

关乎生与死

您为什么活着？生命的目的是什么？

您的人生有什么意义？

您对死後的归宿有选择吗？



A Matter of Life and Death

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Going? What Does Your Life Mean?**

**Do You Have Any Choices Regarding
the Outcome?**

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What do you think will happen when you die? Will it simply be the end of your existence? Sudden nothingness ? Or will you, as many people believe, come back into this world many times, perhaps as another person or an animal? Neither of those answers seems to satisfy our hope of living beyond death or our desire to live life with joy, freed from doubt and disappointment. So, what if you could be assured that you will continue to exist after you die in a world that is free from pain, sorrow and death? Would you be interested?

Of course, we've only been talking about what happens after you die. Is there any meaning for your life while you're still living? If you are like most people, surely there are times when you think that there must be more to life than what you have experienced so far. Don't we all want to know where we came from and why we are here? Hopefully, this little introduction can help answer those important questions.

When you think about it, in order for our individual lives to have meaning, the universe itself must have meaning. Strangely, many people would tell us that the universe (whether planets and stars, or the earth, or the animal world, or even us humans) has no meaning. They insist that the universe (and us!) came about only by chance, not on purpose. But if that is right, what possible meaning could life have? The funny thing is that those same people act as if life has a purpose, and they too look for meaning just like the rest of us.

人死後到哪去了？从此不存在了吗？突然之间化为虚无？不少人相信轮回转世，您也认为您会投胎变成另个人或一只动物吗？这些答案似乎都无法满足我们对超越死亡的盼望，也无法解除我们对来世的疑惑，而安於快乐的活在今生。如果我向您保证，人死后能继续活在一个没有痛苦、悲伤和死亡的世界里，您会有兴趣知道是怎么回事吗？

刚才提的是人死后的景况，但人还活着的时候，生命有意义吗？您可能和大部分的人一样，曾经思索过生命不会仅止於单单活着而已，我们都想知道自己是从何处来？为什么活在这世上？希望这本小册子能帮您回答这些重要的问题。

如果要我们的生命有意义，我们住的宇宙需要先有意义。很多人觉得宇宙的存在不含带任何意义，他们坚称宇宙（行星，地球，动物和人类）的形成是随机发生，而非被特意创造出来的。如果这说法正确，生命能有什么意义呢？有趣的是，这些人似乎相信生命的存在是有点目的的，他们也和我们一样在寻求生命的意义。

So the first question is: Are they right when they say that we are here only by chance? It could be a much longer discussion, but for now, ask yourself this simple question: When you look around at nature, would you ever guess that what you see came about simply by accident? Think about your own body. Does chance possibly explain why it works so well? For something that complex and amazing, wouldn't there have to be something more than chance involved? What do you think?

The second question is: If we are NOT here by chance, how DID we get here? Think for a minute about something you yourself have made. If you made it, you must have given some thought to it, right? Maybe you chose between doing it one way or perhaps another way. You also probably chose to make it for some particular reason, and so you designed it to achieve that purpose. What, then, should you conclude if you see something that seems to have been carefully designed? That there must have been a DESIGNER, right? And that it was designed for a PURPOSE, right?¹

Which brings us to two very important questions: If both the universe and ourselves appear to have been designed, Who would that Designer have been? And for what purpose would He have designed us?²

How can we possibly find the answers to those big questions? No law says that our Designer would have to tell us why He made us.

¹ Ecclesiastes 3:11, Isaiah 45:5-6, Romans 1:20

² Psalm 139:13-16, Acts 17:16-31, Ephesians 2:8-10

所以先请教您一个问题：有人说我们的存在纯粹出於偶然，这种说法对吗？不必长篇大论，就先请问您这简单的问题：当您环顾四周的大自然，您认为它们的存在都是出於偶然吗？想想您的身体，种种复杂的机能不停的运作，这些都只是巧合吗？单纯的“偶然”二字就能解释一切吗？您觉得呢？

