days) are a shadow of things to come:

Let no man therefore judge you in meat [food], or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of **the sabbath days: which are a shadow of things to come**; but the body is of Christ. – Colossians 2:16-17

And so we see it in the Spring feasts, which have coincided with their events already:

Passover	Jesus was crucified at the same time as the Passover Lamb* The following day was the High Sabbath of the Passover (they needed to get the bodies off the crosses before the High Sabbath began at sundown.) *How could Jesus eat the Passover meal the evening before? There were two sects amongst the Jews at the time, one holding to the traditional date, in which Jesus participated in the meal, and one holding to a newer schedule instituted by the Pharisees.
Unleavened bread	On the Passover, people ate only unleavened bread (no yeast, like Matzos). Then the following day starts the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and people eat it for a week. The lack of yeast stands for a lack of sin, meaning pure. Jesus spoke of this bread as being his body, broken for us. I'm not sure what this feast represents in the events.

First Fruits	On the first day of the week after the Passover, Sunday, the priests waved an offering of barley bread before the Lord as a first fruits of the barley harvest. This is when Jesus first went up to the Father after his resurrection, and in the Bible he is called the first fruits.
Shavuot (Feast of Weeks) / Pentecost	7 x 7 days after First Fruits, or the 50th day inclusive, the wheat harvest celebration. This is the day God poured out his Spirit upon the disciples, and this baptism in the Spirit became a part of every subsequent conversion.

As for the autumn feasts, or fall feasts as the Americans call it, most believe the return of the Messiah as King will be co-incident with these.

Some expect him to first take up the faithful of his church in what is called the Rapture, which I describe in appendix C, and many people expect this to coincide with Rosh Hashanah, though Passover and Pentecost are also possibilities. As for the next two fall feasts, I am not sure what event they line up with, but one prophetic word has Jesus' return at the end of the tribulation on Yom Kippur. Upon his return he will defend and revive Israel and be King of the world for a thousand years, after which Satan will be released, deceive the world and cause one final world war.

Rosh Hashanah (Day of Trumpets, 1st day of Tishri, late Sept/early Oct) The Jews used to say, "No man knows the day or the hour" of Rosh Hashanah because this feast is on the 1st day of the new month which day is not known because the start of a Jewish month depends on seeing the new moon.	Matthew 24:36-42 But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. 37 But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. 38 For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, 39 And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. 40 Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. 41 Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left. 42 Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. 1 Corinthians 15:51-53 Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. 53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17 For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent [go before] them which are asleep. 16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: 17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Revelation 3:10 Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.

Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement)	A bull and goat is sacrificed, and on a second goat, the scapegoat, is laid all the sin of the people and the goat is sent out alone into the wilderness.
Sukkot (Feast of Tabernacles)	The people live in booths for 7 days to remind them how the Israelites lived in tents with God leading them for 40 years. This could be a type of Jesus reigning on earth for a thousand years from Jerusalem with his people.

Greater and greater waves of light – is the Rapture the next one?

I personally suspect that God is releasing waves of increasing light and revelation of himself, and the purpose is as follows:

While he is not willing that any should be lost, at the same time he is not willing that any who wish to be evil be forced to be made good.

Now, merely by his appearing as God, they would be forced to bow down and yield to him. So instead he hides himself, but he gives just enough light, just enough evidence, for the sincere to seek him and find him, while the insincere harden their hearts.

But there are among the insincere some who, if they understood better, would change their minds. And yet others who would harden their hearts even further.

So God releases a greater revelation of himself, and in the new light, some more now come forward, and yet others draw further back in to the darkness in their hearts.

And so on, with each successive wave of greater light, some elect to come forward, while others draw further and further back towards the darkness.

Each time, a decision is made in a heart, to yield to the light and be made good, or to draw further to the dark and become more evil still, until they reject God while fully aware of his existence.

I personally think the rapture is the next wave of light, and it's going to be a big one, but with it God will also allow Satan to bring in a great deception, perhaps demons masquerading as aliens, perhaps even showing 'alien spacecraft'. Certainly the 2nd 3.5 years will be with miraculous powers, see Revelation 13 quoted later on.

In the rapture(s) God will gather his elect before sending his judgments upon the earth. But even by his judgments there will be successive revelations in waves of light, and I believe some more will yet be saved, and others become darker still, until, ultimately, the wicked will be face to face with God and yet still not repent, like Satan.

> And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not to give him glory. ... And blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds. – Revelation 16:9, 11

In the end, there will be no one left who can be restored to good, and the earth will then be purified by fire as it was once cleansed by a flood.

Revelation overview

In this book I have liberally included swathes of the Bible with the view that it might not be available to someone who might find this book and read it later in the tribulation, however, owing to space constraints I just can't include enough of Revelation to refer to it with all context as I go. So if you want to follow along and can't get a physical copy of a Bible, perhaps you can find www.blb.org to read it online or go to www.purebiblesearch.com to download a searchable copy of the King James Bible to your phone or PC which also allows you to simply read the text. In case the site gets taken down by the Antichrist I have saved a 7-zip archive of it on Dropbox at Silver.7z which should execute on any Windows after you unzip it with an archive program like 7-zip or WinRAR. Or failing those, perhaps you can use a video of all the pages at The Elton Anomaly.

Revelation 6 to 19 – the final years of the world

After John is taken up into heaven in Revelation 4, he sees a sealed book written on both sides (perhaps similar to Ezekiel's scroll of judgment written on both sides) which no one is worthy to unseal except for the Lamb of God (who knows what it is like to be a man and live a sinless life), who then opens the seals in Revelation 6, one at a time.

Once 6 seals of the scroll have been opened and their events have happened, the 7th and final seal is opened upon which 7 angels blow 7 trumpets of judgment one at a time, where the 7th trumpet, which is called the 3rd woe (the 5th and 6th trumpets release the first two woes), releases 7 vials of wrath.

There is a lot of confusion around these events in Revelation, and I think it is primarily caused by some intervening chapters which give a panoramic view of the Tribulation (especially the 2nd half), looking back prior, to what has been described so far, and ahead to what is still to be detailed:

- Revelation 11 - The two witnesses ending the 2nd woe (1260 days)
- Revelation 12 - The woman and the dragon (1260 days + 1290 days)
- Revelation 13 - The Beast (42 months)
- Revelation 14 - Begins with 144,000 first fruits redeemed walking with Jesus
  - Moves to angels warnings, e.g. not to take the mark
    (Could be at the start of the 2nd half when the mark is issued)
  - Ends with the winepress of God's wrath (the 7th trumpet and 7 vials;
    note Rev 19:15 mentions Jesus's return treading the winepress.)

Plus there is confusion over events with some similarities to each other, leading people to conclude they are the same event, despite small but clear differences.

I think that as a result of the above, people overlap different events and read events in a different order than presented, chopping and changing the time periods of the events as though John was shown events flick-flacking forward and back in time with just the word 'and'; while I believe that in actual fact Revelation is surprisingly straightforward and clearly serially presented when the time is taken to analyse it more carefully and pick up on each clue that is given to pin the timing down.

So let's first establish some sure foundational pillars in regard to timing.

1. The last 7 years of the world are defined by a covenant confirmed with many by the Antichrist, It is split in the middle by the Antichrist setting up an abomination in the temple. It ends with God's judgment.

> And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week [literally 'seven', which word the Hebrews used for their periodic seven years for sabbath year counting]: and **in the midst of the week** he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of **abominations he shall make it desolate**, even **until the consummation [end]**, and that [which is pre-]determined shall be poured upon the desolate [no hope or help for them]. – Daniel 9:27
>
> For more detail see also Daniel 12 and Matthew 24:15, shared earlier, and 2 Thessalonians 2:4, shared later after the Events table summarising Revelation.)

2. There are Christians on earth when the Antichrist confirms the 7 year covenant.

These Christians see the beginning of sorrows in which they finally become persecuted. They see a great falling away from the church. They see the Antichrist break the covenant with the abomination of desolation, and they are the elect gathered by Jesus (see point 3.) after that Great Tribulation which follows:

> 6 And ye shall hear of **wars** and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. 7 For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be **famines**, and **pestilences**, and **earthquakes**, in divers places. 8 All these are the **beginning of sorrows**. 9 Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. 10 **And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another**, and shall hate one another. 11 And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. 12 And because iniquity shall abound, **the love of many shall wax cold**. 13 But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. 14 And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; **and then shall the end come. 15 When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation**, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) – Matthew 24:6-15

3. The 2nd half of these 7 years is the Great Tribulation.
It ends with or is interrupted by Jesus Christ's return to gather the church and judge the world

> 14 ... and then shall the end come. 15 When ye therefore shall see the **abomination of desolation**, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place ... 21 ... then shall be **great tribulation** ... 22 And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake **those days shall be shortened**. 29 Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the **stars shall fall from heaven**, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: 30 And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the **Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power** and great glory.

And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall **gather together his elect** from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. – Matthew 24:14-15, 21, 29-31

12 And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; 13 And the **stars of heaven fell** unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. 14 And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. 15 And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; 16 And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: 17 For **the great day of his wrath is come**; and who shall be able to stand? – Revelation 6:12-17

Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; And to you who are troubled **rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance** on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day. – 2 Thessalonians 1:6-10

Thou didst cause judgment to be heard from heaven; the earth feared, and was still, When God **arose to judgment, to save all the meek** of the earth. Selah. – Psalm 76:8-9

4. The 7th trumpet and the 7 vials after it are both called the wrath of God

God has levels of discipline:

a) Discomfort / Chastisement – allowing something difficult in your life to help you spiritually.
b) Judgment – a punishment after ignoring repeated warnings to stop being wicked
There is often some redeemable element involved, such as a nation coming to their senses.
c) Wrath – deserved payback (recompence) for deliberate evil.
Nothing in people under wrath can be redeemed. It is similar to throwing weeds on a fire.

15 And the **seventh angel sounded**; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever. ... 18 And the nations were angry, and **thy wrath is come**, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth. – Revelation 11:15, 18

1 And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God. ... 7 And one of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels **seven golden vials full of the wrath of God**, who liveth for ever and ever. – Revelation 15:1, 7

5. The vials come after the trumpets

5.1 The vials are called the 7 **last** plagues.*

> And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God. – Revelation 15:1
>
> *Plagues refers to judgments. The events of the first 6 trumpets are referred to as plagues in Revelation 9:20, so are the vials, and also the judgments meted out by the two witnesses.

5.2 The 5th, 6th and 7th trumpets are called the 1st, 2nd and 3rd woe (see point 8.)
We see the woes of the 5th and 6th after they are blown,
then we see the vials after the 7th trumpet is blown, and both are called the wrath of God.
There is nothing other than the vials that can be the **3rd woe**.

> The second woe is past; and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly. And the seventh angel sounded [the 7th trumpet]; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever. Revelation 11:14-15
>
> (There is a reference to the winepress of God's wrath in the intervening chapter 14, but as the 7th trumpet and 7 vials are called the wrath of God this is surely a reference to them.
>
> There is also a weak argument that the great hail from God's throne in Revelation 11:19 could be the 3rd woe but this is unconvincing for three reasons:
> a) It is not to scale. The other trumpet events are all far greater.
> b) The events all escalate. The seal events are not as great as the trumpet events,
> and the trumpet events are not as great as the vial events,
> and the 7th vial event is the greatest of all.
> God's throne is visited before each of these escalations, and each time, there is an escalation around God's throne also. (See purple font in the Events table below.)
> c) The 7th seal does nothing else but visit God's throne and unleash the 7 trumpets,
> and the 7th trumpet does nothing but visit God's throne and unleash the 7 vials.)

6. The trumpets come after the seals

The seals are all fairly natural, not supernatural – the Antichrist conquering, wars, famine, plagues, earthquakes, and martyrdom. They are a tribulation, but not the judgment or wrath of God. However, things take a massive turn at the 6th seal. The sun goes dark, the stars fall, the earth sees the Son of Man coming in the clouds, and the ungodly try to hide, saying **the day of his wrath has come**. (See next table, Revelation 6 vs Matthew 24).

We then in Revelation 7 see **angels saying not to hurt the earth, sea and trees until the 144,000 Israelites have been sealed for their protection** (and indeed in Revelation 9:1-4, the 5th trumpet, we expressly see a command given to terrible creatures not to hurt those sealed). So the trumpets begin only after the 6th seal: the earth is not hurt until the 144,000 are sealed. Therefore seals 1-5

do not hurt the earth and it makes sense that they come before the 6th seal, especially because there is not much point in doing the seals out of order once the trumpet judgments have started. So the trumpets start after seals 1-6, and obviously seal 7 unleashes them.

7. There is a rapture at the 6th seal, just before the wrath of God, i.e. the trumpets and vials.

In Matthew 24 Jesus gives a timeline of events and it matches surprisingly well with the seals of Revelation 6, especially in the unique event when the sun goes black and the stars fall from heaven. (Don't let scholars allegorise this by saying God's using dramatic language. God speaks only truth – it is entirely possible that God can make the stars fall, after all, he made them in one day; or, there may be an event which looks exactly like the stars falling.)

This shows that Jesus gathers his elect at the time of the 6th seal, before the wrath of God in the form of the 7 trumpets and vials falls upon the earth.

Revelation 6		Matthew 24
1 And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see. 2 And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer.	False Christs / Antichrist	Matthew 24:4 And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you. 5 For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.
3 And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come and see. 4 And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword.	Wars	6 And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. 7 For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom:
5 And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand. 6 And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine.	Famine	and there shall be famines,
7 And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see. 8 And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.	Death	and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. 8 All these are the beginning of sorrows.
9 And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God. ... 11 ... and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.	Martyrs	9 Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake.
	Middle of the Trib:	15 When ye therefore shall see **the abomination of desolation**, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso

	Start of the Great Trib.	readeth, let him understand:) 16 Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains: 17 Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house: ... 21 For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.
Great Tribulation		
12 And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; 13 And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. 14 And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. 15 And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; 16 And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: 17 For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?	Sun goes black and the stars fall. This happens at no other time in history.	29 Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken. 30 And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. 31 And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

It makes sense that God removes his elect before his wrath. He did this with Noah and with Lot.

> 20 And the LORD said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous; 21 I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me; and if not, I will know. ... 23 And Abraham drew near, and said, Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked? ... 25 That be far from thee to do after this manner, **to slay the righteous with the wicked: and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee: Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?** ... 32 And he said, Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak yet but this once: Peradventure ten shall be found there. And he said, I will not destroy it for ten's sake.. – Genesis 20-21, 23, 25, 32

Moreover also he seals the 144,000 Israelites for their protection at this time. Why are they not taken up in the gathering of the elect? Read on.

8. The two witnesses are in Jerusalem for the 2nd half of the tribulation; the Gentiles tread Jerusalem underfoot over the same time.

The two witnesses serve God in Jerusalem for 1260 days (3.5 years) and are taken up after the 6th trumpet (2nd woe):

> 12 And the **fourth** angel sounded [his trumpet], and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them

was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise. 13 And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, **Woe, woe, woe**, to the inhabiters of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of **the three angels, which are yet to sound!** – Revelation 8:12-13

1 And the **fifth** angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the **bottomless pit**. ... 12 **One woe is past**; and, behold, there come **two woes more hereafter.** – Revelation 9:1, 12

2 But the court which is without [outside] the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is **given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months.** 3 And I will give power unto my **two witnesses**, and they shall prophesy a **thousand two hundred and threescore days**, clothed in sackcloth. …
7 And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the **bottomless pit** shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and **kill them**. 8 And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, **where also our Lord was crucified**. 9 And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and **shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves**. 10 And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth. 11 And after three days and an half the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them.
(We see here that the Antichrist controls Jerusalem for the whole 1260 days after he breaks the covenant and stops the Jews' sacrifices.)
12 And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they **ascended up to heaven** in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them. 13 And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven. 14 **The second woe is past**; and, behold, **the third woe cometh quickly.**
And the seventh angel sounded... – Revelation 11:3, 7-15a

9. The Beast government exists during the whole 2nd half of the tribulation;
and successfully martyrs Christians and Jews;
and deceives the world with the help of the false prophet.

And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw **a beast rise up out of the sea** [sea: a prophetic type or figure of the peoples], having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority. And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast. And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is

able to make war with him? And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue **forty and two months**. And he opened his mouth **in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle**, and them that dwell in heaven. And it was given unto him to make **war with the saints, and to overcome them**: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. If any man have an ear, let him hear. He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints. And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon. And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live. And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed. And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six. – Revelation 13

31 And arms shall stand on his part, and they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and **shall take away the daily sacrifice, and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate**. ... 45 And he [the Antichrist] shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him. - Dan 11:31, 45

1 And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be **a time of trouble, such as never was** since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. 2 And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. 3 And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever. 4 But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased. ... 6 And one said to the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, How long shall it be to the end of these wonders? 7 And I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and sware by him that liveth for ever that it

shall be for a time, times, and an half; and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished. ... 11 And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be **a thousand two hundred and ninety days**. 12 Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days. – Daniel 12:1-4, 6-7, 11-12

10. The Lord comes with ten thousands of his saints to judge the earth

And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, **the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, To execute judgment** upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him. – Jude 1:14-15

These ten thousands are likely to be the pre-trib raptured (see evidence for pre-trib later). They do not include the resurrected saints of old, for then the resurrection must have happened, at which time the elect are gathered (see Appendix C), in which case the ten thousands would doubtless include the gathered, but they are an innumerable multitude. And ten thousand is not just 'a really big number Enoch has no greater words for': Daniel prophesies that ten thousand times ten thousand will stand before God's throne for judgment (presumably of the church) at the end of this time – that's one hundred million:

7 After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns. 8 I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things. 9 I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. 10 A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: **thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him**: the judgment was set, and the books were opened. – Daniel 7:7-10

11. The Day of the Lord is a year long, starting with the heavens shaken, and filled with wrath. It ends with the earth being judged by fire as it once was judged by water in Noah's Flood.

It seems the trumpets, including the 7th trumpet's vials, take one year to execute.

As the two witnesses and the 144,000 Israelites, and very likely Israel, go through the trumpets up to the end of the 6th trumpet when the two witnessses are lifted up, we know that 6 trumpets finish at about the end of the 1260 days. It may be that the the 7th trumpets' vials are then poured out over the next 30 days to get to 1290 days, or the mysterious next 45 days, arriving at the 1335 days spoken of in Daniel 12.

Isaiah 61:2 To proclaim the **acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God**; to comfort all that mourn

Isaiah 63:4 For the **day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come**.

Jeremiah 46:10 For this is the day of the Lord GOD of hosts, a **day of vengeance**, that he may avenge him of his adversaries: and the sword shall devour, and it shall be satiate and made drunk with their blood: for the Lord GOD of hosts hath a sacrifice in the north country **by the river Euphrates.**

Come near, ye nations, to hear; and hearken, ye people: let the earth hear, and all that is therein; the world, and all things that come forth of it. For the indignation of the LORD is upon all nations, and his fury upon all their armies: he hath utterly destroyed them, he hath delivered them to the slaughter. Their slain also shall be cast out, and their stink shall come up out of their carcases, and the mountains shall be melted with their blood. And **all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll: and all their host shall fall down, as the leaf falleth off from the vine, and as a falling fig from the fig tree.** For my sword shall be bathed in heaven: behold, it shall come down upon Idumea, and upon the people of my curse, to judgment. ... **For it is the day of the LORD'S vengeance, and the year of recompences for the controversy of Zion.** And the streams thereof shall be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into brimstone, and the **land thereof shall become burning pitch**. – Isaiah 34:1-5, 8-9

And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto. **For these be the days of vengeance**, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: **and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars**; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: **for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.** – Luke 21:20-27

(Note this seems to be a double prophecy. It is not uncommon for a prophecy to refer both to an event and the shadow of the event, which is a smaller, similar event beforehand. In this case, the Jews were scattered after 70 AD's destruction of the city and temple by the Romans [the people of the prince that shall come – Daniel 9:26]; and they will also be forced to flee again when the Antichrist breaks the 7 year covenant half way through and starts beheading the people of God; and only then, after the ensuing Great Tribulation, will we see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.)

