

The Bible in Two HoursTM

*A brief summary of the Bible taken from the International EnglishTM Bible.
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IEBible.net

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The Bible in Two HoursTM

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HOW THE WORLD BEGAN

This is how everything happened at the very beginning of time. God is the One who lives forever and ever.^{<1>} In the beginning, God created the universe in six days.^{<2>} He made heaven and everything in it, the earth and everything on it, and the ocean and everything in it.^{<3>}

God created people in His own image. He created mankind in the image of God. He created them male and female. And God blessed them. He said to them, “Have lots of children. Increase in number. Spread throughout the earth. Conquer the world and take complete authority over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every creature that crawls on the earth.”^{<4>}

God, the One Who Is Always Present,^{<5>} put them in the garden of Eden. He said, “You are allowed to eat fruit from every tree in the garden — except one. Do NOT eat anything from the tree that causes people to know the difference between right and wrong. You must NEVER eat the fruit of that tree. If you ever do, you will most certainly DIE!”^{<6>}

ENDNOTES:

<1>Revelation 10:6a

<2>Genesis 1:1; literally, “the heavens and the earth.” See Genesis 1:1-31.

<3>Revelation 10:6b

<4> Genesis 1:27-28

<5> Yahweh, God’s personal name in Hebrew, the language of the Old Testament.

<6>Genesis 2:15-17

QUESTIONS:

1. Who is the Creator of all things?
2. Where do we come from? From animals? Or, from God?
3. In whose image are we created?
4. What was God's original design for marriage?
5. Did God invent sex? Why?
6. What does "taking dominion" mean?
7. What was the ONE rule that God gave to the man and the woman in the garden of Eden?
8. Do you think that this couple understood this command?
9. Was it right for God to restrict them in any way?
10. What would the consequences be if they disobeyed this one restriction?
11. What does it mean to "die"?
12. Did Adam and Eve die on the same day that they ate the forbidden fruit?

SOMETHING WENT WRONG

Now the snake (Satan, the Devil)<1> was the most crafty creature<2> that God, the One Who Is Always Present, had made. The snake asked the woman, "Did God actually say to you that you could NOT eat from any tree in the garden!?"

The woman answered the snake, "Yes. We are allowed to eat the fruit of any tree in the garden, but NOT from a particular tree near the center of the garden. God told us not to eat any fruit from that tree — we cannot even touch it. If we do, we will DIE!"

The snake said to the woman, "That is NOT true! You will NOT die! Why? Because God knows that whenever you do eat some of it, then your eyes will be opened. Then you will become like God, knowing the difference between right and wrong!"

The woman could see that the tree was good for food, that it was beautiful to look at, and that it could make her wise. So, she took some of its fruit and ate it. Then she also gave some to her husband who was with her. And, he ate it, too. Then the eyes of both of them were opened; they realized that they were naked. So, they sewed together the leaves of a fig tree to make coverings for themselves.

That evening,<3> when they heard God, the One Who Is Always Present, walking in the garden, they tried to hide themselves among the trees of the garden, away from the presence of the Always-Present God. But God, the Always-Present One, called out to the man, “Where are you?”

The man answered, “I heard You walking in the garden, but, because I was naked, I was afraid and hid myself.”

The Always-Present One asked, “Who informed you that you were naked? Did you eat some of the fruit which I commanded you NOT to eat!?”

The man answered, “It was the woman whom YOU put here with me — SHE gave it to me! So I ate!”

The Always-Present One (God) asked the woman, “What is this you have done!?”

She answered, “The snake tricked me. So I ate!”

Then the Always-Present One, God, said to the snake, “Because you have done this thing, you are banished from all livestock and all wild animals. From now on, you will crawl on your belly, and you will have to eat dirt as long as you live. I will put hostility between you and the woman, between your children and her child. Although her child (Jesus) will crush your head,<4> you will bite his heel.”<5>

Then God said to the woman, “I will surely increase your problems in having children; you will give birth in great pain. Nevertheless, you will still yearn for your husband, and he will be in charge over you.”

And God said to Adam,<6> “Because you listened to your wife and you ate some of the fruit which I commanded you NOT to eat, the ground is now condemned. It is your fault! As long as you live, you will have to work

hard to make it produce enough food for you. Instead, it will sprout stickers and thorns for you. And, you will have to eat wild plants. The food which you do eat will only come to you through hard work until you go back to the earth from which you came, because you were taken from the ground. You are dirt, and you will return to the dirt!"

The man named his wife "Eve,"^{<7>} because she was to become the mother of every human being.

Then the Always-Present One (God) made clothes out of animal skins^{<8>} for Adam and his wife. And He dressed them.

After this, the Always-Present One (God) said, "Look, the man has become like one of Us; the man now knows the difference between right and wrong. He must no longer be permitted to reach out his hand and pick fruit from the Tree of Life, so that he could eat it and continue to live forever!" So, God, the Always-Present One, sent him away from the garden of Eden to plow the ground from which he had been taken. And, God drove out the man and his wife. On the east side of the garden of Eden, God posted heavenly guards and a flaming, lashing sword to protect the Tree of Life.^{<9>}

ENDNOTES:

<1> See Revelation 12:9; Matthew 13:39; 1 Peter 5:8.

<2> See 2 Corinthians 11:14.

<3> literally, "during the breeze of the day"

<4> In the future, one of the woman's descendants (Jesus Christ) would defeat Satan by rising from death. Satan has no more power. See Romans 16:20; Revelation 20:2.

<5> Like a viper, even while it is being killed, it inflicts a death-wound on its attacker. Even though Jesus rose from the grave to live again, it was Satan and his slaves who inflicted a horrible death upon the Savior. They nailed him to a cross!

<6> a word which is like the Hebrew word for "dirt" (Hebrew: *'adamah*)

<7> a name which is similar to the Hebrew word for "life"

<8> Some animals had to die (that is, to give their blood) for the sake of this first human couple.

<9> Genesis 3:1-24

QUESTIONS:

1. Who tempted Eve to do wrong?
2. How did Satan deceive the woman?
3. What appealed to her?
4. What did Satan allege about God's motive for giving them that command?
5. In what way did Satan tell the truth? What part was true?
6. Why did Eve persuade her husband to participate with her in eating the forbidden fruit?
7. Why did Adam go along with it?
8. Was the nudity of Adam and Eve wrong?
9. When did they realize that they were nude?
10. What did they do about their nakedness?
11. Why did they do that?
12. What did they do next?
13. Is God a searching God? Was He concerned about them?
14. Can you hide from God?
15. What reason did Adam give to God for trying to hide himself?
16. Why was it suddenly "strange" (in Adam's mind) to be naked?
17. Did Adam ever feel the emotion of fear before this time?
18. Previously, did Adam know what it felt like to be ashamed?
19. Do you think that Adam understood what was going on inside him?
20. What were the next two questions that God asked of Adam?
21. What did God immediately suspect that Adam had done?
22. What was Adam's instant response to God's probing question?

23. What was Eve's reply?
24. After that, to whom did God speak first?
25. Exactly what did God say to the Devil, the snake?
26. What did God mean by the following statement? "...I will put hostility between you and the woman, between your child and *her* child. Although her child will crush your head, you will bite his heel."
27. To whom did God speak next?
28. What did God say to her?
29. Next, what did God say to Adam?
30. What is the meaning of the name "Eve"?
31. Why did God provide clothes for them?
32. What did God do in order to make the clothes for Adam and Eve?
33. Did these animals deserve to die?
34. Why did the animals have to die?
35. Why were Adam and Eve banished from the Garden of Eden?
36. How did God prevent them from returning to the garden?

SIN CAUSES DEATH

Every person who sins is breaking God's law. Sin is breaking God's law.<1> Since the beginning, the Devil has been sinning.<2> He does NOT stand with the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he tells a lie, he is only talking naturally, because he is a liar and the father of lies.<3> The person who continues to sin belongs to the Devil.<4> Everyone has sinned and is far away from God's glory.<5> Sin came into the world through one man.<6> And, death came into the world through sin. In this way, death spread to all mankind, because all sinned.<7> Every person who continues to sin is a slave of sin.<8> The pay you get for sinning is death.<9>

ENDNOTES:

<1> 1 John 3:4

<2> 1 John 3:8

<3> John 8:44

<4> 1 John 3:8

<5> Romans 3:23

<6> Adam

<7> Romans 5:12

<8> John 8:34

<9> Romans 6:23

QUESTIONS:

1. What is *your* definition of sin? (See 1 John 3:4.)

2. What was the first sin against God?

3. Who has been sinning from the very beginning?

4. Who is the slickest liar of all?

5. How did God punish Adam and his wife for their disobedience?

6. Who has sinned? (See Romans 3:23.)

7. How did the spirit of rebellion enter our world?

8. And, death came into our world through *what*? (See Romans 5:12.)

9. Is sin like a disease?

10. Who is a slave of sin?

11. What happens if you continue to sin?

GOD IS GOOD

Turn to the true living God. He is the One who made the land, the sea, the sky, and everything which is in them. In the past, God let all the nations do what they wanted. But God did things to prove that He is real: He does good things for you. He gives you rain from the sky and good harvests at the right times. He gives you plenty of food and fills your hearts with joy.<1> God's sun shines<2> upon good people AND bad people. It rains upon the people who do right AND upon those who do wrong.<3> We know that idols really do NOT exist. There is only one true God. There are so-called "gods" in heaven and on earth — many "gods" and many "lords." But they are NOT real. To us, there is only one God — the Father. He is the Source of everything. We live for Him.<4>

