

## **WHO IS JESUS?**

### **Do we know that Jesus actually existed as a person?**

**Yes!--To the unprejudiced historian, the historical facts regarding Jesus are as definite and evident as those of Julius Caesar. Not only do we find an accurate portrait of Him in the documents of the New Testament, but dozens of ancient non-Biblical manuscripts confirm that Jesus was a genuine historical figure who lived in Palestine in the early part of the first century.**

**Concerning the testimony of the many ancient secular accounts of Jesus, the Encyclopedia Britannica states:**

**"These independent accounts prove that in ancient times even the opponents of Christianity never doubted the historicity of Jesus, which was disputed for the first time--and on inadequate grounds--by several authors during the 19th and at the beginning of the 20th centuries."**

### **What makes Jesus different from the other great religious teachers, prophets or philosophers?**

**If any adjective were to describe Jesus, it would be "unique"!-- His message was unique. The claims He made regarding Himself were unique. His miracles were unique. And the influence He has had on the World is unsurpassed by any other.**

**One very outstanding and undeniably unique aspect of Jesus' life is that literally hundreds of detailed predictions and prophecies were made by ancient prophets and seers, many centuries before He was born.--Specific details regarding His birth, life and death, that no mere mortal man could possibly have fulfilled!**

**In the first books of the Bible, known as the "Old Testament," over 300 such predictions about the "Messiah" or "Saviour" can be found. The discovery of hundreds of ancient Old Testament manuscripts by archaeologists during this century has proven without a doubt that these prophecies were indeed written before this man called Jesus was born.**

**Here is a small sampling of the kind of specific predictions we're talking about: In 750 B.C., the prophet Isaiah made the astounding prediction that:**

**"The Lord Himself shall give you a sign; behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Emmanuel."--Isaiah**

**7:14.**

7-1/2 centuries later, a young virgin girl in Israel named Mary was visited by the angel Gabriel, who announced to her that she would bear a Son Who would be called Emmanuel, which means "God with us." The books of the Bible which were written after Jesus came to Earth, the "New Testament," tell us that, "Mary said to the angel, 'How can this be, seeing I have not lain with any man?' And the angel answered, 'The Spirit of God shall come upon you, and the power of the Almighty shall overshadow you! Therefore that Holy One which shall be born of you shall be called the Son of God!'"--Luke 1:26-35.

So even the very beginning of His life on Earth--His conception and birth--were not only unique, but miraculous, in that the simple and humble young girl who became His mother had never slept with a man! In fact, the Bible tells us that the news of her pregnancy was so shocking to the young man to whom she was engaged to be married, Joseph, that when he learned about it he promptly decided to break off the engagement and call off the wedding!--Until the angel of the Lord appeared to him also, and instructed him to stay with her and rear and protect the very special child that she was carrying.

A full 800 years before Jesus was born, the prophet Micah foretold the exact village where the Messiah would be born:

**"You, Bethlehem, though you are small among the clans of Judah, yet out of you shall He come forth unto Me Who is to be ruler over Israel; Whose goings forth have been of old, from days of Eternity."--Micah 5:2**

Although His earthly parents lived in the town of Nazareth, 100 miles to the north of Bethlehem, a decree from Rome demanded that all families return to their ancestral homes to register for a worldwide census. The decree came just as Mary's child was due to be born.--Thus God used a Roman emperor, Caesar Augustus, to help bring about the fulfillment of Micah's prophecy. Joseph and Mary journeyed to Bethlehem, and upon their arrival, Mary went into labour, and as the Gospels inform us, "Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea" (Matthew 2:1), just as the prophet Micah predicted.

Micah's prophecy also tells us that the Messiah "Has been of old, from days of Eternity." Jesus Himself said, "Before Abraham was (around 2000 B.C.), I AM."--John 8:58. Abraham was the forefather of the Jews and Arabs, who lived about 2,000 years before Jesus was born to Mary. So Jesus was referring here to His pre-existence with God before His life on Earth in the form of a man.

