

# THE EDIFIER

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A recent children's film set in "Far, Far Away" land, closes with a character named "donkey" singing, "I'm a believer... I believe. I believe. I believe..."

While the film is entertaining, and donkey's lyrics an apropos closing, belief is a powerful, motivating force that determines who we are and what really drives us. So, what if I were to ask you, "Are you a believer?" How would you respond?

I suppose you might think that I could be asking, "Do you believe in God? – I mean, a God who is personally knowable, as Creator of the entire universe, and Sustainer of it, who knows every hair on your head – and wants you to be saved!

Talking about faith and belief, I've even been asked, "Are you saved?" That is, have I professed a belief in Jesus Christ as my personal Saviour?

Salvation, or being saved, and belief and faith are notions worth considering and are often discussed, I think, with the idea that a profession of belief in Jesus equates to eternal salvation, that is living forever. Now while that's true to a certain extent, it only tells part of the story, because it is on this very point that Jesus' challenges our thinking.

He said that, "*Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who **does** the will of My Father in heaven.*" (Matthew 7:21)

Consider the implications of this. God wants us to be doers, and not just hearers or applauders. There is a difference. God wants us to respond to His will for us, in a tangible, outgoing way that is measurable.

In his letter written to the early Christians, James reminded them that, "Abraham believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness." (James 2:23)

Perhaps you know the story. Abraham faithfully obeyed God's instructions in one of the most preposterous situations imaginable. At that time, God simply said, "Go and sacrifice your only son whom you love..." Without the hindsight and benefits of history, I don't suppose we would know what to do with this. And to a certain extent, neither did Abraham, but he obeyed.

And his experience serves to help us today to understand the depths of God's love for us as fulfilled in our Father in heaven being prepared to allow His Son Jesus pay the death penalty in our stead. You see, this is what is at the very core of it all: Abraham's faith wasn't restricted to a verbal profession alone, saying, "God I love you," but a faith demonstrated by what he did. He simply obeyed God.

Belief expressed in action might be illustrated by an account where a young man told his beloved over the phone one wintry day that he loved her.

He said, “I would do anything for you.”

“I’d climb the highest mountain, swim the stormiest sea, fight the wildest of beasts just to be with you.”

She paused for a moment, before pondering “Do you love me that much?” and then she asked, “Will you come over for dinner?”

“I can’t,” he lamented, “because it’s raining tonight.”

We get the point. Talk is cheap, isn’t it!

James goes on to say “that a man is justified by works, [by what we do] and not by faith only.” (James 2:24)

This was certainly the case with Abraham – no wonder scripture attests to him as being the “father of the faithful”.

Now I know that salvation is by grace through faith alone. No amount of legalistic activity or being religious can earn “points” with God. It just doesn’t work that way. Salvation is a free gift from God only dependent on our repentance; it’s not something we can earn!

Having said that, however, once we have come to God, and experienced His unmerited grace in forgiving us our sins, we then move forward to live a new life in Jesus Christ, as James so aptly puts it: “I will show you my faith by my works.” – *by what I do, by how I live.*

He doesn’t mince words; James further confronts us with just how

basic belief is: He said,

*“You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe — and tremble!”* (James 2:19)

There’s so much we can distil from that one observation – especially when you tie it in with some of the incidents Jesus experienced with the demon possessed of his day, about which you can read the witness accounts of this as recorded in the gospels!

For now, however, we understand that God has a plan for us through Jesus Christ, and this is important as it is exciting to explore. Through this, we learn that faith is a launching pad for a life-long journey of good fruit, of good works – a daily choice to live obediently “to every word that comes from the mouth of God.”

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*We get the point.  
Talk is cheap,  
isn’t it!*

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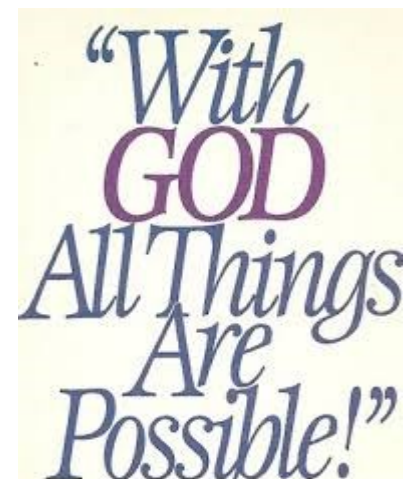
So, the question remains, how do we do this? Faith and belief are lived out, for example, in Jesus’ words, by keeping the commandments of God. Jesus also said that this translates into willingly giving the thirsty among us a glass of water, visiting the sick and incarcerated, caring for the elderly, and clothing the needy among us.

