



Christianity in a

Nutshell



N. B. Gyan

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Christianity in a Nutshell

Dedication

To Harriet, my dear wife, for being there for me. And to the children, Maame, Ewura and Kwabena for being amazing.

I also want to acknowledge my fellow ministers — Prophet Kafui, Apostle Kenneth, Osmond, Julia, Anita, and Agnes — for their steadfastness in the faith and for keeping the flame alive. I am certain that if God had not brought you into my life, my path would have taken a very different direction.

Acknowledgement

When I first sat down to write the book, the cover was the last thing on my mind. But as I neared the end, still wondering what to use, I decided to turn it into a competition and invite entries from everyone—the prize being that the winning entry, unedited, would become the cover. The cover you see is the work of nine-year-old Master **David Mackenzie Okae**. For a book titled *Christianity in a Nutshell*, he explains that “the bird represents the Holy Spirit and the sparkles are diamonds, showing that the Holy Spirit glows.” I chose his drawing as the winner because, in many ways, it captures the title remarkably well.

A big thank you to Agnes for reviewing the book.

Prologue

In this book, I take on a task that is clearly beyond my own capacity. It is an attempt to distil my thoughts and experiences in line with what I have come to deeply appreciate about what God has done for humanity — and, by extension, for me personally. Many wiser and more gifted writers, living and long gone, have treated this subject far more effectively than I have attempted here; readers are welcome to turn to their works as they see fit. Yet my own experience is no less certain to me, and the course of my life has been unmistakably shaped by the Supernatural. In writing this, I hope to show others who share a similar background what it truly means to serve God as a Believer — or a Christian, if you prefer.

Far too often, the meaning of what it is to be a Believer needs to be defined again — not because no definition exists, but because people have chosen, and continue to choose, to define it only as they have come to know it: sometimes faithfully, sometimes distorted to the limits of their own understanding. This, it seems to me, is the burden the Lord has placed on my heart — perhaps as He placed it on the Apostle Luke, who wrote to Theophilus to set matters in order in a time when clarity and certainty were essential. So I write this book for anyone who will come to this place in their walk with God as I have come. To walk with God and succeed, we must follow the paths of the apostles, believe what they believed, and walk in those things. We must not expect to see more of God than the fathers did if we insist on choosing our own ways.

It seems to me that it is of the utmost importance for believers to know where we have come from as a people, and the purpose of God for which we even have fellowship with Him. Our understanding of what it means to believe

God and place our faith in Him must not originate in this world; if it is allowed to, corruption and perversion are the certain result. We must be firmly grounded in the knowledge of God and His plans for mankind as His word tells us, and be ready to dedicate our lives to fulfilling our calling as our reasonable sacrifice to Him for all He has done.

Throughout the book, numerous Scripture references are cited to demonstrate that Christianity truly makes sense and is, in fact, profoundly true. To fully enjoy the book, the reader is invited to give careful attention to these references and verify for themselves that they hold true. In places where certain references may appear to be omitted, the reader is encouraged to supply them in order to strengthen the argument. No claim is made of this book to exhaust all the treasures of knowledge God has given in His word regarding His purposes for humanity. The intention is that God's people will come to understand what they believe and why they believe it. These are among the truths that sustained the fathers of the faith — even those who, though they did not live to see the promise fulfilled, held fast to it nonetheless.

This, above all, is the reason for this book. It grows out of a burden on my heart to show people the great things God has done for us, and the greater things He will do if only we will choose Him and His ways above all else.

N. B. Gyan

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Journeying with God

“These all died in faith, not having received the promise, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.” (Hebrews 11:13)

Man in Search of the Laws of the Universe

God, the Creator of heaven and earth, chose to make man and enter into a relationship with him — a purpose He has revealed in Scripture. Man’s whole duty, then, is to seek God through His Word, for that is the very relationship He intends with each of us here on earth. Every person is born with a purpose God has appointed, and the question of how finite beings can find the Infinite is the journey each one must walk in this life. This is the wisdom of God.

Men and women of greater wisdom and nobility in ages past reached similar conclusions about the world they inhabited and undertook the same journey with God. Scripture records in **Genesis 5:24** that Enoch “*walked with God: and he was not; for God took him.*” These imperfect people, no different in their passions from us, looked past the mortality and frailty that visit every human being and, rising above the doubt that clouds us all, touched glimpses of eternity as they chose to walk with God during their sojourn on earth. Their experiences and encounters have been preserved for our instruction, written as examples for those today who likewise resolve to walk the same path toward the true God of the universe. These are the ones Scripture calls the Prophets of God.

The Bible is, at its core, a record of the spiritual journeys of men and women and the lessons drawn from those experiences. Consider **Psalms 82**: Asaph turns to worship God — perhaps in song, perhaps in speech — and speaks words that could not have originated in any human library. As he journeyed with God, he uncovered a mystery: that man is, in fact, *the child of God* (v. 6). Yet God is Spirit (**John 4:24**), so how does a mortal become the child of the Immortal? The knowledge imparted to Asaph, and through him to us, could not have been the product of years spent studying human philosophy.

God is eternal and stands above man, so any knowledge of Him or His ways must necessarily be that which He Himself chooses to bestow. He grants this knowledge to those who journey toward Him and commit to doing His business. In **John 10:34**, Jesus affirms the words of Asaph, confronting the religious leaders of His day with their contrived and shallow piety, and in doing so confirms to us that Asaph truly heard and received a mystery from God.

The journeys of holy men and women taught them lessons, unveiled the mysteries of God, imparted divine knowledge, and rendered the spiritual secrets locked in the heavens plain to us in this realm. Without that, man is entirely incapable of knowing anything about the physical life he is condemned to live — a condemnation that traces back to the death of Adam (representing all men) in Eden — since, in the final analysis, it is the spiritual that governs the physical. For God, the Father of spirits (**Numbers 16:22**, **Hebrews 12:9**), is the one who made the universe and the world we inhabit. He called into being “*those things which be not as though they were*” (**Romans 4:17**). Scripture further declares that “*through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are*

seen were not made of things which do appear” (Hebrews 11:3). The apostle Paul tells us that spiritual knowledge is “*spiritually discerned*” (1 **Corinthians 2:14**). Therefore, without any assistance from the spiritual realm, man cannot simply come to know God or determine what is good — for there is none good but God alone (**Matthew 19:16**). All he will know is evil and death, the fruit of that condemnation.

Consider the example the writer of the book of Hebrews draws from the encounter between Melchizedek, the priest of God, and Abraham following his battle with the kings. In the account given to us in **Genesis 14:14-24**, we are told that the priest of God “*blessed*” Abraham, who in turn “*gave him tithes of all.*” From what appears to be a simple physical meeting between two men, the writer, by revelation, discloses its spiritual significance. In Abraham’s day, when few knew the ways of God and priests of God were far rarer than they are today, that encounter and experience served to unveil a hidden mystery about the workings of the spiritual realm — a mystery preserved for the instruction of men in every generation to come.

The writer makes clear to us that Abraham’s encounter with the priest of God was no ordinary meeting. Beyond the physical meeting and the events that transpired, it served to reveal an established, universal, and eternal law in the spirit: that in all encounters between men, whether physical or spiritual, “*the less is blessed of the better*” (**Hebrews 7:7**). By the force of this law, Abraham and every priest who descended from his line (his descendants) were placed under the priesthood of Melchizedek for all generations to come.

This revelation is profound, and there is much to consider in it. A striking question arises: how can a man — a descendant of another man who had an

encounter in his own day — be subject to the rules of that encounter, when he was neither privy to it nor a party to it? Every thoughtful person ought to meditate on this and recognize that man in the physical is subject to rules and regulations that stand above him, rules that emanate from the spiritual realm. All of Abraham’s descendants subsequently became subject to a universal law, though they were neither its initiators nor parties to the circumstances that gave it birth. And this rule has been revealed to us because Abraham met Melchizedek as he journeyed toward the place God had promised him.

