

Revelations of God's Love

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Out of the darkness into the light:

My parents were generally good people, but their heavy drinking contributed to their divorce when I was 4 years old. As a single parent with limited job opportunities in the 1950s, Mom worked as a cocktail waitress, which required her to be away on nights and weekends. I often did not see her for weeks at a time. To care for me, she found an apartment where the landlady was paid to look after me. Sadly, the landlady only cared about the money, and the care I received was very poor. My daily diet consisted of a cheap hamburger patty, SpaghettiOs, and whatever I could find. I was often very hungry. It was obvious that she didn't like me. To avoid her as much as possible, I spent significant time in my apartment alone. Despite the food and the lack of care, my biggest problem, which is impossible for me to fully describe, was tremendous loneliness.

A few days after turning 5 years old, I started the first grade. I was very immature and quickly concluded that we didn't need to do the work, that we only went to play. Sadly, my conclusion and resulting academic failures were never challenged. Not "wasting time" on school work, I easily became the most disruptive student in class. It is safe to say that I was not any of my teachers' pets, and they spent as little time with me as possible. With virtually no assistance from teachers or at home, I was unable to learn to sight-read (memorize the words by their shapes). Mom relied on the teachers to be professionals, and she believed that they understood my "problems". So, at the end of my first-grade year, I couldn't read, and she agreed that I needed to repeat the 1st grade. However, I didn't receive any more help in my second year in the first grade, or the second, or the third grades, so I made no progress in learning to read. Left to my own devices, I was a grungy, mean, little kid who got into a lot of fights. I knew that some of my fellow students had strict instructions to avoid me. But somehow I understood their parents' concerns, and despite my loneliness, I didn't have any expectations, so the lack of friends didn't bother me.

When I was 6 years old (after my second 1st-grade year), I was loitering in the park on a summer day, and a young man captured my attention. He told me that God loves me and that Jesus Christ demonstrated His love by dying on the cross for me. I knew nothing about anything, but there was no question that I was a sinner and I needed God's love and forgiveness, so I eagerly asked Jesus into my heart.

However, there weren't any drastic changes in my life, and I continued to live on a proverbial deserted island that exacerbated my loneliness. I didn't know much about anything, especially what it meant to have a relationship with God. But one day, He prompted me with the idea to talk to Him. I didn't hear voices, but He spoke to me with a still quiet prompting, and I began to talk with Him, mostly within my mind. I invited God to listen to all of my thoughts.

As a 6-year-old, I was very inconsistent, and sometimes there were long periods between when I would spend time with God. After a long silence, it was as if God gently tapped me on the shoulder, "Do you remember me?" I would ask His forgiveness and try harder to remember to spend time with Him. The gaps grew smaller and less often as God built a friendship with me. Again, I didn't hear voices, but I asked Him questions, shared thoughts, and ideas, and He prompted me with thoughts, questions, and sometimes instructions. Many times, He would prompt me to do something or not do something, but I often dismissed His leading. And as clockwork, there were consequences when I ignored Him.

I wasn't aware of the depth of my friendship with God until one day I was startled when I realized that my agonizing loneliness was gone. Some may say that my relationship with God was my imagination, but even my creative abilities were not capable of overcoming the tremendous loneliness that I had felt.

Aside from my relationship with God, there were few changes in my life or my behavior. When I was 9 years old, my mom remarried, and we moved to a rural farm area. Instead of the big city school, I started 4th grade at a small country school. Unfortunately, the new 4th-grade teacher also came from the previous school system and she continued to ignore my poor academic performance. As I listened to God more, my behavior had greatly improved, but I was far behind in school. At the end of the 4th grade, my teacher recommended another social promotion. However, the school board, all farmers wanted to know why. They had many questions that the teacher couldn't answer. But instead of firing her, they gave her a probationary year to allow her to help me learn to read. She wasn't my favorite teacher, but we repeated 4th grade together. Surprisingly, even to me, she still didn't spend much time with me. I still couldn't read, and after that year, I never saw her again.

Unlike my previous teachers, the 5th-grade teacher diligently worked with me, and with much prayer and effort, I finally learned to sound out words with minimal phonics. I was 11 years old before I learned to read.

Sadly, despite my friendship with God, my moral life degraded as lying, cheating, stealing, and other sins crept into my life. I knew that these thoughts, attitudes, and actions were wrong, and to my shame, I was able to compartmentalize when I spent time with God from when I sought to fulfill my selfish wants and desires. I shudder to think what God endured with me.

At age thirteen, I was walking along when suddenly the Lord Jesus Christ confronted me. I can't say if it was a vision or not, but I was in His presence. Words fail to describe the depth, purity, and overwhelming perfection of being fully immersed in God's love. Since that moment, I have come to believe that when Believers are with Him in heaven, they will experience this same perfect, undeniable, and eternal love.