Life doesn’t have to be like “donkey’s” feel-good chorus of, “I believe, I believe, I believe...” and that’s it. Rather, let your faith take

on a tangible, Godly form, that genuinely reflects the work of God in a desperately needy world.

**Written by John Klassek**

*This article first appeared in the December, 2008 Edifier.*



**Answers “Test Your Knowledge”**

**1. A 2. B 3. B 4. False 5. True**

## Psalm 22:1

### The Psalm of the Cross

**Do** you find it hard to love God? One of the most important keys for loving God is loving His word. The people I have met who really love God's word all seem to love God with a great passion.

King David, who lived about 1000 B.C. meditated on God's word, including God's commandments, which Psalm 119 (probably written by David) says David thought about day and night. No other writer in the Bible spoke of his love for God as much as David did in the Psalms. There are some amazing, exciting and wonderful things in one of David's Psalms - Psalm 22. There are things that might surprise you and make you say "wow!" They speak to us about the love of God and I pray will fill us with love for God's word and especially with love for God Himself.

#### The Son of David

One unusual thing you will notice about Psalm 22 is that David writes it in the first person as if it's all about him, yet the New Testament suggests it is about

Christ (see John 19:23-24 and compare Ps 22:18). Whilst unusual, this is understandable when we remember that Jesus' favourite way of referring to Himself was as the "Son of David" and that Jesus did come through the family line of David (Matthew 1:6-16).

Also, David's life pictured Christ's in many interesting ways. For example, both were born in Bethlehem. David means 'beloved,' and God said of Jesus, "this is my beloved Son." Both were shepherds (Jesus in the spiritual sense). Both were doubted and mocked by their people, brothers and by the king. However, both were also loved by the poor and those hated by society. People in high places were jealous of them and tried to kill them. Neither of them had a hand laid on them by their enemies without their consent. Both faced what looked like impossible situations, but brought salvation for their nation in unexpected ways. No one thought David would bring Goliath down with the unusual method of a single sling shot. Not even Christ's disciples expected Him to be resurrected and bring salvation for all through the surprising way of the cross. David is Israel's most

famous and loved king. Jesus is the King of Kings. As kings they both suffered terrible betrayal by those close to them and experienced great suffering.

The similarities are many, so we can understand why David can write Psalm 22 in the first person, while at the same time the Psalm's deepest meaning is found in Christ. Despite all of these similarities, it's interesting that Jesus thought it was necessary to remind us that He was much more than David's son. Matthew 22:41-46 says:

*While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, saying, "What do you think about the Christ? Whose Son is He?" They said to Him, "The Son of David." He said to them, "How then does David in the Spirit call Him 'Lord,' saying: 'The LORD said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool"'? If David then calls Him 'Lord,' how is He his Son?" And no one was able to answer Him a word, nor from that day on did anyone dare question Him anymore.*

From this, we see that Jesus played a special part in David's life as his Lord and God. Jesus is so much greater than David, but David is still given very special importance in the Bible. Jesus is not called the Son of Abraham or Moses, but the Son of David.

The tribe or house Jesus is said to come from is not the House of Abraham or Moses, but the House of David. It's not the throne of Solomon Jesus reigns from, but the throne of David. Acts 15:16-17 says Jesus came to rebuild, not the tabernacle of Abraham or Moses, but the tabernacle of David. The city of Jerusalem which pictures the heavenly city of New Jerusalem is not the City of Moses or Abraham, but the City of David.

Knowing just how close King David and Jesus (the Son of David) were will now help us make sense of Psalm 22. David writes it as if it's about himself, but you will see, as we go through this *Psalm of the Cross* verse by verse, that it is an amazing prophecy about Jesus, the Son of David.

### The Cry

*My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? Why are You so far from helping Me, And from the words of My groaning? (22:1)*

These are the very words Jesus spoke while suffering on the cross (Matthew 27:46).

### The mockery

*But I am a worm, and no man; A reproach of men, and despised by the people. All those who see Me ridicule Me; They shoot out the*

*lip, they shake the head, saying, "He trusted in the LORD, let Him rescue Him; Let Him deliver Him, since He delights in Him!" (22:6-8)*

This was exactly how Jesus was regarded and treated by His enemies and most of the people who called for His crucifixion. Luke 23:35 says: "And the people stood looking on. But even the rulers with them sneered, saying, 'He saved others; let Him save Himself if He is the Christ, the chosen of God.'"

