

Shaking The Pillars Of Christianity

Volume One

QUESTIONING THE UNQUESTIONABLE

FREE READER EDITION

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BY RAY EVANS

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BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Whether you're an unbeliever or a believer struggling with your faith, I believe you will find this book enlightening.

It addresses questions many people have wondered about but were often confused by the answers they were given.

If these questions stir something in your heart, the journey doesn't end here. The *Shaking the Pillars of Christianity* series continues exploring these issues and the deeper truths found in Scripture.

Feel free to share this Reader Edition with anyone who might benefit from hearing God's truth without the religious rhetoric often heard from the pulpit.

May God richly bless you on your journey through life.

Ray Evans

DesertStream Press

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Shaking the Pillars of Christianity – Volume One
Questioning The Unquestionable

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Scripture quotations are from the King James Version (KJV).

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For every seeker of truth, brave enough
to ask the hard questions and humble
enough to hear God's answers.

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PREFACE

A lot of people see the Bible as nothing more than a collection of stories and superstitious mumbo-jumbo — an outdated book with little value for people today.

That's because the Bible wasn't written for them.

The Bible is not a history of the world, nor was it meant to prove the existence of God.

It is God's instruction manual for his people on how to live a happy, healthy, wealthy, abundant life.

Unfortunately, much of what you hear from the pulpit, on the radio or television, see on the internet, or read in books is simply the recycled religious rhetoric of the religious elite.

WHAT IF THEY'RE WRONG?

Can you think of a better way to deceive people — especially Christians — than from the pulpit?

Hello, my name is Ray Evans.

I'm not a pastor, priest, or biblical scholar. I didn't attend seminary, nor do I hold a degree in theology, so you may wonder about my qualifications to answer questions and write books about God, Jesus, and Christianity.

It's a valid question.

THE DAMASCUS ROAD

On January 13, 1987, I heard the Lord's voice speaking to me, and I committed my life to serving God.

Unlike the religious elite, I have seen God's shape and heard his voice, and I don't hope, assume, or even say that I believe God is real — I know he's real.

Like most new Christians, I watched Christian television, listened to Christian radio, and went to church as much as humanly possible. But the more I watched, listened, and went, the more confused I got.

They all claimed to know the truth — but who was right?

I was pondering that question when God spoke the words that changed my life: "Stop listening to the words of man and start listening to the Word of God."

I turned off the radio and television, stopped going to church, and spent nine months in prayerful study of Scripture. What was revealed to me was this simple truth:

"Christianity is not a religion; it's a way of life — a way of living as God intended... in peace, without fear."

NEW WINE

Since my understanding differed from everything I had been taught, I had a lot of questions for God.

How can I be right while everyone else is wrong?

His answer was simple: "New wine must be put into new bottles." What God was showing me was "new wine."

The Scriptures were the same, but the understanding was different — it was more logical, and more practical.

Finally, it all made sense.

I wrote this book because people are being deceived and led astray by the religious elite. They need to understand the truth about God, Jesus, and Christianity without the misleading religious rhetoric that keeps people away from God and in bondage to organized religion.

However, I'm just the messenger.

What you do with this information is between you and God.

The world is moving farther away from God, but you cannot change the world — its fate was sealed long ago.

You *can*, however, change your own world.

All it takes is desire, commitment, and someone to show you the way.

Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life.

And when you know the Truth, you will know the way.

That is why this book — and this series — exists: to help others hear God's Word without the noise of religion.

INTRODUCTION

Now that you know how this journey began, let's turn to why it must continue.

“Christianity,” as commonly practiced today, relies on traditions, doctrines, and interpretations developed over centuries — some rooted in Scripture, others not.

Shaking the Pillars of Christianity re-examines those foundations without the misleading religious rhetoric you hear from the pulpit, on radio and television, see on the internet, or read in books.

Far too often:

- verses are taken out of context,
- doctrines are accepted without question,
- and practices continue that have little or no basis in Scripture.

The result is a faith that is more focused on religion than relationship, and more secular than inspired.

This book presents ten challenging but essential questions that expose the lies, misunderstandings, misinterpretations, and manipulations of Scripture that keep people from discovering the truth of God's Word and in bondage to organized religion.

The purpose of this book — and this series — is to help seekers, skeptics, unbelievers, and believers struggling with

their faith understand the truth about God, Jesus, and Christianity so they can be reconciled to God.

Each chapter encourages you to set aside assumptions and examine the Scriptures for the truth hidden beneath layers of tradition and translation.

YOU CAN'T SERVE GOD AND MONEY

Religion is a billion-dollar industry, and many stalwarts of Christianity have become multi-millionaires.

Whom do you think they serve — God or money?

Jesus said, “But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.” — *Matthew 15:9*

Listen, the church has lost its way, so be careful whom you choose to follow, for it is written: “If the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.” — *Matthew 15:14*

Jesus cast out those who bought and sold in the temple and overturned the tables of the moneychangers.

So it should come as no surprise that — at some point — God would send someone to shake the pillars of Christianity and restore the truth of his Word.

Let the shaking begin.

IS GOD REAL?

Satan's greatest victory wasn't convincing the world he doesn't exist — it was convincing the world that there is no God. And all he had to do was plant a seed of doubt in people's minds: "If God is real, prove it."

I understand your skepticism... from day one, we are taught that if you can't see, hear, taste, touch, or smell something, it isn't real.

Physically, that may be so, but God isn't physical; he's Spiritual, and the things of God are Spiritually discerned.

No one can prove the existence of God; looking for tangible "proof" that God is real is a fool's errand.

I'm not trying to discourage you from your quest.

Although you can't "prove" to an unbelieving world that God is real, there is a way to prove it to yourself.

As Jesus said, "Ye must be born again, born of water and Spirit, to see or enter the kingdom of God." (John 3:3–7)

I know it sounds like something out of the "Twilight Zone," but God is Spirit, and the only way to know for sure that God is real is to be Spiritually reborn... born again.

It's not just an option, and don't let anyone convince you it's not a real experience. Spiritual birth is genuine... and unforgettable.

We cover Spiritual birth later, so it will be clear.

GOD IS SPIRIT, AND HIS KINGDOM IS SPIRITUAL

I don't mean ghosts and goblins or Harry Potter, but until you are Spiritually reborn, you can't know for certain that God or the kingdom of God exists.

And until you're sure that God exists, you won't live a sinless life, walk in his ways, or obey his voice. And that, my friend, is the key to an abundant life, both now and for eternity.

Do not be deceived: You must be Spiritually reborn to be a child of God. This is how God distinguishes his children from the rest of the world. It's also how the angels will separate the wheat (God's kids) from the chaff (everyone else) at the end of the age.

To clarify: there are only two kinds of people in the world: the children of God and everyone else.

Relax. You don't have to become a monk or enter a convent — being reborn Spiritually is not about wearing long robes and chanting like a Franciscan monk.

Solomon said it best in Ecclesiastes 12:13, "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this *is* the whole *duty* of man."

It's that simple.

However, without knowing for certain that God is real, you will neither fear God nor keep his commandments, and all that awaits you is judgment. (Hebrews 10:27)

Look, you might be a good person, go to church, do a lot of good things, believe in God, and even have a good life, but that doesn't mean you're a child of God or have Eternal Life.

Until you're "Born-Again," you will be easily influenced by the deceitfulness of riches and cares of this world. You will ignore sin and believe there's nothing wrong with how you live... that may be so, if you don't care what happens to you after you die.

Please understand: Sin separates you from God. (Isaiah 59:2)

If you die with unrepentant sin in your life, all the good things you've done will be forgotten (Ezekiel 33:13), and your name will be removed from the Book of Life.

DON'T TAKE THIS LIGHTLY

I know it doesn't sound fair, but sin is always a choice, and God warned his children that there are consequences for sinning.

When you experience Spiritual birth, God wipes your sin-slate clean and enables you to live sinlessly through the Holy Spirit.

It doesn't happen often, but if a child of God sins, the Holy Spirit convicts them, and they will repent immediately.

REPENTANCE IS THE KEY TO FORGIVENESS

Many preachers will tell you that “Jesus died for you,” and when he died on the cross, all your sins, past, present, and future, were forgiven; or they say, when God looks at you, he doesn’t see your sinful self, he only sees the righteousness of Jesus.

These are lies from the pit of hell designed to relieve you of any responsibility for sinning.

Do Not Be Deceived: Your sins are not forgiven until you repent, and if you keep sinning, you have not been reborn Spiritually.

A born-again child of God does not knowingly or willfully sin; as I said, they understand that if you die in sin, all the good things you’ve done in life will not be remembered. (Ezekiel 33:13)

Don’t believe me? That’s okay; you can believe whatever you want. Just don’t be surprised when you reach the pearly gates and hear the most sorrowful words ever spoken: “I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.” (Matthew 7:23)

“Iniquity” (Anomia) means “transgression of the law.” Keep that in mind when you hear a preacher say, “We are no longer under the law.”

YOU MUST BE SPIRITUALLY REBORN

God is Spirit, and the things of God are Spiritually discerned (1 Corinthians 2:14).

You won't grasp the deeper Spiritual meaning in scripture or believe that sin has eternal consequences until you have been reborn Spiritually.

We will discuss Spiritual birth later, so the meaning of being Spiritually reborn will become very clear.

Regardless of what you hear from the pulpit, you're not "born-again" when you're baptized or confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord.

It might make you a Christian and a member of the congregation, but these are the traditions of "man." They do not make you a child of God or assure you of Eternal Life.

You see, it's easy to say, "I'm a Christian," or even, "I'm a born-again Christian," but living a sinless life — fearing God and obeying the commandments — is not easy, especially today.

However, God never said it would be easy; just that it would be worth it.

SO, HOW CAN YOU KNOW THAT GOD IS REAL?

Get on your knees, repent of your sins, and pray as I did over thirty years ago, "God, if you're real, I want to know."

That's it. No special prayers, magical incantations, or altar calls. Just a simple request... but you must be sincere.

This is serious business; acquiring the knowledge of the Holy comes with responsibility.

It's not an easy road, but as I mentioned before, God never said it would be easy, only that it would be worth it.

If life and blessings now, and for all eternity, aren't worth it, then what is?

I realize very few people reading this will take it seriously... since only "a remnant shall be saved." (Romans 9:27).

But if you're among those who take it seriously and pray, God will reveal himself in his way, in his time, according to his purpose, and you will no longer hope, assume, or even say you believe God is real... you will know it.

DON'T EXPECT TO HEAR ANGELS SINGING

My journey of Spiritual birth began with a simple prayer.