Despite my failures, His love permeated every fiber of my being. Before that encounter, I only understood God's love as an idea, but afterwards, God's love gripped me, providing the power to transform my life. After that, my relationship with God grew from a friendship into an abiding relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. Aside from when I was concentrating on projects, I have enjoyed a constant awareness with Him for over 60 years. I believe that God's love and having an abiding relationship with Him are priceless gifts that everyone should seek above all else.

Standing before the Lord Jesus Christ, being enveloped by His love, I intuitively understood His power, authority, and holiness. My sins began to flow through my mind. **There was no room to argue or to justify them.** Standing before His holiness and righteousness, I quickly confessed and repented of each of my sins, striving to make Him Lord of every area of my life. I made Him Lord, not **out of obligation, fear, ritual, or religion, but as an expression of love back to God.**

When I asked Jesus into my heart, I knew very little about anything. I didn't know about the Bible, and couldn't read it if I had one. But God demonstrated His love and built a close friendship with me. Despite my dynamic relationship with God, I continued to live in a broken, alcoholic home. They weren't supportive or adversarial towards my relationship with God, but much of society, and most of what was taught in school, was anti-God, especially rejecting His moral standards.

God prompted me to attend a small rural Bible Church. Again, who was I to know anything, but as I began to study the Bible, the hallmark of Believers should be moral purity, selflessness, and love. I had no expectations, and while there were a few shining examples, many who attended Church inconsistently reflected these qualities. It is difficult to know the true heart of others, but my conclusion is that some who profess to be Christians are gripped by God's love and are developing dynamic relationships with Him, while many are only "religious" Christians. While there have been times when my life was not a shining example, my hope and prayer is that others will find and be gripped by God's love.

The problem for many is that when they see the inconsistencies and failures of Christians, it is difficult for them to grasp the perfection of God's love towards them. However, this raises the question of whether they are seeking these priceless gifts or if they are looking for excuses to justify their selfish desires. I ask this question because I know how I once ignored God.

The Good News of The Bible:

My strong friendship with God amplified my awareness of the attacks against His existence and ultimate rejection of His moral standards. Evolution was/is being crammed into most school subjects, and His moral values were either ignored, questioned, or openly rejected. I believe that the results of these attacks have had long-term consequences, including the disintegration of American moral values, especially tremendous damage to the quality and integrity of American families. My broken family was relatively rare when I was a child, but since those days, increasing numbers of American families, even within the Modern Church, have experienced increasing destruction. Living in such a culture, with a friendship with God, made it important for me to determine if my relationship with God had any foundation, especially the validity of the Bible. So, I began and have studied the Bible for over 60 years.

A very short description of what I found is that God created an intelligent being (man- Genesis Chapters 1 and 2) to have genuine, close, and loving friendships with Himself. However, genuine friendships require sacrificial love (Agape-love), which is only possible when there are personal costs, putting the needs of others ahead of our selfish wants and desires. If God simply programmed Agape-type love into man's nature, there would be no sacrifice, making it impossible for mankind to genuinely love God and others. Thus, God placed the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the garden, knowing that

mankind would ultimately sin and rebel, to allow us the ability of genuine love. However, the fantastic ability of love came with the tremendous cost of selfishness, sin, and death. Thankfully, God also implemented a plan to redeem us, at significant personal cost to Himself, by demonstrating His perfect love.

John 3:16 "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

God allowed His precious Son to become a humble man, to be falsely accused, painfully crucified, and to pay for the sins of the world.

Romans 5:8 "But God shows his love for us in that **while we were still sinners**, Christ died for us."

The downside of giving mankind free will is the tremendous desire to lie, cheat, steal, and murder if necessary to fulfill lusts and desires, placing mankind at enmity against God and His Holiness. So, when Christ died for us, God demonstrated perfect love towards His enemies (us), not because we are "good" people. Pure holiness is so far beyond our understanding that it is impossible for us to grasp the high price the Lord Jesus Christ paid when He took on the sins of the world.

John 3:17-18 for God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. ¹⁸ **Whoever believes in him is not condemned**, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.

When sin entered the world, mankind was separated from God. But when God reveals Himself to individuals and they humbly embrace their need for a savior, God cleanses them and views them as He views the righteous of the Lord Jesus Christ. Genuine repentance allows God's Holy Spirit to enter, regenerate our spirit, and cause us to be born again.

Titus 3:4-7 But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, **by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.**

Then, as Believers understand and are gripped by God's love, they receive the power and desire to bow to Him as Lord, and to crucify their selfish wants and desires.

Galatians 2:20 I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh **I live by faith in the Son of God**, who loved me and gave himself for me.

With the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ and a renewed spirit, Believers are able to enter into God's presence and develop close friendships with Him. My experience and what I have seen in others

is that to the extent that Believers are gripped by God's love, they receive the power and the desire to die to self. This love empowers Believers to daily crucify their selfish desires, transforming them to genuinely love God and others. And, as they develop abiding relationships with God, they begin to be a reflection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I have come to believe that one of God's primary purposes of our life on earth is for Believers to develop abiding friendships with Him that will allow us to experience the love that we will have in His presence for eternity.

