

ONE SECOND

Ten Events That Define the History of Man

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Class Purpose

- Define 10 of the most important events in History
- Consider God's motivation in these events
- Examine their historical periods and man's relationship with God
- Observe the cause and effect of each of these events
- Consider your spiritual response to each of these events

Class Responsibilities

- Read one chapter of *One Second at home* each week and be ready to discuss this in class each week (10 weeks).
- Your consistent attendance is vital for you to gain a full understanding of the material (builds upon itself)
- Each class will consist of both review and examination of the major events for each chapter
- A weekly guide will be provided that you can use to review the material for personal devotional study following each class

The Book's History

- Over the years I kept seeing similar patterns in questions from students in Sunday School
- I don't believe the Bible is too hard to understand
- The full context of events (before and after a major time point in the Bible) is often needed to understand why God might have acted as He did.
- The Bible was the primary resource-for a reason
- It was written to help those who do not believe that God is Sovereign and that the Bible is fully accurate
- My hope is that at least one soul will recognize God in this work and receive salvation.

Class Sessions

Week 1

One Second till Creation

Week 2

The Hour Satan Was Cast out of Heaven

Week 3

The Last Days of Eden

Week 4

The Week of the Exodus

Week 5

The Day the Law Came down the Mountain

Week 6

The Centuries of Reward and Punishment

Week 7

The Hour of Christ's Birth

Week 8

The Week of the Cross

Week 9

One Second after the Rapture

Week 10

The Day Christ Returns

One Second Till Creation

Key verse: *And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day (Gen 1:31 KJVA).*

Key thought: If nothing else is apparent about why God has chosen to act in the manner He has, it should be recognized as this: “Love is the motivation behind every act of God.”

Purpose: Consider God’s motivation in creation and your response to this event

Key question: Why did God create (Heaven, earth, plants, animals, man?)

Starting Points

1. God was present as the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. These existed as a single, unified being, while possessing Their own, unique roles. They had always existed; They were (are) eternal.
2. The Godhead was alone, that is, there were no other gods, or anything else in existence. There were no angelic beings, no physical Heaven, and not one molecule of matter. Existing as a spiritual being, They (the Trinity) were free to pursue whatever They desired.
3. There would be no one who could counteract as a checks and balances mechanism, no one who could offer collaboration, and no one who could thwart the goals of anything they desired to pursue.
4. Neither time nor place existed.
5. God is all-knowing. This means that not only does He possess full wisdom and knowledge but He also knew (knows) the result of every action He would take.
6. Lastly, and most importantly, He is a being whose number one motivation in everything He planned would be the demonstration of His love.

Why do you think God chose to create?

- He is genius and creation is the greatest act of genius
- There was nothing. God saw the emptiness and knew that creation was “good” as compared to the opposite
- It provided Him a means of establishing His kingdom.

What Does Creator Mean?

- It means setting the mark
- It means being responsible for everything else after the fact
- It means doing so with a purpose
- It means establishing a motivation
- It means sharing that which is part of you
- It means casting a vision for the future

What do you believe was God's primary motivation in Creation?

- To Reveal Himself (Jehovah/Elohim- the self-revealing God)

What did He need to reveal?

- Righteousness
- Love
- Mercy
- Kindness
- Faithfulness
- Beauty
- Friendship
- Authority
- Power

Those descriptors named on
the last slide can be
summarized as this :

His image

What did God have to lose by creating?

- Peace
- Order
- Righteousness around Him

If God knew that Creation would result in its failure, why go forward?

- We all want to be loved. God wanted to be loved for who He is
- God wanted to share His love, even though it would cost Him

Why create the Heavenly realm?

- Heaven is God's domain. It is a physical reality
- It stands as a contrast to that which would ultimately deny God
- It is something Mankind can understand (mirrors Earth in many ways)
 - Angelic beings were created-- so was man
 - Angelic beings have free will – so does man
 - Authority exists in forms in Heaven – so it does on Earth
 - There are familial relationships such as the Father/Son/Holy Ghost –so it is on Earth
 - The Godhead has unique personage- so does Man/Woman/Child
 - Provides a perfect mirror for life on Earth and creations where there is perfection

Why did God need the Heavenly Beings?

- He didn't need them for Himself
- They were needed to establish intermediaries between God and man (after the fall)
- As a point of reference for man relative to free will

Consider this

- For ages unknown (before the fall of Eden), the angelic beings existed with God. We don't know for how long
 - Even so, the Bible indicates 1/3 of the angels followed Lucifer (an angel of great responsibility) in a revolt against the authority of God
 - The revolting angels knew they were not God, knew they were created beings, and knew that God was God— but they still revolted. Why
 - They recognized Him for who He was, but
 - They would not accept Him for who He was
- This is the same state most of man finds itself in. If we see that angels, living eons in the presence of a Holy God could turn from Him, it is easy to see why man would do likewise given the first chance.

This also reveals to us:

- God did not introduce sin into any part of His creation
- Sin is a natural state, it is a failure to accept God for who He is
- However, sin can be controlled (not all of the angels rebelled)
- Since sin erupted where it did not exist (Heaven) in the very presence of God, the fall of Adam and Eden should not be a surprise (earth mirrors Heaven in many ways)

Order	Creation timeline	Properties	Purpose
Godhead	eternal, self-existing as the Father, Son and Holy Ghost	All powerful, all knowing, omnipresent	Creator, Sovereign, Self-Revealing One
Angelic beings	Unknown, but before the remainder of creation	powerful, eternal, able to move in space and exist in both earthly and heavenly realms. Their number is said to be uncountable. Some ultimately choose to reject God.	serves the Creator and interacts with creation as messengers to mankind. Satan would act as an unequal but opposite force and reject God as Sovereign.
Heaven	Unknown, but prior to creation of the celestial bodies and earth	eternal, the physical realm of God and those who serve him. Exists as the throne room of God. Its spectacle and sign of authority is beyond measure.	provides the Godhead a place where His glory and might are continually revealed. Ultimately will be the center of God's full communion with man.
Hell	Unknown, but created prior to the celestial bodies. Some cast out angels already placed there	eternal, a physical reality already for those who have rejected God (angels and fallen man). Separation from God and continual punishment beyond measure and description.	serves as a place of punishment for those who have rejected God's sovereignty. Provides a means to highlight the need for man to accept God for who he is. Deciding not to decide results is the same as deciding against Him.

Characteristics of God

- Self Revealing. What personally tells you that God is self-revealing?
- Angelic beings. Are angels real. Yes! How to they relate to God? How do they relate to man?
- Should angels be worshipped?
- Why would some angels rebel against God even though they knew his power?
- What does the hierarchy of angels tell you about God and His creation?

Characteristics of Heaven

- It Exists. It is a physical reality. It has existed for some unknown period of time.
- It is God's domain but not needed by God for His existence.
- Original Heaven marked by rebellion
- Ultimate (New Heaven) will never see sin
- Current Heaven home to God, His angels, Old and New Testament saints (following the death/burial/resurrection of Christ)
- Displays God's power and authority.

Characteristics of Hell

- It Exists. It is a physical reality. It has existed for some unknown period of time.
- Original purpose to retain condemned fallen angels.
- Ultimately will contain both fallen angels and unrepentant man
- Place of eternal punishment and separation from a Holy God
- Provides a contrast to Heaven (reward vs punishment). This is a concept man can understand.

Celestial bodies	first order of creation	immeasurable in number, diversity, and properties.	reflects the genius and power of God, provides a reference point for God's role in creating man.
Earth	second order of creation	separate land, water, and sky. Beautiful beyond measure but restrained by God from being perfect.	a home for man and the venue by which God would see His vision come to completion.
Plants and animals	third order of creation	unknown numbers of diverse plants and animals, each having unique and wonderful properties.	created to give man dominion responsibilities and ultimately serving to provide food and sustenance materials following his fall.
Man (Adam and Eve)	fourth and final order of present creation history (prior to the ultimate consummation of God ushering in a new heaven and a new earth)	represents the ultimate act of God's creative genius. Created in the partial "image" of God with an eternal soul. Created with the ability to reason, make independent choices.	God's act of love by creating a being to share Himself with. This was not to be mindless love but rather love based upon man's gratitude and acknowledgment of the sovereignty of the Creator.

Characteristics of Heavenly Bodies

- They exists. Showcases the genius and power and wonder of God Himself
- Beyond number and their existence themselves “reveals” God to all mankind. As David said, ‘Who is man that you are mindful of him?’

Characteristics of Earth

- Man's home but Satan's domain
- Mirror's Heaven with respect that it is a physical place, a place or order, a place of beauty, and place with hierarchy (authority).
- Creation has been constrained because of sin. The new Earth after the Millennium will not have the sin nature of the earth (thorns/vines, natural disasters).
- Its wonders reveal the genius of God
- Provides the backdrop for which God's eternal plan of salvation will be brought to completion. It is the stage.

Characteristics of Plants and Animals

- Magnitude and variability of the various species reveals God's genius.
- Each has a unique purpose (just like man, just like you and I individually)
- Given to man so he could exhibit dominion over him. In doing so, God was revealing more of Himself to man (mentoring man with respect to be spiritual)
- Given originally to man as a blessing. After the fall, plants and animals had both a positive and negative attribute.

Characteristics of Adam and Eve

- God's greatest creation (Man). God inserted Himself into man (sentience, consciousness, ability to discern).
- Represented the obvious point of attack for Satan against God
- Were created without sin and knowing of sin. Even so, man was not immune to sin. Man has a natural sin nature (free will)
- Created to have partial communion with God (God came to man to visit with them).

One Second-Week 2

**The hour Satan was cast out
of Heaven**

Key verse: *How art thou fallen from Heaven,
O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou
cut down to the ground, which didst weaken
the nations! (Isaiah 14:12 KJVR)*

Key thought: God did not invent evil, for He is fully righteous. This is not part of His image. He did, however, allow free will, which permitted the introduction of rebellion and the resulting insertion of evil into the world. Even this was to be used by God in His desire to share Himself with those who choose to love Him.

Purpose: God's eternal plan requiring all created beings to decide for themselves as to God's dominion

Key question: Why did God allow free will and the introduction of sin (Heaven and Earth)

- In this chapter, we will examine the known events surrounding the removal of Satan from God's immediate presence. God's perspective in these events will be considered and the resulting impact upon His plans for the ultimate redemption of man discussed. If you gain no additional understanding of these courses of events after reading this chapter, keep this one thought in mind: **we have much in common with Satan.**
- Free will comes into play here. We can choose to see God clearly for who He is and respond accordingly, or we can decide our own fate and deny Him. Satan has no influence over man except that which we allow him to have. It has always been in the individual's own hand, and regardless of whether we are an angelic being or earth-bound man, God and His sovereignty is clearly displayed.
- The question is: **do you feel He has the right to be on the throne and directing your life?** Satan chose to deny God that respect and will also suffer eternal punishment.

- Satan (Lucifer) represented one, if not the most, highly exalted of the angelic host.
- He was a created being.
- He was not co-equal with God, Christ, or the Holy Spirit.
- God did not introduce evil into Satan. God did permit the self-introduction of evil (rebellion), knowing that even this would be useful in drawing mankind to Himself.
- Satan was not the only angel that rebelled. We are told that a significant portion of the heavenly host also rejected God's authority.

- Satan's initial punishment for rejecting God was loss of direct access to God and his place of service and authority to act on God's behalf.
 - It appears that some limited access was permitted by God for some period of time after his rebellion but then totally curtailed.
 - This may be linked to Calvary and God's final redemptive act.
 - Satan and his following were permitted to have full access to the earthly realm of man.

- Hell is not Satan's current abode, nor is it his dominion. God holds the keys to both heaven and hell.
- Satan's action to thwart God's redemptive plan and to draw mankind away from God did not catch God by surprise. He knew it would occur.
- Hell is currently for some, and will ultimately be, the place of punishment for all of the fallen angels.

- The Bible references one hundred ninety-four separate verses where angels are discussed. Most often, these descriptions are reporting the contact with man, where they are acting as messengers for God. An example like that is where Gideon is being encouraged, *“And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him, and said unto him, The LORD is with thee, thou mighty man of valour”* (Judges 6:12 KJV).
- While we know very little about individual heavenly host (Gabriel along with Michael being the most referenced angels with the exception of Lucifer), we know that there were various positions of authority and duties within their ranks.

- We often see the term “archangel” used to address Gabriel’s and Michael’s titles. Its first mention is found in the New Testament and states, *“For the Lord himself shall descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first”* (1 Thessalonians 4:16 KJVA).
- Whether the archangel being mentioned is either Gabriel or Michael, we do not know, but clearly there is rank and order among the heavenly host.

Lucifer was a highly exalted angel as we read:

“Thou wast in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, the topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was in thee; in the day that thou wast created they were prepared. Thou wast the anointed cherub that covereth: and I set thee, so that thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till unrighteousness was found in thee. By the abundance of thy traffic they filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore have I cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God; and I have destroyed thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. Thy heart was lifted up because of thy beauty; thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I have cast thee to the ground; I have laid thee before kings, that they may behold thee” (Ezekiel 28:13-17 ASV).

Lucifer had a position of great honor that he lost

- The Bible states that at one time Lucifer, being translated from the original texts as “the shining light”, and as first reported by the prophet Isaiah, *“How art thou fallen from Heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning. How art thou cut down to the ground”* (Isaiah 14:12 KJV), had a position of high authority and close proximity to God.
- The Bible is not descriptive of Lucifer’s primary duties any more than it is descriptive of the other tasks in which one can imagine the angels being involved.

Lucifer's fall was due to envy

- The prophet Isaiah captured this event when he stated, *“For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into Heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High (Isaiah 14:13 KJV).”*
- Note the personal terminology that Lucifer applies to his ambition when he states, I will exalt; I will sit; I will ascend. And lastly, he claims equality with God Himself by wanting to be like almighty God.
- Lucifer's name was changed to Satan following his rebellion, its meaning being “adversary.”

Did God Create Evil?

- It should be clearly stated again that God did not create evil, and He obtains no joy or delight in its existence. Evil in any form directly contradicts the image of God.
- God is righteousness fully defined and infinite in quality and quantity.
- God knew of both good and evil. The angels had knowledge of good and evil. It was never God's desire for man to know evil. Because of the pain and suffering it causes.

So, why would an omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent God allow Satan to rebel?

- Free will. God wants all created beings to love Him and respect Him out of a personal response
- Satan would be a useful tool in God ultimately developing his eternal kingdom

- God knew before Creation that, even in the absence of sin, all self-aware beings would have to make a decision as to whether they would love and respect God for who He is.
- In other words, was God worthy of worship? All of history and the Bible directly relate to this issue and mankind's constant struggle with who is in control of his life.
- Why do you feel this statement is correct?

It wasn't that Lucifer did not know:

- God was all powerful
- God was the Creator (even his)
- God was righteous
- God was all-knowing

What he did not accept was that:

- God had the right to be his (Lucifer's) sovereign)

This last statement gets at the heart of all sin and man's relationship with God

Few will state that they don't believe in a god or a higher being.

However, many refuse to accept that any such God has the right to have dominion over them. This is the same argument that Lucifer voiced. In all of the eons, nothing has changed. It takes a humble heart to recognize God for who he is and be willing to accept His control over our lives.

- Scripture records that one-third of the heavenly host also rejected God and chose to cast their lot with Satan. How or why they chose to rebel is not recorded.
- John records that, *“And his tail drew the third part of the stars of Heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born”* (Revelation 12:4 KJVA). Stars in the preceding passage should be translated as angels and the dragon as Satan.
- The Bible is clear that many of these fallen angels are already being punished, as described by Peter. *“For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment”* (2Peter 2:4 KJV).

Food for thought:

- If countless angels, knowing first-hand that God was exactly who He said he was, and experiencing the glory of God up close and personal, chose to reject God's dominion, it should not come as a surprise that man, being created slightly lower than the angels, would experience similar temptation.
- Would Adam and Eve have sinned even if Satan had not deceived them. We don't know. It should be stated however, that man by nature has a sin state (original sin) that originates in the gift God provided all sentient beings (free will)

- Satan has limited authority over the earthly domain, but one needs to recognize that he is a deceiver, liar, and extremely dangerous opponent (to man, not God).
- Even the archangels deal with him with some reservations, *“Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee”* (Judges 1:9 KJV).

So why did God allow Satan to rebel?

- The apostle John so clearly states the answer when he said, *“He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil” (1John 3:8 KJV).”*
- Christ’s role in God’s plan was envisioned at the beginning of time. It was not something done to overcome a mistake or planning failure...it was the plan!

But why? Why did it have to be like this?

- Having Satan present in this world as an influencing force provides God with the ability to contrast good and evil.
- The effect and pattern of godliness versus godlessness comes into focus for man because there is something (someone) he can compare against.
- It provides God with a means of learning who, under earthly conditions of trials and tribulations, will love Him in spite of such conditions and the influence of evil in the world
- It provided God with the means of introducing a part of Himself directly with man. A part of Him that could look directly upon sin and the depravity of man without destroying it because of His righteousness.
- It provided God the means to determine who, under circumstances of a personal decision, who choose God's ways over the ways that oppose God (both Satan as well as man's self-centered nature).

Angelic hosts created	unknown , not coequal with the Trinity, and therefore having some unknown origin.	established unique heavenly hosts with individual roles and responsibilities.	servants, messengers to God, and established a hierarchy that would be mimicked on earth
Satan challenges God	unknown, but at least before Adam and Eve	introduction of sin into creation.	as later seen on earth, created beings have to decide individually upon the sovereignty of God. Shows that even in a perfect world, sin will occur.
Satan cast from heaven	at or before the fall of Adam and Eve	documents God's righteousness and authority to control His own creation	provides God with a tool which will be used either to draw mankind to himself or encourage man to reject God
Satan's angels cast into hell	at or before the fall of Adam and Eve	hell is created, and many if not most of the fallen angels already are being punished.	shows the required eternal separation of the righteous versus the unrighteous. All sin must be punished: no exceptions.

Event	Timeline	Effect	Purpose
Satan tempts Eve and Adam	in the garden	introduction of lies, deceit, and death into God's earthly creation.	reveals Satan's desire to separate us from fellowship with God using any means possible.
Satan present in the earthly realm and has some limited access to God	continually after the Garden of Eden with some limited heavenly access till possibly the birth-death-resurrection of Christ	the deceiver of mankind acts as a force by which man can compare the effects of godliness versus godlessness.	tool by which God sets the stage for doing the most loving act imaginable for His children.
Satan denied access to heaven	possibly by the birth/death/resurrection time period	fully restricted Heaven to only those who love God and are deemed righteous (by their pre-Christ faith or through the blood of Christ after Calvary).	prevented accusations against believers from being charged against them. God is our only Judge, and no one else can challenge us before him because of what Christ has done for us.

Application

- With what you have learned about the rebellion in Heaven, suggest why God would create beings He knew would rebel
- What are some of the similarities we have with angels
- What are some of the differences we have with angels
- How are Heaven and earth alike
- How are Heaven and earth different
- We should never believe that God had to go to plan “B” when Lucifer rebelled and the Garden of Eden was contaminated with sin. Why would Satan want you to believe this was not the original plan.
- Why was such a plan necessary and so unique to God.