I recited "The Sinner's Prayer" I found on a bookmark every night, until I finally got up the nerve to say what I really wanted to say: "God, if you're real, I want to know."

I made this request every night until it was answered on January 13, 1987, when I heard the Lord's voice speaking to me.

WILL YOU HEAR HIS VOICE?

Jesus said, “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.” (John 10:27) So I’m going to say, “Yes.” If you’re a child of God, you will hear his voice.”

I can’t say from within or without, but it will be unmistakable... and you will know, without a doubt, that God is real.

A word of caution: Not every “voice” you hear is the voice of God. It could be the Devil or your own desires... even Jesus was tested by Satan for forty days. (Matthew 4:3–6)

HOW WILL YOU KNOW IF IT’S GOD’S VOICE?

Spiritual birth is like physical birth; it is an unforgettable experience, and you will know when it occurs.

However, it cannot be explained any more than you can describe the taste of salt to someone who has never tasted salt.

Only those who have experienced it truly understand, just as no one can know the pain and joy of natural childbirth except for those who have given birth.

You’ll know it’s God because your thinking will change.

Before I was illuminated, I rarely thought about God. After my illumination, I couldn’t stop thinking about him.

You will have an insatiable hunger and thirst for the Word of God and an innate desire to please him.

Obedience to God will be the priority of your life, and sin — even the thought of sinning — will be anathema to you.

The significance of your actions and decisions will be apparent, and the necessity for repentance and obedience will be undeniable.

Please understand that you will still live a physical life.

As revealed to me by the Holy Spirit: “Salvation is not an external change in the way you act... it’s an internal change in the way you think.”

YE MUST BE BORN AGAIN

When you’re “born again,” your thought process changes.

There are millions, perhaps billions, of good, decent, hard-working, church-going people in the world who believe they are children of God... but they are being deceived.

Only those who are or have been Spiritually reborn can be called a child of God... and only God’s children will have their names written in the Book of Life.

Now, do you see why Jesus said, “Ye must be born again?”

There are very few people who have experienced Spiritual birth. Most are following humanity's path to destruction.

They don’t believe it because they are being misled by the religious elite, who assure them of Eternal Life and an easy path to Heaven if they convert.

Let's face it. When you think about the fossil record, dinosaurs and Neanderthals, then look around and see cars, planes, microwaves, and televisions, it doesn't bode well for the Bible and God.

You might be thinking, "Look at all we have accomplished without God. The advances in technology, science, and medicine allow us to live better and longer than ever."

Are we?

Noah lived for 600 years, Methuselah for over 900 years... and there is not a single mention of cancer or even the common cold.

Satan was given rule over the Earth, and his mission is to try to draw people away from God.

Do technology, science, and medicine bring you closer to God or move you farther away?

Do you trust God for your health... or science?

Just because God has been silent for the last 500 years doesn't mean he's dead or that his promises won't be fulfilled.

He is long-suffering and merciful, waiting for his children to return to him.

You might wonder, "Why doesn't God just appear or do a miracle or something so everyone would know he's real?"

IT'S NOT FOR EVERYONE

Among all the nations on Earth, God chose Israel to be his people. This doesn't imply that one must be Jewish to be a child of God.

The Jews intermarried with Gentiles, so I suspect that if it were possible to trace their ancestry back to the beginning, every child of God would have one of the twelve tribes of Israel in their lineage.

Jew or Gentile, as I said earlier, there are only two kinds of people in the world: the children of God and everyone else.

Only those who are led by the Spirit are the sons (and daughters) of God. (Romans 8:14)

I can tell you God is real until I'm blue in the face, but you won't know absolutely, positively, for sure, without a doubt that God is real until the Holy Spirit reveals him to you.

You must be reborn Spiritually... It's not an option.

So, if you want to know if God is real... get down on your knees, repent of your sins, and pray as I prayed over thirty years ago, "God, if you're real, I want to know."

Because, until you know, without a doubt, that God is real, nothing else really matters.

WHY ARE CHRISTIANS SO HYPOCRITICAL?

Most likely, you have encountered a religious, Bible-thumping, churchgoing “Christian,” not a born-again child of God.

You see, not everyone you meet who calls themselves a Christian is a child of God.

The people sitting in the pews who call themselves Christians may be good people who pray, tithe, and do a lot of good things, but going to church doesn't make them children of God.

As Jesus said, “This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with *their* lips; but their heart is far from me.” (Matthew 15:8)

You see, there's a big difference between being a Christian and being a child of God.

It's easy to say, “I'm a Christian,” or even “I'm a child of God,” but these are only words, and words mean nothing.

The fault lies with the clergy, who are more concerned with making converts than making disciples of Christ.

Converts fill the pews and collection plates...they buy lots of books and tapes.

If you think Christians are hypocritical, you're not alone.

Jesus repeatedly cautioned people about the hypocrisy of the clergy, but they wouldn't listen... and they still don't. People follow church leaders like sheep to the slaughter.

I mean, if Christians believe there is life after death, why are they so afraid to die?

RELIGION LEADS TO DESTRUCTION

Religious people may do a lot of good things, and attending church might boost their self-esteem, but it does not make them a child of God; rather, it fosters self-righteousness.

They view themselves as superior to those who do not attend church, yet God does not dwell in buildings of stone; rather, he resides in the hearts and minds of his people.

Suffice it to say, not everyone is a child of God.

You see, most Christians have been led to believe that if they get baptized, go to church, and say they believe in Jesus, they get a free ticket to Heaven and Eternal Life.

It's a lie.

It might make them a Christian and a member of the church, but it doesn't make them "Christianos."

"Christianos" (Christian) in Greek means "follower of Christ."

It is mentioned only three times in scripture, each time in the context of being or becoming a follower of Christ, rather than a member of a church.

WHO IS A FOLLOWER OF CHRIST?

A follower of Christ is a disciple (“Mathetes”), which means a learner.

However, people today don’t want to learn God’s ways or walk in them. They want to live their lives, go to Heaven, and be reunited with loved ones.

Preachers are happy to tell them what they want to hear. It’s how they keep the pews filled and the collection plates overflowing.

In the early days of the “church,” the Apostles taught the people to follow Christ.

The “Great Commission” (Matthew 28:19) was Jesus’s instructions to his disciples to “go into all the world and make disciples” (Matheteuo), not converts... teaching them to obey his commandments.

The disciples took God and his Word seriously.

Today, not so much.

Preachers today avoid discussing the consequences of sin and advocate a gospel of love and forgiveness instead of obedience and repentance.

The church has turned into a social gathering place. Their concern is not for the souls of people; it’s for their pocketbooks.

Religion today is a billion-dollar industry.

THE SAVED/UNSAVED TRAP

The religious elite have successfully divided the world into those who are “saved” and those who aren’t. They say “saved” people go to Heaven, and unsaved people go to hell... this too, is a lie.

Some preachers tell people that if they will convert to Christianity and accept Jesus as Lord and saviour, all their sins, past, present, and future, will be forgiven, granting them a free ticket to paradise and Eternal Life.

Some even go so far as to say, “It’s okay if you sin occasionally; God knows you’re not perfect.”

These are also lies.

With all that he did, Moses disobeyed God one time and was forbidden to enter the promised land... does that sound like God says it’s okay to sin on occasion?

God expects his people to be “perfect” (“Tamyim” – it means “morally without blemish”), and he sent the Holy Spirit to help them.

And just so you know, sins are only forgiven when a sinner repents.

Regardless of what you hear from the pulpit, it is possible to live a “perfect,” sinless life that is pleasing to God.

However, it is impossible without help and guidance from the Holy Spirit. That’s why Jesus said, “Ye must be born again, born of water and Spirit.” (John 3:3–7)

“Perfection” (morally blameless) is not an option; it’s a requirement if you want to rule and reign with Christ in the coming kingdom. (Proverbs 2:21)

Since most preachers have not been reborn Spiritually, they don’t understand what it means to be “born again,” so they merely pass along what they learned in seminary.

WHAT IF THEY’RE WRONG?

It’s common knowledge that if you tell a big enough lie long enough, people will believe it to be true... but remember, just because everyone believes something is true, doesn’t make it true.

After hundreds of years of lies, deception, and manipulation of scripture by the religious elite, it is nearly impossible to shake the foundations of modern Christianity successfully... which is why “new wine must be put into new bottles” (Luke 5:38).

You might be the bottle that God is going to fill with “new wine.”

People sitting in the pews prefer the old wine of organized religion, steeped in human traditions.

They place their faith in pastors, priests, biblical scholars, and anyone with a lot of university letters after their name.

Do not be deceived: the Bible says that Satan is transformed into an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:14), and his ministers

as ministers of righteousness, not the dark, ominous figures typically shown in movies.

Satan is a liar and the father of lies (John 8:44).

The lies coming from the pulpit are not from God. I mean, “Can you think of a better way to deceive, especially Christians, than from the pulpit?”

Instead of teaching, as Jesus did, the need and necessity for repentance and obedience, preachers use scripture, like the Devil did, to convince Christians that their mission is to “save the unsaved.”

Sounds pretty righteous, doesn't it? I mean, who wants their loved ones to end up in hell?

In truth, preachers, much like the Pharisees, encourage the people to make converts of everyone they know.

Trust me, you won't hear these words of Jesus from the pulpit: “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves.” (Matthew 23:15)

It doesn't get any clearer... a “proselyte” (prosēlytos) is a “convert.”

FORGET THE HYPOCRITICAL CHRISTIANS

Genuine born-again people differ from others; they are humble individuals who take God and his Word seriously.

They do not knowingly lie, cheat, or steal because they understand that the wages of sin is death.

All God wants is for his children to listen and follow his instructions. As Solomon said, “Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man.”

It may seem simple, but it is impossible until one is Spiritually reborn.

Or, as God laments in Deuteronomy 5:29, “O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children forever!”

It saddens God when his children ignore his wisdom and disobey him, which is why he established a new Spiritual covenant and sent the Holy Spirit to help them.

As it is written, “For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people.” (Hebrews 8:10)

(Please Note: “the laws” he’s referring to are the Ten Commandments — knowing right from wrong — not the statutes and rituals concerning animal sacrifice).

THE BOTTOM LINE

It is the perfect description of being reborn Spiritually. When you’re reborn Spiritually, your thinking (your mind) changes.

Before I was illuminated, I rarely thought about God; after my illumination, I couldn't stop thinking about him.

When you're Spiritually reborn (born-again), you will have an insatiable hunger and thirst for the things of God and an innate desire to please him. Obedience to God will become the priority of your life, and sin, even the mere thought of sinning, will be anathema to you.

I understand this contradicts what you often hear from the pulpit, where all you need to do to be born again is get baptized and recite a few lines of scripture. However, keep in mind that the church's goal is to increase membership, not make disciples of Christ.