Though born in Bethlehem, Jesus grew up in Nazareth. In His

first recorded public address there, He openly declared that He indeed was the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies regarding the Messiah. While attending the local house of worship, He stood up before the crowd and read a prophecy from the book of the prophet Isaiah. In the passage, Isaiah predicted that the Messiah would be anointed with the Spirit of God to "preach Good News to the poor, to heal the broken hearted, to give freedom to the captives, recovering of sight to the blind and to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord."--Isaiah 61:1,2. The New Testament tells us that after He read this prophecy aloud to the congregation, Jesus told them, "Today is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears!"--Luke 4:18-21.

Another outstanding prophecy regarding the Messiah was made by Israel's King David around the year 1000 B.C., or over 10 centuries before Jesus was born. In his prophecy, David gave details of a cruel and agonising death which he himself never suffered:

"I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint. My heart is like wax, it has melted within me...Like a pack of dogs, they have surrounded me; a company of evil doers has encircled me. They have pierced my hands and my feet. They divide my clothing among them and cast lots for my garment."--Psalm 22:14-18.

King David died a peaceful, natural death, so we know he was not talking about himself in this passage of Scripture. But being a prophet, he predicted with unerring accuracy the circumstances surrounding the cruel death on the cross of the Messiah, the Christ that was to come. Let's examine some of the details outlined in the above prophecy:

"I am poured out like water...my heart is melted within me." Jesus not only poured out His life for us spiritually, but the New Testament tells us that shortly after He died, while He was still hanging on the cross, "one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water flowed out."--John 19:34. Modern medical authorities have affirmed that in the case of heart rupture--when a human heart literally bursts open under extreme stress and trauma--the blood collects in the pericardium, the membranous sac that encloses the heart and the roots of the main blood vessels. This blood then separates into a sort of bloody clot and a watery serum, thus when the soldier pierced His side, His life was literally, "poured forth like water." (Unwittingly, this Roman soldier fulfilled another prophecy, "They will look upon Me whom they have pierced," a prophecy given by the Prophet Zechariah around 500 B.C.--Zechariah 12:10.)

"All my bones are out of joint."--This is one of the horrors of

death by crucifixion; the weight of the victim's body literally pulls his arms out of their sockets.

"Like a pack of dogs...a company of evil doers has encircled me." The New Testament tells us that Jesus' wicked and vengeful religious enemies, the Scribes and the Pharisees, gathered around Him as He was nailed on the cross, mocking and reviling Him.--Matthew 27:39-44.

"They have pierced my hands and my feet." This is probably the most astounding prediction within this prophecy. Crucifixion was not practiced by the Jews of David's time. Their religious laws demanded that criminals be executed by stoning. But God showed His Prophet, David, how the Messiah would die 10 centuries later, executed at the hands of an empire that did not even exist in David's day, Rome, whose principal means of executing criminals was crucifixion!

"They divide my clothing among them and cast lots for my garment." In the Gospels of the New Testament we find the almost incredible fulfillment of this prophecy: "When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took His clothes, and divided them into four shares, one for each of them, with the undergarment (a long robe-like tunic) remaining. This garment was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom. So they said one to another, 'Let us not tear it, but let us cast lots to decide whose it shall be.'"--John 19:23,24.

In 487 B.C., the Prophet Zechariah predicted: "And I said unto them, if you think well, give me my price; and if not, keep it. So they paid me 30 pieces of silver."--Zechariah 11:12.

On the night that Jesus was arrested by His enemies, the New Testament tells us that, "One of the twelve Apostles, Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said to them, 'What will you give me if I deliver Him to you?', and they counted out for him 30 pieces of silver."--Matthew 26:14,15.

Imagine!--Over five hundred years before the event took place, God's Prophet, Zechariah, predicted the exact "price" that Jesus' enemies would pay to His traitorous disciple, Judas! In the next verse of Zechariah's prophecy, he goes into even more astounding details:

"And the Lord said, 'Cast it unto the Potter--the handsome price at which they priced Me!' So the 30 pieces of silver were taken and cast to the Potter in the house of the Lord."--Zechariah 11:13.