God is jealous, and the LORD revengeth; the LORD revengeth, and is furious; the LORD will take vengeance on his adversaries, and he reserveth wrath for his enemies. ... He rebuketh the sea, and maketh it dry, and drieth up all the rivers: Bashan languisheth, and Carmel, and the flower of Lebanon languisheth. **The mountains quake at him, and the hills melt,**

and the earth is burned at his presence, yea, the world, and all that dwell therein. Who can stand before his indignation? and who can abide in the fierceness of his anger? his fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down by him. ... But with an overrunning flood he will make an utter end of the place thereof, and darkness shall pursue his enemies. What do ye imagine against the LORD? he will make an utter end: affliction shall not rise up the second time. **For while they be folden together as thorns, and while they are drunken as drunkards, they shall be devoured as stubble fully dry.** – Nahum 1:2, 4-6, 8-10

Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and **the earth standing out of the water and in the water: Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.** But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But **the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.** Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. – 2 Peter 3:3-13

Note. God takes no pleasure in judgment and wrath. But wickedness builds a debt that *must* be paid in full, otherwise holiness tolerates evil.

12. The resurrection at the gathering of the elect is of those in Christ.
The rest of the dead are not resurrected for another thousand years.
Those who received Christ but returned to sinful lives will face condemnation.

1 And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. 2 And **many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake**, some to everlasting life, and **some to shame and everlasting contempt**. – Daniel 12:1-2

40 And this is the will of him that sent me, that **every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him**, may have everlasting life: and **I will raise him up at the last day**. – John 6:40

4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. 5 But **the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished.**
This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years. – Revelation 20:4-6

42 And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season? 43 Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. 44 Of a truth I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he hath. 45 **But and if that servant say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming**; and shall begin to beat the menservants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken; 46 The lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will **appoint him his portion with the unbelievers**. – Luke 12:42-46

4 Raptures in the Repeating patterns in the events of Revelation

I see a pattern in Revelation, of a rapture and view of the throne before each escalation of trouble:

1. Pre-trib rapture before the 1st seal / 7 seals of troubles
2. Pre-wrath rapture before the 7th seal / 7 trumpets of judgment
3. Pre-vials rapture before the 7th trumpet / 7 vials of wrath
4. Pre-7th vial hint of rapture before 7th vial of wrath

After this table I will list evidences for these raptures.

Ref	Events	Timeline
Rev 4	24 elders redeemed out of every tribe, nation and tongue are before the throne. (Implicit rapture #1: The barley harvest – see later)	Pre-tribulation
Rev 4:5a	Out of the throne proceeded **1) lightnings 2) thunderings 3) voices**	**Just before the seals**
Rev 6	**Seal 1**: a rider on a **white** horse with a bow (could mean either an archer's bow or a rainbow) and crown, conquering – likely the **Antichrist** – note that the next two horses' rider is not mentioned **Seal 2**: a **red** horse, causing **war** **Seal 3**: a **black** horse, causing **famine** (equivalent to a loaf of bread for a day's wages) **Seal 4**: a **pale** horse (pale green is the Greek word) horse ridden by Death, followed by Hell, causing **death** over 1/4 of the earth **Seal 5**: the souls of the martyred asking God to bring **vengeance** and being told to wait a little while for their brothers to be martyred. **Seal 6**: a great **earthquake**, *moving* islands and mountains, the sun goes black, moon red, stars fall and the **heavens roll up** like a scroll. People say the wrath of the Lamb has come.	Seal troubles – likely to start with the tribulation but could start earlier. Ends at the end of the Great Tribulation. (The Jews' tribulation continues.)
Rev 7	After this John saw four angels holding the four winds of the earth, who can hurt the earth and the sea, and another angel saying to them, "Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads." (i.e. before Trumpet 1) **144,000 Israelites are sealed.**	Pause to seal 144,000 Jews ...
	After this John saw an **innumerable multitude** of all people before the Lamb, clothed in white and praising him, who have **come out of great tribulation**, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes. (Rapture #2: The wheat harvest – see later)	… and see the elect in heaven before the 7th seal (before the 7 trumpets of judgment)
Rev 8	**Seal 7**: silence in heaven for half an hour, then 7 trumpets given to 7 angels	
Rev 8:5	There were 1) voices 2) thunderings 3) lightnings **+ 4) an earthquake**	**Just before the judgment**

Rev 8	**Trumpet 1**: **hail and fire** mingled with blood: 1/3 of trees **burnt up**, all green grass burnt up **Trumpet 2**: something like a **great mountain** burning with fire is cast into the sea: **1/3 of the sea becomes blood**, 1/3 of ships are destroyed **Trumpet 3**: a **great star** from heaven called Wormwood, burning like a lamp, falls on **1/3 of the rivers** and springs, making them **toxic**, and many people die of the waters **Trumpet 4**: **1/3 of the sun, moon and stars** are smitten, so 1/3 of the day is dark, and the night likewise Announcement: an angel announces that trumpets 5-7 will be **3 woes**	The judgment
Rev 9	**Trumpet 5, Woe 1**: an angel opens the bottomless pit out of which comes a great smoke that darkens the sky and l**ocusts which sting like scorpions for 5 months**, commanded not to hurt any green thing nor the 144,000 sealed. People will wish to die but will not be able to. **Trumpet 6, Woe 2**: Four angels bound in the river Euphrates are loosed, who were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, to slay 1/3 of the people. Two hundred million creatures with riders are released, **like horses with heads like lions**, out of whose mouths come **fire and smoke and brimstone**, and who have **tails like snakes** with heads that hurt. And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not. (Note that woe 2 is not finished yet.)	The 3 woes of the judgment
Rev 10	An angel announces that when the 7th trumpet is blown, "there should be time no longer" but the mystery of God will be finished. Presumably he means the way things are now, for we know that the vials and the thousand year reign follow.	
Rev 11	**Overview of the final 42 months**, regarding **two witnesses** John is told to measure the temple but not the court outside because that will be trodden under the Gentiles's feet for 42 months. And God will empower two witnesses (perhaps Enoch and Elijah who never died but ascended to heaven) to prophesy 1260 days, and if anyone tries to hurt them they breathe fire and kill that person. They can also stop the rain and turn waters to blood and smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they wish. When they finish their testimony, the new world order finally kills them in Jerusalem, and the world celebrates and does not allow them to be buried, but after 3½ days they revive, and ascend to heaven. Then there is a great earthquake, and 1/10 of Jerusalem falls down and 7,000 people die. **This ends woe 2.**	Review of the last 3.5 years and the end of woe 2
	Trumpet 7, Woe 3: Trumpet 7 is sounded, heralding the 7 vials of God's wrath, but there will be a pause first.	
	In God's temple is seen the ark of the covenant: and there are 1) lightnings 2) voices 3) thunderings 4) an earthquake + **5) great hail**	**Just before the wrath**

Rev 12	**Overview of the 1260+1290 days**, regarding **Israel** And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered. And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born. And she brought forth a **man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne.** [This is both Jesus and the body of Christ, as the Word says both rule with a rod of iron]. And the woman **fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days.** [1260 days] And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, **Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.** Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabiters of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time. And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, **he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child. And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time,** [also called 42 months] from the face of the serpent. And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood. And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth. And **the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.** (The beast or new world order aims to kill all Christians – presumably those who converted after the gathering of the elect – during its reign of 42 months, see next.)	Review of the 7 years
Rev 13	**Overview of the final 42 months**, regarding **beast/new world order**	Review of the

	A beast rises up out of the sea [of peoples], with **seven heads*** [mountains and kings, 5 had fallen at the time of the vision, one was alive, and the last was to come] and **ten horns with ten crowns****, empowered by Satan. One of his heads is wounded to death and revives (presumably the Antichrist – I wonder if he is cloned?). The world worships him and he is allowed to reign for <u>42 months</u>. He blasphemes against God and his temple and is allowed to overcome the saints and all peoples. But the saints do not worship him and are killed by him – here is the patience and the faith of the saints. And a second beast rises up out of the earth [of organisations?], with two horns like a lamb [the false prophet, we know from later]. He has miraculous powers, making fire come down from heaven, and deceives everyone into making an image of the one that died and lived, which he makes come alive. And he forces the mark of the beast on everyone so they cannot buy or sell without it. Any who will not worship the image or take the mark that is found is killed.	last 3.5 years
	**** Seven heads*** [7 mountains and 7 kings, 5 had fallen at the time of the vision, one was alive, and the last was to come] Perhaps types of the Antichrist throughout all the empires of history, i.e. the kings of: 1. Egypt – Pharoah of the Exodus who oppressed Israel 2. Assyria – Sennacherib who attacked Judah and blasphemed God (and also who decades ago the Holy Spirit told me was a type/figure of the Antichrist, I've no idea why he told me) 3. Babylon – Nebuchadnezzar who made a statue and forced everyone to worship it, and/or his son who defiled the temple cups. 4. Medo-Persia – Artaxerxes who issued an order to kill all the Jews 5. Greece – Antiochus who put the abomination of swine's blood on the altar (referred to as a transgression of desolation by a saint in the prophecy of Daniel 8, aside from the use of a similar term for the Antichrist's) 6. Rome – Domitian who persecuted the Christians around 95 AD, demand he be worshipped as God and exiled John to Patmos 7. NWO – the Antichrist (It seems that each of these did a *unique* thing against God and his people that the Antichrist will also do) ***** Ten horns with ten crowns*** We know from Daniel and elsewhere in Revelation these are 10 rulers who give the Antichrist their power for 'one hour' to the beast. As the Philadelphian church is kept from the 'hour of trial' perhaps this hour refers to the period of the beast, i.e. from the abomination that causes desolation up until the 6th seal when Jesus gathers his elect and God judges the earth.	
Rev 14	144,000 virgins with his Father's name in their foreheads are seen with	Pause to see

	the Lamb on mount Sion (in heaven, as they then sing before the throne of God). Three angels fly over, each with an announcement: 1. The first preaches the gospel to every tribe and tongue 2. The second says Babylon is fallen 3. The third warns everyone not to take the mark of the beast because they will be tormented by fire forever. [From a vision youtuber Last Days had, I believe this is because the mark is a neuralink style chip which takes complete control over you, effectively a lobotomy, preventing you from repenting.] Then it is said "here is the patience of the saints" and "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth"	the 144,000 virgins, hear warnings, and ...
	John then sees one like unto the son of man reap the earth. (Rapture #3: The fruit harvest (grape and fig – see later)	...gather new Christians...
	After which an angel reaps the grapes of wrath and casts them into the winepress and blood comes out.	
Rev 15	Then John sees 7 angels with the 7 last plagues "full of the wrath of God" and a sea of glass mingled with fire "and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb." (Note how they sing a Jewish song – most are likely Israelites – as well as the song of the Lamb)	...whom we see in heaven before the 7th trumpet (before the 7 vials of wrath)
Rev 16	**Vial 1**: People who took the mark and worshipped the beast get a **foul** ("noisesome") and **grievous sore** **Vial 2**: The **sea turns to blood** and everything in it dies **Vial 3**: The rivers and **springs turn to blood** **Vial 4**: The **sun scorches** men **Vial 5**: The beast's kingdom goes **pitch dark** and they gnaw their tongues for pain **Vial 6**: The Euphrates dries up to make way for the kings of the East, and demons go gather the world to war against God in Armageddon	The wrath
	Very interestingly, there is an odd verse (15) slipped in here with vial 6 (verses 12-16): "Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame. (Indication of Rapture #4 – the olive harvest)	
	Vial 7: 1) voices 2) thunders 3) lightnings, **++ 4) the greatest earthquake ever**	**Just before the 7th wrath,** AND the 7th wrath
	++ 5) the greatest hail ever, every hailstone about 30-40kg, and every island and mountain is gone	
Rev 17,	**Overview of the doom of Babylon**	Review of

Revelation 18		Babylon
Rev 19	There is a celebration in heaven and the marriage of the Lamb is now come, his wife has made herself ready, dressed in fine white linen. "Blessed are they which are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb" Then John sees "heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS. And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great. And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh". – Revelation 19:11-21	The return of Christ to the earth, to defeat the beast

Evidence of a pre-trib rapture:

It all begins by surprise, after a period of peace and safety, as a snare the world cannot escape, like a woman's labour pains increasing in suffering till the end; but we can pray to be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass (see verses below).
Once the covenant is confirmed by the Antichrist there is no more surprise, no more peace and safety.

> 1 Thessalonians 5:2-4
> 2 For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh **as a thief in the night**. 3 For when they shall say, **Peace and safety**; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as **travail upon a woman with child** [they start suddenly; they get worse in intensity and

frequency; there is no escape]; and **they shall not escape**. 4 **But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.**

Luke 21:34-36
34 And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. 35 For as **a snare** shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. 36 Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that **ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass**, and to stand before the Son of man.

Matthew 24:36-40, 44
36 **But of that day and hour knoweth no man**, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. 37 But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. 38 For as in the days that were before the flood they were **eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage**, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, 39 And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. 40 Then shall two be in the field; the **one shall be taken** [*paralambanō – see John 14:3*], and the other left. … **Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not** the Son of man cometh.

John 14:2-3
2 In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, **I will come again, and receive** [*paralambanō – see Matthew 24:40*] **you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.**

Matthew 25:1-2, 5-8, 10-13
1 Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. 2 And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. ... 5 While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. 6 And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. 7 Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. 8 And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. ... 10 And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. 11 Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. 12 But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. 13 Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.
The virgins are identical – they are pure, they have oil in their lamps, they await the bridegroom, they sleep, they awake and get ready – except in this one thing: five had no spare oil and so their lamps went out. In the Bible oil is is a figure for the Holy Spirit. We are filled with the Spirit when we take time away from the world to be with God and open our hearts to him.

Revelation 3:10-11
10 Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from **the hour of temptation**, which shall come upon **all the world**, to try them that dwell upon the earth. 11 Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.
*(Note how the ten kings have power for **one hour** with the Beast while he persecutes Christians. – Revelation 17:12)*

Revelation 4:1, 4, 5:8-10
1 After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of **a trumpet** talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter. ... 4 And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold. 5:9 And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and **hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation**; 10 And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.
Note that at the 5th seal we see the souls of them that were slain as martyrs, but here we see the elders, not their souls only. Thus the elders have their new bodies already.

Paul also reassures the Thessalonians, who were worried that the return of Christ to gather the elect and judge the earth was at hand, by reminding them that that day will not happen until there is a great falling away (of lukewarm Christians recanting under the persecution of the Antichrist, as per Matthew 24) and the Antichrist sits in the temple presenting himself as God:

1 Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, 2 That **ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as [if] from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.** 3 Let no man deceive you by any means: for **that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; 4 Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.** 5 Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? 6 And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. 7 For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth [disallows] will let, until he be taken out of the way. 8 And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: 9 Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, 10 And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. 11 And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: 12 That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness. – 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12

(Pastors often teach that "he who now letteth [blocks the Antichrist]" is the Holy Spirit and that the Holy Spirit is taken out of the way by the pre-trib rapture of the church, however, though it may refer to the Spirit (though I doubt the Spirit as the prime mover of God would ever be passively taken), it cannot be that the Spirit is removed by the pre-trib rapture because there are still many Christians on earth while the Antichrist confirms the covenant and starts the 7 year countdown – see 2nd foundational pillars in regard to timing earlier in this chapter – and the Spirit is with them during all this time.)

Why were the Thessalonians troubled by the soon return of Christ, if it is the day they go to heaven with him?

> For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive [and] remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. 16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: 17 Then we which are alive [and] remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. 18 Wherefore **comfort** one another with these words. – 1 Thessalonians 4:15-18

Not because they were fearful of being found wanting by Christ, nor of persecution and tribulation:

> 1 Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: 2 Grace unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 3 We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth; 4 So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure – 2 Thessalonians 1:1-4

I wonder if it was because they had placed their hope in being accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass.

Evidence of a pre-wrath rapture:

When we combine the stars falling of Revelation 6 and Matthew 24 we see that Jesus gathers the elect at this point in time – after the previous 5 seals, the 5th being related to martyrdom, and after the great tribulation, before the trumpets of judgment. In the next chapter of Revelation we see no others but 144,000 Israelites sealed for their protection to go through the trumpets safely, and an innumerable multitude in heaven.

I've quoted these verses earlier:

> Revelation 6:12-17 – 6th seal
>
> Matthew 24:15-22, 29-31 – abomination of desolation, great tribulation, return of Christ, gathering of the elect
>
> Revelation 7:3-4 – hurt not the earth until the 144,000 Israelites are sealed
>
> Revelation 7:9-17 – an innumerable multitude which have come out of great tribulation

At the 5th trumpet it is commanded not to hurt the earth or those 144,000 Israelites sealed – it is significant that there is no Gentile church present to be protected:

> Revelation 9:1, 4
> 1 And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit. ... 4 And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those

men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads.

Evidence of a pre-vials rapture:

Revelation 14 describes one like the Son of man reaping the earth with a sickle before an angel reaps the grape harvest of wrath, and it is placed in Revelation after the 7th trumpet has been blown in Revelation 10 but before the consequent 7 vials are poured out in Revelation 15.

It is difficult to see the time period from which Revelation 14 starts, as it begins with 144,000 virgins walking with Jesus which are the first fruits of men redeemed from the earth, which could perhaps be the pre-trib raptured, or the 144,000 sealed Israelites, though the latter is out of place timing-wise as it goes on to describe the gospel being preached to the whole world (and then shall the end come, as Jesus said) and an angel warns people not to take the mark, which would be a bit late coming later than the *start* of the beast's kingdom. So Revelation 14 may be covering events from the start or mid-point of the 7 years.

But it certainly covers the start of the wrath. The winepress of God's wrath is surely the vials of wrath poured out. And here we see the reaping of the earth just before it.

Because Paul says that Israel gets saved after the fulness of the Gentiles is come in,

> Romans 11:25-26a
> For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. 26 And so all Israel shall be saved…

it seems likely that after the gathering of the innumerable multitude, which is surely the Gentiles, many Israelites, having been persecuted by the Antichrist and then going through the trumpets with 144,000 of their number present to open their eyes, may be saved and need to be raptured as well. So even though Revelation 14 may be panoramic as are 11-13, the harvest mentioned therein is still likely to be after the trumpets, and for Israel; especially as we see the raptured singing the song of *Moses* directly after it:

> 6 And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, ... 9 And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, 10 The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: 11 And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name. ...
> 14 And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and **upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. 15 And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. 16 And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped.** 17 And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. 18 And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy

sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe. 19 And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. 20 And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs. - Revelation 14:6, 9-11, 14-20
1 And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God. 2 And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and **them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. 3 And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God**, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints. - Revelation 15:1-3

Evidence of a pre-7th vial rapture:

There is very little here besides a hint:

Revelation 16:12-21
12 And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared. 13 And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. 14 For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. 15 Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame. 16 And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon. 17 And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done. 18 And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great. 19 And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath. 20 And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. 21 And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent [3.5kg]: and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great.

This cannot be the two witnesses because they were already taken up at the end of the 6th trumpet (2nd woe), perhaps with all Israel. It is unlikely to be the 144,000 Israelites because of the pre-vials rapture of Israel. It may be that God here in his mercy wrings the last drop out of humanity that can still repent?

