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Knowing Your Eternal Destiny

Do you want to know your future – your eternal destiny? In whom, or in what, do you trust? This article will show how wonderfully trustworthy God is!

Consider the following passage of scripture, and as you read it, contemplate who you think the writer is referring to and whether the passage is from the Old or the New Testament:

He is despised and rejected by men ... Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows ... But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by his stripes [lashes] we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, everyone, to his own way; And the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet he opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth. ... For He was cut off from the land of the living; For the transgressions of My people He was stricken ... He had done no violence, nor was any deceit in His mouth. Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him ... He poured out His soul unto death, and He was numbered with the transgressors, and He bore the sin of many, and

made intercession for the transgressors.

Who do you think the writer is referring to?

Most who have even only a basic knowledge of the life of Jesus Christ will say it is referring to Him and His horrible crucifixion experience, and many who are not all that familiar with the Bible presume the passage is from the New Testament, written after Jesus' death. In fact, it is written about Jesus Christ, but remarkably, it was written by the prophet Isaiah in the Old Testament about 700 years before Christ.

The prophet Isaiah was accurately foretelling the future. In what, or in whom do you trust for knowing your future?

Let's consider in more detail Isaiah chapter 52 & 53 where part of this passage was taken from. I pray that by doing so you will gain a greater trust in the Bible.

Verse 13 of chapter 52 says, "Behold, My Servant shall deal prudently". In other words, this Servant was to be a wise and

prudent man. The New Testament records that many people marveled at the wisdom of Christ. Countless examples could be given here, but space does not permit.

Verse 13 also says that, "He shall be exalted and extolled [praised greatly] and be very high". Acts 2:33 refers to Jesus being exalted to the right hand of God, and Philippians 2:9-10 says, "God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth ... and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father".

Verse 14 says, "Just as many were astonished at you [Jerusalem (see v1)], so His visage [appearance] was marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men". The terrible physical punishment Jesus suffered is partly described in Matthew 26 : 67 - 68

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and 27:26-27. As a result of being whipped and beaten and crucified Jesus' appearance was altered to the extreme.

Chapter 53 continues the incredibly prophetic description of Christ's life. Verse three says, "*He is despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief*". The Apostle John wrote in John 1:11, "He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him". Even his own brothers and community are recorded as rejecting Him. To add insult to injury, his own people even preferred to save a rebel and murderer, Barabbas, from crucifixion rather than Him (Matthew 27:21).

Through the many sufferings Jesus went through on this earth He was acquainted with grief, and He also wept for others, such as Mary, Martha and Lazarus. The sin of His people grieved Him terribly too (John 11:35, Luke 19:21).

Verse three also says, "*we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him*". Even His disciples ran away and forsook Him when He was arrested (Matthew 26:56). Peter denied Him three times. The leading priests in Israel especially despised Him. Mark 15:10 tells us they were envious of Him. Instead of being esteemed, or held in high regard, Jesus was mocked and spat upon.

Verse four says, "*Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God and afflicted*". It's interesting that the word for 'grief' here, 'choliy' in the Hebrew can mean disease, or grief, or any bodily disorder. Matthew 8:16-17, quoting this verse, says it

was fulfilled in Jesus casting out demons and healing all who were sick. Despite the many wonderful healings Jesus performed, however, the masses in Jerusalem thought it was a good thing for Him to be crucified – they esteemed Him stricken and afflicted by God. They, like Job's friends, thought He deserved it and that God was punishing Him.

Verse five, so clearly prophesies of Christ when it says, "*But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes (lashes with the rod or whip) we are healed*". This accurately prophesies several things. Jesus was not to be punished for His own sins, but rather for ours.



The New Testament confirms that Jesus was without sin. He indeed was to provide the perfect sacrifice to save us from our sins and to reconcile us to God. He brings us peace with God if we accept His sacrifice (see Romans 5:6, Colossians 1:20 & Hebrews 9:27).

Verse six says, "*All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way; and the*

Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all". This is a prophecy stating that it was God's plan for Jesus to suffer the consequences of our sins. Consider how accurate this prophecy is when we remember what Jesus prayed in the garden of Gethsemane before his sufferings - "not my will God, but thine"!