The New Testament tells us that, "When Judas saw that Jesus was condemned, he repented, and returned the 30 pieces of silver to the chief priests of the Jews, and he cast down the pieces of silver in the Temple. Then the chief priests picked up the silver pieces and said, 'It is against our law to put it into our treasury because it is blood-money.' So they used the money to buy a Potter's field, to bury foreigners in."--Matthew 27:3-6. The 30 pieces of silver were literally

**"cast to the Potter in the house of the Lord"!--Just as Zechariah predicted 500 years earlier!**

**In 712 B.C., the prophet Isaiah predicted that the Son of God would "be given a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in His death."--Isaiah 53:9.**

**Jesus' bitter religious enemies condemned Him as a criminal, as a wicked man, thus as He died, the Bible tells us "there were two robbers crucified with Him."--Matthew 27:38. After His body was removed from the cross, "a rich man named Joseph of Arimathaea went to Pilate and pleaded for the body of Jesus, and when Joseph had taken the body, he laid it in his own new tomb."--Matthew 27:57-60.--A "grave with the rich!"**

**1,000 years before Jesus was born, the Spirit of God prophesied through King David that the Saviour would be resurrected from the dead: "God will not leave His soul in the grave, neither will He suffer His Holy One to see corruption or decay."--Psa.16:10.**

**King David died and was buried in a grave, and his flesh saw corruption and decay. But Jesus was raised from the grave three days after His death!--As the Angel said to the mourners who came to Jesus' tomb, "He is not here, but is risen! Why do you seek the living among the dead?"--Lk.24:5,6.**

**What mere human can choose his own birthplace? Or what mortal man can--or would--cause the officials of a foreign government to order his death by a terribly agonising execution? How could anyone manipulate their bitter enemies to pay a specific price for their betrayal, mock and revile them as they are dying, much less cause a band of soldiers to gamble for their clothing and pierce their side after they've died, & cause a rich man to bury their body in his own personal tomb? Yet Jesus of Nazareth fulfilled not only these, but over 300 more specific predictions regarding His birth, life, ministry, death and resurrection!--Truly He was--and is--"unique" in every sense of the word!**

**Not one of the great recognised religious leaders--not Moses, not Buddha, not Confucius, not Mohammed--ever claimed to be God. True, some have been deified by their followers after they died, but none ever personally claimed to be Deity.--That is, with the exception of Jesus Christ. In fact, He not only claimed to be the Son of God, God manifest in human flesh, but He convinced a great portion of the World that He in fact is God's Son.**

**This is probably the greatest difference between Jesus and all of the other great philosophers, teachers, prophets and gurus throughout the ages. Although many of them spoke and taught about love and about God, Jesus claimed that He was Love, that He was God's Love for**

**the World.--Thus He really knew what He was talking about! Either He was right, or He was terribly wrong.--Either He was good, and spoke the truth, or He was evil, a deceiver and a liar!**

**The famous intellectual and former professor of Cambridge University, C.S. Lewis, expressed it this way:**

**"There is a really foolish thing that people often say about Him: 'I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept His claim to be God.'--That is one thing that we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things that Jesus said would not be 'a great moral teacher'. He would either be a lunatic--on a level with a man who claims he is a poached egg--or else He would be the Devil of Hell! You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God: Or else a mad man or something worse.**

**"You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come up with any patronising nonsense about His being a 'great human teacher'. He has not left that option open to us, He did not intend to."**

**Another unlikely authority on such matters, the emperor & conqueror of nations, Napoleon Bonaparte, also rightly recognised the absolute uniqueness of Jesus, & expressed it in these words:**

**"I know men, and I tell you that Jesus Christ is no mere man. Between Him and every other person in the World there is no possible term of comparison. Alexander, Caesar, Charlemagne and I have founded empires. But on what did we rest the creations of our genius?--Upon force. Jesus Christ founded His empire upon Love, and at this hour millions of men would die for Him."**

### **But why would God send His Son into the World?**

**God loves us and wanted us to know His Love. But He knows that He--the great Creator of the Universe--is simply too great a concept for us to comprehend or even imagine! He says, "As high as the heavens are above the Earth, so high are My ways above your ways, and My thoughts above your thoughts!"--Isaiah 55:9. He also tells us, "Even the Heaven of heavens cannot contain Me!"--1Kings 8:27. None of us can really grasp just how great God is, how marvellous and wonderful He is, far beyond the minds of men and the wildest stretch of our imaginations!**

**But because He loves us and wanted us to know His Love and Salvation, He sent His "only begotten Son"--Jesus--into the World to**

show us what He Himself is like.