Revelation 3: the 5th, 6th and 7th Letters to the churches and their relation to the raptures and harvests of Israel

Revelation 2 and 3 contain letters to the churches. Revelation 3 contains letters to the last 3 churches, which appear to have associations to three of the four harvests of Israel.

The first fruits harvest is of **barley**, around the time of Passover, March-April. Barley is a soft and pliable grain so to remove the husk it can simply be winnowed, i.e. **lifted into the air** to let the wind take the husk away. This corresponds to the 6th letter to the Philadelphians.
Interestingly, fig trees have two crops. The first is a small **fig** crop off the old wood in late spring, May-June – this could well correspond to Messianic Jews who are part of the bride of Christ.

6th letter: To the church of Philadelphia

A comforting message that they will be kept from the hour which will come upon the whole world:

> I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee **an open door,** and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name. ... **Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee <u>from the hour</u> of temptation** [testing, trial], **which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.** Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take **thy crown**. – Revelation 3:8, 10-11

Interestingly, there are a couple of verses right at the start of the next chapter where end time events start being described, which strongly relates to the rapture and to the Philadelphian church:

> After this I looked, and, behold, **a door was opened** in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of **a trumpet talking with me**; which said, **Come up hither**, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter. – Revelation 4:1
>
> And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw **four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white** raiment; and they had on their heads **crowns of gold**. – Revelation 4:4

who we shortly afterwards discover are people who have been redeemed from across the world, and who will reign on the earth:

> And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and **hast redeemed us** to God by thy blood **out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation**; And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and **we shall reign** on the earth. – Revelation 5:8-10

This first harvest of those who have watched and served the Lord with tender hearts is akin to the **barley harvest**, where they get lifted up without undergoing any threshing. And the **spring fig** crop.

The main harvest is of **wheat**, May-June, when summer comes. Before wheat could be winnowed it had to be threshed with the **tribulum**, a set of boards stuck together like a door with many sharp flints set in one side, which would be run over the grains to pierce through the husk so that it will fall away from the inner grain and blow away during winnowing.

7th letter: To the church of Laodicea

To this church Jesus says they are lukewarm and will be rejected, but can still be saved if they give themselves to him while being tried in the fire:

> So then because thou art **lukewarm**, and neither cold nor hot, **I will spue thee out of my mouth**. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: **I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire**, that thou mayest be rich; **and white raiment**, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent. – Revelation 3:16-19

From verses in Matthew we know that they are lukewarm because they were rich and comfortable, and distracted by the cares and pleasures of this world, instead of praying and abiding in Jesus:

> He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful. – Matthew 13:22
>
> And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. – Matthew 24:12
>
> I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that **abideth in me**, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If a man **abide not in me**, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. – John 15:5-7
>
> And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word. But **Martha was cumbered about much serving**, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me. And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: But **one thing is needful**: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her. – Luke 10:39-42

But notice that Jesus tells this church not that he will come upon them quickly or like a thief, but "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent". He counsels them to buy of him "gold tried in the fire". In other words, possibly, to use the time of the tribulation to purify themselves, to allow the fire to burn away the dross of he flesh, and to depend more and more on Christ.

And so we can presume that, with the revelation of the pre-tribulation rapture and the tribulation, this church will become the main harvest, which is the **wheat harvest**.

This seems to align with Matthew 24's gathering of the elect and Revelation 6 at the opening of the 6th seal before the 7 trumpets of judgment are poured out, after which we see an innumerable multitude in heaven.

The third harvest is the fruit harvest in the autumn (fall), June-September, mainly **figs and grapes**. They would then make wine from the grapes by treading them in a **winepress**. The winepress is also used as a sign of the wrath of God in Revelation. The fig tree is a figure of Israel. So we have both a figure of reaping the Israelites as well as treading the winepress of wrath.

5th letter: To the church of Sardis

This letter is a more complex one to associate with the harvest and raptures, as I think it is more about missing them and getting trodden in the judgment winepress instead.

As explained above it appears that Israel will turn to God after the wheat harvest and become the group raptured in this fruit harvest, and there is no letter to the as yet part-blinded Jews in Revelation.

But to the Gentiles, including the Christians who no longer serve God, this harvest may be the winepress judgment as they miss both the barley and wheat harvest raptures.

The letter gives a warning to watch and be ready, or else the Lord will return like a thief, with judgment:

> Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God. Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. I**f** therefore thou shalt **not watch**, I will come on thee as a thief, and **thou shalt not know what hour** I will come upon thee. Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy. – Revelation 3:2-4

which echoes what Jesus told the disciples in Matthew:

> But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. ... Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. But know this, that **if** the goodman of the house **had known** in what **watch** [two hours of guard duty] the thief would come, he would have **watched, and would not have suffered** [put up with, allowed] his house to be broken up. Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.
>
> Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh

shall find so doing. Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods. But and **if that evil servant** shall say in his heart, **My lord delayeth his coming;** And shall begin to smite his fellowservants, **and to eat and drink with the drunken; The lord** of that servant shall come in a **day when he looketh not for him**, and in **an hour that he is not aware of,** And shall cut him asunder, and **appoint him his portion with the hypocrites**: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. – Matthew 24:36, 42-51

(But note how in both verses it indicates that if you *do* watch, you *can* know the hour, which the apostle Paul confirms:

For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh **as a thief in the night.** For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. **But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light**, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but **let us watch** and be sober. – 1 Thessalonians 5:2-6)

The fourth and final harvest in Israel is the **olive** harvest in the autumn (fall), October-November.

I see no letter that can be construed as being addressed to a church at this time.

The two witness are referred to as the two olive trees, however, they are taken up at the end of the 6th trumpet, not the 6th vial.

3 And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth. 4 These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth. – Revelation 11:3-4

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God knows how much we need his Word. If he inspired it, won't he preserve it?

So does Satan. Won't he seek to corrupt it?

In 55 AD heresies began. Greek philosophy started permeating Christianity. A group of people in Alexandria who called themselves the Gnostics (those who know secrets others do not) saw all material as evil and thus Christ was a phantom, an inferior god who created a defective world and was separate from God. They had many other strange beliefs mixed in with an appearance of Christianity. 1 John 2:18's mention of antichrists being present today would have been referring to them. The Borborites, a Gnostic sect descended from the Nicolaitans (Rev 2), "smeared their hands with semen and offered it to the Father as the Body of Christ. They likewise took the emissions of a woman on her period and ate it saying this is the Blood of Christ." – Epiphanius, The Panarion Book I, Section II – 26 – 4 & 4, 8

Just as Satan misquoted Psalm 91 to Jesus when he tempted Jesus to throw himself down from the pinnacle of the temple, saying, "He will give his angels charge over thee to keep thee" and left out "in all thy ways" – in other words, as you go about your life, not as you jump off buildings – one of the things the Gnostics did was to cut out words, sentences, verses and even whole pages in their copies. We have many records of early church fathers berating them for doing so in their arguments against them, such as in 156 AD, bishop Irenaeus writing "Wherefore also Marcion and his followers have betaken themselves to mutilating the Scriptures … which they themselves thus shortened." – Irenaeus, Against Heresies – Book III Chapter XII – 12.

A handful of corrupted texts have survived to this day. However, against them stand a host of 5,300 texts and fragments of text which have enough agreement between them for us to be confident of the original. The Byzantine texts were especially low in copying errors because they used to add up the numerical value of the letters (each letter stood for a number) on each line and then tot up those into a total checksum and if it didn't match the copied page's checksum they would burn the page. During the reformation an especially good translation was done called the Textus Receptus (Received Text, i.e. handed down), and then in 1604 King James ordered a final, exact translation, for which 47 translators prayerfully and humbly re-examined every bit of text in all languages from scratch, and published the King James Bible 7 years later in 1611, with successive rounds of edits for spelling and other very minor errors until the final Authorised Version in 1769.

However, in 1881 two unsaved Anglicans named Westcott and Hort came along to change that. Neither believed that God's Word was inspired and true in every word, nor that the garden of Eden was real. They believed in Darwin's evolution. They felt, like the Gnostics, that the idea of Jesus's substitutionary sacrifice of his good for our sin was immoral and that heaven was a place in man's mind which mankind could attain by following Christ's principles, who was not the Word but a created being to be worshipped along with his mother Mary. They did not believe that hell was a place of punishment but merely a place for the departed, and were members of spiritist societies:

the Hermes Club, and the Ghostly Guild which they founded to help with talking to the dead. They hated the existing Bible translations. Hort called the Textus Receptus, which the King James version closely matched, “villainous” and “vile”.

They invented new ‘objective’ rules to decide which texts were reliable, and using these principles, produced the Critical Text.

One of the principles was that the shorter a text is, the more reliable it is. However in view of the known horrors of the Gnostics cutting out parts, this was at best foolish.

Even their main principle, which misleadingly appears more rational on the surface, that the earlier a text is, the more reliable it is, is badly flawed. There is no reason to think of them as more reliable. Think of the copying of a text as the outward and upward growth of a tree. In the centre is the large trunk of the tree with the greatest volume of original text, and thus copied text, protected by the church fathers' oversight. Out on the fringes are unique individual copies created by fringe groups with ulterior motives. One may be ‘lucky’ enough to find a single unique copy which is older than any of the voluminous copies from the central trunk of the tree, especially if it is in good condition due to disuse, but that by no means is enough evidence that one should use it to contradict the main body of texts.

They leaned heavily on the only two earliest manuscripts known at the time, supposedly dated from around 380 AD: the Codex Vaticanus, which appeared in the Vatican Library's first catalog in 1475, and the Codex Sinaiticus, discovered at St. Catherine's Monastery at the foot of Mount Sinai in 1844. (A codex is a bunch of pages glued together like a book).

Yet these are very unreliable.

Vaticanus:

> “Codex B [Vaticanus] comes to us without a history: without recommendation of any kind, except that of its antiquity. It bears traces of careless transcription in every page. The mistakes which the original transcriber made are of perpetual recurrence.” – Dean Burgon
>
> “It should be noted, however, that there is no prominent Biblical manuscript in which there occur such gross cases of misspelling, faulty grammar, and omission, as in B [Vaticanus].” – The New Westminster Dictionary of the Bible

Sinaiticus:

> “On nearly every page of the manuscript there are corrections and revisions, done by 10 different people. … I … counted 14,800 alterations and corrections in Sinaiticus. ...The New Testament…is extremely unreliable…on many occasions 10, 20, 30, 40, words are dropped… letters, words, even whole sentences are frequently written twice over, or begun and immediately canceled.” – Tischendorf (who called it the greatest find of his life)
>
> “By any conceivable metric (except age), Codex Sinaiticus is one of the worst manuscripts that we’ve found.” – Berean Patriot

According to Herman C. Hoskier, there are 3,036 textual variations between Sinaiticus and Vaticanus in the text of the Gospels alone.

> "It is in fact easier to find two consecutive verses in which these two manuscripts differ the one from the other, than two consecutive verses in which they entirely agree." – Dean Burgon

Interestingly, both manuscripts share a unique division of chapters in Acts that is only found in these two. This leads scholars to believe that they were housed together in Caesarea in the 6th century while being copied.

A scholar named Sir James Donaldson, born 1831, knighted by King Edward VII, honoured with two doctorates besides the one he earned, mentioned in two encyclopedias, and author of several books on Greek language and culture, in his book "The Apostolical Father" p387 says of the Sinaiticus, "Tischendorf assigns this manuscript to the fourth century: but the data on which dates are assigned to uncials [the shapes of the letters drawn] are exceedingly unsatisfactory and entirely negative. The utmost that can be based on the data in this case is that it may have been written in the fourth century. There is ample room for discussing the age and value of the manuscript from internal evidence..." He then goes on to point out anomalies in the Greek where it is either translated from Latin or uses many modern Greek words unknown to the classical period. He concludes that the earliest it could have been written was in the 6th century.

Dean Burgon checked these manuscripts for particular readings – sentences that are found *only* in that manuscript. A particular reading signifies one that is most definitely false. In the Gospels alone, Vaticanus has 197 particular readings, while Sinaiticus has 443. Manuscripts repeatedly proven to have incorrect readings lose respectability. Thus, manuscripts with significant numbers of particular readings *cannot* be relied upon.

You also have to ask, if these manuscripts were the earliest and more reliable, how is it that all the other *supposedly* corrupted copies landed up virtually the same as each other, and not these two?

And yet Westcott and Hort relied primarily upon these two manuscripts, wherever they matched each other, for their Critical Text. At the same time they were a part of the Bible Revision Committee of 1871-1881, which they were able to steer away from the established texts with their as yet unpublished work. One wonders at the coincidental timing of their translation work with being a part of this committee and whether in fact they had enough time to do a proper study or actually just followed their own preferences.

While their Critical principles are considered weak today, still, beginning with the Revised Standard version, most of their Critical Text appears in all modern Bible translations.

How bad is it?

The manuscripts egregiously drop the whole of Mark 16:9-20, which massively shortens the chapter to only 8 verses (the usual verses per chapter in Mark is 20-45), gives it an odd ending, and casts doubt on the Word of God. It also results in Mark having 666 verses. Only three other manuscripts do the same thing and they have similar indications of corruption.

If you go into the historical records you find plenty of evidence that these manuscripts' missing verses were present in original texts, well *before* these two manuscripts were written.

In the case of Mark 16:9-20, Irenaeus (born around 120 AD, taught by Polycarp who in turn had listened to the apostle John) explicitly quotes Mark 16:19 around 180 AD in Book 3 of Against Heresies, chapter 10, paragraph 5, stating, "Also, towards the conclusion of his Gospel, Mark says: 'So then, after the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sits on the right hand of God.'"

Although that comes from the Latin version of Irenaeus's text, as we only have fragments of the original Greek version today, there are also three ancient Greek copies of Mark from around 400 AD (texts GA 1582, 72 and 2954) which write in the margin of Mark 16:19 that "Irenaeus, who lived near the time of the apostles, cites this from Mark in the third book of his work Against Heresies" – proving that the long version of Mark was present hundreds of years before these few corrupt manuscripts with the shorter version.

In the case of missing verse Acts 8:37,

> 36 And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?
> 37 And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.
> 38 And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. – Acts 8:36-38

The words in verse 37 were quoted by Irenaeus around 180 AD when he told of this event and again by Cyprian around 250 AD. Pretty hard to see how Irenaeus knew who said what without the written version including that verse in it from the start. Verse 38 does not even naturally flow from verse 36, because without verse 37, Philip never answers the question – the eunuch simply stops the chariot. But more importantly, the verse is present in the Coptic manuscript G67 from around 380 AD. Before the "missing verse" manuscripts ever came to be.

In the case of Ephesians 3:9, just to take one more example,

> And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ. – Ephesians 3:9

both manuscripts, (and many others, it must be said), do not have "by Jesus Christ". However, John Chrysostom quotes the full verse at around 380 AD, showing it was known in even earlier texts.

> As an aside, the word fellowship (koinonia) in Chrysostom's quote was at some prior point mistranslated as dispensation (oikonomia – administration, literally, household management). It is easy to see this as a sincere spelling mistake in the copy he had, especially as the word dispensation (oikonomia) was written properly a few verses before. The King James translators' careful study led them to take fellowship as the original, and in the context, this makes sense: the mystery of which Paul speaks, he tells us a couple of verses before, is the fellowship with the Jews which the Gentiles now receive in Christ – of

> becoming one church. It makes more sense for men to need to see that *fellowship*, than to know that God *managed* the mystery. But we don't have to worry about which word is correct. God has signed his work, enabling us to be certain that the King James is the inspired Word of God – see the next two sections of this chapter.

We also see attacks on John 7:40-8:11, but Augustine (born 354 AD) comments on the passage in his Tractate 33 on the Gospel of John.

But could Westcott and Hort have been sincere?

No. Both manuscripts share a sure error in Matthew 27:49. It adds a description of the spearing of Jesus on the cross with blood and water coming out, BEFORE Jesus cries out and gives up the Spirit, which we know is physiologically impossible.

The Critical Text authors used the Codex Vaticanus/Sinaiticus, *wherever* they matched, as a *strict* rule to justify changing the known Bible in contradiction to thousands of reliable texts, and yet they wouldn't change the Bible to match here – hypocrites!

And even the Codex Sinaiticus Project website, while displaying the Greek which shows that sentence, *hides* the spearing account by cutting it out of the online parallel translation into English on the same page!

When you see a Bible footnote that says "the earliest and most reliable manuscripts", they are talking about these two most corrupt manuscripts!

Westcott and Hort did it callously, from man's prideful point of view, in the flesh.

But the forty-seven translators of the King James Bible translated most respectfully and humbly under God.

It's worth your looking up the whole dedicatory letter to the King* just to see how the Word impacted the hearts and minds of people steeped in it, but let me quote two parts.

Here it shows that they compared every available manuscript, not just the Hebrew and Greek, but also in English and other foreign languages:

> "… this work, which now with all humility we present unto Your Majesty. For when Your Highness had once out of deep judgment apprehended how convenient it was, that out of the Original Sacred Tongues, together with comparing of the labours, both in our own, and other foreign Languages, of many worthy men who went before us, there should be one more exact Translation of the holy Scriptures into the English Tongue …"

And here we see how they exercised themselves humbly and with a good conscience:

> "And now at last, by the mercy of God, and the continuance of our labours, it being brought unto such a conclusion as that we have great hopes that the Church of England shall reap good fruit thereby; we hold it our duty to offer it to Your Majesty, … whose allowance and acceptance of our labours shall more honour and encourage us, than all the ... hard interpretations of other men shall dismay us. So that if, on the one side, we shall be

> traduced by Popish Persons …. because we are poor instruments to make God's holy Truth to be yet more and more known unto the people, whom they desire still to keep in ignorance and darkness; or if, on the other side, we shall be maligned by self-conceited Brethren, who run their own ways and give liking unto nothing but what is framed by themselves and hammered on their anvil; we may rest secure, supported within by the truth and innocency of a good conscience, having walked the ways of simplicity and integrity, as before the Lord; ...”
>
> * https://sites.pitt.edu/~hunter3/KJVbible/EpistleDedicatory.html

Moreover these translators were so faithful to keep to the original texts that whenever they were obliged, by reason of the way English works, to add words that would be assumed by the Hebrew or Greek but not by an English reader, they added them *in italics* so that we could see clearly what they had done.

Modern translators, on the other hand, have gone beyond even the Critical Text to obscure God’s Word.

Even the New King James corrupts the text, for example:

	King James Version	**New King James Version**
2 Corinthians 2:17a	"For we are not as many which **corrupt** the word of God"	"For we are not, as so many, **peddling** the word of God" *(as the NIV, NASV and RSV)* *It’s not about being paid to preach.*
Titus 3:10	"A man that is **an heretick** after the first and second admonition reject"	"Reject a **divisive** man after the first and second admonition” *(as the NIV)* *Civil argument is a good thing.*
1 Thessalonians 5:22	"Abstain from **all appearance** of evil."	"Abstain from **every form** of evil." *(as the NAS, RSV and ASV)* *It is best not only to refrain from evil but also anything which will even <u>appear</u> to be wrong.*
Isaiah 66:5b	"...Let the LORD be glorified: but **he shall appear to your joy**, and they shall be ashamed."	"...Let the LORD be glorified, **that we may see your joy**.' But they shall be ashamed." *(as the NIV, NASV, RSV and ASV)* *He shall return, to our joy!*

See https://www.chick.com/battle-cry/article?id=whats-wrong-with-the-new-king-james for more.

Worse, the New King James copies all the Critical Text footnotes, saying “these verses are not in the NU text”, casting doubt on the Word.