ENDNOTES:

<1> Acts 14:15-17

<2> literally, "rises"

<3> Matthew 5:45

<4> 1 Corinthians 8:4-6

QUESTIONS:

1. How do we know that God is a *good* God?
2. Do idols (false gods) really exist?

THE PROMISE TO ABRAHAM

Hundreds of years later, God appeared to Abraham. Abraham was 75 years old. God said to him, "Leave your country and your relatives! Go to another country. I will show you where to go. I will make you into a great nation. I will bless you and make your name famous, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, but I will condemn those who despise you. And, through YOU, all the nations on earth will be blessed." So Abraham obeyed God. Then Abraham lived in the new land. It was called Canaan.<1>

When Abraham was almost 100 years old, God promised Abraham that he would have as many descendants as the stars in the sky.<2> Abraham believed God, and so God declared him to be a righteous man.<3>

God promised that He would give the new land to Abraham and his descendants; it would belong to them. (This was before Abraham had any children.) This is what God said to him: “Your descendants will live as strangers in another country. The people there will make them slaves and do evil things to them for 400 years. I will judge that nation which will make them slaves.” And God also said, “After those things happen, your children will come out of that country to worship Me in THIS place (Canaan).”

God made a covenant with Abraham; the sign of this covenant was circumcision.<4> And so, when Abraham had a son, Abraham circumcised him when the boy was eight days old. His son’s name was Isaac. Isaac also circumcised his son Jacob. And Jacob did the same for his twelve sons.<5> Jacob’s favorite son was Joseph.<6>

God’s contract with Abraham was passed on to his son Isaac. Then it was passed on to his son Jacob. Then it was passed on to Jacob’s twelve sons and their families. The descendants of these twelve sons became the twelve tribes of Israel.<7>

After Abraham, Isaac, Jacob (Israel), and his twelve sons died, all of their relatives stayed in Egypt. Their descendants continued to live there for many years. And they had many children. They were called Israelites (Jews).<8>

ENDNOTES:

<1> Acts 7:2-3; Genesis 12:1-5

<2> Genesis 15:5; 17:1,17

<3> Romans 4:3

<4> to cut off the foreskin of the male sex organ as a cultural sign of God’s covenant with Israel

<5> Acts 7:5-8

<6> See Genesis 37:3-4.

<7> See Genesis 17:7-13,19,21; Exodus 2:24; 6:3-5; Leviticus 26:42,45; Deuteronomy 4:31; 7:12; 8:18; Judges 2:1; 1 Chronicles 16:16-17; Psalms 105:8-10; Jeremiah 11:10; Acts 3:25; 7:8; Galatians 3:16.

<8> See Genesis 50:26; Exodus 1:1-7.

QUESTIONS:

1. What was the promise which God made to Abraham?
2. How old was Abraham when God promised that he would have a son?
3. What else did God promise to Abraham?
4. What caused God to declare that Abraham was a righteous man?
5. What was the sign of God's covenant with Abraham?
6. How long would Abraham's descendants live in the strange land as slaves?
7. Who was Abraham's promised son?
8. How old was Isaac when he was circumcised by Abraham?
9. Who was Isaac's son?
10. Did Isaac circumcise his son Jacob?
11. Did Jacob circumcise his twelve sons?
12. Who was Jacob's favorite son?

SLAVERY IN EGYPT

God made His people great during the time that they lived in Egypt as strangers.<1> In Egypt, the Jewish nation grew larger in number. (The promise which God made to Abraham was soon to come true.) There were more and more Jews in Egypt. The Egyptians were afraid of the Israelites because there were so many of them. Then a different king (Pharaoh) began to rule over Egypt. This king cheated the Jewish people. Pharaoh (the king) made all of them his slaves. The Egyptians forced the Israelites to build many buildings and even entire cities. This hard work made their lives miserable!

Pharaoh saw that the Israelites were having many, many babies. So he ordered his Egyptian people to kill all the Jewish baby boys.<2> He forced them to put their babies outdoors to die. He persecuted them!<3>

During this time, one Jewish woman gave birth to a baby boy. She and her husband hid that baby for as long as they could.<4> He was no ordinary baby. For three months they took care of him in his father's house.<5>

Then they could hide him no more. So they decided to put him in a basket that floated on the water. It was among the reeds along the edge of the Nile River. They wanted to save this baby boy from being killed by the Egyptians. His older sister was named Miriam. She watched to see what would happen to her baby brother.

A daughter of Pharaoh saw that basket. And she looked inside it. When she saw the baby boy, she took him into her house. She hired an Israelite woman to nurse him. But, she did NOT realize that this woman was the baby's own mother! When the child was old enough that he no longer needed his mother's milk, she returned him to Pharaoh's daughter. And she named him Moses. This name means "drawn out of the river."<6>

The king's daughter raised Moses as if he were her own son.

The Egyptians taught Moses everything they knew. He was powerful in the things he said and did<7>

ENDNOTES:

<1> Acts 13:17

<2> See Exodus 1:8-22.

<3> Acts 7:19

<4> See Exodus 2:1-3.

<5> Acts 7:20

<6> See Exodus 2:3-10.

<7> Acts 7:21-22

QUESTIONS:

1. What was the name of the country where God rescued His people?
2. What happened when a different line of Pharaohs took control of Egypt?
3. How did the king of Egypt want to control the population of the Jewish people in Egypt?
4. What famous person was born during this time of persecution?
5. Who was hired to take care of Moses when he was an infant?
6. What was the name of the great man who later led the Jews out of slavery in Egypt?
7. What kind of education did Moses receive?

FREEDOM

Many years later, Moses was in the desert on Mount Sinai. The Angel of the Always-Present One appeared to Moses in the flames of fire from within a bush. Moses could see that the bush was on fire, yet the bush did NOT burn up! So Moses thought, “I must go over there now and see this unusual sight. Why doesn’t the bush burn up!?”

When the Always-Present One (God) saw that Moses came over to look, God called out to him from inside the bush. He said, “Moses! Moses!”

Moses answered, “I’m here.”

God said, “Do not come any closer! Take off your sandals from your feet, because the place where you are standing is holy ground.” Then He said, “I am the God of your forefathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob!”

Then Moses hid his own face, because he was afraid to look at the one true God.<1>

The Lord said to him, “I have seen My people suffer much in Egypt. I have heard My people moaning. I have come down to rescue them. And now, Moses, come on, I am sending YOU back to Egypt! I will give them the land of Canaan, the same land that I promised to Abraham, Isaac, and

Jacob.”^{<2>}

But Moses was afraid; he did NOT want to go back to Egypt and Pharaoh, its king. Why? Because Moses thought that he was not a good speaker.^{<3>} So, God sent Aaron (Moses’ brother) to help him.^{<4>}

Moses and his brother Aaron went to King Pharaoh. They said to him, “This is what Yahweh, the God of Israel, says: ‘LET MY PEOPLE GO!’”^{<5>}

But Pharaoh would NOT listen to them. Instead of letting the Israelites go free, he forced them to work even harder!^{<6>}

Pharaoh continued to refuse to allow the Jewish people to leave Egypt. So, God sent ten terrible plagues upon the whole nation of Egypt,^{<7>} but NOT upon the Jews.^{<8>} This was how God showed the king of Egypt that He was more powerful than Pharaoh and his false gods.^{<9>}

God brought His people out of Egypt with great power.^{<10>} Moses led the people out. He did powerful things and miracles in the land of Egypt, at the Red Sea, and in the desert for 40 years.^{<11>} At Mount Sinai, Moses received commands from God (which still live). Moses gave these commands to the Jews.^{<12>}

REBELLION

But most of the Jewish people did NOT want to obey Moses. They rejected him. In their hearts, they wanted to go back to Egypt! The Jews said to Aaron,^{<13>} “Make us some gods to lead us!” The people made an idol which looked like a calf. Then they brought sacrifices to it. The people were very happy with what they had made with their own hands!

God turned against them. He stopped trying to change their hearts.^{<14>} But God listened to Moses’ prayer on their behalf. And, God forgave them.^{<15>}

Then Moses came down off the mountain with the Ten Commandments from God.^{<16>} And God led the Israelites away from Mount Sinai toward the Promised Land (Canaan).^{<17>}

Later, Joshua led the Jewish people into Canaan to capture the lands of the other nations. (The Canaanites worshiped false gods, and they did many other evil things.) The Israelites went in, and God drove those pagan people out.<18> God destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, giving their land to His people.<19>

But, after Joshua died, the Israelites disobeyed God. They did NOT drive out the rest of the Canaanites. And, they refused to obey the laws of the one true God. No, the Israelites began to worship the false gods of the Canaanites instead of Yahweh, the true God!<20>

After this, God gave special leaders (judges) to the Jewish people, until the time of Samuel, the prophet.