What lessons can we draw from Abraham’s encounter? First, it establishes that God has long desired to reveal the spiritual to us, who are dead in our sin. He therefore uses, in Abraham, the physical act of an encounter to unveil a spiritual truth to us. Second, the encounter reveals a spiritual law that man in the physical would never have discovered by his own methods. Had this meeting not taken place, we might never have learned this universal, eternal truth — that the less is blessed of the better.

The lesson to note here is that spiritual laws indeed override physical laws, and man has very little — if any — control over them. Because they are true and spiritual in nature, they are universal, operating for both good and evil with profound consequences. In other words, the law that “the less is blessed of the better” applies equally when evil forces appropriate it for their own purposes. If one’s forefathers served and worshipped idols, for instance, whatever covenant arose from that relationship binds the descendants as well. This is because worship is, in many respects, a formal declaration of allegiance to a superior authority. Scripture records that when the children of Israel fashioned a golden calf and worshipped it at Horeb, “*they changed their glory into the similitude of an ox that eateth grass*” (**Psalm 106:20**). It

is no wonder, then, that only a few from that generation made it to the promised land.

The account of Abraham and Melchizedek, along with the lessons drawn from it, as well as the narratives of several others in the Old Testament, is what Scripture describes as “God speaking to the fathers by prophets at sundry times and in divers manners” (**Hebrews 1:1**). Among other things, this demonstrates that the Bible is indeed a revelation of not only who God is to us, but also how the universe operates. The Bible discloses the laws of the universe because God is the one who made them and sustains them. His word is a law for the universe, and the man who journeys faithfully with God comes to know these laws, becomes their master, and learns how to navigate their circuitous paths.

The Laws of God Given to the Sons of Men

The call of God to Abraham (**Genesis 12**) is perhaps one of the most significant moments in the history of the human race. It is from this call that, among all the peoples on the face of the earth at that time — and for generations to come — God Almighty chose to reach out to one of them, so that He might make His plans and will clear to us. For God alone had seen the attempt at Babel and the many other efforts men had devised, all to no avail, efforts of which we have no full account. Man was in search of God, but did not know how or by what means. Often, these attempts led them into error. Such was the depth of men’s ignorance of God that He decided to intervene in the situation Himself.

He found in Abram a man among the sons of men who refused to serve the gods his fathers had made. He called him to reveal the life of altars to the God of the universe, in place of that owed to idols. By covenant, He chose him to disclose Himself to all men through His laws — though this would not come to pass until at least five hundred years after his time. Abraham did not live to see it, but through his own experience he taught other men what it means to serve God in righteousness by faith. Such long stretches of time with God serve only to underscore the gravity of man's deadness, and what it takes — in the natural processes of time — to accomplish in the flesh anything supernatural. Man's death in Eden also means that time has become, in a sense, a judge over the affairs of men.

One of God's reasons for choosing Abraham was made known to us by God Himself. He said of Abraham that He knew he would “*command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment...*” (**Genesis 18:19**). In essence, God needed a man for the purpose of teaching other men across generations, and He found in Abraham that man among all the peoples of the day. It was essential to God, in selecting the one to use, that he possess the ability to teach others the ways of God — because what has become our natural disposition as a result of the fall is rebellion against Him.

And this purpose of God largely succeeded until the sons of Jacob were delivered from slavery in Egypt and led into the wilderness to meet with God and to receive His laws. The Lord's command to Pharaoh was to let His people go out of Egypt to “*hold a feast unto him in the wilderness*” (**Exodus 5:1**). Three months after their departure from Egypt, they arrived at the wilderness of Sinai, and it was there that God laid out His purpose for Israel

— the reason He had brought them to that place. He told the leaders, “*If ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people... And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation*” (**Exodus 19:5–6**). The purpose of God, the mystery of His will, is here beginning to take shape: He has resolved to build a nation of priests unto Himself, under an everlasting covenant.

And He chose Abraham and his seed to make this known to all men. Scripture declares, “*God had not dealt so with any nation: and as for his judgments, they have not known them*” (**Psalms 147:19-20**). The giving of His laws to man was intended to bring an end to man’s search for God. With that act, man no longer had the excuse of choosing his own way, as in the days of Babel. God could now be found by man, provided man obeyed the rules He Himself had codified and established.

The Inability of Men to Keep the Laws of God

The giving of the laws by God also brought with it the recognition of sin — a point the apostle Paul addresses thoroughly in **Romans 7**. Though the law was not sin in itself, its weakness for man lay in the fact that sin, already dwelling within him, took occasion of the commandment and “*wrought in him all manner of concupiscence.*” Paul goes on to state that “*without the law sin was dead*” (**Romans 7:7**).

The entire shortfall of the law, and man’s inability to keep it to God’s full satisfaction, is revealed in how Jesus wielded it to rebuke every opponent of what He preached. In **Matthew 5:27-28**, for instance, Jesus says, “*Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery:*

But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.” Here we see that the original intent of **Exodus 20:14**, in its fullest expression on the soul of a man, was that a man would not so much as look upon a woman with lust. The law was meant to bring its adherents to the place where that standard became their reality. Yet everyone who heard Jesus speak this — including those who claimed to be teachers of the law — was genuinely struck by such a high moral standard.

The project of God had suffered another setback, if you will, as it did in Eden, because the original intent of the laws given in the wilderness could not achieve its aims. To the religious leaders of the day, Jesus appeared as a strange man proclaiming new laws of God — yet in reality, He was merely restating the laws God had already given them on the plains of Sinai. Since those laws had become estranged from them, Jesus — who knew, understood, kept, and proclaimed them — came across as a blasphemer. The seed of the first Adam had proven once again that the standards of God are far too high, and beyond his capabilities.

In fact, God Himself, through the prophet Isaiah, sums this up in **Isaiah 66:3**. The keeping of His laws had become so perverted and defiled that, in God’s eyes, *“he that killeth an ox is as if he slew a man; he that sacrificeth a lamb, as if he cut off a dog’s neck; he that offereth an oblation, as if he offered swine’s blood; he that burneth incense, as if he blessed an idol.”* God saw that they had *“chosen their own ways, and their soul delighteth in their abominations.”* It was the intention of God, as Jesus demonstrated, that when He gave them these laws in the wilderness, they would, through them,

come to know of righteousness and know Him — but they turned out corrupted and polluted in the very ways they had chosen for themselves.

Prophet after prophet laid bare man's treacherous attempt to go his own way apart from God, all to no avail. God also, through these same prophets, brought to light certain plans He had in place — but man refused to listen. We catch a glimpse of this in the dream of the Gentile king of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar, and its interpretation from God. God was making known to everyone, even in that age, a new kingdom He was establishing — one that would overwhelm all the kingdoms of the world. Scripture records that when Jesus rose from the dead and encountered the disciples on the road to Emmaus, He expressed His frustration at their failure to grasp the events surrounding His life and death. He therefore took the time, *“beginning at Moses and all the prophets, expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself”* (**Luke 24:27**). In other words, God had revealed through the prophets His intention of establishing a new kingdom but it looked as if few looked forward to it.

Man's disobedience toward God alienated him from His plans. Yet this was no surprise to God. In His covenant with Israel at Sinai, **Exodus 19:5** makes clear that it was conditional: *“If ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant...”* God now had to show man His ideal of what a man should be, after all those generations of little success. And this, among other reasons, is why Jesus came.