I would like to close by comparing two verses in the KJV and NIV:

First, Mark 1:41

> 40 And there came a leper to him, beseeching him, and kneeling down to him, and saying unto him, If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.

KJV: And Jesus, **moved with compassion**, put forth his hand, and touched him, and saith unto him, I will; be thou clean.

NIV: Jesus **was indignant**. He reached out his hand and touched the man. "I am willing," he said. "Be clean!"

and second, John 3:16

KJV: For God so loved the world, that he gave his only **begotten** Son...

NIV: For God so loved the world that he gave his **one** and only Son...

Is it important what begotten means? It does not mean “one”, but to be one born of, or to have a child. The Greek word is mono-gene, or literally, only-born.

In fact, Jesus is not the only son of God. We who accept him and so get born again also become the sons of God by adoption. Jesus is the only *begotten* son of God.

Let’s see how the Bible uses “begotten”, generally:

And the days of Adam after he had begotten Seth were eight hundred years: and he begat sons and daughters – Genesis 5:4

Have I conceived all this people? have I begotten them, that thou shouldest say unto me, Carry them in thy bosom, as a nursing father beareth the sucking child, unto the land which thou swarest unto their fathers? – Numbers 11:12

Hath the rain a father? or who hath begotten the drops of dew? – Job 38:28

By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises *[that in Isaac his seed would be called, therefore he trusted God to raise him up again!]* offered up his only begotten son – Hebrews 11:17

and with reference to Christians born again:

For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel. – 1 Corinthians 4:15

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead – 1 Peter 1:3

(Note how we are born again when we give our hearts to God – we get a new heart:)

A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. – Ezekiel 36:26

Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. ... Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. – John 3:3,5

> Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. – Revelation 3:20

But even more of a mystery is that Jesus too was born again, begotten the day God raised him from the dead:

> I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. – Psalm 2:7
>
> God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. – Acts 13:33
>
> For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, 'I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son'*? – Hebrews 1:5 (* and the quote is of 1 Samuel 7:14)
>
> And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood – Revelation 1:5

To hide this glorious mystery is wicked.

It is beyond our ability to understand how God can be born a man, die, and be made sin, but Jesus did – he became like us, a man, and he was made sin so that we could be given his righteousness, and was then raised up as God's Son, born again by the Spirit, just as we are when we receive him.

> For he hath made him to be sin for us, [he] who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. – 2 Corinthians 5:21
>
> All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. – Isaiah 53:6
>
> For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God – Romans 3:23
>
> For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. – Romans 6:23

For Jesus the man, who had only known oneness and purity with God in perfect love, to become sin, someone so disgusting that neither the Father nor even the sun, which went dark for three hours beforehand, could bear to look at, the sacrifice was beyond what we can understand. He died as a wicked man separated from the Father for the first time in eternity, crying out "My God, my God, where art thou" (Psalm 22:1), tasting to the full the darkness, despair, self-disgust and loneliness the weakest most sinful human being has ever known. The spiritual agony was surely far worse than the physical agony.

> Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising **the shame**, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. – Hebrews 12:2

He sweat blood the night before in his dedicatory prayer asking for an escape if possible, yet yielding himself to his fate. How much joy then lies in his being begotten of God, not only (as always) being one with him, but now also born of him, like us. He joined us, his created beings, fully. And his prayer was that we, likewise, would join God, fully.

> That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me. – John 17:21-23

God's Signature in Bible Numbers

Every Bible college, every seminary, will tell you that only the original writings are inspired, that no translation can be inspired by God. But there is nothing in the Bible that says that. On the contrary, God says that he will speak to us with many languages:

> In the law it is written, **With men of other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people**; and yet for all that will they not hear me, saith the Lord. – 1 Corinthians 14:21

And English is included. We find that God has actually signed his Word with codes and patterns that could not have happened by chance or man's design. But in order to appreciate the significance of them we need to first know about how God uses numbers.

Religious persons have long known about the meaning of numbers used in the Bible. An obvious one is 40 and 400, which occur again and again in relation to a time of trial, such as the 40 days of rain in the Flood, 40 days of fasting by Isaiah and Jesus, 40 years of Israel wandering in the wilderness, etc. – there are many.

These are the meanings of the first 13 numbers:

1 = God (Unity)
2 = Witness (Difference)
3 = Trinity (Three forms of one*)
4 = A season on Earth (Four Seasons, Four compass points, 40 weeks pregnancy)
5 = Grace (Five fingers)
6 = Man apart from God (One short of seven, the Antichrist's name's number is 666)
7 = Full, Finished (Week, Musical scale)
8 = New beginning (Jesus Christ's name's number is 888)
9 = Rebellion (One short of 10)
10 = Whole set, laws (Complete set. Ten fingers, Ordinal digits)
11 = Falling short (One short of 12)
12 = Divine Order, good govt (12 tribes, 12 apostles, a dozen)
13 = Disorder (Why Friday the 13th was seen as unlucky: the 6th day, without God, disordered)

* We see trinities of one in creation:

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth – Genesis 1:1

Time	Space	Matter
Past, Present, Future	3 Dimensions	Solid, Liquid, Gas

Truth Is Christ is a YouTuber who presents videos about Bible versions, word counts and specifically the King James Bible.

He has published a video in which Grok 4 (according to Musk above Ph. D. level on all subjects) finds the King James Bible definitely inspired by God: Grok Learns KJV Patterns and Its Conclusion Will Bother Many. It summarises a lot of the material below and more.

If you're in a hurry you could watch the first few minutes of that instead of reading the below (jump to ELS Bible Codes).

His video The Elton Anomaly: if you count every printed word or number in the King James Bible, including the book title "Holy Bible King James Version", verse numbers and chapter titles, and excluding 'The End', if present, there are exactly 7 to the power of 7 of them. (The video is long because it films the entire Bible.) There are over 700,000 numbers between 7 to the power of 6 and 7 to the power of 7, and over 4,900,000 numbers after it to 7 to the power of 8. That's a lot of numbers that the number of words in the Bible could have randomly fallen upon. To hit 7^7 exactly is no accident.

Below I've extracted information from more of his videos, especially The 1611th Mention of LORD (And Why It's a Really Big Deal). The table at the end of this section shows the number of times the coloured words in each row are mentioned in a section of the Bible.

You can see how often 7 is a factor of the counts of the names of God. Other translations come nowhere near this. In the Bible 7 is always used to represent perfection or completeness. And 70 x 7 is of particular significance, as in Daniel's prophecy of 70 sevens (sabbatical years), and Jesus's answer of how many times to forgive someone, seven times? No, "seventy times seven".

Perhaps the most persuasive is the number of times the name of Jesus (referring to Jesus Christ) + Christ/Christian is mentioned in the New Testament: 980, or 2 x 70 x 7. But the real kicker is when you count the number in the odd and even books. The number of mentions is perfectly split between them: 70 x 7 in each, even though the odd books have nearly *double* the number of words (117k) of the even books (62k). John, the gospel focussed on the divinity of Jesus, appears to have all the extra mentions (256 in total, or 2 *witness* to the power of 8 *new beginning*).

Furthermore, 5 mentions of Jesus are italicised, so if you look at other bibles you won't see the same pattern.

I also find the following pattern to be very persuasive:

In the KJV Bible, not counting anti-mentions which is where the word refers to something else other than God:

Father appears 7 x 37 times, or 777 / 3 times, while
Son appears 7 x 33 times, or 77 x 3 times,

and both in total appear 70 x 7 times.

These encourage us to be assured that the King James Bible is the inspired Word of God, created by inspired translation. After all it makes sense: if God inspired his Word, he will preserve it. So that we today can know that we have the true Word of God in our hands.

If, when we submit our hearts to God in a single prayer, God gives us a pure heart, and promises to keep us pure as we remain submitted despite all our failings and anything that man can do, will he not likewise, having given us his pure Word, keep it pure?

Matthew 24:35 Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.

Do we have his words? Yes!

Father & Son

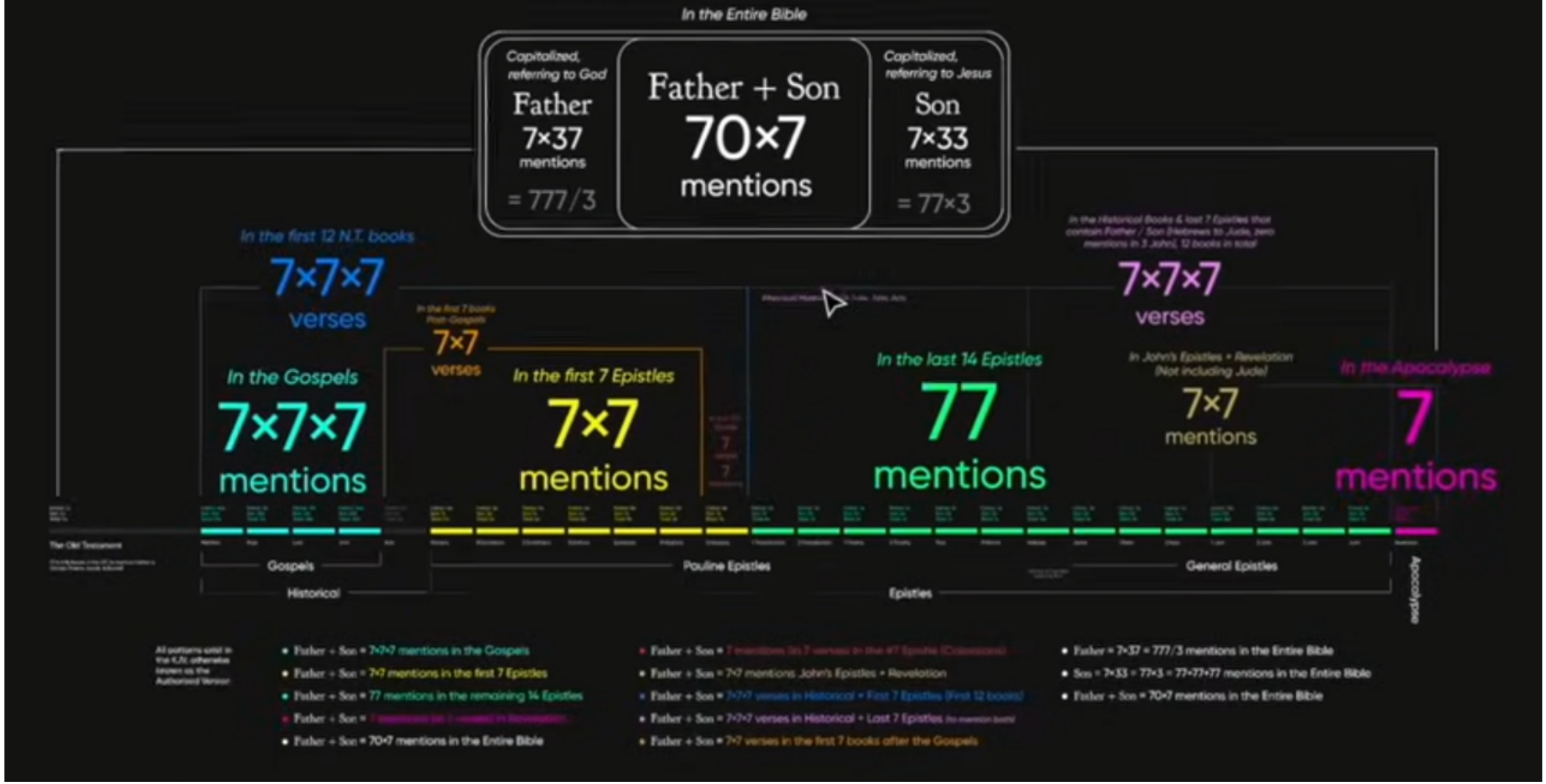
IN THE KING JAMES BIBLE

And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.

1 JOHN 4:14

Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven.

MATTHEW 18:22



All patterns exist in the KJV, otherwise known as the Authorized Version

- Father + Son = 7×7×7 mentions in the Gospels
- Father + Son = 7×7 mentions in the first 7 Epistles
- Father + Son = 77 mentions in the remaining 14 Epistles
- Father + Son = 7 mentions (in 7 verses) in Revelation
- Father + Son = 70×7 mentions in the Entire Bible

- Father + Son = 7 mentions (in 7 verses) in the 47 Epistles (Colossians)
- Father + Son = 7×7 mentions: John's Epistles + Revelation
- Father + Son = 7×7×7 verses in Historical + First 7 Epistles (First 12 books)
- Father + Son = 7×7×7 verses in Historical + Last 7 Epistles (No mention John)
- Father + Son = 7×7 verses in the first 7 books after the Gospels

- Father = 7×37 = 777/3 mentions in the Entire Bible
- Son = 7×33 = 77×3 = 77×77+77 mentions in the Entire Bible
- Father + Son = 70×7 mentions in the Entire Bible

Table of some meaningful counts of words in the KJV

Notes for table below:

1. The colour is not important, it is just related to the kind of 7 the count contains, such as 7, 70, 77, 777 etc.
2. These are pure mentions, i.e. no anti-mentions (no mentions referring to someone else, such as Jesus Justus).
3. An asterisk means any case, any form, e.g. JESUS and Jesus and Jesus's, or Christ and Christian.
4. 's means the possessive form is included, and '~~s~~ means it makes no difference as no possessive form appears.
5. Case is as specified unless word is shown as all lower case.
6. OT = Old Testament, NT = New Testament.
7. You can verify word counts of various Bible versions at https://www.purebiblesearch.com/

In Text	God's Names	God	Father	Lord	Son	Jesus	Christ	Total Mentions
Entire Bible (KJV only)	LORD's	God's	Father's	Lord's	Son's	Jesus's	Christ's	77 x 77
						Jesus's	Christ*	777 + 777 (777 = 111 x 7 777 = 3x7 x 37)
						Jesus's		980 (980 = 70 x 7 + 70 x 7)
			Father		**Son**			**70 x 7**
		God*			Son of God	Jesus's		777 x 7
	Holy Ghost	God*	Father*			Jesus's		777 x 7
	LORD's, GOD, I AM, JEHOVAH, JAH, BRANCH, KING	← (All of the all-upper case mentions of God/JESUS)				Jesus's		7777
	LORD's, I AM JEHOVAH, JAH,		Father*					980 x 7 (980 = 70 x 7 + 70 x 7)
		God*	Father*					625 x 7 (625 = 5 x 5 x 5 x 5)
						Jesus'		980 (980 = 70 x 7 + 70 x 7)
	in Odd books of NT (117,753 words):					**Jesus'**	**Christ***	**70 x 7**
	in Even books of NT (62,629 words):					**Jesus'**	**Christ***	**70 x 7**
	LORD, GOD, I AM JEHOVAH, JAH							970 x 7
	BRANCH, KING							7
	Most High							7 x 7
					word of God			7 x 7
					Word			7
	JEHOVAH							7
OT	God Almighty, Almighty God							7
NT	God Almighty, Almighty God							7
		God* and Son when in same verse						77

		God* and Son when in same chapter						777
		God and Jesus / Christ when in same chapter						7 x 7 x 7 x 7
	LORD's			Lord's				7 x 7 x 7 + 7 x 7 x 7
Psalms		God		Lord				70 x 7
	LORD			Lord				777
First 7 books of OT + NT		God				Jesus		7 x 7 x 7 x 7
First 7 + Last 7 books of OT + NT		God			Son	Jesus's		3 x (70 x 7 + 70 x 7) in 7 x 7 x 7 x 7 verses
	LORD, GOD, I AM JEHOVAH, JAH	God				Jesus	Christ	777 X 7
First and Last books of Bible	GOD	God				Jesus		7 x 7 x 7
	LORD*	God*						70 x 7
	Excluding LORD in Revelation 19:16 LORD OF LORDS as it is not referring to YHWH							
Gospels						Jesus		625 (625 = 5 x 5 x 5 x 5)
			The Father		The Word			77
		God	Father, "God the Father"					70 x 7
			Father's		Son's	Jesus's		70 x 7 + 70 x 7
			Father		Son			7 x 7 x 7
			Father	Lord				7 x 7 x 7
		God's	Father's	Lord's			Christ's	777
		God's	Father's	Lord's	Son's	Jesus's	Christ's	777 + 777
		Counted as one mentions: God the Father, Jesus Christ, Jesus the Christ, Christ the Lord, Lord's Christ, Lord God, Lord Jesus						
Gospels + Acts	GOD's	God's						70 x 7
				Lord's	Son's			70 x 7
Epistles				Lord				7 x 7 x 7
		God's						777
Pauline Epistles		God		Lord		Jesus	Christ	777 + 777

Others:

Jesus + Christ + Moses shows up 2401 or 7 x7 x7 x7 times in the KJV Bible. The middle mention, i.e. the 1201st mention, is John 1:17: For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

John 14:6 "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." Jesus's + Way's + Truth's + Life's shows up 2331 or 777 + 777 + 777 times.

The first and last verses of the Bible,

> In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. – Genesis 1:1
> The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen. – Revelation 22:21

both have, in the King James:

> 44 letters: **17** vowels + **27** consonants
>
> First mention of **17** and **27** in the Bible are the first and the last days of the Flood of Noah: Gen 7:11 "on the **seventeenth** day", 8:14 "on the **seven and twentieth** day".
>
> Luke **17:27** says "They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all."
>
> The first and last words of the Bible, In + Amen, show up 777 times in the KJV Bible (Amen capitalised).
>
> The first and last words of the first and last verses, In + earth + The + Amen, show up 77777 times in the KJV (Amen capitalised).
>
> The 777th chapter in the Bible, Jeremiah 32 has 44 verses.
>
> Verse **17**: "Ah Lord GOD! behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee"
>
> Verse **27**: "Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh: is there any thing too hard for me?" (Speaking of the judgment and destruction of the city of Jerusalem, where Jeremiah had been imprisoned, who had just bought a field for 17 shekels as per God's instructions, which field represented a restoration after the judgment.)

