



ALL IN THE NAME OF



PREFACE

I can distinctly remember times in my life when I wanted there to be a superior being in much the same way as a kid might hope for a super hero. You know; some God like infinite power out there with the ability to champion the cause of the underdog and perhaps take a few shortcuts through the tangled maze of religious agencies to expedite it. Needless to say those lofty thoughts were quickly extinguished like dousing a hot idea with a bucket of ice water. The very idea of breaking the “chain of command” to eliminate God’s earthly representatives was, in my mind, a futile vain exercise.

Much later in life, after living a bit more of it, I was confronted with a compelling challenge that started me on a different thought process changing my attitude to so many things. Even so I never forgot the early thoughts I had of a super hero being thwarted by religious gate keepers. Well, I might be able to laugh at those thoughts now but it occurred to me that I wasn’t laughing at the time, I was angry and suspicious of all religions no matter what persuasion. The fact that we had to engage with and practice all these various doctrines to have access to God was a depressing hopeless feeling, much like being abandoned without hope. So for peace of mind the conclusion was simple; it was much easier to believe that there was no super power, no God and avoid the perils of choosing between all these diverse religious practices.

It is this early memory that has inspired me to reach out to others who might be looking for a super hero in their life. Not necessarily underdogs or even down trodden people but the average person looking for something better than what they see or might have experienced in their search for simple answers.

It is for those people I dedicate this humble outreach.

This is a private publication and is not associated with any organization or religious group. It is not for sale and does not seek payment, donation, obligation or any other commitment by the reader.

ALL IN THE NAME OF

Chapter 1

The existence of organized “practicing atheism” is apparently very active and represented by a global organization “Atheist Alliance International. The Australian branch, Atheist Foundation of Australia Inc. held their conference in March 2010 and by all accounts attracted some heavy weight international participants.

Their mission statement: *An Atheist loves himself and his fellow man instead of a God. An Atheist accepts that heaven is something for which we should work now -- here on earth -- for all men together to enjoy. An Atheist accepts that he can get no help through prayer, but that he must find in himself the inner conviction and strength to meet life, to grapple with it, to subdue it and to enjoy it. An Atheist accepts that only in knowledge of himself and knowledge of his fellow man can he find the understanding that will help to a life of fulfillment."*

One thing must be said of atheist, they don't mince words about their allegiance and as far as a God is concerned, well, there is no concern. Of course under our system of religious freedom they can believe or not believe in anything they choose. In our more recent history these people would have been promptly barbecued for their disbelief, or any belief not conforming to the dictates of the day.

Atheists do not need to prove their hypothesis and beliefs nor do they need state permission to practice or meet. Their “Mission Statement” is not required to be registered or sanctioned by any authority and although this might irk some people it still forms part of the freedoms we all enjoy. To support their views atheists can draw upon an inexhaustible supply of religious examples, such as hypocrisy, subversion, tyranny, wars, extreme persecution, murder, and just about every undesirable human characteristic and practice. So it comes as no surprise to learn that quite apart from atheists there exist a much larger number of people who reject all forms of organized religion for much the same reasons.

Other people have rejected religion on the basis of intellectual reasoning giving way to a more scientific approach. Regardless of how their rejection is perceived or practiced none of the above needs to justify or explain their indifference, nor should they be persecuted by any authority or individual.

Christianity is widely accepted as just another religion and is singled out for a lot of negative criticism, often falling victim to its own contradictions and examples. Much of this criticism may appear to be well founded and if you are using man or man's organizations as an example then it might be fair to state that something stinketh in Christendom. Of course the conclusion to this kind of thinking is: If you need to find a "feel good" religion, then why choose Christianity with all its fragmented contradictions and rival doctrines.

A more cohesive religion like Buddhism, Zen, or Hinduism, may be a better choice. Indeed, there is no squabbling here, each of them having separate disciplines and beliefs and each would appear to be in universal harmony. Besides, what could be wrong with a person working towards perfection, even if that status is never attained think of all the "good will" shed on life's journey by these tireless efforts?

The two main groups of Christianity are generally recognized as Catholic and Protestants. Catholic organizations are, in the main, slick and well organized with appealing window dressings of Godliness. They have a long history of influence and power, even absolute power, much of it now exposed bare to public scrutiny.

On the other hand the Protestant groups, of which there are hundreds, have great difficulty presenting any appeal. Fragmented and diverse these large and small organizations tend to cause much confusion with their different brand names and conflicting doctrines. The cultish practices of some Christian brand groups have come under close scrutiny and bare scant resemblance to mainstream Christianity, tending only to perpetuate the confusion.

Many of the smaller fundamental groups are often made up of simple hard working people, some renowned for giving their services and information away free. Not much appeal here, in fact most outsiders might interpret free as being worthless: Just simple folk with simple beliefs, the soup kitchen of spirituality. I should emphasize that all the above observations are perceived ideas fostered in society and do not necessarily reflect the view of this writer.

The nature of the beast

The subject of human behavioral science is complex and extensive and often broken down into specialised areas of practice. But not all credentials are attained by doctorates and university degrees.

With advertising for example, basic responses of buying behavior are gleaned by simply observing what has been successful in the past. This information is freely available to anyone who cares to research the results of successful advertising campaigns.

Today there are many examples of international companies with very slick Hollywood style advertising creating a global appeal for their brand. Brand names are big business and carry more weight than the substance of the product, in some cases the product is so inferior that close scrutiny or analysis is hardly required. As someone once observed; *"There is a buyer for everything"*. A simple observation perhaps, but nonetheless true. The point is that the world is not only full of useless products but useless information, even as you read this someone somewhere is developing something new. An endless stream of products, theories, ideas, social changes, new sects and religions, indeed some of this marketing spin might even appeal to you. Since the soul of a human being is not designed to be a vacuum something must fill the void. You may, on the basis of rationale, reject a certain God or philosophy but finally you will replace it with something else and let's face it there are thousands of choices in the "something else" category. If after an exhaustive search you fail to find one that suits you then take heart! Simply start your own. You never know, someone, somewhere may want to follow, bringing forth others, bringing forth more. Yes, you too can be the guiding light for hundreds of gullible followers by simply observing the success of proven formulas used in the past. Here are a few points to get you started:

- *Plenty of agonizing and self effacement*
- *Giving up all you have and donating it towards the cause (That's you)*
- *Condemning modern lifestyles as evil and decadent*
- *Isolating your followers from outside influences*
- *Rejecting Governments and authorities to recognize only one authority; (That's you)*

What about qualifications? Or at least some time spent at a bible seminary. Ah, not necessarily required; as a performer it is more important to learn how to use the good book as a prop rather than read or have any knowledge of the contents. You know? Things like how to hold it above your head and shake it with a quivering voice, say it with authority and include: "In the name of" for good effect. That'll get them.

The search for the truth and the quest to find tangible evidence that a real God does exist becomes a minefield of contradictory interpretations with vastly different practices. However, at the centre these practices and common to all are the same finite creatures *"whose breath is in its nostrils"*. Not only is this creature finite but breathing through its nostrils does suggest a very delicate state, whose very existence is dependant on the next breath. Surely such a creature cannot be held responsible for setting the example of perfecting the perceived lofty standards required by a perfect God. Well no! You wouldn't think so, but many religions certainly go a long way to convince us that we can achieve these standards. Not too hard really because in our human thinking we believe that we are capable of producing wonderful and noble deeds. All it takes is to turn this around from occasional to full time wonderfulness. Of course anyone with the IQ of a grasshopper can readily see that this totally virtuous state is as phony as gourmet polony. Full time wonderfulness requires a lot more than the limitations of human perfection hiding behind symbols, robes and images.

The standards we enjoy in the western world today have evolved from chaotic ignorance to a better understanding of a social structure. Certainly we would not tolerate human sacrifices to Gods and idols. We know that the elements are not controlled by vengeful deities demanding blood for appeasement or favor. We know that any carved edifice representing a God that needs to be propped up has no more power than a mushroom. We know that atmospheric conditions, such as lightning and thunder are not the angry voices of the Gods, prompting a head count of the available virgins for sacrifices.