One Second- Week 3

The Last Days of Eden

Key verse: *And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed (Genesis 2:8 KJV).*

Key thought: What beauty and contentment there must have been in the Garden. We can all agree that the fall of the Adam and Eve represents a sad day for God's creation. It introduced pain, hardship, and death to mankind, where such conditions did not exist. However, it points to man's ultimate reconciliation with God.

Purpose: God gave man dominion over another created world. In doing so, God was sharing with man part of Himself as an act of love.

Key question: Why did God allow Satan to tempt Adam and Eve. Why didn't he either prevent Satan from interacting with man or destroy Satan outright?

ONE SECOND

Ten Events That Define the History of Man

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- We should never forget that man was created in the image of God, as we have discussed earlier. Every good quality that God possesses was found in some manner and quantity in Adam and Eve.
- I would expect that, in the beginning, these two were open, tender, considerate, helpful, giving, and many of the other traits we would now associate with the fruit of the Spirit as defined by Paul in the letter to the Galatians, *“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law” (Galatians 5:22-23 KJV).*

- Certainly Adam and Eve would not have been bound under the law, because neither it nor sin existed at this point in time.

- God's Spirit (image), however, would have been readily available to impact the first couple because of the daily communion taking place with Him in the garden.

- Consider that the more we learn about our planet, the more we discover the interconnectivity of so many plants and animals. Each one has a unique purpose.
- I think song lyrics from the musical *Show Boat* concerning the nature of things helps to explain this fact. One verse states that “fish gotta swim, birds gotta fly.” The songwriter couldn’t have said it more beautifully or more succinctly. Why is this true?
- The sheer genius of God to create such a perfect environment for Adam and Eve with so many unique species and then to give them dominion over everything is still mind-boggling.
- Consider what creation would have been like if plants and animals were **not unique** to themselves?

Key points we need to consider are:

- God's earthly creation was perfect. Why?
- The Garden provided everything needed to sustain and fulfil life. What did it provide to them?
- The Garden and all it contained would reflect the glory of God. How so?
- Man was perfect. Adam and Eve were without sin. How do we know this?
- The Garden provided man with a home and so much more. What assignment was given to man?
- The Garden provided man with comparisons and differences between Heaven and the Garden. Which ones?

- Man had duties, roles, and an established hierarchy. What does this remind you of?
- Satan's efforts here had little to do with Adam and Eve themselves, but more with negating the work of creation God had performed (and its purpose). How so?
- The initial sin was a lack of faith followed by direct disobedience. Describe what occurred.

- Mankind lost much with the fall from grace. Name some of what was lost.
- Mankind (believers) will ultimately gain much as a result of the fall. How do we gain from the fall of the Garden?
- Will we ever see Eden or part of it again? Yes. What does the Bible say about this.

- The familiar term “it was good” is used a total of six times between Genesis 1:10-31. We see that God’s creation of the heavenly bodies, followed by the sky, sea, land, beasts, fowl, fish, plants, and ultimately man (Adam), were pronounced good. Does this mean that just because God was the creator He deemed it good?
- Yes. He and He alone had the right to know whether what had been created was acceptable.

- The root word we translate “good” from the original Hebrew can also mean beautiful, bountiful, pleasing, at ease, or plentiful, among others.
- Indeed, God created the earth and all within it so that it was at ease and self-sustaining with man not having to take any action (except to enjoy the bounty that had been provided).

- It is stated that, “*And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so*” (Genesis 1:11 KJV). Similar text describes the self-perpetuating systems God created for all animal species
- Think about life on earth if apples could mix with thorns, peppers with fish, birds with potatoes, flowers with deer.
- What would be some of the consequences if there was not “order” of this nature

What does this law of order previously discussed tell you about the creation versus evolution discussion?

- Intelligent design
- A purpose for each created thing
- A building up rather than a tearing down of life (the law of entropy)
- Diversity beyond what natural selection would be expected to yield

God wanted life on earth to proliferate (literally to fill it up)

- *And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind: and God saw that it was good. And God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth” (Genesis 1:21-22 KJV).*
- God has always been a God of non-stasis; that is, He enabled His creation to proliferate. He is still maintaining creation today with every new birth, every new blade of grass, and every seed that sprouts.

- *And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.*
- *And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food" (Genesis 2:7-9 KJV).*
 - Much has been said about the difference between Adam, the first man, and the animals. Both were created, but Adam was different. We see here that he had a "living soul."
 - We might translate those terms to mean "a living, breathing creature that is aware." Did you get that? Adam was "aware."

That word “aware” deals with created beings understanding the he was:

1. Created
2. That there was a Creator other than Himself
3. That they had to establish a relationship with the Creator

- Considering the definition above, what would cats, dogs, fish and other created animals not fall into this category. What separates man from the animals in respect to being “aware”?

Food for thought:

- Adam was created to have communion with God and to be aware of it. We see no where in Scripture that animals were asked to recognize the sovereignty of God to save their “souls.” They have never been asked to make a choice.
- No where in scripture is it reported that God infused the animals with His image as was done with man.
- Even so, there is still some debate as to whether animals, other than the “beasts” described in the throne room of God will or do exist in Heaven.

Mankind was originally a vegetarian

“And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat. And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to everything that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so” (Genesis 1:29-30 KJV)

Why do you think that early in the Garden, mankind was instructed to be vegetarians?

- Plants would fully sustain all life
- Animals were vegetarian also
- Animals were in harmony with man and with each other (there was no killing as it was not necessary)
- Plant life reproduces much faster than animal life. By having a prohibition upon the eating of meat or killing between animals, this allowed their numbers to increase without hindrance.
- Remember, God had instructed all of creation to “multiply and fill the earth”

Why do we eat meat now?

It is not until after the flood that we see mankind and animals have division and animal's meat used as food.

“And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth. And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moveth upon the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea; into your hand are they delivered. Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things”

(Genesis 9:1-3 KJV).

- Genesis 2:7-9 passage introduces the tree of life and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Both of these were in the center of the garden. One was off limits (tree of knowledge of good and evil), while the other was there for the enjoyment and, I believe, the necessity of Adam (tree of life).
- This tree of life is the same tree we see mentioned in the new heaven and new earth, where it states, *“In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations”* (Revelation 22:2 KJV, emphasis mine).

Why do you believe God would place one of these tree off-limits to Adam and Eve but still put it in the Garden?

- God does not tempt man- he did not tempt Adam and Eve
- Knowing good and evil is part of God's image. Even so, there was no value sharing the knowledge of evil with man
- Once such knowledge was gained, man would have a natural tendency to both explore and proliferate evil (sin nature)
- The angels knew (know) of both good and evil. Like in Heaven, God wants man to fully understand the ramifications of rejecting His good.

What did Adam and Even enjoy while in the Garden?

- oneness with God,
- oneness with nature,
- their needs fully met without any effort,
- the bounty of nature to explore and enjoy,
- no fear of anything,
- dominion over all that God had created for them, and
- an expression (shadow) of the full nature of God's love in the union of Adam with Eve.

Why both and Adam and an Eve?

“This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.

Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed”

(Genesis 2:23-25 KJV).

- The latter part of this verse indicates that Adam and Eve were innocent before God and before each other. They had nothing to hide and were fully comfortable. I don't believe that they were incapable of sinning at this point, as free will had already been established.
- They were, however, free from the thought (desire) of sinning.
- They were as just as innocent as a child who, even if he might have done something wrong, would not be aware that it was wrong, and therefore free from the realization that they had acted disobediently before God. Just as Adam would be created in the image of God, Eve would be created out of the image of Adam.

Prior to the fall, there is no indication of Adam and Eve being sexual. God expected to meet the need for intimacy with His creation. This is the same type of relationship that we know will exist in Heaven.

....there does not appear to be a physical (sexual) relationship between them (Adam and Eve) until after the fall. Such a relationship is not mentioned until we read, *“Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee”* (Genesis 3:16 KJV).

- The word “desire” can be translated as “longing,” such as the physical attraction that now exists between a man and a woman.

Establishment of the family unit resulted in:

- Repeated pattern of authority like that which existed (exists) in Heaven
- Adam, as the head of his family, was an example of how God will provide, protect, safeguard, and lead.
- Like the family unit, ultimately Christ will lead the Church (it is an example of things to come)

- Why didn't God warn Adam and Eve about Satan?

- Adam and Eve knew no sin nor sinners. They would have a natural reaction to trust everyone. Even so, God had clearly given them instructions about the Tree of Good and Evil

- Adam and Eve had been given dominion over the Garden as well as everything they needed to be productive and fully at peace.
 - There was only one prohibition, and that was not to eat of the tree of good and evil. Genesis states that, *“And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die”* (Genesis 2:16-17 KJV).
 - So, why did God place the tree in the Garden if man was not to have access to it?
 - The tree would provide God with a means to reveal man's inner self, that is, his ability to fully trust God and to be obedient.
 - It was God's Garden, and He had every right to place this particular, off-limits tree there. He only asked that man not do one simple thing.

The half-lie

“Ye shall not surely die, for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil” (Genesis 3:4 KJV). Here we see that Satan mixes a lie (you shall not die) with something that would appear to be a good thing (knowing good and evil).

- Why God didn't give Adam and Eve this knowledge at the moment of creation? Knowing good and evil would allow man to recognize that which would have been of a godly nature (spiritual discernment), but it would also provide man with knowledge of all manners of sin. It would immediately open man's eyes to the infinite variety of depravity, selfishness, hatred, envy, and rebellion.
- The proof, just a few generations removed from Adam and Eve during the days of Noah, the Bible records, *“And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually”* (Genesis 6:5 KJV).

The Impact of man's fall from grace:

- loss of full communion with God,
- separation of male and female and their respective roles,
- the introduction of work, not for pleasure but for survival,
- creation actually working against man, resulting in hardship,
- introduction of sorrow throughout one's life, and
- the use of Satan as a formal adversary of man.

Event	Purpose	Who benefited	Benefits
God creates Eden	to share Himself with other conscious beings. To share love, beauty, and eternity with His creation	God and His created beings, Adam and Eve	communion
Adam and Eve enjoy Eden	to fulfill man, give him a purpose, and provide him a place of dominion	Adam and Eve in full communion with God and His creation	joy, peace, love, and purposeful living as defined by God
Satan encourages the introduction of sin	to negate the work of God. Satan is powerless against God; so he attacks those most loved by God	Satan	none
Eve and Adam fall from grace	sin becomes a part of man's existence. Sin in opposition to a life of righteous living provides all of creation a contrast needed to further highlight the unique character of God	Satan	provides man with a litmus test (rebel or submit to God)

Event	Purpose	Who benefited	Benefits
God reacts to rebellion	God is righteous and holy. He cannot accept sin, even from those He created and adored	no one, all of creation is punished	lets man know that God is true to Himself and will not accept sin
Adam and Eve lose the sanctuary	expulsion from the garden is a punishment for the act of rebellion which provides the means to sharpen man's decision further either to love God or deny Him	none directly, but ultimately all mankind (who love God) will gain because of this and God's decision to restore communion in Christ	man is forced to recognize what he has lost and the hardships caused by sin
Introduction of death	loss of physical immortality	none initially, but Christ's death ultimately results in victory to all believers	man is forced to be prepared to face death and the consequences of sin

Application

1. Why did God allow man to be tempted?
2. What does knowing that sin occurred even in the presence of a Holy God tell you about our daily struggles
3. What is Satan's primary role of attach on our spiritial lives as evident by what happened in the Garden
4. Knowing that at one time man had full peace, safety, security, prosperity and happiness give you a cause to be excited about our future where we will be in the presence of God?
5. What have you learned about the fall of Adam and Eve that you had never considered before reading One Second

One Second- Week 4

The Week of the Exodus

Key verse: *And I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God: and ye shall know that I am the LORD your God, which bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians (Exodus 6:7 KJV).*

Key thought: In the Exodus we see the full introduction of God's chosen people and the length to which God would go to make them His own. God is still in the business of bringing out those to belong to Him.

Purpose: All of creation needs to understand that God is God and that we need to respect all that those three little words imply.

Key question: Why do some reject God even when He reveals His overwhelming power and authority?

Some of the pivotal events following the Garden episode

- Death and even murder becomes a reality on planet earth (Cain and Abel).
- The family unit is firmly established (sons and daughters of Adam and Eve).
- People groups result from the various family units.
- Man's life expectancy is nearly a thousand years, allowing man to populate the earth and acquire knowledge.

Some of the pivotal events following the Garden episode

- Mankind becomes a self-centered, often sin-filled entity; even so, there is always a remnant of those who choose to worship the “unnamed God.”
- God chooses Abram and his descendants and establishes the first covenant.
- God shows Abraham (through the near-offering of Isaac) that a sacrifice is required; instead, God provides the sacrifice. This was symbolic of the eventual coming of the Messiah.
- Man’s sin state grows to the point where God could no longer accept it.

Some of the pivotal events following the Garden episode

- God gives creation a bath and destroys all of humanity except for those He has found faithful.
- Noah and his offspring receive another of God's covenants and are given the charge to repopulate the earth.
- Man reaches a point of knowledge where he believes he can be like God, resulting in the dispersion of people groups over the entire face of the earth and the introduction of nationalities into man's history.
- The offspring of Isaac becomes what will be known as God's chosen people.
- The eventual oppression of this group by the Egyptians sets the stage for the Exodus.

God's chosen people: what do those words mean to you?

The **chosen people** of God, to whom much had been promised, had no home, no nation, and no identity

God, as Creator of the universe and all that exists, often chooses to take that which seems impossible and highly unlikely and to use such circumstances to bring men to knowledge of His power and authority.

The Bible indicates that God selected the descendants of Shem, Noah's son, to build up a nation that would turn the world's attention back to God. Following the flood, the Bible reports that, "*Sons were also born to Shem...; Shem was the ancestor of all the sons of Eber*" (*Genesis 10:21 NIV*). It is from "Eber" that we get the term "Hebrews" (sons of Eber).

God is a God of Promises

- God had established agreements or covenants with His Chosen before and after the flood.
 - These covenants need to be considered as binding contracts, a promise (at least on God's part).
 - Unfortunately, man often failed on his part of the agreement.

Reference	Chosen party	Covenant promise
Genesis 9:9-17	Noah and his descendants	never to destroy the world by flood again
Genesis 15:18	Abram (Abraham)	given the Promised Land
Genesis 28:14	Jacob	through the descendants of Jacob, the entire world would be blessed
Exodus 19:5	Moses' descendants	to be a chosen people, set apart from all other mankind to represent God
Exodus 19:6	nation of Israel	to establish the holy nation of Israel
2 Samuel 7:16	David and his descendants	the eternal kingdom will be established out of David's descendants
Isaiah 55:3-5	nation of Israel	a Holy One will come in God's name and be the Leader that all nations will come to worship
Jeremiah 31:33- 34	Israel and all people groups	because of Israel, all people will one day be God's, and He will be their God
Ezekiel 37:26	David's descendants	to be their eternal King and provide them the only lasting peace

Leading up to the Exodus we see:

1. a desperate situation
2. a warning from God
3. the rejection of God's warning
4. God being true to Himself
5. the harsh reality of finding yourself
against God's plans
6. deliverance
7. Exodus principles
8. the vision for the chosen.

A desperate situation

“Now there arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph. And he said unto his people, Behold, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we: Come on, let us deal wisely with them; lest they multiply, and it come to pass, that, when there falleth out any war, they join also unto our enemies, and fight against us, and so get them up out of the land. Therefore they did set over them taskmasters to afflict them with their burdens” (Exodus 1:8-10 KJV).

“And worked them ruthlessly. They made their lives bitter with hard labor in brick and mortar and with all kinds of work in the fields; in all their hard labor the Egyptians used them ruthlessly” (Exodus 1:13-14 NIV).

The Bible is so full of symbolism. In the exodus, we see a shadow of God's eventual direct intervention with the coming of Christ. In particular we see:

- a people who had forgotten the promises of God,
- a people without hope,
- a people under repression and bondage,
- a people desperate for deliverance,
- the coming of a deliverer,
- opposition to the deliverer,
- the effects of opposing God,
- a wondrous intervention, and
- God's instruction for those delivered.

Moses would be the deliverer for the chosen of God.

We know this was not a role he desired, and he even questioned God as to the reasonableness of this plan. Moses asks, *“Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?” (Exodus 3:11 NIV).*

The Chosen found themselves without hope.

And it came to pass in process of time... the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage. And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God had respect unto them" (Exodus 2:23-25 KJV).

Jehovah is a Self Revealing God

He informs Moses that, "*I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you. And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations*" (Exodus 3:14 KJV).

Why did Pharaoh refuse to acknowledge God?

And the LORD said unto Moses, When thou goest to return into Egypt, see that thou do all those wonders before Pharaoh, which I have put in thine hand: but I will harden his heart, that he shall not let the people go" (Exodus 4:21 KJV).

What does that mean? Does it mean that God actually causes men to sin or reject him? No, God cannot work against Himself, and all of mankind has been created with the express purpose of knowing God and glorifying Him. It does mean, however, that God knows the heart of all mankind.

Mankind is still rejecting God

“The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned” (1 Corinthians 2:14 NIV).

God confronted the Egyptians with plagues or signs. These consisted of :

- waters turning to blood,
- coming of the frogs,
- swarms of gnats,
- swarms of flies,
- plague of illness upon the livestock,
- plague of festering boils,
- hail mixed with fire,
- swarms of locusts,
- three days of darkness, and ultimately
- the death of all firstborn (man and animal).

Why Pharoah, Why Egypt?

“And in the very deed for this cause have I raised thee up, for to shew in thee my power; and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth”
(Exodus 9:16 KJV).

The final event in the plagues represents one of the most, if not the most, symbolic acts of the fore coming of Christ in the entire Bible.

Let's set the stage. We see that God has ordained that His people are to be protected by the shedding of the blood of an unblemished lamb, "*Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year*" (*Exodus 12:5 KJV*). This blood had to be placed on the door of every home so that God's angels of death would pass over God's chosen that night, as it is written, "*And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses*" (*Exodus 12:7 KJV*). Blood would have to be shed to spare even God's people. "*And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt*" (*Exodus 12:13 KJV*). The word "token" above can be translated to mean "signal" or "evidence" of an event. Later in time, God would reveal to His chosen that only the mark of another shed Lamb's blood upon an individual would save him from His wrath.

God led His people from captivity

The presence of Almighty God was constantly with them. *“And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night” (Exodus 13:21 KJV).*

God's Exodus Principles

- God's plan has never changed.
- God is patient with respect to His plan.
- God puts the people and resources in place to accomplish this plan.
- Those called to be in His plan might not want or desire to be involved.
- One can only oppose God for so long; ultimately this position is doomed to failure.
- God uses the simple, the extraordinary, and even the supernatural to cause His plan to succeed.
- God's plan always involves His glorification, and this glorification is first to be reflected in His people, who in turn are called upon to share it with all others.

What took God so long to move in the lives of His people?

Nothing: God always acts in the fullness of time. The Bible records 722 verses using language such as, “in the fullness of time, at the set time, in the course of time, etc.” God chooses to act when the time is right for maximum effect of His purpose.

One Second- Week 5

The Day the Law Came down the Mountain

Key verse: Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation (Exodus 19:5-6 NIV).