Most Christians are hypocrites; they lie, cheat, and steal, just like "everyone else," because, except for saying, "I'm a Christian," they are just like everyone else.

They live physical lives in a physical world because they don't know that the Spiritual world even exists, but don't let them spoil your search for the truth.

Hypocrites will get their comeuppance sooner or later.

And don't think the church knows the truth; most pastors, priests, and biblical scholars have not been Spiritually reborn. They don't know the truth because "the truth" (the Holy Spirit) is not in them.

DO I HAVE TO GIVE UP EVERYTHING?

All you need to give up... is sin.

You don't have to become a monk or enter a convent, and you don't have to join a church or become a "Christian"... you must just take God and his Word seriously.

Listen, I lead a fairly normal "physical" life. I enjoy a round of golf on occasion and go on vacation with my family. We buy gas for the car and visit the grocery store. We cut our grass, clean the house, and do laundry like most people today.

However, unlike most people, we begin every day with prayer and readings from Psalms, Proverbs, and several chapters of scripture. We don't go to a church, but we have "church" at home every morning.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF SIN

Sin separates you from God (Isaiah 59:2), but it is impossible to stop sinning until you have been reborn Spiritually... until you know, without a doubt, that God is real.

You see, when you know God is real... the consequence of sin becomes real, too.

The wages of sin is death. (Romans 6:23) If you believe you can sin without facing punishment, you are being deceived.

Why do you think Jesus was so adamant about the necessity of Spiritual birth? Only then will you stop sinning and have your name written in the Book of Life.

When you're Spiritually reborn, it doesn't mean you walk around in a long robe chanting like a Franciscan monk.

As revealed to me by the Holy Spirit, it's not an external change in the way you act; it's an internal change in the way you think.

Regardless of what you hear from the pulpit, the Road to Life is not a walk in the park; it is full of trials and tribulations as God tests your heart to see if you will obey. You will likely lose some friends and perhaps even a few family members.

It's not easy, and many who embark on that journey give up, but God never said it would be easy... just that it would be worth it. I can tell you from experience, it's worth it.

I DON'T MEAN TO IMPLY THAT IT'S HARD

When you experience Spiritual birth, the Holy Spirit will protect you on your journey, and God will never give you more than you can bear without also providing a way out of every trial and tribulation.

It's just not the one-time, say-a-little prayer event that you hear from the pulpit. The Road to Life is a 24/7 journey... only those who endure to the end will be "saved." (Matthew 24:13)

Let me clarify something. The word "saved" has been corrupted by the religious elite. It does not mean, as preached from the pulpit, "going to Heaven" and receiving Eternal Life.

“Saved” (“Sozo” in Greek) means “to deliver and protect.” And only those who walk in his ways and obey his voice will be protected and delivered.

It’s your choice, but if an abundant life now and Eternal Life later are not worth it, I don’t know what is.

A Note of Caution: It is possible to be “born-again” and ignore the Spirit when he warns you before you sin.

God will not force you to do anything. Born-again people still have “free will.” It is still their choice to obey or not.

The parable of the Sower (Matthew 13:4–8) makes it clear that not every seed falls on fertile ground and produces fruit.

Even for a child of God, it's possible to revert to their old physical life of sin, so be cautious... you can only be reborn Spiritually once.

If you have been Spiritually reborn, ignore the Spirit’s warning and “backslide” into a life of sin. If you remove God from your mind, God will turn you over to a reprobate mind. In other words, if you forget God, God will forget you. (Romans 1:28)

Some preachers will tell you, “Once saved, always saved,” but that isn’t true. Sin separates you from God. If you sin, whether you’re born again or not, you will lose God’s protection and your salvation.

The temptation to sin can be overwhelming at times, so as Peter said in 1 Peter 5:8, “Be sober, be vigilant; because your

adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.”

SAINTS AND SINNERS

I know preachers say, “We are all sinners,” but that isn’t true either.

The scripture does not say, “We are all sinners;” it says, “All have sinned.” (Romans 3:23)

Words matter, so be careful.

Everyone has indeed sinned, but you don’t have to keep sinning. Sin is always a choice.

If you’re a child of God, the Holy Spirit will convict you when you sin so you can repent and stay “sinless,” but ultimately, it is your choice to do so.

SO, WHY ARE CHRISTIANS SO HYPOCRITICAL?

The answer should be clear by now. As it is written, “This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me.” (Matthew 15:8)

Like all religious people, they have head knowledge; they know about God, but in their hearts, they don’t really believe he is real or that sin has eternal consequences.

They are living a physical life in a physical world... just like everyone else.

Until they know, without a doubt, that God is real and understand that sin has eternal consequences, they will lie, cheat, and steal... just like everyone else.

They seem righteous. They go to church and bow their heads... they carry a Bible and sing worship songs, but after they leave church, they forget about God until they need something from him.

They say they believe in God, but they don't take God or his Word seriously... he is, "near to their lips, but far from their hearts."

So I say again, if you want to find out if God is real, get on your knees, repent of your sins, and pray as I did over thirty years ago: "God, if you're real, I want to know."

If you're sincere, God will reveal himself in his way, in his time, according to his purpose, and you will no longer hope, assume, or even say you believe God is real... you'll know it.

Until then... nothing else really matters.

IS THERE LIFE AFTER THIS LIFE?

This is what almost everyone wants to know: Is there life after death?

The answer is “Maybe.”

Are you talking about "Heaven" or Eternal Life? They are not the same thing.

We discuss “Heaven” in another chapter, but if you’re wondering whether you will receive a new physical body, live in a mansion on streets of gold, and be reunited with loved ones as you often hear from the religious elite... sorry, the answer is “No.”

I don’t mean there’s no Heaven.

“Heaven” is real; it’s just not what you think it is.

Almost every religion offers an afterlife. The idea of Heaven draws people to religion, but Heaven, no matter how different religions describe it, doesn't mean Eternal Life.

If Eternal Life is not Heaven, what is it?

Well, what did Jesus say? “And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.” (John 17:3)

He also stated, “And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.” (John 11:22)

Now, this is where you need to be cautious.

The scripture reads, “believeth,” but the Greek word is “Pisteuo,” which means “to trust.”

Preachers have seized upon the word “believe” and tell people all they need to do is “believe.”

Believing and trusting are not the same thing.

It’s easy to say, “I believe,” but trusting is much harder.

Was the word misinterpreted, or was it simply manipulated to fit a narrative?

BELIEVING IN GOD DIFFERS FROM TRUSTING GOD.

The only way to trust God, is to know him. And the only way to know him is to be reborn Spiritually... because until you are reborn Spiritually, you can’t see or enter the kingdom of God. (John 3:3-7)

You can know about God, but until you know God, you won’t trust him, and until you trust him, you won’t obey him.

Disobeying God is a sin, and for those who sin, there is no life after death.

Alright, that was a mouthful, but Eternal Life is only available to those who live a “sinless” life on Earth.

Go ahead, roll your eyes. I know this contradicts everything you’ve ever heard, but think about it: “Do you really think God wants a bunch of disobedient lawbreakers ruling his kingdom? Would you?”

Living a sinless life isn't easy, but it's really not that difficult once you understand that the wages of sin is death.

And please, do not listen to preachers who say Jesus died for you, so all your sins — past, present, and future — have been forgiven. It's a lie; the Bible is clear: sin separates you from God.

When you sin, you lose blessings now and your Eternal Life later.

If a blessed life now and Eternal Life later (immortality) aren't worth it, what is?

IMMORTALITY?

The Tree of Life (Immortality) was also present in the Garden of Eden. (Genesis 3:22)

I suspect that if they had passed the obedience test, Adam and Eve could have eaten from the Tree of Life and stayed in the Garden of Eden, enjoying God's goodness forever.

They failed.

God gave us an instruction manual (the Bible) and an example (Jesus) for living a sinless life on Earth.

Yes, you can live a sinless life and have life after this one if you walk in his ways and obey his voice.

Obedience brings life and blessings; disobedience brings death and cursing. It's your choice.

I said, "Can," because Jesus also said in Matthew 7:21, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of Heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in Heaven."

WHAT IS GOD'S WILL?

"Walk in my ways and obey my voice."

God's love may be unconditional, but his promises are not.

Jesus continued. "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." (Matthew 7:22, 23)

"I never knew you." Let that sink in for a minute.

There are going to be a lot of disappointed Christians when they reach the pearly gates and hear those sorrowful words.

Let me clarify

You aren't a child of God because you say you believe in God; even demons believe in God. (James 2:19)

You are a child of God when you know, without a doubt, that God is real, because this knowledge comes only through Spiritual birth.

Do not be deceived: Sin separates you from God.

If you die with unrepentant sin in your life, none of the good things you've done will be remembered. (Ezekiel 33:13)

You will die as a sinner, and all sinners will burn in the lake of fire. (Revelation 21:8)

For sinners, there is no life after this one.

I apologize for being so direct; I was called to preach the truth, not win a popularity contest.

However, the question is irrelevant if you don't know, without a doubt, that God is real.

IF GOD IS NOT REAL, THERE IS NO AFTERLIFE

So, the question you should be asking is not, "Is there life after this life?" The question you need to consider and answer is, "Is God real?"

If God isn't real, swing for the fences and enjoy it while you can. Sin as much as you want; if God isn't real, there are no eternal consequences for sinning, right?

However, if God is real, you might want to reconsider the sinning part. Only those who live a sinless life will inherit Eternal Life.

If the preacher tells you it's okay to sin on occasion, run — run as fast as you can — this preacher is leading you to eternal damnation.

The issue isn't whether sinners burn in the lake of fire or just cease to exist. In either case, life as they know it is over... unless eternal damnation has a different meaning, such as being tormented for eternity or what will feel like an eternity... until Judgment Day.

For the unrighteous — the wicked, evil, and unrepentant — there is no life after this one... only judgment awaits them.

We understand what happens to the unrighteous, but nothing is certain about the afterlife for the righteous... and with good reason.

God doesn't want us to focus on the afterlife; he wants us to follow his instructions for living an abundant life while we are on Earth.

You see, it was never God's plan for his children to live, die, and go to Heaven. If that was true, why not just keep them in Heaven?

He intended for them to have dominion over and enjoy his creation on Earth for eternity.

Remember, Heaven is not what they say it is.

ETERNAL LIFE ON EARTH?

That was the plan. It still is, just delayed a few thousand years while his children are being prepared to rule and reign with Christ in the coming kingdom.

Yes, a new world is coming, but it won't be man's world; it will be God's world, where every knee will bow and every tongue will proclaim that Jesus is Lord.