All this might lead you to wonder if these people were real human beings like us. Well quite simply, yes, in fact some scholars will argue that they had much the same level of intelligence as modern man. We must remember that today all our knowledge and advancements have been accumulated and passed down to successive generations. Each generation improving and adding to the immense store of knowledge as we know it today. With the advent of personal computers a vast amount of the world's knowledge is now available at the fingertips of children. People living in our recent history, (a mere 100 yrs ago) could not comprehend such technology; it would literally blow their minds. The point remains that ancient people were not stupid because of their lack of intelligence, causing a state of fear and superstitions. In their ignorance they had no choice but to follow the dictates and Gods adopted by their rulers, some rulers even parading as Gods

themselves. The truth is that barbaric practices and bloody conquest have little correlation to intelligence, as some events of the twentieth century will sadly attest.

A huge benefactor of knowledge is freedom and in the western world we enjoy freedom like no other time in human history. With that freedom there is choice, the freedom to choose our own destiny and lifestyle all within the boundaries of our constitution and laws. Whatever persuasion religious freedom is part of these privileges, again we should state: *In the western world*. Many millions of people in other parts of the world still live under the tyranny of hard line religions and governments with no freedoms to speak of.

Regardless of choice spiritual religion is the source of much confusion; its history no matter what persuasion is dark and questionable and provides the perfect patsy for atheists, agnostics and every other category of Godless thinking. We hardly need to balance the ledger here but there is something bizarre about an intelligent, educated man quietly listening to Bach whilst sensitively tending to his roses. As a principle member of the "Third Reich" this man helped to create the worst barbaric acts of extermination in recorded human history. By all accounts he was an Atheist.

Putting all factions to one side it would be fair to state that there exists a common denominator associated with perpetuating much of this confusion, no prizes for guessing who. Just try to get a consensus (without debate) on any subject of your choice, throw it open to opinion and see how many viewpoints you finish up with? In fact there are only a handful of basic question that 99.9% of people would readily agree.

1) Do humans need oxygen? 2) Do humans need food? 3) Do humans need water? 4) Do humans need shelter?

These are basic irrefutable facts that cannot be argued unless you are completely loopy and want to risk your very life to prove otherwise. Expressed opinion is a wonderful freedom, whereas the opinion expressed might be nonsense the right to express it fulfills the very basis of free thought and volition. But with all that freedom come a constant steam of imaginings that impact our lives in a very real way. Theories, philosophies and opinions tend to become facts which are quickly absorbed into our thinking.

As one observer noted: *"Everyone is entitled to his own opinion, but not to his own facts.* Daniel Patrick Moynihan.

Hardly a day goes by that we don't hear about a new idea, a new way to live, new fashions, new social changes, new governments and new changes to laws, to mention a few. There is nothing certain anymore and anyone who comes even close to some practical truth on any subject is quickly condemned as a passing crackpot with an insignificant opinion. We were all taught right from wrong but find ourselves constantly having to revise these standards. Our language and very thoughts are subjugated to a juggernaut of humanistic thinking. It would appear that the social engineers of our time are frantic in their efforts to control everything, stifling initiative and freedom and outlawing free thinking. It is ironic that initiative and free thinking was the very catalyst that began our industrial revolution giving us all the comforts we enjoy in this modern technological age.

This clearly indicates that man is a very special innovative being. His ability to discover, develop and improve has given us all an amazing life style far beyond our forefather's wildest dreams and imagination. Yet with all this knowledge and advancements we stumble like a drunken hippo when it comes to the basic acceptance of creation. It would appear that we have become victims of our own perceived intelligence preferring to believe that the wonderfulness of man has evolved from Tarzan's little mate. After all, they say; we believed in Santa Claus once, but then we grew up. Of course Santa Claus and creation are one of the same and now that you're all grown up even the parents that raised you can be discarded as superfluous kids stuff.

So the question remains; with all this layback technology designed to make our lives easier why should there be the stress and suffering we see in this world. Why can't we use some of this great knowledge to solve some of mankind's most urgent needs? Nice sentiment perhaps; but unfortunately mankind left to his own devices proves only one thing; Man by man's efforts cannot solve man's problems. History proves it, rationale proves it and most certainly the present state of today's world proves it. Yet we blindly stumble along with our experimental systems of humanism believing that we will find the answers. To say that "something stinketh" extends way beyond Christianity and religion right into the very core of men's affairs. Collectively nothing benefits from this confusion, leaving one to conclude: If there is a God why would He sponsor or permit such chaos. Assuming that He does exist raises this serious question: What does God think about all this confusion? To have any chance of investigating this mystery there must be a point of enquiry, but where do you start? What absolute impeccable source could you rely on?

Would God Himself grant you an interview? Does He have an opinion about all this mess? What does He really think? If indeed He is the creator then surely he must take responsibility for what appears to be a faulty model. A short cut juvenile response perhaps abrogating any responsibility, but nonetheless widely used.

"It's not my fault I was born" How many parents have listened to this stuff from their offspring, I even used it once, but only once. My Mother's response was quiet and patient: We loved you from the first day you came into this world; there never was a day that we didn't, including today.

At this point we might loose some readers because we need to consult a reference not mentioned in previous comments. To those people who find the Bible hard to believe I do sincerely wish them all the very best in their journey. One thing is certain, *where there is life there is hope*. Your free volition is immensely important and your right to believe in whatever you choose is protected by the same God that you might be avoiding.

Chapter 2

I make no pretense in stating that the Bible is indeed the word of God, it does not require defending or debating by me, it stands alone as an absolute. Nothing would be achieved throwing this open to an avalanche of opinions or alternate theories. Even basic methods of the debater's technique can be cleverly used to support or dismiss anything, making right wrong and wrong right. As one commentator observed; *"If you torture the truth long enough it will confess to anything."*

So where does this leave the philosophers, the scholars, and the world's brilliant debaters? God has made the wisdom of this world look foolish. (1 Corinthians 1:20)

Our intention here is to show that man has not been abandoned by a Creator too busy doing other things. Rather, we see a God who has extended the greatest patience and cost to reconcile Himself with puny man. From the Garden of Eden to the present day He has not changed a bit, nor has He been caught by surprise at the turmoil and confusion of today's world. The simple intention here is to present a clear fundamental understanding of exactly what God has to say to you. This is not a generic term or generalization, this is personal. He knows exactly who you are:

Not even a sparrow falls to the ground without God knowing. Fear not, you are more important than a whole flock of sparrows, even the hairs on your head are numbered. (Matt 10 29-30)

In modern day speak God has your genetic code and DNA that is uniquely different in every person. In fact you are a "one off, "never to be duplicated", so there is little doubt that God knows each individual. At the same time he is a gentleman and does not encroach on or violate our free volition. The term "free volition" is something we need to plant firmly in our mind because it forms the key to so many things. (Other than confusion)

So what does God think of man? Is there anyone around today whose natural life is so exemplary that God points to them as an example?

What is God's real evaluation of man?

The greatest of man's righteousness is like filthy rags to God. (Isaiah 64:6)

There are none righteous, no not one. (Romans 3:10).

We all, like sheep, have gone astray. (Isaiah 53:6)

The heart of man is evil above all things and desperately wicked. (Jeremiah 17:9)

All have sinned (failed) and come short of the Glory of God. (Rom 3:23)

Well that's it, we are all stuffed like a festive turkey - He doesn't like us. Even the *greatest of man's righteousness* is condemned. If by now you find yourself squirming or indignant at the above evaluation, I urge you to stick around and consider that a perfect God is making these judgments. In our finite human viewpoint world we have our own way of discerning people; there are some people we admire, so much so that they can influence our lives in very positive ways. So to differentiate between the two viewpoints, that of God and man, we will simply refer to them as **Divine viewpoint** and **human viewpoint**.