Key thought: The law was never meant to provide man with the means to live a perfect life, as God knew man was incapable of this. It was provided so that man might have the best life possible in a sin-filled world. The law would enable the chosen of God to be different than all other peoples with respect to how they worshipped (one God) and how they related to one another. These differences would allow the entire world to see the holiness and righteousness of the Hebrews' God.

Purpose: God was Holy, and His people would be called upon to be holy.

Key question: What was God thinking about when he gave man the 10 commandments?

- Man innately knows right from wrong, but that is not enough. Man obtained this “knowledge” when Eve ate from the forbidden tree. I believe it is a truly rare event when someone over a very young age does something wrong and then can honestly say that they “didn’t know any better.” Even with the natural knowledge of good and evil, man did not know the boundaries of this knowledge. Cain proved that fact when he killed his brother.

- Why is just knowledge of right and wrong not enough in keeping man holy? What are some examples?

- God was preparing His people to be different,
 1. different in how they treated Him,
 2. different in how they treat each other,
 3. and different in how they related to every other human being.
- The law was a gift. Unfortunately, it is rarely considered in those terms today. Why?.

Think about these chain of events

- “*And the children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand on foot that were men, beside children. And a mixed multitude went up also with them; and flocks, and herds, even very much cattle*” (Exodus 12:37-38 KJV).
- Pharaoh immediately realized that his entire labor force had departed, as well as much wealth. “*And he made ready his chariot, and took his people with him: And he took six hundred chosen chariots, and all the chariots of Egypt, and captains over every one of them*” (Exodus 14:6-7 KJV).
- “*And the LORD overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea. And the waters returned, and covered the chariots, and the horsemen, and all the host of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them; there remained not so much as one of them*” (Exodus 14:27-28 KJV).

What was the importance of this supernatural act in relation to the giving of the Ten Commandments?

- Everything God does is with purpose. Yes, he destroyed Pharaoh and his army and therefore provided safety for this fledgling nation of a people as they headed toward the promise, but it did so much more.
- The parting of the Red Sea helped to establish the trust credentials of Moses' God. The power displayed was just as much for the Hebrews as it was to the Egyptians
- God was setting the stage for His people to trust Him without fear and without reservation for anything in their lives.
- The giving of the law would be another day in which God would reveal Himself to man with the expectation that man would accept God's ways and see that His ways were always the best.

- God provided for the Hebrews during the Exodus.
- Approximately forty-five days after leaving Egypt, they complained about the lack of their favorite foods from their days in Egypt.

“Then said the LORD unto Moses, behold, I will rain bread from Heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day, that I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law, or no” (Exodus 16:4 KJV).

- The manna was so special that it was commanded that a memorial be established so that all would remember Jehovah Nissi (the Lord Our Provider) was their God. Moses said, *“This is the thing which the LORD commandeth, Fill an omer of it to be kept for your generations; that they may see the bread wherewith I have fed you in the wilderness, when I brought you forth from the land of Egypt” (Exodus 16:32 KJV).*

- God provided the flesh (quail) and manna (bread of the angels) fresh every day to meet this need.
- Even so, many failed to obey the need to gather daily, as we see, *“Notwithstanding they hearkened not unto Moses; but some of them left of it until the morning, and it bred worms, and stank”* (Exodus 16:20 KJV).
- He said He would provide the manna as a means to “prove,” better translated as “test,” man as to whether he would or would not walk in His law. What you might not realize is at this point, man had not yet received the law. In fact, the restrictions placed upon those in the wilderness were meant only to assist man in reinforcing the fact that God knows best. One intent was to provide man with the simplest of instructions so that he might have his daily needs met while gaining experience in obeying the law. Moses records, *“At even ye shall eat flesh, and in the morning ye shall be filled with bread; and ye shall know that I am the LORD your God” (Exodus 16:12 KJV).*

The giving of the manna might be paralleled to the feeding of a child:

- The child quickly recognizes us as the provider.
- Until the child is mature enough, some training (commands) cannot be expected to be obeyed.
- Establishing “table manners” is not the end all of training needed for life; in fact, it is just the beginning.
- What could be more natural than training a child during an act that has to occur multiple times each day?
- those in the desert eating manna were sitting at God's high chair.
- It was a teachable moment in preparation for the giving of the commandments

Providing the Ten Commandments would serve the purpose of:

- giving man a benchmark to live his life with respect to honoring Jehovah,
- prohibiting man from engaging in acts that would damage his relationships to others,
- encouraging man to engage in acts that would honor God as well as establish parallel principles observed in both heaven and earth, and
- providing man with a life course that, if followed, would give him the greatest degree of blessings while minimizing his degree of suffering.

Moses was called to commune with God on the mountain, *“The LORD said unto Moses, Come up to me into the mount, and be there: and I will give thee tables of stone, and a law, and commandments which I have written; that thou mayest teach them”* (Exodus 24:12 KJV).

Hebrew priests eventually established six hundred thirteen individual commandments from this entire set of Scripture that was commonly referred to as the “law of Moses.” Many of these additional commandments would become the basis for much of the ritualistic and legalistic attributes of Jewish temple worship and daily life occurring well before the coming of the Messiah.

Reference	Commandment	Results of Obedience	Results of Disobedience
Exodus 20:3	have no other gods before Me	the one true God is glorified	false religion does not benefit the individual
Exodus 20:4-5	do not create or worship any form of idol	close communion with those who worship God resulting in love extending forever	family punishment extending beyond just those first involved
Exodus 20:7	do not misuse the name of the Creator	reveal one's respect for the holiness of God. This results in God honoring you for honoring Him	to be found guilty and therefore deserving of God's wrath
Exodus 20:8-11	remember to keep the Sabbath day holy	a day of refreshment for both the body and the soul. A day to reflect that the God of creation knows you personally	reflects lack of respect for God and His commandment to honor Him as your personal Creator
Exodus 20: 12	honor thy father and mother	bolsters the family unit which God will bless during one's lifetime	breakdown of the family unit itself and society in general

Reference	Commandment	Results of Obedience	Results of Disobedience
Exodus 20:13	do not murder	honors the value of life for yourself as well as others and results in peaceful living	destroys life and takes that which only God has the right to control. Destroys man's ability to live in harmony together
Exodus 20:14	do not commit adultery	honors the God-created institution of marriage. Reflects God's desire to be uniquely ours	destroys family unit and the trust needed to maintain familial relationships
Exodus 20:15	do not steal	God will provide all that one needs	greed takes over and man ignores God's desire to provide for him
Exodus 20:16	do not lie to one another	builds holiness and righteous character reflecting God's image	shows that one follows Satan's example, which God is sure to punished
Exodus 20:17	do not covet what others have	you find peace and comfort knowing that He provides all that you truly need	if you do not respect others rights, then expect those same rights of yours to be forfeited

The first commandment was the cornerstone of the remaining nine.

- If the people could only honor this commandment, then the remainder would naturally fall into practice.
- It established the prohibition of worshipping false gods.
- We see that, *“When the people saw that Moses was so long in coming down from the mountain, they gathered around Aaron and said, "Come, make us gods who will go before us. As for this fellow Moses who brought us up out of Egypt, we don't know what has happened to him”* (Exodus 32:1 NIV). Can you believe it?

Here is the take home message from our discussion concerning the first commandment:

- believing (hoping) in a false god is the easiest thing in the world to do. It really is.
- Once we choose to worship someone (something) other than God, then the sky is the limit on who that god might be and what it expects from us.
- Doing so allows us to choose that which fits our image of what we want our god to be and how we need to respond to it.
- It happened in Moses' day, and it is happening right now.

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Gen 1:1”

- If we can only accept those two words above (God created) and the power behind that statement, then our willingness or desire to worship anyone else quickly fades.
- Those two words require you and me to make a decision about our lives and our places in the universe.

God prohibits man from the making an image of any false idols. That is the second commandment.

- No man has ever seen the face of God, nor can man look directly upon Him. With that being said, any image trying to depict God would only take away from the glory that is His. It would defame God, no matter how sincere.
- Even Moses had to be protected from seeing the full glory of God. As he was receiving the tablets with the commandments, we read, “And it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a clift of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by: and I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt see my back parts: but my face shall not be seen” (Exodus 33:22-23 KJV). You might be asking the question: why then do some have pictures or even statues of Jesus? Jesus is God. Wouldn’t having statues of Him be breaking the second commandment? The answer is no, as long as people do not actually worship the depiction. Jesus lived with us and was made known to us.

The third commandment forbade the Hebrews from “taking the Lord’s name in vain.”

- We might interpret that literally to mean not to lift up the name of God in a manner where it would be desecrated or even be considered derogatory.
- The Hebrews took this so seriously that, centuries later, they subsequently refused even to speak God’s name in fear that they would offend Him.
- They also chose to use the anagram “YHWH” to represent the Great I AM in the writing of the Scriptures.
- We get the English word “Jehovah” from a translation of the word “Adhonai,” which means “Master,” from this practice.
- The Hebrews would use this word when reading in the Scripture to indicate the word (name of God) which could not be spoken.
- How wonderful it would be if modern society had the same respect for God’s name.

God's people were told to remember the Sabbath by keeping it holy. This was the fourth commandment.

- It was such an important concept that God provided further instructions concerning how it was to be kept. Exodus verses 20:8-11 gives explicit instructions on this matter. We might summarize these as:
- first remembering it,
- followed by observing it,
- followed by enforcing it throughout your household, because
- God had set the pattern in the very act of creation for a day of remembrance.

By requiring the keeping (some would say the marking or the remembrance) of the Sabbath, God was setting the pattern by which busy man would purposefully stop his efforts so that he might reflect on and worship God.

- If man did not have to work in the fields, prepare meals, travel, or any of the other “tasks” performed during the other six days, he would be freed up to focus upon spiritual matters.
- God was purposefully giving him the day off just so that man, without hindrance from anyone over him, would have the freedom to remember God for what He had done and worship Him accordingly.
- It literally is a day given to man to allow us time to thank God for allowing us to be a part of His creation!

The fifth commandment is the first tied specifically with a blessing. The Hebrews were told to honor their parents so that it might be well with them in the Promised Land.

- This commandment reinforced the parallels between the heavenly realm and the earthly realm. That is, there is a hierarchy in heaven (the Trinity, the created beings, the angels), and on earth the family unit would reflect such a system.
- This was important, not only in Moses' day but also with Christ and His church (Christ being the head).
- The act of children honoring their parents was meant to go far beyond merely respecting them.
- It meant being under their guidance and accepting their direction, providing for them when they were in need and yielding to their authority.

The sixth commandment was a prohibition against murder, or the taking of life under evil pretense. Murder since the time of Cain had become commonplace.

- We need to remember that the primary purpose of this was to acknowledge that the Creator is the only one who has the jurisdiction or right to end any of His created beings' lives.
- Those who would murder place themselves falsely as equals with God by deciding to commit this act.
- Murder and the taking of life are not necessarily the same things. God never prohibited His people from entering acts of war while under His direction.

If we examine this issue in the same light as that discussed earlier, that only God has the right to end a life, then abortion by definition is an act of murder.

- This might seem harsh or even a draconian statement, but I know of no other way of describing what this means to God as defined by His commandments.
- Every child ever born was formed in the image of God for a purpose, regardless of the circumstance of the conception or the desire of the parents to love and raise that child.
- *“For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be” (Psalm 139:13-16 NIV).*

Not committing the act of adultery was the seventh commandment.

- Adultery is the act of breaking the covenant one enters into when he marries.
- God loves the institution of marriage between a husband and a wife.
- Marriage and the sexual relations that are part of it were created for mankind's benefit.
- While there are multiple incidences in the Old Testament of men having more than one wife and still being honorable (Jacob, for example, in Genesis 26), the vast majority of time we see the one man-one-woman design started in the Garden maintained by the children of God as being the best for all parties.

God knows adultery destroys all those affected by it.

- It breaks the bond of trust between the spouse and the one who had broken that trust. The apostle Paul stated, *“Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral”* (Hebrews 13:4 NIV).
-
- It was important that God’s chosen be different than all other people. Sexual purity was not the norm during Moses’ day, and unfortunately, it is not the norm for today’s society. God’s people would have to resist the temptation of improper sexual relations within their own nation as well the practices of the other people groups they would encounter.
- How seriously did God take the sin of adultery? We see later that, *“If a man commits adultery with another man’s wife—with the wife of his neighbor—both the adulterer and the adulteress must be put to death”* (Leviticus 20:10 NIV). It is a shame to think that adultery now is considered almost a victimless crime. Some statistics indicate that adultery may affect nearly fifty percent of every U.S. marriage over its lifetime.

The eighth commandment prohibiting stealing informed those with Moses that obtaining goods other than that which God would provide would be a sinful act.

- This would mean that God would either provide the goods through a divine act (such as the manna from heaven) or He would provide them the talent and strength to obtain the goods or services through their own work.
- The core of this commandment is that God will provide whatever was needed for His people. He provided the sacrifice in place of Isaac so that Abraham's faith was rewarded, as we read, "*And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah jireh*" (*Genesis 22:14 KJV*). We can translate this name as "God will provide."

Stealing takes God out of the equation and circumvents His desire to be the provider for all we need.

- The key word here is need. Most people steal not because they need something but rather because they desire something.
- When one goes beyond the provision supplied by God and takes from another person (steals), it robs the other party of his possessions.
- It is also an indication that the thief does not believe God can supply his needs or that the individual is unwilling to wait for God to supply it. In either case, God is not glorified.

The ninth commandment prohibited God's people from giving false testimony or what we might call telling lies.

- This commandment was meant to have prevented individuals from doing harm against their neighbors by telling lies used in legal proceedings.
- The analogy here is someone under oath making false statements in a courtroom where another party is injured.
- Why was such a commandment needed? Lies harm everyone involved. We see that "*like a club or a sword or a sharp arrow is the man who gives false testimony against his neighbor*" (*Proverbs 25:18 NIV*).

False words can be just as damaging as a physical weapon.

- God wanted His people to be truthful in both word and deed. This was to be a people that would have to establish a system of justice built upon God's laws.
- What happens when people have no respect for telling the truth? We see that innocent people are harmed, and there is no justice. Isaiah stated it as, *“Those who with a word make a man out to be guilty, who ensnare the defender in court and with false testimony deprive the innocent of justice”* (Isaiah 29:21 NIV).

What happens when someone lies? We know that it becomes a tangled web as the liar has to weave a story. At a minimum, the following happens:

- The person who lies makes a conscious decision not to tell the truth.
- There is a fabrication of facts that is intended to benefit the liar.
- In some instances, the lie is meant to injure someone directly.
- The person receiving the lie is led astray from the truth and may make decisions that injure himself or others because of the lie.
- Once discovered, the liar's credibility is lost.
- Lost credibility results in broken relationships.

John gave us these words, “*And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life*” (Revelation 21:27 KJV).

- God’s people need to heed the warning behind this commandment.
- No one will enter Heaven who lives an unrepentant life filled with lies.

The last of the primary commandments concerned the topic of covetousness.

- We might translate this into a lusting after someone else's property. It goes beyond merely wanting the same types of things as others. That in itself is no sin.
- An example would be wanting to have a new pickup truck like your neighbor's. The key word is "like".
- If you say, "I want my neighbor's pickup truck." Instead of admiring something and wanting to be equally blessed, a covetous person wants to take something away from someone else and have it for themselves.
- It is the act of desiring to obtain something from someone in a lustful manner with no regard for the impact it has on the other party.
- God tells us to be patient and to allow Him to provide. In some cases, God simply wants His people to be satisfied with what they have.

With the giving of the law came the knowledge of the law and God's expectation.

- Paul said, *“All who sin apart from the law will also perish apart from the law, and all who sin under the law will be judged by the law. For it is not those who hear the law who are righteous in God's sight, but it is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous. This will take place on the day when God will judge men's secrets through Jesus Christ” (Romans 2:12-13,16 NIV).*
- Yes, God fully expected man to obey the law completely. When mankind failed, he found himself in jeopardy of eternal damnation, because no sin can go unpunished by the only holy and righteous God.
- Thankfully for us, the story does not end with the giving of the law and man's subsequent failure to obey it. God would provide His own solution to this problem.

Paul writes, “*for the law made nothing perfect, and a better hope is introduced, by which we draw near to God*” (Hebrews 7:19). We see that God:

- created man with the express desire to share Himself and maintain full communion with His creation, requiring Him to
- provide man with the perfect law to guide his life, but
- man would rebel from the law and sin against his Creator, resulting in
- man having knowledge of the law and therefore being in damnation of the law because of this willful act of disobedience, resulting in
- God righteously finding man sinful and requiring punishment, which
- man was unable to resolve on his own, resulting in
- God having to provide a means for man to be released from his sin, requiring
- God to find a perfect substitute, a sin offering of such measure that all of mankind’s sins would be absolved once and for all, resulting in
- God choosing the only perfect substitute, in the form of Himself, requiring
- the Messiah, the very Son of God to offer up Himself voluntarily to take away the sins of man’s failure to live successfully under the law.

Application

1. Why are the 10 commandments still important?
2. Why are the first two so hard for you and I to fully obey?
3. Why do so many refuse to even acknowledge the commandments?

One Second- Week 6

The Centuries of Reward and Punishment

Key verse: *For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it (James 2:10 NIV).*

Key thought: God had provided mankind with the perfect law, which would enable man both to worship God and love each other. The plan was perfect, but man was not. Man was incapable of maintaining the law in the spirit it had been given. Man would reject the heavenly God for earthly ones and suffer the consequences.

Purpose: Fellowship, sin, punishment, repentance: what a vicious and self-destructive cycle for God's chosen people! God would share much with His people during that time in preparation for a King, a Priest, and a Prophet who would truly be God-given.

Key question: Why does man so quickly forget who God is and His power and authority.

One of the main reasons the Jews were chosen to be God's special people (and given the commandments) was to be a testament to all other people regarding Jehovah.

- The Jews were given instructions for what would be necessary for the people to worship God in a manner He would accept and the manner in which they would be asked to treat each other.
- In doing so, they would be found acceptable in God's sight and have healthy relationships with their brothers and sisters.
- They would also be a people of distinction that had the potential to draw all mankind to the Great I AM, as we see, *"Observe them carefully, for this will show your wisdom and understanding to the nations, who will hear about all these decrees and say, 'surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people'"* (Deuteronomy 4:6 NIV).

A number of primary issues need to be discussed concerning the events after Mount Horeb and before the birth of the Messiah. Those points are:

- characters of renown (both godly and ungodly)
- the need for priests (intercessors)
- the progress of Israel/Judah as a nation-state
- the need for a king
- the need for prophets
- the cyclical nature of rebellion/confession/repentance/deliverance
- the need for temple sacrifices
- perversion of the law
- warnings from the prophets
- the loss of the Promised Land
- the period of darkness
- the need for a Messiah
- the prophecies of the Messiah

We might want to consider that God never changed His desire to be the God of the Hebrews so that in turn they could be His people.

- The approximately one thousand four hundred forty years between the giving of the law and the coming of the Messiah is best represented to us by what we commonly call the Old Testament.
- This collection of thirty-nine books containing the inspired Word of God would contain a variety of writings, each with a specific purpose relative to the vision of God to make Himself known to mankind.