Although He was literally the Ruler & King of the Universe, He chose not to be born in a fine palace with the elite & powerful members of the governments of Man in attendance. Instead, He was born in the humblest & most lowly of circumstances, on the dirty floor of a barn amidst the cattle & the asses, wrapped in rags & laid to rest in the animals' feed trough.

His earthly step-father, Joseph, was a humble carpenter with whom He lived & labored, conforming to our own human ways of life, custom, language & living.--Thus He personally experienced life as we know it, & learned to understand & love us better, to communicate with us on the lowly level of our own limited human understanding.-- He learned to love Mankind. He saw our suffering & had great compassion on us, longing not only to heal our sick & broken bodies, but also to save our souls and broken hearts!

When Jesus began His life's work, He went about everywhere doing good.--Helping people, loving children, healing heartaches, strengthening tired bodies, and bringing God's Love to all whom He could. He not only preached His message, but He lived it among us as one of us. He not only ministered to Man's spiritual needs, but He spent a great deal of time ministering to their physical & material needs, miraculously healing them when they were sick, giving sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, cleansing lepers, raising the dead. He fed the crowds when they were hungry, & did all He could to share His life & His Love!

**How could Jesus be God, if He lived and walked on the Earth like a man?**

Jesus said, "I and my Father are One."--John 10:30. Before being born to Mary and living in a fleshly human body, He and His Heavenly Father were together in very close personal Heavenly fellowship, something He had to forsake while He was down here on Earth.

The Bible tells us, "In the Beginning was the Word (Jesus) and the Word was with God and the Word was God. All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made...And the Word (Jesus) was made flesh and lived among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the one and only Son of the Father."--John 1:1,2,14.

Just before He was arrested and crucified, knowing that He would soon be reunited with His Heavenly Father, Jesus prayed: "And now, Father, glorify Me along with Yourself and restore Me to such majesty and honour in Your presence as I had with You before the

**World was made...for You loved Me before the foundation of the World.**--John 17:5,24.

**Why does Jesus frequently refer to Himself in the Gospels of the New Testament as "the Son of Man"?**

He called Himself the Son of Man because He was human, He was born of a woman just like the rest of us. He had the same kind of body that we have, He had the same feelings that we have, the same human limitations we have, He felt the same kind of weariness and pain.

The Creator of all things willingly stripped Himself of His unlimited power and became a tiny helpless infant. The Source of all wisdom and knowledge had to study and learn to read and write. He left His throne in Heaven where innumerable angels worshipped Him, where all the forces of the Universe were at His command, and He took the place of a servant--scoffed at, ridiculed, persecuted and ultimately killed by the very ones He came to save.

The Bible tells us that Jesus is "a High Priest Who is touched with the feeling of our weaknesses, for He was in all points tempted the same way we are, yet without sin."--Hebrews 4:15. Imagine!--The Son of God literally became a citizen of this World, a member of humanity, a man of flesh, in order to reach us with His Love, prove to us His compassion and concern, and help us to understand His Truth in simple childlike terms that we could grasp.

**What does the Bible mean when it calls Jesus "The Word"?**

God has always spoken to people in many ways: Through the beauty and wonder of His Creation, through His prophets and messengers, and through His written Word. But the clearest revelation of Himself--of His character, of His Love--is found in His Son, Jesus, Whom He calls "the Word."

Words are the means by which we express ourselves, by which we reveal our thoughts, our feelings, our character.--And Jesus is the means by which God expresses Himself to us. God's most outstanding means of communication with us, the way that He chose to communicate His Love to the World, was by His Own Son, Jesus.

**So Jesus came to give us God's message, to tell us about God's Love?**

Yes.--But He not only gave us God's message and God's teachings, God's Love, but He is God's message, He is God's Love to us.

