

Looking for Jesus

[I had planned a different message for this month, but a reprint permission I needed did not come through, so I'm repeating one from May, 2013. I pray it will bless some of you.]

Now after the Sabbath, toward the dawn of the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. And behold, there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. And for fear of him the guards trembled and became like dead men. But the angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here, for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead, and behold, he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him. See, I have told you." So they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. And behold, Jesus met them and said, "Greetings!" And they came up and took hold of his feet and worshiped him. Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see me." (Mathew. 29:1-10)



If you read the account of the Resurrection morning's events in each of the four Gospels, you will see that there are differences in the details. This is normal when different people are reporting what they remember about the same event. The main points are pretty consistent—the tomb is empty; an angel is there to tell them Jesus has risen from the dead; and Mary Magdalene, at least, has an encounter with the risen Christ.



The women went to the tomb on Sunday morning,

looking for a dead man. Instead they found that Jesus was all He claimed to be, and had accomplished everything He said he would do. For He had said, "We are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written about the Son of Man by the prophets will be accomplished. For he will be delivered over to the Gentiles and will be mocked and shamefully treated and spit upon. And after flogging him, they will kill him, and on the third day he will rise." But [his disciples] understood none of these things. This saying was hidden from them, and they did not grasp what was said. (Luke 18:31b-34)

The truth was revealed to them, more than once, but they didn't receive it because it was not what they expected or wanted to hear. They didn't understand it when He told them what was going to happen, and so they were shocked and dismayed and terribly let down when they saw Him arrested, brutally beaten, stripped naked, and horribly executed as a criminal.

The astonishing truth about the Risen Christ is still there to be found by those who seek Him. God's Word has declared it; the actions of Jesus have shown it to all who will believe; and many witnesses (beginning with the disciples and Paul) have declared and affirmed it.

The problem, of course, is that many people are still looking for the wrong Jesus. They don't want God as He is; they want God as they wish him to be. They want a God who will affirm them in their chosen life style; one who will conform to their own ideas of what He should be and what He should do. There is a quotation, attributed to both Jean Jacques Rousseau and George Bernard Shaw, which says, "God created man in His image, and man, being a gentleman, returned the favor." And, as someone said, "... has been doing so ever since." In other words, God, for many people, is whatever they choose to believe.



And of course the people who “create” a god to their own liking also often try to get others to adopt the same wrong beliefs. And they often succeed, so that many who might willingly worship and obey the one true God are led astray into worshipping (and obeying!) a false one.

So why are we Christians so sure that the God of the Bible, the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, and David; the God of Jesus, Peter, and Paul — our God — is the one true God, and all other “Gods” are either lying demons or vain figments of someone’s imagination? Let me give you my own reasons ...

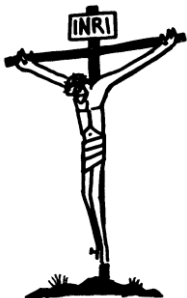
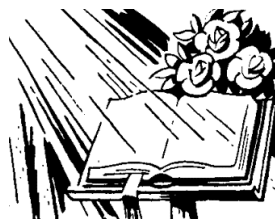
First, I can see the majesty and immense size of the physical universe, and I know in my heart that it didn’t “just happen.” The stars and planets exist.



They are composed of physical matter. Where did it come from? The only reasonable answer I have ever heard is, “And God said, let there be ...” and it was so.

Next, I can look around me at the beauty and intricacy of nature, from the mighty mountains to the tiniest flower or insect, and I see the handiwork of a Creator who is not only powerful and creative beyond imagining, but also completely good and loving. Creation, to me, is obviously the work of a loving God.

Thirdly, there is a book called the Bible that claims to be God’s story in His own words, written down many centuries ago by men who were inspired by His Holy Spirit. What I read in this book about God makes sense to me — it is consistent with what I have seen. In my life I have experienced both love and the opposite of love, which is selfishness. “It is better to give than to receive.” I know that this is true, because it has been proved many times in my life — one of many, many biblical truths.