Did you think Jesus was joking when he said, "The meek shall inherit the Earth?" (Matthew 5:5)

God is going to return the Earth (the inheritance) to his children. The wicked, evil, and unrepentant will be removed from the Earth, just as in the days of Noah... only it won't be a flood; it will be with fire.

Proverbs 2:21 says, "For the upright shall dwell in the land, and the perfect shall remain in it." The word "perfect" (teleios) means "complete, without blemish."

The "Perfect," who are prepared both physically and Spiritually to endure what's coming, will remain on Earth to start over; everyone else will go to "Heaven."

"YES, VIRGINIA, THERE IS A HEAVEN."

I must emphasize that Heaven is not what you think.

It's not mansions on streets of gold or running through fields of daisies, as you hear from the pulpit or see in movies.

Heaven is a resting place for souls until judgment.

I have always been amazed that Christians get excited about and look forward to meeting God in the afterlife, when God will come down from Heaven and meet them here.

It's what Jesus meant when he said in Luke 17:21, "The kingdom of God is within you." He was referring to the Holy Spirit.

Jesus did not die so we could go to Heaven; he came to show us the way to an abundant life, both now and forever, through Spiritual birth.

STOP WORRYING ABOUT THE AFTERLIFE

It was never God's plan for his children to live, die, and go to Heaven; it was to live an abundant life on Earth.

However, until you have been reborn Spiritually and know, without a doubt, that God is real, there is no life after this one.

I'm sorry to be so blunt, but as I said earlier, I was called to preach the truth, not win a popularity contest.

Religions emphasize the afterlife because it provides hope to people. This hope keeps the pews filled and the collection plates overflowing.

Let's face it, no one wants to hear that you won't see your loved ones again, and you do want that mansion on streets of gold, right?

As Karl Marx observed, "Religion is the opium of the people." Like opium, religion serves as a temporary feel-good "fix" that makes "slaves" of people.

DOES THIS RING A BELL?

Join our church, get baptized, and confess that Jesus is the Lord of your life, and all your past, present, and future sins will be forgiven. You will receive a free ticket to "Heaven," where you will get a new body, live in a mansion, and be reunited with loved ones... sounds great, doesn't it?

It's a lie, but no one can prove it is.

This explains why preachers can say anything they want to fill the pews and collection plates, and why Christianity has the largest following of any religion.

Nearly a third of the global population identifies as Christian. I mean, who wouldn't want to live in a mansion and party with friends and loved ones for eternity?

People want it to be true, and since it can neither be proven true nor false, people prefer to believe a lie.

“How can two and a half billion people be wrong?”

History proves that if you tell a big enough lie, long enough, people will believe it's true. But remember, just because everyone believes something is true doesn't make it true.

A SINLESS LIFE?

There is life after this one for those who live a sinless life.

I know preachers say it's not possible to live a sinless life, but that's because they have not been Spiritually reborn.

Remember, their goal is to make converts.

No one wants to hear that sin separates them from God, so preachers say it's okay to sin sometimes. Does the term “venial” sound familiar? They teach about a loving God who would never hurt anyone, especially Christians.

You have to wonder: if living a sinless life wasn't possible, then what was the point of sending Jesus to show us that it

is? And why did Jesus say he came to “call sinners to repentance?”

If all sins, past, present, and future, were forgiven when he was crucified, why do we need to repent at all?

And if her sins were going to be forgiven, why did he tell the woman who was about to be stoned for adultery to “Go, and sin no more”?

Does that make sense to you?

If it wasn't possible to live a sinless life, no one would inherit Eternal Life, since sin separates us from God.

And don't fall for the idea that when he looks at you, God only sees the righteousness of Jesus. It's a lie meant to free you from any responsibility for your sins.

Do you really think all you need to do is confess that Jesus is Lord to receive Eternal Life?

Do you honestly believe there will be billions of Christians kneeling before God, worshiping him for eternity?

It's a fantasy, but since you're reading this, you might be one of the few chosen to stay on Earth and reign with Christ.

Remember, “new wine” must be put into new bottles.

CHOSEN?

What if this is the chosen generation, a generation set apart for a specific purpose in God's plan?

What if this generation is both the last of the first and the first of the last?

What if God is going to remove the wicked, evil, and unrepentant from the Earth, and start over with the righteous of this generation, just as he did in the days of Noah?

What if the sinless of this generation are meant to start anew?

Okay, no one knows, but doesn't inheriting the Earth and living forever on a "new Earth," as described in Revelation 21:1, seem like a much better reward for living a sinless life that pleases God than kneeling before God and praising him for eternity?

Wouldn't inheriting the Earth be more scriptural (Matthew 5:5) and a better reward than sitting on a cloud with a harp?

No one knows what God has prepared, so don't fall for the fantasies that you will have a new physical life in a new physical body, live in a mansion on streets of gold, and be reunited with your friends and loved ones in Heaven.

There is no scriptural evidence to support it.

These are merely religious soundbites intended to make converts.

I mean, c'mon, don't you want to live in a mansion and party with friends and loved ones for eternity?

I know this won't sit well with anyone who has lost someone they love, but don't worry about those who have passed; their fate is sealed, and there's nothing you can do about it.

I apologize for being so blunt.

My concern is for the living who will die, not for the dead who are already dead.

It should be your concern as well.

Preachers say God is love, and he is — but he is also a consuming fire (Hebrews 12:29) who destroyed 23,000 Israelites for worshiping a golden calf.

He is not a “loving” God.

He's a loving Father who cares for his children.

He loves those who love him. (Proverbs 8:17)

If you're a Christian, you likely think, “I love God.”

But do you, really?

Jesus said, “If you love me, keep my commandments.” (John 14:15)

Are you keeping the commandments?

- Do you lie to your boss, spouse, children, or anyone else?
- Do you take office supplies home from work?
- Do you sample grapes at the grocery store?
- Do you cheat on your taxes? Expense report? Spouse?
- Do you speed on the interstate?

If you do any of these things, you must question whether the love of God is in you because a truly born-again child of God does not willfully or knowingly sin.

Sin, even the thought of sinning, is anathema to a born-again child of God, and even just observing lawbreakers will rankle your sensibilities.

If you're not keeping the commandments, do you really love Jesus?

C'MON, SPEEDING?

Sin is breaking the law.

Speeding is against the law.

If you don't keep man's law, which is visible, you won't keep God's law, which is not visible.

In either case, you are a lawbreaker. Born-again individuals do not willfully break the law — God's or man's.

SAMPLING GRAPES?

When you take something that doesn't belong to you, it's stealing.

Taking a grape may seem insignificant, but it's not that you took a grape; it's that you didn't think it was wrong. I mean, how hard is it to ask the attendant for permission to sample the grapes?

Theft, no matter how small, is against the law.

Do you really think God wants a bunch of disobedient “lawbreakers” ruling his kingdom?

Please take this seriously, as only those who have been Spiritually reborn and lead sinless lives pleasing to God will receive Eternal Life.

The religious elite have no idea what it means to be reborn Spiritually because very few, if any, have been Spiritually reborn. They are, as Jesus said, “blind leaders of the blind.”

They deceive their congregations, telling them that if they get baptized and confess that Jesus is Lord, they are born again, will get a new body, have a mansion in Heaven, and will be reunited with friends and family when they die.

These are religious soundbites designed to attract converts and boost collection plates.

If Christians believe in life after death in Heaven, why are they so afraid of dying?

Trust me, as I said earlier, there are going to be a lot of disappointed Christians when they reach the pearly gates and hear the most sorrowful words ever spoken, “I never knew you, depart from me, ye workers of iniquity.” (Matthew 7:24)

Let that sink in for a minute.

“I never knew you.”

If you don't know, absolutely, positively, for sure, without a doubt, that God and his son, the Lord Jesus Christ, are real... the message is clear... you will not receive Eternal Life.

And, regardless of what you hear from the pulpit, you cannot commit "iniquity" (anomia, which means "transgress the law" in Greek) and expect to have your name written in the Book of Life.

You won't live in obedience to the law, whether God's or Man's, until you know, without a doubt, that God and the consequences of sin are real.

Consider that the next time you're speeding down the interstate or popping a "stolen" grape in your mouth at the grocery store.

I understand that preachers will say no one can live a sinless life, but that isn't true.

Those who have genuinely been Spiritually reborn do not knowingly or willfully sin. In the unlikely event that they do sin, they will quickly be convicted by the Holy Spirit and will immediately repent.

When you repent, God wipes your sin-slate clean; you are, in effect, sinless.

IT'S NOT A "GET-OUT-OF-JAIL-FREE" CARD

Repentance is the key to forgiveness; however, if you continue to sin knowingly and willfully, your repentance is

insincere, and God will turn you over to a reprobate mind.
(Romans 1:28)

Sorry to be so blunt, but a true born-again child of God does not knowingly or willfully sin.

And yes, with the help of the Holy Spirit, it is possible to live a sinless life pleasing to God.

I know I mentioned it earlier, but it deserves to be repeated. "If it wasn't possible to live a sinless life, then no one would have Eternal Life, because sin separates us from God." (Isaiah 59:1-2)

I know some preachers say it's acceptable to sin occasionally because God knows we are imperfect humans.

Besides, they say we are all sinners, and anyone who says they are not a sinner is a liar, heretic, or worse.

These are merely religious soundbites designed to absolve individuals of their responsibility for sinning and to distance them from books like this.

Preachers manipulate scripture to align with their narrative and will do whatever is necessary to defend that narrative.

Scripture does not say, "We are all sinners." It says, "All have sinned." (Romans 5:12). It's not the same thing... words matter.

Yes, everyone has sinned, but you don't have to keep sinning... sin is always a choice.

When you repent, God wipes your sin-slate clean, and you become sinless. You are, for all intents and purposes, no longer a sinner.

Sin is not evil; it's unrighteousness... it's choosing to do wrong.

It is impossible to stop sinning without help from the Holy Spirit.

Here is wisdom: "When you can see the invisible, you can do the impossible."

Only when the Holy Spirit reveals to you that God is real will you understand and recognize the eternal consequences of sin.

So, if you continue to sin, you should question whether the Spirit of God is within you because a born-again child of God does not knowingly or willfully sin.

You can live a sinless life and have life after this one, but as Jesus said, "Ye must be born again, born of water and spirit, to see or enter the kingdom of God." (John 3:3-7)

As I mentioned earlier, until you know, for sure, that God is real, you won't believe there are eternal consequences for sinning — and you will continue to sin, which guarantees eternal damnation.

Do you believe God will reward sinners with Eternal Life?

If you do, then you don't know God.