### Christ's background

*But You are He who took Me out of the womb; You made Me trust while on My mother's breasts. I was cast upon You from birth. From My mother's womb You have been My God. (22: 9-10)*

The Apostle Matthew tells us how the Man Jesus was conceived of the Holy Spirit. He therefore had an incredibly close connection to God, even from conception (Matthew 1:18,20).

### The angry mob

*Be not far from Me, For trouble is near; For there is none to help. Many bulls have surrounded Me; Strong bulls of Bashan have encircled Me. They gape at Me with their mouths, Like a raging and roaring lion. (22:11-13)*

When it was time for Jesus to be taken and sacrificed He was like a helpless lamb surrounded by raging bulls or lions. Matthew writes that a great many people came after him with swords and clubs (Matthew 26:47). He also tells us how Jesus was surrounded by many soldiers who hurt him very badly.



### Pain and exhaustion

*I am poured out like water, And all My bones are out of joint; My heart is like wax; It has melted within Me. My strength is dried up like a potsherd, And My tongue clings to My jaws; You have brought Me to the dust of death. For dogs have surrounded Me; The congregation of the wicked has enclosed Me. They pierced My hands and My feet; I can count all My bones. They look and stare at Me. (22:14-17)*

A person hanging on a cross would have their bones out of joint as they hung there. The cross is like a rack that tortures people by stretching them. Death by crucifixion is understood to be one of

the most painful, if not the most painful, kind of deaths. The word we use today to describe the worst kind of pain is the word “excruciating.” It’s very interesting that the word “excruciating” and the word “crucifixion.” are associated. Charles Spurgeon also writes:

*We know that the greatest ... pain that the body can endure, is that arising from a bone out of its place ... Now when the Lord was raised up upon the cross, and his sacred body hung in the air from the nails, all the joints began to give, so that the bones were parted one from the other so visibly that, in very truth (as David had prophesied) they might tell all his bones, and thus, throughout his whole body, he endured acute torture. Whilst our Lord suffered these torments, his enemies, who had so earnestly desired to see him crucified, far from pitying him, were filled with delight, as though celebrating a victory.* (The Treasury of David, Vol. 1, Hendrickson Publishers, p. 343).

It’s amazing that David knew exactly the kind of death Jesus would die, even specifically stating, as we are told in the New Testament, that Jesus’ hands and feet would be pierced. Jesus was indeed nailed to the cross by His hands and feet. Did you notice al-

so that the prophet David said in verse 15 that *God* did this to Jesus? It was God’s plan to save us through His Son’s sacrifice.

#### **Casting lots**

*They divide My garments among them, And for My clothing they cast lots.* (v. 18)

The apostles John and Matthew, Jesus’ close disciples, both write about how the soldiers shared Jesus’ clothes among themselves by casting lots.

#### **God answers Jesus’ cries and raises Him from the dead**

*Save Me from the lion’s mouth And from the horns of the wild oxen! You have answered Me. I will*



*declare Your name to My brethren; In the midst of the assembly I will praise You. You who fear the LORD, praise Him. All you descendants of Jacob, glorify Him, And fear Him, all you offspring of Israel! For He has not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; Nor has He hidden His face from Him; But when He cried*

*to Him, He heard.* (vv. 21-24)

God raised Jesus from the dead. He heard His cries, but did not save him immediately as He had a greater plan for us. Jesus, for 40 days, showed the brethren he had been raised from the dead. Therefore, his followers praised and glorified Him. The Christian movement would have died if Christ’s followers had not seen Him alive again.

Today, in Christ’s spiritual kingdom of grace, people from every country of the world worship Jesus because of the love he showed all of us through taking the suffering for our sins on the cross to save us from the punishment we deserve from God. Many from all nations serve Him. Jesus has been raised and sits on the throne and is seated at the right hand of God (Acts 2:29-33).

#### **Conclusion**

I hope you can see just how incredible Psalm 22 is, knowing that it was indeed written 1000 years before Jesus suffered on the cross. Do you have trouble loving God with all of your heart? Why not take the time to study the Bible carefully. You will notice that God has sent you a personal love letter with His Almighty signature all over it.