As a side note, those who reject God's love will not be covered with the Lord Jesus Christ's righteousness. Unlike the love I experienced when God confronted me, they will feel unimaginable fear when they stand before God's Holiness, and every fiber of their being will strive to flee from His presence into outer darkness.

The Validity of the Bible:

When Jesus came into my life, I knew very little, so I was delighted when I later found that my relationship with God was founded on fundamental Biblical truths. But I still faced concerns about whether the Bible was valid, especially if it was inspired by God.

Many hold other books to be holy, but I found that the Bible is the only book that claims and is widely accepted to be inspired by God.

2 Timothy 3:16,17 All Scripture (the Bible) is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; ¹⁷so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

One of the first challenges is the many fantastic accounts in the Old Testament. If God desires easy acceptance of the Bible, He could have excluded many of the fantastic claims. Creating our universe in 6 literal days, with only the power of His Word. The Ark and the Great Flood. The Exodus from Egypt, and many other accounts, are so fantastic that they are either true accounts and the Bible is God's Word, or they are fables and the Bible cannot be depended upon. Some of the fantastic accounts are discussed in Appendix A.

The events in the Old Testament were recorded long ago, so it is more difficult to determine their validity. However, one area that provides confidence in the validity of the Bible is the prophecies of the Messiah. Many of the prophecies have been validated to have been recorded hundreds of years before the Messiah arrived. Appendix B presents many of the prophecies and how Jesus Christ's life fulfilled them as the promised Messiah.

If the Bible is just an ordinary book, it can be viewed only as an academic work. However, since numerous prophecies accurately predicted Jesus Christ's life, it is reasonable to accept that God has prompted, promoted, and *preserved* the integrity of the Bible to reveal His love, hope, His moral standards, and His purpose for our lives. Furthermore, the extraordinary details in the Old Testament accounts reveal an all-powerful God, His purposes, and His character.

Evidence of Jesus Christ's Divine power:

If Jesus Christ is the prophesied Messiah and He is the Creator God, there should be solid evidence.

The foundation of the New Testament is the four Gospel books. The Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and John are the eyewitness testimonies of these Apostles who spent the last three years of Jesus' life. The 4th Gospel, Luke, and the book of Acts are a chronological composite of the testimonies of many witnesses.

These accounts either describe the Lord Jesus Christ's supernatural power or they reveal significant lies that prove that the Bible is not God's Word. Therefore, countless numbers of scholars have spent their lives comparing, looking for fallacies, and challenging the validity of the New Testament.

Evidence of His divine power, as recorded in the 4 Gospels, is listed below:

Miracle	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
1. Turns water into wine				2:1-11
2. Heals an official's son				4:43-54
3. Drives out evil spirits from a man		1:21-27	4:31-36	
4. Heals Peter's mother-in-law fever	8:14-15	1:29-31	4:38-39	
5. Heals many sick and oppressed	8:16-17	1:32-34	4:40-41	
6. Miraculous catch of Fish			5:1-11	
7. Heals man with leprosy	8:1-4	1:40-45	5:12-14	
8. Heals a Centurian's paralyzed servant	8:5-13		7:1-10	
9. Heals paralytic	9:1-8	2:1-12	5:17-26	
10. Heals man's withered hand	12:9-14	3:1-6	6:6-11	
11. Raises widow's son from the dead			7:11-17	
12. Calms a storm on the sea	8:23-27	4:35-41	8:22-25	
13. Casts demons out of a man into a herd of pigs	8:28-33	5:1-20	8:26-39	
14. Heals woman of long-term bleeding issues	9:20-22	5:25-34	8:42-48	
15. Raises Jairus' daughter Back to life	9:18,23-26	5:21-24,35-43	8:40-42,49-56	
16. Restores the sight of two blind men	9:27-31			

17. Heals mute man	9:32-34			
18. Heals the crippled man				5:1-15
19. Feeds 5,000 men plus women and children	14:13-21	6:30-44	9:10-17	6:1-15
20. Walks on water	14:22-33	6:45-52		6:16-21
21. Heals many sick	14:34-36	6:53-56		
22. Casts out a demon from a girl	15:21-28	7:24-30		
23. Heals the deaf and dumb man		7:31-37		
24. Feeds 4,000 plus men plus women and children	15:32-39	8:1-13		
25. Heals a blind man		8:22-26		
26. Heals man born blind				9:1-12
27. Casts out unclean spirit from a boy	17:14-20	9:14-29	9:37-43	
28. Pays tax with a coin found in a fish	17:24-27			
29. Heals a blind, mute demoniac	12:22-23		11:14-23	
30. Heals woman with a disabling spirit			13:10-17	
31. Heal man with dropsy			14:1-6	
32. Cleanses 10 lepers			17:11-19	
33. Lazarus is raised from the dead				11:1-45
34. Restored the sight of the blind	20:29-34	10:46-52	18:35-43	
35. Withers a fig tree	21:18-22	11:12-14		
36. Restores a severed ear			22:50-51	
37. A miraculous catch of fish				21:4-11

The Bible makes so many assertions about who Jesus Christ is that if they are false, it cannot be claimed that the Bible is God's Word, and ultimately, Jesus Christ was not a good man, but a scam artist and liar. But if the claims are true, they reveal more evidence of the supernatural power of the Lord Jesus Christ and that the Bible is genuine. Therefore, it is critical for every individual to carefully examine the evidence for themselves.