For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts higher than your thoughts. (Isaiah 55:8-9)

The Divine viewpoint is saying that we are all a dead loss (unprofitable) and given man's nature there is nothing we can achieve by human efforts to ever be acceptable by God. In order to accomplish this we must be made perfect, not by our own *human good* efforts, referred to as: *The greatest of man's righteousness*; that is closer to religion. Rather, we need Divine intervention here, a plan that will satisfy God's higher standards. A fool proof plan endorsed by the author, God Himself.

We should make some clear distinctions here in order to resolve some of the confusions previously mentioned. Christianity is generally accepted as a religion, in fact a lot of Christians might hesitate when faced with the uncomfortable question; are you religious? The immediate response is often an awkward feeling of association being lumped into the murky world of religion. This might suit the skeptics reasoning because they are constantly armed with a well practiced stinging retort waiting for your answer: Because by answering "yes" you are automatically guilty by association. The real response to that question is: No, by the grace of God I am not religious.

In the English that is considered an “oxymoron”, a statement of contradiction. But there are literally hundreds of examples of contradictory terms and phrases used today that are never challenged and subsequently accepted as the norm.

God has many things to say about religion, none of them good. Christ described religion as: *A whitewashed tombstone, all clean and smooth on the outside, yet full of dead man’s bones.* (Matt 23:27) Many other verses make it abundantly clear that religion and *human good* has been rejected by God as a means for man to gain God’s approval and can be simply summed up as: *Man by man’s efforts trying to gain the approval of God.* On the other hand Christianity should be void of all human works (religion) that seek to gain God’s approval. Quite simply, God has done all the work required here to remove the barrier separating us from God.

For by grace are ye saved through faith; and not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. (Ephesians 2:8-9)

Grace is something not earned or deserved but bestowed an act of generosity or mercy. However, this grace extends to “whosoever”; in this case any member of the human race. Such an extensive benevolence might be better described as an amnesty, a period of grace offered to everyone without fear of prosecution.

The Divine Charter

Objective: To remove the barrier between God and man

Solution: Amnesty (Period of Grace)

Concerning: Whosoever (any member of the human race)

Subject: Free pardon

To Comply: Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ

The Conditions: Unconditional (whilst you still live)

The charter and conditions of this amnesty have been designed and endorsed by God for the very purpose of removing the death sentence imposed on mankind. *For the wages of sin is death.*

Herein is the stumbling block of mankind; free and unconditional does not sit well with our nature. Firstly the suspicion of anything offered free especially something so great. After all we were taught from an early age that rewards come from good behavior, hard work and charity. Indeed in the human realm all these virtues are admired if not always practiced. The very notion that such a generous offer of a free pardon extending to *whosoever* immediately raises the question of comparison. Surely it does not include scum bags, criminals, thugs and every other undesirable human category, does it? Well quite simply, yes it does. The acceptance of grace in the case of criminals or lawless individuals may indeed be a welcome offer. How quickly they might understand the significance of such an offer applying to them. On the other hand many honest law abiding citizens actively doing good in their community might question why they need the same grace. Surely God, who sees all things, has not overlooked all their good deeds. In their own mind they don't imagine themselves as wretched or sinful and are quite content in the knowledge that God will not condemn them. Many of these people belong to religious groups and organizations. Sadly, others of kind, who are not aligned to or part of mainstream religions, are often susceptible to joining one.

From a *human viewpoint* all the above can be inspiring citizens and leaders contributing a great deal of time and effort in their society. Suffice to say they are exemplary citizens and deserve the accolades of men. But this does not in anyway qualify them to receive a special dispensation or exempt them from God's requirements applying to the rest of us. If indeed you consider yourself a good citizen then you reap your own rewards in life. For example, you have maximum freedom, prestige and qualities to pass on to your children. Under man's law criminals are punished whilst good citizen's rights and status are protected. Generally speaking, every generation can do with more good citizens, which in turn benefits the whole society. Nowhere does God state that we are not subject to the law of the land and the offer of a free pardon under this amnesty does not come with a free "get out of jail pass". It might surprise you to know that our prisons are full of Christians answering to the law of the land. So the amnesty referred to here deals with eternal issues, the Divine quest to rescue dying men from a dying world, the good, the bad and all stops in between.

Come now, let us reason together, says the LORD. Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool. (Isaiah 1:18)

It simply requires the act of belief to qualify for all the benefits of this amnesty. *Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved.* (John 3:14)

Whosoever believeth in Him will not perish but have everlasting life. (John 3:16)

These things are written that you might believe that Jesus is The Christ, The Son of God and by believing you will have life in His name. (John 20:31)

Right at this very moment wherever you are, whatever your circumstances you can have eternal life. Not by feeling sorry, changing your ways, fasting, agonizing or any other *human viewpoint* endeavor, but simply by believing.

He that believes on the Son has everlasting life: and he that believes not on the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abides on him. (John 3:36)

It is immensely important here to remember that the offer of salvation is only conditional to your free volition in accepting what God has provided: Belief on the Lord Jesus Christ. At that very moment in time you are stamped, sealed and perpetuated into eternity.

And I give them eternal life; they will never come to destruction, and no one will ever take them out of my hand. (John 10:28)

For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Rom 8:38-39)

This is the promise, the Divine guarantee by the Creator Himself, who, unlike men cannot lie. *God is not a man that He should lie.* (Numb 23:19)

The integrity of God insures your eternal security through the completed work of Jesus Christ and every sin you ever committed, past present and future was poured out on Him and Judged.

He who knew no sin was made sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. (2 Corinth 5:21)

This applies to whomsoever, every member of the human race. So great a sacrifice has not only paid for thousands of your personal sins

but countless billions of whosoever. This completely removes so many false and misleading notions that good behavior gets you to heaven because your personal sins are no longer the issue in salvation. The real issue is: *What think ye of Christ*. We are all judged on this one crucial fact. All your human good deeds on earth might impress others and deservingly so but it falls way short of impressing God. What Christ accomplished on the cross to fulfill God's plan was the greatest gift ever bestowed on humanity. The ramifications are enormous and with it came a period of time given to men known as grace. (*The great amnesty*)

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. (Eph 2:8-9)

Not by works of righteous which we have done but according to his mercy he saved us. (Titus3:5)

The integrity of God to fulfill this promise is beyond question and despite all the ills of this world and all the mockery, yet He abides faithful. It is the very essence of God backing this promise.

The essence of God:

Love

Justice

Omnipresence: Everywhere.

Omnipotent: All powerful.

Omniscience: All Knowing.

Immutable: Unchangeable.

Veracity: Absolute Truth.

The most remarkable point here is that God designed a way to save condemned man without compromising any of these characteristics. This was accomplished in eternity past long before the creation of man. Here is a statement that will have some skeptics licking their chops with glee. However for the time being I will refer you to that old adage, "The truth is stranger than fiction" and deal with this subject in another chapter.

In the meanwhile you don't need an excuse or justification not to believe because it is your right not to. Only God need know your heart, He is making the offer and He alone is your judge. So relax and keep an open mind.

Come now, let us reason together, says the LORD. Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool.(Isaiah 1:18)

We dedicate this closing chapter to those of you who are without Christ, without hope and without eternal life. We want you to know that Jesus Christ had you personally in mind when He went to the cross. So that every sin you ever committed, past, present and future, was poured out on him and judged. *He who knew no sin was made sin for us that we might be made the righteous of God in Him. (2 Corinth 5:21)*

Right now, wherever you are whatever your circumstance you can have eternal life. Not by agonizing, pledging or promising to change but by one simple act of belief.

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved. (John 3:14)
Whosoever believeth in Him will not perish but have everlasting life. (John 3:16)

These things are written that you might believe that Jesus is The Christ, The Son of God and by believing you will have life in His name. (John 20:31)

Chapter 3

Much has been written and practiced by mainstream churches and organization with regard to salvation, all with much the same hope of everlasting heavenly rewards. Of course there are many variation and recipes offered to accomplish this end, some genuine in their endeavors many others with doubtful motives. Trying to work out what is accurate becomes a minefield of confusion causing some people to throw their hands in the air and dismiss the whole thing. Indeed; you may be saying, how can we be certain that this writer is not misleading us? Well good for you, but it is my hope that if nothing else is accomplished here you will at least be able to discern between salvation by grace and the counterfeit salvation offered by religion.