***Written by David Kidd***



# THE LORD'S SUPPER

*"The Lord's Supper service is a solemn Christian memorial. Jesus introduced the Lord's Supper or communion service as a commemoration of His sacrificial death.....This booklet will examine the origin and significance of the Lord's Supper, how it symbolizes our participation in the body and blood of Christ and the importance of our fellowship with other believers."*

Please send for the free booklet

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Annual  
Lord's Supper  
Service

Thursday, April 2, 2015  
(at sunset)

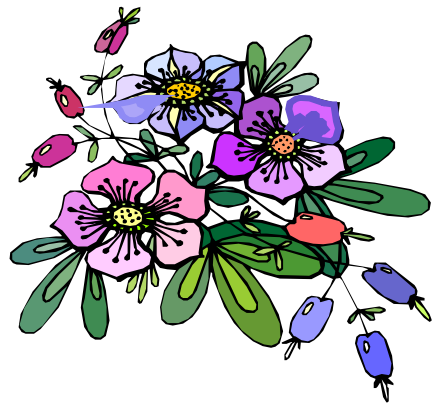
## More Like Jesus

*Let us be more like Jesus  
In everything we do;  
Let's live a life of service,  
A life that's fresh and new.*

*Let's relinquish worldly things,  
And not be slaves to fashion;  
Let's fill our hearts with love,  
Forgiveness and compassion.*

*Yes, let's be more like Jesus,  
Being always in God's will,  
For if Jesus' light shines through us,  
Our earthly purpose we'll fulfill.*

*By Joanna Fuchs*



# Youth Vibe



## The “I AM” Statements of Jesus

When God appeared to Moses in the Burning Bush He asked Moses to go to Egypt to save His people (Israelites) from the Egyptians. Moses was scared and didn't think he could do such a big job.

So he said in Exodus 3:13, *“When I come to the children of Israel and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they say to me, ‘What is His name?’ what shall I say to them?”* God said to Moses, *“I AM WHO I AM.”* This is what you are to say to the children of Israel.” (v.14.) God has a very good reason for this name. ‘I AM’ means that, God was and is and is to come. He has always existed before any ocean, star, or person. He still exists now. God said that ‘I AM’ is His name forever. So when Jesus came, He too is called “I AM.” Now, let's look at what Jesus called Himself!

**Read the Bible verses carefully, and write down who Jesus says that He is. And why?**

1. John 6:48 - 51 “ I AM \_\_\_\_\_ ”  
Why? \_\_\_\_\_ .
2. John 8:12 “ I AM \_\_\_\_\_ ”  
Why? \_\_\_\_\_ .
3. John 10:7 - 9. “I AM \_\_\_\_\_ ”  
Why? \_\_\_\_\_ .
4. John 10:14 - 16. “I AM \_\_\_\_\_ ”  
Why? \_\_\_\_\_ .
5. John 11:25 -26. “I AM \_\_\_\_\_ ”  
Why? \_\_\_\_\_ .
6. John 14:6 “I AM \_\_\_\_\_ ”  
Why? \_\_\_\_\_ .
7. John 15:5 “ I AM \_\_\_\_\_ ”  
Why? \_\_\_\_\_ .



## TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

### Sermon on the Mount

1) The Sermon on the Mount can be found in which book?

- A. Matthew 5:1 to 7:29
- B. Luke 7:1 to 9:62
- C. Mark 2:1 to 4:41
- D. John 5:1 to 7:53

2) Blessed are the \_\_\_\_: for they shall inherit the earth.

- A. pure in heart
- B. meek
- C. merciful
- D. peacemakers

3) Christ said He came to \_\_\_\_ the law.

- A. destroy
- B. fulfill
- C. add to
- D. Change

4) The gate that leads too eternal life is strait and wide.

- A. true
- B. false

5) If we hear and do what Christ told us, He will liken us unto a wise man that built his house on a rock.

- A. true
- B. false



## ***Easter: There's More To be Said***

*We believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ, His death, burial and resurrection were central to the message of the apostles and of the first century church. Today, with the cross, the Resurrection remains as the central theme of our Christian faith.*

*But as a church, we do not celebrate Easter, but uphold the teachings of Scripture, regarding the Lord's death and resurrection.*

*Find out more about Easter's pagan origins and how intermixing of Christianity and practices of heathen religions are strictly forbidden in the Scriptures.*

***Please send for the free booklet***

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