His death and resurrection:

In addition to the miracles the Lord Jesus Christ performed, the events of His death and resurrection are of great significance. Again, these are either fantastic accounts or lies. It is worth noting that many scholars claim that many of the events are supported by non-Biblical and historical records.

Matthew 27:45-56 From **noon until three in the afternoon darkness came over all the land** [1]. About three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “*Eli, Eli,¹ lema sabachthani?*” (which means “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”). When some of those standing there heard this, they said, “He’s calling Elijah.” Immediately one of them ran and got a sponge. He filled it with wine vinegar, put it on a staff, and offered it to Jesus to drink. The rest said, “Now leave him alone. Let’s see if Elijah comes to save him.” And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit. **At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom** [2]. **The earth shook, the rocks split** [3] and **the tombs broke open. The bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life** [4]. They came out of the tombs after Jesus’ resurrection and went into the holy city and appeared to many people. When the centurion and those with him who were guarding Jesus saw the earthquake and all that had happened, they were terrified, and exclaimed, “Surely he was the Son of God!”

[1] Every person in Jerusalem would have seen 3 hours of darkness in the afternoon. Such a prolonged darkness cannot be explained by any normal or an eclipse event.

[2] The veil represented the separation between the Holiness of God and sinful man. It was about 45 feet tall and several inches thick, and the Temple was carefully guarded. So, when the veil tore from top to bottom, it signified that God removed the separation between God and man through Jesus Christ’s atoning death. The temple and the veil were significant, so this would have been big news for all the inhabitants of Jerusalem at the time, making any such false claim to be widely known.

[3] Upon His death, there was a massive earthquake and the breaking open of many tombs. As many of the tombs were of relatives, most people in Jerusalem were probably aware of the evidence of that significant event.

[4] Before the separation between God and man was removed, the Bible explains that those who looked forward to the Messiah by faith were in a suspended state until Jesus rose from His grave. They were then resurrected and seen by many. No doubt many who rose from the grave were recognized by friends and family members.

These events were so significant that within the next few weeks, 3,000 people received Jesus Christ at what is called Pentecost. If these events had not occurred, they would have been widely recognized as lies, so it is doubtful that any would have followed Jesus Christ. Especially if the events had not occurred and they were not convinced that He had risen from the grave. Therefore, this large group of people is a significant verification of the validity of the claims concerning the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Some may claim mass hysteria, but not long after, Rome demanded that all individuals under their rule bow to Caesar as god. However, all those who bowed to the Lord Jesus Christ could not bow to Caesar. Therefore, soon after Pentecost, anyone who held faith in the Lord Jesus Christ did so under the threat of violent death by Roman crucifixion. Despite the threat of death, history records that countless Believers were crucified along the side of Roman roads for miles. The persecution of Christians continued for over 300 years. **Not exactly an attraction for individuals to accept faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, but the early Church continued to grow and has continued to spread throughout the World for**

the last 2000 years. The most reasonable conclusion is that many of the original followers who witnessed the supernatural events, embraced Jesus as God, were born again, and then developed personal relationships with the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, the testimony of so many who were willing to cling to their faith in light of impending Roman torture and cruel death verifies the claims of the Gospels to be true.

The fulfilled prophecies, the many miracles of His life, His death, and His resurrection present considerable evidence that Jesus Christ is the promised Messiah. *In addition to what God has done in my life, the testimony of countless Believers, spanning thousands of years, those who were willing to die for their faith, strengthens my confidence in the Lord Jesus Christ as God, the validity of the Bible, and the certainty of His moral standards.*

The Lord Jesus Christ's Demonstration of Love:

The core teaching of the Bible is love, which is consistent with the Lord Jesus Christ's life.

Matthew 22:36-40 "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets."

Not only did He teach the importance of love, but also to love our enemies:

Matthew 5:43-45 "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven.

But God does not desire love out of obligation, fear, ritual, or religion, but as an expression of love back to His love. The Bible is the only book that promotes relationships with God built on a foundation of love, and it emphasizes this as the highest calling for His Children.

Warning of the Differences Between Religion and Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ:

Tragically, many Christian denominations and Jewish traditions profess reverence for portions of the Bible, yet they reject the Lord Jesus Christ and His substitutional payment for sin. Thus, they remain under bondage to attempt to earn God's approval by their own works and are the essence of false religions. When accomplishments are devised to achieve righteousness, God's profound demonstration of sacrificial love is rejected. No matter how persuasive a philosophy or religion may appear, the ultimate measure of truth rests on the acceptance of who the Lord Jesus Christ is and salvation solely based on His atoning sacrifice. Therefore, there is a great difference between genuine faith and religion.