Son of Man, Son of God

“...I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.” (John 10:10)

His Birth, Personhood and Life

According to the apostle Paul in **1 Corinthians 15:45**, Jesus is the *last* Adam, not the *second*. This distinction is both important and necessary for understanding the life, work, and ministry of Jesus. He was indeed a man, for He came through a woman, yet there was something distinctive about His birth. Of all men on the face of the earth, He was born without the seed of man! In other words, just as God created Adam in Eden without the seed of a man, He created another man in the same way — only this time through the agency of a man, and free from the taint of sin that comes to man by birth. The virgin birth was God’s way of giving to the human race His ideal kind of man, from whom other men may learn how to worship Him. Finally, man can now know God by learning from and looking up to another who did it to God’s satisfaction.

The first Adam had died — that is, had been separated from God, the source of all life — and had lost his way, and so it was with all the descendants who came after him. Jesus therefore could not have come from that seed. This is why God said it was to be a *sign* (**Isaiah 7:14**): a thing that only the Supernatural God could orchestrate and bring to pass. According to the account of the apostle Luke in **Luke 1:35**, the angel who appeared to Mary, the mother of Jesus, told her, “*The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing*

which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.” Jesus was therefore no ordinary man, in the sense that He did not carry the seed of the first Adam. David recognized this affliction in man when he declared in **Psalm 51:5**, *“Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.”* Jesus did not suffer this fate, for He did not come from the seed of man. In the womb of Mary, the child was that *“holy thing.”* **Hebrews 7:26** describes Jesus as the high priest who *“was made like unto us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens.”*

The Bible also records a number of supernatural occurrences that attended the pregnancy and birth of Jesus. We are told, for instance, that when Mary greeted her cousin Elizabeth, who was also pregnant with John, the baby in her womb *“leaped for joy, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit”* and prophesied (**Luke 1:41**). And on the day He was presented according to Jewish custom, two strangers — Simeon and Anna the prophetess — appeared at the ceremony, each having been independently summoned by the Holy Spirit to witness the event (**Luke 2:25–38**).

The point of Jesus being the last Adam is also instructive — there will be no other after Him. The plans of God for man all come to their fullness in Jesus. He is the dream of all the prophets of old who wailed and cried for the salvation of God. He is the answer to the perfect man God had long desired in man, and therefore the example for all who are in search of God. He is God’s perfect model for other men to follow. A man bound in sin, looking for salvation, now has in Jesus an example to look to and be set free. Jesus is the final answer to all cries for salvation, and there is no other after Him, not

today or forever. To all intents and purposes, God concludes His work of salvation for man in Jesus, and there will not be another.

But despite His supernatural birth, His natural life did not exempt Him from the temptations that come to all men on earth. Since He was a man, Jesus faced all the trials and temptations of man. In fact, He referred to Himself as the Son of man (see, e.g., **Matthew 9:6**). The great difference, however, is that even though He was tempted as we are, He did not sin. Throughout His life, He lived a life above sin — something the first Adam and his descendants were unable to do. Scripture declares in **Hebrews 4:15** that Jesus was “*in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.*” There is reason to believe He grew up as a boy fully devoted to God. At age twelve, for instance, according to **Luke 2:46**, He understood the word of God so well that, as a young boy, He sat “*in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions.*” Not much more is known of Him in Scripture during those early years, but the fruit of all His childhood is what we see when He appears to be baptized by John at the Jordan.

Hebrews 1:1–2 sums up this whole account of Jesus when the writer tells us that “*God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all, by whom also He made the worlds.*” Jesus thus becomes the fulfilment of all of God’s approach to His dealings with the descendants of Adam. In **Luke 4:18–19**, Jesus Himself told the men in the synagogue — after being tempted by the devil and returning in the power of the Spirit into Galilee — that, having opened the book of Isaiah on the Sabbath day and read from it, that Scripture (**Isaiah 61:1–2**) spoke of Himself, much to the surprise of all who were present. He preached

that it was He who had come to “*proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD,*” and not the day of His vengeance. When men, by the first Adam, had lost their way, Jesus comes and says, “*I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me*” (**John 14:6**). The way to God is not a mere path to thread — it is to know a Person.

A Fisher of Men

One of the distinguishing facts about the life and ministry of Jesus was that He came to “*fish for men.*” In other words, he came to find men who were willing to walk the paths that lead to God. After praying all night one day, Jesus set out to find men to help Him in this task (**Matthew 4:19; Mark 1:17**). These men, whom He initially called His disciples, He did not gather until after He had been baptized by John. It was John the Baptist who ushered Jesus into His ministry when He had turned about thirty years old. He confronted the religious authority of the day and authoritatively set forth His doctrines of true religion. After a long stretch of trial and error in the things of God, a man had finally appeared in Jesus who truly knew who God is and what His ways are. Unfortunately, this was to become a major point of contention with the religious authority of the day, who considered it their own duty and faulted Jesus for usurping their authority.

It appears that Jesus took particular issue with the religious authority of the day because, by all means, they should have known better. The teacher of the ways of God must, above all else, be a follower of those laws. But Jesus saw through their lies and hypocrisy — the heavy burdens they laid upon the ignorant rather than leading them to God. They could see the speck in the eye of another but not the log in their own. They monetized the laws of God and

arbitrarily picked and chose what they deemed fit. This, as far as Jesus was concerned, was a major departure from the law. One of these teachers, Nicodemus, took an interest in the ministry of Jesus and consulted Him privately.

That encounter, recorded in **John 3:1–21**, is shared with us for much to learn. What is most revealing, however, is that religion apart from the God of the universe blinds man to who God truly is. In the ears of Nicodemus, all Jesus said was strange and hard to believe, and yet a witness within him would not allow him to ignore those words. A man does not become a teacher of the laws of God simply because men call him so. Rather, he is a teacher because God has ordained him as such and placed His words in his mouth. That encounter of Nicodemus with Jesus proved the point beyond every shadow of a doubt. But to Nicodemus the entire episode was perhaps one of his most confounding encounters.

Jesus displayed an extraordinary understanding of the laws of God. This, too, was a distinction between Him and the descendants of the first Adam. Nicodemus, for instance, could not grasp that man must be “*born again*” (**John 3:4**). Yet throughout the Psalms and the prophets, hints of this are given (see, e.g., **Psalm 22:26–31; 87**). As a man, Jesus knew in the Bible what was, as it were, hidden even from the teachers and doctors of the law. It is also altogether fascinating to read of His debates with the teachers of the law in His day and how He confounded them all on the very laws they themselves claimed to be custodians of. The condition of man was in such a hopeless state that even though he had lost his way to God he did not know this and kept insisting on it as being right. This was what Jesus pointed to us, that, truly, we did not know God and it was the reason He had come to us.

When, for instance, the question of paying taxes to Caesar arose, anyone who has studied that encounter should be struck by the image metaphor Jesus chose to answer it (**Luke 20:21–26**). When we consider it carefully, we see how He was redirecting their attention to how put His image on us in the beginning, and how that should be the very reason for our service to Him. The answer He gave was not one to be easily conjured unless you were a man thoroughly versed in the text and spirit of Scripture, with a depth of understanding so vast.

Another striking fact about the man Jesus was that He demonstrated sufficient authority to validate the word of God. Put another way, Jesus brought interpretation to the true meaning behind Scripture. Consider, for instance, the story of Jonah. The mere reference to it by Jesus dispels all doubt about the man who was converted in the belly of a fish. It is Jesus who gives credence to it and removes all doubt about God's word. He makes reference to that story and says of Himself that similar event was going to happen with Him (**Matthew 12:40**). We know now that the story was not concocted in the course of time to deceive men, but that God truly moved in a certain season with a man called Jonah and revealed Himself in the ancient city of Nineveh.