Time period (BC)*	Authors**	Category	Books
4000-2000	Moses	Law	The Pentateuch (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy)
1425-435	Joshua, Samuel, Ezra, Nehemiah, Mordecai	History	Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1&2 Samuel, 1&2 Kings, 1&2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther
2250-500	Moses, David, Asaph, Solomon, sons of Korah, Ethan, Elihu	Poetry and Wisdom	Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon
645-530	Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel	Major prophets	Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel
835-400	Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi	Minor prophets	Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi

*approximate dates as defined by Boyd

** Authorship of some works of the Psalms is anonymous. Authorship of some of the books is directly named, but this is not always the case. This represents those most likely to have been the principal authors.

The Old Testament represents approximately 3600 years of recorded history. We see during this period of time that man was given (in no particular order):

- the creation story (introduced to God and His sovereignty),
- the law and its benefits if it is obeyed,
- the result of substituting a heavenly king for an earthly one,
- guidance for daily living through wisdom,
- the need for the prophetic Word of God,
- the need for God to be praised in all things,
- a history lesson of the consequences of sin for both the individual and the nation, and
- the raising up of the priesthood (intercessors) and kings (leaders).

God Principles

Book	Biblical Characters	Major Events	God's Principle
Genesis	Adam, Noah, Abraham	creation, the Garden, the flood, covenants established	Man is created to glorify God, but sin abounds.
Exodus	Moses	God's people are established	God chose the Hebrews to reveal Himself to all.
Leviticus	Moses, sons of Levi	creation of the priesthood	There is a need for an intercessor with God.
Numbers	Moses, Aaron	40-year march in circles	Only faith is rewarded.
Deuteronomy	Moses, Aaron	Moses dies	The Promised Land awaits.
Joshua	Joshua	conquest of	The ark (God's power) prevails.
Judges	Othniel and 12 others	apostasy followed by salvation	Sin results in chastisement.
Ruth	Ruth, Boaz	Boaz honors Jehovah's ways	need for a Redeemer
1 Samuel	Samuel, Eli, Saul, David	establishment of kingship	earthly kings subject to failure
2 Samuel	David	peace and turmoil, adultery with Bathsheba	the impact of sin on an individual and then the nation
1 Kings	Solomon and other kings	division of and	need for God's people to be united behind Him

God Principles

Book	Biblical Characters	Major Events	God's Principle
2 Kings	Elijah, Elisha, Hezekiah	fall and captivity of and	God's warning's not heeded
1 Chronicles	David	the acts of David	the Davidic line established
2 Chronicles	Solomon, Nebuchadnezzar	the temple and its destruction, Babylonian captivity	the glory of God and the results of disobedience
Ezra	Ezra	restoration of God's people	a godly remnant will be used
Nehemiah	Nehemiah	rebuilding	need to be unified as a people
Esther	Esther, Mordecai, Haman	Esther saves all of the Jews remaining in	Man cannot defeat the plans of God for His people.
Job	God, Satan, Job	testing of Job	Man is capable of loving God regardless of his situation.
Psalms	God, David, Asaph	life events of all mankind	God is to be praised.
Proverbs	God, Solomon	God's wisdom in all things	heavenly wisdom for man
Ecclesiastes	Solomon	search for pleasure and wisdom	real joy comes through God

God Principles

Book	Biblical Characters	Major Events	God's Principle
Song of Solomon	Solomon	union between lovers	faithful love is required
Isaiah	Isaiah, Uzziah, Ahaz, Hezekiah	's destruction and ultimate deliverance	needs a Messiah to restore the people and nation.
Jeremiah	Jeremiah, Nebuchadnezzar	fall of	the judgment of a holy God
Lamentations	Jeremiah	the ruin of	accept God's discipline
Ezekiel	Ezekiel	destruction of	God's glory will return
Daniel	Daniel, Nebuchadnezzar	the fiery furnace, the lion's den, prophecies of future kingdoms	History will eventually lead to God's eternal kingdom.
Hosea	Hosea, Gomer	and acted adulterously	mankind's unfaithfulness
Joel	Joel	destruction of by locusts	Desolation and destruction await the ungodly.
Amos	Amos, Amaziah	a great earthquake and suffering	God has set the bench marks.

God Principles

Book	Biblical Characters	Major Events	God's Principle
Obadiah	Obadiah, Edomites	destruction of	God will repay evil for evil.
Jonah	Jonah, Ninevites	salvation of	God's plans will be achieved.
Micah	Micah, Ahaz, Hezekiah	return and restoration of	Redemption is available to all.
Nahum	Nahum	wickedness of	God's wrath is terrible.
Habakkuk	Habakkuk, Babylonians	invasion by the Chaldeans	God uses others to impact His own.
Zephaniah	Zephaniah, Josiah	destruction of	a coming day of great wrath
Haggai	Haggai	need to rebuild the temple	We should remain encouraged.
Zechariah	Zechariah, Darius	war and the coming of the Messiah	The kingdom will be restored.
Malachi	Malachi	failure of the priesthood	certain judgment for sin

Famous Biblical Testaments

- Even though **Moses** did not receive an earthly reward, he is receiving it forever in heaven, as John wrote, “*And they [angels] sing the song of Moses the servant of God*” (*Revelation 15:3 KJV*).
- Scripture says, “*And Naomi said unto her daughter in law, blessed be he of the LORD, who hath not left off his kindness to the living and to the dead. And Naomi said unto her, the man is near of kin unto us, one of our next kinsmen*” (**Ruth 2:20 KJV**). **Boaz** was a prime example of the first kinsmen-redeemer
- “*Then Esther the queen answered and said, if I have found favour in thy sight, O king, and if it please the king, let my life be given me at my petition, and my people at my request*” (*Esther 7:3 KJV*).

Famous Biblical Testaments

- *“Now among these were of the children of Judah, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah: Unto whom the prince of the eunuchs gave names: for he gave unto Daniel the name of **Belteshazzar**; and to Hananiah, of **Shadrach**; and to Mishael, of **Meshach**; and to Azariah, of **Abednego**. But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself” (Daniel 1:6-8 KJV).*
- **Daniel** records the words of **King Nebuchadnezzar**. *“The decision is announced by messengers, the holy ones declare the verdict, so that the living may know that the Most High is sovereign over the kingdoms of men and gives them to anyone he wishes and sets over them the lowliest of men” (Daniel 4:17 NIV).*

Early after the exodus from Egypt, God ordained all of Aaron's descendants to serve a special purpose.

- These would be the priesthood or, as it is also called, the Levitical line.
- This latter appears in respect to Levi the patriarch of this tribe, *“The priests, the sons of Levi, shall step forward, for the LORD your God has chosen them to minister and to pronounce blessings in the name of the LORD and to decide all cases of dispute and assault” (Deuteronomy 21:5 NIV).*
- Why did God need to institute the priesthood?

The verse quoted earlier gives us direct insight into this question.

Focus on four of the words in that verse “**priests**,” “**chosen**,” “**minister**,” and “**blessings**.”

We might best interpret “priests” as “**one who officiates**.” But officiates what?

The root word for “**chosen**” was “**to require**.” So we see that God was going to require someone (priests) to officiate something.

The origin of the word **minister** is “**to be a servant or to wait on someone else’s needs**.”

So God’s vision for man included **the need to have a chosen individual who would hold the office of being a servant and perform its duties**. Those duties were our last word, “**blessings**.” This word can best be interpreted as “**to kneel or to adore**.”

Priests would be selected by God (not man) to be humble and serve Him so that He would be glorified.

Priests

The priests from the day of Moses well through the first century had much of the same duties.

They would offer the daily sacrifices needed for themselves, the people, and the nation of Israel. *“And as a penalty he must bring to the priest, that is, to the LORD, his guilt offering, a ram from the flock, one without defect and of the proper value. In this way the priest will make atonement for him before the LORD, and he will be forgiven for any of these things he did that made him guilty”* (Leviticus 6:6-7 NIV).

Notice that the role the priest played was **to act** on God's behalf. Also, we see that it is the remission (forgiveness) of sin that was the priest's **most important role**. Unfortunately, earthly priests were prone to sin just like any other man. As such, their ability to come before God with a clean heart and offer up sacrifices for sin offerings was problematic. In fact, their sin was also cast upon God's people, *“If the anointed priest sins, bringing guilt on the people”* (Leviticus 4:3 NIV).

I would suggest the priests were instituted to:

- act as an intermediary between God and His people, **so that**
- man had a means to seek forgiveness for his sins, **allowing**
- man to come before God in a state of acceptance, **but**
- Israel, mankind, and the priests were prone to sin, **resulting**
- in a constant need for both man and priest to seek forgiveness, **by the**
- offering up of acceptable sacrifices, **consisting of**
- a sacrifice requiring the shedding of blood, and
- that blood must be of acceptable quality, **without blemish.**

- Priests would never be able to meet their role fully, because they, too, were men and fraught with the same sinful desires as other men.
- The Messiah would come and fill the role of the priesthood like no one ever could.
- The prophet Zechariah wrote, “*Tell him this is what the LORD Almighty says: Here is the man whose name is the Branch, and he will branch out from his place and build the temple of the LORD. It is he who will build the temple of the LORD, and he will be clothed with majesty and will sit and rule on his throne. And he will be a priest on his throne. And there will be harmony between the two*

(Zechariah 6:12 NIV).

- This verse indicates that there would come One who would not only be a honorable **priest** but also serve as **king**. This Branch would be the Messiah. It would be God’s will that this perfect Priest, the One who would righteously intervene for all mankind, would also be the sacrifice needed to cover man’s sin, “*Yet it was the LORD’s will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the LORD makes his life a guilt offering, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the LORD will prosper in his hand*

(Isaiah 53:10 NIV). The offspring being referred to above was mankind, that is, you and me

Jerusalem

Nearly all of the history of Israel/Judah can be summarized by studying who has lived there, what has happened there, and God's interest in this one piece of real estate. Many things would happen there as a prelude to the coming of the Messiah.

Jerusalem is mentioned in 626 verses in the Old Testament, more than any other location.

That is one clue as to God's vision for this city. One must realize that what has happened over the centuries in Jerusalem has impacted all Jews. This in turn, has impacted all of mankind.

We might even say that all Jewish, and therefore Christian, history has passed through Jerusalem.

We first see the city mentioned in Abram's encounter with the priest-king Melchizedek, as it is written, "*Melchizedek was the king of Jerusalem. He brought out bread and wine. He was the priest of God Most High*" (*Genesis 14:18 NIV*). So we know the city had been in existence for approximately 2000 years by the time the Messiah had been born.

Jerusalem or “city of peace.”

How might we best summarize history through this one city? We might say that it:

- was ordained by God to be His,
- was a place where the sacrifice for the nation’s sin would be held,
- was, and will again be a royal city (a place for the King),
- was a place of the prophets, where God spoke often to man,
- was a location upon which the enemies of God’s people have focused, and
- where God resided in His temple, within the Holy of Holies.

Jerusalem or “city of peace.”

David was the first in the kingly line that would live in Jerusalem, taking it from the Jebusites in battle and claiming it for himself as the city of David.

- But God had a purpose for Jerusalem. It was to be His city, not David's. We read, *“Go and tell my servant David, this is what the LORD says: are you the one to build me a house to dwell in?”* (2 Samuel 7:5 NIV). Scripture records, *“On that day Gad went to David and said to him, ‘go up and build an altar to the LORD on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite’”* (2 Samuel 24:18 NIV), and *“But the king (David) replied to Araunah, no, I insist on paying you for it. I will not sacrifice to the LORD my God burnt offerings that cost me nothing. So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen and paid fifty shekels of silver for them”* (2 Samuel 24:24 NIV).

Jerusalem or “city of peace.”

- Yes, God ordained an altar to be established in Jerusalem and that a temple would be built so that He might dwell there.
- This purchased threshing floor, set on a hill, would become the location of Solomon’s temple and within it the Holy of Holies.
- This parcel of land might be the same as that visited by Abraham, who was asked to offer his son Isaac in a challenge of faith.
- The Bible says, “Some time later God tested Abraham. He said to him, ‘Abraham!’ ‘Here I am,’ he replied. Then God said, ‘Take your son, your only son, Isaac, whom you love, and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains I will tell you about’” (Genesis 22:1-22 NIV). It might be that Solomon built the the temple on the aforementioned spot. Think of the symbolism of one Father offering up His Son at this location!
- “Then Solomon began to build the temple of the LORD in Jerusalem on Mount Moriah, where the LORD had appeared to his father David. It was on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite, the place provided by David” (2 Chronicles 3:1 NIV).

Jerusalem or “city of peace.”

“This is what the Sovereign LORD says: O city that brings on herself doom by shedding blood in her midst and defiles herself by making idols” (Ezekiel 22:3 NIV).

Jerusalem and its people fell into the cycle of rebellion, punishment, repentance, and deliverance. In doing so, it suffered tremendously as it lost its way.

Prophet after prophet would call out to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and the nation as a whole about the need for repentance and true worship to Jehovah. Prophets like Isaiah, Jeremiah, Hosea, Micah, Haggai, and Malachi would lament over the sinful state of God’s people

All roads don’t necessarily lead to Rome. For the Jew and for the Christian, **all roads lead to Jerusalem**. It was the city that God had chosen to hold His throne and from which He would rule eternally. Jerusalem was waiting for a priest, a prophet, and a king that would finally fulfill all that those titles demanded. They would have to wait many centuries for this event.

Kings

God's people were not satisfied with having a spiritual ruler over them (Samuel); they demanded an earthly king to be their leader.

This in no way pleased God, as it is written, *“But when they said, ‘Give us a king to lead us,’ this displeased Samuel; so he prayed to the LORD and the LORD told him: ‘Listen to all that the people are saying to you; it is not you they have rejected, but they have rejected me as their king”* (1 Samuel 8:6-7 NIV).

We see, *“But the people refused to listen to Samuel. No! they said. We want a king over us. Then we will be like all the other nations, with a king to lead us and to go out before us and fight our battles”* (1 Samuel 8:19-20 NIV).

The reason Jerusalem fell and that the nation of Israel fell so repeatedly is that they had received their wish and become just like all other nations, that is, ones without the righteous God leading them.

Kings

Thomas Jefferson might have said this best concerning man's ability to lead and govern others, "Sometimes it is said that man cannot be trusted with the government of himself. Can he, then, be trusted with the government of others?"

Breakdown of man's response to the Law

During these many centuries of man's existence, we see that the law resulted in:

- man either ignoring God's law totally, or
- changing it to the point it no longer carried its original intent, resulting in
- priests and other rulers oppressing the people, to the point where
- the sacrifices needed for forgiveness were without benefit to anyone.
- “Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings” (Malachi 3:8 KJV).*

The Need for a Righteous Priest, Prophet, King

More than 300 individual Bible passages directly relate to prophecies concerning the Messiah and what this would mean to mankind.

In addition, there are nonbiblical Hebraic writings that also herald this event. There are the Sibylline Oracles dating back to 184-117 BC as well as numerous rabbinical writings (Talmud and Targum).

Old Testament Reports of the Messiah

Reference	Name/Title/Depiction	Reference	Name/Title/Depiction
Genesis 3:15	Seed of Woman	Ecclesiastes 12:1	The Creator
Exodus 3:14	I AM	Song of Solomon 2:1	Rose of Sharon
Leviticus 10:7	The Anointed One	Isaiah 9:6	Wonderful Counselor
Numbers 24:17	Scepter	Jeremiah 8:22	Balm of Gilead
Deuteronomy 18:18	Prophet	Lamentations 3:30	The Smitten One
Joshua 5:14	Captain of the Host	Ezekiel 34: 29	Plant of Renown
Judges 6:24	Our Deliverer	Daniel 7:13	Son of Man
Ruth 2:1	Kinsman-Redeemer	Hosea 12:5	Lord God of Hosts
1 Samuel 20:42	Seed of David	Joel 3:16	Hope of His People
2 Samuel 22:3	David's Lord	Amos 3:13	God of Hosts
1 King 1:37	King of Kings	Obadiah 1:21	Lord of the Kingdom

Old Testament Reports of the Messiah

Reference	Name/Title/Depiction	Reference	Name/Title/Depiction
2 Kings 3:14	Reigning King	Jonah 1:17	Risen Prophet
1 Chronicles 28:4	Sovereign King	Micah 1:2	The Witness
2 Chronicles 5:14	God's Glory	Nahum 1:7	A Stronghold
Ezra 1:2	Lord of Heaven	Habakkuk 3:3	Holy One
Nehemiah 1:5	Lord	Zephaniah 3:15	Israel's King
Esther 7:3	Our Advocate	Haggai 2:7	Desire of the Nations
Job 38:12	Dayspring	Zechariah 13:7	Shepherd
Psalms 118:22	The Headstone	Malachi 4:2	Sun of Righteousness
Proverbs 8:12	Wisdom of God		

Old Testament Reports of the Messiah

Message	Verses	Scripture examples
What would the Messiah be like, and what would He do?	45	a Prophet (Deuteronomy 18:15); a King (Psalm 2:6); righteous (Isaiah 11:4); humble (Zechariah 9:9); spirit-filled (Isaiah 11:2); a Shepherd (Isaiah 40:11)
He would be the Savior of God's chosen and all mankind	31	an acceptable sin offering (Isaiah 53:10); a blood offering (Isaiah 52:15); would redeem Israel (Isaiah 49:5); rejected by many (Psalm 2:12); would establish a new covenant (Jeremiah 31:31)
He would be crucified	29	grouped with criminals (Isaiah 52:12); offered vinegar (Psalm 69:20-21); clothes would be divided as spoil (Psalm 22:18); would be pierced (Zechariah 12:10); people would mock His agony (Psalm 22:7)
He would be resurrected and victorious over sin and death	29	Defeated death (Isaiah 53:10); defeat Satan (Genesis 3:15); ascend to heaven (Psalm 68:18); crowned as King (Psalm 2:7); would be exalted (Daniel 7:13-14); sit at the right hand of God (Psalm 80:17)
He would be a true Hebrew and a descendant of David	28	line of Shem (Genesis 9:26); line of Abraham (Genesis 22:18); line of Isaac (Genesis 17:19); line of Jacob (Genesis 28:14); line of Judah (1 Chronicles 5:2); line of Boaz (Ruth 4:12-17); line of Jesse (Isaiah 11:1); line of David (2 Samuel 7:16)
He would obey the Father's commands	26	would please God (Isaiah 42:1); would glorify God (Isaiah 49:3); would do God's will (Psalm 40:7-8); would be God's servant (Isaiah 49:5); God would be satisfied (Isaiah 53:11)
He would be rejected by man	20	by the Jews (Psalm 118:22); by His family (Psalm 69:8); by the Gentiles (Psalm 2:1)
He would be God	13	as Creator (Psalm 102:25); as God incarnate (Isaiah 7:14); as both God and man (Zechariah 12:10); as Lord (Psalm 110:1)

Old Testament Reports of the Messiah

Message	Verses	Scripture examples
He would be born of woman	11	natural birth (Genesis 3:15); from a virgin (Jeremiah 31:22); in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2); as God with us (Isaiah 7:14)
He would have a ministry	11	preach the Good News (Isaiah 61:1-2); beheld as King (Zechariah 9:9); enter Jerusalem on a donkey (Zechariah 9:9)
He would serve all mankind	11	for all nations (Genesis 22:18); for all people (Isaiah 49:1); for the Gentiles (Isaiah 49:6)
He would suffer greatly	9	with great sorrow (Isaiah 53:3); greatly afflicted (Isaiah 53:7); persecuted (Isaiah 53:8); spit upon (Isaiah 50:6); whipped (Isaiah 50:6)
He would be the Son of God	7	God's Son (Psalm 2:7); God would be His Father (Psalm 89:26)
He would perform miracles	6	Heal the blind and deaf (Isaiah 35:5); heal the lame and dumb (Isaiah 35:6)
He would be betrayed	6	by a friend (Psalm 41:9); for pieces of silver (Zechariah 11:12)
He would be despised	6	by many (Psalm 69:4), by political and religious leaders (Psalm 2:2)
He had lived	5	forever (Proverbs 8:22-23); having no beginning or end (Micah 5:2)
He would have a herald	5	to prepare the way (Malachi 4:5); from the wilderness (Isaiah 40:3)
He would be judged	5	falsely (Psalm 109:2); without uttering a rebuke (Isaiah 53:7)
He would be abandoned	3	by His disciples (Psalm 22:11); by His associates (Isaiah 53:3)
Time of His coming	3	483 years after the temple was to be rebuilt (Daniel 9:25)

Old Testament Reports of the Messiah

If the numbers (ranking) of these verses are significant, then these might give us insight as what God wanted to share most with His people about the Messiah during the centuries of darkness.