It is difficult to discern the hearts of others. Many display great zeal, serving in long-standing ministries and outwardly appearing to be very religious. They may even make claims acknowledging Jesus Christ, but the true test of genuine faith is when Believers rely on and embrace God's love, evidenced by

developing an abiding friendship with the Lord Jesus Christ. Sadly, many reject God's love because of the offensive actions and attitudes of religious Christians.

Warning of Conflicts of Interest:

The Bible teaches that since the fall, the heart of mankind has been filled with deceitfulness and selfishness (Jeremiah 29:11). However, the Bible also teaches that God's law is written on the heart of mankind (Romans 2:15), and when individuals violate it, the result is guilt.

Romans 1:18-22 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, **who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth**. For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, **but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools,**

Most heartbreaking are those who, despite having some understanding of God's truth, choose to reject His love to satisfy selfish and fleshly desires. Attempting to silence guilt, they deny the existence of a higher moral standard, which demands the rejection of God Himself. Such individuals have significant conflicts of interest and often become outspoken champions, opposing God. Therefore, great care must be taken to evaluate all claims of those who have conflicts of interest. Especially, since these individuals reject higher moral values and are not constrained by lies and exaggerations to persuade others to affirm the validity of their moral choices. Therefore, great care should be taken to evaluate any claims or "evidence" that is presented concerning any fallacies of the Bible.

I grew up in a culture and attended schools that have been antagonistic and critical of the Bible. It is safe to say that the Bible is the most scrutinized Book in all of history. Some arguments I encountered initially sounded reasonable, even persuasive. Yet as time passed and more facts were discovered or revealed, there has been a clear pattern of disproving them. What is concerning is that atheists have typically continued to cling to their perspectives, regardless of the validity of the new facts.

However, many devout atheists, such as Lee Stroble, have sought to prove the Bible to be false, but when confronted with overwhelming evidence, have embraced the truths of the Bible and the Lord Jesus Christ. The point isn't to promote him or his books, but to present an example of the level of scrutiny that the Bible has endured. And when individuals are genuinely honest, they have changed their positions when they grasped the validity of the Bible.

God welcomes honest questioning, but it is very important to seek truth regardless of wants, personal motivations, or desires.

Implications:

The Bible includes so many fantastic accounts that it either proclaims a mountain of lies or fantastic revelations of God's power. **The fulfilled prophecies of the Messiah, the life of Jesus Christ, His resurrection, His teachings, the countless transformed lives, and what God has done in mine and many others yield a preponderance of evidence that the Bible is true and that God is powerful beyond our imagination.** Therefore, the highest recommendation for every individual is not to listen to what is popular or to those who proclaim their own authority, but to carefully evaluate the validity of the Bible. Because if God exists, the implications are staggering with eternal consequences.

The Bible teaches that Jesus Christ is the Creator God of the Universe (Colossians 1:16-20). He submitted Himself to profound humility, pain, torture, and suffering because He loves each of us. God does not demand good works or sacrifices, only to humbly accept His substitutional demonstrations of love. The natural response of those who embrace His love will be a willingness to die to selfish wants and desires. The implications of these truths are that it is important for every individual to be gripped by God's perfect love and that the Lord Jesus Christ is worthy of the highest praise and honor of our lives. God will cause all those who sincerely receive Him to be born again (John 1:12). They will be covered with the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ and will receive the right to enter directly into God's presence. Again, these implications carry eternal consequences.

A third implication is that God's ultimate goal for every born-again Believer is to begin a lifelong journey of building an abiding relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. [All Honor to the King- Discipleship](#) further discusses important aspects of an abiding relationship with God. Furthermore, [Discipleship Meditation System \(DMS\)-A Handbook for Mentors](#) is designed to help guide Believers to build abiding friendships with the Creator God of the Universe. And again, these implications also carry eternal consequences.

When the Lord Jesus Christ entered my life and built a friendship with me, being only 6 years old, I literally knew nothing about life. I was in such a lonely and desperate situation that I could have easily been led astray. Thankfully, there is overwhelming evidence of God's existence, of His love, and a close abiding relationship with the living God.

Appendix A, The Spectacular Events Recorded in the Old Testament:

For most of my life, the general theme at school and in the culture has been that God doesn't exist. Philosophies of evolution have been crammed into every subject and a lot of entertainment. The constant barrage of evolution allowed most of my peers, including those who attended Church with their families, to reject the existence of God. So, having a fantastic friendship with the living God and what everyone else was proclaiming created some interesting challenges for me.

Given all of the information that surrounded me, if I didn't have my relationship with God, it would have been illogical to have faith in Him. Another obstacle was the fantastic nature of most of the accounts recorded in the Old Testament.

The book of Genesis begins by proclaiming that God spoke the universe into existence, out of nothing, by only the power of His words. The Bible states that the vastness, the intricacies of living creatures, and the complexities of life were created in 6 literal days. This is such a profound claim that there are only two possibilities. Either the Bible is a total fantasy, or it describes a God that is powerful beyond our imaginations.