Verse seven says, "*He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth*". Matthew 27:12-14 show just how quietly Jesus went to the cross. He did not struggle with those who arrested Him, or answer his accusers, or Pilate.

Verse eight says, "*He was taken from prison and from judgment and who will declare His generation? For He was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgressions of my people He was stricken*". Jesus indeed was detained and went to court, as prophesied. Acts 8:31-35 also regards this prophecy, in its translation of it, as being about Jesus not receiving any justice in His humiliation, which also was true. He was convicted on the evidence of false witnesses (Matthew 26:60), and Pilate found no reason to condemn Him (Luke 23:4). Also, in fulfillment of this prophesy, Jesus was 'cut off' – He died an early death at the age of approximately 33 years old.

Verse nine says, "*And they made His grave with the wicked – but with the rich at His*

death, because He had done no violence, nor was any deceit in His mouth". Matthew 27:57-60 shows us how a rich man, Joseph of Arimathea, had Jesus laid in a new tomb. Certainly Jesus was also a truthful man and a peaceful man, who both taught and practiced turning the other cheek.

Verses 10-11 say, "Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief. When You make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand. He shall see the labour of His soul, and be satisfied. By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many, for He shall bear their iniquities". In other words, although it was God's plan for Jesus to be the sacrificial offering for humanity's sin, God saw the good that would come from it. Did you notice the exciting aspect of this prophecy? The one who was to be offered (Jesus) was to see His seed and have his days prolonged. This is a prophecy of His resurrection. Interestingly Jesus, when referring to His own impending death, was recorded in John 12:24 as saying, "Unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain". Jesus was resurrected to see that His death was not in vain. Many *have* followed Him and been justified before God through faith in Him.

Verse twelve also prophesies that He shall have a "portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong, because He poured out His soul unto death, and He was numbered with the transgressors, and He bore the

the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors". In fulfillment Jesus is seated at the right hand of God. He was numbered with the transgressors too, as he was treated as a criminal, crucified in between criminals, and God laid the world's sin on His back. But on the cross he interceded for those who had delivered Him to be crucified by praying for their forgiveness – "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do". Jesus now is our High Priest still making intercession for our sins to God, pleading on our behalf (Hebrews 7:25).

These prophecies of Isaiah are so detailed and accurate that it is understandable that someone might at first glance be suspicious as to whether they were written hundreds of years before Christ was born in Bethlehem. However, no serious scholar would argue otherwise. In fact, in 1947 a complete copy of the book of Isaiah was found in the Dead Sea Scrolls. It was dated pre-Christ, and it contained no significant differences to the book of Isaiah as we know it today. Some might try and reinterpret Isaiah 52 & 53, but few deny its date. Ancient Jews, before the coming of Christ, also regarded it as a prophecy about the coming Saviour (Messiah). Since Judaism does not believe that Jesus is their Messiah, they have had to come up with other interpretations. Many Jews, however, have been unable to deny that Jesus fulfilled these prophecies. Indeed, Christianity initially started because Jews accepted that Jesus fulfilled these Messianic prophecies. What may further amaze you is that the Bible contains many

more specific Old Testament prophecies about Christ which He clearly fulfilled, including prophecies about where and when he would be born and how he would die. (Please contact us if you want to know more about these. See for example Psalm 22).

The prophet Isaiah and other Old Testament prophets wrote accurately of the future because God enlightened them. Do you want to know your future – your own destiny? In what, or in whom, do you trust? If you want to know your eternal destiny, you will find the answer in the Holy Scriptures of the Bible. I hope you can see that you can trust them because God inspired them. No man could make predictions like Isaiah did without God's inspiration.

When I see people giving tarot readings, palm readings, tea leaf readings etc to help people know their future I would like to sit down with them and give them a 'Bible reading' and show them what the Bible says about their future.



Here are some scriptures that might be used at a 'Bible reading'.

Hebrews 11:6 says that without faith it is impossible to please God.

Continued on page five

WHEN THE BOTTOM FALLS OUT

Experiencing trouble is a good time to separate truth from fiction.

Life undergoes a drastic reversal - a disaster, a great loss - and you find yourself asking . . .