Only when you are Spiritually reborn and know, absolutely, positively, for sure, without a doubt, that God is real and that the wages of sin is death... will you stop sinning.

So, if you don't know whether God is real, I urge you to get down on your knees, repent of your sins, and pray as I prayed over thirty years ago, "God, if you're real, I want to know."

If you're sincere in your request, God will make himself known to you in his way, in his time, according to his purpose, and you will no longer hope, assume, or even say, "I believe God is real"... you will know absolutely, positively, for sure, without a doubt that God is real.

Only then will you know for sure that there is life after death.

Hopefully, you now understand why I keep saying that until you know, without a doubt, that God is real... nothing else really matters... because in truth, nothing else does.

IS RELIGION A CULT?

Webster defines “cult” as:

1. A system of religious beliefs and rituals
2. A system of religious worship
3. Enthusiastic but often temporary devotion to a person, idea, or thing

Based on the definition, all religions are cults.

We often think of a cult as a “fringe” element outside the mainstream of society — a small group of followers who worship something or someone other than the “accepted” religions.

We point to witches, Satanists, Waco, and David Koresh, Jim Jones and his suicidal Kool-Aid, and even Jehovah’s Witnesses and Mormons as prime examples of a cult.

We often think of cults as “wackos.”

However, in reality, a cult is, as Webster says, a system of religious worship.

It sounds a lot like a church, doesn’t it?

WHO DEFINES CULTS AS WACKOS?

The accepted religions, of course.

God forbid we label Christianity a cult. And what about Catholics, Hindus, Muslims, and Buddhists? Don’t their

followers belong to and show devotion to the teachings of their religions?

The “accepted” religions are all “systems of religious worship.” This is the very definition of a cult.

All religions are centered on making converts. Converts fill the pews and collection plates; they buy lots of books and tapes.

“Accepted” religions take offense at being called a “cult,” yet they embody all the characteristics of cults; their followers “belong to or show devotion to its teachings.”

The only difference is size... and acceptance.

Since the accepted religions have millions, even billions, of followers, they avoid being labeled a cult, yet they are, by definition, a cult.

You wouldn't join a cult, so why would you join a church?

Born-again individuals do not start churches or cults.

Their mission is to please God, not others.

Jesus never said, “Go into all the world and start a church.”

Very few preachers, if any, have experienced Spiritual birth; they are, as Jesus said, “Blind leaders of the blind; and if the blind lead the blind, they will both fall into the ditch.”

BE CAREFUL WHO YOU CHOOSE TO FOLLOW

Churches help a lot of people and do many good things; religious institutions are responsible for building most of the hospitals and higher education facilities in the world.

Do hospitals and colleges glorify God or man? Do science and higher education draw you closer to God or drive you farther away?

Churches and cults attract followers for the same reason: they provide a sense of “belonging,” and the promise of a better life. The appeal is emotional, but they neglect the weightier matters of sin and its consequences.

Churches, like cults, appeal to the physical nature of humanity, leading them away from God. They seem righteous, but organized religion is the road to hell.

Here is wisdom from Proverbs 2:18,19:

“For her house inclineth unto death, and her paths unto the dead. None that go unto her return again, neither take they hold of the paths of life.”

The proverb is a metaphor.

Physically, it's a “whore.”

Spiritually, it's a “church.”

WHAT DOES GOD WANT FROM ME?

It is a widely held misconception taught from the pulpit that God desires our worship.

God doesn't need us to worship him; he can create as many "worshippers" as he desires from the stones on the ground.

You weren't created to worship God; you worship God because he created you.

GOD IS NOT AN EGOTISTICAL TYRANT

It was never God's plan for his children to live, die, and go to Heaven.

If that were true, why not just keep the kiddos in Heaven instead of subjecting them to the pain and suffering of this earthly life?

We could be living in a paradise if Adam and Eve had eaten from the Tree of Life instead of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil.

All they had to do was obey one simple request, "But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it:" (Genesis 2:17)

God sent Satan (the serpent) to test them, to see if they would obey or not... they didn't.

Everything God has done, is doing, and will do is for the benefit of his children.

He is not an ogre waiting for you to disobey so he can bop you on the head. He's a loving Father who only wants the best for his children. It pains him when they ignore his instructions and disobey.

CHOOSE LIFE

In Deuteronomy 30:19, he presents them with life and blessing or death and cursing, and gives them the free will to choose.

He hopes they choose life, but ultimately it's their choice.

Every child of God gets to choose the kind of life they want — blessed or cursed.

Obedience brings a life of blessings, disobedience a life of cursing.

God doesn't want you to worship him; he wants you to listen to him... he is the creator of everything.

He knows what works and what doesn't.

He is wisdom personified.

So, what does God want from you?

I once asked God for the formula for living a good life... he said, "Live for today, prepare for tomorrow."

Too often, people spend their time living for the future instead of enjoying today. They fear not having enough for

the future, so they give up today, for tomorrow. For some, tomorrow never comes.

You see, no one knows the future; you and I could both die with our next breath, and someone else will benefit from our labor. That's not what God intended for his kids.

All God wants is for them to trust him and obey his instructions.

He provided an instruction manual (the Bible), an example (Jesus) to show the way, and the Holy Spirit to guide them.

All they must do to have an abundant life now and Eternal Life later is obey his instructions and follow the example.

He is more than able to provide all that they need.

As Solomon said: "Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man." (Ecclesiastes 12:13)

As it is written: "Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people: and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you." (Jeremiah 7:23)

SOUNDS SIMPLE, RIGHT?

It is simple; it's just not easy.

The "god" of this world is money; it is the only thing universally worshiped by almost everyone (including most Christians).

The deceitfulness of riches and the cares of this world are overwhelming, and you will neither “Fear God nor keep his commandments” until you know, without a doubt, that God is real.

God is Spirit, and his kingdom is Spiritual. The physical “man” cannot please God.

You can hope, assume, and even say that you believe God is real, but you can't know, absolutely, positively, for sure, without a doubt, until you have been reborn Spiritually and the Holy Spirit reveals him to you.

As Jesus said, “Ye must be born again to see or enter the kingdom of God.” (John 3:3–7)

Even if you consider yourself an atheist or agnostic, if you're reading this book, you may be a child of God who just needs to be reborn Spiritually to understand the true nature of God and his kingdom.

If you want to know if God is real, I urge you to get down on your knees, repent of your sins, and pray as I prayed over thirty years ago, “God, if you're real, I want to know.”

You see, all God wants is for you to know him... until then, nothing else matters.

WHY DID GOD CREATE US?

This is among the most challenging questions to answer.

The Bible indicates that God created everything, but the question remains the same: why?

Why would an all-powerful, all-knowing God create a world filled with pain and suffering?

Actually, he didn't. He created a paradise; it was disobedience to God that brought death and cursing to humanity.

Pick up any newspaper, turn on the radio or television, and see the result of man's way: crime and violence, death and destruction.

THE MIND OF GOD

No one knows the mind of God, which is why the Bible says, "Trust in the Lord and lean not to your own understanding." (Proverbs 3:5).

As it is written, "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. (Isaiah 55:8)

Neither of these offers a sufficient explanation for why God created us; however, any attempt to justify our existence would be to second-guess God.

We must remember that the Bible serves as God's instruction manual for his children, not a history of the world.

It includes only what is necessary for his kids to live an abundant life now and forever.

God said, "I am," and that's good enough for me because I, like any born-again child of God, know that "He is."

The whys and wherefores are not important to a child of God.

I know without a doubt that God is real.

Where he came from or why he does things is of no concern and little importance. I'm just grateful to be a son of God.

The "physical being" wants to know the who, what, when, where, why, and how, but God is not physical.

GOD IS SPIRIT, AND HIS WORLD IS SPIRITUAL

Viewing the world through "physical" eyes will never explain God or why God does anything. But, as I mentioned, until you know, without a doubt, that God is real, nothing else matters.

After Spiritual birth, life's "physical" aspects will be unimportant.

When you know, without a doubt, that God is real, you will have an insatiable hunger and thirst for the Word of God, and an innate desire to please him. Obedience to God will become the priority of your life, and sin, even the thought of sinning, will be anathema to you.

The only thing that matters in this life is pleasing God.

Any explanation of why God created us is inherently subjective.

HERE IS SOMETHING TO CONSIDER

Imagine you're an entity floating around in an empty void we call "space," that God calls "Heaven." "Heaven" is the abode of God.

You cannot die, so what will you do for eternity?

Alright, you create some planets, numerous stars, and some angels, but what will the angels do for eternity?

We may never know God's motivation for creating the world and everything in it, but I suspect God simply needed something to occupy his eternity of free time, so he fashioned a universe with one planet (Earth) and "man" (Adam) in his image, to enjoy it.

It provides him and his angels with something to watch over and something to do, instead of just floating in space.

It also gives an invisible Spirit a physical presence...just a thought.

IT'S ALL SUBJECTIVE

Of course, this is all subjective and not as romantic as "God is love" and wanted to share his "love" with us, as you hear from the pulpit.

However, it's more logical to think that God needed something to do, a purpose, rather than being a "God of

love" who killed 23,000 Israelites for worshipping a golden calf and destroyed the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah for sexual immorality. Does that sound like "love" to you?

For all practical purposes, God created an environment in which humanity could live an abundant life.

He hoped that Adam (humanity) would walk in his ways and obey his voice, but when tested, Adam failed.

Satan was given rule over the Earth to test God's people — to see if they could be drawn away... providing an option for God's people to choose between good and evil.

Remember, Satan comes as an angel of light, not the dark, foreboding creature portrayed in movies.

GOD NEEDED TO KNOW WHO WOULD TRUST HIM

The unbelief and disobedience of Adam and Eve set the ball rolling downhill, ultimately leading God to regret creating humanity.

FYI: Belief without obedience is unbelief.

He wiped out all the inhabitants with a flood and began anew with Noah. Noah's kids, Shem, Ham, and Japheth, repopulated the earth.

Of all the nations on Earth at the time, he chose Israel — and promised Abraham that he would be their God and they would be his people.

He wanted them to learn his ways and follow them so that they and their descendants would have abundant lives on Earth.

They couldn't or wouldn't follow his instructions, but he had made a promise. Rather than destroy them, he filled Jesus with the Holy Spirit to show them the way to live a sinless life indicative of a son or daughter of God.

You see, as I mentioned, it was never God's plan for his children to live, die, and go to Heaven. His plan has always been for them to live abundant lives on Earth... for eternity.

The plan hasn't changed; it's only been delayed by a few thousand years while his children learn his ways and follow them.

God is not an ogre; everything he does is for the benefit of his children.