If life is an accident through evolution, purpose in life is ultimately reduced to survival and striving for happiness. There is no hope of anything after death, and there is no foundation of absolute right and wrong. It doesn't appear that many consider the ramifications of evolution, but the consequence of God not existing is one of the most important issues and questions of life.

The Bible goes on to make other potentially outlandish claims about Adam and Eve's relationship with God. The implications of the all-powerful creator God desiring a relationship with His creation are staggering. That God placed mankind into a paradise and gave them one temptation to not eat from a specific tree. God certainly knew that, given enough time, Adam and Eve would be tempted to disobey and rebel. Why would He allow the opportunity for disobedience, knowing that the result would be millennia of death, pain, and misery? Again, the Bible must be either a total fantasy or filled with vital truths.

It is not difficult to understand that once mankind was removed from the garden, history would be full of selfishness, violence, murder, and every form of sin. It is the nature of the heart of mankind for the strong to take advantage of the weak. The Bible states that the conditions became so grievous that God planned to destroy the earth. But Noah, a righteous man who found favor with God, was commanded to build an Ark.

There has been considerable debate about whether the described Ark was capable of saving the life that we have on earth. Some argue that the Ark was not capable of preserving the vast diversity of life, but intensive analysis indicates that the size and the design of the Ark was capable of saving life through the cataclysmic events of the great flood. The Ark Encounter Organization (<https://arkencounter.com/>) has conducted many studies and built a full-size replica in Kentucky.

A major issue is that evolutionists and those who dismiss the evidence of the Great Flood are often driven to reject God's moral standards. And therefore, diligently strive to argue that there is no God. They interpret the same scientific evidence that confirms God's existence to "prove" and promote their goals of removing the encumbrances of God's moral standards. However, the fundamental question for every individual is whether the story of the Ark is another fantasy or a demonstration of an all-powerful God.

After the story of saving mankind from the Great Flood, the Bible continues with more personal stories of individuals having relationships with God. Abraham is a very significant historical individual. God promised him to be the father of nations, but Abraham did not have any children by the time he was 100 years old, and his wife, Sarah, was 90. The Bible then provides considerable descriptions of how God proceeded to fulfill those promises. Issac was miraculously born, and his descendants became a mighty nation that has survived for thousands of years. But again, are these fantasies that have been handed down over millennia, or are they evidence of a powerful God?

Another fantastic series of events involving Abraham's great-grandson, Joseph. The Bible says that Joseph received dreams that God would make him great on the earth. But when Joseph bragged to his brothers, their jealousy motivated them to sell him into slavery. Despite God's tremendous promises, Joseph found himself a slave in Egypt. The Bible teaches that God blessed Joseph, raising him from slavery in the depths of captivity to hold the second most powerful positions in Egypt. God could have caused Joseph to be born as a great Pharaoh but He chose to demonstrate His power by first lowering Joseph down to the depths of a foreign slave, imprisoned as a sexual predator, and then raising him to a very high position. Joseph's life is either a fantasy or another example of God's ability to intervene in Joseph's life.

Either Joseph's actions saved Egypt and all of the surrounding countries from a tremendous drought, or the story is a lie. After Joseph's death, over the next 400 years, Abraham's descendants grew to probably about 2,500,000 people. Given the nature of mankind, it is not hard to understand that Abraham's descendants (the Children of Israel) were so large in number that the Egyptians feared them and forced them under cruel slavery.

To free God's people, the Bible proclaims that God raised Moses. Even from Moses' birth to when he was 80 years old, the description of his life is either a demonstration of God's power or a lie. When he was 80, God sent him to demand that Pharaoh release the children of Israel. However, Pharaoh was reluctant to lose such a large, cheap workforce, but his real problem was that he didn't like his authority challenged, even if it was by the Creator God of the Universe. The Bible then describes that God brought 10 supernatural plagues to Egypt. Each plague was more severe, and after each plague, Pharaoh agreed to let them go. But Pharaoh then hardened his heart. After the 10th plague, Pharaoh let them go, but again hardened his heart and sent his army to pursue them. The Bible claims that God protected the children of Abraham with a pillar of smoke during the day and a pillar of fire at night. God led them to the Red Sea, where the Children of Israel were trapped. But God used this hopeless situation to demonstrate His supernatural power by parting the sea. It should have been obvious to Pharaoh that this was a trap, and God would protect the children of Abraham, but he commanded his

army to follow them through the parted sea. And when the children of Israel had reached safety, the sea crashed down, destroying the entire Egyptian army. Again, so many miraculous and supernatural events demand that it was either all fantasy or that God exists and designed the situation to demonstrate His power.

After crossing the Red Sea, there were many more fantastic accounts. However, because of disobedience, God caused the Children of Israel to remain in the desert. But again, God miraculously provided food and water for millions of His people and their animals for 40 years. During their time in the desert, Moses received the Ten Commandments and wrote the first 5 books of the Old Testament.

When the Children of Israel finally entered the promised land, the spectacular events of God's supernatural intervention continued as the cruel and merciless pagan inhabitants were overthrown.