The Israelites continued to sin, and God would punish them. Then they would be sorry, and God would send another deliverer to save them. This pattern happened again and again and again.<21>

After about 300 years, the Jews asked Samuel (the last judge) for a king to lead them. God gave them Saul, the son of Kish. Saul was from the tribe of Benjamin. He was king for 40 years. After God removed Saul for disobeying Him, He made David their king.<22>

God was very pleased with David.<23> God said: “David is the man I like. He will do all the things I want him to do.”<24>

ENDNOTES:

<1> Exodus 3:2-6

<2> Acts 7:30-34; Exodus 3:8

<3> Exodus 4:10

<4> Exodus 7:1

<5> See Exodus 5:1.

<6> See Exodus 5:2-21.

<7> Exodus 7:14-25; 8:1-24; 9:1-33; 10:12-15,21-29; 11:4-5; 12:12,29,30

<8> Exodus 8:22; 9:4,7,26; 12:13,23

<9> Exodus 9:14-16

<10> Acts 13:17

<11> Acts 7:36

<12> Acts 7:38

<13> Aaron was the brother of Moses.

<14> Acts 7:39-42

<15> Exodus 32:11-14

<16> Exodus 32:15-16,31-33; 34:1-4,29

<17> Exodus 32:34; 40:36-38

<18> Acts 7:45

<19> Acts 13:19

<20> See Judges 1:1,19,21,28,29,30,32,33,34,35; 2:1-3,7-15.

<21> Judges 2:11-23

<22> Acts 13:20-22

<23> Acts 7:46

<24> Acts 13:22

QUESTIONS:

1. What attracted Moses' attention on Mount Sinai?
2. How did God identify Himself to Moses on Mount Sinai?
3. Did God care about the Jewish people while they were suffering in Egypt?
4. What did God command Moses to do?
5. How many years did Moses lead God's people in the Sinai Desert?
6. Where did Moses perform God's miracles?

7. What was the name of the mountain where God first gave His Law to Moses?
8. But where did most of the Jewish people want to go back to? Why?
9. Who was Aaron?
10. Why did the Jews want to worship an idol that looked like a bull calf instead of the one true God?
11. Why did God turn against His people? See Acts 7:39-42.
12. What was the name of the famous man who led the Jews as they conquered the land of Canaan (the Promised Land)?
13. How many small nations were destroyed by Joshua and his army in the land of Canaan?
14. What happened next in their history? What were the special, local leaders of Israel called during this period?
15. The separate, tribal structure of God's people lasted until the time of which judge?
16. What was the name of the first Jewish king?
17. What tribe did King Saul come from?
18. Saul was the king for how many years?
19. Why did God replace King Saul?

DAVID AS A BOY

The Lord wanted a different kind of man than Saul to rule His people.<1> So, Yahweh said to Samuel, “I have rejected Saul from being king over Israel! Now I want you to go to Bethlehem. I am sending you to Jesse who lives there. I have chosen one of his sons to be the next king.”<2> God vouched for David: “David, the son of Jesse, is the man I like. He will do all the things I want him to do.”<3>

David was only a shepherd boy, taking care of his father’s sheep.<4> He always spent a lot of time thinking about how much he loved God.<5> He wrote many songs about this<6> and played them on his harp.<7> Here is

one of his best-known songs:

“Yahweh^{<8>} is my Shepherd;
I have everything I need.
He gives me rest in green pastures.
He leads me beside calm waters.
He gives me new strength.
For the sake of His Name, He guides me in paths
that are right.
Even if I walk through a very dark valley,
I will not be afraid of anything bad, O One Who Is
Always Present,
because YOU are with me.
Your rod and Your walking-stick comfort me.”^{<9>}

So, Samuel took some olive oil and anointed David to be king.^{<10>}

ENDNOTES:

<1> 1 Samuel 13:14

<2> 1 Samuel 16:1

<3> Acts 13:22

<4> 1 Samuel 16:11; 17:34-35

<5> Psalms 18:1; 116:1; 119:47,97,113,119,127,132,140,159,163,167

<6> At least 74 psalms are ascribed to David. Compare 2 Samuel 23:1.

<7> 1 Samuel 16:18

<8> “Yahweh” is Hebrew for the personal Name of God.

<9> Psalms 23:1-4

<10> 1 Samuel 16:13

QUESTIONS:

1. After King Saul, what was the name of the next king of Israel?

2. What town did David come from?

3. What did God like about David?
4. As a boy, what was David's job?
5. What did David do when he was sitting out there in the fields?
6. What was one of David's best known psalms?
7. Who anointed David to be the next king?
8. What did Samuel use to anoint David?

DAVID AS KING

Later, God sent a prophet named Nathan to King David. God told Nathan to say this to David: “I took you from the pasture, when you were following the flock. I took you to become the ruler over My people, over Israel. I have been with you wherever you have gone. I have defeated your enemies for you. Now, I will make you as famous as any of the great men on the earth. Also, I will choose a place for My people Israel. And, I will plant them, so that they can live in their own home — they will NOT be bothered anymore. I will give you rest from all your enemies. I am also declaring to you that I will make your descendants kings after you. Your days will come to an end, and you will die. But, at that time, I will make one of your sons to be the next king. He will build a temple for Me. And, I will make his kingdom strong forever! I will NOT withdraw My loving support from him, as I did from Saul. But your family and your kingdom will continue FOREVER before Me. Your rule will last forever!”<1>

Then King David went and sat in the presence of Yahweh. David prayed: “O Lord Yahweh, I’m not worthy. I am not important. Why have You made MY family so important!? And, why have You brought me to this point in life!? But that was not enough for You, O Lord Yahweh! You have also said these wonderful things about my future family. I am Your servant. O Lord Yahweh, this is NOT the usual way that You talk to human beings. What more can I, David, say to You!? O Lord Yahweh, You know me, Your servant, so well! You have done this wonderful thing because You said that You would do it — because You wanted to do so. And, You have decided to let ME know this. That is why You are so great, O Lord Yahweh! There is no one like You! There is no God except You! We have

heard all of this with our own ears! And, there is no other people like Your people Israel. They are the one nation on earth that God chose to be His own people. You used them to make Your Name famous. You did great and awesome miracles in the presence of Your people, for Your land. You freed Your people from slavery in Egypt. You saved them from pagan nations and their gods! You made the people of Israel Your special people forever! And, O Yahweh, You became their God. Now, O Yahweh God, keep the promise which You made about me and my family, and confirm it forever! Do as You have promised!”^{<2>}

King David ruled over the people of Israel for 40 years.^{<3>} The time of David’s death was getting closer. So, David gave his last commands to Solomon, his son. David said, “The time of my death is very near. You must be strong! Be a man! Obey everything that Yahweh, your God, commands. Live by His ways. Obey all His laws, rules, and decisions — do whatever He told us. Obey whatever is written in the Law of Moses. If you do these things, then you will be successful in everything you do and wherever you turn. And, if you obey God, then He will keep the promise that He made to me. This is what He promised: ‘Your descendants must live as I tell them. They must have complete trust in Me. If they do this, then a male from your family will ALWAYS be king over the people of Israel.’ “^{<4>} Then David died, and he was buried in the City of David (Jerusalem).^{<5>}

ENDNOTES:

<1> 2 Samuel 7:8-16

<2> 2 Samuel 7:18-25

<3> 1 Kings 2:11

<4> 1 Kings 2:1-4

<5> 1 Kings 2:10

QUESTIONS:

1. What was the name of the prophet who came to David to tell him that David’s lineage would never end?
2. How did King David respond to this special prophecy?
3. How long was David the king?

4. What is another name for Jerusalem?

KING SOLOMON

At first, Solomon loved Yahweh.<1> One night, when Solomon was very young, Yahweh appeared to him in a dream. God said to him, “Ask for anything you want. I will give it to you!”

Solomon answered, “Yes, O Yahweh, my God, You have caused me to be king in my father David’s place. But I am only a young man; I do NOT have the experience necessary. I am here among Your chosen people. They are a great people — there are too many of them to even count. So, I ask that You give me wisdom. Then I can govern Your people in the right way. Only then can I tell the difference between what is fair and what is unjust. Without wisdom, it would be impossible to govern this great people who belong to You!”

When Solomon asked Yahweh for wisdom, this pleased the Lord. So, God said to Solomon, “You did NOT ask for a long life for yourself. You did NOT ask for riches for yourself. And, you did NOT ask for the death of your enemies. Instead, you asked for insight to make the right decisions. Because you asked for wisdom, listen, I have given you what you asked for. Look, I have given you a wise and discerning mind. There has never been anybody like you in the past. And, no one will ever be like you in the future! I have given you what you did NOT ask for. You will have riches and honor, too. And, during your lifetime — among the kings — there will be NO king as rich and famous as you will become! If you follow Me and obey My laws and My commands, as your father David did, then I will also give you a long life.” Then Solomon woke up. And, look, it was a dream!<2>

King Solomon became richer and smarter than any other king. He was famous. Kings and queens began to come from everywhere just to hear King Solomon’s wisdom and to see his splendor.<3>

Solomon became a great philosopher and an author of thousands of proverbs and songs.<4> He also described everything about plant life, and he taught about animals, birds, reptiles, and fish; he studied them closely. Everyone wanted to learn wisdom from him.<5>

King David had already provided all the materials that his son Solomon would need to build God's temple — the huge blocks of stone, the expensive wood,^{<6>} the iron, the bronze, the silver, the gold, and the jewels. Everything was ready.^{<7>} So, King Solomon gave the order to begin building the temple of God.^{<8>} Solomon's workers did their very best to design it well. Finally, after 7 long years, the temple was finished. It was so beautiful!