Jesus, the living Word, revealed God's feelings to us in a way that we could understand and relate to. For example, Isaiah 53:3 tells us,

**"He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." He wept over the grief of His friends, over the suffering of humanity, and even over Jerusalem, a city that rejected its Saviour and was therefore doomed to destruction.**

**Jesus was so merciful, so kind and kind-hearted. There were times when He was wearied, worn and virtually exhausted from constantly ministering to the crowds that thronged Him. On one occasion He tried to retire from the busy scene for a little rest and recuperation, but the Bible tells us that when He saw the multitudes who needed His help, He had compassion upon them. He felt so sorry for them that despite the weariness and pain He felt, He went out and healed all that came to Him, and taught them all the wonderful Words of God's Kingdom of Love.--Matthew 9:36; Mark 6:31-34.**

**There were also times when God's anger blazed through Jesus, the Living Word, against pretense and hypocrisy. He told the self-righteous leaders of the ruling religious hierarchy of His day, "If I had not come and spoken unto you, you would not be guilty of sin, but now I have come and exposed you, so you have no covering for your sin!"--John 15:22.**

**Actually, most of the time He had very little to do with the lofty, rich-robed, powerful and wealthy religious leaders, the Scribes and the Pharisees.--Except when they insisted on annoying Him and raising critical questions, doubts and accusations among those He was teaching. Then He unleashed scathing rebukes against them, publicly exposing them as the "blind leaders of the blind" that they were (Matthew 15:14), even telling them on occasion that they were like "whitewashed sepulchres, tombs, which, although they appeared beautiful, clean and holy outwardly, were full of rottenness, corruption and stinking dead men's bones within!"--Matthew 23:27,28. These religious leaders considered themselves to be the most "righteous and holy" people in town, but Jesus exposed them for the hypocrites, liars, robbers and cheaters of the poor that they were, which of course infuriated them.**

**But most of the time Jesus avoided the self-satisfied religionists, and spent His time helping and loving the poor, the common man, speaking to them, healing them, feeding them and most importantly, giving them the spiritual answers, Love, forgiveness and Truth that they longed for.**

**The Bible says that He mingled with and preached to the fishermen, drunks, prostitutes, tax collectors and sinners, and "the common people heard Him gladly."--Mark 12:37. But when He went into the temple and gave His message to the religious leaders, they mobbed Him, threw Him out and finally crucified Him!**

### **Why did the religious leaders of His Own people reject Him?**

Jesus' message that all that the people had to do was to simply "love God with all their heart, and love their neighbour as themselves" (Matthew 22:37-39), liberated them from the dictatorial stranglehold and control that their religious leaders held over them. His teachings snatched the people out from under the established religion's control, a development that filled the religious leaders with fear and envy. They reasoned, "If we let Him alone, all men will believe on Him, & the Romans will come and take away both our temple and our influence!"--John 11:47,48.

These bitter religious foes finally had Jesus arrested and brought to trial on false charges of sedition and subversion. Although the Roman governor found Him innocent, he was pressured and persuaded by the influential High Priests to execute Him. When Jesus' enemies came to arrest Him, He assured His disciples, "They couldn't even touch Me without My Father's permission! If I would but raise My little finger, He would send tens of thousands of angels to rescue Me!"--Matthew 26:53.--But instead, He chose to die.--For you and me! Nobody took His life from Him, He laid it down, He gave His life of His Own free will and accord.--See John 10:11, 17,18.

But even His death did not satisfy His bitter and vengeful enemies! To ensure that His followers couldn't steal His body and claim He had risen from the dead--as He had said He would--these false religious leaders had a huge stone placed over the entrance to His tomb, and posted a group of Roman soldiers there to guard it.--A scheme that proved futile, as these same guards became eye-witnesses to the greatest miracle of all.--Three days after His lifeless body was laid to rest in that cold tomb, He arose from the dead, victoriously conquering death and Hell and the grave!

### **If all of this amazing past history of Jesus is true, what does it mean? What good is it to me today?**

In the same text of the Bible where we read the story of His life on Earth, we also find many specific, definite claims that Jesus made regarding Himself.--Claims that you can take at face value and put to the test right now. Here are a few examples in Jesus' Own Words:

"I am the Light of the World. He that follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the Light of life."--John 8:12. All of us have had the experience of being caught in the dark before and wishing we had a light so we could see, so we could make our way safely past any dangers, avoid any falls etc. Well, spiritually speaking, when we do not know God and are out of fellowship with Him, we are in spiritual

darkness.