Why me?

What now?

Where do I go from here?

Perhaps the house you worked so hard to get is in pieces, or ashes, and your possessions are scattered to the winds. Maybe you've sustained injury, said goodbye to a close friend or family member through death, or lost your job and financial security. You're wondering what will happen now that the bottom has fallen out of life.

Many answers may come to our troubled minds in times like these. But are they good answers? The rough places in life call for tough truth - biblical truth that gives hope and exposes fiction.

The six boldfaced statements that follow are somebody's version of "truth", You have probably heard them stated by well-meaning people. We follow each statement with another take, in light of Christian Scripture.

This disaster came as punishment from God.

Probably fiction. The Bible does talk about God forming light and creating darkness, making peace and creating evil (Isaiah 45:7). This

includes pain and suffering. By not removing evil from the world and by giving humans the option of choosing evil for themselves, God is, at least indirectly, responsible for both natural disasters and human troubles that befall us.

But God doesn't often match up natural tragedy with our personal sins on a one-to-one basis. Even natural elements, which He created exclusively good (Genesis 1), have the potential for evil and can bring suffering to many without regard to faith or conduct. Think tsunami.

While setbacks and sorrows can result from our poor choices or from the poor choices of others, many of life's storms fall randomly on all kinds of people. The Bible character Job, for example, lived rightly in the eyes of God and still experienced the worst of calamity: the loss of his livestock, servants, children and health (Job 1:13-22; 2:7).

No, disaster is not usually a punishment for sin.



You should give thanks for all things; everything that happens is good.

Fiction. Neither half of this statement is correct, although both parts come close to Bible words. Scripture says we should give thanks "in" everything, not "for" everything. The reason, obviously, is that not everything that happens in this life is good. Many bad things take place every day, and we certainly don't give thanks for them. However, we can give thanks in the midst of problems and disasters because God works in all circumstances to bring about something good for His people (Romans 8:28).

Trouble is no good reason for thanksgiving. A God who turns trouble to triumph is!

God won't give you a burden greater than you can bear.

Fiction. Read closely: The worst of life's hardships were intended to be more than you can bear - alone.

God knows our weakness and He knows our limits. He does promise that He will never give us more burdens than we can carry *with* Him. (Matthew 11:28-30). Without God, any burden may be unbearable. We need His strength to endure it all.

God is always with His people, walking with them through the dark passages of life: sorrow, despair, depression, anxiety, gloom, physical or emotional pain. He promises that no matter how deep the waters of tragedy or how hot the fires of suffering, He will not let us drown or be burned (Isaiah 43:2). God bears our burdens *daily* (Psalm 68:19). But in order for Him to do so, we must cast the whole load on Him and refuse to carry it ourselves. The Bible says, "Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you" (1 Peter 5:7; see also Psalm 55 : 22).

Paul, a diehard missionary for Christ, wrote about his experiences. He described being "under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired even of life" (2 Corinthians 1:8). Paul knew the reason he faced such trials was so that he wouldn't trust in himself but in God (v9).

Being a Christian protects You from suffering.

Fiction. It is a common misconception that Christians are promised smooth sailing for life: good health, solid home, loving

marriage, obedient children, and plenty of money in the bank. But any earnest believer will tell you how false this impression is.

Jim Elliott turned his life over to Jesus at an early age. After Christian college, he decided to become a missionary to Ecuador. In January 1956 Elliott and four other men devoted to Christ were martyred by the Auca Indians in the jungles of Ecuador.

A more recent example is the Christian students who were murdered at Denver's Columbine High School in April 1999. They had been involved in youth groups and had talked of their faith with others. But their faith didn't protect them from the deadly gunfire of two classmates.

Jesus, the realist, said that the world is full of trouble, and He assured His disciples that they would certainly encounter it. But He added, "Take heart! I have overcome the world" (John 16:33). Christians will suffer, but God grants them the courage to persevere.

Good comes out of bad.