They needed to learn to walk in his ways and obey his voice to gain the wisdom and knowledge necessary for living abundant lives and ruling the Earth... or perhaps another "Earth" in another universe.

He needed to know who would trust and obey him, and whom he could rely on to rule in his kingdom.

OBEDIENCE IS THE KEY TO LIFE

Obedience is how we gauge love and respect, so he gave them the freedom to obey or disobey.

It pains him when they choose to ignore his guidance and face the consequences of their decisions... but he gave them the freedom to make their own choices.

Obedience leads to a blessed life; disobedience to a cursed life.

In essence, he gave his children the free will to choose the kind of life they wanted... blessed or cursed.

Is it really any different for you as a parent?

Wouldn't you rather have your kids obey you?

Don't you discipline your kids when they misbehave?

If you don't, you should; that's how they learn right from wrong.

I recognize that "obedience" is one of those words we all dislike.

We don't want anyone telling us what to do.

Consider it this way: obedience is simply following instructions.

One can choose to follow God's instructions to live an abundant life or ignore them.

However, trying to do anything without following the instructions often results in disappointment.

WHAT NOW?

God is preparing to return the Earth (the inheritance) to his children, so he needs to know who he can entrust with the planet. That's why there is so much chaos in the world today.

Evil is escalating because God is testing his children to see who will trust and obey him.

God has always used evil to test, teach, correct, and yes, punish his people, but God is not going to allow evil to rule the Earth forever.

The day is approaching when God will again remove the wicked, evil, and unrepentant from the Earth, just as he did in the days of Noah... and start anew.

God is giving humanity another thousand years to get it right.

FYI: A thousand years to us is like one day to God. Two thousand years seems like a long time, but it's just a weekend to God.

Notwithstanding, it won't be a perfect world until the "tree" has been thoroughly shaken to remove the bad fruit, and Jesus returns in a thousand years, but it will be peaceful... where every knee will bow, and every tongue proclaim that Jesus is Lord.

It will seem like “Heaven,” where the lion lies down with the lamb and eats straw like the ox, but it’s not “Heaven”... it’s the kingdom of Heaven, on Earth.

HOW SOON?

No one knows the day or hour when it will occur.

And keep in mind, the world doesn’t have to end for someone to take their last breath. They could get run over by a truck on the way home from work or have a fatal heart attack while watching television. That’s why Jesus said in Matthew 24:44 to “Be ready always.”

He wasn’t talking about the end of the world; he was referring to the end of your life. If you die in sin, you will not inherit Eternal Life.

However, if Eternal Life is not important to you, the question of when your world will end becomes irrelevant.

As I have said on several occasions, until you know, without a doubt, that God is real...nothing else really matters.

I know you’re going to tire of hearing me say this, but if you want to know, without a doubt, if God is real... get on your knees, repent of your sins, and pray as I prayed over thirty years ago, “God, if you’re real, I want to know.”

It’s the most important thing you can do.

It’s not the end of the world; it’s just the end of the world as we know it — and the beginning of a new world.

Honestly, it doesn't matter why God created us, because, as I have mentioned repeatedly, until you know absolutely, positively, for sure, without a doubt, that God is real... nothing else really matters.

WHY SHOULD I BELIEVE IN GOD?

Believing in God is the first step on the “Road to Life,” but it is just that: the first step.

It’s like starting down a two-lane highway: one way leads to Eternal Life, while the other leads to eternal damnation, and everyone is going one way or the other.

Those who believe in God can choose their path.

Believing in God is not about going to Heaven.

Everyone, both good and evil, believers and non-believers, goes to Heaven when they die.

It’s just that Heaven is not what you think it is.

We cover what happens when you die in another chapter, so it will be clear later.

FEAR OF THE UNKNOWN

Fear has always been a powerful motivator, and its use is not limited to secular organizations; the church employs fear as effectively as any secular entity.

Does this sound familiar? If you don’t believe in God, you’re going to hell.

It’s somewhat true, but it’s not the whole story.

You can believe in God and still go to hell; even demons believe in God, and tremble (James 2:19).

A lot of people believe in God due to fear of the unknown. Preachers have convinced people that only “saved” individuals go to Heaven; “unsaved” individuals go to hell.

They will tell you that the only way to be “saved” with the assurance of Heaven and Eternal Life is by becoming a Christian, getting baptized, and confessing that Jesus is Lord of your life.

It isn't true, but as I said earlier, “fear” is a powerful motivator.

IT'S NOT ABOUT “BELIEF”

Obedience brings life and blessings; disobedience leads to death and cursing.

If you don't believe in God, you won't "obey his voice," but even those who do believe in God must obey, or they will face the consequences of disobedience.

The consequence of disobedience is “death and cursing.”

Disobedience is the road to hell.

Should you be afraid of God?

Not of God.

God is not an ogre waiting for you to disobey so he can bop you on the head. He tells you what to do; it's up to you to do it.

It saddens God when his kids disobey and miss out on his blessings.

You should, however, fear the consequences of disobedience.

ARE YOU GOING TO HELL?

If you think preachers use “hell” to get you to convert, you’re probably right; they’ll employ any means necessary to fill the pews and collection plate.

However, that doesn’t mean hell doesn’t exist or that there are no consequences for sin, nor will attending church keep you out of hell.

Jesus said, “And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.” (Matthew 10:28)

Certainly, God has the power to destroy both body and soul in hell, and that’s the interpretation generally preached from the pulpit.

Still, when you understand the Spiritual meaning, Jesus was referring to the religious elite and their false doctrine.

You see, God doesn’t send anyone to hell; they choose to go there by sinning.

So, if you continue to sin because you believe the lies from the pulpit that:

1. All your sins, past, present, and future, are forgiven
2. You are under “grace” and not subject to the law

3. When he looks at you, he sees Jesus
4. Just say a prayer and believe in Jesus

If you believe any of these, you're in danger of having "both soul and body" destroyed in hell.

We cover "Grace" in another chapter, but, like Heaven, grace is not what you think it is.

If you believe that there are no eternal consequences for sinning, you are sadly mistaken.

BUT I DIGRESS

You asked why someone should believe in God.

It may help someone become a better person and do a lot of good things, but it doesn't guarantee Eternal Life and blessings.

Life and blessings come from obedience, not belief.

You see, it's not about believing in God; it's about believing God... walking in his ways and obeying his voice. And you won't do that until you have been reborn Spiritually.

A world of Bible-believing people would be a much better place to live... not perfect, just better.

Still, a world of Spiritually reborn individuals who take God and his word seriously... a world where every knee bows and every tongue proclaims that *Jesus* is Lord would be ideal.

In this world, as described in Ephesians 4:6, there would be only “One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.”

This would be a paradise... Heaven on Earth.

This is the new world coming soon, the kingdom God promised to his children; but, as Jesus said, “Ye must be born again to see or enter the kingdom.” (John 3:3–7)

Are you starting to understand what Jesus meant?

SO, SHOULD SOMEONE BELIEVE IN GOD?

If you want Eternal Life, or, dare I say it, if you want to remain on Earth to rule and reign with Christ in the coming kingdom, you must believe in God — but it is only the first step.

As the Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu said, “A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.”

The journey doesn't end with believing in God; it is merely the beginning of a lifelong journey.

If you expect to complete the journey to Eternal Life and remain on Earth, “Ye must,” as Jesus said, “be born again.”

The Road to Life is not easy; it is filled with trials and tribulations, but God never said it would be easy... just that it would be worth it.

If a blessed and Eternal Life isn't worth it, what is?

BELIEF WITHOUT OBEDIENCE IS UNBELIEF

To say, "I believe in God," and not obey God is akin to not believing in God... it may even be worse.

You are breaking the third commandment, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless" (Exodus 20:7).

It does not mean "Cursing."

It means saying the Lord is your God for vanity purposes. "Vain" (Shav' in Hebrew) means, among other things, deceptive, false, falsely, lie, lying, vain, and vanity.

It's when you say, "I believe in God," to be socially acceptable to others, or if you're just "covering your bases" in case it's true, without any intention of obeying God.

Remember, although the word is usually translated as "believe" in both the Old and New Testaments, the word "believe" (pisteuō in Greek, aman in Hebrew) means "to trust."

FYI: Belief without obedience is unbelief.

You see, God doesn't care if you believe in him. He wants you to trust him and obey the commandments.

And you won't trust or obey him, nor will you remain on Earth to rule and reign in the coming kingdom unless you have been reborn Spiritually... until you know, without a doubt, that God is real.

Until then, nothing else matters.

What's The Difference Between Spiritual And Religious?

The two words are often used interchangeably, but they are fundamentally different.

“Religious” refers to an individual who is part of an established religion characterized by a shared set of rules and beliefs.

“Spiritual” describes a person who claims to believe in a “higher power.”

They are, in essence, two sides of the same coin.

Individuals who are “religious” attend a church, mosque, temple, synagogue, or even a cave in the desert, etc., and follow the traditions of their faith.

For example, it is a tradition in Protestant and Catholic faiths that, to go to Heaven and gain Eternal Life, one must be baptized and confess that Jesus is Lord.

It's not true; it's a tradition that churches use to attract converts and increase membership.

DO NOT BE DECEIVED

The Bible warns us to be cautious of traditions, as it is written: “Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the

rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.” (Colossians 2:8)

What is the second commandment? "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in Heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth" (Exodus 20:5)

In complete disregard of the commandment, Christian churches hang at least one painting of “Jesus” on their walls. Have you ever seen the “fish” symbol on the back of cars?

And doesn't the Catholic Church have the ‘Crucifixion’ above or behind the altar, and don't they pray to Mary and the “Saints”?

If they ignore the commandments, what other details might they be missing?

ARE THERE ANY BENEFITS?

Being religious might give you a sense of intellectual superiority or, depending on the group you associate with, social acceptance.

However, James 1:27 states, “Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.”

You don't need to be religious or spiritual to do good for widows and orphans, but you won't remain unspotted from the world until you are Spiritually reborn.

Unless you're reborn Spiritually, you will easily be drawn away by the deceitfulness of riches and the cares of the world.

HOW ABOUT SPIRITUAL?

People who consider themselves spiritual often use it as an excuse to skip church or follow alternative religions — like mystical Eastern religions — or they use it to hide their disbelief and avoid questions about religion altogether.

Some people think that being “spiritual” is better than being “religious.”

It's similar to those who dismiss political parties by saying, “I'm an independent.” It gives them a feeling of intellectual superiority.

WHICH IS BETTER, SPIRITUAL OR RELIGIOUS?

Actually, neither.

You see, it's not about being religious or spiritual; it's about taking God seriously... putting your life in God's hands; trusting him for your welfare — and you won't do that until you know, without a doubt, that God is real.