再请教第二个问题：如果我们的存在不是出於偶然，我们怎么来的？想想您曾经做出来的东西。如果是您做的，做前一定先经过思考。也许您从两个做法中选了一个；也许您为了某个特定的目的把它设计出来。因此我们是否能如此下结论：某样被精心设计出来的东西，背後一定有位设计师，而且它一定是为了某个目的而被造出来？¹

这引出两个重要的问题：如果我们住的宇宙和我们都是经过设计的，谁设计了我们？祂为什么设计我们？²

我们怎能回答如此博大精深的问题呢？没有法律条文规定那位设计师必须告诉我们他创造我们的

¹ 传道书 3：11，以赛亚书 45：4-6，罗马书 1：20

² 诗篇 139：13-16，使徒行传 17：16-31，以弗所书 2：8-10

After all, who are we compared to such an intelligent and powerful being? But suppose He *wanted* to explain it all? How could such a Creator possibly communicate with mere creatures that He has created from nothingness? Think about what a big difference there would be between us and Him!³

Maybe it would help if we thought about how we ourselves communicate. Want to tell what's on your mind to someone who is far away? Send them a message! Explain the whole thing to them! If perhaps it's a young child you're trying to communicate with, use "baby talk," or maybe stories they can easily understand. And if you want to tell, not just what's on your mind but what's on your *heart*, you might think of going to wherever they are so you can have a heart-to-heart talk, up close and personal. Amazingly , that is exactly what our Creator has done! Not only has He sent us a message to explain it all, but He has come down into our world to personally tell us why He created us, and what meaning He wants for our lives on earth, and what wonderful plans He has for us when we die! Most of all, He came to tell us how much He loves us!⁴ Imagine that!

Our Creator's love for us explains why He created us in the first place. Because He loves us so much, He wants to have a relationship with us, not just for the short time while we are living on earth, but in His own spiritual world where there is no time, no death, no suffering and no disappointment.⁵ From our point of

³ Isaiah 55:9; Job 38:4-42:3

⁴ Philippians 2:5-8

⁵ John 3:16-17

原因。我们如何揣测那位有超凡智慧的创造者背后的动机？假设祂想要向我们解释，祂如何与祂从无变为有的人类沟通？祂和我们之间有如此大的差距，我们怎能了解祂的信息？³

也许试想我们和别人的沟通方式有助於了解这个问题。我们如何与远方的人交流？发个邮件给他们！如果对方是小孩，您会用他们能了解的词汇，或是用故事来表达您的意思。如果您要让对方明白不光是您脑中所想，还有您心里所关切的，您可能会去找他们面对面的交流。我们的创造者就是这么做的。祂不但发给我们一个“邮件”，还亲自来告诉我们祂为何创造了我们，祂希望我们怎么活着，以及祂对我们死后的计划是什么。更不可思议的是，祂来告诉我们祂有多爱我们。⁴

创造主对我们的爱解释了祂为何造我们。祂是如此的爱我们，祂想和我们建立一个关系，不但是当我们短暂活在现世时与我们互动，甚至将来在没有时间、死亡、痛苦、失望的灵魂世界里还能持续地互动。⁵从人的观点来看，死亡是个敌人，

³ 以赛亚书 55：9，约伯记 38：4－42：3

⁴ 腓立比书 2：5-8

⁵ 约翰福音 3：16-17

view, death is an enemy. It means the end of everything that's familiar to us, including, most especially, relationships with those whom we love. But from the Creator's point of view, death is the doorway to the end of death! And also the end of any hurt or sadness we may have experienced.⁶

So why put us on this earth *first*, or *at all*? To get us ready for the new life he has in mind for us. Think of babies in the womb. They're not meant to live there permanently, only to get ready! Death, then, is like coming out of the womb of this world into another, far better world! Humans also choose to have children to express a new and different kind of love.

How do we know all of this? Our Creator has sent us a message...and signed it "God."