1. We see first that God wanted His people to know that a Messiah would indeed be coming.
2. This Messiah would be the eternal King, but humble and filled with God's Spirit like never seen before.
3. He would offer Himself up as a sacrifice that God would find acceptable for the sins of the entire world.
4. He would be crucified and die, but death would not hold Him.
5. He would be a true Hebrew, with ancestors from Noah to David to Joseph, His earthly father.
6. He would come from the priestly and kingship patriarchal lines that would give Him rights to be both.
7. The Messiah would be obedient to the will of God but in doing so would be rejected by man.

Old Testament Reports of the Messiah

If the numbers (ranking) of these verses are significant, then these might give us insight as what God wanted to share most with His people about the Messiah during the centuries of darkness.

8. He would be the “man-god,” born of woman but having a heavenly home.
9. He would establish a ministry involving spiritual service to all of mankind but at great cost to Himself (physically and emotionally).
10. He would be declared God’s only Son and have the power to perform many supernatural miracles. Even so,
11. He would be betrayed and despised for challenging both the political and religious leaders of the day.
12. As an eternal being, God would first send Him a herald in the spirit of Elijah who would turn the hearts of the fathers back toward their children and preach of repentance of sin.
13. This God-sent servant would be rejected and judged to be a blasphemer and insurrectionist.
14. His coming would take place nearly five hundred years after Daniel’s prophecy of the rebuilding of the temple.

Application

Why would God design a plan in which His earthly priests, kings and prophets failed?

Did God want these individuals to fail (sin)?

What should you take away from all of the reports of a coming Messiah recorded consistently across all books of the Bible?

One Second- Week 7

The Hour of Christ's Birth

Key verse: *For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this (Isaiah 9:6-7 KJV).*

Key thought: *The Messiah had been prophesized from the beginning of time. In fact, we should recognize that History is all about His Story. It started long before His birth.*

Purpose: Man had fallen into spiritual decay. God's chosen people, had forsaken true worship and replaced it with meaningless practices or outright denial of Jehovah. The birth of Christ provided the means for God to deliver to mankind the remedy for their sins.

Key question: Why would God chose to send His Son in the manner and condition that He did?

1500 years of prophesy about the Messiah

God had asked the people to:

- look for Him with anticipation,
- note the signs of His soon arrival,
- accept the prophecies dealing with His being,
- cherish Him while He was with them,
- be prepared for Him to be rejected and scorned,
- expect Him to be sacrificed for their sins, and
- watch God defeat both physical (the grave) and spiritual death (sin) through Him.

We need to understand.....

- Why was the Messiah needed?
- When would He be sent?
- Who could be the Messiah?
- Where would it happen?
- Who wanted in anticipation, and who waited in fear?
- What did the people expect in a Messiah?
- Why would it be through Mary and Joseph?
- Why was a virgin birth necessary?
- How could He come both as a human and yet still be God?
- What did His birth mean to God?

What does “Messiah” means?

The word itself is related to the Hebrew “mashiah,” the Aramaic “meshiha,” and the Greek “messias.” A modification of the Greek form of this word yields the English title we know as “Messiah.” All of these have a basic meaning of “Anointed One.” To be anointed represents one who has been chosen by God to perform some special task with an indwelling of God’s Spirit and/or blessing (kingship, priest, prophet).

While there are hundreds of messianic verses in the Old Testament, the first actual use of the term, “Anointed One” is observed in one of the early Psalms, *“The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together against the LORD and against his Anointed One” (Psalm 2:2 NIV).*

Why was the Messiah needed?

The Bible records over three hundred verses describing the purpose of the law. It was written, *“For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it”* (James 2:10 NIV).

Mankind deserves to be punished for breaking just one of the commandments. The consequence of breaking God’s law was having to face the wrath of a righteous God. Paul stated it this way, *“God becomes angry when his Law is broken”* (Romans 4:15 CEV).

The law intended for good became a death sentence for man. Paul was inspired to write more on this subject when he said, *“Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned, for before the law was given, sin was in the world. But sin is not taken into account when there is no law. Nevertheless, death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, even over those who did not sin by breaking a command, as did Adam, who was a pattern of the one to come”* (Romans 5:12-14 NIV).

We see that the Messiah was the resolution.

We read, *“For if, by the trespass of the one man [Adam], death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ. Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men. For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous. The law was added so that the trespass might increase. But where sin increased, grace increased all the more, so that, just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord”* (Romans 5:17-21 NIV).

The first Adam brought Death, the Second Adam Life

When would He be sent?

Daniel's prophecy laid out the course of events where we see, " *Know and understand this: from the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed One, the ruler, comes, there will be seven 'sevens,' and sixty-two 'sevens'"* (Daniel 9:25 NIV).

The first "sevens" in the preceding verse are often thought to represent sixty-nine years or a total of $69 \times 7 = 483$ years from the issuing of Artaxerxes' order to rebuild Jerusalem (estimated to be on or about March 14, 445 BC).

As a result, the Messiah's resulting lifespan has often been calculated to be approximately 33 years. There are other indications of the approximate year in which He was born. We read, " *Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king*" (Matthew 2:1 KJV).

We know of Herod's death in 4 BC by the noted historian Josephus. Soon after the birth of the Messiah, Herod issued a decree that all male children under the age of two should be killed. This and other calendar considerations would place the birth of the Messiah sometime in late 5 BC (the offset from 0 BC is due to issues with the synchronization of the Gregorian, Caesar, and other calendars of this time period). I will say, however, that there are numerous other interpretations of the year of the Messiah's birth. Many of these range from 1 to 6 AD.

Obviously, it is not important to God that we know the exact date of the Messiah's birth at this time.

It was much more important that the world anticipate His coming and be preparing itself.

Paul sums up God's point of view concerning the timing of the Messiah's birth when he said, *"But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons"* (*Galatians 4:4-5 KJV*).

God would send the Messiah at exactly the right moment in history to have the planned impact.

Prophetic Requirement	Reference	Applicable to man	Applicable to God*	Applicable to God's Son
be eternal, have had no beginning or end	Micah 5:2	no	yes	yes
be from the tribe of Judah and an heir of David	Isaiah 9:6-7	yes	no	yes
be born in Bethlehem	Micah 5:2	yes	no	yes
be given gifts fit for a king	Psalm 72:10	yes	yes	yes
be called a Nazarene	Judges 13:5	yes	no	yes
be born of a virgin	Isaiah 7:14	no	no	yes
be meek and lowly	Isaiah 42:2	yes	no	yes

*While God the Father is capable of anything, He has no beginning

Prophetic Requirement	Reference	Applicable to man	Applicable to God*	Applicable to God's Son
be an acceptable sacrifice for man's sin	Isaiah 53:10-12	no	no	yes
be preceded by a Spirit-filled prophet	Malachi 4:6	yes	no	yes
be coequal with God	Jeremiah 23:5-6	no	yes	yes
be God's son	Psalm 2:7	no	no	yes
be Emmanuel (God with us), both man and God	Zechariah 13:7	no	yes	yes
be called Jesus (Yeshua)	Isaiah 12:2	yes	yes	yes
be capable of death	Isaiah 53:9	yes	no	yes

*While God the Father is capable of anything, He has no beginning.

The Messiah would have to be:

- obedient to God even though He was co-equal with God,
- born of woman and live a normal human existence,
- a true Hebrew with the proper family lineage (kingly and priestly lines),
- able to live a fully sin-free life, and
- willing to sacrifice Himself for others while suffering great pain.

No fully human man could ever lay claim to all of those requirements.

Man was by nature a sinner. We see, “*The LORD looks down from heaven on the sons of men to see if there are any who understand, any who seek God. All have turned aside, they have together become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one*” (Psalm 14:2-3 NIV).

Every man who came before and after the Messiah was a sinner and, therefore, unfit to claim this title. Man is naturally disobedient to God.

Paul wrote, “*For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous*” (Romans 5:19 NIV).

Only God Himself met the requirements

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved” (John 3:16-17 KJV).

We see repeatedly in the verses above that God ultimately chose to sacrifice (give) that most precious to Himself. The prophet wrote, *“Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS” (Jeremiah 23:5-6 KJV).*

The individual who was to be the Messiah was God.

He would be born of woman but fully God. Only God himself was worthy enough to meet the demands required for man's atonement. Isaiah describes it like this: *"He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth" (Isaiah 53:3-7 NIV).*

We see, therefore, that God would send His Son. I don't think any of us can really understand why (or maybe how) God could do this. I mean that to give up your Son (yourself) for the sins of others is just unthinkable. That's right; it is unthinkable to you and me. We cannot love like that, but God is like no other.

Paul wrote, *"Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:7-8 NIV).*

This has to be one of the most amazing statements ever recorded.

Why Bethlehem (House of Bread)

- The Messiah was to be of the lineage of David.
- David's ancestral home was Bethlehem.
- Bethlehem would offer a stark contrast to Jerusalem or other major cities relative to atmosphere.
- Bethlehem was in a unique position relative to its relationship with Jerusalem.

David had been promised by God that his offspring would rule Israel eternally.

Nathan the prophet instructed David that, *“Thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever”* (2 Samuel 7:16 KJV).

David’s family line would be established forever. While David would surely die, One would come that would live forever and maintain the kingship over God’s chosen people. The Messiah, therefore, had to be able to trace (through the father) an unbroken line going back to David.

How does Micah 5:2 above relate to David and the Messiah? We see that David’s ancestral home was Bethlehem, *“Now David was the son of that Ephrathite of Bethlehem judah, whose name was Jesse”* (1 Samuel 17:12 KJV).

The Messiah would be born in David’s hometown.

Bethlehem provided:

- a place of humble origins
- separation from wagging tongues and town talk
- a situation where His parents had to fully depend upon God
- a place where sheep for the temple were raised (signs of things to come)

Scripture	God's intent	Man's interpretation
2 Samuel 7:16	eventual restoration of a godly King and righteous government	immediate overthrow of any government but that of Israel
Psalm 22:27	restoration of the status of Israel	Israel restored and exceeding its former glory under Solomon
Zechariah 9:9	vanquishing of the ungodly	the Messiah would be a conquering hero who would lead Israel to military victories
Psalm 72:17	providing spiritual nourishment	an immediate time of plenty (food, wealth) would be ushered in
Isaiah 35:4	the Messiah would physically heal, but ultimately to heal all mankind spiritually	the Messiah would heal the sick
Psalm 78:2	He would speak for God and provide a new revelation to man	the Messiah would have to fit their interpretation of the Torah
Isaiah 53:3	God's Son would be evident to all who truly loved God. The Messiah would be evident by His spiritual character and His fulfillment of the prophecies.	God's Son would be clearly evident to all people because of His physical presence, His power, and His majesty as a King.
Isaiah 59:20	Jerusalem would be the place of the Messiah's death and Man's redemption	the Messiah would return to Jerusalem to redeem the nation from occupation

The Messiah's Parents

Reference	Attribute	Man considered them	God considered them
Isaiah 11:1 Luke 2:7	social status	of low status	worthy to raise his Son
Isaiah 7:14 Matthew 1:18	virgin pregnancy	impossible	foretold from old
Psalm 132:17 Luke 3:23-38	family heritage	ordinary	unique and fully traceable to Adam, Abraham, Levi, David
Isaiah 7:14 Matthew 2:24-25	righteousness	of little account	fully obedient to His will in spite of hardships

Mary

Probably the most notable feature of this story is the righteousness of both Mary and Joseph.

Numerous prophecies had indicated the “virgin” aspect of the Messiah. This word exists in two forms in the Old Testament (b’tulah and almah) and is used interchangeably a total of **twenty-six times**, the former first being found in Genesis 24:16 and the latter in Genesis 24:43. B’tulah is the predominant form (**twenty four times**) with the latter only being used upon two occasions (Genesis 24:43 and Isaiah 7:14). Some contest that the translation of the latter form of this word, used in the messianic Isaiah 7:14 verse, only indicates “a young girl, maid, or even bride,” and therefore denies that Mary might not have had to be sexually pure at the moment of the Messiah’s conception. This would be an incorrect assumption. Rebekah, the eventual bride of Isaac, is described as being a “virgin” in both **Genesis 24:16 and Genesis 24:43**, using one of the alternative forms of the words each time. Considering that Genesis 24:16 is explicit in the matter of the sexual purity of Rebekah, where it states, “*The girl was very beautiful, a virgin; no man had ever lain with her*” (Genesis 24:16 NIV), **we should be assured that Mary also was virginal based upon Scripture.**

This is important because

- Mary's virginity negates any considerations that Joseph was the Messiah's paternal father and therefore only human.
- Mary's and Joseph's purity reflects God's righteousness and that the Messiah would be raised in a home where God's righteousness would be honored.
- It would show that the Messiah would come to man supernaturally through an act that only could have been performed by God.
- God's prophecies had said so. Failure of this to be accurate would cast doubt upon all of the other hundreds of messianic prophecies.

How could the Messiah be both fully God and yet fully human?

Let me just cut to the point; this is above our comprehension. Isaiah stated, *“Who has understood the mind of the LORD, or instructed him as his counselor?” (Isaiah 40:13 NIV).*

This duality was important because by being:

- God could He live a sinless life in full obedience to God's law (both the letter and spirit of it).
- God would He have the spiritual fortitude to stay true to the Father's vision.
- God would He be able to deny Himself and yield His spirit fully to the Father's.
- human did He show that man, if he was fully indwelled by God, could live a sinless life.
- human would He be able to be the perfect sacrifice, accepting the physical punishment of death, deserved for all mankind.
- both would He be able to relate fully to both God and man at the time of judgment. He would be in a unique position to cover man's sin.

Application

Why, Bethlehem, why Joseph and Mary, why when it did? Was this the only way?

Could you imagine every sacrificing your loved self for someone else?

Why are so many unprepared to accept what the Bible so clearly foretold? How can we help them?

One Second- Week 8

The Week of the Cross

Key verse: *He grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed (Isaiah 53:2-5 NIV).*

Key thought: Christ's death on the cross represents God's ultimate vision for reconciling sinful man.

Purpose: The redemption of man would take place through something that happened on a routine basis in Jerusalem, something of which many would only marginally take notice. Yes, the nails and wood chosen for this event in history were common items. They were common, but their mark on history has forever changed how man relates to God and how man relates to others.

Key question: How could Jesus' followers, His people, His temple, and others turn their back on one who had done nothing wrong?

Both the Old and New Testaments contain an incredible number of names for the Messiah. These range from Scepter, King of Kings, Lord Jesus Christ, Rose of Sharon, Risen Prophet, and Savior, to name but a few. In fact, He was described by well over two hundred fifty names or titles in the Bible. The following table below provides just a snapshot of these names/titles.

Example reference	Name/title/depiction of the Messiah	Primary focus of this New Testament book
Matthew 12:8	Lord of the Sabbath	Jesus is the Messiah
Mark 1:1	the Christ	God's Servant
Luke 2:25	Consolation of Israel	the sinless man
John 9:5	Light of the World	God's only Son
Acts 11:17	Lord Jesus Christ	power of the Holy Spirit
Romans 3:25	Our Propitiation	Jesus is Savior to the Jew and Gentile
1 Corinthians 15:45	the Last Adam	Jesus overcomes Adam's failures
2 Corinthians 11:7	Image of God	Christ's influence on the church
Galatians 3:13	Redeemer	Christ's actions freed man from death
Ephesians 5:23	Head of the Church	Jesus reigns over His church
Philippians 3:20	Savior	expectations for Christ's disciples
Colossians 1:27	Hope of Glory	the power of Christ
1 Thessalonians 1:1	Christ Jesus	the coming rapture
2 Thessalonians 1:1	Lord	Christ's second return

Example reference	Name/title/depiction of the Messiah	Primary focus of this New Testament book
1 Timothy 2:6	Ransom	order in the church
2 Timothy 4:8	the Righteous Judge	the authority of God
Titus 1:1	Justifier	discipleship results in good works
Philemon 1:3	Lord Jesus	call to service
Hebrews 2:17	Eternal Priest	Christ is the fulfillment to the Jews
James 2:1	Lord of Glory	daily living through Christ
1 Peter 2:4	Living Stone	Christian discipline
2 Peter 1:19	Day Star	the need to know God truly
1 John 2:1	Advocate	fellowship with God
2 John 1:3	the Son	discerning false teaching
3 John 1:3	Truth	warning against division in the church
Jude 1:25	Wise God	do not be led astray
Revelation 5:12	Lamb of God	the King is coming

We'll focus upon these main attributes of Christ's time on earth:

- His three years of ministry,
- the Passover week in Jerusalem,
- His fulfillment of prophetic Scripture,
- the role of His disciples concerning His death,
- the role of the people concerning His death,
- the role of the temple officials concerning His death,
- the role of the Romans concerning His death,
- His crucifixion and death,
- His miraculous resurrection, and
- the winners and losers in this event.

Most scholars believe that the Messiah was approximately thirty-three years old when He died.

- “Now Jesus himself was about thirty years old when he began his ministry” (Luke 3:23 NIV), and we know that it ran approximately three and a half years in total.
- We read, “*In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar—when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, Herod tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and Traconitis*” (Luke 3:1 NIV). History records that Pontius Pilate reigned from 26-36 AD, further fixing the general time frame of the Messiah’s death.
- What is more certain, however, is that His earthly ministry ended on a Friday afternoon around 3:00 PM. “*It was about twelve o'clock when the sun stopped shining and darkness covered the whole country until three o'clock; and the curtain hanging in the Temple was torn in two; Jesus cried out in a loud voice, ‘Father! In your hands I place my spirit!’ He said this and died*” (Luke 23:44; 23- 46 GNB).
- Considering that His death occurred during the observation of the Passover (the month of Nissan, our April), there are suggestions that any number of dates from April 7 through April 30 might be correct. This is because the Passover observance was tied to the cycle of the new moon, and attempts to match up such events have been somewhat problematic due to calendar changes and other factors.

He was anointed for service

Matthew records this account of the event, “Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. But John tried to deter him, saying, ‘I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?’ Jesus replied, ‘Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness.’ Then John consented. As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment Heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, ‘This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased’” (Matthew 3:13-17 NIV).