Being “religious or spiritual” is not the path to Eternal Life promised by the religious elite of any faith; instead, it is the path to hell.

There is only one way. As Jesus said, “Ye must be born again.”

Some of you might find that offensive, believing their “religion” leads to Eternal Life. You can believe whatever you want, but that doesn’t make it true.

When you’re reborn Spiritually, the question “Is it better to be religious or spiritual?” will be moot. You will no longer think of yourself as religious or spiritual.

When you know the truth, the “truth” will free you from religious and spiritual bondage.

You see, true Christianity is not a religion; it’s a way of life — a way of living as God intended: in peace, without fear.

Born-again individuals do not flaunt their beliefs like a badge of honor. They are humble individuals whose only goal is to lead a life that pleases God.

Nevertheless, regarding Eternal Life, there is no distinction between religious and spiritual paths; neither will provide you with the certainty of Eternal Life.

There is only one way, as Jesus said several times, “Ye must be born again, born of water and Spirit.”

Until then, nothing else matters.

DO YOU NEED TO ATTEND CHURCH TO BE SPIRITUAL?

“Spiritual” can refer to various “religious” figures, including Sages, Seers, Gurus, and Medicine Men.

It usually refers to someone who claims to believe in a higher power.

In that context, a person who claims to be “spiritual” may or may not go to church.

Individuals who consider themselves “spiritual” often see themselves as independent thinkers, probably the same people who reject political labels and choose to identify as “Independent.”

It makes them feel intellectually superior, just as people who claim to be “spiritual” believe they are better than those who are religious.

The short answer is, “No, you don’t need to attend church to be spiritual.”

SPIRITUAL PEOPLE DON’T ALWAYS BELIEVE IN GOD

Spiritual people may follow any religion or none at all. They believe in a “higher power,” which could be anything or anyone.

Many individuals who identify as “spiritual” are young people involved in the New Age movement.

They have been deceived by the allure of alternative or Eastern religions... their “higher power” is not God.

Regarding the question, you don’t need to go to a church, synagogue, mosque, temple, or even a cave in the desert to believe in a “higher power,” or even God.

Saying, “I’m spiritual,” or claiming to believe in a “higher power,” is generally just a way to feel intellectually superior and avoid questions about belief.

Those who have been reborn Spiritually rarely claim to be “spiritual.”

They do not refer to God as a “higher power,” and apart from the social aspect provided by church attendance, it is unlikely that you will find truly “born-again” people sitting in the pews of a church.

Their focus is on pleasing God, not others.

There’s a big difference between believing in God and believing God; between being “spiritual” and being reborn Spiritually.

Spiritual birth, like physical birth, is an unforgettable experience. It cannot be explained any more than you can describe the taste of salt to someone who has never tasted salt.

We cover Spiritual birth in another chapter, so it will be clear later.

Notwithstanding, only those who have experienced Spiritual birth truly understand what it is like, just as only those who have given birth to a child can know the pain and joy of natural childbirth.

SAYING, "I'M SPIRITUAL," MEANS NOTHING

People who are born again rarely use the term to describe themselves, but if you want to be reborn Spiritually, that's a different matter altogether.

As Jesus said, "Ye must be born again, born of water and Spirit." (John 3:3-7)

Because until you are Spiritually reborn and know for certain that God is real, nothing else matters.

WHY DOES GOD ALLOW EVIL AND SUFFERING?

This is one of the most common questions asked and possibly the main reason many people turn away from God.

They ask, “Why would a loving God allow evil and suffering?”

“If he’s God, he can eliminate evil and suffering, right?”

He can, and he will... just not yet.

Scripture is clear: the day is coming when God will once again remove the wicked, evil, and unrepentant from the Earth, just as he did in the days of Noah. Only this time it won’t be with a flood; it will be with fire.

Before that day, a time of tribulation will come like no other the world has ever seen or will see again.

It will appear normal and natural: wars, famine, disease, and natural events like earthquakes and volcanoes happening around the world.

Some might think we are living through that time now, with unprecedented natural disasters worldwide, the increase in violence, diseases like AIDS and Covid-19. and divisions among races and religions, not to mention the threat of World War III (a nuclear war), looming on the horizon.

THE LAST DAYS?

I believe we are living in the last days.

The signs are everywhere, but no one knows the day or hour — not even the angels — when God will remove the wicked, evil, and unrepentant again and start over.

It could happen next week, next month, next year, or even years from now, but it also might mean that you and I could both die with our next breath... so Jesus warned the people always to be prepared.

The warning was not about preparing for the end of the world or even the return of Jesus... it was about being ready to die at any moment.

Remember, if you die with unrepentant sin in your life, all your good deeds won't be remembered, and you will face eternal damnation like all sinners. (Ezekiel 33:13)

THIS IS JUST A WARNING

No one knows when they'll take their last breath. You don't know if or when you'll suffer a fatal heart attack or get hit by a truck.

Remember, the world doesn't need to end for anyone to take their last breath; as Jesus said, "Be ready always."

This might be a good time to reiterate that there are only two kinds of people in the world: the children of God and everyone else.

Only those who have been reborn Spiritually are God's children; everyone else is simply a tool God uses to help perfect his children.

I know that was insensitive, but evil and suffering are necessary — because God has always used them to test, teach, correct, punish, and drive his people to repentance.

FIRST THE PHYSICAL

If you think that different political philosophies are causing the world's problems today, you're seeing the world through physical, not Spiritual, eyes.

Spiritually, as it is written, “We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against Spiritual wickedness in high places.” (Ephesians 6:12)

In other words, the Devil and his minions... whom God is using to test, teach, correct, and, yes, punish his kids for their unbelief and disobedience.

Go ahead, roll your eyes as if this is just some superstitious mumbo-jumbo.

It's been said that Satan's greatest victory was convincing the world he doesn't exist, but it's not... his greatest victory was convincing people that God isn't real.

Until you're reborn Spiritually, you won't even realize a Spiritual world exists,

Nor will you understand that what we see today is the physical manifestation of Spiritual warfare.

Lies, deception, and corruption are among the tools that Satan uses to create chaos and foster unbelief in God.

THE GOLDEN CALVES

Science, religion, and higher education are complicit in the Devil's work.

I understand how that sounds, but think about it.

Do science, religion, and higher education bring people closer to God or push them further away?

Does "Trust the science" sound familiar?

It's not that God doesn't know what's happening; he allows it.

A FALLEN WORLD?

When asked why God allows evil and suffering, the answer is usually, "We live in a fallen world."

Does that answer the question for you?

Probably not.

Truth be told, the problem in the world today is not that there is so much evil. God is using evil and suffering to bring his children to their knees... a final push for them to repent and return to him.

They have turned their backs on him, worshiping the “golden calves” of science, religion, and higher education.

They have placed their faith in the god of this world... money. So, as promised, God has left them to their own devices. (Proverbs 1:31)

WHY WOULD A LOVING GOD DO THAT?

First, he is not a loving God; he is a loving Father. A loving father corrects his children. It’s how they learn right from wrong.

However, Proverbs 1:30 makes it clear. “They would none of my counsel: They despised all my reproof. Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way and be filled with their own devices.”

The escalating prevalence of evil and suffering in today's world is God's final attempt to reconcile with his people.

They will turn, return, or burn.

Sorry, I know that was insensitive, but God called me to preach the truth, not win a popularity contest.

It’s not going to get better... it’s going to get worse, a lot worse.

God is giving his people one last “push,” the opportunity to repent before he again removes the wicked, evil, and unrepentant from the Earth and starts over, just as he did in the days of Noah.

THE FALLING AWAY

Statistically, more people are leaving churches and identifying as "no religion" than ever before.

If they are moving away from organized religion and embracing God, this would be a positive development.

Unfortunately, that is not the case... they are moving away from God in record numbers.

The "falling away" is among the last signs before the end of the age.

Let me be clear: it's not the end of the world, as some preach.

We cover the end of the "world" in another chapter.

Suffice it to say, the world is not ending... not now, not ever.

WHO WILL SURVIVE?

You have likely heard it preached that it is not God's desire for anyone to perish.

Again, be cautious of this interpretation.

2 Peter 3:9 says, "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."

Remember, the Bible is God's instruction manual for his children, not the world at large.

Peter is not saying that God doesn't want anyone to perish; God knows the wicked, evil, and unrepentant will perish, and is warning his kids to repent.

Without repentance, there is no forgiveness of sin. They must repent, or like the men, women, and children scratching and clawing at the door of Noah's Ark, they too will perish.

BUT GOD IS LOVE, RIGHT?

The naysayers argue that a loving God wouldn't permit evil and suffering. It's actually just the opposite.

As I said earlier, God is not a "loving God"; he's a loving Father. A loving father corrects his children, teaching them right from wrong.

Thanks to the religious elite, whose only goal is to make converts, the perception of God has changed.

They preach a loving God who loves everyone and would never hurt anyone, which confuses many people when they see the evil and suffering in the world.

God is love, but he is also a jealous God (Exodus 20:5) and a consuming fire (Hebrews 12:29); however, you won't hear that from the religious elite.

God is not an ogre looking for an excuse to hit you with a stick. He is a loving Father who only wants what's best for his children.

Everything he does is for his children's benefit.

He outlined everything they need to know and do to live a healthy, wealthy, abundant life.

It pains him when they ignore his wisdom, disobey his instructions, and bring suffering upon themselves and their families... but he gave them the free will to choose.

He tells you what to do; it's up to you to do it.

How can you know good without evil? Right without wrong? Truth without lies?

God gave his children free will to choose, but in order to choose, there must be options.

THE ABORTION CONUNDRUM

Many Christians and others argue that abortion should be illegal, but God always gives you a choice. Abortion laws, like gun laws, will not deter lawbreakers.

Sin is always a choice.

No matter how they justify it, if a woman chooses to sin by killing her unborn baby, she should have that choice.

However, it's not between her and her doctor as they want you to believe; it's between her and God. However, with genuine repentance, even abortion can be forgiven.

But after repentance, if you choose to abort another baby, it indicates that your repentance was insincere, and God will turn you over to a reprobate mind.

There will be no more forgiveness for sin, and all you will have to look forward to is judgment. (Romans 1:28)

This is why the issue is so divisive, even among Christians.

PRO-CHOICE AND PRO-LIFE?

How can someone be both pro-choice and anti-abortion?

If you vote to legalize abortion, you are advocating for the killing of babies.

If you vote to make abortion illegal, you are taking away the God-given free will to choose to sin.

As has been said, you cannot legislate morality.

Morality is a matter of the heart, not the head.

You can be both Pro-Choice and Pro-Life.