After the time of Moses, there were about 1,400 years before Jesus was born. The Bible continued to include accounts of David and Goliath, Samson, Elijah, Elisha, Jonah, and many others. The recorded events are so spectacular that they either demonstrate the existence of the powerful Creator God of the Universe or they are a mountain of lies.

Appendix B, The Promised Messiah:

The challenge of evidence from the Old Testament is that it was written between about 2,500 and 4,000 years ago, making it more difficult to verify. However, while the claims in the New Testament are potentially just as outlandish, it was written only 2,000 years ago, and are much easier to verify. In addition to a vast array of archeological discoveries and other collaborating resources, there are over 5,000 supporting documents for the New Testament writings. But again, either the evidence is accurate or part of the biggest conspiracy in all of history.

Much of the Bible, the New and the Old Testaments, is focused on the Lord Jesus Christ. As I searched for evidence that the Bible is God's Word, I found it difficult to refute the numerous prophecies in the Old Testament of the promised Messiah. Most of these prophecies were written 400 to 800 years before Jesus Christ was born.

[Isaiah 7:14 Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.](#)

Immanuel means "God with us", implying that the all-powerful creator God of the universe was going to humble Himself to be limited to live and suffer on earth as a man. If fulfilled, this and several other prophecies in the Old Testament are evidence that the Lord Jesus Christ is truly God.

What is very important for every individual to determine for themselves is if Jesus Christ is the promised Messiah. If there is fraud, then the Bible is a lie, but if He accurately fulfilled multiple prophecies after several hundred years, this is strong proof towards determining the validity of the Bible.

The chart below describes some of the Old Testament prophecies and proposed fulfillments recorded in the New Testament:

Prophecy	Old Testament	New Testament
1. Born of a woman.	Genesis 3:15	Matthew 1:20,21
2. Born in Bethlehem	Micah 5:2	Matthew 2:1, Luke 2:4-6
3. Born of a virgin	Isaiah 7:14	Matt 1:22-23, Luke 1:26-31
4. Descendant of Abraham	Gen 12:3, Gen 22:18	Matt 1:1
5. Descendant of Isaac	Gen 17:19, Gen 21:12	Luke 3:34
6. Descendant of Jacob	Numbers 24:17	Matt 1:2
7. Of the tribe of Judah	Gen 49:10	Luke 3:33
8. Heir of King David	2 Sam 7:12-13, Isaiah 9:7	Luke 1:32-33
9. His throne is eternal	Psalm 45:6-7, Daniel 2:44	Luke 1:33
10. The Messiah will be Immanuel	Isaiah 7:14	Matthew 1:23
11. Would spend time in Egypt	Hosea 11	Matthew 2:14-15
12. Children would be massacred	Jeremiah 31:15	Matthew 2:16-18
13. A Messenger would prepare His way	Isaiah 40:3-5, Malachi 3:1	Luke 3:3-6, Matt 11:10
14. The Messiah would be rejected	Psalm 69:8, Isaiah 53:3	John 1:11, Luke 23:18
15. Messiah would be a prophet	Deuteronomy 18:15	Acts 3:20-22
16. Proceeded by Elijah	Malachi 4:5-6	Matthew 11:13-14
17. Be declared to be The Son of God	Psalm 2:7	Matthew 3:16-17
18. From the Davidic line a Nazarene	Isaiah 11:1-5	Matthew 2:23
19. Would be a great light to Galilee	Isaiah 9:1-2	Matthew 4:13-16
20. Would speak in Parables	Psalm 78:2-4	Matthew 13:10-15, 34-35
21. Would heal the broken-hearted	Isaiah 61:1-2	Luke 4:18-19
22. A priest, after the order of Melchizedek	Psalm 110:4	Hebrews 5:5-6
23. Would be called King	Psalms 2:6	Matt 27:37
24. Would enter Jerusalem on a donkey	Zechariah 9:9	Matthew 21:4-5, Mark 11:7-11
25. Would be praised by little children	Psalm 8:2	Matthew 21:14-16

26. Would be betrayed	Psalm 41:9	Luke 22:47-48, Matt 26:14-16
27. Price of betrayal would be to buy a Potter's field	Zechariah 11:12-13	Matthew 27:9-10
28. Would be falsely accused	Psalm 35:11-12	Mark 14:57-58
29. Would be silent Before His accusers	Isaiah 53:7	Mark 15:4-5
30. Would be spat upon and struck	Isaiah 50:6	Matthew 26:67
31. Would be hated without cause	Psalm 35:19, Psalm 69:4	John 15:24-25
32. Would be crucified with criminals	Isaiah 53:12	Matthew 27:38, Mark 15:27-28
33. Would be given vinegar to drink	Psalm 69:21	Matt 27:34, John 19:28-30
34. His hands and feet would be pierced	Psalm 22:16, Zech 12:10	John 20:25-27
35. Would be mocked and ridiculed	Psalm 22:7-8	Luke 23:35
36. Soldiers would gamble for His clothes	Psalm 22:18	Luke 23:34, Matt 27:35-36
37. His bones would not be broken	Exodus 12:46, Psalm 34:20	John 19:33-36
38. Would be forsaken by God	Psalm 22:1	Matthew 27:46
39. He would pray for His enemies	Psalm 109:4	Luke 23:34
40. His side would be pierced	Zechariah 12:10	John 19:34
41. He would be buried with the rich	Isaiah 53:9	Matthew 27:57-60
42. He would be resurrected from the dead	Psalm 16:10, Psalm 49:15	Matt 28:2-7, Acts 2:22-32
43. He would ascend to Heaven	Psalm 24:7-10	Mark 16:19, Luke 24:51
44. Would be seated at the right hand of God	Psalm 68:18, Psalm 110:1	Mark 16:19, Matt 22:44
45. He would be a sacrifice for sin	Isaiah 53:5-12	Romans 5:6-8

