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## *Have you ever wondered who Jesus Christ is--and why so many people follow His teachings?*

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If so, this message, along with a chart to follow, may bring new meaning and understanding to these ponderings.

After reading the 66 books of the Bible through several times, God's intent for human kind is clear. These books show God's plan is for men and women to be in a day-by-day loving relationship with Him. An ongoing *unconditional* love is ever-extended for all who respond. This is a love greater than human beings can reach in any other way. And because of that great love, God sent His son Jesus to be with us as the embodiment of unconditional love. Why? To give us a "visual" of God's Self and to extend a message of mercy, forgiveness, and acceptance.

### **What was Jesus Like? And, What Did He do?**

Jesus had great passion for people--especially those who were sick or troubled emotionally or spiritually. He performed amazing healings and miracles. This proved He was sent by God and that His message was, and is, true. (These teaching are recorded in the four Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.<sup>1</sup>)

The fulcrum of Jesus' passion was to carry out the mission given to Him by His Father. The very heart and will of God for all humankind are portrayed through Jesus' teachings. His work, while here on earth, constantly saw Him helping others triumph over their difficulties and their sorrows.

Jesus did not spend His time with people who were rich and self-satisfied. The Jewish religious leaders were of that ilk. Consequently, the heads of the Jewish religion hated Jesus. That became *their* passion. In the end, although they could find no fault in Him, these jealous leaders pressured the Roman government into crucifying Him. That was the darkest day of human history, yet through it God's plan was fulfilled<sup>2</sup> as Christ carried the stains (called sins) of every person who lived, or ever would live, to that cross. Then, He arose from the grave, as was prophesied centuries before in Psalms 16:10.<sup>3</sup> In this way, Jesus Christ became our Savior who loves us in the midst of it all--and forgives us as we so often need that help.

God used the very "wrongness" of Jesus' crucifixion to bring salvation to all who put their trust in Him, asking for salvation. The word "salvation" means wholeness. And wholeness is what God wants for us. We advance in wholeness through prayer and reading the Scriptures. Our desire to do God's will sees us finding our unique way of being a part of God's work on earth.

The Apostle Paul wrote about Jesus in the book of Acts, Chapter 10, verses 35-45, which I will paraphrase, here. Paul told his audience that God shows no partiality, but that throughout the whole world all who revere God and desire to do what is right are accepted by Him. Paul spoke of how God taught the children of Israel, through the prophets of the Old Testament--but, that now God was "preaching peace through Jesus Christ." From John the Baptist on, the Holy Spirit worked through Jesus with great power. "He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by 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 killed by hanging on a tree (verse 9)." Amazing as it is: *God raised Jesus up on the third day*. Many people saw Jesus walking and talking in Jerusalem. "Some, ate and drank with Him after He arose from the dead (verse 41)."

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<sup>1</sup> These books, called "the Gospels," are the first four books of the New Testament where Jesus' life is recorded, along with His teachings.

<sup>2</sup> John 4:34 and John 19:30.

<sup>3</sup> Matthew 28, verses 5, 6 and 9 extends specifics of Jesus' resurrection from the grave.

The disciples were commanded to preach to the people everywhere, testifying “that it is He who was ordained by God to be Judge of the living and the dead” (Acts 10:42). So, today, as then: It is “through His name” that we are reconciled to God. For, all who seek to be reconciled to God become His chosen children.

This writing is about Jesus. But, many have wondered, “Who is God, the one who sent Jesus to us? And, *what is it that God wants of us?*” I am currently reading the Bible again, from the beginning to the end, for the sixth time. What is most evident is that God loves the people He created. And, that God wants a people through whom He can work. In order for God to be able to use us within His eternal, optimal design we must depend on our sins being covered by the very love of God—portrayed for us through Jesus on the cross. We will make mistakes; and, we have faults. The truth is that we are continually strengthened and helped as we purpose to overcome our failures and the things that make us less than we want to be.

In this way, we take on more of God’s loving nature toward others—and God does His work through us. We hear His nudging as God directs us in ways that bring goodness and help to the earth and its people. We can hear God speaking directly to us, guiding us in a “still, small voice” within our souls.<sup>4</sup> It brings great joy knowing that God is doing good for others through us.

“God is love.”<sup>5</sup> And being in love with us *God longs for our wholeness*. The *measure* of God’s desire for our wholeness can be seen through Jesus Christ. The prophecies in the chart below portray the *greatest* sign of God’s love, based on a plan to bring us Christ who was the very epitome of love in action.