Legalizing abortion does not mean anyone is required to get an abortion. However, making abortion illegal is “standing in the way of sinners” (Psalm 1:1), denying women the free will to sin.

Abortion is a sin, and it is wrong to sin; however, sin is always a choice. You see, free will is not the choice to believe or disbelieve in God as preached from the pulpit.

Free will is the choice to obey or disobey God.

DOES GOD KNOW IF WE WILL DISOBEY?

Maybe, maybe not. Why would he need to test his kids if he already knows how they will respond?

Does that make any sense to you?

God sees the end from the beginning, but he has given his kids the free will to make their own choices. If he interferes with their choices, then free will is not really free.

Think about it. You know that drugs and alcohol can have disastrous consequences, but do you know whether your son will drive home drunk or your daughter is going to overdose at a party?

Does God know what you will do before you do it?

Do you know what your kids will do before they do it?

It's possible, but unlikely.

However, a true born-again child of God would never consider an abortion, so the question is academic; but even if God knows, he won't interfere with your choices.

Notwithstanding, if you commit your ways and seek his guidance, he will direct your steps and lead you on the right path.

"How," you might ask?

When faced with a decision, that little voice in their head says, "Don't do it," so they don't do it, and realize later they're glad they didn't, or they do it, and then regret the decision... that's the Spirit directing you.

Another way is through the wisdom found in his Word, the Bible — like saving ten percent of your income will lead to

a comfortable retirement — which is why it's essential to study and take the Bible seriously.

IT'S A CHOICE

You always have a choice, though sometimes the choice isn't obvious, much like deciding between two bunches of grapes.

Can you tell which bunch to pick without tasting a grape?

Or, even if you taste one, does that mean the whole bunch is good? Or bad?

If you trust God, the right choice will become clear when you ask him to choose for you.

Prayer is not a spectacle to be observed openly; simply direct your thoughts to God.

If you're a child of God living a sinless life, he's listening.

I should mention that John 9:31 says that God does not hear the prayers of sinners. So, if you have unrepentant sin in your life, that may well be why your prayers aren't answered.

He does, however, hear all prayers of repentance.

Also, if you don't commit your ways and seek his guidance, you will be left to your own devices and live at your own risk.

God allows you to do things your way, make mistakes, and face consequences; however, if you heed his wisdom, you won't need to touch the stove to discover that it's hot.

On the other hand, unlike his kids, who have the free will to make their own choices, God can and does, when necessary, direct evil to do his bidding, just as he hardened Pharaoh's heart to demonstrate his power to his people.

EVIL IS JUST A TOOL GOD USES

Remember the book of Job?

God sent the devil to test him, too.

Rest assured, every child of God will be tested to see if they will obey. Obedience brings life and blessings; disobedience brings death and cursing.

God's children can choose the kind of life they want... blessed or cursed, but how can they choose if there is no option?

He hopes they decide to trust and obey him, but ultimately it's their choice.

The purpose of evil and suffering is to test, teach, correct, and even punish his children... to encourage them to repent so they can enjoy an abundant life.

Disobedience caused Adam and Eve to lose the opportunity to eat from the Tree of Life (Eternal Life).

God knows the result of disobedience is a cursed life.

He just wants his kids to listen and obey him so they can have blessed, not cursed, lives.

God sees the end from the beginning. He knows what will happen if you disobey his laws and statutes, just as you know what will happen if a child runs out in front of a moving car or touches a hot stove.

It's not punishment, it's consequences.

God's laws and statutes benefit us by guiding us to a blessed life of peace, without fear.

As I have said before, it pains him when his children disobey and "suffer" the consequences of their choices.

SUFFERING IS THE CONSEQUENCE OF BAD CHOICES

We know that smoking can sometimes cause cancer.

It's not a sin to smoke, but if you "choose" to smoke, don't be surprised if you get cancer.

God said he would send pestilence upon the world. "Pestilence" (Loimos in Greek) means "disease."

Have you ever wondered why God instructed us not to eat the fat or drink the blood? (Leviticus 3:17)

Almost all known diseases have been traced to animal fat, and blood carries disease throughout the body.

Pretty smart, God, huh?

If you're talking about the suffering experienced by starving people around the world, those who perish in natural disasters like floods and earthquakes, or even the pain stemming from the loss of a loved one, understand that rain

falls on everyone — both good and evil, and nothing comes upon you that is not common to everyone, but that doesn't mean everyone dies in an earthquake or that everyone who smokes develops cancer...and not everyone gets sick.

We don't know if the people who die in earthquakes are good or evil. We don't know what choices led them to the catastrophe.

Also, I hope you understand by now that not everyone who calls themselves a Christian is a child of God.

We don't know why some people survive and others don't, or why some reach a hundred while others die at thirty.

We don't know why some kids get cancer or suffer while others don't, which is why Proverbs 3:5 says to "Lean not unto thine own understanding."

We don't know God's purpose for what he does. Only that God knows the number of our days, and only God can make them longer or shorter. So, while it may seem like a simplistic answer, when it's your time, it's your time.

A FALLEN WORLD?

Perhaps, but when you realize that God's people have chosen to follow man's way instead of God's way, it's no surprise that the world is "suffering" the consequence of disobedience to God.

Do you think God wants a genderless, Godless world?

We need to put things into perspective. As I mentioned earlier, a thousand years is like a day to God; so while it may have taken six thousand years of human history to get to where we are now, it's only about a week to God.

It was humanity's choice to disobey that created the chaos we see in the world, but God is giving his people one last chance to repent and a thousand years to make it right... that's one day to God.

YOU ARE NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR WHAT OTHERS DO

Just like with Adam, you need to understand that you alone are responsible for your actions.

“The devil made me do it” won't hold water with God.

What you do and how you live your life matters... now and forever.

It is important to note that God does not care about evil people; he knows their end and uses them for his purpose.

He only cares for and concerns himself with his children, and we are not, as the song implies, “all God's children.”

Evil is a tool that God uses to test, teach, correct, and punish his children. Suffering is usually just the consequence of poor choices.

I realize this statement will not sit well with some of you, but understand that God is the creator of all things; he made some things for honor... and some for dishonor. (2 Timothy 2:20)

GOD DOES NOT NEED YOU, YOU NEED GOD

People's biggest misconception about God, particularly among Christians, is that he needs them to worship him.

God needs nothing; he can make as many worshipers as he wants from the stones on the ground.

God is God; he can do whatever he wants... he does not need our approval. In reality, he doesn't need us at all.

He created the world for his children, not his children for the world. It is the epitome of arrogance to think God needs us.

Everything belongs to God, and the sooner you realize that, the better your life will be.

Do you think God needed me to write this book? If I chose not to write it, he would just get someone else to do it.

YOU CAN'T CHANGE THE WORLD

Don't worry about evil; it's simply God's way of testing, teaching, correcting, and punishing his children.

As we near the end of the age when God will once again remove the wicked, evil, and unrepentant from the Earth, he is testing his children to see who will remain on Earth to rule and reign with Christ in the new world.

But it's not only about who will stay on Earth at the end of the age; it's also about living an abundant life until then.

You can't change the world; its fate was sealed long ago, but you can change your own world by taking God and his Word seriously.

Remember, obedience brings life and blessings.

How does the saying go? "If you keep doing what you've always done, you'll keep getting what you've always gotten."

If you're ready for your life to change, get on your knees, repent of your sins, and pray as I did over thirty years ago: "God, if you're real, I want to know."

Or you may end up like the men, women, and children, scratching and clawing at the door of Noah's ark.

A FINAL WORD

As a new Christian in 1987, I watched Christian television, listened to Christian radio, and went to church as much as possible, but the more I watched, listened, and went, the more confused I got.

They all claimed to know the truth, but who was right?

I was pondering that question when God spoke the words that changed my life: “Stop listening to the words of man and start listening to the Word of God.”

Simple wisdom and sound advice for anyone seeking the truth about God, Jesus, and Christianity.

Don't entrust your relationship with God to preachers, teachers, denominations, or traditions — read his Word yourself with an open heart and a humble Spirit.

Ask God to reveal himself to you — and he will.

The Scriptures were written so that you might know God, not merely know *about* him.

Truth does not fear examination. And God does not hide from those who seek him.

If this book challenged your assumptions or raised new questions, I encourage you to bring each one to God.

Pray for wisdom. Search the Scriptures. Test all things. And believe nothing just because a man says it.

The goal of this book — and this series — is to help seekers, skeptics, unbelievers, and believers struggling with their faith understand the truth about God, Jesus, and Christianity, so they can be reconciled to God.

But I'm just the messenger.

What you do with the information is between you and God.

However, it is my hope and prayer that you will get on your knees, repent of your sin, and pray as I did over thirty years ago, "God, if you're real, I want to know."

If you're sincere, God will reveal himself in his way, in his time, according to his purpose — and you will no longer hope, assume, or even say that you believe God is real... you'll know it.

Until then... nothing else really matters.

Thank you for reading.

May God richly bless you on your journey through life.

— Ray Evans

MEET THE AUTHOR

Ray Evans is not a pastor, priest, or biblical scholar. He didn't attend seminary, doesn't hold a degree in theology, or have a lot of university letters after his name.

He is just a man, called by God for a purpose.

After hearing the Lord's voice on January 13, 1987, Ray committed his life to serving God.

He is a lifelong student of Scripture who believes that God's Word is meant to be understood — not obscured by tradition or complicated by religion.

After confusion caused by conflicting teachings from the pulpit, radio, television, the Internet, and books, Ray stepped away from the noise of human opinion and devoted himself to prayerful study of Scripture.

His Spiritual awakening opened his understanding of God's Word — revealing truth hidden for generations by the religious elite, preventing people from forming a personal relationship with God and keeping them in bondage to organized religion.

Ray writes with a straightforward but passionate purpose: to encourage others to seek truth directly from God and his Word — and to trust God above every human voice.

He created DesertStream Press in 1992 to spread the Word.

ABOUT THE SERIES

Shaking the Pillars of Christianity examines the foundations of modern Christianity and challenges many of the doctrines, traditions, and interpretations that have shaped Christianity over the centuries.

Each volume explores difficult but important questions about faith, religion, and the teachings of Scripture — questions that many people have wondered about but rarely hear addressed honestly.

As the series continues, other questions lead to deeper discoveries about the nature of God, the purpose of life, and what it truly means to follow Christ.

CONTINUE THE JOURNEY

If this book caused you to rethink what you have been taught or heard, the journey continues in the next volumes.

- *Shaking the Pillars of Christianity – Volume Two*
- *Shaking the Pillars of Christianity – Volume Three*
- *Shaking the Pillars of Christianity – The Collected Works*

Learn more at DesertStreamPress.com.