He would be tested directly by Satan:

The Bible records that Jesus rebuked all of Satan's challenges, as it was written, *"Jesus said to him, 'away from me, Satan! For it is written: Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only'" (Matthew 4:10 NIV).*

- The Bible records that, following His time of testing in the desert, He departed to the area of Capernaum. It reads, "Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him. When Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, he returned to Galilee. Leaving Nazareth, he went and lived in Capernaum, which was by the lake in the area of Zebulun and Naphtali—to fulfill what was said through the prophet Isaiah: Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali, the way to the sea, along the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles—the people living in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned" (Matthew 4:11-16 NIV).
- Yes, the Messiah would fulfill many of the prophecies concerning His life during His time on earth (the remainder upon His next coming). It was during the Messiah's time in and around Capernaum that God chose to do a marvelous act—select disciples.

“Jesus went up on a mountainside and called to him those he wanted, and they came to him. He appointed twelve—designating them apostles—that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach and to have authority to drive out demons. These are the twelve he appointed: Simon (to whom he gave the name Peter); James son of Zebedee and his brother John (to them he gave the name Boanerges, which means Sons of Thunder); Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him” (Mark 3:13-19 NIV).

From the last slide, we see that there were three reasons the disciples were chosen by the Messiah.

These were:

- simply to “be with” Him,
- eventually to “be sent” out to preach, and
- to “be able” to receive power under His authority.

Each of these is an action term. Man’s interaction with the Messiah was for a purpose.

During His three years of ministry, the Messiah gave man a glimpse of His power. We might typically call these signs, wonders, and miracles. The tables to follow provide a complete summary of all such events found in the first four books of the New Testament in their order of appearance by the Synoptic Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. We might summarize these supernatural events by their categories:

- power over disease
- power over disability
- power over the laws of man
- power over evil
- power over physical laws
- power over nature (creation)
- power to provide our needs
- power to know the future
- power revealed to the Jews
- power revealed to the Gentiles
- power to be shared with us
- power over sin
- power over the grave and death
- power to be fully revealed to all one day

Reference	Event	Reveals His power
Matthew 4:24-25	healing of many in Galilee on the Sabbath	over the law of man
Matthew 8:1-4	healing of the leper	over disease
Matthew 8: 8-13	healing of the centurion's daughter	to the Gentiles
Matthew 8:14-15	healing of Peter's mother	over the law of man
Matthew 8:16-17	healing of many in Capernaum	over sickness
Matthew 8:23-26	calming the storm	over nature (creation)
Matthew 8:28-34	sending demons into a herd of pigs	over demonic forces
Matthew 9:1-6	healing the paralyzed man	over physical conditions
Matthew 9:19-22	healing the bleeding woman	over sickness
Matthew 9:23-26	healing the sleeping maiden	over death
Matthew 9:27-31	healing of blind men	over physical health
Matthew 9:32-33	healing the dumb of hearing	over physical health
Matthew 9:35-36	healing of the many	over all disease
Matthew 12: 13-14	healing of the withered hand	over the law of man
Matthew 14:14	healing the sick near Bethsaida	over disease
Matthew 14:16-21	great feeding during the Beatitudes	to provide
Matthew 14:25	Jesus walks on the water	over the physical laws
Matthew 14:34-36	healing of many in Gennesaret	to the Jews

Reference	Event	Reveals His power
Matthew 14:29	enabling Peter to walk on water	over the physical laws
Matthew 15:28	healing of the Canaanite daughter	to those others than the Jews
Matthew 15:30-31	healing of many in Galilee	to God's chosen
Matthew 15:34-38	feeding of the four thousand in Galilee	to provide
Matthew 16:13-20	predicts His death	to know the future
Matthew 17:1-3	glory revealed with Moses and Elijah	to know what awaits Him
Matthew 17:5-6	God vocally praises His Son	through the Father
Matthew 17:17-18	healing of the demon-possessed boy	over evil
Matthew 17:22-23	predicts the circumstances of His death	to know the future
Matthew 17:24-27	coin from a fish's mouth	to provide
Matthew 19:13-15	blessing of the little children	to all who accept Him
Matthew 20:17-19	predicts His death by the Romans	to know the future
Matthew 20:33-34	heals the blind men of Jericho	to God's chosen
Matthew 21:1-6	foretells the availability of a donkey	to know the future
Matthew 21:18-20	withering the barren fig tree	over creation
Matthew 26:17-19	foretells the availability of the upper room	to provide
Matthew 26:34	predicts Peter's denial	to know the future
Matthew 28:5-10	His resurrection from the dead	over death
Matt 28:16-20	appears to the disciples in Galilee	over the grave

Reference	Event	Reveals His power
Mark 1:10-11	anointed by the Holy Spirit	to those seeking God
Mark 1:23-24	healing of the possessed Galilean	over the laws of man
Mark 6:12	empowers the disciples to heal	to empower us
Mark 15:33-34	healing the deaf man of the Decapolis	over physical health
Mark 8:22-26	healing of blind man of Bethsaida	over physical health
Mark 10:40	foretells of the apostles' fates	to know the future
Mark 13:1-36	foretells the last days	to know the future
Mark 16: 9	appears to Mary Magdalene in the Garden	over the grave
Mark 16:12	appears to the two near Emmaus	over death
Mark 19:19	ascends to heaven	over physical laws
Luke 4:29	passes through the angry Galileans	to those who oppose Him
Luke 5:6-8	produces the great catch of fish	to provide
Luke 7:12-15	raises a dead son in Nain	over physical health
Luke 13:11-13	healing of paralyzed woman	over the laws of man

Reference	Event	Reveals His power
Luke 14:1-6	heals the man with dropsy	over the laws of man
Luke 17:11-15	heals ten lepers, including a Samaritan	to Jew and Gentile alike
Luke 22:51	heals the severed ear	to those who would kill him
Luke 24:35-43	appears to the disciples and eats a meal	over death
John 1:48	seeing Nathanael under the fig tree	to know everything
John 2:6-8	turning water into wine	to provide
John 1:19	foretells His three days in the grave	to know the future
John 4:17	discloses the Samaritan woman's life	to know everything
John 4:50	heals the nobleman's son	over disease
John 5:8-9	heals the man of the Bethsaida pool	over the laws of man
John 11:40-44	raises Lazarus from the dead	over death
John 15:23-26	foretells the coming of the Holy Spirit	to know the future
John 20:26-31	appears before the disciples after His resurrection	over death
John 21:7-12	the second catch of fish with the disciples	over death and to provide for us

His last week

Sunday	enters Jerusalem in the manner of a King; is hailed as the one who will restore the kingdom's former glory	Luke 19:29-40
Monday	rebukes temple vendors; rebukes meaningless worship; demands His house be a place of true worship and prayer	Mark 11:15-17
Tuesday	rebuked by temple officials; challenges temple officials to accept His fulfillment of the Scripture; desires both Jew and Gentile to follow His teaching; teaching from the Mount of Olives about the future	Luke 20:1-8; Luke 20:9-47; John 12:20-26; Luke 21:5-38
Wednesday	not specifically recorded in Scripture. He would be expected to be with His disciples, staying in or in close proximity to Jerusalem and observing the normal feast activities	None (although some believe some Scripture text is actually describing events that might have occurred on Wednesday)
Thursday	eating of the Last Supper; the Lord's discourse to His disciples; trial in Gethsemane; betrayed and then falsely arrested	Luke 22:14-20; John 14-16; Luke 22:39-46; Matthew 26:47-56
Friday	illegally tried by the Jewish officials; shown innocent by the Roman officials; crucified and dies	Matthew 26:57-75; Matthew 27:1-31; John 19:17-30
Saturday	sealed within the tomb	Luke 23:53-56
Sunday	rises from the dead; is revealed to His disciples	Mark 16:1-11; John 20:1-31

The Messiah's death did not randomly occur.

The Bible indicates that it was for this very purpose that Jesus was born, lived, and ultimately gave His life for you and me. Paul wrote, “*He [God] made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment—to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ. In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will*” (Ephesians 1:9-11 NIV).

In 1944, a mathematician named Peter Stoner sought to determine just what the probability was that an individual might be able to fulfill even eight of the three hundred thirty-three Messianic prophecies he chose to include in his analysis.

He did this not from a Christian viewpoint but from a purely scientific perspective. His results were published and found to be mathematically sound by the American Scientific Affiliation.

He determined that the odds of such an event was 1×10^{17} , and the odds of an individual fulfilling just forty-eight of these prophecies at 1×10^{157} !

God has given us over four thousand years of one repeated message: “the Messiah is My Son, and He is coming on My behalf.” That has to be the longest-running advertisement in all of history.

Prophecy	Scripture examples
What would the Messiah be like, and what would He do?	a Prophet (John 6:14); a King (John 19:19); righteous (John 5:30); humble (Matthew 11:29); Spirit-filled (Matthew 3:16-17); a Shepherd (John 10:11)
He would be the Savior of God's chosen and all mankind	an acceptable sin offering (Romans 5:8-9); a blood offering (1 John 3:14-18); redeem Israel (Luke 2:38); rejected by many (John 12:37-40); establish a new covenant (Matthew 26:28)
He would be crucified	grouped with criminals (Mark 15:27-28); offered vinegar (John 19:28-29); clothes would be divided as spoil (John 19:23-24); would be pierced (Matthew 27:38); people would mock His agony (Matthew 27:39)
He would be resurrected and victorious over sin and death	defeated death (Mark 16:6-7); defeat Satan (1 John 3:8); ascend to heaven (Luke 24:51); crowned as King (Acts 13:30-33); would be exalted (Ephesians 1:20-22); sit at the right hand of God (Mark 16:19)
He would be a true Hebrew and a descendant of David	line of Shem (Luke 3:23-26); line of Abraham (Matthew 1:1); line of Isaac (Luke 3:23-34); line of Jacob (Matthew 1:2); line of Judah (Luke 3:33); line of Boaz (Luke 3:23-32); line of Jesse (Romans 15:12); line of David (Matthew 1:1)
He would obey the Father's commands	would please God (Matthew 3:17); would glorify God (Matthew 15:30-31); would do God's will (John 12:27); would be God's servant (John 6:38); God would be satisfied (John 4:34)
He would be rejected by man	by the Jews (John 5:43); by His family (Mark 3:30-31); by the Gentiles (Acts 4:25-28)
He would be God	as Creator (John 1:3); as God incarnate (Matthew 1:23); as both God and man (John 10:30); as Lord (Matthew 22:41-45)

Prophecy	Scripture examples
He would be born of woman	natural birth (Luke 1:34-35); from a virgin (Matthew 1:18-20); in Bethlehem (Matthew 2:1-2); as God with us (Matthew 1:23)
He would have a ministry	preach the Good News (Matthew 26:28); beheld as King (Hebrews 8:1); enter Jerusalem on a donkey (Matthew 21:6-9)
He would serve all mankind	for all nations (John 18:11); for all people (John 3:16); for the Gentiles (John 8:12)
He would suffer greatly	with great sorrow (Luke 19:41-42); greatly afflicted (Matthew 27:27-31); persecuted (John 15:24-25); spit upon (Matthew 27:67); whipped (Matthew 27:26)
He would be the Son of God	God's Son (Luke 1:31-35); God would be His Father (John 12:28-30)
He would perform miracles	heal the blind and deaf (Matthew 9:27-31); heal the lame and dumb (Matthew 11:5)
He would be betrayed	by a friend (Mark 14:17-18); for pieces of silver (Matthew 26:14-15)
He would be despised	by many (Luke 23:21-23); by those in power (Matthew 26:3-4)
He had lived	forever (John 1:1-2); having no beginning or end (John 8:58)
He would have a herald	to prepare the way (Luke 1:16-17); from the wilderness (Matthew 3:1)
He would be judged	falsely (John 18:29-30); without uttering a rebuke (Mark 7:6)
He would be abandoned	by His disciples (Mark 14:50); by His associates (Luke 23:49)
Time of His coming	483 years after the temple was to be rebuilt (John 12:12-13)

One disciple recorded these words concerning the Sunday before the Passover, "The crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed shouted, "*Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!*" (Matthew 21:9 NIV).

Many would have entered Jerusalem from throughout the nation and would have shared about what they had seen Him do. His reputation would have surely preceded Him.

They had seen or heard that He:

- miraculously fed thousands,
- healed the sick,
- cast out demons and restored individuals back to their loved ones,
- shared with them the message of God's love, not God's burden on their daily lives,
- taught them the Scriptures like no one else ever had the ability to do, and
- raised the dead back to life.

They would come with great expectations about what He might be able to do for them, what He might be able to do about the Roman occupation, and what He might be able to do to restore the nation to glory. Yes, they would have high expectations, as evidenced by the cheering crowds as He entered Jerusalem early in the week.

The Bible records that the religious rulers and priests sought a means to rid themselves of this One whose fame was starting to grow.

The Bible records, “*Now the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread were only two days away, and the chief priests and the teachers of the law were looking for some sly way to arrest Jesus and kill him*” (Mark 14:1 NIV).

This they accomplished through Judas Iscariot’s betrayal of Jesus in the Garden following the Last Supper. Following his arrest, Jesus was brought before the religious rulers to face false charges. John recorded these words concerning their desire to rid themselves of Jesus, “*You do not realize that it is better for you that one man die for the people than that the whole nation perish*” (John 11:50 NIV).

The individuals who thought they served God were actually holding God in the flesh. The One they had longed to see was right in front of them, but their hearts were too blind to see.

Yes, it would be better if one man (Jesus) would be willing to perish than all of mankind. It was not these individuals who were putting Jesus to death that day; it was God the Father. By permitting this act of sacrifice to go forward, He was providing the means by which His chosen people, Israel, and all others could be redeemed.

The Pax Romana (Roman Peace) was instituted locally by the tag team of Herod the tetrarch and Pontius Pilate the governor.

Why did God choose just this moment to permit the sacrifice of His Son?

Think about these conditions that existed:

- a unified (nearly one-world) government (exceptions being far Asia),
- the world in a state of near-peace while under occupation,
- an improved postal and transportation network (roads and ships),
- government-encouraged/enforced religion (in this case Caesar worship),
- a hunger for truth (the Hellenistic period), and
- Roman citizenship brought great privileges.

Roman government provided	God's vision saw	Scripture references
Unified world government	the civility that Rome provided would be used to spread the news about the Messiah.	Matthew 22:21 Luke 2:1 Acts 17:7
State of world peace	that wars close countries. The Pax Romana allowed the apostles to move freely throughout the known world with relative freedom with regards to travel.	Acts 23:10 Acts 26:32 Acts 27:1
Transportation networks	the quick dissemination of the gospel throughout the Roman Empire.	Acts 16:9 Acts 23:11 Romans 1:15
Government-sponsored religion	that Rome- sponsored Caesar worship set the stage for its eventual replacement by Rome-sponsored Christ worship many centuries later.	Luke 23:2 John 19:15 Matthew 24:15
Hellenistic ideals	that man's search for "truth" could be used to His advantage in introducing the gospel to the Gentiles.	Acts 17:18 Acts 17:21 Acts 17:22
Citizenship privileges	the means for Paul to spread the gospel with fewer hindrances and actually to share it with the Roman authorities.	Acts 22:27 Acts 25:25 Philippians 4:22

As the Messiah passed through the hands of temple officials into the hands of the Roman authorities (Herod and Pontius Pilate), a number of such events occurred. In thinking about God's vision for the sacrifice of His Son, meditate on the following four Scripture texts:

- *Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them, Behold the man! (John 19:5 KJV).*
- *But they cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Caesar (John 19:15 KJV).*
- *When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it. Then answered all the people, and said, His blood be on us, and on our children (Matthew 27:24-25 KJV).*
- *And Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross. And the writing was, JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS. This title then read by many of the Jews: for the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city: and it was written in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin. Then said the chief priests of the Jews to Pilate, Write not, The King of the Jews; but that he said, I am King of the Jews. Pilate answered, What I have written I have written (John 19:19-22 KJV).*

Jesus would have been crucified starting at 9 AM, and Scripture reveals His death occurring at 3 PM on the same day.

His death would occur within Jewish tradition and the observance of the Sabbath. But He was not powerless as He was arrested, tried, and crucified. At any time during this event, Jesus could have removed Himself from this situation. John wrote, *“Then saith Pilate unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee? Jesus answered, Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above”* (John 19:10-11 KJV).

At the appointed time in God’s plan for man, the Messiah’s life on earth ended with these words, *“It is finished”* (John 19:30 KJV). He then died, and God’s plan for redeeming man had been completed.

Perry Stone, a Christian scholar, states that the High Priest upon sacrificing the last of the Passover sheep would raise his arms toward Heaven and say those same words. **Was Jesus indicating to all mankind that the last sacrificial sheep every needed for sinful man had also been sacrificed.**

What did Christ's sacrifice mean to God and His eternal plan? It meant that:

- No further direct intervention performed by God was needed to reconcile man with his Creator. Man's sin had been covered by this sacrifice once and for all (John 1:29; Acts 8:32).
- Christ's death as a sacrificial lamb was an acceptable one. He was found to be sinless (Hebrews 10:10; 1 Peter 1:19).
- Those who died now as well as those who died in the future who had accepted the Messiah would spend eternity in heaven (Revelation 7:17; Revelation 19:7).
- Satan's plan for spoiling God's relationship with man had failed with only the final drama to be carried out (Revelation 17:14; Revelation 20:2).
- Christ had been obedient to God the Father. In return, the Father would give His Son all of creation as its Head (Revelation 5:12; Revelation 7:10).

The question is often asked: how does Christ's blood take care of my sins and everyone else's? There is only one answer:

"Because God says it does." We can't understand why this satisfies God, but it does. We can struggle with this issue using logic, science, ethics, and a host of other reasoning systems in trying to understand the "how" question. We need to be confident that God developed this plan, devised a means to implement it (through the Messiah), and then saw it carried out. Our response is as it has been since day one in the Garden: have faith. We need to trust God. He knows what He is doing and what He has already done for us through the Messiah

Paul wrote to the Jewish Christians in Rome about this exact topic and recorded, *“In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness. It was necessary, then, for the copies of the heavenly things to be purified with these sacrifices, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ did not enter a man-made sanctuary that was only a copy of the true one; he entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God's presence. Nor did he enter heaven to offer himself again and again, the way the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood that is not his own. Then Christ would have had to suffer many times since the creation of the world. But now he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself. Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him”* (Hebrews 9:22-28 NIV).

Luke described it thusly, “*After his suffering, he showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God*” (Acts 1:3 NIV).

Why was this proof of the resurrection so important to the early church, so important to you and I?

Benefits of the resurrection to man	Value	Scripture
Validated the Messiah's own words	He gave proof to His disciples that everything He had taught them was true. They could fully trust in Him for their eternal souls.	Matthew 12:40; Matthew 27:63; Mark 9:1; Luke 18:33; John 2:19
Showed His power over death	While others had been raised from the dead (temporarily), Christ raised Himself, showing that He alone had power over both physical and spiritual death.	Mark 16:9; John 11:25; John 14:19; John 17:2; John 21:14; 1 Corinthians 15:6
Allowed the giving of information concerning the afterlife	He provided first-hand knowledge of what the afterlife would involve.	Matthew 10:32; Matthew 18:13-14; Matthew 22:30; Matthew 26:64; Luke 10:20; John 20:27
Provided instructions for the development of the church	He gave specific details about how the church would be empowered and the mission of Christ's church.	Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:16-18; Luke 24:45-49; John 20:21-23
Set the stage for His return	He fulfilled the Old Testament Scriptures. Israel's prophesied warrior-king would return, setting the stage for man's full communion once again with God.	Mark 16:19; Luke 24:51; Acts 1:10-11

Who lost and who gained because of the resurrection?