Would you like to get rid of all the darkness in your life? Just like turning a light on immediately chases all of the darkness out of a blackened room, so Jesus will chase all of the spiritual darkness, oppression, fear and evil out of your life if you will just ask Him to come into your heart! Once you have received the "Light of the World"--Jesus--into your heart, all of the powers of evil and the dark experiences of life will never be able to quench it!

**"All power is given unto Me in Heaven and in Earth!"--Matthew 28:18.**

The Devil and all of his evil spirits tremble at even the name of Jesus! All you need to do is ask Jesus to come into your heart, then you've got the greatest, most powerful spiritual Force of all with you.-- He is your Friend, He loves you and wants to help you and fill your soul with His Light!

**"I am the Door, by Me, if any man enter in, he shall be saved."--John 10:9.**

He is not a closed or locked door that you must try to force open or work hard to enter.--He's an open door! All you have to do is walk through Him and thereby freely enter God's Heavenly Kingdom of Love and Light! If you come to Jesus, He will give you His free gift of Eternal Life, and you will know that you belong to Him and are going to Heaven! There are millions of people alive today who can testify with certainty that this claim of His is true!

**"I am the Bread of Life, He that comes to Me shall never hunger, and he that believes on Me shall never thirst."--John 6:35.**

Deep in their hearts, most people know that something is missing in their lives. Outwardly they may seem to have everything--money, position, friends etc., all the things that are supposed to make them happy--yet they still have an emptiness, a hunger that nothing really satisfies.

Jesus said that He is the Bread of Life Who would completely fulfil our heart's "hunger and thirst." You can find out if this claim is true by simply asking Him to come into your life. See how quickly His Love can satisfy your hungry heart!--The loneliness, emptiness and dissatisfaction you may have experienced will be replaced with lasting happiness, peace and joy such as you have never known before!

**"I am the Way, the Truth and the Life.--No man comes unto the Father except by Me."--John 14:6.**

**This is an extraordinary claim, and is in fact the heart and soul of the writings of the New Testament.--That Jesus alone is the way to Eternal Life, Salvation and union with God.**

**But aren't such beliefs rather bigoted and narrow-minded?**

**Quite the contrary, Jesus and His life and teachings are absolutely universal, open to all men, and are anything but "narrow-minded" or "bigoted"! In fact, it was Jesus' proclamation that "whoever believes in Me shall not perish!", that so infuriated the closed-minded and racially-prejudiced religious leaders and rabbis of His Own Jewish religion! Jesus frequently helped and mingled with so-called "pagan" Gentiles, those whom His Own Jewish people had been taught by their leaders to despise and look down upon.**

**The religious leaders and teachers of Jesus' day were narrow-minded in every sense of the word. They were sour, intolerant and legalistic, and felt that they alone had an absolute monopoly on God and His Kingdom. It was the fact that Jesus told them to their faces that the Kingdom of God would be taken from them and opened up to others--to nations from the East and from the West, to all people throughout the entire World--that infuriated them so much that they determined to destroy Him.--Matthew 8:11 12; 21: 42,43.**

**God sent us His Son to show all men, all nations, all people, what He Himself is like, to freely bring us His Own great Love! "For God so loved the World (you and me) that He gave His only begotten Son (Jesus), so that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."--John 3:16.**

**But can't you just say "God" and speak of "God's Love"? Why must you insist on using Jesus' name?**

**If Jesus is God's Son, and God chose Jesus to reveal Himself to the World, then God Himself has insisted on it! These are God's conditions, not ours: "Love Me, love My Son!" The Bible says, "All men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He who does not honour the Son, does not honour the Father Who sent Him."--John 5:23.**

**God is our great, kind and loving Heavenly Father, and He loves each of us very much. And He wants us all to experience and know the wonderful Love, joy and satisfaction that comes from personally knowing and being close friends with Him.**

But sad to say, all of us have done wrong at one time or another, and have been selfish, unloving or unkind to others.--Or even to Him, our Heavenly Father! He tells us in His Word, "All have missed the mark and have fallen short of the perfection of God.--Romans 3:23.