When the Pharisees sought to entangle Jesus with Scripture and find a pretext for arresting Him, they brought the matter of divorce before Him. They inquired, rather insincerely, about His views on the subject. Jesus boldly told them that divorce is an aberration rather than the norm (**Matthew 19:1-9**). He explained that in the beginning it was not God's original plan; that Moses allowed a writing of divorcement only because of the hardness of their hearts. He brought finality to the matter, shutting down all opposition

and falsehood to God's word, and insisted that one who divorces his wife commits adultery. Such authority and validation could only come from one who truly knew what He was saying.

In **Genesis 28**, the account of Jacob and his encounter with a ladder of angels ascending and descending to and from heaven is told. Jesus speaks of a similar experience to Nathaniel and promises him a comparable vision for his decision to become His disciple (**John 1:47-51**). This gives credence to Jacob's experience, confirming that it was real and true. There is this other example of what is often said about the Bible — that it is a spiritual book. Believers sometimes say the Bible is more than a book of historical accounts. This true and Jesus confirms this when He cites, for instance, **Psalm 110** and affirms that it was truly David who wrote it, with the added note that what he said was “*in spirit*” (**Matthew 22:43**). Jesus confirms to us in that text that the Bible is food for the spirit and can minister spiritual realities to us. Put another way, He is saying that if anyone reads that psalm and sees only David, they may not be reading it properly since there is more to it.

Jesus also sometimes spoke deliberately in parables to separate the casual seeker of God from those who truly hungered and thirsted after Him. Scripture records that “*without a parable spake he not unto them*” (**Matthew 13:34**). When asked about this, He explained that it was a fulfilment of the prophecy of Isaiah (**Matthew 13:11–15**). Through them, He also loved, rebuked, corrected, admonished, and encouraged, doing all He could to turn man's attention back to our core duty toward God. Through His disciples, He showed us what true leadership looks like and what it means to serve. He revealed God's mind on every situation a man has gone through

and would ever go through. He was firm yet amiable, sometimes showing weakness yet uncompromising on the law of God. He told His disciples, *“Many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them”* (**Matthew 13:17**).

Despite His divinity, Jesus never despised men. Even for a man born and raised a Jew, He genuinely loved and helped everyone who sincerely sought His assistance, whether Jew or Gentile. And He did this knowing full well the frame of man, and sometimes for He knew would eventually betray Him. In **Luke 11:13**, He actually understood that, by nature, man is evil. On one occasion, He deliberately charted His route in order to meet a Samaritan woman who would eventually become a witness for God’s kingdom — even though Jews had no dealings with Samaritans (**John 4:3–42**) or Gentiles. The Samaritan woman was the first person outside His disciples to whom Jesus revealed Himself as the Messiah. He brought God closer to all men, regardless of their sex, tribe, culture, or social standing. Scripture declares in **2 Corinthians 5:19** that *“God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.”* For everyone who truly loved God and searched for Him, Jesus was the most pleasant of company.

Even for publicans like Zacchaeus, who felt they did not even deserve the company of such a holy man as Jesus. The religious leaders of the day had condemned Zacchaeus as a sinner, unworthy of God (**Luke 19:2–8**). Jesus told His accusers, *“The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost”* (**Luke 19:10**). He was the first to reveal to all men the true value of the soul within. According to **Mark 8:37** and **Matthew 16:26**, Jesus reveals that there is nothing a man can give in exchange for his soul. He posed a

question no man had ever uttered: “*What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?*” In Jesus, God returned to the original intent He had in the creation of man. Man had lost his way to God, and God Himself, in Jesus, came to show us the way. He came to show us that actual essentials of life and need to pay more attention to what is within rather without. Jesus placed such priceless value on the soul of man and taught men how to do same.

Preaching the Kingdom of God to Men

If there was one thing Jesus spoke of more than any other throughout His entire ministry on earth, it was the kingdom of God. And this made complete sense within the scheme of things of God. Since God was creating a new generation of men, different from the descendants of the first Adam, they were to be distinct and separate — dwelling in a kingdom apart from the one in which all descendants of the first Adam dwell. In **Luke 16:16**, Jesus told His audience that “*the law and the prophets were until John,*” and since then — when John was killed, his ministry ended, and Jesus began His own — “*the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it.*” When answering Pilate in **John 18:36**, Jesus replied, “*My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.*” And so, according to this Scripture, there is indeed a kingdom of God separate from what we know here on earth.

If man is to be saved, he must be hosted in a new place, a new kingdom — and rightly so, this is what proved to be the preoccupation of Jesus. **Mark 1:14–15** tells us that after John the Baptist was put in prison (effectively

marking the end of his ministry), *“Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, the time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.”* Nicodemus was a teacher of the law, yet he knew nothing of this kingdom Jesus preached. Jesus not only proclaimed it — He showed men how to enter into it. He told Nicodemus bluntly, *“Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God”* (**John 3:3**). This was a profoundly new concept, a truth entirely foreign to the man whom others revered as a teacher of others.

In preaching the kingdom of God, Jesus also performed mighty miracles such as were unknown to men. Perhaps the most miraculous of them all was the raising of Lazarus of Bethany, narrated to us in **John 11**. Lazarus had been dead for four days before Jesus arrived at his tomb to perform the miracle. And when He got there, contrary to all expectations of the family, Jesus called the man who had lain in the tomb for four days back out. In that same passage, we are told that the chief priests and the Pharisees even complained that the many miracles Jesus performed threatened their rule. He cleansed people of all manner of sicknesses and diseases, many of them highly infectious and incurable; opened blind eyes and deaf ears; fed five thousand people with just five loaves and two fish. On one occasion, He paid the temple tax with money taken from the mouth of a fish He had sent His disciples to fetch. He walked on water, commanded raging seas to be still, and it appeared as though, literally speaking, the natural elements of the universe were at His beck and call. He possessed and demonstrated absolute control over nature. No man in known history had ever done this before Him.

As has already been mentioned, Jesus held the souls of men in very high regard, and even said that nothing in this world can be exchanged for one

(**Matthew 16:26**). Throughout His preaching, He emphasized the need for a man to direct his attention more toward the prosperity of his soul. Jesus repudiated the tendency to live without God and apart from His counsel and purpose. And because of this, He devoted His entire ministry to seeking out lost souls — those who did not know what new thing God was doing in this world and were still in search of Him. He admonished all men to seek first the kingdom of God, and not to live their lives like the Gentiles, who focus on the material rather than the spiritual (**Matthew 6:33**). In **John 10:16** He said, “*And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.*” On one occasion He called it a harvest, saying it was truly plentiful with few labourers, and admonished that we “*pray the Lord of the harvest to send forth labourers into his harvest*” (**Luke 10:2**).

Jesus devoted His entire life to inviting the descendants of the first Adam into the kingdom of God, and He did so even to His dying moments on the cross. He even promised to give them the keys to it (**Matthew 16:19**). And in doing so, one of His characteristic methods was the use of parables. In total, Jesus taught somewhere between thirty and forty parables, but only a specific subset of them directly defines the nature of the kingdom — roughly twelve in number. In Jesus, God was at last calling men into the kind of fellowship He had long desired with the first Adam. These parables about the kingdom were meant to stir our imagination and give us substance to reflect upon regarding the operations of God within it. They were to equip every invitee with the tools and knowledge of how the God of the universe operates in His kingdom. They finally revealed to all men what has truly been the heartbeat of God through the ages — a fellowship of the divine with mortals, for an everlasting covenant (**Psalms 132:13–14**).