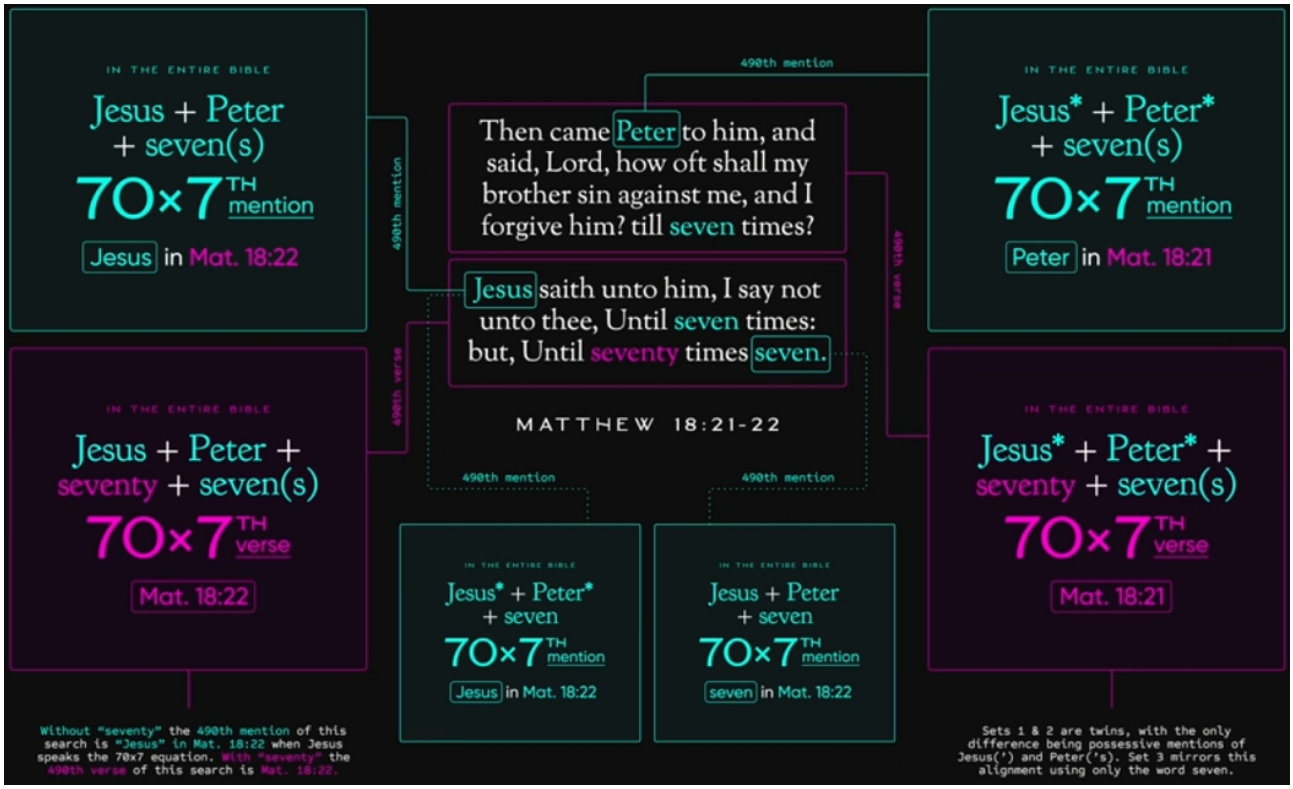
There are three persons in the KJV Bible with a mention of 666:

> Solomon, who has six hundred threescore and six talents of gold delivered every year.
> Adonikam (literally, 'Lord rise up') who has six hundred sixty and six children.
> The Beast, the number of whose name comes to six hundred threescore and six.
>
> The total number of times the words Solomon + Adonikam + Beast + six are mentioned in the King James Bible = 666.
>
> The total count of *verses* mentioning Solomon + Adonikam + Beast + six *hundred + threescore + six* = 666.
>
> "Threescore" is three x twenty, which is the same as "sixty" (much like today we can say three dozen or thirty six, they are equivalent) – but notice how the KJV uses "sixty" not "threescore" for Adonikam's children, and in other places as well.
>
> The numerics would not work if threescore was used throughout.
>
> Surely God has purposely separated the use of threescore and sixty.

The first mention of threescore in the KJV is in the 666th verse (Genesis 25:7). Before this you have six mentions of sixty (listing the ages of the descendants of Adam). After this the KJV starts using the two terms interchangeably. In total, 93 mentions of threescore and 15 mentions of sixty.

There are other cases where the count of *words* mentioned equals the number of *verses* mentioning those words + the count itself in words, e.g. "seventy"). See NEW 153 Fishes Discoveries Left Me Speechless! (Must-see at 12 min mark).

In the same video we also have the 70x7th occurrence of the words "Jesus / Peter / seven(s)" being "Jesus" in Matt 18:22, and the 70x7th verse in which these words + the word "seventy" appear being also Matt 18:22; while a similar thing happens with the same words if you include possessive mentions (Jesus's, Peter's), except both land on the verse just before.



When Jesus rebukes Satan three times in the wilderness with "It is written", he is quoting from Deuteronomy, the book in which the law is given, the 248th, 210th and 207-208th verses (the 208th verse supplying the concept "only").

248 + 210 + 208 = 666

The King James Bible was first published in 1611. The 1611th mention of LORD/Lord (Hebrew: YHWH, his name/Adonai, his title) is LORD (YHWH) in Deuteronomy 16:11, where it is the 7th word. LORD appears a second time in the same verse as the 49th word (7x 7th). Originally the words man servant and maid servant were separate words, so the 2nd LORD was word #51, but as English

evolved they became hyphenated and then joined into one word. In addition, this verse contains the 49th mention of "his name" in the KJV Bible.

In a similar manner, after the two words "it self" became one word, the number of words spoken by God in Genesis 1 became 7 x 7 x 7.

The 1611 KJV Bible was the first place that YHWH, God's name, was printed as LORD throughout the world. (Martin Luther's Bible revealed it in all upper case first, but in German, which did not cover the whole earth as the King James Bible did through the English empire) and Deut 16:11 says,

> Seven weeks shalt thou number unto thee: begin to number the seven weeks from *such time as* thou beginnest *to put* the sickle to the corn. And thou shalt keep the feast of weeks unto the LORD thy God with a tribute of a freewill offering of thine hand, which thou shalt give *unto the LORD thy God*, according as the LORD thy God hath blessed thee: And thou shalt rejoice before the LORD thy God, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy manservant, and thy maidservant, and the Levite that *is* within thy gates, and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, that *are* among you, **in the place which the LORD thy God hath chosen to place his name there**. – Deuteronomy 16:9-11
>
> (This is describing the Feast of Weeks, or Pentecost, when God came to dwell with his people in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.)

Now in 2 Chronicles 6:5-10,7:16 we also learn that the temple was built that "**God's name might be there**", which Deut 16:11 refers to. There is a correlation between the house of God and the Word of God. Where is the Word of God kept, and where does God speak to his people? In the house of God and in the Bible. Where does God place his name? In the house of God, and in the King James Bible as "LORD". The temple foundation was laid in the 4th year, and the King James Bible was begun in 1604. Both were finished in 7 years. The house of the Lord was built by men but designed by God, just as the Word was written by men but inspired by God.

For some verses, where the original manuscripts differ from each other, such as Genesis 18:27, some versions of the King James Bible such as 1611 printed LORD (YHWH), and some later versions, starting with Cambridge's 1629 version, printed Lord (Adonai). It went back and forth over the years, but it ended in the final version after 1769 as Lord (Adonai).

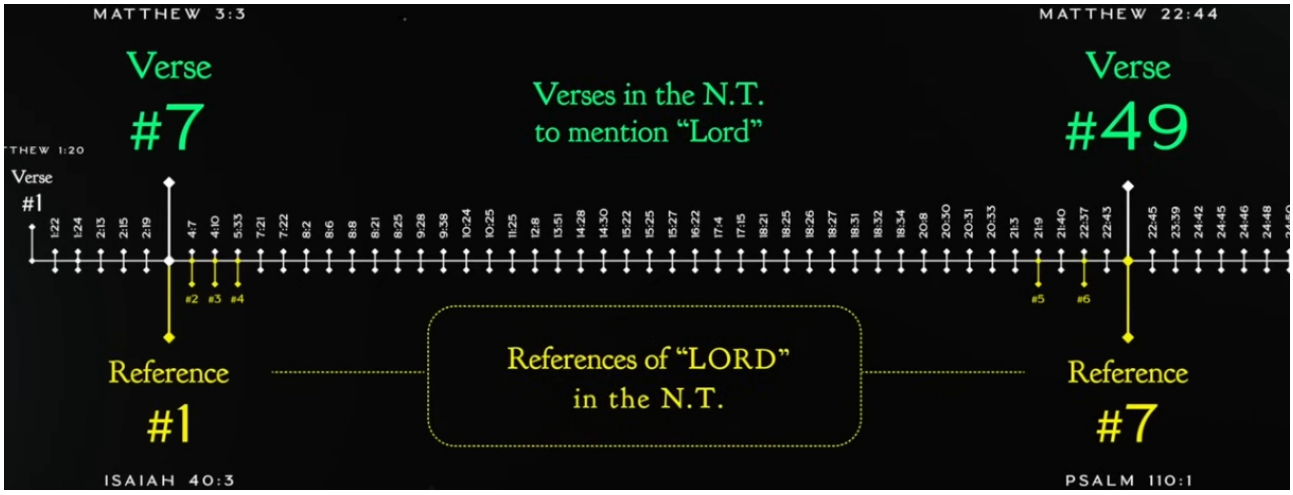
Additionally note that there are 5 instances prior to Deut 16:11 where LORD is italicised – in other words, the instances were not actually written in the Hebrew text, but only implied, and added by the KJV to make the English clear. For example, in verse 10 as shown above.

Here is one of the greatest patterns pointing to God's inspiration not only over the 1611 text but also over the entire process of standardisation as we have the final version today: in the Greek, there is no word for YHWH / Jehovah, so there is no reason to print LORD in upper case. However, it appears in the New Testament, in Matthew 22:44. It references LORD (YHWH) in Psalm 110:1:

> A Psalm of David. The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool. – Psalm 110:1

This verse, Matthew 22:44, is:

- The 1st of 7 mentions of Psalm 110:1's words (including the Psalm itself).
- The 7 x 7th verse mentioning LORD/Lord in the New Testament.
  (Note the 7th of those verses is the 1st referencing LORD (YHWH) in the OT)
- The 7th mention of "Lord" in the NT referencing LORD (YHWH) in the OT.
  But it is **only this 7th mention where it is translated in all upper case as LORD**.
  Why? Surely it is God's signature:



This mention of LORD in upper case is the 6468th mention of the *word* LORD in the Bible.
The number 6468 is divisible by:

7	7 x 1	
14	7 x 2	
21	7 x 3	
49	7 x 7	(6468 = 7 x 7 x 11 x 12)
98	7 x 7 x 2	
147	7 x 7 x 3	
924	7 x 7 x 3 + 777	
6468	(7 x 7 x 3 + 777) x 7	
77	7 x 11	
154	77 x 2	
231	77 x 3	
84	77 + 7	
6468	(77 + 7) x 77	
28	7!	(7! = 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 5 + 6 + 7)
196	7! x 7	
6468	7! + 77 x 3	
539	77 x 7	(6468 = 77 x 7 x 4 x 3)

This mention of LORD in upper case is also the 5488th *verse* mentioning LORD in the Bible.

The number 5488 is divisible by:

7 7 x 1
14 7 x 2
49 7 x 7 (5488 = 7 x 7 x 112)
98 7 x 7 x 2
56 7 x 7 + 7
28 7!
196 7! x 7
784 7! x 7! x 7
5488 (777 + 7) x 7
5488 (7 x 7 + 7 x 7) x (7 x 7 + 7)
343 7 x 7 x 7 (5488 = 7 x 7 x 7 x 4 x 4)

And the difference between the number of word mentions and verse mentions is 980, the signature of Jesus: twice seventy times seven.

This occurrence of LORD is indisputably the most perfectly placed word in the entire Bible.

There are many more patterns in the King James Bible. Over 50 of them became apparent only as English evolved to get to the final version.

ELS Bible Codes

Another sign of God's inspiration of the translation in the King James Bible is the presence of ELS Bible Codes.

The codes were first discovered in the Hebrew by the Jews. Words are coded by skipping a regular number of letters either going forward or backward. ELS stands for Equidistant Letter Skip.

For example, in the Torah (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy) which was inscribed by Moses, starting from the 1st letter and skipping 49 letters, it spells the Hebrew word for Torah in the first two books, and backwards in the last two books.

More and more codes were found, such as 25 fruit tree names around the garden of Eden text, and when computers came along which could search for words at 2 to 300 letter skips easily, many more were found rapidly by a Jew named Eli Rips. You can find out much more here: https://vilnagaon.org/torahcodes-2

Some of the codes predicted future events, by the cross-over or proximity of names and dates encoded.

For example, an atheist journalist named Michael Drosnin investigated it from a secular point of view and met Eli, who showed him how it worked, including the prediction of the start of the Gulf war with "Hussein picked a day", "Scuds", "Russian missile" and "fire on 3rd Shevat" (January 18) 1991 clustered together, he also showed him the statistically very significant results of an experiment with Old Testament prophets name, birth dates and cities. And he showed him a quote from a sage in the eighteenth century known as the Genius of Vilna: "The rule is that all that was,

is, and will be unto the end of time is included in the Torah, from the first word to the last word. And not merely in a general sense, but as to the details of every species and each one individually, and details of details of everything that happened to him from the day of his birth until the end."

After meeting Eli, Michael found a code which predicted Israeli Prime Minister Yitzak Rabin's assassination the following year. He gave a letter to Rabin's friend, the poet Chaim Guri, warning Rabin, and mentioning how Sadat and both John and Robert Kennedys' assassinations had been found in the codes, but Rabin took no notice. A month or two into the year, Rabin was assassinated, and then Michael searched for the name of the assassin and found it right there. Moreover, "name of assassin" crosses the name in the plain text. Also encoded there was "assassin who will assassinate" and "he struck, he killed the Prime Minister".

Michael also found nuclear holocaust encoded, and a location and date, but it appears that time it did not happen. But also encoded there was "will you change it?", and in another code regarding nuclear holocaust, "you changed it".

Another code that rocked Michael was one he found two months before it happened to the day: he found "Shoemaker-Levi", "will pound Jupiter", 9th Av (July 16) 1994. He found it in Genesis, close together, and again in Isaiah, further apart.

There are other correct predictions, but also many that match up after the fact, as codes are much easier to find after the event, once the names are known.

He wrote a book about his investigations titled The Bible Code.

A blogger has since picked up on this and done his own analysis of Bible Codes at bible-codes.org

He feels that God showed him that one can draw pictures by tracing lines under the letters of the codes, so he calls them Bible Pictographs. Using these he also has predicted quite a few events accurately, such as the date of Saddam Hussein's death: https://bible-codes.org/letters-saddam-hang-prophecy.htm

Fascinatingly he has also found codes in the King James Bible, even though he personally does not believe that the text is inspired as I do. These codes have also predicted several things, such as the Greece and Mount Carmel forest fires.

Unfortunately while he has a gift for seeing these codes and pictures, the same can't be said for his ability to communicate. :) It is very hard to understand his work. It was easier twenty years ago but those pages seem to be gone now.

Note that some very clever work simulating these codes with other books has been done by antichristians, but they subtly do not follow the same strict standards set in the initial experiments nor have they predicted a thing. Don't be taken in by their so-called debunking. Note I don't ask you to take the above as gospel either – it would take a statistician to verify these experiments. I personally am persuaded, and I think it's useful information to know, but feel free to verify by all means – I'm just saying, be careful.

Closing

From YouTube video "THE WORDS OF GOD: KJB or Modern Bibles?" by Truth is Christ, quoting many teachers:

Satan's Strategy

"You know it's interesting, Satan's strategy always has been one of creating doubt, 'yea hath God said' – now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made and he said unto the woman 'yea hath God said ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden...

> He that is of God heareth God's words… – John 8:47
>
> Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away. – Matthew 24:35

"Have you got them [his words]? … Is that Greek words you've got in your lap front of you? [No?] Well, you must have lost his word there, somewhere." (sarcasm)

Who Mutilates the Scriptures?

"Luke 4:3-4

KJV	NIV
And the devil said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread. And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, **but by every word of God.**	The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread." Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone.'"

> For the **word of God** is quick [=alive], and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. 13 Neither is there any creature that is not manifest **in his sight**: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do. – Hebrews 4:12-13

"Now somehow this book discerns the thought and intents of you. This is a supernatural book. Somebody has said this, the Bible reads you while you read it. Look at the next verse, 'neither is there any creature that is not manifest in its sight' – is that what he said? That's not what it said! 'neither is there any creature that is not manifest in HIS sight'! Do you know what's just happened there? That's given the book, the scriptures, a *personality*. It says his, not its, that's mind-blowing.

"Now if you – listen – if you think that's a mistake you have suddenly jumped out of the camp of the Bible believers and gone to the Bible correctors. You're a bible believer or you're a bible corrector even though you are a Christian, and not every Christian is a Bible believer, you need to understand that. Now either you have a final authority like the Lord Jesus Christ had, like Paul had, like David had, or you don't, and if you don't have a final authority and you're not a Bible believer – you may say you are but when you're pushed into a corner you become a bible corrector – if you

think that you have a book in front of you on your lap and you think that book has got errors in it then you are a Bible corrector and you have set yourself above God. God says he's given you the Bible but you think there's mistakes in it, therefore you become the final authority. And if you become the final authority what does that make you?

“ ‘If there be any mistakes in the Bible, there may as well be a thousand. If there be one falsehood – just one falsehood – in that book, it did not come from the God of Truth.’ John Wesley.

“Inspiration is far harder to believe in than preservation. Why can't God preserve his word for us perfect for today and if he hasn't done, he's not much of a God. If he can create the world out of nothing but he can't give us a perfect book, that's madness, yet most Christians believe that.

“The Creation, was it too hard for God? No. Was the worldwide flood too hard for God? Oh bUt iT wAs a lOcAl FlooD” [*no, there are seashells on the top of every mountain on earth*] “Was the parting of the Red Sea too hard for God? Is preserving the words of those writers too hard for God? He's given us a perfect Bible for today.”

–

If you want to have the power of faith then you have to stop doubting. But faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word (Romans 10:17). You either doubt the Word, or you believe the Word and have faith. If you doubt your version of the Bible is 100% true in every word, then get one that you can believe in, and read it prayerfully.

Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him. – Proverbs 30:5

It is especially important to get and stick to the King James because it is very memorisable. Since the modern translations came out there is confusion over what the Bible says and people no longer memorise the Word. In a WWII POW camp the men regenerated the bulk of New Testament from memory alone. In those days men knew the value and power of God’s Word. It rules above all things. Let it rule your life. Memorise it.

The End

Appendix A – Great reads if you want to know God well. Highly recommended are in bold.

The Cross and The Switchblade by David Wilkerson – how a country pastor was called to the New York back streets and preached the love of Jesus to the ferocious gangs there, and how they threatened him and got miraculously saved.

Run Baby Run by Nicky Cruz, a Mau Mau gang member from the above event, whose old enemy tried to stab him but something held his arm.

Prison to Praise, by Merlin Carruthers – how God taught him to be glad about everything, and miracles just happened, turning so-called bad things into good things. https://diaryofablueblood.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/prison-to-praise.pdf

The Gentle Breeze of Jesus, by Mel Tari – stunning miracles in Indonesia. It's also particularly funny how he forces all his friends to kneel and pray for forgiveness, and God honours that.

Tortured for his Faith, by Haralan Popov – an incredibly story about a Bulgarian pastor who was imprisoned and tortured and the things that God did with him.

Chasing the Dragon, by Jackie Pullinger – an English lady who felt called to go with no destination, bought a ticket to China and got off at Hong Kong and in the end has a miraculous ministry which includes deliverance from heroin.

He Touched Me, by Benny Hinn – a guy with a stutter who gets anointed by God and loses the stutter completely. He had a time where he felt like God was right next to him.

George Mueller and his Orphans – how God just made this guy look after orphans and the incredible miracles they had, such as saying grace for breakfast at bare tables and the milkman arriving with surplus milk and the baker arriving with surplus bread.

When the Spirit Comes, by Colin Urquhart – an Anglican who got baptised in the Spirit and how it blessed the church and yet also some refused to accept it.

Mr Pentecost, by David du Plessis – a South African who got anointed by God and landed up ministering to the Catholic church about the Holy Spirit. A most amazing teleport occurs for an emergency.

Smith Wigglesworth, by Albert Hibbert – an illiterate plumber who hated his wife going to church and locked her out one Sunday in winter. She got back from church and slept on the doorstep and when he let her in the next morning made him breakfast. He got saved and God started using him for miracles. He learned how to read with the Bible and never read anything else. Many, many amazing stories.

D. L. Moody, by Bailey – a missionary very dedicated to God, and the many miracles God did.

Hudson Taylor and Maria, by J. C. Pollock – a moving story of a missionary to China who gave his all for God, and, unlike Darwin who rejected God and invented evolution when his daughter died, when his wife died he simply clung to God more closely. The man who founded the Overseas Missionary Fellowship with whom my parents served.