God knows that no matter how hard we try to be good, none of us can ever be good enough to come into His perfect presence through our own self-goodness. But Jesus is perfect. And because He was willing to come to Earth and suffer and die on the cross for us, to take the punishment that we deserve for our wrong-doings, we can be forgiven for all our failings and be reunited with our great and loving Heavenly Father if we will simply accept Jesus' pardon and Gift of Eternal Life!

It doesn't matter how bad we are, no matter what we've done, if we will simply ask Jesus to forgive us and receive Him into our heart, we will be forgiven and saved.--Which means we will not only know God's wonderful Love and peace here and now, but when we die, we will inherit a never-ending life of Love and happiness in Heaven forever!

No mere mortal man, be he prophet or teacher, sage or guru, could possibly do what Jesus did!--Only God Himself in the person of His Own Son could pay the price for our failings, and take the punishment that we deserve. Only God could have done that in the person of His Son Jesus. This is why Jesus alone could rightfully proclaim Himself to be "the Way, the Truth and the Life."

There is simply no other way to make peace with God. He will not accept any other terms, any other deal. In Jesus, the one thing that needed to happen for Mankind happened in such a way that it never needs to happen again! It is for this reason that we can claim with certainty that for the greatest ailment of humanity there is only one specific remedy.--Jesus!

If many different groups of pathologists were all earnestly seeking to discover the cause and cure of cancer, and one group--through no brilliance of their own--were to discover the secret, would it be "narrow-mindedness" or "bigotry" for them to share what they had found with all the other groups, and indeed with the entire World?--Of course not! In fact, it would be the utmost folly, selfishness, lack of love and dishonesty were they to keep the secret to themselves!--This is why we who have personally found Jesus, do all we can to share Him with others.

**How can a conscientious person become a Christian, when the history of Christianity is so darkened by the sin, intolerance, wars, excesses and divisions of generations of its adherents?**

Millions of individuals through the ages have come to personally know and love Jesus, and have been empowered by Him to lead wonderful lives of love and service to their fellow man. But sad to say, generally speaking, Christianity as an institution has failed miserably in fulfilling the mission that Jesus gave His original Apostles and followers: To share God's Love with a needy World!

Most so-called "Christian" organisations and denominations have become so preoccupied with their internal squabbles, selfish accumulation of wealth, construction of elaborate and wasteful church buildings etc. that they have in effect forgotten and lost sight of Jesus' original command to "love thy neighbour as thyself!"

Our objective is not to persuade you to become a member of a religious organisation.--Jesus is not a religion! In fact, Jesus Himself never actually started any denominations or hierarchical organisations! He simply went about doing good, helping people and sharing the Love of God with all whom He could. He never had a synagogue, mosque, church or temple of any kind, nor did He have a congregation whom He met with on a certain "holy day" of the week.

He never put up a sign or advertised, "Come to My church on Holy day!" He only said, "Come unto Me!"--Matthew 11:28. He absolutely refused to compromise with the powerful and corrupt religious system of His day, but rather worked totally outside of it, reaching and sharing His Love and Truth with the poor and common folk who had long ago abandoned and been abandoned by organised religion.

Once, while speaking to a woman who was arguing with Him over whether God should be worshipped in a certain "holy" mountain in Samaria, or in the Jews' temple in Jerusalem, He answered her, "The day is coming, and now is, when you shall neither worship God here upon this mountain not yet at Jerusalem. For they that worship God must worship Him in spirit and in truth.--For the Father seeks such to worship Him!"--John 4:21-23. Jesus made it clear that forms and ceremonies, rituals and religious buildings were in no way necessary to worship God, but that we could simply love and worship Him in spirit, in our hearts and in truth, by following the light of His Word.

**How can I know beyond a shadow of a doubt whether or not Jesus Christ really is the Son of God, the way of Salvation?**

We have touched on several features of Jesus' life that could perhaps assist or inspire your faith. As mentioned earlier, the historical facts regarding Jesus of Nazareth cannot be denied by anyone who seriously and open-mindedly examines the facts.

The fulfillment of over 300 Old Testament prophecies given many

centuries before He was born, describing in detail His birth, His life, His work, His death and His resurrection, also cannot be denied by any sincere seeker of truth.

There is also no reason to doubt that after His death, something incredible happened which transformed His tiny band of dejected followers into a company of witnesses whom all the persecution of Imperial Rome could not stop. Downhearted and discouraged, their Lord cruelly crucified by His enemies, it looked to those disciples like their hopes had died and their dreams were shattered.