And so what is the reality of this fellowship that God has desired through the ages? In the days of Daniel, God spoke of it in many ways — for instance, through Nebuchadnezzar’s dream of the image and its interpretation (**Daniel 2**), and through Daniel’s own visions of the last age (**Daniel 7, 8**). Jesus, for His part, called it His church (**Matthew 16:18**), the first time the word is used in that sense. The fathers, however, called it the congregation (see throughout the Psalms, e.g., **1:5; 7:7; 22:22; 74:3; 82:1; Isaiah 14:13; Joel 2:16; Micah 2:5**). In the church, the desire of God expressed to the elders of the children of Israel in the wilderness in **Exodus 19:5–6** comes into realisation. **Hebrews 12:18–24** spells this mystery out clearly: that, unlike what happened in the wilderness, mount Zion is *“the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator, and to the blood of sprinkling.”*

This, then, is effectively the gospel: God, the Creator of the universe and all that lies within it — both the living and the dead — has come to reconcile all men to Himself once again, and invites them to partake in the kingdom He is building, just as He had desired to do so with Adam in Eden from the beginning. And that for anyone who will believe this and ask in faith to be a part of it, God will surely not forsake them or ignore their request. This is the message Jesus came to reveal to men, as stated by the apostle John: (*“God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved”*) (**John 3:17**).

Confronting Satan on Earth

The story of man in Eden begins with Satan already present on earth. The first Adam came to meet a Satan who was already here. The backstory to this, we only come to know in later books of the Bible. If the chronology of prophecies is taken into account, it appears that Satan had concealed himself from men quite effectively from the beginning, until he was revealed by the prophets Isaiah and Ezekiel and even John the apostle. All the men before them knew little about his origins or his works. The prophet Ezekiel (**Ezekiel 28:12–19**) tells us that Lucifer “*sealed up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty,*” and was in fact “*in Eden, the garden of God.*” We are told that Satan “*was perfect in his ways from the day that he was created, till iniquity was found in him.*” It is as though his very perfection caused him to lift up his heart in pride and corrupt his wisdom (v. 18).

It is later, in **Isaiah 14:12–16**, that we learn of the treachery Satan devised in heaven and how he threatened to “*exalt his throne above the stars of God; and sit upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north; ascend above the heights of the clouds; and be like the most High.*” He was denied this request and his judgment came as that Satan “*shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit*” (v. 15). In **Revelation 12:7–9**, we are given a glimpse of the war that broke out in heaven as a result, in which “*Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels,*” which ultimately ended with Satan and his fallen angels being “*cast down to the earth.*”

Therefore, in **Revelation 12:12**, we are told that Satan “*was cast down, having great wrath,*” because “*he knows that he hath but a short time.*” Satan permanently lost a place among immortals for his treachery. After his fall, Satan must have earnestly set about building his kingdom here on earth,

and after deceiving man and enslaving him, proceeded to destroy his seed and pervert the agenda of God for man.

Jesus, the last Adam, also comes to meet Satan here on earth, but unlike the first, He is the man who comes to reveal Satan for who he truly is and to settle, once and for all, his identity and how he operates. Jesus reveals to us, for instance, that the devil is a thief who “*cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy*” (**John 10:10**). He also made some startling remarks about Satan and his kingdom. In fact, on one occasion, He actually revealed that the fall of the kingdom of Satan is because the kingdom of God is here now. In **Luke 11:20**, Jesus said, “*But if I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you.*” He tells us that casting out devils from men was one of the signs that God’s kingdom is here with us. All through the prophets and the Old Testament, the devil is, as it were, in the shadows among men and with them, reinforcing the rule he secured from the fall in Eden. What that meant was death and destruction for humanity — and all that we witness in the world today.

Jesus even revealed how unclean spirits operate in men. In **Matthew 12:43–45**, He discloses to us that unclean spirits can indeed be cast out of men. And once they are out, they go in search of “*dry places,*” and when they find none, they return to their former dwelling to see if it is empty. If it is, they come back with seven other spirits even more wicked, and the state of the man is ultimately worsened. This mystery of the life of spirits was known to no one else. Yet it was not only Jesus who knew the spirit world so well. According to **Mark 5:1–16**, when Jesus entered the country of the Gadarenes, a man possessed by unclean spirits — whom He was meeting for the first time — approached Jesus, called Him by name, and even recognized

that He was the Son of the Most High God. And this was at a time when the Pharisees, Sadducees, teachers, and doctors of the law were all struggling to discern who Jesus was. This must certainly mean that Jesus was well known in the spirit world as a man of authority.

Such was the power and authority Jesus held over demons and unclean spirits that, on one occasion, He sent out His disciples to preach, arming them with power over the works of Satan. In **Luke 10**, we are told that Jesus sent out seventy disciples in pairs, ahead of His visit to certain cities. These disciples returned with joy, saying, “*Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name*” (v. 17). Jesus responded in rather cryptic terms, saying that He “*beheld Satan fall from heaven as lightning*” (v. 18). When did Jesus see this? Could He have been referring to the moment Satan lost the battle in heaven and was cast down to earth?

On one occasion, Jesus also healed a woman who had been afflicted by a spirit of infirmity for eighteen years, one who was “*bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself*” (**Luke 13:11–16**). Jesus directly attributed the woman’s inability to physically raise herself to being “*bound by Satan*.” How could Jesus have known this, unless He possessed a superior insight and knowledge of the operations of evil spirits and the kingdom of Satan?

His Passion, Death, Resurrection and Ascension

His Passion

When Jesus told Martha in **John 11:25** that He is the “*resurrection and the life*,” few probably understood what He meant at the time. This is because,

even long before it happened, Jesus had spoken of His death — something even His disciples did not grasp, despite His pointing out that it was all recorded in the Scriptures. We know today that Jesus knew ahead of time, for in teaching the disciples on the road to Emmaus, we are told that “*beginning at Moses and all the prophets,*” Jesus “*expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.*” Jesus must have known about His predicament in the hands of the religious leaders of the day, because the holy prophets of God had prophesied this in the Scriptures.

In **John 10:17–18**, Jesus declared that He “*laid down*” His life of His own accord and that “*no man taketh it from*” Him. He readily anticipated and embraced His passion and death. He was fully aware of every word He spoke and every action He took or refrained from, all the while keeping the fulfilment of Scripture in view. He told Pilate that His “*kingdom is not of this world,*” and that it was “*to this end*” He “*was born,*” and “*for this cause*” He “*came into the world, that*” He “*should bear witness unto the truth*” (**John 18:33–38**). Jesus told the Pharisees that “*Abraham rejoiced to see His day, saw it, and was glad*” (**John 8:56**), and that the Scriptures in which they thought they had eternal life are in fact those “*which testify of*” Him (**John 5:39**).

Jesus knew that His purpose on earth included His death. On one occasion, when He mentioned this to His disciples, Peter strongly opposed it, but Jesus immediately recognized it as the voice of Satan (**Matthew 16:23; Mark 8:33**). Jesus knew He was the Lamb of God, sent to take away the sin of the world, and John also testified of this (John 1:29). **Hebrews 9:12** declares that Christ “*by his own blood entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.*” What, then, could account for this,

except that it was all part of the eternal plan of God in the redemption of man from the curse inherited from the first Adam? The universal law of the spirit is that “*without shedding of blood there is no remission of sin*” (**Hebrews 9:22**).

His Death

The laws of God given in the wilderness, Scripture tells us, were types and shadows of heavenly things, in which the blood of calves and goats was sprinkled to purge the unclean. **Hebrews 9:18** tells us that “*neither the first testament*” (that is, the Old Testament) “*was dedicated without blood.*” But for the cleansing of men’s souls, it was necessary that better sacrifices be employed. This is precisely what Jesus meant when, at the table of the last supper, He said, “*Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins*” (**Matthew 26:27–28**).