Unfortunately a more common practice of religious power is to control the hapless flock, just as you would imagine sheep following the self appointed Sheppard jingling the keys to the feed bins. If you don't follow the flock and fall back you are left behind with thorns and stubble to graze on. If this were not enough punishment then the unimaginable existence of one lone sheep becomes a very strong deterrent.

Others organizations have the audacity to change and manipulate the bible to become the gatekeepers of heaven, threatening their flock with punishment and even loss of salvation not mentioned in scripture. Regardless of the recipe offered there is one ingredient common to most religious practices and that is the on going participation in retaining one's own salvation. (*Human good*) Firstly the initial need to earn God's approval followed by the endless vigilance to maintain that status. The average person functioning under human good would see nothing wrong with this entire salvation concept, indeed anything worthwhile comes from hard work and sacrifice. From an early age we are conditioned to believe that rewards and treats are given for good behavior and obedience. Rightfully so, there is nothing wrong with teaching these incentives except it belongs and should stay in the category of *human viewpoint* when dealing with the subject of salvation. The confusion begins with trying to impose this very *human viewpoint* into the realm of *Divine viewpoint* and failing to understand or accept what grace really means. In simple terms: There is nothing you can do or achieve to earn or deserve your salvation; it is a gift, a free gift that carries only one non-meritorious condition. *Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved.*

Whereas this gift is free to you it wasn't free to acquire, indeed the highest price imaginable was paid to secure it.

For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in him shall not perish but have everlasting life. (John 3:16)

By the simple act of believing you are standing by Christ's perfection and not of your own. God is then free to impute the righteousness of Christ to you and call you His son. No where in the bible does it state: Believe and join a church, believe and give up drinking, believe and give up the good times, believe and stop lying, believe and marry your lover, believe and give away your money. Some of these things you might be led to do but they are not a condition of your salvation. Any human deed such as: sacrifice, agonizing, fasting, charity, love, self improvement, or any other form of do-ism required for salvation is strictly legalism, the playmate of religion. These motives are not only antagonistic to grace but are deceptive and cruel in the way they distort the truth and mislead others. "Come as you are" is a literal term with a very practical application, requiring no appointment, no forward notice and no preparation.

Reading the bible some people might see what appear to be contradictions or at the very least favoritism. Armed with human viewpoint they might seize upon the opportunity to exploit the negative, claiming the whole lot to be a scam. For example: we read: *All have sinned and come short of the glory of God. There is none righteous, no not one.* So according to this we are all in the same boat and bound for damnation. On the other hand God speaks of certain people as belonging to Him.....*these are mine and I shall spare them.* So to a rational mind there is only one conclusion: God is showing some favoritism here by choosing out some of the damned. Of course this raises the question; if we are all in the same boat then why this favoritism, why have some been selected. Quite simply: **because they choose to be selected.** Incredible as it may seem, it is not God's choice, it is ours. In fact God laments that many will not be saved.

The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is long suffering toward us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repent (change of mind). (2 Peter 3-9)

Here we can readily see God's motives: *not willing that any should perish*, this clearly indicates that our salvation is entirely our choice.

He cannot and will not interfere with free volition. For this very reason it is important that people live in a society where each person has the maximum freedom and privacy to choose. Also you will note in the same verse where God is said to be *long suffering*, expressing absolute patience dealing with us. We can't even begin to understand what God must see here on earth, yet with all the man made horrors, cruelty and misery, He abides faithful.

A reasonable person might pause long enough to wonder what could be so imperative about God's desire to strive with man. Sure there is the promise of everlasting life but what about our status here and now, what exactly happens from the minuet we are saved. After all we are still human with human failures living in a wild reckless world. So to even begin to understand the importance of just one person being saved we can refer to God's Angels as an example, said to be intently watching human history.

In the same way, I tell you that there is joy in the presence of God's angels over one sinner who repents. (Luke 15:10.)

So what exactly causes such a response from creatures far superior to us, obviously there must be some inside information not commonly known here on earth, a secret perhaps that is hidden from our knowledge. It is true that there are things that God has said are too fantastic for us to understand.

But as it is written, "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has imagined the things that God has prepared for those who love him. (1 Corinth 2:9.)

From this we can clearly see that eternity is not just lounging around on cloud nine playing a harp. Indeed it is far too wonderful for our finite minds to understand and therefore kept for a time when we do. In the meanwhile the question remains: what about now? A new believer dressed up in human flesh living in "cosmos diabolicus". What exactly is their status? The bible has much to say about the believer's relationship and status right from the very first minuet of salvation.

Barrier between God and believer removed: John 3:18, 5:24 Rom 8:1

Adopted: Rom 8:15, 8:23 (Future) Ephesians 1:5.

Son of God: John 1:12, 2 Corinth 6:18, 1 John 3:2.

Ambassador: 2 Corinthians 5:20

Priesthood: direct access to God. 1 Peter 2:5 & 2:9 Rev 1:6.

Blameless: (no condemnation) Rom 8:1

Equal heirs with Christ: Rom 8:17, Eph 1:14, Col 3:24, Heb 9:15, 1Peter 1:4.

A new creation: 2 Corinth 5:17, Galatians 6:15, Eph 2:10.

Transferred into Gods Kingdom: Col 1:13.

Member of the family and household of God: Gal 6:10, Ephesians 2:19.

A saint of the “new species: 2 Corinthians 5:17.

Recipient of eternal life: John 3:15, 10:28, 20:31, 1 John 5:11-12

These are some examples of over thirty things provided by God for every believer at the point of salvation, none of which are earned or ever deserved. Perhaps by now you may be coming to terms with “amazing grace” and have good reason to raise your voice when next you hear this song. Not only was this wretch saved but was bestowed with titles and position far beyond that which music and words can express. Good reasons for the Angels in heaven to cheer, for not only do they know these things but also the coming promise.

“No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has imagined the things that God has prepared for those who love him. (1 Corinth 2:9.)

To say mind boggling is an understatement and you might be left wondering why so many people don't take up this extraordinary offer of grace. Needless to say there are many reasons why people shun the Gospel; some of which have been previously sighted. Personally I do have some sympathy for those people who have bitter memories and bad experiences with religious groups. Sadly those memories can be very damaging and cause a great deal of mistrust and suspicion.

To those people I say: *Look not to man whose breath is in his nostrils. Of what account is he. (Isaiah 2:22.)*

Let's make a buck

The gospel is not for sale at any price and those who seek to exploit and profit from it for their own selfish gains or control are in for a rude shock. People find the most extraordinary things to salvage and sell, for some it is nothing more than survival for others it is trickery. The bible has proven to be a good source of income for dodgy operators and continues to attract weirdoes, manipulators and control freaks. Even a failed course in philosophy, the right color eyes, long greasy hair and sandals will get you a start here.

Your decision to accept Gods grace is private, your dialogue with God is private, your failures are private, your prayer is private; even your thoughts before the Lord are private., No order, authority, organization or man need intercede on your behalf and God does not need gophers or brokers to act on his behalf. Oops! I think we just cut out the middle man.

Before venturing any further we need to make sure that man's participation here is not completely dismissed like discarded bathwater. Far from it: In fact Christians play a vital role during their time on earth. From the moment of salvation each believer is given a special gift possibly based upon personal talents and capacity. Regardless God has the ability to impute special talents if He so chooses. So there is a distinct difference between Christians who provide the Gospel to others and Christians who interfere with the grace principals of the Gospel. There is no substitute for Christians who have a good fundamental knowledge of the word and able to teach or help others. Hardly would you think that any of the twelve things listed above are mere titles with no practical reason or use.

To understand man's predicament relating to "sin" it is necessary to firstly understand that sin is not so much of an option between good and bad behavior, like drunken one day, sober the next. Sin relates to the very nature of man, an inherent state that is completely out of his control. *There is none righteous, no not one.* By this, does it mean that God has looked around and failed to find one righteous person? Or God should review his appraisal since this was written a long time ago and there might be a few good ones around today.