But three days after Jesus' death, their faith was rekindled in such a dramatic manner that no force on Earth was ever able to quench it! And that lowly handful of His original followers went on to tell the entire World the Good News!--That God not only sent His Son into the World to teach us His Truth and show us His Love, but also that Jesus suffered death for our sake, and then rose from the grave!--So that we who know and believe on Him never need to fear death again, for we are saved and on our way to Heaven, thanks to Jesus!

The New Testament tells us that Jesus personally appeared to over 500 eye-witnesses after His resurrection.--1Corinthians 15:6. This was the resounding message that His first disciples boldly proclaimed throughout the World, "God raised Him from the dead!"--Acts 13:30.

A mere mental, intellectual acceptance of these facts is not enough. For you to be absolutely certain that Jesus is Who He claimed to be, the Son of God, you simply need to personally try Him! Ask Him to come into your heart, forgive you for all the wrong you've done, and fill your life with His Love, peace and joy.--And He will! He says in His Word, "Behold, I stand at the door (of your heart) and knock. If you hear My voice and open the door I will come into you."--Revelation 3:20. You don't have to try to figure Him out, just let Him in!

If you want His Love, light, life, joy, eternal happiness and Salvation, all you have to do is personally receive Him into your heart.-  
-You can do it this very moment! He's made Salvation the easiest thing in the World, it requires absolutely no effort on your part whatsoever, no work, nothing, you simply have to receive it. And even if you don't understand it all, the Bible says that God's Love is "Love which passes your own understanding."--Ephesians 3:19. You don't have to understand God in order to receive His Love!

Will you receive Him?--If so, He will be the most precious One in your life!--Your closest Friend and Companion Who will be with you always! Receive Him now by simply praying this little prayer:

"Dear Jesus, I know that I need help and that I can't save myself. I have heard that You are the Son of God, and that through You I can personally find and know the God of Love. Jesus, I need Your Love to

cleanse me from all fear and hate. I need Your Light to drive away all darkness. And I need Your Peace to fill and satisfy my heart. So I now open the door of my heart, and I ask You, Jesus, to please come in and give me Your free gift of Eternal Life! Thank You, Jesus, for suffering for all of the wrong I have done and for forgiving me and hearing my prayer! In Jesus' name, amen."

If you would like to know more about Jesus and God's Plan and Will for you, please ask the one who gave you this booklet for a copy of the next booklet in this series, "The Word!"--A fascinating and enlightening explanation of what the Bible is, why it is the most unique book in the World, how God wrote it, how to understand its mysteries, etc.! We love you!

### **JESUS' SECOND COMING!**

The Bible not only contains hundreds of predictions about Jesus' first coming, but it contains even more prophecies regarding His Second Coming, when He will return to Earth, not as a meek and mild baby in a manger, but as the Mighty King of kings and Lord of lords that He is!--Who will take over this World by force and put an end to Man's cruel and chaotic reign! He promised, "I will come again!"--In the clouds of Heaven with power and great majesty!"--John 14:3; Luke 21:27.

Jesus gave us many "Signs of the Times," signs that we should be aware of, so that we will know when He is about to return. He predicted that just before His Coming, there will be a dramatic increase in "famines, pestilences and earthquakes in various places," and that the "Gospel would be preached in all the World for a witness to all nations."--Matthew 24:7,14.--Just as it is today! He also said there would be a drastic increase in international travel, with "many running to and fro, wandering from sea to sea, as knowledge is greatly increased!"--Amos 8:11,12; Daniel 12:4.

He also said that there would be "a great falling away from the Lord as evil men and seducers grow worse and worse, deceiving many, with the love of many growing cold," resulting in "distress of nations upon the Earth and men's hearts failing them for fear!"-- 2Thessalonians 2:3; 2Timothy 3:13; Matthew 24:12; Luke 21:25,26.-- Signs which are all obviously being fulfilled today more than ever before!

Are you ready for the "End of the World" as we now know it, and for Jesus' soon return to establish His Kingdom of Love upon Earth?--If not, receive Him into your heart today!--Tomorrow may be too late!