The Bible

In a way beyond our understanding, our Creator God caused 40 ordinary men over a period of some 1500 years to write down what He told them regarding the mysteries of life, death, and afterlife in the book known as the Bible. The writing of this book could not have been a merely human process, because everything

⁶ Hosea 13:14; 1 Corinthians 15:54-57

它会终结我们所熟悉和所拥有的，尤其是和我们所爱之人的关系。若从造物主的角度来看，死亡只是个门，引导我们进入永生。门的后面没有悲伤和痛苦。⁶

祂为什么要让我们先降生在人世呢？直接让我们进入永生美好的国度不更好吗？想想在子宫里的婴儿，他们不会永远待在那里。子宫是让他们准备出生的地方。死亡就像从子宫里出来一样，我们会进入一个更好的世界。

我们怎么知道这些的？我们的创造者已经发给我们一封信，上面签了他的名字“上帝”。

圣经

造物主以超出我们能理解的方式，让四十个普通人在 1500 年的时空中写下了圣经，记载了神所述说的有关生命、死亡和死後的奥秘。虽然有这么多位作者，横跨了这么长的时间，圣经的内容却首尾贯串，前後一致，准确记载了历史、自然

⁶ 何西阿书 13：14, 哥林多前书 15：54-57

fits together in a way not expected of human writings, and reflects precisely what we know of history, nature and human nature. Many of the writers were eyewitnesses to what they wrote, and the insights they give could not have come from humans alone.⁷

The Bible itself is a collection of 66 smaller books, presented on two “shelves”. On the first “shelf” we find the 39 books of the Old Testament which tell us about how God created all things and made us humans in many ways like Himself. Like God, Who is a spirit being, we too are spirits, just packaged in fleshly bodies.⁸ Also like God, we have the ability to freely choose between good and evil.⁹ Unlike God, however, we sometimes choose to do things that are evil or sinful. That possibility was a huge risk for a God Who, Himself, never chooses evil. On the other side of death, God has arranged that, like Him, we will only choose that which is good. But in order for us to grow to be like Him on the *other* side, on *this* side God must be like a father training His children to do what is right and good.

⁷ 1 Corinthians 2:9-10; 2 Peter 1:20-21; 1 John 1:1-3

⁸ John 4:24; 1 Corinthians 3:16-17

⁹ Deuteronomy 30:19; Joshua 24:15

和人性。很多作者是现场的目击者，他们的见解很多不可能是单单出於人。⁷

圣经有六十六卷书，分成两部分。第一个部分有三十九卷书，叫旧约。旧约告诉我们神如何创造天地万物，而且把我们造得很多地方和祂一样。神是个灵，我们就像祂，肉身中也有灵。⁸跟神一样，我们有选择行善或行恶的自由。⁹神是完美的，一直行善，绝不行恶。我们却有时会选择犯罪。如果我们以後能进入那永恒的世界，我们也会跟神一样纯然的美善。为了我们能有那一天，神必须像父亲一样，在我们还活着时，教导我们如何分辨是非。

⁷ 哥林多前书 2：9-10, 彼得後书 1：20-21, 约翰一书 1：1-3

⁸ 约翰福音 4：24, 哥林多前书 3：16-17

⁹ 申命记 30：19, 约书亚记 24：15

The first book of the Old Testament books—Genesis—tells us about the very first man and woman God created, Adam and Eve.¹⁰ When they chose to disobey God, they were punished for their sin, just as any child should be disciplined by a father to be taught properly. Unfortunately, Adam and Eve’s children, and their children, and all the rest of us who have come after them, have also sinned (which is to say, we’ve disobeyed our Creator-God).¹¹ The simple story of the Old Testament is about God trying to show us what it means to be good and pure as He is good and pure. The birthplace and early history of mankind took place in what is known as the Middle East today.