No, God is very much aware of the human condition and like a leopard we may whitewash our spots but the leopard will never become a vegetarian.

From the Garden of Eden man inherited what is referred to as: "The Old Sin nature" (Imputed sin) that is a state of being that cannot by itself, produce perfection. The true definition of sin is: *falling short of the glory of God. (Rom 3:23)* Whereas the glory of God is God's perfect character, so man through Adam inherited a nature that separates us from God, a barrier that cannot be bridged by human efforts.

To ever consider where to start categorizing human failings is mindboggling. God refers to as sin, whether it be one or one billion sins it falls short. Sure we might be able to name a few extreme ones that from a social point of view are not acceptable, especially those that harm or affect others. And we all have our own personal taboos, things that are most abhorrent to us that we wouldn't dream of doing. But what would you imagine God's to be. Are there any sins that He sites as being bad enough or worthy of stating in the bible.

There are six things the LORD hates, seven that are detestable to him: Haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked schemes, feet that are quick to rush into evil, a false witness who pours out lies and a person who stirs up conflict in the community. (Prov 6:16-1)

Surprisingly six of the above can be committed before you leave your own house, even seven if you murder someone there. These can be all render down from their origin and summed up in three categories.

Three are sins of the tongue. Three are mental attitude sins. One overt sin: Murder.

Under our system there are only two of the above that break the law: Murder and false witness. Of course false witness usually applies to our court system and is referred to as "perjury". But "a false witness pouring out lies" could be anyone who causes grief in somebody's life by false accusation, rumor mongering, written or verbal slander. No one, at least no one real will deny that some sin is fun. In fact some of the more popular ones are keenly sought, most are legal and quite acceptable by western society. In the main these fun harmless pursuits involve pleasures that are referred to as natural;

Others are simply dismissed as fun or entertainment. Regardless they become the “right of passage” to consenting adults and experimenting adolescents.

Thinking, breathing, eating and living in the world of human viewpoint is very difficult especially when confronted with a Devine viewpoint that is never wrong. Our very nature wants to question, debate and challenge things, but debating absolutes is far too absolute for our minds to accept. Surely, we say, there must be a trick or angle to all this bible stuff and salvation, all you need to do is find it.

Firstly what is glaringly obvious is that the bible doesn't take into account today's modern lifestyles and is far too ridged by our standards? Also the original translation was crude and possibly conveying the wrong meanings; surely we can do a much better job of this today. At the same time we can bring together some of the best academics and religious leaders to help with a more balanced translation to include all faiths. So after months of grueling debate and argument a new International United Christianity is born and the very best of human reasoning is unveiled. Now the simple Gospel has been buried under an avalanche of hotchpotch human viewpoints and endless goodwill gobbledygook, turning this victory into an enormous loss. Firstly for those who conceived it and the hundreds or even thousands that might believe it?

Eternal security

What better way to start this subject than quote directly from God, the author of eternal security.

For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come. Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Rom 8:38-39).

We see all the most powerful forces on earth stated here to assure the believer that there is nothing that can separate them from God. In a split second from the moment you believe, you enter into the plan of God and He seals you for all eternity.

And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish; neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.

My Father, which gave them to me, is greater than all and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. (John 10: 28-29)

So, don't let anyone ever suggest that you can lose your salvation by some personal failure or misdeed; that is impossible. To ever consider that your failures are greater than all the forces listed previously is arrogant beyond belief. How sad that some people don't even know they are still saved. Perhaps many years ago they did believe but became disillusioned by their own failures and convinced that they will never measure up. If this sounds like you I strongly urge you to re-evaluate your position and remove that huge burden you might be carrying around.

A well known story in the bible is the parable of "The Prodigal Son" and widely associated with children's bible stories. However it is way past appropriate that we bring this valuable information back into the Christian adult life where it belongs. The analogies associated with this story are particularly relevant to the subject of eternal security and invaluable to anyone needing this assurance.

¹¹ *Jesus continued: "There was a man who had two sons. ¹² The younger one said to his father, 'Father, give me my share of the estate.' So he divided his property between them.*

¹³ *"Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living.*

¹⁴ *After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. ¹⁵ So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. ¹⁶ He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything.*

¹⁷ *"When he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! ¹⁸ I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. ¹⁹ I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants.' ²⁰ So he got up and went to his father. **But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.***

²¹ *"The son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.'* ²² *"But the father said to his servants, 'Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet.*

²³ *Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate.*

²⁴ *For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.'* So they began to celebrate.

²⁵ *"Meanwhile, the older son was in the field. When he came near the house, he heard music and dancing. ²⁶ So he called one of the servants and asked him what was going on. ²⁷ 'Your brother has come,' he replied, 'and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.'* ²⁸ *"The older brother became angry and refused to go in. So his father went out and pleaded with him. ²⁹ But he answered his father, 'Look! All these years I've been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. ³⁰ But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!"*³¹

"My son,' the father said, 'you are always with me, and everything I have is yours.

³² *But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found."*

The highlighted section (verse 20) again supports eternal security and the principal "Once a son, always a son". Regardless of the son's recklessness God the Father demonstrates His love for a lost son. The parable goes on to include the brother's attitude to this benevolence. He states his objections with great passion and then concludes with his own version of a good time: *He squandered your property with prostitutes*. This was never specifically mentioned, nor did we have a breakdown of exactly what was involved in "wild living". The brother in this parable is a fellow Christian, or brother in Christ, his reasoning, however compelling, is pure human viewpoint. How often did he daydream about a bit of excitement in his own life but feared the Father's judgment. But now it would appear that all these suppressed urges were in vain, he too could have let off a bit of steam for little or no consequence. Sometimes there is just a smudge of unfulfilled longing and jealousy involved when we judge others.

You might have heard the term, “Born again Christian” referring to the regeneration or rebirth associated with being saved. Quite simply it is an analogy which describes the beginning of a new person (*John 3*) and from this rebirth the status “Son of God”. The term “born” further describes the believer’s eternal security i.e.: once born you cannot be unborn. Furthermore God knows exactly how many sons He has, the idea that you can lose your salvation would completely negate this statement. It would be like saying that God really doesn’t know how many sons he has because it’s difficult to know, varying from good behavior days to bad days. That I’m afraid is far too whimsical and circumstantial for a Divine plan and places too much importance on the actions of a mere mortal. Finally, there is only one unforgivable sin and that is failing to accept Christ as Savior.

We dedicate this closing chapter to those of you who are without Christ, without hope and without eternal life. We want you to know that Jesus Christ had you personally in mind when He went to the cross. So that every sin you ever committed, past, present and future, was poured out on him and judged.

He who knew no sin was made sin for us that we might be made the righteous of God in Him. (2 Corinth 5:21)

Right now, wherever you are whatever your circumstance you can have eternal life. Not by agonizing, pledging or promising to change but by one simple act of belief.

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved. (John 3:14)
Whosoever believeth in Him will not perish but have everlasting life. (John 3:16)

These things are written that you might believe that Jesus is The Christ, The Son of God and by believing you will have life in His name. (John 20:31)

Chapter 4

So if you got this far it might be safe to say that at least you have a basic clear understanding of what the Gospel of Jesus Christ is and how you can be part of the plan of God. No gimmicks, no handstands, no guilt, no rituals, just come as you are. If it makes you feel better, then take a deep breath even so that is optional. “As you are” is the operative term that requires no preparation, no appointment and definitely no agonizing first. If you feel a restless stirring inside but haven’t quite made up your mind yet then relax, after all there is no “sign up gotcha” working here.

Where to now

Assuming that you have made the greatest decision of your life and chose to accept God’s gift, the burning question is what happens now? What do I need to do? People feel different things from the very moment they are saved, some have quite a euphoric experience, others much like myself; speak of a warm feeling surging through their body. A more common experience is the feeling of a great weight being lifted. In your case it might have been a peaceful feeling of wellbeing. Regardless, none of the above are essential reactions to confirm your salvation.