Before Jesus left the earth to return to His Father, He promised to send us His Holy Spirit to comfort, to teach, and to guide us. Henceforward, it is the Holy Spirit of the Lord who manifests God’s gifts of loving service *through us*.<sup>6</sup>

Jesus promised to *return* to the earth.<sup>7</sup> Right now the human race is in a period of grace, God’s grace. When the Gospel has been taught throughout the entire world—to people of all the races—the Father will send His Son to earth for a second time. Christians throughout the world long for that *Event!* Meanwhile, as disciples of Christ, *we are expressions of God’s presence on earth*.

Many wonder who Jesus is, or was, yet have not settled that question for themselves. Decide for yourself as you look at His life and His death. Portrayed below, in the following chart, are prophecies about Jesus, laid alongside Scriptures showing that these prophecies were fulfilled. Keep in mind that the prophecies of the Old Testament promising the coming of a messiah—His life and His death—were written many centuries before His birth.

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<sup>4</sup> 1 Kings 19:12.

<sup>5</sup> 1 John 4:8 and 1 John 4:16.

<sup>6</sup> In Corinthians 12:8-13 gifts of the Spirit are listed.

<sup>7</sup> Acts 1: 9-11; Matthew 26:64; Luke 21:27; Hebrew 9:28.

*Prophecies found within the Old Testament along with  
Their Fulfillment (shown in the New Testament)*

Old Testament Promise Made	New Testament Promise Fulfilled
Genesis 3:15, "And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel."	Galatians 4:4, 5 "But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons."
Numbers 24:17 holds promise that the One to come would be from the "seed of Jacob." And, Isaiah 9:7 shows He will be a Ruler, and an heir to the throne of David.	Matthew 1:2, provides Jesus' genealogy, "Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham: Abraham begot Isaac, Isaac begot Jacob . . ."
Micah 5:2 foretold Bethlehem as His birthplace, promising His rule would be "from of old and everlasting."	Matthew 2:1, "Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king . . ."
Isaiah 7:14 speaks of the "virgin birth," Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel."	Matthew 1:18, "Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit."
Deuteronomy 18:15, "The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear . . ."	John 6:14, "Then those men, when they had seen the sign that Jesus did, said, 'This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world.'" Also see, Jn. 1:45, Acts 3:19-26.
Isaiah 53:3, "He is despised and rejected by men, A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, [our] faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him."	John 1:11, "He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him."
Isaiah 11:2 "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 . . ."	Luke 2:52, "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men."
Zechariah 9:9, "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He [is] just and having salvation, Lowly and riding on a donkey, A colt, the foal of a donkey."	John 12:13, 14, "The next day a great multitude that had come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, took branches of palm trees and went out to meet Him, and cried out: "Hosanna! 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD! The King of Israel!"
Psalms 41:9, "Even my own familiar friend in whom I trusted, Who ate my bread, Has lifted up his heel against me."	Mark 14: 19, 20, And they began to be sorrowful, and to "say unto him one by one, Is it I? And another said, Is it I? And he answered and said unto them, It is one of the twelve, that dippeth with me in the dish."
Zechariah 11:12, "Then I said to them, "If it is agreeable to you, give me my wages; and if not, refrain." So they weighed out for my wages thirty pieces of silver."	Matthew 26:15, 16, "and said, "What are you willing to give me if I deliver Him to you?" And they counted out to him thirty pieces of silver. So from that time he sought opportunity to betray Him."

Old Testament Promise Made	New Testament Promise Fulfilled
Isaiah 53:7, "He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, And as a sheep before its shearers is silent, So He opened not His mouth."	Matthew 26: 62, 63, And the high priest arose and said to Him, "Do You answer nothing? What is it these men testify against You?" But Jesus kept silent. And the high priest answered and said to Him, "I put You under oath by the living God: Tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God!"
Psalms 22:16, "For dogs have surrounded Me; The congregation of the wicked has enclosed Me. They pierced My hands and My feet;"	John 20:27, "Then He said to Thomas, "Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing."
Psalms 22: 6-8, "But I [am] a worm, and no man; A reproach of men, and despised by the people. All those who see Me ridicule Me; They shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, "He trusted in the LORD, let Him rescue Him; Let Him deliver Him, since He delights in Him!"	Matthew 27:39, 40, "And those who passed by blasphemed Him, wagging their heads and saying, "You who destroy the temple and build it in three days, save Yourself! If You are the Son of God, come down from the cross." (Also Mt. 27:41-44 and Mk. 15:29-32.)
Psalms 27:12, "Do not deliver me to the will of my adversaries; For false witnesses have risen against me, And such as breathe out violence."	Matthew 26: 60, 61, "Now the chief priests, the elders, and all the council sought false testimony against Jesus to put Him to death, but found none. Even though many false witnesses came forward, they found none. But at last two false witnesses came forward and said, "This [fellow] said, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God and to build it in three days.'"
Psalms 22:8, "He trusted in the LORD, let Him rescue Him; Let Him deliver Him, since He delights in Him!"	Matthew 27:43, ""He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him now if He will have Him; for He said, 'I am the Son of God.' "
Psalms 69:4, "Those who hate me without a cause Are more than the hairs of my head; They are mighty who would destroy me, [Being] my enemies wrongfully; Though I have stolen nothing, I [still] must restore [it].	John 15:23-25, "He who hates Me hates My Father also. If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would have no sin; but now they have seen and also hated both Me and My Father. But [this happened] that the word might be fulfilled which is written in their law, 'They hated Me without a cause.'"
Isaiah 50:6, "I gave My back to those who struck [Me], And My cheeks to those who plucked out the beard; I did not hide My face from shame and spitting."	Mark 14:65, "Then some began to spit on Him, and to blindfold Him, and to beat Him, and to say to Him, "Prophesy!" And the officers struck Him with the palms of their hands."
Psalms 69:21, "They also gave me gall for my food, And for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink."	John 19:29, "Now a vessel full of sour wine was sitting there; and they filled a sponge with sour wine, put [it] on hyssop, and put [it] to His mouth."
Psalms 100:4, "In return for my love they are my accusers, But I [give myself to] prayer."	Luke 23:34, "Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do." And they divided His garments and cast lots."
Zechariah 12:10, "And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced.	John 19:34, "But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out."
Psalms 22:18, "They divide My garments among them, And for My clothing they cast lots."	Mark 15:24, "And when they crucified Him, they divided His garments, casting lots for them [to determine] what every man should take."