In fact, the account of the events leading to the death of Jesus reveals what appears to be an intentional and carefully orchestrated series of activities designed to ensure that as much of His blood as possible was spilled. We are told of the crown of thorns (**Matthew 27:29; Mark 15:17; John 19:2**) and of His scourging (**Matthew 27:26; Mark 15:15; John 19:1**). The scourging and maltreatment must have been so severe, as the prophet Isaiah foretold. **Isaiah 52:14** tells us that His “*visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men.*” For anyone to have endured this at the hands of their enemies, it must have been an occasion for them to unspeakably let flow so much blood. And this, we are told, was by design — in order to “*sprinkle many nations*” (**Isaiah 52:15**). In **Hebrews 12:24**, it is revealed that believers have come “*to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.*”

We see this intentionality in the spilling of Jesus' blood, for that was the blood meant to pay for the sin of the world. An even more striking account that reinforces this fact of the deliberate shedding of His blood is the incident at the cross. Jesus had already died, yet for the Roman soldiers to determine and confirm that He was indeed dead, a soldier pierced His side. As for the other two prisoners who had been crucified beside Him, they had not yet died at the time preparations were underway for the sabbath the following day, during which no one was to remain hanging on the cross, and so their legs were broken. Jesus, instead, was pierced with a spear by a soldier, and blood and water “*forthwith came there out*” (**John 19:34**). Jesus literally paid with His blood for the redemption of man.

His Resurrection

Jesus died and was buried — as all men of the earth die and are buried. But Jesus was no mere man. Since all He did and all that was done to Him was according to Scripture, including His death, so too was His resurrection. **Psalm 16:10** records David saying, “*For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.*” Yet David had died, and his tomb was among his people, and so this scripture could not have referred to him. In **1 Kings 2:2**, David himself, as his days on earth drew to a close, told Solomon, his son and successor, “*I go the way of all the earth*” **Psalm 16:10**, therefore, must have certainly referred to someone else — and we know now that it referred to the One God Himself had witnessed of as His “*beloved Son, in whom*” He “*was well pleased*” (**Matthew 3:17**). Jesus, therefore, could not be held in the grips of death, and after three days was raised by the Spirit of God (**Romans 8:11**), exactly as Jesus had prophesied about Himself when He referred to the story of Jonah.

The writer of Hebrews declares that *“through death”* Jesus *“destroyed him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and delivered man who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage”* (**Hebrews 2:14–15**). So among the reasons for the gruesome crucifixion of Jesus was that He would take the power of death from Satan. If the kingdom of God was to be established on earth, then all power Satan wielded over men ought to be stripped from him. And Jesus confirmed this when He said in **Matthew 28:18**, after resurrection, *“All power is given unto me in heaven and on earth.”* Again, He declared, *“I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death”* (**Revelation 1:18**).

His resurrection from the dead is what signifies this victory. Paul says that *“if Christ be not raised,”* our *“faith is vain,”* and that Jesus was raised to become *“the firstfruits of them that slept.”* *“For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive”* (**1 Corinthians 15:12–22**). A new universal law came into force as a result: any man who will have Jesus as his Lord and Saviour is freed from the curse of the first Adam.

His Ascension

Luke 24:50–53 (along with **Acts 1:9**) narrates to us that Jesus was physically **“carried up into heaven”** while He blessed His disciples. The Bible is deliberate in including this detail, for it was the very point of Jesus’ ministry that, in the end, He would go to take His seat at the right hand of God the Father. Apostle Paul tells us in **Colossians 3:1** tells us that at this moment Jesus *“sitteth on the right hand of God,”* and in **Romans 8:34** He is *“making intercession”* for us. This brings to pass what David had seen in the

spirit and recorded in **Psalm 110:1**: “*Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.*”

This, then, is the mystery God has made known to us in our days: that He has a man, ever living, seated at His right hand, interceding for other men (**Hebrews 7:25**). This is perhaps the very glory Satan sought to possess in the beginning but was denied and cast down from heaven. For in **Revelation 5**, it was “*a man*” who was needed to “*open the book*” and “*to look thereon.*” The fact that Jesus, in His glorified body after the resurrection, showed His wounds to Thomas in His physical body also confirms what we see in **Revelation 5**. For in **Revelation 5:6**, John saw a “*Lamb as it was slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth,*” who alone was worthy (v. 7) to “*take the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne.*” His ascension was therefore His going up to the heavens to take up the place God had ordained for man.

Jesus Himself had spoken of this during His earthly ministry. As He walked with His disciples, He never concealed the fact that He would depart to heaven. In **John 14:2–3**, He told them, “*In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.*” The ascension to heaven from the mount is the fulfilment of this promise.

The Spirit of God Given to Men

“And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.” (Acts 2:1-4)

A Feast Unto the Lord

In the age after Adam, when humanity had grown and spread across the earth, something changed. **Genesis 6** records that as wickedness among people grew, God effectively withdrew from human affairs, declaring, “*My Spirit shall not strive with man forever,*” and resolved to wipe mankind from the face of the earth (vv. 3, 7). Noah alone found favour with the Lord, and it was he and his family who were spared from the flood that covered the earth.

In His earthly ministry proclaiming the kingdom of God, Jesus acknowledged that the Spirit of God rested upon Him (**Luke 4:18**) and foreshadowed the coming of the Holy Spirit. In **John 7:37–39**, He invited all who were thirsty to come and drink, promising that rivers of living water would flow from within them. John clarifies in verse 39 that this referred to the Holy Spirit, who had not yet been given because “*Jesus was not yet glorified.*” That glorification came through His resurrection and ascension to the Father. This fulfilled prophecy, as Paul notes in **Ephesians 4:8**, quoting **Psalms 68:18** with his own interpretation. In that Psalm, the purpose of the gifts was that “*the LORD God might dwell among*” His people — a promise

the fathers had long foretold, and one fulfilled by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in believers.

Before His crucifixion, Jesus told His disciples that it was actually beneficial for them that He should leave (**John 16:7**). He explained that unless He departed, the Comforter would not come to them; but once He did, He would send the Spirit to them. Jesus also gave them a clear instruction: to remain in Jerusalem until they were “*endued with power from on high*” (**Luke 24:49**). He promised that they would receive power after the Holy Spirit came upon them, and that they would be His witnesses “*in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.*” The Holy Spirit, then, appears to be the power of God who dwells within people, enabling them to live God’s life on earth.

The terms “Holy Ghost” and “Holy Spirit” are not found throughout the entire Old Testament. Nevertheless, the Spirit of God appears from the very beginning, described in **Genesis 1:2** as “*moving upon the face of the waters.*” During that early dispensation, the Spirit’s relationship with humanity was one of selective, temporary presence — He would fill certain individuals for a specific purpose or need, and then withdraw. A clear example is the prophet Balaam, upon whom the “*Spirit of God came*” to enable him to deliver a prophecy (**Numbers 24:2**).

When the prophet Samuel presented Saul to God’s plan for his life as Israel’s first king, he told him that on the journey home, “*the Spirit of God will come upon him,*” with the significant addition that “*he shall be turned into another man*” (**1 Samuel 10:6**). Similarly, on multiple occasions in Samson’s life, the “*Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him*” — at one point so powerfully that he slew a thousand men with nothing but a donkey’s

jawbone (**Judges 15**). The Spirit's work in people took many forms and was not always easy to discern, but one thing was unmistakably clear: this privilege was not extended to everyone.

This was the pattern of God's dealings with humanity until, through the prophet Joel, He revealed a different plan for a future dispensation. God promised that He "*will pour out His Spirit upon all flesh*" (**Joel 2:28–29**) — a promise that, among other things, confirms the Spirit had not previously dwelt in all people. In a sense, this was a reversal of what happened in **Genesis 6**, when human wickedness caused God to withdraw and declare that His "*Spirit will no more strive with man.*" Today we live in that promised new dispensation, whose beginning is known to us as the Day of Pentecost (**Acts 2**) — the very day Jesus had instructed His disciples to await in Jerusalem. After His glorification, He sent the Spirit to fill His disciples, an event that likely forever altered the relationship between God and man. Pentecost was no coincidence. The word literally means "*the fiftieth day,*" and in Jewish tradition it was the second of the three great feasts (**Exodus 23:14–16**) — the feast of the harvest. When God demanded that Pharaoh release the children of Israel "*that they may hold a feast unto Him*" in the wilderness (**Exodus 5:1**), that promise ultimately came to pass on the Day of Pentecost.