One thing common to all new believers is their delicate state as any newborn would be. Newborns start with milk and graduate to solid foods, then finally they can sink their teeth into a real piece of meat. In the case of new believers the time span varies but it is directly linked to the amount of information that the individual can absorb. In the ancient city of Corinth Paul the apostle was addressing a whole congregation that was still on milk and not progressing.

I have fed you with milk, and not with solid food: for until now you were not able to bear it, neither yet now are you able. (1Cor 3:2)

What was the imperative about this or any congregation being able to take solid food? Bear in mind that solid food mentioned here is an analogy for good solid information and that is the key to this very subject “Where to now”.

To understand the importance of good solid information (bible doctrine) it might be helpful to take a look at the writer’s motives here.

Paul was considered one of the greatest believers of all time but that was not always the case. Before his conversion Paul was known as Saul of Tarsus a gung-ho very zealous Pharisee. As a principal member of this highly religious sect Saul took great pride in going from door to door rounding up Christians and jailing them for what was seen as blasphemy against God's law. The sect of the Pharisee was not only one of the most religious organizations of the day but had great influence with governance.

Remarkable that God would choose this nasty zealot to do anything but die on the spot. But whilst on the road to Damascus to pick up a fresh batch of Christians Jesus Christ struck him blind with a strong light. This must have been quite a shock to Saul and while he was on his knees Jesus Christ spoke to him.

And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: ⁴ And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? ⁵ And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom you persecute: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. ⁶ And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do. (Acts 9:3-7)

Paul was there for 3 days before his eyesight gradually returned and during that time had plenty to think about. Ananias was sent by The Lord to administer to him. The point of this story is to reveal that Paul as a religious man knew the strategies of religion and how it could be used to infiltrate and contaminate the simple Gospel. For this reason he became qualified to know exactly how to handle the barrage of religious interference that a Christian congregation would receive and what they needed to thwart it.

Reading the book of Galatians it's clear that Paul was concerned about their baby status (little knowledge) and subsequently what happened when he left town. Basically, easy pickings for the religious groups to criticize Paul's teaching claiming that "The Jewish Law" should still apply to their lives. Typically, this is how legalism works with religion and is always antagonistic to the saving grace of Christ. As an educated adult can you imagine being lured away with a bag of lollies, or allowing someone to convince you that Santa Claus really does exist.

At the very least you might sink your grown up meat eating teeth into some fleshy part of their anatomy, lovingly of course? The point is that new Christians are vulnerable to influences from every point of the compass and you must learn how to discern what someone is trying to sell you. God is not the author of confusion and if you have the desire to clue yourself up then you have a direct line to Him so everything you might read or be told can be tested. The best lies are always mixed with some truth, like sugar with unpalatable medicine. A good example of this can be seen when Jesus Christ was tempted in the wilderness by Satan.

In Matthew 4, we read. *And Satan took Jesus up to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms. These are mine and I will give them all to you if you will fall down and worship me.*

Quite a stunning claim, “*these are mine*”. In fact that is true, Satan owned the whole lot and still does so he is able to give them to whoever he wants. Jesus didn’t deny this claim but addressed the lie, “*if you will fall down and worship me*” And Jesus replied, Get thee going for it is written there shall be no other Gods before me. After hearing that Satan departed.

Your personal relationship with God is dependant on your basic knowledge of what God requires. For example: As unbelievers all our personal sins were not the issue at salvation, quite simply because everyone is born into sin and from the age of accountability we all habitually sin. But once we become a Christian what happens then, what is God’s attitude to our personal sins. This is where religion can run wild with condemnation even threatening loss of salvation.

Hardly would God devise such a perfect plan for our rescue and not make some provisions for our Christian life. The fact is that we will fail because the “old sin nature” still resides in us and there will be some toll. The important thing is to know what provisions have been made for us and what to do about it. Indeed there will be many times in our lives when we don’t know that we have sinned, not surprising really when we understand how easy it is to fail. (See page 15)

When Christians knowingly sin they temporary cut off communications to God. I say temporary because we have been given the power to connect up again. *If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me : (Psalms 68:18.)*

The solution: *If we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us of our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1st John 1:9.)*

By simply naming your sins God is free to not only forgive our known sins but also to cleanse us from all (unknown) sins, stated as: *All unrighteousness*. Now here is the clincher, the following verse (1st John 1:10) sums up our status quo and puts things into prospective, lest as believers we become self righteous. *If we say we have not sinned, the truth is not in us and we make God a liar.* It is abundantly clear from this verse that we will fail, how often or how repetitive is an unknown quantity. One thing is certain God has made this provision to allow us to pick ourselves up and get on with it and not sit around moping about failing. In this way we can have the maximum time in fellowship with Him and be reassured that our prayers are being heard.

One of the most flattering things God ever said about a person concerned David. Quote: *He, David is a man after my own heart.* Yet when we read the account of David and Bathsheba we are left to wonder why God would think of David in this way. The full account of 2 Samuel Ch 11-12 is worth reading.

11 In the spring, at the time when kings go off to war, David sent Joab out with the king's men and the whole Israelite army. They destroyed the Ammonites and besieged Rabbah. But David remained in Jerusalem.

² One evening David got up from his bed and walked around on the roof of the palace. From the roof he saw a woman bathing.

The woman was very beautiful, ³ and David sent someone to find out about her. The man said, "She is Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam and the wife of Uriah the Hittite."

⁴ Then David sent messengers to get her. She came to him, and he slept with her. (Now she was purifying herself from her monthly uncleanness.) Then she went back home. ⁵ The woman conceived and sent word to David, saying, "I am pregnant."⁶ So David sent this word to Joab: "Send me Uriah the Hittite." And Joab sent him to David.

⁷ When Uriah came to him, David asked him how Joab was, how the soldiers were and how the war was going. ⁸ Then David said to Uriah,

"Go down to your house and wash your feet." So Uriah left the palace, and a gift from the king was sent after him.

⁹ But Uriah slept at the entrance to the palace with all his master's servants and did not go down to his house.

¹⁰ David was told, "Uriah did not go home." So he asked Uriah, "Haven't you just come from a military campaign? Why didn't you go home?"¹¹ Uriah said to David, "The ark and Israel and Judah are staying in tents,^[a] and my commander Joab and my lord's men are camped in the open country. How could I go to my house to eat and drink and make love to my wife? As surely as you live, I will not do such a thing!"

¹² Then David said to him, "Stay here one more day, and tomorrow I will send you back." So Uriah remained in Jerusalem that day and the next. ¹³ At David's invitation, he ate and drank with him, and David made him drunk. But in the evening Uriah went out to sleep on his mat among his master's servants; he did not go home.¹⁴ In the morning David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it with Uriah. ¹⁵ In it he wrote,

"Put Uriah out in front where the fighting is fiercest. Then withdraw from him so he will be struck down and die."¹⁶ So while Joab had the city under siege, he put Uriah at a place where he knew the strongest defenders were. ¹⁷ When the men of the city came out and fought against Joab, some of the men in David's army fell; moreover, Uriah the Hittite died.¹⁸ Joab sent David a full account of the battle. ¹⁹ He instructed the messenger:

"When you have finished giving the king this account of the battle, ²⁰ the king's anger may flare up, and he may ask you, 'Why did you get so close to the city to fight? Didn't you know they would shoot arrows from the wall?' ²¹ Who killed Abimelek son of Jerub-Besheth^[b]? Didn't a woman drop an upper millstone on him from the wall, so that he died in Thebez? Why did you get so close to the wall?' If he asks you this, then say to him, moreover, your servant Uriah the Hittite is dead."

²² The messenger set out, and when he arrived he told David everything Joab had sent him to say. ²³ The messenger said to David, "The men overpowered us and came out against us in the open, but we drove them back to the entrance of the city gate.

²⁴ Then the archers shot arrows at your servants from the wall, and some of the king's men died. Moreover, your servant Uriah the Hittite is dead."

²⁵ David told the messenger, "Say this to Joab: 'Don't let this upset you; the sword devours one as well as another. Press the attack against the city and destroy it.' Say this to encourage Joab."