A fourth reason is the beauty and simplicity of God’s solution to the problem of sin. We are all sinners; we all want to be God rather than to obey Him. We are selfish and rebellious by our very nature, since Adam’s fall. The penalty for our sins is too great for us; we cannot

pay it without being totally destroyed. So God said, “Because I love you, and because you are so

precious to me, even as sinful as you are, I will pay the penalty for your sins.” And He did. God the Son (Jesus) became a man, and He came into the world and taught and left us the truths of the Gospel; then He offered Himself as the necessary and sufficient sacrifice to pay the penalty for our sins. He suffered horribly and died the most painful and shameful death that men had been able to devise up to that time. And then, to defeat death for all time, He rose from death.

Anyone who says that “God would never send anyone to hell” has totally missed the point. God has gone to great pains to provide a way of escape for sinners — but He also permits the existence of hell — eternal separation from God’s presence — as a destination for those who refuse to accept His gift of salvation on His terms.



Another reason I believe is because of the “great cloud of witnesses” (Hebrews 11:1-12:1) who have testified to the truths of God’s word and the Gospel message. From Jesus Himself and Paul and the apostles, down through the ages to the saints of today who testify to God’s goodness and mercy, there is a consistent theme: God is real, God is loving and caring, and even those commands He tells us to obey are meant for our good.

I am fully convinced that the Jesus I have sought and found (actually, He sought and found me) is the one true God. I can’t put Him in a box with a label on it, but I know He is real, and good, and really loves me, and by His grace I am coming to really love Him. I believe He keeps His promises, and I thank Him and praise Him every day for His goodness and mercy to me.

What about you? Have you found the one true God? Or has He found you? Are you still seeking? Or have you decided, like so many, to believe whatever makes you comfortable? I pray that this message will give someone a nudge toward finding out for himself or herself what is really true about God, even if it is not initially comfortable. The more you get to know God, the more you will understand that He is real, good, and loving.

May He keep you in His hand and give you peace.

Brother Roland

God's Promises

Here are some of God's promises that I cherish, because they tell me that He cares for me and wants to bless me, not only in this life on earth but in Eternity with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.



Psalm 23:1 The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

Psalm 40:1-4a I waited patiently for the LORD; he inclined to me and heard my cry. He drew me up from the pit of destruction

... Blessed is the man who makes the LORD his trust....

Psalm 46:1-2a God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear

Psalm 112:1 Praise the LORD! Blessed is the man who fears the LORD, who greatly delights in his commandments!

Psalm 4:8 In peace I will both lie down and sleep; for you alone, O LORD, make me dwell in safety.

Matthew 11:28 Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Ephesians 2:8 For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God ...

Colossians 1:13-14 He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

Romans 8:1 There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

Romans 8:15 For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!"

Romans 8:26 Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.

Romans 8:31b-34 If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn?

Colossians 2:9-10 For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, and you have been filled in him, who is the head of all rule and authority.



Philippians 4:19 And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

Galatians 5:22-23 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

Philippians 1:6 And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 1:8-9 [He] will sustain you to the end, guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Psalm 23:6 I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

If you have a question about the Bible or the Christian life, send it to me and I'll try to give you a good answer here in the "Good News Guide" so that maybe your question will help someone else. If you know of anyone (inmate or otherwise) who would like to be on the mailing list, have him or her send me the name, number, SID, and address. **Brother Roland, P O Box 14, Fayetteville PA 17222.**

Names of the REAL Jesus

Here are some of the familiar, and maybe some not so familiar, names that the Bible gives to the Lord Jesus. If any are puzzling to you, it would be worth your while to look them up. Enjoy the puzzle.