Everything was ready for the dedication of God's temple.

The Holy Chest of Yahweh which contained God's laws was moved from the Meeting Tent, along with its sacred contents. (The Tent of Meeting^{<9>} had been built by Moses hundreds of years before near Mount Sinai.) And the Holy Chest was placed inside the inner sanctuary of the new temple of God — the Most Holy Place.^{<10>}

Then King Solomon spoke to God, "O God, can You really live here on the earth? No! Look, even the sky and the highest place in heaven cannot contain You. This temple which I have built certainly CANNOT contain You, either! Nevertheless, O Yahweh, please watch over this temple night and day. My God, heed my prayers and the prayers of Your people, Israel. Please hear us when we pray toward this place. Hear us from Your home in heaven. And, when You hear us, please forgive us!"^{<11>}

Then Solomon turned to the people and said, "Let your hearts be complete with Yahweh, our God. Live by His rules. Always obey His commands as you do today!"^{<12>}

Solomon slaughtered 22,000 cattle and 120,000 sheep as peace-offering sacrifices. In this way, the king and all the Israelites were dedicating the temple of Yahweh. The king and the people celebrated for a total of 14 days!^{<13>}

But King Solomon loved women. Later in his life, he married many foreign women — hundreds of them! He married them, even though Yahweh had commanded the Israelites NOT to intermarry with non-Jewish people, because they would cause the people of Israel to give their loyalty to other gods. These foreign women eventually caused Solomon to turn away from the one true God. By the time Solomon was old, these women led him into the worship of many foreign gods. He was NOT faithful to Yahweh, his

God, as his father David had been. Solomon even built several pagan temples where all his foreign wives could worship their own gods.<14>

Yahweh, the God of Israel, appeared twice before to Solomon to command him NOT to worship foreign gods (false gods). But Solomon did NOT obey what Yahweh commanded. His heart had turned away from Yahweh. Yahweh was angry with Solomon and said to him, “You have chosen to break your covenant with Me. You have NOT obeyed My commands. Therefore, I hereby vow that I will certainly rip your kingdom away from you! And, I will give it to one of your own officers (Jeroboam). However, I will not take your kingdom away while you are still alive. Why? Because of My love for your father, David. I will tear it away from your son (Rehoboam) when he becomes king. But I will not tear away the ENTIRE kingdom from him. I will leave him one tribe (mostly Judah) to rule. I will do this for the sake of David (My servant) and because of Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen.”<15>

Solomon ruled in Jerusalem over all of Israel for 40 years. And, it was a time of peace.<16>

At the end of King Solomon’s life, he realized that he was wrong. He wrote the Book of Ecclesiastes. The following is a quotation from him. It is found at the end of that book:

“Remember your Creator while you are still young. . . . Now, the conclusion of the whole thing has been heard. Here is my final advice:

‘Revere the true God and obey His commands!’

Why? Because this is the most important thing that anybody can do. God knows every single thing that people do, even the things that are done in secret. God knows all the good and all the bad. The one true God will judge everything you do!”<17>

But the damage had been done. The people had learned to worship many false gods. King Solomon had set the wrong example for them. They forgot the true God again. They were always worshiping idols (statues) made of stone and wood. Yahweh God was very unhappy about this.

ENDNOTES:

<1> 1 Kings 3:3

<2> 1 Kings 3:5-15; compare 1 Kings 4:31.

<3> 1 Kings 10:1-13,23,24; 4:31,34

<4> 1 Kings 4:32; see his three collections in the Book of Proverbs — Proverbs 1:1–9:18; 10:1–24:34; 25:1–31:31. He also wrote The Song of Solomon (also called The Song of Songs or Canticles), Psalm 72, Psalm 127, and the Book of Ecclesiastes (also known as Qoheleth).

<5> 1 Kings 4:33-34

<6> 1 Chronicles 22:2-4

<7> 1 Chronicles 22:14

<8> It took about \$3 billion to complete it.

<9> or, “the Tabernacle”

<10> 1 Kings 8:1-13

<11> 1 Kings 8:27,29,30

<12> 1 Kings 8:61

<13> 1 Kings 8:63,65

<14> 1 Kings 11:1-8

<15> 1 Kings 11:9-13

<16> 1 Kings 11:42

<17> Ecclesiastes 12:1,13,14

QUESTIONS:

1. What did young Solomon request from God?
2. What did God grant to him?
3. How did God communicate His message to King Solomon?

4. How smart was Solomon?
5. What famous building did King Solomon build?
6. What was placed inside the inner sanctuary of God's temple?
7. What led to King Solomon's downfall?
8. How long did King Solomon rule over Israel?
9. What was the name of Solomon's son?
10. What was King Solomon's final advice to us?

ELIJAH THE PROPHET

There were now TWO kingdoms. The northern one was named "Israel," and the southern one was named "Judah". These two Jewish kingdoms became enemies. They often fought against each other.

In the kingdom of Israel, ALL the kings were evil. They all worshiped false gods. Their idol worship often included sexual immorality.<1> Sometimes they even sacrificed their own children in fire!<2>

Many years after Solomon, Ahab became the king over Israel.<3>

God chose a prophet named Elijah from the town of Tishbeh. God wanted to remind King Ahab and the Jewish people that Yahweh is the ONLY God. Elijah told Ahab what Yahweh wanted him to do, but Ahab would NOT listen to Elijah. Ahab didn't want to obey the one true God; Ahab wanted his own god (Baal).

So, Elijah told Ahab, "I stand in the presence of the Always-Present One, the God of Israel. As surely as the Yahweh lives, there will be NO rain or dew during the next few years — unless I command it!"<4>

Meanwhile, King Ahab remained very stubborn. He and his many false prophets continued to make idols of wood and stone and metal. These were gods of Baal. Ahab believed that Baal was the real God, and Ahab wanted all the people to worship Baal, NOT Yahweh (the God of Elijah). No more

rain came. And, there was a famine in the land of Israel.

Three and a half years later,<5> the Lord God sent the prophet Elijah to King Ahab and the Jewish people. When Ahab saw Elijah, Ahab said to him, “Is that YOU, the biggest troublemaker in Israel!?”

Elijah answered, “I am not the one who has caused so much trouble for Israel! It is YOU and your father’s dynasty (Omri) who have caused all this trouble! YOU have abandoned the commands of Yahweh! YOU have followed the idols of Baal! Now, tell all the people of Israel to meet me at Mount Carmel. And, gather the 450 prophets of Baal there. And, bring along the 400 prophets of the goddess Asherah, too. They are supported from the rich supply of food from Queen Jezebel’s table.”

So, Ahab summoned all the Israelites, and he gathered those false prophets to Mount Carmel. Elijah stood in front of all the people. He said, “How long will you people try to serve BOTH Baal and Yahweh!? If Yahweh is the one true God, follow Him! But if Baal is the true God, follow him!”

The people said nothing.

Elijah said to them, “I am the ONLY prophet of Yahweh here. But there are 450 prophets of Baal. So, bring us two bulls. And, let the prophets of Baal choose one bull for them. Let them kill it and butcher it. Then, let them put the meat on the wood. However, they must NOT set fire to it. Then I will do the same thing with the other bull — I’ll lay it on the wood, but I won’t set fire to it either. Then you prophets of Baal should pray to your god, Baal. And I, I will pray to Yahweh. The one who answers the prayer will set fire to the wood supernaturally — HE is the one true God!”

And, all the people agreed that this was a good idea.

Then Elijah said to the false prophets of Baal, “There are so many of you. So, you men go first. Choose a bull and prepare it. Pray to your god, but do NOT start the fire!”

So, they took the bull that someone gave them and prepared it.

Then they prayed to Baal from morning until noon. They cried out: “O Baal, answer us!” But there was NO sound. No one answered. They continued to dance around the stone altar which they had built.

At noon, Elijah began to mock them. He said, “Pray louder! If Baal really IS a god, maybe he is preoccupied with thinking about something else! Or, maybe he is busy . . . or he has gone away on a trip!? Perhaps he’s asleep!? You might have to wake him up!?”

So, the false prophets prayed even louder. They even cut themselves with swords and spears until their blood flowed out on them. (This was the way they usually worshiped.) The middle of the day passed. The prophets of Baal were acting like wild men. They continued doing this until the middle of that afternoon. But NO sound came from Baal. Baal did NOT answer. Baal paid NO attention!