²⁶ When Uriah's wife heard that her husband was dead, she mourned for him. ²⁷ After the time of mourning was over, David had her brought to his house, and she became his wife and bore him a son. But the thing David had done displeased the Lord

Wow, the crimes here are unspeakable and certainly did not go unnoticed or covered up by God. *But the thing David had done displeased the Lord.*

Following this The Lord sent Nathan to David to have him deliberate on a matter of justice concerning one of his subjects.

And the Lord sent Nathan unto David. And he came unto him, and said unto him, there were two men in one city; the one rich, and the other poor. ² The rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds: ³ But the poor man had nothing, save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up: and it grew up together with him, and with his children; it did eat of his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter.

⁴ And there came a traveler unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that was come unto him; but took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come to him. ⁵ And David's anger was greatly kindled against the man; and he said to Nathan, As the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die: ⁶ And he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity. ⁷ And Nathan said to David, Thou art the man. Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, I anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul; ⁸ And I gave thee thy master's house, and thy master's wives into thy bosom, and gave thee the house of Israel and of Judah; and if that had been too little, I would moreover have given you more.

David immediately confesses to his crimes, no excuses no blaming others, no defense, he was guilty before the Lord. It is very touching when we read exactly what God had given to David, exclaiming: *And if that had been too little, I would have given you more.*

So why did David transgress in this way when he had everything a man could desire. Winding back to the start of this disaster what was the motivator here other than seeing a woman taking a bath. Was she more beautiful than all his other wives, did he lack feminine company or was he deprived of sex?

No, David's problem was none of these, quite simply he was out of fellowship with God and thus susceptible to his personal weaknesses. The fact that David was in town at the time, when as King he should have been with his army indicates that he was out of line and setting the stage for this folly.

The principal here is very compelling and vitally important to Christians who are out of fellowship and compound their mistake with more or even greater ones. What we ultimately learn from this is that "out of fellowship" is a temporary self imposed separation from God and in this state we are all very susceptible to the old sin nature looking for a bit of action or gratification. Make no mistake about it, a Christian out of fellowship can imitate a non believer and left unchecked for a long period of time their lifestyle and actions can appear even worse. The Lord punished David for his crimes and he later lost his first born son from his union with Bathsheba. But true to His promise The lord never gave up or abandoned him.

We are told that as Christians we have three powerful enemies, THE WORLD, THE FLESH, and THE DEVIL (Satan). Each of these can take their toll in the Christian life and much more so if we don't know or fail to acknowledge the existence of these powers.

THE WORLD

This is an enormous subject that requires a lot more than the thin veneer treatment we can offer here. Most certainly the physical world exists, we live in it so hardly could we deny that it doesn't exist. Despite the fact that we have trashed it the natural world is still a beautiful place and abounds with the creation and wonders of God the Father.

Take a look around you, the whole world testifies of my existence so you are left without an excuse oh man.

So whatever argument you might have to the contrary it is strictly between you and God.

So how can the physical created world ever be called an enemy? Well its not, but rather the philosophies and systems of the world are, appropriately refer to as 'Cosmos Diabolicus'.

You might have already come to the conclusion that the world is staggering under the weight of a population now exceeding 7 billion people. We are constantly bombarded with up-to-date information on the state of the world and endless reports of human suffering bought about by famine, disease and wars. Amidst all these tragic events we see the very best and worst aspects of human nature expressed like two sides of a coin. Whilst some are busy with genocide, wars, rape, torture, and just about every other cruel act of unimaginable horror, others are totally dedicated to the rescue and rehabilitation of these poor souls. In fact we have countless organizations thousands of professionals and many more thousand volunteers working tirelessly in what seems to be a never ending quest to alleviate human suffering.

It is all the efforts of *human good* that come into focus when we refer to "THE WORLD" falling into the category of "Man by mans efforts trying to solve mans problems". As commendable as this may sound it is mostly void of any reliance or recognition of God and therefore doomed to fail. Whether it is The United Nations, Climate change, International socialism, feed the poor, International religion, or any other global initiative to save or elevate mankind. I hasten to add that the charitable deeds and kindness of many individuals is not diminished by this statement. I was reminded of this fact with a short stay in hospital recently. The dedication shown by the nurses and staff was, to say the least amazing and far beyond the call of duty and meager pay: I have nothing but admiration for them.

Unfortunately, disguised in this milk of human kindness and *human good* are all the social engineers that have such an impact on our daily lives with seemingly endless changes to our family and laws. They have a well hidden agenda that really amounts to international socialism, far more controlling than our local grown form of socialism.

In Australia and much of the western world we have seen the greatest social upheavals in human history all adopted without a whimper. Some are so divisive that we have lost track of our very identity, even control over our own children and lives, yet how quickly our governments have committed us to these changes.

Generally the world has a philosophy that is rehearsed and repeated like grade 3 poetry. Many of its systems have been designed and orchestrated by an entity said to be the god of this world. It is woven into every facet of our lives and disguised in many forms, but no matter how it might be camouflaged and served up it all has a common thread: Godless.

As Christians we are: "*in the world but not of the world*," meaning we live in the world physically but should not get distracted or caught up by all the worldly social issues. Collectively the future of man is not dependant on man made solutions and initiatives, it will continue until The Lord declares: *That is enough*. It is therefore enough for us to know that all things will stagger along until that time.

THE FLESH

Well we should know enough about this subject living in today's world. However prudish or restrained you might be yourself you still have a mind with imagination and a body with certain desires and needs, *The spirit is strong but the flesh is weak*, sums this up adequately. Again the world is there to help convince you that anything goes; *if it feels right for you then it can't be wrong*.

Regardless of your choices (bar few) you should be free to practice them. If in fact you want to be trendy then you are only restricted by your own imagination, however sick. Of course the poor old flesh and blood representing the body is by no means the guilty party here; the term *flesh* in this case is what controls it. If you remove the control of the mind from the flesh (comatose state) then you are left with a body completely incapable of feelings, hunger, desires and performance. So in this case any references we make to the *flesh* is what controls it, the mind. Previous chapters dealing with the nature of man particularly his inherent state referred to as: *The old sin nature* clearly shows that the OSN cannot by itself produce anything that satisfies God's requirements; it is born corrupt and stays that way all our lives. Only in the case of believers is there the power, not to get rid of it but

overcome the strangle hold it has over us. To fight against the flesh is by no means easy especially when there is conflict between two standards, that of God's and the more appealing world of self gratification. Indulgence would appear to be the norm whether we talk about ambitions, power lust, fame or basic indulgencies such as: Food, sex, possessions, comfort, drugs etc. Some of this pampering can become excessive and manifest into compulsive and addictive behavior. In a different way even Paul the apostle wrestled with the old sin nature and recognized the power it can have over us.

Romans 7:15 -20

What I am doing, I do not understand; for I am not practicing what I would like to do, but I am doing the very thing I hate.

But if I do the very thing I do not want to do, I agree with the Law, confessing that the Law is good. So now, no longer am I the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me. For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not. For the good that I want, I do not do, but I practice the very evil that I do not want. But if I am doing the very thing I do not want, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me.

I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wants to do good. For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man, but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members.

Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin.

In our desperate search for happiness we experiment with and pursue all manner of things that might bring some contentment in our lives. But too often we are left disillusioned even after attaining these goals and become frustrated in our search for happiness. From a Christian prospective if you recognize these symptoms then you probably have mind on self and not the on The Lord. The flesh is absolute proof of your finite state and although it is governed by human viewpoint it by no means has total control if you don't want it to.

The lord has provided you with 24-7 help here in the form of The Holy Spirit, it is this very force that speaks to you, helps you understand and protects you, often from yourself. Being aware and receptive to this power is the front line defense to controlling the weaknesses of the flesh and the build up of human viewpoint toxins that constantly nag. The antidote to which is Devine viewpoint, (bible doctrine).