Puzzle:

K I N G O F K I N G S B L U U V C W G F Y S X X V V X L D E T P B
W D L I G H T O F T H E W O R L D H M A I G O Y F U Z T A N I Q R
L A M B O F G O D Z P R Q E E Q W A R C G R L N U L I B Y O I R A
M I R A C L E W O R K E R Q G E S X Z I H E S O O L B Y S T S E T
W D O G Y T H G I M E W O O L T U W Y M S A M T R F G M P S Z H S
H D O G L A N R E T E T V B E Q E J H P E T T O B Y M N R R Y T G
D C S G N I H T L L A F O R O T A E R C T P T Z D O O A I E G A N
N R R D F H H G E I M M A N U E L S S O A H U H B N R F N N M F I
Y B E U R O U N Z N R L W V I C R C W U C Y H X E F A N G R Z G N
Z G S H H O N L Y B E G O T T E N S O N O S O K A L E A B O B N R
Y U Z D P C L O S C Q R Y R N H T A R Q V I G E U Q O E H C D I O
F O X O E E E E S H F J A N D F N C R E D C M K T J U R D P Z T M
B K V G E A H H H K A I Z R O H P O L A I J W Y K G C D L L S Q
G F N H H H D S T T I S I N A E F R S S Y A D F O T N E I C N A T
L A A G S A E L D F F G R T J N Z L F M H N D C F M Z R O D A L O
E K M I E L L C V O O O H O H E I R O F A L L T H I N G S Q C R D
A B E H H W I I D R O D M P T F T V N R D V J M O F V E V U H E J
R B A T T F V N H G D G A R R A U U A I D U W S L P A C R W O V W
S E B S F C E Q O I Y O J E A I I L M S D S T O I U K A P U S E S
I B O O O I R T Y V O B R R H W E D O G J V W H N U Y E L O E X T
F R V M R G E D A E H D O G F O S S E N L L U F E S C P L X N B J
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P D L Q D T F X K F B Y P A H E L P E R O F T H E N E E D Y G D O
O O L L E O Z H Y S O N O F D A V I D P K R W U V S G C A I O V N
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W G A G G G O A P N B A L M O F G I L E A D A V L U E I E A I D H
C O M K P O N V W S W B G R E A T H I G H P R I E S T R A G B A R
U D E H A D U J F O N O I L S R Q F B X N M F K G R X P G H B B M
E M S E T A N R A C N I E V O L E A I W A E H D C Z K G S M Q W I

Words:

ADVOCATE	ETERNAL GOD	HIGH PRIEST FOREVER	MIGHTY GOD
ALPHA AND OMEGA	EVERLASTING FATHER	HOPE OF ISRAEL	MIRACLE WORKER
ANCIENT OF DAYS	FAITHFUL ONE	IMMANUEL	MORNING STAR
ARM OF THE LORD	FIRSTBORN	JUDGE	MOST HIGH GOD
BALM OF GILEAD	FORGIVER OF SINS	KING OF KINGS	NAME ABOVE ALL NAMES
BEAUTY OF HOLINESS	FRIEND OF SINNERS	LAMB OF GOD	NAZARENE
BREAD OF GOD	FULLNESS OF GODHEAD	LIGHT OF THE WORLD	ONLY BEGOTTEN SON
BRIDEGROOM	GIFT OF GOD	LION OF JUDAH	PRINCE OF PEACE
CHOSEN OF GOD	GLORY OF GOD	LIVING WORD	RABBI
CHRIST THE LORD	GOOD SHEPHERD	LORD OF LORDS	SON OF DAVID
CORNERSTONE	GREAT HIGH PRIEST	LOVE INCARNATE	SON OF GOD
CREATOR OF ALL THINGS	GREAT PHYSICIAN	MAN OF SORROWS	SON OF MAN
DAYSpring	HEAD OF THE CHURCH	MASTER	SUFFERING SERVANT
DELIVERER OF ZION	HEIR OF ALL THINGS	MEDIATOR	THE GREAT I AM
DOOR OF THE SHEEP	HELPER OF THE NEEDY	MESSIAH	