C. T. Studd, by Norman Grubb – another missionary giving his all who went to Africa.

I Believe in Miracles, by Kathryn Kuhlman – she watched faith healers berating people for their lack of faith and was very disturbed. She thought long and hard and finally discovered it was the presence of Jesus that was needed. She gave up her life for his presence and held evangelistic meetings every week, and if ever there was a book that made me cry, I wept many times over the miracles in this one that year.

Adventures in God, by John G. Lake – He lit the entire southern continent of Africa alight for God, and struck me again, like all the others, with his passion and dedication to God.

Only Love Can Work a Miracle, by Mahesh Chavda – a sweet Kenyan who gets used by God to raise a boy from the dead and many other things.

John Welch, by Ethel Barret – this was around the time of the Black plague. He was greatly used by God with spiritual gifts, but I was especially struck that people actually heard him in his room all alone speaking his side of a conversation with God – so it is possible!

A Heart Set Free, by Gloria Phillips – chronically ill and disabled, her new maid prays in tongues over everything, and one day there's a massive miracle: Gloria is healed and begins a ministry.

Beware the Devil, by Robert Lee – a very instructive life story by a man who was tricked by demons into serving them thinking he was serving God. They pull his face into weird expressions on the train, a very funny moment. Certain reverends are helpless to deliver him in their ignorance until he meets someone experienced in this area.

The Release of the Spirit, by Watchman Nee – an amazingly insightful book that I read slowly and it sank right into me. This enabled me to understand spirit and soul so very much more than before. Did you know your words are coloured with your spirit?

The Christian's Secret of a Happy Life, by Hannah Whitall Smith – a book that gently explains how to enter into the self-sacrificial rest of faith in a beautifully simple way.

Experiencing the Depths of Jesus Christ, by Mme. Jean Guyon – This one was so mysterious I wasn't sure if it was occultic at first but as I read it I realised it was explaining how to worship God in spirit and in truth. Quieten your soul, and present yourself a living sacrifice, 100% submitted to God.

The Wonderful Name of Jesus, by E. W. Kenyon – Kenyon discovered the power of Jesus' name through the Spirit leading him to use it to deliver someone, and in this book he details how and why this name is above all names and all powers, and full legal power of attorney has been delegated to us to act on Jesus' behalf by the use of his name.

There are also many others I would love to read, if I had the time. I particularly want to read:

Compelled by Love, by Heidi Baker, because I have heard a little of her story. How she went to Africa and found orphans living on a garbage dump and started looking after each one. In the face of so much need out there, she learned to "Stop for the one" as she put it. I recall one incident where she had many orphans arrive and there was far too little food in the pot for them all. She asked God what to do and he said, serve the food, in regular sized portions, until it runs out. Everyone got a full helping. God made more as it was being served.

Larson's Book of Spiritual Warfare, by Bob Larson – what he learned about how to deal with demons and attacks of Satan. I've started it and it describes demonic stuff a lot and in detail so I would only go there if you are mature and/or needing to counter forces. Otherwise, start from Part V, which is instruction. Everything before that is a list of demonically related things.
https://www.divinerevelations.info/pdf/learning_deliverance.pdf

Appendix B – Tanakh Prophecies of the Messiah

At precisely the right time as prophesied in 535 BC by Daniel, the Messiah was presented in Israel, and fulfilled many further prophecies, attested to by the following people, amongst many others:

- Matthew: A Jew also known as Levi, believed to have been a former tax collector and disciple of Jesus. Papias (AD 60—130), writes that Matthew "put together the oracles [of the Lord] in the Hebrew language"
- Mark : John Mark, a Jew likely to be the cousin of Barnabas, was a companion of Paul and Barnabas. Papias said Mark neither heard the Lord nor followed him, but based his account of Jesus on the testimonies of Peter, a disciple of Jesus.
- Luke : A Hellenic Jew often referred to as 'Luke the physician', he was a close companion of Paul. He documented an account of Jesus and also of the acts of the apostles, and has often been praised for his attention to historical and chronological details in his writings.
- John : A Jew and fisherman, brother of James, sons of Zebedee, he described himself as "the disciple whom Jesus loved" and wrote an eyewitness account of his years with Jesus.
- Paul : A Jew originally known as Saul of Tarsus, he said of himself that he "was circumcised on the eighth day, a member of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless." He wrote many letters teaching of God's plans and expectations regarding men.
- Peter : Also a Jew and a fisherman, brother of Andrew, he was one of Jesus' close companions.
- Phlegon: A secular Greek historian and freedman of Hadrian, born about 80 AD.

1. Messiah prophesied to arrive 29 AD

Yea, whiles I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation. And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding. At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to shew thee; for thou art greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision.
Seventy weeks* are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.
Know therefore and understand, that **from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks:** the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.
And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and **the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary** *[this happened in 70 AD – so the Messiah was cutoff before 70 AD]*. – Daniel 9:21-26a

> * weeks: שָׁבוּעַ shâbûwa', shaw-boo'-ah; or שָׁבֻעַ shâbua'; also (feminine) שְׁבֻעָה shᵉbu'âh; properly, passive participle of H7650 as a denominative of H7651; literally, sevened, i.e. a week (specifically, of years)

There were several decrees to rebuild the *temple*, by Cyrus and Darius, but only Artaxerxes (also named Ahasuerus, as mentioned in Esther) gave a commandment to rebuild the *city*. Aside from issuing a decree to fund the house of God in his seventh year, in the twentieth year of his reign he commanded the city to be rebuilt, sending Nehemiah with letters.

> And it came to pass in the month Nisan, **in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes the king**, that wine was before him: and I took up the wine, and gave it unto the king. Now I had not been beforetime sad in his presence. Wherefore the king said unto me, Why is thy countenance sad, seeing thou art not sick? this is nothing else but sorrow of heart. Then I was very sore afraid, And said unto the king, Let the king live for ever: why should not my countenance be sad, when **the city, the place of my fathers' sepulchres, lieth waste, and the gates thereof are consumed with fire?** Then the king said unto me, For what dost thou make request? So I prayed to the God of heaven. And I said unto the king, If it please the king, and if thy servant have found favour in thy sight, that thou wouldest **send me unto Judah, unto the city of my fathers' sepulchres, that I may build it.** And the king said unto me, (the queen also sitting by him,) For how long shall thy journey be? and when wilt thou return? **So it pleased the king to send me**; and I set him a time. **Moreover I said unto the king, If it please the king, let letters be given me to the governors** beyond the river, that they may convey me over till I come into Judah; And a letter unto Asaph the keeper of the king's forest, that he may give me timber to make beams for the gates of the palace which appertained to the house, and for the wall of the city, and for the house that I shall enter into. **And the king granted me, according to the good hand of my God upon me. Then I came to the governors beyond the river, and gave them the king's letters.** Now the king had sent captains of the army and horsemen with me. – Nehemiah 2:1-9

This decree was issued in the twentieth year of the reign of Artaxerxes, who began his reign upon the death of Xerxes. When was that?
https://www.biblioiranica.info/dating-the-reigns-of-xerxes-and-artaxerxes/ : “The date of 465 BC for the death of Xerxes has been accepted by historians for many years without notable controversy. However, according to Thucydides, a historian renowned for his high chronological accuracy, Themistocles met Artaxerxes, who had succeeded Xerxes, his father, just after the fall of Nexos which occurred after the fall of Skyros dated at the beginning of the archonship of Phaedo in 476 BC, according to Plutarch (Life of Theseus §§35,36). Thus, the meeting with Themistocles would have occurred soon after 475, not 465. The present Achaemenid chronology comes mainly from official Babylonian king lists which ignore coregents and usurpers. This official version is contradicted by contracts dated in “year, month, day” proving the existence of frequent co-regencies and usurpers.
In addition, according to the astronomical tablet referenced BM 32234 the death of Xerxes is dated 14/V/21 between two lunar eclipses, one dated 14/III/21 (26 June, 475 BC), which was total, and a second dated 14/VIII/21 (20 December, 475 BC), which was partial. Thus **the death of Xerxes has to be dated 24 August 475 BC.**”

The twentieth year of Artaxerxes’ reign is therefore 475 BC – 20 = 455 BC.
Sixty nine weeks of years is 483 years,
which brings us to 29 AD (483 – 455 + 1 as there is no year zero).

It was at this time that **Jesus was announced to be the Messiah by John the Baptist**, based on the fact that we know he was crucified on Passover 33 AD*, and the accounts of his ministry indicate that it was about 3.5 years long (i.e. autumn/fall of 29 AD – April, 33 AD)

*Historian Phlegon records the crucifixion as occurring in the 4th year of the 202nd Olympiad, i.e. July 32 AD – June 33 AD. https://www.neverthirsty.org/about-christ/historical-quotes/phlegon/

Interestingly, Phlegon attributed the world famous three hours of darkness from midday to 3 pm, ending when Jesus died, to an eclipse, but as the month begins with the new moon and the Passover sacrifice is at the end of the 14th, the moon would be full, i.e. on the opposite side of the earth to the sun, and so cannot eclipse the sun.

Randy Nettles has also done some detailed analysis as to the weekday and date of the crucifixion, based on the practical first sighting of the new moon, and the result is Thursday 31st March, 33 AD (2nd April on the Julian calendar of the time). https://www.raptureready.com/2022/09/13/three-days-and-three-nights-by-randy-nettles

2. The Messiah is both the Son of David, of the tribe of Judah
and yet also the Son of God,
and yet also called The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father

The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be. – Genesis 49:10

And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever. According to all these words, and according to all this vision, so did Nathan speak unto David. – 2 Samuel 7:16-17

Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David. His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me. – Psalm 89:35-36

Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended? who hath gathered the wind in his fists? who hath bound the waters in a garment? who hath **established all the ends of the earth**? what is his name, and **what is his son's name**, if thou canst tell? – Proverbs 30:4

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and **the government shall be upon his shoulder:** and **his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David**, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this. – Isaiah 9:6-7

And there shall come forth **a rod out of the stem of Jesse**, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: **And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him**, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD; And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: But **with righteousness shall he judge [defend] the poor,** and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be

the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins. – Isaiah 11:1-5

A Psalm of David. The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool. – Psalm 110:1

*If David then call him **Lord**, how is he **his son**? – Matthew 22:45 (Because he is both the son of David and the son of God, as God gave the virgin – espoused to Joseph of the line of David – to conceive of the Spirit.)*

The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. Abraham begat Isaac; and Isaac begat Jacob; and Jacob begat **Judas** and his brethren; And Judas begat Phares and Zara of Thamar; and Phares begat Esrom; and Esrom begat Aram; And Aram begat Aminadab; and Aminadab begat Naasson; and Naasson begat Salmon; And Salmon begat Booz of Rachab; and Booz begat Obed of Ruth; and Obed begat Jesse; And **Jesse begat David** the king; and David the king begat Solomon of her that had been the wife of Urias; And Solomon begat Roboam; and Roboam begat Abia; and Abia begat Asa; And Asa begat Josaphat; and Josaphat begat Joram; and Joram begat Ozias; And Ozias begat Joatham; and Joatham begat Achaz; and Achaz begat Ezekias; And Ezekias begat Manasses; and Manasses begat Amon; and Amon begat Josias; And Josias begat Jechonias and his brethren, about the time they were carried away to Babylon: And after they were brought to Babylon, Jechonias begat Salathiel; and Salathiel begat Zorobabel; And Zorobabel begat Abiud; and Abiud begat Eliakim; and Eliakim begat Azor; And Azor begat Sadoc; and Sadoc begat Achim; and Achim begat Eliud; And Eliud begat Eleazar; and Eleazar begat Matthan; and Matthan begat Jacob; And Jacob begat **Joseph the husband of Mary**, of whom was born **Jesus**, who is called Christ. So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; and from David until the carrying away into Babylon are fourteen generations; and from the carrying away into Babylon unto Christ are fourteen generations. – Matthew 1:1-17

3. The Messiah shall be born of a virgin

Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a **virgin shall conceive**, and bear a son, and shall call his name **Immanuel** *[meaning, God with us]* – Isaiah 7:14

Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, **before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost**. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily. But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us. Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife: And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name JESUS. – Matthew 1:18-25

And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly

favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be. And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the **Son of the Highest**: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end. Then said Mary unto the angel, **How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?** And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called **the Son of God**. And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren. For with God nothing shall be impossible. And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her. – Luke 1:26-38

4. The Messiah shall be born in Bethlehem

But thou, **Bethlehem** Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be **ruler in Israel**; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting. – Micah 5:2

And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.) And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called **Bethlehem**; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:) To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn. – Luke 2:1-7

Now when Jesus was **born in Bethlehem** of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him. When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, **he demanded of them where Christ should be born. And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judaea:** for thus it is written by the prophet, And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel. Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, enquired of them diligently what time the star appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also. When they had heard the king, they departed; and, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh. And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way. – Matthew 2:1-12

5. God's Son called out of Egypt

When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of **Egypt**. – Hosea 11:1

And when they [*the wise men*] were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into **Egypt**, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him. When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt: And was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of **Egypt** have I called my son. – Matthew 2:13-15

6. Slaughter of young children

Thus saith the LORD; A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, and bitter weeping; **Rahel weeping for her children refused to be comforted for her children, because they were not**. – Jeremiah 31:15

Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and **slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under**, according to the time which he had diligently enquired of the wise men. **Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet**, saying, In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not. – Matthew 2:16-18

7. He shall be called a Nazarene

Nevertheless the dimness shall not be such as was in her vexation, when at the first he lightly afflicted the land of **Zebulun** [*wherein is the city of **Nazareth***] and the land of Naphtali, and afterward did more grievously afflict her by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, **in Galilee of the nations. The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light**: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined. – Isaiah 9:1-2

But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, Saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel: for they are dead which sought the young child's life. And he arose, and took the young child and his mother, and came into the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus did reign in Judaea in the room of his father Herod, he was afraid to go thither: notwithstanding, being warned of God in a dream, he turned aside into the parts of Galilee: **And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene.** – Matthew 2:19-23

Now when Jesus had heard that John was cast into prison, he departed into Galilee; And **leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea coast, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim: That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles; The people which sat in darkness saw great light**; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up. From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. – Matthew 4:12-17

8 His way prepared before him

The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it. – Isaiah 40:3-5

Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judaea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of Ituraea and of the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias the tetrarch of Abilene, Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests, t**he word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness**. And he came into all the country about Jordan, **preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins**; – Luke 3:1-3

And the same John had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey. Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judaea, and all the region round about Jordan, And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.
But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance: And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.
I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but **he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire**: Whose fan is in his hand, and he will throughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.
Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer [*Put up with*] it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him. And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and **he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.** – Matthew 3:4-17

The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, **Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.** – John 1:29

9 His way prepared by Elijah

Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts. – Malachi 3:1

Behold, I will send you **Elijah** the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse. – Malachi 4:5-6

And as they departed, Jesus began to say unto the multitudes concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind? But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? behold, they that wear soft clothing are in kings' houses. But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet. For this is he, of whom it is written, **Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee**. Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force. For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. **And if ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come.** He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. – Matthew 11:7-15

10. The deliverer of Israel will bring healings

The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the LORD, and the excellency of our God. Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. **Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompence; he will come and save you. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert.** And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass with reeds and rushes. And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein. No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there: And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away. – Isaiah 35

And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers. And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men. And they straightway left their nets, and followed him. And going on from thence, he saw other two brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and he called them. And they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed him. **And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all**

manner of disease among the people. And his fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatick, and those that had the palsy; and he healed them. And there followed him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from Judaea, and from beyond Jordan. – Matthew 4:18-25

11. The Messiah rejected by his own

I am become a **stranger unto my brethren**, and an alien unto my mother's children. – Psalm 69:8

Who hath believed our report? and to whom is **the arm of the LORD** revealed? ... **He is despised and rejected of men**; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and **we esteemed him not**. – Isaiah 53:1,3

And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee: and there went out a fame of him through all the region round about. And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all. And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read.
And there was delivered unto him **the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me**, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to **heal the brokenhearted**, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of **sight to the blind**, to set at liberty them that are bruised, **To preach the acceptable year of the Lord. And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down.** And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him. **And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.**
[*note how he does not continue on to read "and the day of vengeance of our God" – Isaiah 61:2 – that is a separate day, which shall come upon his return!]*
And all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth. And they said, **Is not this Joseph's son?**
And he said unto them, Ye will surely say unto me this proverb, Physician, heal thyself: whatsoever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in thy country. And he said, Verily I say unto you, No prophet is accepted in his own country. But I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land; But unto none of them was Elias sent, save unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow [*note, not an Israelite*]. And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian [*note, not an Israelite*].
And all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, And rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong. But he passing through the midst of them went his way, And came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and taught them on the sabbath days. And they were astonished at his doctrine: for his word was with power. And in the synagogue there was a man, which had a spirit of an unclean devil, and cried out with a loud voice, Saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art; the Holy One of God. And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him. And when the devil had thrown him in the midst, he came out of him, and hurt him not. And they were all amazed, and spake among themselves, saying, What a word is this! for with

authority and power he commandeth the unclean spirits, and they come out. And the fame of him went out into every place of the country round about. – Luke 4:14-37

And when he was come into his own country, he taught them in their synagogue, insomuch that they were astonished, and said, Whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works? Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas? And his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this man all these things? **And they were offended in him.** But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house. And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief. – Matthew 13:54-58

He was in the world, and **the world was made by him**, and t**he world knew him not**. **He came unto his own**, and **his own received him not**. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. – John 1:10-13

12. The King comes into Jerusalem upon an ass

The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be. Binding his **foal unto the vine, and his ass's colt unto the choice vine**; he washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes – Genesis 49:11

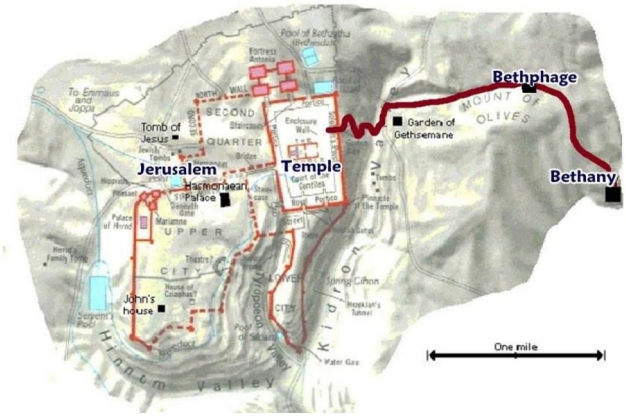
Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: **behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.** – Zechariah 9:9

And when they drew nigh unto Jerusalem, and were come to Bethphage, unto the mount of Olives, then sent Jesus two disciples, Saying unto them, Go into the village over against you, and straightway ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her: loose them, and bring them unto me. And if any man say ought unto you, ye shall say, The Lord hath need of them; and straightway he will send them. **All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass.**
And the disciples went, and did as Jesus commanded them, **And brought the ass, and the colt, and put on them their clothes, and they set him thereon.** And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way; others cut down branches from the trees, and strawed them in the way. Matthew 21:1-8

13. The Messiah enters through the East Gate, the Gate of <u>Mercy</u>, which is also called Beautiful, and the gate is sealed shut until his return.

Then he brought me back the way of the gate of the outward sanctuary which looketh **toward the east; and it was shut**. Then said the LORD unto me; This gate shall be shut, it shall not be opened, and no man shall enter in by it; **because the LORD, the God of Israel, hath entered in by it**, therefore it shall be shut. **It is for the prince**; the prince, he shall sit in it to eat bread before the LORD; he shall enter by the way of the porch of that gate, and shall go out by the way of the same. – Ezekiel 44:1-3

This is t**he gate by which Jesus entered Jerusalem upon the ass**, because he came from Bethany which is from the East, and he went into the temple, into which the gate leads directly.