Then Elijah spoke to all the people, “Come here to me.” So they all gathered around him. And Elijah rebuilt the altar of Yahweh, because it had been torn down. And Elijah got twelve stones — each stone represented the twelve tribes of the twelve sons of Jacob. (Jacob was the man to whom Yahweh said: “Your name will be ‘Israel.’ ”) Then Elijah used these stones to rebuild the altar in honor of Yahweh. Then Elijah dug a small ditch around it. It was big enough to hold almost 3 gallons of seed. Elijah arranged the wood on the altar. And, he butchered his bull and laid the pieces of meat on the wood. Then Elijah said, “Fill four big jars with water. Pour the water on top of the meat and upon the wood.” They did it.

Then Elijah said, “Do it again!” And, they did it again.

Then he said, “Do it a third time!” And, they did it the third time. So, the water ran off the altar and filled up the little ditch.

At the time of the afternoon sacrifice, the true prophet Elijah went near the altar. He prayed: “O Yahweh, You ARE the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Israel (Jacob). I ask You today to prove that YOU are the one true God in the nation of Israel. And, prove that I am Your servant. Show these people that You commanded me to do all these things. O Yahweh, answer me. Answer my prayer! Show these people that YOU, Yahweh, are the one true God! Then the people will know that YOU are bringing them back to You again.”

Suddenly, the fire of Yahweh came down. And it burned up the meat-sacrifice, the wood, the stones, and the soil around the altar. It also dried up all the water in the little ditch.

When all the people witnessed this, they fell face-down to the ground. They cried out, “Yahweh, HE is the one true God! Yahweh, HE is the one true God!”

Then Elijah told them, “Seize those prophets of Baal! Do not let any of them run away!” So, the people captured all those prophets. Then Elijah led them down to Kishon Brook. There he executed all the false prophets.

Then Elijah said to King Ahab, “Now, go, eat and drink. I hear the sound of a heavy rain!” So, King Ahab went off to eat and drink. At the same time, Elijah climbed to the top of Mount Carmel to pray. Elijah sent word by his messenger to King Ahab: “Tell him to get his chariot ready and to go back home NOW! If Ahab doesn’t leave now, the rain will stop him!”

After a short time, the sky became black with dark clouds. And, the wind began to blow. Then a heavy rain began to fall. Immediately, Ahab got in his chariot and started back to Jezreel. Yahweh gave His power to Elijah. Elijah tightened his clothes around him. Then Elijah ran ahead of King Ahab, all the way to Jezreel!<6>

ENDNOTES:

<1> Leviticus 19:29; Numbers 25:1,2,31; Deuteronomy 23:17-18; 1 Kings 14:23-24; 15:12; 22:46; 2 Kings 23:6-7; Ezekiel 16:44-52; Hosea 4:14; Micah 1:7

<2> Leviticus 18:21; Deuteronomy 18:9-14; 2 Kings 16:3; 17:17; 21:6; 23:10; 2 Chronicles 28:3; Jeremiah 7:31; 16:21; 19:2-6; Ezekiel 16:21; 20:25,31; 23:37

<3> 1 Kings 16:29-33

<4> 1 Kings 17:1

<5> See 1 Kings 18:1; James 5:17-18.

<6> 1 Kings 18:17-42,44-46

QUESTIONS:

1. What was the name of the king of Israel when Elijah was a prophet?
2. How long did the drought last?
3. What was the name of Ahab’s false god?

4. How many false prophets of Baal opposed Elijah?

THE JEWISH PEOPLE REPEATEDLY TURNED AWAY FROM THEIR GOD

During the next few centuries, the Jewish people, as a whole, abandoned God. Nevertheless, God continued to send them His prophets to speak to them. Why? Because God wanted His people to return to Him. But they wanted to continue following different gods — false gods.<1>

Then, from the north, God sent the powerful Assyrians and Babylonians to conquer His people and to make most of them slaves.<2> This was a warning from God that the rest of His people should change their ways and serve only Him (the one true God). But they did NOT learn their lesson.

Yahweh, the God of their ancestors, sent warnings to them through His messengers (the prophets) again and again. God did that because He felt sorry for them and for the sake of His temple. But they made fun of those messengers of the one true God. They hated God's messages. So, they refused to listen to God's true prophets. Finally, God became so angry with His people that there was NO remedy.<3>

So God turned against them. He stopped trying to change their hearts. They were worshiping the sun, the moon, and the stars. This is what the prophet Amos had written: "God says, 'People of Israel, you killed animals and offered sacrifices in the desert for 40 years, but these sacrifices were not for Me. You carried with you the tent for Moloch<4> and the image of the star of your god, Rephan — statues which you made to worship. So, I will send you away beyond Babylon.' "<5>

ENDNOTES:

<1> See Isaiah 30:10-17; Jeremiah 35:15; 44:4-5; Lamentations 2:9,14; 4:11-14; Ezekiel 13:2-4,9,16; Hosea 6:4-7; 12:10; Amos 2:10-12; 3:7; Zephaniah 3:4,5; Zechariah 1:4; 7:7,12; 8:9.

<2> See 2 Kings 15:19; 16:18; 17:1-33; 18:1-37; 19:1-37; 2 Chronicles 33:11-13; Isaiah 10:6,12,22-24; 20:1-6.

<3> 2 Chronicles 36:15-16; see also Matthew 21:33-46.

<4> a false god of the Ammonites

<5> Acts 7:42-43; see Amos 5:25-27.

QUESTIONS:

1. What two nations did God first send to conquer His people Israel to make them slaves?
2. Where did God send His people as captives?

THE PROPHETS STILL GAVE THEM HOPE

“Where is Yahweh?”<1> “How will we be able to escape?”<2>

“When a trumpet blows a warning in a city, the people tremble because of fear. When trouble comes to a city, the Always-Present One has caused it. Before the Lord, the Always-Present One, does anything, He reveals His secret to His servants, the prophets. The lion has roared! Who wouldn’t be afraid!? The Lord, the Always-Present One, has spoken — someone must prophesy!”<3>

“But I must say this: ‘O people of Jacob, the Spirit of the Always-Present One is becoming very impatient. What is He going to do?’ God says: ‘If you were to live right, then I could say nice things to you. But recently, My people have become My enemy!’”<4>

“But Jerusalem<5> said: ‘Yahweh has abandoned me! My Lord has forgotten me!’ The Always-Present One answers: ‘Can a woman forget the baby she nurses!? No. Does she feel any kindness for the child she gave birth to!? Yes. Even if she could forget her children, I would NOT forget you!’”<6>

“Yahweh loves justice. He will NOT abandon His holy ones. He will always protect them. But the children of the evil people will die!”<7>

“O Yahweh, You will be true to the people of Jacob! You will be merciful to the people of Abraham, the ones for whom You took an oath, to our ancestors long, long ago.”<8>

“A wise and truly discerning person will know these things. The Always-Present One’s ways are upright. Good people live by following them, but

those who turn against God will falter because of them!”^{<9>}

About 700 years before Christ (the Messiah), the prophet Isaiah foretold this:

“The Lord Himself will give you a sign:
‘Look, the virgin will become pregnant.
She will give birth to a Son,
And she will name him ‘Immanuel.’”^{”<10>}

“Now those people live in darkness,
but they will see a great Light.
They dwell in a place that is very dark,
but Light will shine on them. . . .
Why? Because a special Child (Jesus)
will be born to us.
God will give us a Son!
He will be responsible for leading the people.
He will be called:
‘Wonderful’;
‘Counselor’;
‘Powerful God’;
‘Father of Eternity’;
and ‘Prince of Peace’.

There will be peace in his kingdom forever and ever.
His royal power will continue to grow.
He will rule as the true Successor of King David
and over David’s kingdom.
He will make it strong by upholding it
with justice and righteousness.
He will rule it from the time he comes until
forever!
Yahweh leads the armies of heaven
and His zeal will accomplish this!”^{<11>}

The prophet Micah said that the Messiah would be born in the town of Bethlehem.^{<12>} He was!

The prophet Zechariah predicted this:

“Rejoice greatly, O you people of Zion!

Shout for joy, O you people of Jerusalem!
Behold, your King is coming to you!

He does what is right, and he will have salvation
in himself.

He is gentle and riding on a donkey,
even upon a young donkey,
born of a work animal.”^{<13>}

“Look, the arrogant person whose soul is not
within him will fail. upright

But the person who is right with God by his faith
will live forever.”^{<14>}

“Those who know Yahweh trust in Him.
O Yahweh, You have never abandoned anyone
who continues to seek You.”^{<15>}

“God’s way is without fault.
Yahweh’s Word is pure.
He is a Shield to all those who trust Him.”^{<16>}

“I feel crushed.
Nevertheless, I have hope when I think of this:
The Always-Present One’s love never ends.
His mercies never stop.
They are fresh every morning.
O God, Your faithfulness is great.
I say to myself,
‘The Always-Present One is what I’ve got.
Therefore, I have hope, because of Him.’

The Always-Present One is good
to those who put their trust in Him,
to the person who looks to God for help.
It is good that one hopes quietly
for the Always-Present One to rescue him.”

^{<17>}

ENDNOTES:

<1> Micah 7:10; compare Lamentations 5:20.