The Promise of God Fulfilled

Beyond Joel, Jesus Himself identified the Holy Spirit as the promise of His Father (**Luke 24:49**). **Hebrews 11** offers a striking insight: it recounts ordinary men and women who walked in faith with God, all of whom "*obtained a good report*" yet "*did not obtain the promise*" (v. 39). What was

that promise? Apostle Paul tells us it was the Holy Spirit (**Ephesians 1:13**), described as “*the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession*” (**Ephesians 1:14**).

According to Strong’s Definition, “earnest” refers to money given as a pledge or down payment that guarantees the full amount will follow. In other words, God’s promise to weak and fallen man is that He Himself will take direction of his life through His Spirit until his redemption is complete. Man can now live in full assurance and in God’s power, undisturbed by Satan’s schemes, because — unlike the prophets of old — God now dwells within man to help him live a life that pleases Him through His Spirit. By and through the Holy Spirit, God restores the souls of men and guides them “*in the paths of righteousness for His name’s sake,*” just as David declared in **Psalms 23:3**. This is a gift from God to man. The Holy Spirit in man is God’s promise to the fathers of faith fulfilled in our time.

Hunger and Thirst

In this present dispensation, though God’s Spirit is poured out upon all flesh, we are still called to ask Him for it, and He will give. Although the Spirit is present in the world, we must seek God for His Spirit to dwell within us and work through us. Jesus made this clear in **Luke 11:13**: “*If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?*” Such a thing was impossible in the old dispensation, for God had not yet revealed the full extent of His plans to man as He has now — it was only through types and shadows. The Spirit had not been poured out on all people. In **John 7:37–39**,

we read that “*Jesus stood and cried in the last day, that great day of the feast, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.*”

The prophet Isaiah foretold that of Jesus, “*the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him — the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, of counsel and might, of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD*” (**Isaiah 11:2**). John affirmed this, declaring that “*God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto Him*” (**John 3:34**). Jesus Himself spoke of a hunger and thirst that God answers by filling (**Matthew 5:6**). It appears, then, that even though God has poured out His Spirit upon all flesh in this age, the measure of His Spirit a person possesses is determined by the hunger and thirst of their soul for Him. The Spirit is given to men in measure, and those who hunger and thirst are the ones who get filled.

Jesus was mighty and accomplished everything we read of Him because He possessed the Spirit “*without measure.*” This same path is open to any person who wills to be filled with God. It is precisely what Isaiah prophesied in **Isaiah 55**: he invited all who thirst to “*come to the waters,*” and even those “*without money,*” provided they are hungry, to “*come, buy, and eat — yes, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.*” In the spiritual realm, the only currency, according to this scripture, is hunger and thirst for God.

The story of Mary at the tomb of Jesus may be the most powerful expression of the deep spiritual hunger for God that we are called to cultivate. Mary was so eager to take the body of Jesus that she was ready to carry it the moment the man she mistook for the gardener showed her where it was (**John 20:15**). The Lord’s response to her was all the more remarkable. Jesus had not yet ascended to the Father, and He even instructed Mary not to touch Him —

and yet He could not turn away from the sight of Mary's hungry soul at that tomb. What was so urgent that Jesus had to act in that moment, when a single touch from Mary could have potentially derailed God's plan of salvation? There is a reason David held a special place with God. His hunger, as revealed in his psalms, is unmatched among men. "*My soul thirsteth for Thee, my flesh longeth for Thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is*" (**Psalms 63:1**). "*As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God*" (**Psalms 42:1**).

Hunger and thirst for God has a way of keeping a person young in spirit, regardless of their physical age. Being young in spirit is a prized spiritual possession, as Jesus Himself declared — the kingdom of God belongs to those who are like children (**Mark 10:14, Luke 18:16**). There is a place with God where men do not age. The more a person desires more of God, the more of His life is imparted to them, and the more they are kept young. Eternity touches us here on earth, and our lives are literally shaped by it. Hunger and thirst for God is what keeps us in His presence — for it is impossible for mortals to exhaust Eternity.

The Sons of God

“Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself...” (Ephesians 1:9)

Sonship

Once Jesus completed His earthly mission — His life, death, resurrection, and ascension to the Father — and sent the Holy Spirit to us, the full purpose of God for humanity became clear. The Apostle John captures this in **1 John 3:1**, marvelling at the Father’s love: *“Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.”* He reinforces this in **John 1:12**, declaring that *“as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name,”* and affirms it once more in **1 John 3:2**: *“Beloved, now are we the sons of God.”* Centuries earlier, King David had already sensed this mystery. In **Psalms 8:4** he asked, *“What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?”* Writing under the Spirit’s guidance, David intuited the depth of God’s love for humanity — a question that finds its full answer only in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon mankind.

The coming of the Holy Spirit unveiled a spiritual reality that Scripture long kept hidden in mystery. Paul states in **Ephesians 1:5** that God *“predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace.”* This is perhaps the aspect of the biblical God that proves hardest for some to accept, yet it is undeniably true and stands before us in plain sight. God never abandoned humanity to its own devices, even after man chose to

walk apart from Him. Because the children He created are made of flesh and blood, God Himself descended in that same form as Jesus — “*that through death he might destroy him that had power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage*” (**Hebrews 2:14–15**). God took the initiative in that reconciliation; through Jesus, He came to humanity to show them the way back to Himself (**2 Corinthians 5:19**).

Human history, then, is simply the story of God giving everything to draw back a stubborn humanity into the living relationship and knowledge of Him that He had intended from the very beginning, when He created man in Eden for that purpose — even after man strayed from the path. The Holy Spirit is God Himself dwelling within us to draw us back to Him, leading us home to our Creator. As **Romans 8:14** declares, “*For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.*” Through the Spirit, God is making sons out of men, with Jesus as the perfect example of what it truly means to be a son of God. Because the Spirit of God dwells in us, leading and guiding every step, we are able to “*serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear*” (Hebrews 12:28). Without the Spirit, it is nearly impossible for a person to serve God in a way that pleases Him.

Scripture also makes it clear that it is not only God who awaits the sons. **Romans 8:19** tells us that “*the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.*” The Bible reveals that when the sons of God are manifested — when they live the life of God in His power and strength — it carries direct consequences for all creatures on earth. This is a profound aspect of what God has accomplished for humanity: just as He granted the first Adam the privilege of naming the creatures in Eden and gave him dominion over them,

only for him to lose his way, the Holy Spirit now offers us a new opportunity to exercise absolute mastery over nature.

The author of Hebrews draws on portions of **Psalm 40** to explain why Jesus assumed a human body. David, inspired by the Spirit, affirms that God does not desire sacrifice and offerings but a body —He desires a man who will do His will. In this sense, the law and its ordinances served as, if you will, “*a figure of the true*” (cf. **Hebrews 9:24**), intended to teach humanity, or at the very least, to lead them to the recognition that the source of their life is God Himself. Yet despite all these efforts, the Old covenant achieved little, and so we are told that it was done away with (**Hebrews 8:13**) for, among other things, its inability to “*purge*” our “*conscience to serve the living God*” (**Hebrews 9:14**). Jesus therefore came to reveal to other men the way of sonship toward God (**Hebrews 2:10**) — that is, He shows the descendants of Adam what it truly means to be a son of God.