Truth - a promise, in fact, for those who are believers in Jesus Christ (Romans 8:28). This verse says that God is the mastermind working behind the scenes, fitting all things together for ultimately good results. With Him nothing is haphazard or by chance. Even before we were born, God determined good purposes for us as His children (Psalm 139:16). The Bible assures us that God knows what plans He has for us - plans for a future and a hope (Jeremiah 29:11).

God sees everything - not just our present pain, but our past and future as well. Though we cannot see it now. He has a design in mind to work the negative for positive results in His time and way. Helen Keller, for example, became deaf and blind when she

was 19 months old. She struggled to overcome almost impossible odds through physical and emotional stress. But Helen became one of the world's most admired women for her work among the blind and disabled.

Have you heard the saying "God has a wonderful plan for your life"? A realistic Christian revised it this way: "God has a plan for your life. It has a wonderful end, but it may not always seem so wonderful along the way."

God sees everything - not just our present pain, but our past and future as well.

Tomorrow will be better.

Truth or fiction. People may say, "Everything will be OK," but in reality, tomorrow could be worse in this uncertain world. Today's rebuilding and regrouping can be lost again.

If that happens, a golden tomorrow still awaits those who hope in Christ - a tomorrow that will be infinitely better than today. This world is not our final home. If we've come to know Jesus Christ and trust His sacrifice for our sins, we'll live in an eternity free from death and destruction and pain and suffering. Paul even said that the sufferings we endure on earth can't compare to the good things awaiting us for eternity (Romans 8:18).

Whatever the challenge or loss you face today. God knows about it and cares. Trust and obey Him through Christ, and the eventual victory - the eternal Home - is sure!

Scripture quotations were taken from the New International Version.

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Continued from page three

If you lack faith your future is therefore limited because you don't please God. 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 and Revelation 21:8 both have long lists of the types of people who will not be in the kingdom of heaven. If you fall into the categories mentioned your future is extremely bleak, unless you turn to God.

On the other hand, on a more positive note, Romans 8:11 says, "if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies ...". Jesus said also in John 3:16, "God so loved the world that he gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life".

That's a wonderful destiny, and you can trust the God of the Holy Bible, who was willing to even suffer on your behalf to secure your eternal destiny, because He loves you so much!

By David Kidd



Answers: 1. D (Acts 1:3) 2. C (Jn 20:10-18, Mat. 28:8-10, Lk 24:13-32, Lk 24:33-49, Jn 20:19-23, Jn 20:26-30, Jn 21:1-14, Mat 28:16-20, Acts 1:4-9, Jesus also appeared to Paul) 3. D (1 Corinthians 15:3-8) 4. B (e.g. see Lk 24:33-49 & Jn 21:1-14) 5. A



The Resurrection of Christ

By David Kidd

“And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty ... And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile ... If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable”.

Apostle Paul, 1 Corinthians 15:14-19

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is central to Christianity. It is incredibly important. If there is good evidence or reasoning for believing in it then we can be excited about the great resurrection promised for all true believers. We can have a wonderful hope for everlasting life. As human beings it makes sense then that we would be interested in knowing about it.

Test your knowledge of the resurrection of Christ below by answering the following multiple choice questions.

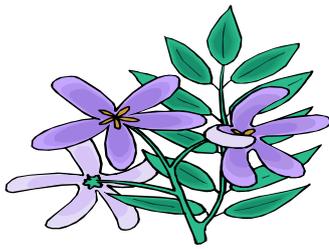
1. Over about how many days does the Bible record Jesus showing Himself to be alive after his death on the cross?
A. One B. Ten C. Twenty D. Forty
2. Approximately how many times does the Bible record Jesus appearing to others after his death?
A. Two B. Three C. Ten D. Twenty
3. About how many eye witnesses does the Bible record as seeing Jesus alive after His death?
A. Eleven B. Twelve C. One hundred D. Five hundred plus
4. Were the sightings of Jesus only for short periods of a few minutes or less?
A. Yes B. No
5. Were the New Testaments records written while many of the witnesses to Jesus’ resurrection were still alive?
A. Yes B. No

After having reviewed the answers on page five the reader will appreciate that the sightings of Jesus alive from the dead were highly significant. They were a far cry from the fleeting and dubious sightings of UFOs or Elvis, that we sometimes hear about. If a Royal Commission, or trial, had been held in AD 50 to determine whether or not Jesus rose from the dead, the evidence in favour of this would be overwhelming!