<2> Isaiah 20:6

<3> Amos 3:6-8

<4> Micah 2:7-8a

<5> literally, “Zion”

<6> Isaiah 49:14-15

<7> Psalms 37:28; see also Deuteronomy 7:9; 2 Kings 8:19; 13:23; Psalms 89:3,8,24; Isaiah 25:1; 49:7

<8> Micah 7:20

<9> Hosea 14:9

<10> Isaiah 7:14. “Immanuel” means “God with us.” See the foreshadowing of the Messiah in Matthew 1:23 and Revelation 12:1-17. Compare Isaiah 8:8,10. This was also a fulfillment of Genesis 3:15; Jeremiah 31:22; and Micah 5:3. Through Jesus Christ, God is *still* with us (Luke 1:78; John 1:14; Colossians 2:4; 1 Timothy 3:16) and will forever be so in the future (Matthew 28:20; Revelation 21:3).

<11> Isaiah 9:2,6,7

<12> Micah 5:2; Matthew 2:1-18

<13> Zechariah 9:9

<14> Habakkuk 2:4

<15> Psalms 9:10

<16> Psalms 18:30

<17> Lamentations 3:20b-26

QUESTIONS:

1. Approximately how many years before Christ did Isaiah live?
2. What did the prophet Isaiah predict about the birth of Christ?
3. In what town would the Messiah be born in the future?
4. What animal was mentioned by the prophet Zechariah?

GOD SENDS FOREIGN ARMIES TO CONQUER HIS OWN PEOPLE

Even though God loved His people very much, it was necessary for God to send King Nebuchadnezzar and his army down upon the remainder of His people to capture them and to take them away to Babylon, hundreds of miles to the east.^{<1>} Thousands of them died. And, the Babylonians destroyed God's beautiful temple, which had been built by Solomon.^{<2>} The Jews were forced to leave their homeland and settle in a different land, where they became slaves to the Babylonians. Through the prophet Jeremiah, God promised that, in 70 years, a remnant of the Jews would be allowed to return to Palestine to rebuild the temple (though it would be greatly inferior in quality).^{<3>}

Later, the Persians conquered the Babylonians and established their own empire. It was vast.^{<4>} Almost all of the Jews were still forced to continue being slaves to the Persians, but a few of them were permitted to return to their homeland, just as God had predicted.^{<5>}

Many years later, a strong, military general from Greece named Alexander the Great rose up and conquered the entire Persian empire.^{<6>} It took him only eleven years to accomplish this! He and his armies fought the Persians all the way to Egypt and India. People everywhere began to speak Greek.

In time, the Romans^{<7>} came from Italy in the west to take control of all the lands around the Mediterranean Sea, including Palestine. It was called "The Roman Empire," and it lasted until 410 A.D.

ENDNOTES:

<1> The great Babylonian king, Nabopolassar, sent his son (Nebuchadnezzar) and his army to conquer the Egyptians at Carchemish (Daniel 1:1; Jeremiah 46:2-12). As a result, all areas of Palestine came under Nebuchadnezzar's control in 606 B.C., including Jerusalem (2 Kings 24:7). He captured thousands of Jews, especially the intelligentsia, and forcibly moved them to Babylon. Daniel and his friends were among them (Daniel 1:1,2,6; Jeremiah 27:19-20; 40:1).

<2> See 2 Kings 25:8-21. Solomon's glorious temple had stood for 416 years.

<3> See Jeremiah 25:10ff; Ezra 1:5-11; 3:1-13.

<4> See Esther 1:1; 8:9,10,14.

<5> See Ezra 1:1-7; Nehemiah 1:1-11; 2:1-9.

<6> See Daniel 7:6; 8:5-8,21; 10:20.

<7> See Daniel 2:33,34,40-43; 7:7,19-27.

QUESTIONS:

1. How long did the prophet Jeremiah say that the Jews would be in Babylonian captivity before some of them could return to their homeland in Canaan?
2. What was the name of the young Greek general who conquered the whole Persian Empire in only eleven years?
3. What people-group came from the west to take control of all the countries around the Mediterranean Sea?

THE MESSIAH WILL COME!

The ONLY descendant of David who could rule forever is the Messiah. (“Messiah” is the name of God’s Chosen One, who would save the people of the world from their sins.)

But David did not know *WHEN* God would send the Messiah. But, as it happened, the Israelites would have to wait a very long time before God’s Messiah came to earth — about 1,000 years!

THE TRUE GOD

The Lord is the one true God who made the whole world and everything in it. He is the Lord of the heavens and the earth. He does NOT live in temples which men build! This God is the One who gives all people life, breath, and everything else. He doesn’t need any help from human beings; God has everything He needs. God started with one man.<1> He made all the different people in the world to live everywhere. God decided exactly when and where they must live. He wanted the people to look for Him — the one true God. Perhaps they could search all around for Him and find Him — He is not far from any of us.<2>

Therefore, we ARE God’s children! So, we must not think that deity is

something like what man imagines or makes out of gold, silver, or stone. In the past, although man didn't understand God, the one true God ignored this. But NOW, God commands every person in the world to change his heart. God has set a day when He will judge the whole world.^{<3>} The evil people will go off into eternal punishment, but the good people will go into eternal life.^{<4>}

In the Book of Revelation, John wrote: "And, I saw a great white throne and the One who was sitting on it. The earth and the sky ran away from His face, but they would not find any place to hide. I saw dead people — important and unimportant. They were standing in front of the throne. Books were opened. And, another book — the Book of Life — was opened. The dead people were judged from the things which had been written in the books, according to the way they had lived. The ocean yielded the dead people who were in it. Then Death and Hades^{<5>} yielded the dead people who were in them. Each person was judged by the way he had lived. Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire.^{<6>} (The second death is the same thing as the lake of fire.) If someone's name was not found written in the Book of Life, then he was thrown into the lake of fire."^{<7>}

WHAT GOD WANTS

God wants every person to be saved and to begin understanding the truth.^{<8>} The gracious love of God has appeared to save all mankind.^{<9>} The Lord is not slow to keep His promise (as some people think of "slow"). No, He is patient with you. He wants everyone to find room for a change in their hearts. He doesn't want anyone to be lost. The Day of the Lord will come suddenly, like a robber. The heavens will pass away with a whizzing noise. The elements will be destroyed with heat. The earth and every force in it will be gone.^{<10>}

If someone doesn't believe in God, he cannot please God, because the person who comes to God MUST believe that He lives.^{<11>} That person must also believe that God will give rewards to the people who are searching for Him.^{<12>} God has set a day when He will judge the whole world. He will be fair, using a man to do this. He chose this man a long time ago. God proved it to everyone by raising that man from death!^{<13>}

From the very beginning, God planned to send the Messiah (Jesus). The first promise of the Messiah came to Adam and Eve. God promised that one

Descendant of Eve would someday be born who would crush the Devil's head.<14> (The snake who fooled Eve was Satan.) So, this promise meant that the future Messiah would defeat Satan completely!

Also, God, the Always-Present One, promised Abraham that, through Abraham, all people-groups of the world would receive a blessing.<15> This blessing would come true when the Messiah arrived on earth. The Messiah would make it possible for every people-group in the world to be saved!

And, God promised Moses that, in the future, God would raise up another prophet like Moses.<16> This was another promise about the Messiah who would come at some later time.

Through the prophet Jeremiah, God promised that He would make a NEW covenant. But, this agreement would NOT be like the covenant that God made with Israel at Mount Sinai. In this new covenant, God would write His law on the people's hearts. The people would know God personally. They would become His special people (Christians), and God would forgive their sins. The Messiah would start this new covenant with his own blood!<17>

God's prophets also said that the Messiah would be a prophet, a priest, and a king. (A prophet is a person who hears the words of God and then proclaims God's words to the people.) The Chosen One (the Messiah), whom God promised to send to the world, would be the perfect Prophet.<18>

The Messiah would be the perfect High Priest who would offer himself on a Roman cross as the perfect sacrifice to God.<19>

A king is someone who rules over a kingdom and judges its people. The Messiah would be the perfect King who would sit on the throne of his ancestor David. The Messiah would rule over the whole world forever. And, he would always judge fairly and make all the right decisions.<20>

ENDNOTES:

<1> Adam

<2> Acts 17:24-27

<3> Acts 17:29-31

<4> Matthew 25:46

<5> the Greek word for the unseen world of the dead

<6> hell

<7> Revelation 20:11-15

<8> 1 Timothy 2:4

<9> Titus 2:11

<10> 2 Peter 3:9-10

<11> or, “exists”

<12> Hebrews 11:6

<13> Acts 17:31

<14> See Genesis 3:15.

<15> See Genesis 12:2-3.

<16> See Deuteronomy 18:15,18,19.

<17> See Jeremiah 31:31-34; Hebrews 8:7-13.

<18> See Matthew 13:57; 21:11,46; Mark 6:4; Luke 4:24; 7:16; 13:33; 24:19; John 1:25; 4:19,44; 6:14; 7:40; 9:17; Acts 3:22-23; 7:31.

<19> See John 1:29; Hebrews 2:17; 3:1; 4:14-15; 5:6,9,10; 6:20; 7:3,11,15,17,21-27; 8:1-2; 9:11-15,23,24,26; 10:19-22; 13:12.