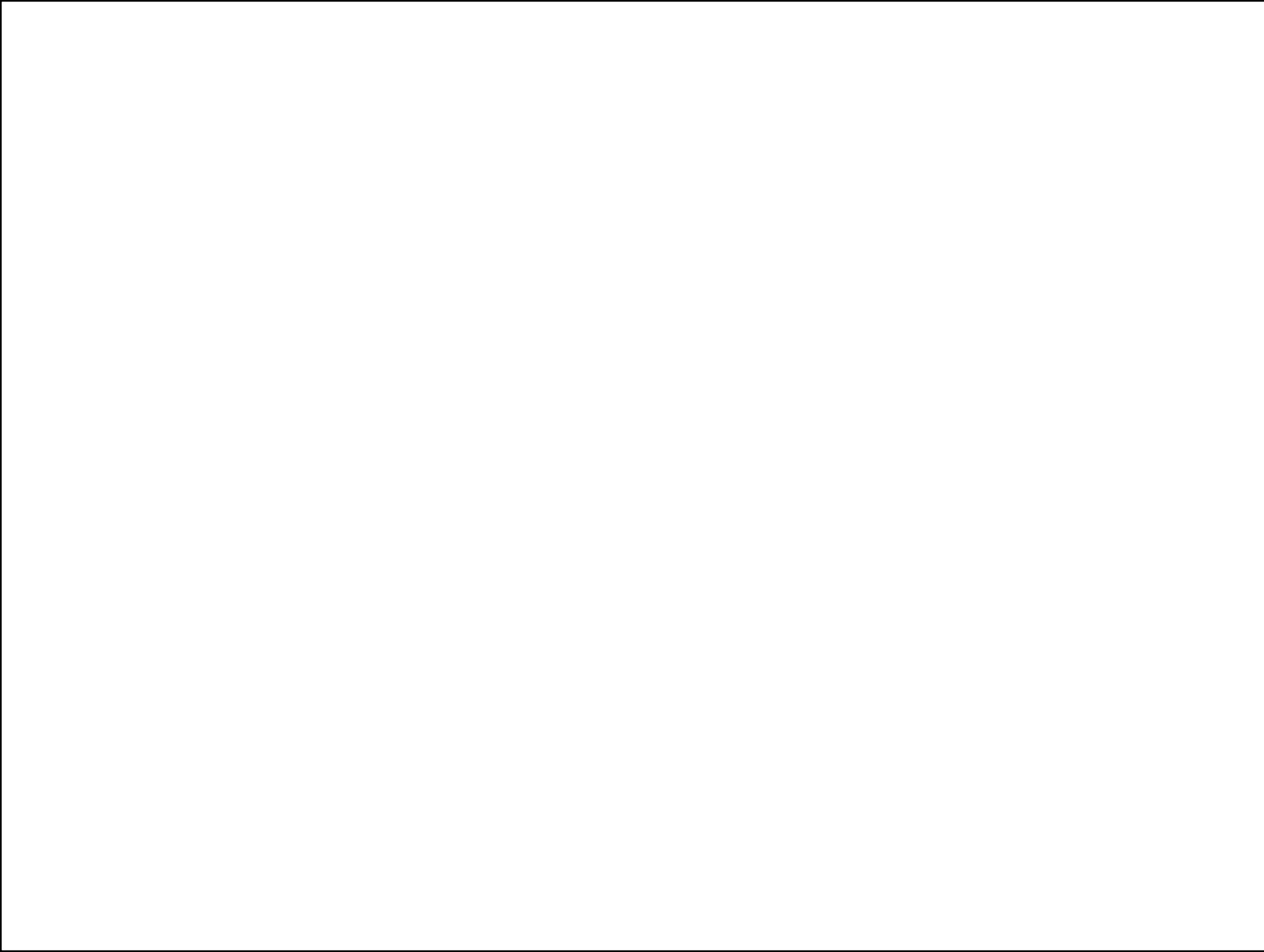
- Satan lost- his goal to disrupt or foil God's plan was denied
- Earthly kingdoms and institutions lost- their failure to honor God became evident to all who would accept Christ
- Mankind won- sin and death had been defeated
- God won- He was willing to sacrifice himself to show man the extent of His love. It was a victory because He proved His word was true

Application

Why do you think so many in Jerusalem refused to accept
what they
Had seen and heard about Jesus?

What power does position, authority, economy often play
over our
Spiritual lives?

If you had been in Jerusalem that week, do you think you
would have
been one of those crying at His death or mocking His
sacrifice?



One Second- Week 9

One Second after the Rapture

Key verse: *I tell you, in that night there shall be two men in one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left. Two women shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left (Luke 17:34-36 KJV).*

Key thought: The Messiah will return following a period of unprecedented trial and travail for man.

Purpose: To understand the events associated with the Rapture and why this event is necessary for God's plan for man's redemption

Key question: Why will so many still refuse to accept God's teaching when they will see and experience the horror associated with the last days?

Why has the Rapture not yet occurred?

Why would God allow so much time to pass before this next event?

Surely part of God's plan had to be for the Good News (gospel) to spread throughout the entire world. Since God's vision was that those who believed in His Son would find salvation, we might expect it to be a lengthy process.

God would not have had the Messiah crucified without taking advantage of the new covenant with man. The Bible puts it this way, *"But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance"* (2 Peter 3:8-9 NIV). The Messiah will return, but it will be on God's timeline, not that of man.

Events prior to the second coming of Christ	Scripture reference
the establishment of the church	Matthew 16:18; Acts 9:31; Acts 15:4; 1 Corinthians 12:28; Ephesians 3:21; Revelation 1:9-20
the strengths and weaknesses of the church	Revelation 1-3
unprecedented increase in the amount of ungodly behavior	Matthew 5:11; Matthew 15:19; Luke 6:22; Romans 1:29; Ephesians 4:19; Revelation 9:20-21; Revelation 17:1-13
the development of the false church	Revelation 13:5-8; Revelation 13:11-17
the rapture of the saints	Luke 17:34-36
the rise of a leader bringing temporary peace for Israel	Daniel 7:8-25; Daniel 11:36; 2 Thessalonians 2:9-12; Revelation 11:2; Revelation 13:1; Revelation 13: 11-15
the turning of this leader against Israel and Christians	Isaiah 14:20-20; Luke 10:18; Revelation 12:10-14
the appearance of a false prophet in support of this leader	2 Thessalonians 2:7-14; Revelation 13:1-2; Revelation 13:11-18
the development of a new group of Christians following the rapture	Revelation 7:1-3; Revelation 7:4-8; Revelation 7:9-10; Revelation 14:1-5

Events prior to the second coming of Christ	Scripture reference
the appearance of two biblical characters of renown warning of God's impending judgment	Zechariah 4; Revelation 11:1-12
the occurrence of worldwide disasters of unprecedented scale and cosmic signs	Jeremiah 10:10; Daniel 12:1-7; Joel 1:2; Joel 2:28-32; Zechariah 1:7-11; Zechariah 14:1-6; Zephaniah 1:14-18; Malachi 4:5; Matthew 24:29-31; Luke 21:25-28; Acts 2:14-21; Revelation 6:9-11; Revelation 8:8-11; Revelation 10:6-7; Revelation 16:1-11
the occurrence of painful sores on the ungodly	Revelation 16:1-2; Revelation 16:11
the appearance of ferocious demonic beasts	2 Peter 2:4; Revelation 9:1-11
the unification of government and a world religion	Revelation 14:8; Revelation 17; Revelation 18
the waging of world war against Israel	2 Kings 9:27; Jeremiah 50:38; Zechariah 12:11; Revelation 16:12-16; Revelation 19:1-21

Rapture is a term never found in the Bible but one Christians use to indicate the event in which believers living on the earth will be miraculously taken to heaven either before or at some point within the series of great tribulations discussed in Revelation.

Why give it this name?

Although I have never been able to find the seminal use of this term, it would appear that it came into being because the common meaning of “rapture” is for one to have indescribable joy.

Key terminology

- Historical critical or preterists. They believe that it was written just for first century Christians and that the primary events have already taken place.
- Historists. They believe the events described represent a long chain of events from John's day to the end of history.
- Futurists*. These believe that John was discussing end time events only.
- Poetic symbolic or idealists. They believe John was writing about the symbolic struggle between good and evil and that the details of the book should not be heavily interpreted.

* My personal belief

John's perspective

John is clearly describing current or recent events in John and the 1-3 John books. He opens his final book with these words, *“The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants what must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John, who testifies to everything he saw—that is, the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ”* (Revelation 1:1-2 NIV).

John clearly indicates that it was God who revealed to him the resulting message (Revelation) and that it was his job to record it accurately. The word “soon” in the verse above may be interpreted as just that (a short period of time), or it can also mean an event scheduled to happen between other particular events.

Revelation perspective	Preterist	Historist	Futurist	Symbolist
John's other writings were fact based (not poetic)	X	X	X	
Some biblical prophecies have yet to be fulfilled		X	X	X
Agreement with Daniel's endtime prophecies		X	X	
Agreement with the endtime prophecies of Jeremiah, Joel, Zechariah, Zephaniah, and Malachi from the Old Testament		X	X	
Agreement with Jesus' prophecies concerning the endtimes			X	

Tribulation Points of View

*Dispensational premillennialism- modern Christians are experiencing a partial experience of God's kingdom which will be fully observed after the end of the tribulation and the beginning of the millennium. Many believe that the rapture will signal the start of the one thousand two hundred sixty days of the tribulation.

Postmillennialism-Christianity will advance to a certain advanced point, and then, after a thousand years of this earthly kingdom, Christ will return.

Amillennialism-there will not be any special period of history dealing with the thousand years (Revelation is not a chronology or may represent the present reign of believers already in heaven).

Historical premillennialism-Christ will reign a thousand years following His second coming. Saints are resurrected at the beginning of the thousand years, nonbelievers at the end.

*This view represents the earliest church interpretation and the one to which most evangelicals hold fast (including me).

So how does it all tie together?

- Why have a rapture?
- When will it occur?
- What impact will it have on those taken?
- What impact will it have on the individuals not taken?
- How will nations respond to this event?

The Rapture-its purpose

The rapture is a somewhat controversial topic, even among evangelical Christians. Some believe that Christians will be present and either be raptured at the middle of the tribulation period or at its conclusion.

Some discount that there will even be such an event.

None of those viewpoints seem logical to me, and they serve no purpose toward what I see as a means to benefit man. That's right; the rapture is for man's benefit, as I will try to explain.

The events (tribulations) occurring after the rapture are just not intended for believers. Paul wrote, “*For God did not appoint us [Christians] to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ*” (1 Thessalonians 5:9 NIV).

And....

“Then I heard a loud voice from the temple saying to the seven angels, ‘Go, pour out the seven bowls of God’s wrath on the earth.’ The first angel went and poured out his bowl on the land, and ugly and painful sores broke out on the people who had the mark of the beast and worshiped his image. The second angel poured out his bowl on the sea, and it turned into blood like that of a dead man, and every living thing in the sea died. The third angel poured out his bowl on the rivers and springs of water, and they became blood. Then I heard the angel in charge of the waters say: ‘You are just in these judgments, you who are and who were, the Holy One, because you have so judged; for they [non-Christians] have shed the blood of your saints and prophets, and you have given them blood to drink as they deserve” (Revelation 16:1-6 NIV, emphasis mine).

Who will suffer during the Tribulation?

As you can see from the underlined words earlier, God has no plan for placing His wrath upon believers; it is reserved for those who have rebelled against Him and are deserving of such punishment. Therefore, it is a very logical consideration that the rapture will occur before the tribulations begin.

Think about it.....

Even though we live in a world of sin, have you ever considered what life on earth would be like if there was no Christian influence?

When all of Christianity are Raptured, the earth will be left with non-believers and new believers. The new believers will have little influence over a depraved and Satan-guided world.

Paul wrote of man's state in his own day, "*Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, with a continual lust for more*" (*Ephesians 4:19 NIV*).

God will be mocked, and man will literally shake his fist as society faces increasingly harsher tribulations. John describes such events, "*And cursed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, but they refused to repent of what they had done*" (*Revelation 16:11 NIV*).

Event	Impact	Scripture reference
Point out those who were Christians	God's elect will not endure the tribulations.	Matthew 24:40-41; Luke 17:34-36; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; 2 Thessalonians 5:9
Point out those who thought they were Christians or proper Jews	Those who thought they were Christians/Jews will reexamine their lives and truly accept Jesus as Messiah.	Matthew 25:31-46; 1 John 2:11; Revelation 7:4-8
Remove Christian thought (influence) from homes	Godly lifestyles, restraint, and the fear of God will rapidly decline.	Ephesians 4:19; 1 Thessalonians 4:5; 2 Thessalonians 2:3-7; 1 John 2:16; 2 Peter 2:10
Remove Christian influence from nations	World leaders will look not to God but to themselves for answers.	Revelation 11:9; Revelation 11:9; Revelation 13:4-7, 14:8
Remove support for Israel	Israel will lose support, and the resulting world war will aim at its destruction.	2 Kings 9:27; Jeremiah 50:38; Zechariah 12:11; Revelation 20:9; Revelation 19:17-19
Signal Christ's imminent return	The Messiah will soon return in full power and glory.	Isaiah 13:6; Lamentations 2:22; Ezekiel 30:3; Joel 1:15; Zephaniah 1:8; Acts 2:20; 2 Peter 3:10

Those who will be taken up to heaven during the rapture will immediately be in the presence of the Messiah and will never have to experience physical death.

Think about what one will be leaving behind. Physical pain, physical death, stress, fear, loneliness, hatred, and greed are all part of our current life on earth. Paul might have summarized the plight of the Christian having to live in the current world when he described man's natural state: "*Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful*" (*Romans 1:29-31 KJV*). Those called at the Rapture will no longer have to endure such evil.

Revelation provides insight that many will come to know God during the tribulation.

Again, that is one of its purposes (the other being to punish physically those who are rejecting God in spite of the obvious signs). Going back to earlier in this book, I want to remind you that God's redemptive plan has always focused upon His chosen, the Jews.

Revelation 7:4-8 is often described by many as an indication that many Jews will accept God and Jesus as the Messiah because of the tribulation. While the numbers of those being listed in these accounts are up to debate (some believing them to be symbolic rather than an actual count), what is clear is that God fully intends to reconcile His chosen people.

The salvation of the Jews is further validated by Scripture immediately following that cited above, where John writes, “After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands” (Revelation 7:9 KJV, emphasis mine).

In doing so, John clearly is delineating the Jewish martyrs (or believers) from those of the Gentiles. Considering that orthodox Jews do not consider the rapture to be a prophesied event, its occurrence as prophesied in the New Testament will provide further validation that Jesus was the Messiah and of their immediate need to place their faith in Him.

A majority of American's consider themselves as "Christian"

In America, a recent poll indicated that professing Christians made up over eighty percent of its voting citizens.

If 80% of the workforce was removed, basic human services would quickly be impacted. Hospitals and schools would be severely short-staffed, police departments overwhelmed, armies decimated, and government agencies unable to provide services or leadership.

Adults might be raptured only to have teenage children of understanding left behind to take care of themselves. Surely you might remember the loss of services that might have occurred during an ice storm, tornado, hurricane, or other such natural event where life was interrupted? That is one reason why John paints such a horrible picture of what life will be like during those days after the rapture. Man will blame God for such conditions, and one can see how non-believers will be persuaded by the Antichrist to follow his leadership, "For God hath put in their hearts to fulfill his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled" (Revelation 17:17 KJV).

The impact of the Rapture on the world...

How could the western world ever allow those opposed to God to threaten Israel in the last days?

John wrote, *“And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon”* (Revelation 16:12, 14, 16 KJV).

Israel and God's Chosen People will be threatened because...

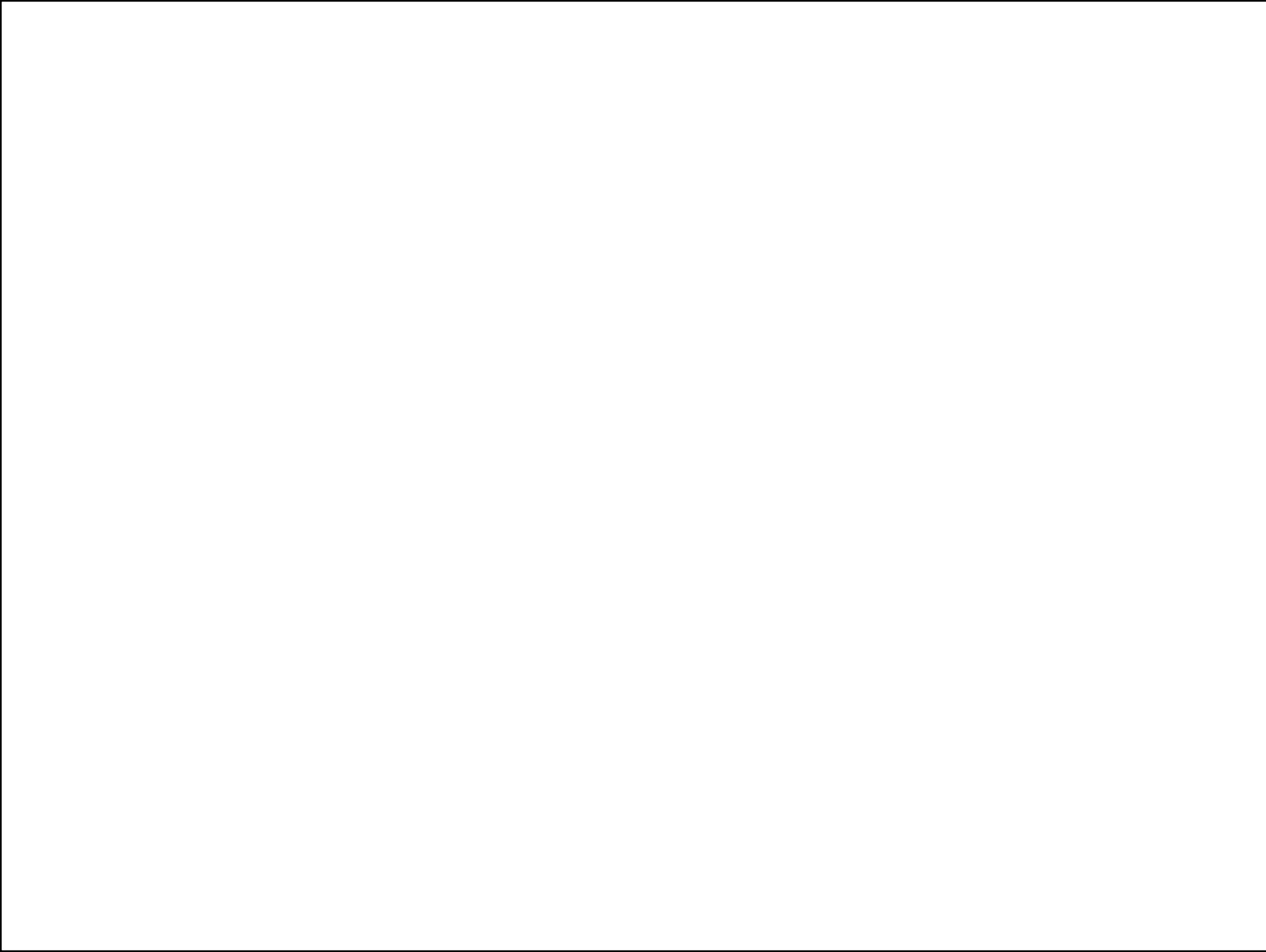
- The world will be guided by Satan
- God will have taken his hand of protection away from those on the earth
- There will be no Christian-based governments left behind to temper the acts of those who oppose God. America will be a radically different society if the Rapture occurs in the near future

Application

Considering the horror of the coming Tribulation, do you have relatives that need to be saved? Now is a great time to discuss this with them.