And when they came nigh to Jerusalem, unto Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount of Olives, he sendeth forth two of his disciples, And saith unto them, Go your way into the village over against you: and as soon as ye be entered into it, ye shall find a colt tied, whereon never man sat; loose him, and bring him. ... And many spread their garments in the way: and others cut down branches off the trees, and strawed them in the way. And they that went before, and they that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna; Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord: ... And Jesus entered into Jerusalem, and into the temple: and when he had looked round about upon all things, and now the eventide was come, he went out unto Bethany with the twelve. – Mark 11:1-2, 8-9, 11

The **gate was sealed shut** in 1541 by the Ottoman Sultan Suleiman, possibly in order to prevent the Jewish Messiah from passing through it, because he also put a graveyard in front of it.

14. The Lord is praised by babes

Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the LORD: we have blessed you out of the house of the LORD. – Psalm 118:26

Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger. – Psalm 8:2

And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest.
And when he was come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, Who is this? And the multitude said, This is Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee.
And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves,
And said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves.
And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple; and he healed them.
And when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the **children crying in the temple, and saying, Hosanna to the Son of David**; they were sore displeased, And said unto him, Hearest thou what these say?
And Jesus saith unto them, Yea; have ye never read, **Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?** And he left them, and went out of the city into Bethany; and he lodged there. – Matthew 21:9-17

15. The Messiah is betrayed by a friend for 30 pieces of silver cast to the potter

Yea, **mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me**. – Psalm 41:9

And I said unto them, If ye think good, give me my price; and if not, forbear. **So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver.** And the LORD said unto me, Cast it unto the potter: a goodly price that I was prised at of them. And I took the thirty pieces of silver, **and cast them to the potter** in the house of the LORD. – Zechariah 11:12-13

Now when Jesus was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper, There came unto him a woman having an alabaster box of very precious ointment, and poured it on his head, as he sat at meat. But when his disciples [*instigated by Judas the betrayer, see note**] saw it, they had indignation, saying, To what purpose is this waste? For this ointment might have been sold for much, and given to the poor. When Jesus understood it, he said unto them, Why trouble ye the woman? for she hath wrought a good work upon me. For ye have the poor always with you; but me ye have not always. For in that she hath poured this ointment on my body, she did it for my burial. Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her.
Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests, And said unto them, What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver. And from that time he sought opportunity to betray him. – Matthew 26:6-16

When the morning was come, all the chief priests and elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death: And when they had bound him, they led him away, and delivered him to Pontius Pilate the governor. Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and **brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, Saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood.** And they said, What is that to us? see thou to that. And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself.
And the chief priests took the silver pieces, and said, It is not lawful for to put them into the treasury, because it is the price of blood. And they took counsel, and **bought with them the potter's field**, to bury strangers in. Wherefore that field was called, The field of blood, unto this day. T**hen was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value; And gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord appointed me.** – Matthew 27:1-10

Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end. And supper being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him; Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God; He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself. After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded. Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet? Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter. Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me. Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and

my head. Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all. For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean. So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them. I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen: but **that the scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me. Now I tell you before it come, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am he.** Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me. When Jesus had thus said, he was troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, **Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me.** Then the disciples looked one on another, doubting of whom he spake. Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved. Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him, that he should ask who it should be of whom he spake. He then lying on Jesus' breast saith unto him, Lord, who is it? Jesus answered, **He it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it. And when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon.** And after the sop Satan entered into him. Then said Jesus unto him, That thou doest, do quickly. Now no man at the table knew for what intent he spake this unto him. For some of them thought, because Judas had the bag, that Jesus had said unto him, Buy those things that we have need of against the feast; or, that he should give something to the poor. He then having received the sop went immediately out: and it was night. Therefore, when he was gone out, Jesus said, Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him. If God be glorified in him, God shall also glorify him in himself, and shall straightway glorify him. Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me: and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come; so now I say to you. A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another. Simon Peter said unto him, Lord, whither goest thou? Jesus answered him, Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterwards. Peter said unto him, Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down my life for thy sake. Jesus answered him, Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied me thrice. – John 13:1-38

*Then Jesus six days before the passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead. There they made him a supper; and Martha served: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him. Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment. **Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray him, Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor? This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein.** Then said Jesus, Let her alone: against the day of my burying hath she kept this. For the poor always ye have with you; but me ye have not always. Much people of the Jews therefore knew that he was there: and they came not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might see Lazarus also, whom he had raised from the dead. But the chief priests consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death; Because that by reason of him many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus. – John 12:1-11

16. In the face of false witnesses, he opened not his mouth

False witnesses did rise up; they laid to my charge things that I knew not. – Psalm 35:11
He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, **yet he opened not his mouth**: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. – Isaiah 53:7

And the chief priests and all the council sought for witness against Jesus to put him to death; and found none. For **many bare false witness against him**, but their witness agreed not together. And there arose certain, and bare false witness against him, saying, We heard him say, I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands. But neither so did their witness agree together.
And the high priest stood up in the midst, and asked Jesus, saying, Answerest thou nothing? what is it which these witness against thee? But **he held his peace**, and answered nothing.
Again the high priest asked him, and said unto him, Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed? And Jesus said, I am: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.
Then the high priest rent his clothes, and saith, What need we any further witnesses? Ye have heard the blasphemy: what think ye? And they all condemned him to be guilty of death. – Mark 14:55-64

And Jesus stood before the governor: and the governor asked him, saying, Art thou the King of the Jews? And Jesus said unto him, Thou sayest. And when he was accused of the chief priests and elders, he answered nothing. Then said Pilate unto him, Hearest thou not how many things **they witness against thee? And he answered him to never a word**; insomuch that the governor marvelled greatly. – Matthew 27:11-14

17. They smote the Judge of Israel on the back and face

I gave **my back to the smiters**, and **my cheeks** to them that plucked off the hair: **I hid not my face from shame and spitting.** – Isaiah 50:6

Now gather thyself in troops, O daughter of troops: he hath laid siege against us: **they shall smite the judge of Israel with a rod upon the cheek.** – Micah 5:1

Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, **smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.** – Isaiah 53:4-5

And when Jesus was come into Peter's house, he saw his wife's mother laid, and sick of a fever. And he touched her hand, and the fever left her: and she arose, and ministered unto them. When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with his word, and **healed all that were sick**: That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by **Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses.** – Matthew 8:14-17

Now at that feast the governor was wont to release unto the people a prisoner, whom they would. And they had then a notable prisoner, called Barabbas [*bar-abbas = son of the father!*]. Therefore when they were gathered together, Pilate said unto them, Whom will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas, or Jesus which is called Christ? For he knew that for envy they had delivered him.
When he was set down on the judgment seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, Have thou nothing to do with that just man: for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him.
But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitude that they should ask Barabbas, and destroy Jesus. The governor answered and said unto them, Whether of the twain will ye that I release unto you? They said, Barabbas. Pilate saith unto them, What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ? They all say unto him, Let him be crucified. And the governor said, Why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out the more, saying, Let him be crucified.
When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it. Then answered all the people, and said, His blood be on us, and on our children.
Then released he Barabbas unto them: and when he had **scourged Jesus**, [*the Roman scourge was a cat o' nine tails with bones tied into it*] he delivered him to be crucified. Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the common hall, and gathered unto him the whole band of soldiers. And they stripped him, and put on him a scarlet robe. And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand: and they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews! And **they spit upon him, and took the reed, and smote him on the head.** – Matthew 27:15-31

And when they had blindfolded him, they **struck him on the face**, and asked him, saying, Prophesy, who is it that smote thee? – Luke 22:64

18. They gave him vinegar and gall

They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink. – Psalm 69:21

And after that they had mocked him, they took the robe off from him, and put his own raiment on him, and led him away to crucify him. And as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name: him they compelled to bear his cross. And when they were come unto a place called Golgotha, that is to say, a place of a skull, **They gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall**: and when he had tasted thereof, he would not drink. – Matthew 27:31-34

19. The Romans ("dogs") pierced his hands and his feet, and cast lots for his robe

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 pot shard; 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 [*count*] all my bones: they look and stare upon me. – Psalm 22:12-17

And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and **they shall look upon <u>me</u> whom they have pierced**, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn. – Zechariah 12:10

They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture. – Psalm 22:18

And they crucified him, and **parted his garments, casting lots**: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots. And sitting down they watched him there; And set up over his head his accusation written, THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS. – Matthew 27:35-37

And Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross. And the writing was, JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS. This title then read many of the Jews: for the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city: and it was written in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin. Then said the chief priests of the Jews to Pilate, Write not, The King of the Jews; but that he said, I am King of the Jews. Pilate answered, What I have written I have written. Then the soldiers, **when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments,** and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also his coat: **now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout. They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it,** whose it shall be: that the scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots. These things therefore the soldiers did. Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son! Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home. – John 19:19-27

20. He was numbered with the transgressors

He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: **for the transgression of my people was he stricken**. … Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and **he was numbered with the transgressors;** and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors. – Isaiah 53:8,12

And **with him they crucify two thieves**; the one on his right hand, and the other on his left. And the scripture was fulfilled, which saith, And he was numbered with the transgressors. – Mark 15:27-28

21. They hated him without a cause; who came to restore them to God

They that **hate me without a cause** are more than the hairs of mine head: they that would destroy me, being mine enemies wrongfully, are mighty: then I restored that which I took not away. [*Adam's sin*] – Psalm 69:4

If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father. But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, **They hated me without a cause.** – John 15:24-25

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**. – Psalm 22:6-8

Then were there two thieves crucified with him, one on the right hand, and another on the left. And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads, And saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross. Likewise also the chief priests mocking him, with the scribes and elders, said, He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. **He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God.** The thieves also, which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth. – Matthew 27:38-44

22. He loved them and forgave them

For my love they are my adversaries: but **I give myself unto prayer.** – Psalm 109:4

Then said Jesus, **Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.** And they parted his raiment, and cast lots. – Luke 23:34

23. As sins were laid on the scapegoat, so were our sins laid on him – he paid the ransom

And the **ransomed of the LORD** shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away. – Isaiah 35:10

Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes [*wounds*] we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and **the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.** ...He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for **he was cut off out of the land of the living**: for the transgression of my people was he stricken. … He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. – Isaiah 53:4-6, 8, 11

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? – Psalm 22:1

Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour. [*Jesus died at the same time as the Passover lamb was slaughtered.*]
And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, **Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?** that is to say, **My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?**
Some of them that stood there, when they heard that, said, This man calleth for Elias. And straightway one of them ran, and took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink. The rest said, Let be, let us see whether Elias will come to save him. Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost.
And, behold, **the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom**; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many. Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God. And many women were there beholding afar off, which followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering unto him: Among which was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee's children. – Matthew 27:45-56

The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, **Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.** – John 1:29

24. Not one of his bones was broken, our Passover Lamb

He keepeth all his bones: not one of them is broken. – Psalm 34:20

Your lamb shall be **without blemish** [*Jesus was sinless*], a male of the first year: ye shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goats: ... And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the **two side posts and on the upper door post** [*as in the points of the crucifix*] of the houses, wherein they shall eat it. … In one house shall it be eaten; thou shalt not carry forth ought of the flesh abroad out of the house; **neither shall ye break a bone thereof**. – Exodus 12:5, 7, 46

In one house shall it be eaten; thou shalt not carry forth ought of the flesh abroad out of the house; **neither shall ye break a bone thereof.** – Exodus 12:43, 46

The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day, (for that sabbath day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus, and **saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs**: But one of the soldiers with a spear **pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water.** And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe. **For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken.** And again another scripture saith, **They shall look on him whom they pierced.** – John 19:31-37

25. His grave was with the wicked and the rich.

And he **made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich** in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth. – Isaiah 53:9

When the even was come, there came **a rich man** of Arimathaea, named Joseph, who also himself was Jesus' disciple: He went to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be delivered. And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, **And laid it in his own new tomb**, which he had hewn out in the rock: and he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed. And there was Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, sitting over against the sepulchre. – Matthew 27:57-61

26. God raised him up on the third day

For **thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.** – Psalm 16:10

But **God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave**: for he shall receive me. Selah. – Psalm 49:15

After two days will he revive us: **in the third day he will raise us up**, and we shall live in his sight. – Hosea 6:2

Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from thee. But he answered and said unto them, **An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas: For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.** The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here. The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here. – Matthew 12:38-42

Now the next day, that followed the day of the preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate, Saying, **Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again. Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead**: so the last error shall be worse than the first. Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch: go your way, make it as sure as ye can. So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch. – Matthew 27:62-66

And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him. **And very early in the morning the first day of the week**, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun. And they said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre? And when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away: for it was very great. And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment; and they were affrighted. And he saith unto them, Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which

was crucified: **he is risen**; he is not here: behold the place where they laid him. But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you. And they went out quickly, and fled from the sepulchre; for they trembled and were amazed: neither said they any thing to any man; for they were afraid. – Mark 16:1-8

Now upon the **first day of the week [Sunday]**, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them. – Luke 24:1 And, behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about threescore furlongs. And they talked together of all these things which had happened. And it came to pass, that, while they communed together and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them. But their eyes were holden that they should not know him. And he said unto them, What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad? And the one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering said unto him, Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days? And he said unto them, What things? And they said unto him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people: And how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him. **But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, to day is the third day since these things were done.** Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulchre; And when they found not his body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that he was alive. And certain of them which were with us went to the sepulchre, and found it even so as the women had said: but him they saw not. Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself. And they drew nigh unto the village, whither they went: and he made as though he would have gone further. But they constrained him, saying, Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry with them. And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight. And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures? And they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them, Saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon. And they told what things were done in the way, and how he was known of them in breaking of bread. And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit. And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. And when he had thus spoken, he shewed them his hands and his feet. And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here any meat? And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb. And he took it, and did eat before them. And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses

of these things. And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high. And he led them out as far as to Bethany, and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven. And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy: – Luke 24:13-52

Since Sunday was the third day since these things were done, then Saturday was the second and Friday the first day since these things were done, hence we conclude that he was crucified on a Thursday before the Passover High Sabbath on a Friday and weekly sabbath on Saturday.

This is further corroborated by the use of the word "sabbaths" (see Sabbath, Sabbaths or week? Matthew 28:1 – the answer under "Background", section "Resurrection Sunday")

So Jesus was in the tomb for three days and three nights (the end of Thursday before sundown, Friday daytime, and Saturday daytime, and Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights).

And he was raised up before sunrise on Sunday, the third day (the Jewish days begin at 6pm the day before), where you can either take the days as being 24 hours or Jewish days.

27. He ascended into heaven

Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the LORD God might dwell among them. – Psalm 68:18

Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene went to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. Then she ran and came to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him." Peter therefore went out, and the other disciple, and were going to the tomb. So they both ran together, and the other disciple outran Peter and came to the tomb first. And he, stooping down and looking in, saw the linen cloths lying there; yet he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb; and he saw the linen cloths lying there, and the handkerchief that had been around His head, not lying with the linen cloths, but folded together in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who came to the tomb first, went in also; and he saw and believed. For as yet they did not know the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead. Then the disciples went away again to their own homes.
But Mary stood outside by the tomb weeping, and as she wept she stooped down and looked into the tomb. And she saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. Then they said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him." Now when she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, and did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?" She, supposing Him to be the gardener, said to Him, "Sir, if You have carried Him away, tell me where You have laid Him, and I will take Him away." Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to Him, "Rabboni!" (which is to say, Teacher). **Jesus said to her, "Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, 'I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God.' "** Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that He had spoken these things to her. – John 20:1-18

One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. **Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)** – Paul in a letter to the Ephesians 4:6-10

The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe. And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God. Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed. And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name. – John 20:25-31

This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his testimony is true. And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen. – John 21:24-25

28. He will save not the Jews only, but also the Gentiles

And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious. – Isaiah 11:10

And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: **I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles**, that thou mayest be **my salvation unto the end of the earth**. – Isaiah 49:6

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; **to the Jew first, and also to the Greek**. – Romans 1:16

For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that **blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. 26 And so all Israel shall be saved…** – Romans 11:25-26a

There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian band, A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God always. He saw in a vision evidently about the ninth hour of the day an angel of God coming in to him, and saying unto him, Cornelius. And when he looked on him, he was afraid, and said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God. And now send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose

surname is Peter: He lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the sea side: he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do. And when the angel which spake unto Cornelius was departed, he called two of his household servants, and a devout soldier of them that waited on him continually; And when he had declared all these things unto them, he sent them to Joppa. On the morrow, as they went on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up upon the housetop to pray about the sixth hour: And he became very hungry, and would have eaten: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance, And saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth: Wherein were all manner of fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat. But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean. And the voice spake unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common. This was done thrice: and the vessel was received up again into heaven. Now while Peter doubted in himself what this vision which he had seen should mean, behold, the men which were sent from Cornelius had made enquiry for Simon's house, and stood before the gate, And called, and asked whether Simon, which was surnamed Peter, were lodged there. While Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee. Arise therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them. Then Peter went down to the men which were sent unto him from Cornelius; and said, Behold, I am he whom ye seek: what is the cause wherefore ye are come? And they said, Cornelius the centurion, a just man, and one that feareth God, and of good report among all the nation of the Jews, was warned from God by an holy angel to send for thee into his house, and to hear words of thee. Then called he them in, and lodged them. And on the morrow Peter went away with them, and certain brethren from Joppa accompanied him. And the morrow after they entered into Caesarea. And Cornelius waited for them, and had called together his kinsmen and near friends. And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped him. But Peter took him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man. And as he talked with him, he went in, and found many that were come together. And he said unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean. Therefore came I unto you without gainsaying, as soon as I was sent for: I ask therefore for what intent ye have sent for me? And Cornelius said, Four days ago I was fasting until this hour; and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and, behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing, And said, Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God. Send therefore to Joppa, and call hither Simon, whose surname is Peter; he is lodged in the house of one Simon a tanner by the sea side: who, when he cometh, shall speak unto thee. Immediately therefore I sent to thee; and thou hast well done that thou art come. Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God. Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him. The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all:) That word, I say, ye know, which was published throughout all Judaea, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached; How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him. And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree: Him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly; Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead. And he commanded us to preach unto the

people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead. To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins. While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days. – Acts 10

29. He is prophet, priest and king

And the LORD said unto me, They have well spoken that which they have spoken. **I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren**, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that **whosoever will not hearken** unto my words which he shall speak in my name, **I will require it of him**. – Deuteronomy 18:17-19

A Psalm of David. **The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand**, until I make thine enemies thy footstool. The LORD shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies. Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth. **The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek**. The Lord at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath. He shall judge among the heathen, he shall fill the places with the dead bodies; he shall wound the heads over many countries. He shall drink of the brook in the way: therefore shall he lift up the head. – Psalm 110

I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the **Son of man** came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a **kingdom**, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed. – Daniel 7:13-14

For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins: Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity. And by reason hereof he ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins. And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron. So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee. **As he saith also in another place, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec**. Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared; Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him; **Called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec**. – Hebrews 5:1-10

30. He has enabled a new covenant in which we receive a new heart and spirit, born again of God.

I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins. – Isaiah 43:25

A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. – Ezekiel 36:26-27

Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that **I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel**, **and with the house of Judah**: **Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers** in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; **which my covenant they brake**, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: **But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.** And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for **they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD**: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more. – Jeremiah 31:31-34

Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened: burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required. Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, **I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart**. – Psalm 40:6-8

Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed. – 1st letter of Peter 2:24

For he hath made him to be sin for us, [*he*] who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. – Paul in his 2nd letter to the Corinthians 5:21

There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, **Ye must be born again.** The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: **so is every one that is born of the Spirit.** Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be? Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness. If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things? And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven. **And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.** For

God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God. After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judaea; and there he tarried with them, and baptized. – John 3:1-22

Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: **if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him**, and will sup with him, and he with me. – John's Revelation 3:20

But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name – John 1:12

And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened [*made alive*] together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; **Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross**; And having spoiled principalities and powers [*evil spiritual rulers, such as whom the archangel Michael fought against in Daniel*], he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it. – Paul's letter to the Colossians 2:13-15

Paul's detailed explanation:

Then verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary. For there was a tabernacle made; the first, wherein was the candlestick, and the table, and the shewbread; which is called the sanctuary. And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all; Which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant; And over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercyseat; of which we cannot now speak particularly. Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God. But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people: The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing: Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience; Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation. But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might

receive the promise of eternal inheritance. For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth. Whereupon neither the first testament was dedicated without blood. For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people, Saying, This is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you. Moreover he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry. And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission. It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation. – Paul's letter to the Hebrews 9

For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God. Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law; Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before, This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin. Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; And having an high priest over the house of God; Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised) – Paul's letter to the Hebrews 10:1-23

For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. **For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.** But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered

up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. – Paul's 1st letter to the Corinthians 15:21-26

Luke's account of Peter's summary:

The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen: To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God: And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. **And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.** Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day's journey. And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James. These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren. And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, (the number of names together were about an hundred and twenty,) Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus. For he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry. Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out. And it was known unto all the dwellers at Jerusalem; insomuch as that field is called in their proper tongue, Aceldama, that is to say, The field of blood. For it is written in the book of Psalms, Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein: and his bishoprick let another take. Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection. And they appointed two, Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, shew whether of these two thou hast chosen, That he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place. And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles. – Luke's account of the acts of the apostles, chapter 1
And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. **And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat**

upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language. And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans? And **how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?** Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God. And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this? Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine. But **Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them**, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words: For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day. But **this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel**; And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy: And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke: The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come: **And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.** Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it. For David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved: Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope: Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance. Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. **This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses.** Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, Until I make thy foes thy footstool. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that **God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.** And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. Then they that gladly received his word were baptized:

and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. And all that believed were together, and had all things common; And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved. – Luke's account of the apostles, chapter 2

Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour. And a certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple; Who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple asked an alms. And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him with John, said, Look on us. And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them. Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk. And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up: and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God.