<20> See Matthew 2:2; 21:5; 25:34,40; Mark 15:32; Luke 1:32-33; 19:38; John 1:49; 12:13,15; 19:21; 1 Timothy 6:14-15; Revelation 17:14.

QUESTIONS:

1. Where does God live?

2. Does God need anything from anybody?

3. Can you hide from God?

4. What did God ignore for centuries?
5. What has God now commanded every person to do? (See Acts 17:30.)
6. What will happen on the Judgment Day?
7. What is the “Book of Life”?
8. What happens to you if *your* name is not found in the Book of Life?
9. What is “the second death”?
10. Does God want to condemn anyone?
11. If you want to come to God, what is the first thing you must believe? (See Hebrews 11:6.)
12. What is the second thing that you must believe about God?
13. Whom did God resurrect from death?

JESUS

God treats everyone the same. God accepts any person who worships Him and does what is right. It doesn't matter what race a person comes from. God has spoken to the sons of Israel. He sent them the Good News (the gospel), that peace has come through Jesus the Messiah, who is the Lord of all people!<1> The news about this salvation has been sent to US!<2> Do you know what happened all over Judea? It began in Galilee after John the Baptizer proclaimed to the people about immersion in water. You know about Jesus from Nazareth. God anointed<3> him with the Holy Spirit and power. Jesus went everywhere doing good things for people. He healed everyone who was ruled by the Devil. God was with Jesus. The twelve apostles<4> saw all of the miracles that Jesus did in Judea and in Jerusalem.

One of Jesus' apostles was a man named Judas Iscariot. Judas loved money. Judas was in charge of the apostles' money-bag. (He often stole a little money out of that bag!)<5> After Jesus and the apostles arrived in Jerusalem, Judas decided to go to some Jewish leaders, the enemies of Jesus. Judas offered to betray Jesus to them in exchange for some money.

The Jewish leaders paid Judas 30 silver coins to betray Jesus to them.

(This happened just as the prophet Zechariah had predicted.)^{<6>} Judas agreed. So he took their money and left. Judas began looking for an opportunity to help the Jewish leaders to capture Jesus.^{<7>}

At the evening meal, Jesus said to his apostles, “One of you will betray me!” These close followers were very surprised to hear Jesus say that. They asked Jesus, “Who would do such a thing!?”^{<8>}

Jesus said to them, “The man to whom I give this piece of bread is the one!” Then Jesus gave the bread to Judas Iscariot!

After Judas received the bread, Satan entered into him. Then Judas left them and went off to help the Jewish leaders to arrest Jesus.^{<9>}

After supper, Jesus and his followers walked to a garden on Olive Mountain to pray. Jesus told them, “You will all abandon me tonight! This is written in the Scriptures: ‘I will hit the Shepherd (Jesus) and all the sheep (the apostles) will be scattered!’”^{<10>}

That very night, Judas came to that garden with some soldiers and a large group of men who were sent by the Jewish leaders. They were carrying torches, swords, and clubs. Judas came near to Jesus and said, “Hello, Teacher!” Then Judas kissed him. (This was the signal for the soldiers to know which man was the one for them to arrest.) Then Jesus said, “Judas, are you betraying me with a kiss of friendship!?”

As the soldiers were arresting Jesus, Simon Peter pulled out his sword to defend Jesus. And, Peter cut off the right ear of a servant of the high priest. Jesus said, “Put your sword away! If I wanted to do so, I could ask God for an army of angels to defend me. But I must obey God, my heavenly Father!” Then Jesus healed that servant’s ear. After Jesus was arrested, all the apostles ran away.^{<11>}

The Jews living in Jerusalem and the Jewish leaders did NOT realize that Jesus was the Redeemer. The words that the prophets wrote about the Messiah were read to the Jews every sabbath day,^{<12>} but they didn’t understand. The Jewish leaders condemned the Messiah to death. When they did this, they made the words of the old prophets come true! They couldn’t find any real reason why Jesus should die, yet they asked Governor Pilate^{<13>} to kill him.

When Judas saw that Jesus had been condemned to death, he brought back the 30 silver coins to the Jewish leaders. Judas said, “I have done wrong! I’ve handed over an innocent man (Jesus) to die!”

But the Jewish leaders answered, “We don’t care! That’s YOUR problem!”

Then Judas tossed that money in the direction of the temple sanctuary and left. And Judas went off and killed himself by hanging!<14>

These Jews did all the things that the Scriptures had said about Jesus the Messiah.<15>

Jesus was killed.<16> Roman soldiers nailed him to a cross.<17>

Then they took him down from the cross of wood and put him in a tomb. But God raised him up from death!

After this, for many days, Jesus was seen by the people who had gone with him from Galilee to Jerusalem. Jesus’ apostles are now his witnesses to the people. We are telling you the Good News: God made a promise to Abraham and his descendants. We are their descendants,<18> and God has made this promise come true for us. God did this by raising Jesus from death.<19>

On the third day after Jesus’ death, God raised Jesus to life! God allowed a few people to see him clearly. Jesus was not seen by all of the people; only the witnesses whom God had already chosen — they saw him! The apostles are those witnesses! They ate and drank with Jesus after he was raised from death. Jesus commanded them to proclaim the Good News to the people. Jesus told them to tell us that he is the one whom God chose to be the Judge of all people, living or dead. Every person who commits himself to Jesus will be forgiven through the authority of Jesus. All the prophets say that this is true.<20>

You must understand what we are telling you: You can have forgiveness of your sins through this man Jesus. The Law of Moses could NOT make you right with God, but everyone who believes the Good News is made right!<21>

The Good News (the gospel) for us is this: Jesus carried our sins in his body on that cross. His wounds were used to heal us.<22> Jesus came to his own people, but most of the Jewish people would NOT accept him. But he gave the right to become God's children to others who did accept him, to those who believe in his name.<23>

ENDNOTES:

<1> Acts 10:34-36

<2> Acts 13:26

<3> When God selected a man, this choice was shown by anointing him (rubbing him with oil). See 1 Samuel 10:1; 16:1-3,13. It was like crowning someone as king.

<4> This word means "special messengers."

<5> John 12:6

<6> See Zechariah 11:12-13.

<7> Matthew 26:14-16

<8> Matthew 26:20-25

<9> John 13:21-30

<10> Mark 14:26,27,32; Zechariah 13:7

<11> Matthew 26:47-56; Mark 14:43-50; Luke 22:47-53; John 18:1-11

<12> The Jewish day of rest. The Law of Moses and the writings of the prophets were read regularly in synagogues, Jewish places of study and prayer.

<13> the Roman governor at that time. The Jewish leaders could not execute Jesus without Pilate's official permission.

<14> Matthew 27:3-5

<15> Acts 13:27-29

<16> Acts 10:37-39

<17> Mark 15:24

<18> See Romans 4:1-25.

<19> Acts 13:29-33

<20> Acts 10:40-43

<21> Acts 13:38-39

<22> 1 Peter 2:24; Isaiah 53:4

<23> John 1:11-12

QUESTIONS:

1. Who is the Lord of all people?
2. Does it matter to God what color a person's skin is?
3. What was the name of the man who betrayed Jesus?
4. How much money did he receive for doing that?
5. Did Jesus know ahead of time that he was about to be betrayed?
6. Did Jesus predict that his followers would abandon him?
7. How did Judas Iscariot identify Jesus to the soldiers?
8. Who tried to fight for Jesus?
9. Who were the first ones to put Jesus on trial?
10. What happened to Judas Iscariot later?
11. How was Jesus of Nazareth put to death?
12. Who crucified Jesus?
13. Who was Pontius Pilate?
14. How long was Jesus in that tomb?
15. Did anyone actually see Jesus after he was raised from death? Who?
16. Can obeying the Law of Moses make us right with God?
17. You can get forgiveness of your sins only through what Person? (See Acts 13:38.)

WHY JESUS CAME

In the beginning was the Message,<1> and the Message was with God, and the Message was deity.<2> The Message became human and lived among us for a while. We saw his glory, the kind of glory like that of the Father's one and only<3> Son — full of gracious love and truth.<4>

Why did the Son of God appear? To destroy the Devil's (Satan's) works.<5> Jesus wanted to use death to destroy the Devil who has the power of death. Jesus also wanted to set all people free from the slavery of fearing death all their lives. Jesus offered himself as a repairing sacrifice to God for the forgiveness of the sins of the people.<6> He came to find lost people and to save them.<7>

Even though Jesus was God's Son, Jesus learned to obey from the things he suffered. After Jesus was made perfect, he became the Source of eternal salvation for everyone who will obey him.<8> Jesus is God's Lamb who takes away the world's sin!<9> His blood has set us free. Christians have the forgiveness of sins!<10>

Jesus Christ said, "If you stay with my teaching, then you are truly my followers. You will find out the truth, and the truth will set you free."<11>

CHRIST DIED FOR US

While we were still helpless and ungodly, Christ (the Messiah) died for us — at exactly the right time. It is rare when anyone dies for another person — even for a righteous person. However, there are instances when somebody dares to die for a good person. But God reassures us of His love for us in this way: While we were still SINNERS, Christ died for us!