“Your Call ”

If you were to call each of the witnesses cited in the New Testament to be cross-examined for 15 minutes each, and you went around the clock without a break, it would take you from breakfast on Monday until dinner on Friday to hear them all. Would nearly 128 straight hours of eyewitness testimony make you more likely to believe that Jesus came back to life? Why or why not?” *Lee Strobel & Jane Vogel, The Case for Christ, Youth edn, p102.*

Answers are on page five.



The Youth Section

Bible Wordsearch

The Vineyard Workers

Wordsearch 175

Matt.20:1-16

K	G	S	I	X	T	H	M	O	R	N	I	N	G	D
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G	H	B	A	R	O	E	B	F	R	I	A	F	N	U
D	T	U	R	U	E	T	E	E	S	R	E	H	T	O
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| ANSWERED | MONEY |
| AROUND | MORNING |
| BEING | NINTH |
| BORNE | NOTHING |
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| DENARIUS | OTHERS |
| EARLY | OWNER |
| ELEVENTH | PAY |
| ENVIUS | RECEIVED |
| EQUAL | RIGHT |
| EVENING | SIXTH |
| EXPECTED | STANDING |
| FOREMAN | STILL |
| GENEROUS | TOLD |
| GRUMBLE | UNFAIR |
| HEAVEN | VINEYARD |
| HIRE | WAGES |
| | WORKERS |

After you find all the hidden words the left over letters spell out a Bible verse reading from the top left to the bottom right

Insights From the Past

THE BIBLE CHRIST

By Eugene B. Willard

What our Lord thought of Himself is very clearly and strongly set forth in a series of *I ams*, contained in the Gospel of John. To the woman of Samaria, He said: "I that speak unto thee am *he*" [the Messiah] (John 4:26; compare Matthew 26:63, 64; Mark 14:61,62). To the disciples in a storm on the Sea of Galilee, He said: "It is I [literally, *I am*], be not afraid" (John 6:20). To the Jews in the synagogue at Capernaum, He said: "I am that bread of life I am the living bread which came down from heaven" (John 6:48, 51). To the Jews at the feast of tabernacles, He said: "I am the light of the world" (John 8:12; compare chapter 1:4, 5, 9; 3:19; 9:5; 12:35, 36, 46). To the Jews again at the same feast, He said: "Before Abraham was, I am" (John 8 : 58; compare Exodus 3:14; John 17:5, 24; Colossians 1:17; Revelation 1:8). To the Jews after the feast, He said: "I am the door of the sheep I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep" (John 10:7, 11; compare Isaiah 40:11; Ezekiel 37:24; Hebrews 13:20; 1 Peter 2:25 and 5:4). To the weeping Martha, whose brother had just died, He said: "I am the resurrection and the life" (John 11:25). To the disciples, whose feet He had just washed in the upper room the night before His death, He said: "Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am" (John 13:13; compare Matthew 23:8; Luke 6:46; 1 Corinthians 8:6; 12:3; Philippians 2:11). In answer to the question of Thomas in the same room and on the same occasion, He said: "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me" (John 14 : 6; compare Hebrews 9:8-12). He also said on the same occasion to His disciples: "I am the true vine and my Father is the husbandman [the vine dresser]. ...I am the vine, ye are the branches" (John 15:1, 5).

When He stood before the Jewish Sanhedrin and was asked by Caiaphas, the high priest, whether He was "the Christ, the Son of the Blessed," He said: "I am: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven" (Mark 14:61, 62). These are examples of the self assertion of Jesus of Nazareth. The "I ams" that fell from His lips on sundry occasions, taken in connection with the annexed predicates, clearly present Jesus Christ in the Language of a Christian writer.

EDITOR'S NOTE: *The above article appeared in the October 16, 1900 issue of the Sabbath Advocate and Herald of the Advent, an earlier name of the Bible Advocate.*

THE NEW BIRTH



Jesus said to him, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again" (John 3:3). In these few words Jesus declared the absolute necessity of spiritual transformation if one is to enter God's kingdom.

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