And all the people saw him walking and praising God: And they knew that it was he which sat for alms at the Beautiful gate of the temple: and they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened unto him. And as the lame man which was healed held Peter and John, all the people ran together unto them in the porch that is called Solomon's, greatly wondering.

And when Peter saw it, he answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk? **The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate**, when he was determined to let him go. But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; And killed the Prince of life, **whom God hath raised from the dead**; whereof we are witnesses. And his name through faith in his name hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know: yea, the faith which is by him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.

And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers. But those things, which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled. Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; **And he shall send Jesus Christ**, which before was preached unto you:

Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began. For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people.

Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days. Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed. Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities. – Luke's account of the acts of the apostles, chapter 3

31. He will return to rule the world after great troubles

Come, and let us return unto the LORD: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up. After two days will he revive us: in the third day* he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight. Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the LORD: his going forth is prepared as the morning; and **he shall come unto us as the rain, as the <u>latter</u> and <u>former</u> rain unto the earth.** – Hosea 6:1-3

*Interestingly, not only does this apply to the resurrection of Jesus, but also to his return to revive Israel after two thousand years, to rule and reign for a thousand years, the seventh millenium, and the third thousand years since Christ.

> For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night. – Psalm 90:4
> But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. – 2 Peter 3:8-10
> And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years. – Revelation 20:4-6

Thou, O king, sawest, and behold a great image. This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee; and the form thereof was terrible [*awe-inspiring*]. This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, His legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay. Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.
This is the dream; and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king.
Thou, O king, art a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory. And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou art this head of gold.
And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee, [*the Medo-Persians, with left and right arms*]
and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth. [*the Greeks, under Alexander the Great*]
And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron [*Rome, which split into East and West legs*]:

forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise. And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters' clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay. And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken. And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay.
And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever. Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure. – Daniel 2:31-45

Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure. Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: **the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance**, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. **Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth.** Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him. – Psalm 2:1-12

And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to shew him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down. And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world? And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many. And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows. Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come. When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains: Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house: Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days!

But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day: For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened. Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Behold, I have told you before. Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not. For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together. **Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.** Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away. But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh. Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods. But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; And shall begin to smite his fellowservants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, And shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. – Matthew 24

The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John: Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw. Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand. John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne; And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen. Behold, he cometh with clouds;

and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty. I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea. And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength. And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death. Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter; The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches. – Revelation 1

After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter. And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne. And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald. And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold. And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices: and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God. And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind. And the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle. And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come. And when those beasts give glory and honour and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever, The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created. – Revelation 4
And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals. And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof? And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon. And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon. And one

of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof. And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne. And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth. And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever. – Revelation 5

And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication. So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration. And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns. The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is. And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth. And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space. And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition. And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast. These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast. **These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.** And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues. And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her

desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled. And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth. – Revelation 17

Appendix C – The Rapture – could be 23-24 September 2025

The rapture is the faithful followers of Jesus being caught up into heaven by surprise in days of peace just before the seven years of tribulation. The word rapture is the Latin translation of the Greek word harpazo, translated in English as "caught up".

> For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be **caught up** together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. – 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17

> For yourselves know perfectly that the **day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night**. For when they shall say, **Peace and safety*; then sudden destruction** cometh upon them, **as travail upon a woman with child**; and they shall not escape. – 1 Thessalonians 5:2-3

*Note that the U.N. has designated 2025 as the year of "peace and trust"

> Jesus's words:
> "And as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all.
> Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all.
> Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed. ... I tell you, in that night there shall be two men in one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left. Two women shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left." – Luke 17:26-30, 34-36

> "And when these things **begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh**. And he spake to them a parable; Behold the fig tree, and all the trees; When they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand. So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that **the kingdom of God is nigh at hand**. – Luke 21:28-31

The tribulation is the teaching that there will be seven years of great trouble in the world, such as has never been before nor will be after. The seven years, also known as Daniel's seventieth 'week' of seven years, will be divided in two, with the Antichrist bringing a seven year peace treaty to Israel at the start, but then breaking the treaty halfway through and placing the "abomination that causes desolation" on the altar in the temple in Jerusalem and calling himself God.

As I understand it, the first six of the seven years after the pre-trib rapture will be a time of increasing and great troubles, like the increasing of labour pains, at the end of which God will rescue his elect (chosen) who have come to him since the first rapture, after which the final year will be hell on earth as, at some point, God's wrath is poured out on the wicked, including terrible stinging locusts and horses of fire, then blood and fire and darkness.

> And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: *[April 33 AD]* and **the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary** *[this happened in 70 AD]*; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. And he *[the prince that shall come, the antichrist]* **shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate**, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate. – Daniel 9:26-27

See also the chapter on PROPHECY AND REVELATION for my understanding of the timing of the Tribulation.

In the last month or so there have been several sincere witnesses to the rapture being Sept 2025:

At 16, Jesus Told Me He'd Return When I Turn 66 – Jimmy, guest on God's Voice Daily. He turned 66 on 20 May 2025.

Jesus Said: "By 2026… the World Will Be Unrecognizable" – Joshua, guest on God's Voice Daily. He is told that the rapture will be on the 23rd or 24th Sept 2025 (Rosh Hashanah) and that Jesus will return on the 15th Sept 2032 (Yom Kippur)
2025 Rapture Prophecy CONFIRMATION – someone calling herself Prophetess Gazelle (odd name but she seems sincere) says the Lord confirmed 23-24 Sept 2025 to her.
Rapture Message: The Lord Spoke Of URGENCY With The Words!! Buckle UP For The Ride #rapture #jesus – Lewis Rogers, guest on Cloud 9 Blessings. Says the Lord confirmed 23-24 Sept 2025 to him.

Nonbeliever Sees the Rapture in a Vivid Dream — Get Ready, It's Almost Time! – 1:16, 2nd person in the video, guest on Uplifted. An unnamed lady has a dream in which the rapture is predicted to happen in Rosh Hashanah 2025.

Rapture Proof Of September, 2025 on Love of God Ministries – a mother's autistic 15 year old son Danny who has to spell out words to talk had a dream in which he went to heaven and met his aborted sister, Siena, and her twin brother Joshua which the mother never knew about (she had prayed and asked God to name the aborted baby Siena if it is a girl, and Joshua if it is a boy). Siena told him Jesus is coming to take us home in September. Danny also met a foster father of his mother's that Danny never knew about, and gave his name, which no one in the family knew.

Rapture 2025 | September Rapture 11:10, on Countdown to Christ – Hundreds of people, saved and unsaved, are getting dreams of the rapture this year 2025

God Told Me To Warn The Church About The Rapture – Terri of the YT channel "Walking by the Spirit Always", guest on God's Voice Daily, is told by God in Nov 2024, if I recall correctly, that the rapture will be within the next 4 years. Her testimony is really very interesting just in the many ways God speaks to and leads us.

Maybe these testimonies are the shout of the bridegroom coming?

> Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. While the bridegroom tarried, **they all slumbered and slept. And <u>at midnight</u> there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh**; go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh. – Matthew 25:1-13

Many of the adults in the church even will not be ready!

But even if the Father is / was intending for Jesus to collect his bride the pure church on the 23-24 September 2025, many, many Christians will have asked for a little more time to reach out, so it could easily change.* But I do not believe it could be much later than 2026. And personally I believe that there already have been extensions, and that God's patience has finally run out. REMEMBER that tens of thousands of little children are going missing every year, some to be sex slaves and others even worse, dying terrible deaths. This is what brought God's judgment on the Canaanites, yet our generation is worse – far worse.

* Interestingly, on Friday the 13th Apil 2029 the comet Apophis is expected to fly past Earth at a closer distance than the geostationary satellites. It could easily hit and become the mountain which falls into the sea mentioned in Revelation during the latter half of the 7 years starting with the rapture.

> And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood; And the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed. – Revelation 8:8-9

Apophis is the Egyptian god of chaos and darkness, a snake, who used to be the sun god but fell from grace and now spends the night seeking to prevent the return of the true sun god, Ra. How similar is that to Satan trying to prevent Christ's victory?

Regarding Joshua's saying that the rapture is the 23-24 Sept 2025 (one of the two days of Rosh Hashanah) and Jesus will return on the 15th Sept 2032, since Revelation says there will be 1260 days then 1290 days, I decided to count the days from 23 Sept 2025 (1st day of Rosh Hashanah) to 15 Sept 2032 inclusive, and it came to 1260+1290 exactly.
And I noticed that 15 Sept 2032 is Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, so I decided to count the days between the 1st day of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kipper (7 years later) for all Yom Kippurs from 2021-2043, and there is only 1 out of the 23 that fit, which is Joshua's 2025-2032.
If we consider the 2nd day of Rosh Hashanah, which shows up in my calcs as 1291 days from the 1st

day, there are 2 in the past and 1 in 2033-2040.
Now, Apophis, if it misses in 2029, the Russians say will hit on April 13 2036. That's a little early if it's due in the 2nd half of the 7 years, but it's hard to know for certain when it's supposed to happen, or even whether it is actually the mountain mentioned in Revelation. But there it is. Just FYI.

Now I am very worried for the people that remain on earth after the rapture. Planes will crash, cars will crash and gridlock, machines won't be tended properly, fires will break out… and that's just the start. It gets a LOT worse by stages afterwards, with famine and earthquakes and plagues. YouTuber Last Days mentions it at 2:50 in his video Jesus took me to the Tribulation and gave me a glimpse of what's to come I had this visitation 2014 linked to in point 6 below, and so do others.

At 22:40 he mentions that all people under the age of 15 are taken up, so that's a help, but I feel so grieved for the 15 and 16 year olds who have grown up in atheist's houses never knowing the truth.

It's going to be terrible! Right now it's hard to grasp because we are all living in the light and grace and benefit of the presence of God's spirit on earth – when we sing, when we smile, when we laugh or cry or look beautiful – that's only due to the presence and light of God. If you do not have his light within you, if you have not received Christ, if you are still on the dark side, as we are by birth, then when God's light is withdrawn in the rapture, all the safety and security you feel, all the peace, all the light, all your confidence will be gone. Then you will know how much trouble we are in.

That is one of the main reasons I have written this book: so that if you read it before the rapture, you have a chance to pray and get close to God; and if you find it after the rapture, you understand that you can still be saved. The Bible certainly mentions to their honour the Christians who go through the tribulation or are beheaded during it (which won't be that painful, by the way – your nerves don't kick in immediately; it's a quick way home.)

What should you do to prepare for the rapture? Or if you have missed the rapture?

"Remember first, that when you leave this world, whatever state you are in spiritually, that's the state you will be in, for eternity." – Pastor Loran Livingstone, Pastor Loran Livingston: HIGH ALERT-PREPARE FOR A SHAKING TONIGHT....Prophetic on channel Heavenly Light.

There is no leaving hell once you are in. The torments will never end. If you feel a doubt, this is likely an evil spirit trying to prevent you. One thing that might help you is to say, "I bind every spirit that is not of God, in the Name of Jesus, and command you all to leave me alone this day, in Jesus' Name" (since Jesus conquered Satan and gave us the power of attorney to use his name, we can take authority over evil influences) and then go to God's Voice Daily on Youtube and watch the testimonies there. Isn't it wise, if a man warns you of eternal torment, to look into it?

1. Repent and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ:

Decide whether you *want* to live right (with God's help) or not. If you do, make a quality decision, (i.e. eternal decision) to get rid of any intentions of sinning, and pray out loud to God: "God, I'm sorry for all I've done wrong to you and to others. I turn away from my sins and ask you to forgive

me for all I've done and help me to live for you from now on. Jesus, I ask you to be my Lord and to come and renew and live in my heart and guide me into righteousness please."

God will answer this prayer, even if you don't feel anything. Your sins will be exchanged for Jesus' righteousness just as the Jews used to lay their sins on the sacrificial lamb, but this is forever.

From this moment on, your spiritual eyes will be opened and you will be able to sense his leading. *Always* obey him *instantly* – just jump! – no matter how scary or embarrassing it will be to you. *Trust* him, and jump. *Never* grieve him. Keep close to him in this way, and he will lead you into paths of green pastures, through whatever it takes to get there.

2. It is not easy to give him your heart in an on-going way,

> The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? – Jeremiah 17:9

but the key is TIME. You can give him your TIME. Spend half an hour or an hour with him whenever you can, and just give yourself over to him. Tell him, "I am yours... Do with me whatever you will... I love you... I give myself to you now…" and just wait there before him as a living sacrifice. He will come collect.

3. Buy a King James Bible from Cambridge, and read it a lot. Just read it. Put down your mobile phone. If you can't get one, read the quoted verses in this book, over and over. Try not to use a modern version, they have been Satan-ified, if I can put it that way.

4. If you can find someone who is baptised in the Spirit, i.e. can speak in tongues, ask them to lay hands on you and pray for you also to be baptised in the Spirit.

5. Get baptised in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. That's fully submersed and raised out of the water again – any water.

6. Die before taking a chip implant. The mark of the beast will be the only way you can buy or sell. DO NOT TAKE IT. It will seal you into hell. It will control you. YouTuber Last Days, who had a vision of a bullet passing Trump's ear well before it happened, (where he misinterpreted the blood that he saw as being due to a busted eardrum), saw a vision of people injected with it and it took control over them – watch from 23:45 to 32:50 or maybe 36:05 if you want to know more. An angel will warn people not to take it. Death is nothing to be feared when you are saved, it is an open doorway to being with Jesus in heaven.

> **And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God**, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and **he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone** in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: **And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever**: **and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name**. Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus. And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth:

> Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them. – Revelation 14:9-13

As I understand Revelation, there is a collection of God's elect (chosen) after the tribulation but before the wrath of God falls upon the earth. Be patient and wait for it. Do not fear suffering. The time is short. You will get through it. Better to suffer for a short time now at the hands of the devil than to suffer for eternity at the hands of God. Do not give your allegiance to Satan, whatever it takes. Be brave, and die rather – it's simply a quick way to heaven.

Here are some additional videos which are of particular interest:

The Man Who Got a Glimpse of The End Times! Pastor Carl Gallups
A shared rapture dream

Matthew 1's 'Error' That Proves the Bible
The inspiration of the Bible and the King James Bible

I Died & Saw This famous False Prophet in Hell!
Fallen angels can appear as an angel of light, such as to Joseph Smith
(watch to the end)

Note: if you go on to look at more videos on NDE experiences, beware of fakes with AI voiceovers, and demonically deceiving experiences. These are those which conflict with the Word of God. Also, a note on the 3 days of darkness prophecy floating around. This may or may not happen to various degrees before and/or after the rapture but there are many fearful ideas associated with it that are just not biblical, and besides, God would have told his church what to do long ago. Do not fear.

I Left My Body… and Watched Hell Open Beneath Me
A woman with a prophetic gifting refuses to heed the warnings
and sees the torment of people in hell but Jesus saves her.

A great alien deception is coming, and many will fall for this
4:18 Cyberattack, New York city dark
7:10 The Lord warns, if they divide Israel, he will divide America: from Texar, Canada to Tulsa, Oklahoma, all Mississipi bridges destroyed
11:16 Digital ID and the mark of the beast
13:32 3 moles in the White House
15:50 A great shaking is coming to awaken the church
25:15 2026 mid-term elections unrecognisable
34:23 The outpouring of the Spirit in shock and awe
40:51 I saw the plague again, via rats released in Europe
45:36 Huge Russian submarine going to Cuba
48:47 People so distracted just trying to make a living
51:03 Back to the rats: people stop using paper money
1:01:11 I hear the spirit of the Lord said, "Fear not…
1:05:38 Pray! I see it all at once, earthquakes, asteroids, plagues, volcanoes, droughts, pestilence… it's overwhelming me
1:09:23 A great 'alien' (demonic) spaceship over the Vatican and smaller ones over Canada, America
1:19:23 Weather manipulation goes out of control
1:23:34 Fake cow disease. Bug burgers.
1:29:46 "There's much more to show you later, more detail, to warn my people and bring them to their knee."

1:30:58 Young people unable to get pregnant.
1:32:47 Celebrities that are false saying, “I got Jesus” And they’ll preach a universal gospel to deceive the many.

A Huge Shift in America by Fall 2025 I David Herzog

Walking with God is about dying to self in prayer
The coming wars around Israel; the temple being rebuilt
Practical ministry especially in nations being taken over

Ken Peters - I Saw The Tribulation (Full Version)

In 1983 Ken, a Roman Catholic but unsaved and ignorant, had a strange dream which took all night. He shared the dream in 2005. It opened with select graves bursting open and men and women in glittering robes coming out who then disappeared. He did not see any rapture, but immediately the world was in despair. There was a two week blackout with mass chaos following, after which a world leader appeared on every screen urging people to unite in world citizenship, and could solve their problems. There was no resistance. The leader also said that the people who had been removed were judged by God. Ken met an evangelist who had a group who saved abandoned babies everywhere. The chip implant was later rolled out. It came with a picture between thumb and forefinger, of a hand within a sunburst. Shortly afterwards the evangelist, Ken and his wife were executed after intense mental pressure to recant.