There are times when you might feel very much alone, not only for company but in your belief. But God is there to assure you with this cast iron promise: *I will not forsake nor will I ever desert you. (Heb 13:5).* With this firmly planted in your mind you will begin to see the vanity of your weaknesses and accept that you are here for a very grand purpose, for there is nothing grander.

SATAN (The Devil)

Close the hatches, bar the doors and take cover we are about to enter into a subject that can disrupt even your very reading of this subject. For those of you who are believers I strongly urge that you duck under the bomber's wings and take refuge in the knowledge that: *Greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world. (1 John 4:4)*

The Devil has many titles in the bible; names we will use here are Dragon, Satan, (Lawyer for defense) Devil, (Diablo, accuser-slanderer) and Lucifer, (Bright morning star). So who is he exactly?

You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was your covering, carnelian, topaz, and jasper, chrysolite, beryl, and onyx, sapphire, carbuncle, and emerald; and wrought in gold were your settings and your engravings. On the day that you were created they were prepared. With an anointed guardian cherub I placed you; you were on the holy mountain of God; in the midst of the stones of fire you walked.

You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created, till iniquity was found in you. In the abundance of your trade you were filled with violence, and you sinned; so I cast you as a profane thing from the mountain of God, and the guardian cherub drove you out from the midst of the stones of fire. Your heart was proud because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor. I cast you to the ground" (Ezekiel 28:13-17)

This is quite a stunning creature and said to have a voice like music or be capable of producing musical instruments from his own voice. To see him stand before you today in his true physical form would be nothing short of astounding, you would hardly believe your eyes. Yet he has successfully replaced this image with a mythical grotesque looking red monster, clawed fingers and toes, horns protruding from the head, a spearhead tail and a trident to complete the image.

The greatest trick that Satan ever pulled was to convince the world he doesn't exist. Charles Baudelaire 1821-1867.

Certainly if the world needs an image of the devil then Satan has done a good job in not only providing one but camouflaging and confusing his real *modus operandi*. To further understand his agenda we must first look at past events and what took place at time before mankind was created.

*"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! 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 14:12-17)*

Here you will see the five "**I wills**" that ultimately caused the downfall of Satan and his followers. Whether he thought or demonstrated these ambitious intentions is not made clear, however we are talking about a highly intelligent being many times smarter than human capacity.

It's not too hard to understand how such a creature was greatly admired amongst all the angelic creations, no doubt receiving a lot of praise and attention. So much In fact that Lucifer developed a false pride and became arrogant about his superior status. Not only arrogant in thought but demonstrating his perceived superiority with some unnamed overt activities.

In the abundance of your trade you were filled with violence, and you sinned; so I cast you as a profane thing from the mountain of God, and the guardian cherub drove you out from the midst of the stones of fire. Your heart was proud because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor. I cast you to the ground" (Ezekiel 28:16-17)

There is little doubt that Lucifer became proud because of his beauty and that pride corrupted his intelligence (*wisdom*) causing such a wayward behavior that God referred to him as a *profane thing*. So what did Lucifer do to incur this strong condemnation, how did he fall out of favor with God.

*“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! 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 14:12-17)

The really interesting point here is centered on the last **“I will” be like the most high** (God). Logically to be really like God you would expect Satan to be a creator of something in the form of other creatures or at the very least animal species. This might appear to be a bizarre statement and there is nothing in the bible that supports it other than the rational conclusion that Satan could have been practicing some creation of his own to emulate God the creator.

To further explore this hypotheses there are reasons to believe that Satan and his followers occupied and used planet earth as a party place. It is reasonable therefore to suggest that Satan was experimenting with existing life forms or genetics here on earth, possibly creating animals we associate with the prehistoric-Jurassic age? Certainly those creatures were vastly different to the life we see in God’s creation today. Again I must stress that this is only speculation and not fully supported by scripture. But there is a compelling case for Satan’s overt activities on earth and to what lengths he might have gone to be *“like the most High”*. Dare I add that “the truth is stranger than fiction” and leave it there.

Whatever the activities God finally intervened and closed down Satan’s party place, even today scientist are perplexed about the sudden disaster that destroyed the earth’s life forms culminating in a period known as the ice age. Fossils of these creatures are still being found today in various states of preservation. According to the bible, Satan and his followers didn’t go quietly because we are told that a great tussle ensued and God’s angels prevailed over Satan. We are further told that “the lake of fire” was prepared as punishment for Satan’s rebellion, although this sentence was suspended, possibly

following an appeal from Satan: *How can a loving God cast His creatures into the lake of fire?*

This appeal immediately questioned the fairness of God and challenged His arbitrary power condemning Satan's ambitions, hence the name Satan. (*Defense lawyer*) So in order to settle this appeal God suspended Satan's sentence to a future date in time. This came to be known as the angelic conflict and forms the very reason for man's creation, for without this conflict there would be no need for our existence.

The present chaos in this world is not necessarily sponsored by Satan, but rather an indicator of his failure to bring about *peace on earth and goodwill to men*, another counterfeit system that will ultimately fail. His *modus operandi* is to promote *human good* through all his agencies. This is a stark contradiction to his hatred of the human race and the diabolical carnage he has caused throughout history. Today, trying to control 7billion people with free volitions including his own vast ranks of angels must be a source of great frustration, little wonder that God is said to *chuckle* at all these efforts. (*Psalms 2:4*)

Three of Satan's many titles indicate his authority in this world: the ruler of this world (*John 12:31*), the god of this age (*2 Corinthians 4:4*), and the prince of the power of the air (*Ephesians 2:2*).

Satan also transforms himself into "an angel of light," a description that highlights his capacity and inclination to deceive. (*2 Corinthians 11:14*). Subsequently Satan has set up systems in the world designed to blind and deceive, none more deceptive than the distortion and lies of his counterfeit Christian style religions (*Man by man's efforts.*) with all its variations. In fact all religions no matter what persuasion are either sponsored by or infiltrated to such a degree that we are left with little doubt about the meaning of: "THE DEVILS ACE TRUMP"

As Christians we must remember we are already conquerors (*Romans 8:37*) and that Satan has already been defeated (*Colossians 2:15*; *2 Peter 3:22*). Moreover the power of Christ within the believer is greater than the power of Satan (*1 John 4:4*). So we have no reason to live in fear of Satan or evil spirits as believers. Satan can harm, but he cannot defeat the believer in Christ.

To summarize: THE WORLD, THE FLESH and THE DEVIL are, at the very least a major distraction in the Christian life and can quickly neutralize the believer to be not only non effective but often miserable.

To the other extreme the believer can become so indifferent that their actions imitate a non believer. These are casualties in the cosmos diabolicus warfare and in extreme cases if there is no chance of recovery The Lord can graciously take them home. Even under extreme failure we are dealt with as a son, albeit a baby son and never abandoned.

The warfare that is currently raging is not seen, felt or recognized by the unbelieving world. They are in fact completely oblivious to it and preoccupied by their own ambitions, physical wellbeing and pseudo happiness, all of which are very temporary at best. The intellectual elite and the academic world of higher understanding will continue to rely on global social solutions and science to save mankind, but sadly their faith will prove to be a “dead loss”.

Finally we only get one shot at this, for in the realm of eternity our lives are like a passing mist and here for a short precious time. We play for high stakes where the results are a big “win fall” to those who invest that little bit of faith to claim it.

There is no time like the present, for no one is promised tomorrow.

So I say to you: **What are you prepared to do about it?**

We dedicate the close of this chapter to those of you who are without Christ, without hope and without eternal life. We want you to know that Jesus Christ had you personally in mind when He went to the cross. So that every sin you ever committed, past, present and future, was poured out on him and judged.

He who knew no sin was made sin for us that we might be made the righteous of God in Him. (2 Corinthian 5:21)

Right now, wherever you are whatever your circumstance you can have eternal life. Not by agonizing, pledging or promising to change but by one simple act of belief.

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved. (John 3:14)

Whosoever believeth in Him will not perish but have everlasting life. (John 3:16)

These things are written that you might believe that Jesus is The Christ, The Son of God and by believing you will have life in His name. (John 20:31)