46. The Messiah will
establish an
Everlasting Kingdom

Daniel 7:13-14

Revelations 19

Some of the prophecies are vague, but many are very specific. Countless scholars agree that there is significant evidence that the prophecies were given centuries before Jesus was born. It is proposed that because Jesus Christ's life fulfilled the prophecies, it is impossible for the prophets to make so many accurate "guesses" without God's guidance.

It is not unusual that the Messiah would be born of a woman [1] but it is unexpected that He would be prophesied to be born of a virgin [3]. It is no surprise that He would be in the line of Abraham and even a descendant of King David [4,5,6,7,8], but, unexpectedly, He would spend time in Egypt [11]. If the Messiah were to be God with us, it is surprising that He would be rejected by the leadership of Israel [12,14]. There is not much of a surprise in the claims of 15 through 23, but it is expected that Kings, especially the King of Kings (the Messiah), would arrive on a horse, not on the back of a humble donkey [24]. Given that the Messiah is God with us, the probability of accurately predicting that He would be betrayed [26], falsely accused [28], hated and abused [30,31], and crucified with criminals [32] is very unlikely. The possibility of predicting the price of 30 pieces of silver to betray Jesus and then to be used to purchase the potter's field is impossible to predict hundreds of years before [27].

Then there is the prediction of piercing his hands and feet, which was never practiced before or during the time of the prophecy. Crucifixion only became common among the Romans hundreds of years after the prediction [34]. The prophecies of the soldiers offering Him vinegar [33], gambling for his clothes [36], and not breaking his legs [37] seem to indicate that the Roman soldiers were trying to fulfill prophecies. However, their mocking and ridicule [30,31,32,35] demonstrate their lack of respect for Him, so this is very doubtful. It is interesting to note that the common practice to kill those being crucified was to break their legs so they would suffocate, so even if the prophets of old foresaw crucifixion, it is highly doubtful that they could guess that a spear would be thrust into Jesus' side [40] to verify that He had died.

It is not intuitive for us to understand Jesus taking on the sins of the world to pay for our debts, but this was prophesied and fulfilled [45].

[1 Peter 2:24 He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.](#)

It is well understood that God's holiness rejects sin, and it was the goal of the forces of darkness for the Messiah to be forsaken [38]. However, because the Messiah (God with us), when the debt was paid by His blood and death, Jesus Christ's righteousness conquered sin, reuniting Himself with God.

And, in addition to the Old Testament, Jesus also prophesied that He would rise 3 days after His death [42], conquering death (Matthew 1:21).

I Peter 1:3,4 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us **to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,**

Therefore, all who embrace the Lord Jesus Christ are renewed in their spirit (born again) and are covered with His righteousness, allowing them to conquer sin and death, so that they can enjoy an eternal relationship with God. This accurately describes my relationship with God and His love for me. While I knew nothing or understood any of this when I received Jesus, the Bible is very clear. And just as important, since Jesus' life, death, and resurrection from the dead have been verified by both Christians and by many who opposed the accuracy of the Bible.

The Bible describes God's plan for the Messiah (God incarnate) to come to earth, to allow Himself to be falsely accused, crucified, and raised from the grave to conquer sin and death. It is natural to expect that the Messiah would then reign on the earth as the King of kings. But it was prophesied and fulfilled that Jesus Christ returned to heaven [43] and is seated at the right hand of God [44]. And because Jesus Christ gave the ultimate sacrifice, it is no surprise that He has been given all authority in heaven and on earth and is building an everlasting Kingdom [46] (Matthew 28:18-20).

Prophecy 46 also predicts that the Lord Jesus Christ will one day return with all majesty and power.

The Old Testament makes many fantastic claims that defy logic, but over hundreds of years, many prophets predicted details of the promised Messiah. Old Testament Stories are easier to fabricate, but when Jesus Christ was born, fulfilling many prophecies, such claims must be taken very seriously.

Many reject being subjected to God and His moral standards and have ulterior motives to deny the validity of the Bible. However, given the potential eternal consequences, it is vital for every individual to not rely on the opinions of others but to carefully evaluate the evidence for themselves. Sadly, many believe and embrace what they want, rather than seek the truth, especially when the Bible is involved.