This then makes perfect sense of why Jesus is called the last Adam. He came not only to pay the price of redemption with His blood, but to serve as the pattern by which humanity is to live and carry out God’s purposes. God now issues the challenge to man: enter a kingdom He has established, free from the corruption of the first Adam. Yet this new kingdom is to be populated only by those who have believed in and accepted the saving grace of God through Jesus, and who bear the seal of the Holy Spirit (**Ephesians 1:13**). Young and old, male and female, every race on the face of the earth is invited to become sons of God, just as God had originally intended with the first Adam in Eden. God, then, is looking for sons for His kingdom.

This is precisely what the prophet Jeremiah foretold in **Jeremiah 31:31–34**: “*Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant*

with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.” In this prophecy, God promised a covenant unlike the one broken at Sinai — no longer an external set of rules to be taught from one person to another, but His law written on the heart itself, accompanied by the complete forgiveness of sin and an intimate, universal knowledge of Him from the least to the greatest. It is truly a blessing for all of us to be alive in such a time, for we are, in a very real sense, living out prophecy before our eyes.

A New Breed of Men

Paul, addressing a dispute in the Corinthian church over the resurrection of the dead, found it necessary to draw attention to the new nature we now possess in Christ. He pointed out that “*since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead*” (**1 Corinthians 15:21**), and then added in verse 22 that just as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. In the verse that follows (v. 23), he goes on to say that “*Christ is the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ’s at his coming.*” In other

words, God is shaping a new kind of humanity after the image of Christ for the kingdom He has established.

The Apostle further clarifies the contrast between the first Adam and the last in **1 Corinthians 15:45–49**. The first Adam, he explains, was made a “*living soul*”, but the last Adam is a “*quickening*” or life-giving spirit. The first was of the earth, earthly in his nature, while the last has a body from heaven, a spiritual one. Paul then reveals that just as we have borne the image of the earthly man, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. Believers, therefore, are new creatures on earth — quite literally not of this world — on their way to a place in a kingdom not made with hands. These are the new breed of people here on earth, waiting for their Lord to appear and take them to be where He is.

Labourers of God

Sonship is not without purpose. God has made us sons for a specific reason: to serve as instruments through whom He will bring many more sons into His kingdom. The ministry of reconciliation that God initiated through Jesus (**2 Corinthians 5:19**) has now been entrusted to us — the Holy Spirit dwelling within and upon us, leading us forward in that charge. **1 Corinthians 3:9** makes this even more explicit, describing us as “*labourers together with God*,” as “*God’s husbandry, God’s building*.” Jesus Himself once urged His disciples to pray to “*the Lord of the harvest that he would send forth labourers into his harvest*” (**Matthew 9:37; Luke 10:2**).

As sons and labourers, then, we walk in the place that Jesus occupied. Whatever He exemplified is what we, in turn, take up. Jesus preached the

kingdom, and so we preach the kingdom. God's work on earth has become our work. God has at last taken His dwelling place in man and is using man to carry out His purposes on earth — and that purpose, according to Jesus, is the harvest of souls. For God has placed the value of a human soul far above anything on earth. Jesus posed the eternal question: “*What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?*” (**Matthew 16:26; Mark 8:37**).

In what many believers today call the Great Commission, Jesus instructs us to “*go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature*” (**Mark 16:15**). He entrusts us with the task of continuing the work God carried out with and through Him to bring us back into alignment with Himself. If we have been privileged to receive this invitation from God, our duty now is to carry this message outward — and as God assists and empowers us, to make the world aware of the gospel: how God has come down from heaven to redeem man and draw him back to Himself.

The Church

When Jesus asked His disciples who they believed Him to be, Peter responded, “*You are the Christ*” (**Matthew 16:13–18**). Jesus affirmed that this declaration did not come from flesh and blood but from His Father in heaven. He then declared, “*Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*” The rock represents the revelation that Peter received from the Father, and it is upon that revelation — the confession that Jesus is the Christ, the Anointed One, the Messiah of God — that the church is built.

The author of Hebrews, explaining how the Messiah's mission was to make sons of God as described above, reveals that the Messiah did not consider it beneath Him to undertake such a task for God. Though He was divine and immortal, He chose to identify with mortals (**Hebrews 2:11**). In verse 12, the author quotes the messianic psalm, **Psalms 22:22**: "*I will declare thy name unto my brethren; in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee.*" In this psalm, the Messiah calls mortals His brethren, and the word "*congregation*" in the Old Testament corresponds to "*church*" in the New.

In the days of King Jehoshaphat, when a vast army gathered against Judah with the intent to destroy it, the people turned to God for deliverance. **2 Chronicles 20:5** records that King Jehoshaphat stood "*in the congregation of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the LORD*", and prayed. In verse 14, we are told that after the king and all the people finished praying, the Spirit of the LORD came upon certain individuals "*in the midst of the congregation.*" It was through those whom the Spirit had come upon that the people received direction for their deliverance, and everything went according to God's word as they obeyed.

The church of Jesus today is no different from the days of old: the Spirit of God dwells in and upon all who have accepted Jesus as their Lord and Saviour. It is among such people that Jesus declares He will make known the name of God the Father to His brethren. The church is not necessarily a building, a denomination, an edifice, or a location. It is wherever a congregation gathers, in each of whom the Spirit of God dwells. Among such people, the mind of God is made known. God guides His people by His Spirit within His church; He reveals secrets to them and shows them how to overcome the attacks of the enemy. The church represents God's instrument

for carrying out His agenda through and among men here on earth. This is why we are admonished in **Hebrews 10:25** *not to forsake the gathering of the assembly.*

Yet the church represents even more before God. In one of the many parables Jesus told about the kingdom, the parable of the great banquet (**Matthew 22:1–14**) depicts a king who prepares a feast for his son's marriage and desires the table to be full of guests. In that parable, the church represents the many gathered from the highways — both good and bad — who are invited as guests. The church is, therefore, the mystical bride of Jesus, the Son of God. This truth is made explicit in **Revelation 21:2** and **9–10**, where the church — referred to as the New Jerusalem in the New Testament, or Zion in the Old — “*comes down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for the husband.*”. The fact that the New Jerusalem was also spoken of by the author of Hebrews in **Hebrews 12:22** before John the Revelator beheld it in his vision only deepens the wonder of it.

The apostle Paul elaborates on this metaphor in **Ephesians 5:22–33**, where the relationship between Christ and the church is compared to the union of a husband and wife. Paul calls it a “*great mystery.*” It is great because it traces all the way back to Genesis, where God established marriage between a man and a woman. This means that God's intention was declared from the very beginning, and throughout the ages it has been progressively revealed to all who will listen, as it continues to be unfolded in time. And as far as the word of God tells us, this will continue until the whole world is filled with it — just as the stone smote the image and became a great mountain that filled the entire earth in Daniel's vision (**Daniel 2:34-35**). The church of God is here to

remain forever, growing ever stronger and more powerful, never diminishing.

Christianity, in essence, is the coming together of many things and yet one thing at the same time. It is the supernatural made manifest in the natural. It is the Immortal God, the Maker of the universe and all that is in it, condescending and coming down to earth to dwell in men, working in and through them for the agenda He alone has purposed and prosecutes. The believer follows the instructions of God as given in His word, inspired and guided by the Holy Spirit, becoming more and more like Jesus, the Son of Man.

It comes with many facets and challenges the order of the world. It humbles the proud and compels them to reckon with the realities of existence. The more one surrenders to its doctrines and teachings, the more the power of God flows through them, enabling them to become what God truly intended for them at their birth and their coming into the world. On the contrary, when one resists it, they quickly discover how utterly impotent man is on earth without God, and how everything suddenly loses its meaning and satisfaction when God has no part in it. This is why Christianity is the good news: God has come to dwell among men, and man now has hope. Praise God.