Since Christ's blood has made us right with God, we will be saved even more so from God's punishment through Christ. We were God's enemies, but the death of His Son was used to make us God's friends. Now that we have become friends of God, we will be saved even more so by Christ's life.<12>

God uses Christ to bring us back to Himself. When God was bringing the

people of the world back to Himself in Christ, He was not counting their sins against them. God gave the apostles the message about how He brings people back to Himself.<13>

In the past, you did evil things. You were strangers and enemies of God in your mind. But now, Christ's physical body has brought you back to God through death. He wanted to present you holy, spotless, and without guilt before Him.<14> Salvation does not come from you; it is God's gift. It does NOT come from human effort. If that were true, then someone could brag about earning it.<15> Salvation did not come from any good deeds that we ourselves did. No, it came by God's mercy!<16> I am not ashamed of the Good News, because it is God's power for saving anyone who believes it — Jews first, then non-Jews.<17>

ENDNOTES:

<1> or, "the Expression" (Greek: *Logos*)

<2> or, "divine." (The Greek definite article is *not* present before this Greek word; therefore, it is not referring to God the Father.)

<3> or, "only begotten"

<4> John 1:1,14

<5> 1 John 3:8

<6> Hebrews 2:14-15,17

<7> Luke 19:10

<8> Hebrews 5:8-9

<9> John 1:29

<10> Ephesians 1:7

<11> John 8:31-32

<12> Romans 5:6-10

<13> 2 Corinthians 5:18-19

<14> Colossians 1:21-22

<15> Ephesians 2:8-9

<16> Titus 3:5

<17> Romans 1:16

QUESTIONS:

1. Why did Jesus come to earth?
2. Before Jesus came to earth, who had the power of death?
3. As a human being, what did Jesus learn from his suffering?
4. Who has been forgiven by God?
5. Who are the true followers of Jesus? (See John 8:31.)
6. Why was the death of Jesus necessary?
7. Can you ever be good enough to go to heaven on your own?

JESUS — THE ONLY WAY

There is one God. There is one go-between between God and human beings — the man Christ Jesus.<1> Jesus said “I am the Way and the Truth and the Life! The only way anyone can come to the Father is through ME!”<2> Jesus is the ONLY one who can save people. His authority is the ONLY power given to the world by which we can be saved.<3> Jesus suffered the pains of death, but God set him free. God raised Jesus up from death. It was impossible for death to hold him.<4> Christ NEVER sinned!<5>

Jesus said, “The Father has life in Himself. In the same way, He gave life to the Son to have in himself. The Father gave the Son authority to judge, because he is the Son of Man (the Messiah). Don’t be surprised at this, because the time is coming when everyone in the graves will hear the voice of the Son of God. They will come out of the graves. Those who lived right will rise to life, but those who did evil things will rise for judgment.”<6>

Jesus said, “The person who rejects ME and does not accept my words has

something to condemn him — the very message which I spoke. That message will condemn him on the last day.”^{<7>} A person must continue to follow ONLY the teaching of Christ. If anyone goes beyond Christ’s teaching, then he does NOT have God.^{<8>} God loved the people of the world so much that He gave up His one and only Son. Every person who commits himself to Jesus will NOT be destroyed. Instead, that person will have eternal life.^{<9>}

Jesus said, “I told you that you would die in your sins. If you do NOT believe that I am the one, you will die in your sins!^{<10>} If all of you don’t change your hearts, then you will be destroyed!”^{<11>} So, change your hearts! Come back to God, so that He may wipe out your sins.^{<12>} Change your lives and do good things. This will show that you have truly changed your hearts.^{<13>} Surely you know that God’s kindness is meant to lead you to a change of heart!?^{<14>}

ENDNOTES:

<1> 1 Timothy 2:5

<2> John 14:6

<3> Acts 4:12

<4> Acts 2:24

<5> 2 Corinthians 5:21

<6> John 5:26-29

<7> John 12:48

<8> 2 John 1:9

<9> John 3:16

<10> John 8:24

<11> Luke 13:3

<12> Acts 3:19

<13> Acts 26:20

<14> Romans 2:4

QUESTIONS:

1. Who made it possible for us to get right with God?
2. Who is the ONLY one who can save people eternally? (See Acts 4:12.)
3. Why was it impossible for death to hold Jesus?
4. What clearly shows that God loves us?
5. What happens to you if you reject Jesus Christ and you won't accept his teachings? (See John 12:48.)
6. What is God's power for saving any person who believes it? (See Romans 1:16.)
7. What really shows that a person has changed his heart? (See Acts 26:20.)

WHAT YOU MUST DO

Near the end of Jesus' life on earth, he asked his apostles, "Who do YOU say I am?"

Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God!"<1>

Jesus says to us, "If anyone confesses, in front of other people, that he believes in me, then I will speak up for him in front of my Father in heaven. But, if anyone is ashamed of me in front of people, then I will be ashamed of him in front of my Father in heaven."<2>

One of the last things that Jesus said to his apostles was this: "When you have gone into the whole world, proclaim the Good News to all mankind. The person who believes it and is immersed will be saved, but the person who does NOT believe it will be condemned."<3>

About ten days later, Peter proclaimed the truth to a large group of people in Jerusalem. When the people heard this, they felt a sharp, cutting pain in their conscience. They asked Peter and the other apostles, "What should we do, brothers?"

Then Peter answered them, “Change your hearts and each one of you must be immersed by the authority of Jesus the Messiah, so that your sins may be forgiven. Then you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”^{<4>} Then those people who accepted what Peter said were immersed. On that day, about 3,000 people were added to the group of believers.

After this, the believers dedicated themselves to learning the teaching of the apostles, to sharing with each other, to eating the supper of the Lord, and to prayer. The believers were praising God. All of the people liked them. More and more people were being saved every day; the Lord was adding them to His family of believers.^{<5>}

Later, Paul was told this: “Now, don’t wait any longer. Rise up, get yourself immersed and get your sins washed away, trusting in Jesus’ name.”^{<6>} Though Paul had not eaten for three days, he was immersed BEFORE he ate!^{<7>}

In Philippi, a jailor asked Paul and Silas, “Men, what must I do to be saved?”

They said to him, “Commit yourself to the Lord Jesus and you will be saved — you and all the people living in your house.” So, Paul and Silas told the story of the Lord Jesus to the jailor and to all the people in his household. It was late at night, but the jailor took Paul and Silas home and washed their wounds. The jailor and all of his people were immersed right away. After this, the jailor took Paul and Silas home and gave them some food. All of the people were very happy because they now trusted in God.^{<8>}

Paul wrote to the Christians in Rome, “You know that all of us were immersed into Christ Jesus. Don’t you know that we were immersed into his death? So, through immersion, we were buried with him into death. Christ was raised from death through the glory of the Father. In the same way, WE will live a new life.”^{<9>}

ENDNOTES:

<1> Matthew 16:15-16

<2> Matthew 10:32-33

<3> Mark 16:15-16

<4> Acts 2:37-38

<5> Acts 2:41,42,47

<6> Acts 22:16

<7> Acts 9:9,18-19

<8> Acts 16:30-34

<9> Romans 6:3-4

QUESTIONS:

1. When Jesus asked his followers, “But who do you say I am?” what was Simon Peter’s response? (See Matthew 16:16.)
2. According to Mark’s Gospel, what two things did Jesus say that you must do in order to be saved? (See Mark 16:16.)
3. What is the purpose of repenting and being dipped in water? (See Acts 2:38.)
4. When you are completely sure of what God wants you to do, how soon should you do it?
5. After you finally decide to die to your sins, how can you be buried with Christ?
6. How can you be raised to a new life with him?
(See Romans 6:2-5.)

BECOME A CHRISTIAN NOW!

Jesus said, “Listen, I stand at the door. I am knocking. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come inside with him. We will have dinner together.<1> If you are thirsty, come to me and drink!”<2> Let the person who is thirsty come. Let him take as much of the living water as he wants.<3>

Jesus went to the apostles and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, after you’ve gone out, make followers for me from every ethnic group.<4> Immerse them in water by the authority of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Teach them to obey everything I

commanded you. Remember, I will always be with you — even until the end of time!”^{<5>}

Jesus says, “Listen! I am coming soon. The reward I have is with me. I will pay back each person according to the way he lived.”^{<6>} No one knows when that exact time will be. The angels in heaven don’t know it. Jesus didn’t know it. Only the heavenly Father knows.^{<7>}

Not everyone who says to Jesus, “Lord! Lord!” will enter the kingdom of heaven. “Only the person who DOES what my heavenly Father wants will enter it.^{<8>} So, put God’s kingdom first and what is right.”^{<9>}

ENDNOTES:

<1> Revelation 3:20

<2> John 7:37

<3> Revelation 22:17

<4> or, “every cultural group.”

<5> Matthew 28:18-20

<6> Revelation 22:12

<7> Mark 13:32

<8> Matthew 7:21

<9> Matthew 6:33

QUESTIONS:

1. Jesus told the apostles to make followers for Jesus from every ethnic group in the world. After that, what two things did he say? (See Matthew 28:19-20.)
2. *WHEN* is Jesus coming back?
3. Who will enter the kingdom of God? (See Matthew 7:21.)
4. Are you ready to follow Jesus, no matter what?