What is the best legacy that you can leave your children concerning God's influence in your life? Why is this so important as seen from our discussion of the Rapture and Tribulation.

Since Rapture is that state of pure, indescribable joy, stop for a moment and think about what a life in the full presence of Jesus will mean to you.



One Second- Week 10

The Day Christ Returns

Key verse: *And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death— even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Philippians 2:8-11 NIV).*

Key thought: The day Christ returns will be a glad day to some, but to many on the earth, it will be a day of great horror.

Christ's return follows chaos...

The world will be in physical and spiritual chaos because of the great tribulations, and the nation of Israel is being surrounded by the armies of the world.

Just when all hope for God-fearing man might be lost, John wrote, “*I saw Heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and makes war. His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself. He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God. The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean. Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. ‘He will rule them with an iron scepter.’ He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS*” (Revelation 19:11-15 NIV).

Consider a listing of a few of some of the great biblical characters: Adam and Eve, Noah, Abraham, Balaam, Isaac, Jezebel, Jacob, Pharaoh, Job, David, Boaz, Cyrus the Great, Jeremiah, Malachi, Joseph, Simeon, Nicodemus, John the Baptist, Herod, Judas Iscariot, Pontius Pilate, and Saul.

Each of these played a role in setting the stage for the Messiah's second coming (His birth being the first). Some set the stage by being godly men who served Jehovah, while others ignored Him, disobeyed Him, or openly worked against Him. God does not desire any to be evil, but He is fully aware of man's willingness to be obedient. As such, He used it to His advantage during his plan for man.

Think about what I just said concerning good and evil.....

- Would you agree with that earlier statement?
- If so, why?
- Describe examples of where both good and evil individuals served God in getting us to this point in man's history

God will send His Son into the world when:

- the rapture will have occurred, totally changing the Christian balance of the earth's population.
- the anti-Christ, false prophet (false Holy Spirit), and Satan will be evident to all who know God.
- evil has nearly overcome all godly influence.
- the world will single out and attack both Jews and Christians.
- the world will be in chaos (physical, spiritual, and emotional).
- all of the prophecies concerning this second coming have been fulfilled.
- the nation of Israel (by the look of things) is facing imminent annihilation.

Finally, after endless centuries, the King is coming to claim that which only He was powerful enough to deny Himself: glory, honor, and praise.

John wrote, “*And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean*” (Revelation 19:11-14).

First arrival	Scripture	Second coming	Scripture
quietly in the night	Luke 2:5-16	in full glory	Revelation 19:11-16
recognized by few	Matthew 1:23-25; John 1:29	known by all	Revelation 5:13
loved by a few	Isaiah 53:3; Psalms 118:22	loved by many	Ephesians 1:20-22; Revelation 15:3
fully human	Mark 11:12; Luke 2:52; John 19:28	fully divine	Mark 16:6; Luke 3:17; Luke 24:51
helpless babe	Genesis 3:15; Isaiah 7:14	warrior-king	Isaiah 9:6; Hebrews 7:2; Revelation 17:14
Satan has earthly dominion	Job 1:7; Luke 10:18; 1 Peter 5:8	Satan is bound	Genesis 3:15; 1 John 3:8; Revelation 20:2

First arrival	Scripture	Second coming	Scripture
Israel in chaos	2 Kings 24:1; 2 Chronicles 36:19; Jeremiah 52:7	Israel is lifted up	Zephaniah 2:9; Malachi 1:5; Revelation 21:2
worship is often false	Amos 7:17; Micah 1:5; Malachi 2:11	true worship	John 4:23; Revelation 4:8; Revelation 5:12-13
government is broken	Daniel 1:1; Daniel 11:36; Matthew 27:24	government is perfect	Isaiah 9:6; 1 Chronicles 17:11-12; Matthew 28:18
man searches for fulfillment	Psalm 81:12; 2 Peter 2:10; 1 Timothy 6:10	man is fulfilled	1 Corinthians 15:28; 2 John 1:3; Jude 1:24
creation is cursed	Genesis 4:11-12; Matthew 21:19; Revelation 16:4	creation recovers	Isaiah 65:21; Isaiah 65:25; Revelation 21:1-5

I wish to discuss the impact of the Messiah's arrival on:

- believers,
- unbelievers,
- Satan and his followers,
- the earthly governments,
- the nation of Israel and the Jews,
- the earth and creation, and
- what follows after the millennium.

Paul wrote, “*We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord*” (2 Corinthians 5:8 KJV).

We will have two sets of believers, pre-tribulation and post-tribulation saints that will eventually enter the full measure of Heaven

Is there a distinction in the years to come?

During the Millennial Kingdom, Satan's influence will be restricted....

“And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season” (Revelation 20:2-3 KJV).

God could have literally wiped the slate clean, recreate or renew the earth, or carry man to Heaven, but He doesn't. All of that happens later. We see that He doesn't destroy Satan now but just removes his ability to influence man (believers on the earth). We also see that believers will continue to live on a partially renewed earth. Why wouldn't God just take everyone to Heaven and be done with the cursed earth?

I believe there are a number of reasons why God continues man's presence on the current earth during this time:

- Following the tribulation, the current earth will be partially destroyed and much of its population killed. There will be a need to rebuild society.
- It would be expected that children born during the tribulation but not yet at an age of accountability will need Christian guides (stepparents).
- They will assume positions in government and leadership as the nations pay honor to the Messiah.
- They will reflect that, even in the absence of Satan, mankind will not fully accept the Messiah. This is not a reflection about some defect with God but rather man's constant struggle to recognize the authority of someone over him.
- They will prepare for eternity while waiting for new bodies, new minds, and new responsibilities. The millennium will provide man the experience he needs to live a life fully devoted to God.

The need to rebuild and repopulate....

The tribulations will effectively kill a majority of all those on the earth, as evidenced by such events as those John describes, *“A third of mankind was killed by the three plagues of fire, smoke and sulfur that came out of their mouths” (Revelation 9:18 NIV)*.

Therefore, when you eliminate everyone who was raptured, everyone who died during the tribulation, and then those that John describes as killed when the Warrior King returns, *“The rest of them were killed with the sword that came out of the mouth of the rider on the horse, and all the birds gorged themselves on their flesh” (Revelation 19:21 NIV)*, we get the impression that the earth’s population will not be that dissimilar to the early Genesis record.

Believers will have the opportunity to rebuild an earthly life with Christ as their leader.

Scripture tells us that:

- Man will rebuild (Isaiah 65:21).
- Man will eat and drink (Isaiah 65:21).
- Nations will exist (Revelation 20:8).
- Man will have occupations (Isaiah 60:5).
- Man will raise families and have children by natural birth (Isaiah 65:23).
- Man will have renewed bodies but not fully glorified bodies (Isaiah 65:20).
- Man will no longer have enmity with the animal world and will probably return to a diet of fish and vegetables (Isaiah 65:25; Ezekiel 47: 9-10).

Believers passing through the tribulations will have the ability to procreate (bear children), and it would appear in a very similar manner to that we know of today.

The major difference will be extremely good health (Isaiah 65:20, 23), and one would expect long life to nearly the full length of the millennium.

There is one obvious reason for stating this fact; there have to be childbearing couples on the earth to raise those who will eventually reject the Messiah once again. Revelation tells us that “*when the thousand years are over, Satan will be released from his prison and will go out to deceive the nations in the four corners of the earth—Gog and Magog—to gather them for battle. In number they are like the sand on the seashore*” (Revelation 20:7-8 NIV).

The ability of post-tribulation man (nonraptured) to live for a very long life will provide the means to repopulate the earth in a number of centuries.

One of the most tragic aspects of the millennium period is that, even with Christ having come in full glory and in an instant destroying all those who oppose Him, there will be some who will choose not to accept Him during this period.

They will recognize Him but not accept Him.

Think of it like this. You may recognize that your boss has been placed in charge of you, but you do not believe he should be. You reject his authority.

That is how it will be with some of the children born during the tribulation. Sounds very familiar to the original rebellion in Heaven, doesn't it? Even when man can see God and experience the blessings He will provide, there will be those who will choose to reject the sovereignty of God! We must note that, even in the absence of Satan, man has the innate ability (desire) to sin. That is one of the reasons that Satan will be bound during the millennium, so that man will see for himself that he naturally wants to sin.

What is God's perspective relative to the unbelievers present at the second coming?

The Bible indicates that their lives on earth quickly come to an end. John tells us, "*The rest of them were killed with the sword that came out of the mouth of the rider on the horse, and all the birds gorged themselves on their flesh*" (Revelation 19:21 NIV).

He also wrote, "*The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended. This is the first resurrection*" (Revelation 20:5 NIV).

Most evangelicals, including me, do not believe in a “sleep” period for unbelievers following the arrival of the Messiah but rather the start of their eternal punishment. A large number of Scriptures (examples include Deuteronomy 33:22, Isaiah 38:18, Matthew 5:21, and Luke 16:19-31) clearly paint the picture of Hell as a place reserved for those who do not love God and who oppose Him.

The unbeliever in Hell will:

- be physically present in a place of torment,
- mentally know of his existence and his present suffering,
- have no hope of ever receiving relief,
- recognize that he personally chose not to accept God's sovereignty, and
- individually suffer for his earthly actions.

Why doesn't Satan try to do something different, since his demise has already been recorded in History?

Revelation clearly indicates that he will be rebuked and punished for his rebellion. Here are a few good reasons why he cannot change history:

- he is not all knowing like God,
- he is not all powerful like God, and
- he is not omnipresent like God.

We sometimes fail to realize that Satan is not, nor has he ever been, an equal to God. He will ultimately be but a footnote in history.

We see that there will be (or maybe it has already taken place) a great battle in Heaven between God and Satan, *“And there was war in Heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in Heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him”* (Revelation 12:7 KJV)

There are different schools of thought concerning when this battle takes place.

Some suggest it was at the original moment of rebellion, potentially as an aftermath of the Garden of Eden incident.

Others see it as potentially occurring immediately after Christ's resurrection, and still others as a part of the tribulation times themselves.

In any event, the bottom line is that Satan has no future beyond that which God has allowed him to have. His time runs out following the last act of rebellion. John informs us that "*the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night forever and ever*" (Revelation 20:10 KJV).

It has always seemed strange to me to think that, after the second coming, man will still be responsible for seeing that government exists.

I mean, God Himself will be with us. Why would He even want us to have such responsibility?

Even so, Isaiah clearly defines for us that the Messiah's kingdom will have governmental functions, "*Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this*" (Isaiah 9:7 KJV).

This and other similar verses clearly tell us that:

- Jesus will be our King (Psalm 2:9).
- We were created to be in authority (Revelation 5:10; Psalm 25:13).
- Levels of authority will exist (Jude 1:9).
- Perfection of leadership will occur (Daniel 7:14).
- We will have specific duties (1 Corinthians 6:2-3).
- These duties are based on our present lives (Luke 16:10).
- Envy of position, selfish ambition, slackness, greed, and pettiness will cease. There will be no need to “get to the top” or “stay ahead of the Joneses.”
- We need to throw away our concept of good government and authority (Luke 22:29-30).
- You will have authority, as was intended (Genesis 1:26-28).
- You need not fear being a leader. God has created you specifically for a role. It will be your dream calling (Daniel 7:27).

Our spiritual gifts have meaning not just during our present life but also during the Messiah's kingdom.

Paul reported, *“And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ”* (Ephesians 4:11-13 KJV).

That verse describes the fact that there are many gifts and that they are needed until man is perfected. Such perfection will not take place until the new heaven and new earth is provided to man and until we fully have the mind of Christ. If that is the case, then man will continue to use his gifts during the millennium to reach those who have not accepted Christ (even though He will reign on earth), support those who are believers, and administer the kingdom itself. Imagine being on God's payroll!

All roads will lead to Jerusalem.

The second coming confirms God's love, not just for His people but also for His holy city. In fact, the city that caused His death will be the first place of His visitation upon His return. The prophet wrote, *"For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city. Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south"* (Zechariah 14:2-4 KJV).

Jerusalem and Israel will be returned to a place of glory and authority, as promised to King David.

All the nations of the world will gather there to pay respect to the King of kings during the millennium, *“And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles”* (Zechariah 14:16 KJV).

God's Chosen People

We should also realize that God has not forgotten about the chosen, that is, the Jews.

Even though redeemed Jew and Gentile alike will be welcomed into the kingdom and enjoy its blessings, we need to remember that God has a special love for His people.

Concerning the millennium, we read, *“In that day I will restore David's fallen tent. I will repair its broken places, restore its ruins, and build it as it used to be, so that they may possess the remnant of Edom and all the nations that bear my name,’ declares the LORD, who will do these things. ‘I will bring back my exiled people Israel; they will rebuild the ruined cities and live in them. They will plant vineyards and drink their wine; they will make gardens and eat their fruit. I will plant Israel in their own land, never again to be uprooted from the land I have given them,’ says the LORD your God”* (Amos 9:11-12, 13, 14-15 NIV).

We see that it is the Jews who will inhabit the royal city. It is they who will receive this special privilege.

One might ask: what will the Jews do there?

What special responsibilities will they have in the interim kingdom?

Surely they will administer the workings of the temple. We read, *“Then the survivors from all the nations that have attacked Jerusalem will go up year after year to worship the King, the LORD Almighty, and to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles. If any of the peoples of the earth do not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD Almighty, they will have no rain”* (Zechariah 14:16-17 NIV). Note the rebellion that is taking place in spite of the fact the Christ has returned.

Two things should be noted from the earlier discussion.

- The first is that God will reinstitute the Old Testament festivals that all nations will be required to participate in each year.
- The second is that there will be some nations, even during the millennium, which will rebel against God, even though Satan is still bound.
- This again indicates the concept of man's internal weakness for rebellion and that Satan cannot be blamed for man's sin state.
- Why would God reinstitute the old ways (festivals)? We need to remember that the Lamb of God is represented in each of the feasts. Even before He came to earth the first time, God was setting the stage symbolically for what the Messiah would do for all of God's people (Jew and Gentile).

Old Testament feast	Purpose of the feast	Old Testament reference	New Testament reference
Passover	God's judgment passed over us because of Christ's blood sacrifice.	Exodus 12:11	Hebrews 11:28
Unleavened bread	Christ was the unleavened (sinless) bread broken on our behalf.	Exodus 12:17	1 Corinthians 5:7
Firstfruits	Christ was the acceptable sacrifice and the resulting resurrection.	Leviticus 23:20	1 Corinthians 10:16
Pentecost	Christ provided the Holy Ghost to each believer.	Leviticus 23:15	1 Corinthians 15:20
Trumpets	Christ was the Good News, trumpeting God's redemptive act.	Leviticus 23:24	Matthew 4:23
Atonement	Christ was the substitute sacrifice that atoned for our sin.	Leviticus 23:28	Romans 3:25
Tabernacles	Christ delivered us from the bondage of sin.	Leviticus 23:43	Romans 11:26

The earth will remain cursed as long as sin exists in the world

A polluted and decayed world does not glorify God: never has and never will. Paul writes that creation itself detests the fact that it has decayed and no longer reveals a fuller reflection of God's nature. We read, *"The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time"* (Romans 8:19-22 NIV).

Earth has always been the domain of man, while Heaven has always been the domain of God.

While the Messiah will rebuild Jerusalem and the nation of Israel following the tribulation, Heaven will still be God's place. It will be a place of purity, righteousness, and holiness.

It is only when the new Heaven and new earth are presented to man at the end of time that the fullness of God's creation will be revealed. Peter gives us these words, *“But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up”* (2 Peter 3:10 KJV).

This total destruction of the old earth will remove the last trace of sin and rebellion from history. Isaiah wrote, *“For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind”* (Isaiah 65:17 KJV). Not only will our former earth be forgotten, but I also fully believe that our old sin state will not be remembered.

The end of the Millennium

- Satan is released and is allowed to influence those on earth who have not accepted Christ as King (Revelation 20:7).
- Many will rebel against God and fight against Him (Revelation 20:8).
- Those aligned with Satan will once again threaten Jerusalem (Revelation 20:9).
- God supernaturally acts and destroys all evil (Revelation 20:9).
- Unbelievers face the great white throne of judgment (Revelation 20:10).
- Death and hell are destroyed (Revelation 20:14).
- A new heaven and a new earth are presented to man (Revelation 21:1).
- God comes down to live with man (Revelation 21:3)!

While earlier chapters in Revelation describe much drama related to the tribulation of man and the global war that ends with Satan's defeat, Revelation 20:9 describes this final war with evil in a single sentence.

The reason for this from God's perspective is clear.

Satan and his contrast to God's ways have served their purpose through history, and he is no longer needed. Isn't it fitting? The one who tried to upstage the Creator is removed from eternity with these few words from John, "And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night forever and ever" (Revelation 20:10 KJV). With this, the end of evil occurs.

The removal of sin from history clears the path for God to bring about a perfected kingdom, one in which man is reunited with a perfected earth.

Peter describes our desire for such a place, *“But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness”* (2 Peter 3:13 NIV).

The new heaven and the new earth, as described in Revelation 21:1-2, comes down from heaven dressed in preparation for the full union between God and man. If you were to ask someone today, “Where is heaven?”

Heaven is where God lives, and it is not among men (except for the partial indwelling of Christ). However, this will not always be the case. Since the creation of man, God has been consistent in asking us to be His. Genesis tells us, *“And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God”* (Genesis 17:8 KJV). Even so, we know that at no time during recorded history have Abraham’s descendants (Jew or Gentile) ever been fully true to God. This verse cannot be fully realized until man has been transformed to be a righteous being, as previously discussed.

As a new heaven, a glorified Jerusalem, comes to earth, we see the fulfillment of God's full vision for creation and all of recorded history, *“And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, ‘Now the dwelling of God is with men, and He will live with them. They will be His people, and God himself will be with them and be their God”* (Revelation 21:3 NIV).

Application

You have now seen explanations for the Creation, the Passion, and man's redemption. What single time in history has made the biggest impression upon you relative to God's wanting to share Himself with you?

Mankind has been established and lives on the earth. Many will go to Hell. Think of ways in which you can share what you have learned with the lost.

What do you look forward to most when you see Jesus?

Just imagine Heaven. While we know something of the Millennial kingdom, we know less about the New Heaven and the New Earth. Why do you think God has not shared extensive details about our eventual home?