Old Testament Promise Made	New Testament Promise Fulfilled
Isaiah 53:12, "Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the great, And He shall divide the spoil with the strong, Because He poured out His soul unto death, And He was numbered with the transgressors, And He bore the sin of many, And made intercession for the transgressors."	Matthew 27:38, "Then two robbers were crucified with Him, one on the right and another on the left."
Psalms 34:20, "He guards all his bones; Not one of them is broken..."	John 19:33, "But when they came to Jesus and saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs."
Isaiah 53: 4, 5, "Surely He has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted. But He [was] wounded for our transgressions, [He was] bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace [was] upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed."	Matthew 8: 16, 17, "When evening had come, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed. And He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were sick, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying: 'He Himself took our infirmities And bore [our] sicknesses.'"
Isaiah 53:9, "And they made His grave with the wicked--But with the rich at His death, Because He had done no violence, Nor [was any] deceit in His mouth." Note: Genesis, Chapters 15 and 23:6 provide the first Biblical mention of burying the dead in sepulchers.	Matthew 27:57-60, "Now when evening had come, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who himself had also become a disciple of Jesus. This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus . . . When Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and laid it in his new tomb which he had hewn out of the rock; and he rolled a large stone against the door of the tomb."
Psalms 16:10, "For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption."	Matthew 28:5, 6, 9, "But the angel answered and said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay . . . And as they went to tell His disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, "Rejoice!" So they came and held Him by the feet and worshiped Him."(Also, Luke 24:36-48.)
Psalms 68:18, "You have ascended on high, You have led captivity captive; You have received gifts among men, Even [from] the rebellious, That the LORD God might dwell [there]."	Luke 24:50, 51, "And He led them out as far as Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. Now it came to pass, while He blessed them, that He was parted from them and carried up into heaven." Ephesians 4:7, 8, "But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore He says: "When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, And gave gifts to men."
<i>[Above passages within this writing are from the New King James version on the Bible.]</i>	

The question becomes, "How then shall I live, knowing that God came to us within this personage of Jesus?"

We know through studying His teachings that faith in God through Christ brings our salvation (a word that means wholeness). This redemption is an undeserved grace. Consider it an embrace with God wherein a promise resides. We are promised eternal life. In the instance of this embrace, every bad choice made and

every failure is blotted out. We are forgiven by Jesus, who was, and is, the embodiment of God. As Jesus hung on the cross His final words were of love, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.”<sup>8</sup>

The intent for writing the above is to reveal Jesus’ identity as the Son of God, while portraying what He was like and what He did while on earth. His teachings show clearly that Jesus intended His followers to become whole and to live a life full of meaning--a joyful life, one of peace and hope. How do we do this? Through trusting that the Holy Spirit of God now resides within us. This Spirit within prompts us to know “the way of life.”<sup>9</sup> Forgiveness is ever there for us, each time we ask. We make amends when we harm others, or ourselves, and continue trusting that God will strengthen us and help us grow. He allows baby steps and does not ask us to run ahead of our abilities. He is loving, caring, and merciful. All who open themselves to His embrace will say, “God is truly awesome!”

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<sup>8</sup> Luke 23: 34

<sup>9</sup> Psalms 16:11