At one point in the early history of the earth, almost no one was listening to what God had to say. So God brought a great Flood on the earth, destroying all the people living at that time except for the family of a man named Noah, who was willing to do whatever God asked of him.¹² Every accountable adult during that time had rejected God. After the population of the earth began to spread again, a particularly righteous man, Abraham, was called by God to go to a land 300 miles from his homeland. Acting on faith in God’s promise to bless him and his descendants, Abraham traveled to the area then known as Canaan, where most of the events recorded in the Bible take place.¹³ Abraham had two sons, Isaac and Ishmael. From Isaac and his son Jacob (later

¹⁰ Genesis 2:4-19

¹¹ Romans 3:23; 5:12

¹² Genesis 6:9-9:17; Hebrews 11:7

¹³ Genesis 12:1-5

创世纪是圣经里的第一卷书，说到神所造的第一个男人亚当和第一个女人夏娃的故事。¹⁰ 当他们选择不服从神时，就遭到惩罚，如同孩子受到父亲的管教。不幸的是，亚当和夏娃的后代也都继续犯罪（因为没有顺服我们的造物主）。¹¹ 旧约简而言之是神要我们知道如何能像祂一样的善良和纯洁，里面记录的事件发生在今天的中东地区。

上古时代的人曾不愿听从神的话，於是神用一场大洪水毁灭了他们。诺亚和他的家人是唯一的例外，因为他愿意顺服上帝。¹² 洪水结束后，世上的人口越来越多。有个人叫亚伯拉罕，十分正直，愿意跟随神。神要他搬到离家三百英里的地方。亚伯拉罕相信神会祝福他和他的後裔，顺服指令搬到这个叫迦南的地方。很多记载在圣经里的故事随后都在那里发生。¹³ 亚伯拉罕有两个儿子—以撒和以实玛利。以撒的儿子叫雅各

¹⁰ 创世纪 2：14-19

¹¹ 罗马书 3：23；5：12

¹² 创世纪 6：9-9：17；希伯来书 11：7

¹³ 创世纪 12：1-5

renamed Israel) would come “the children of Israel,” about whom the Bible has much to say. (Today, their descendants are called Jews.) By contrast, the Bible has little to say about Ishmael. (His descendants eventually would become Arabs, most closely associated with Muhammad and his Muslim followers in the religion of Islam.)

Out of all the nations in the world, God surprisingly chose the least likely nation—tiny, insignificant Israel—as the people through whom He would teach the world His good ways. God gave to the Israelites what would become known as “The Ten Commandments.”¹⁴ They’re a list of “do’s” and “don’ts” (like don’t lie and don’t steal) that a parent would teach a child to help them become good people.

But “the children of Israel” had a bad habit of disobeying God, so throughout the two thousand years of that nation’s history, God worked hard to get their attention.¹⁵ Sometimes He used military victories or defeats. Sometimes He sent special messengers known as prophets to warn them. Sometimes He used miracles, like making dry paths through the sea, or raining food down from the sky. Sometimes He caused nature to act up, as in famines, fire, or earthquakes. But as is often true of children, “the children of Israel” were stubborn.

¹⁴ Exodus 2:1-17

¹⁵ Jeremiah 5:23; Hosea 4:16; Zechariah 1:2-6; 7:11-13

（后来改名为以色列）雅各的后代成为以色列人，圣经里记载了很多他们的故事。（以色列人的后代就是现在的犹太人。）圣经并没有告诉我们很多和以实玛利有关的事。（他的后代成为今天的阿拉伯人）

在世上诸多国家中，神意外的选了一个又小又微不足道国家——以色列，来教导世人祂的原则。上帝赐给以色列人众所周知的“十诫”。¹⁴ 十诫列出了该做和不该做的事（例如不要偷窃，不要说谎），就如同父母用准则教导孩子要做个好人。

不幸的是，以色列人常不服从神的命令。在他们两千年的历史中，神尽力要抓住他们的注意力。¹⁵ 有时祂用军事上的胜利或失败来达成目的；有时祂派先知来警告他们；祂也曾用把大海从中分开，或是让食物从天而降的奇迹，或是用自然灾害如饥荒、火灾、地震来让以色列人知道祂的力量。但是，就像孩子一样，这些“以色列的儿女”是倔强的。

¹⁴ 出埃及记 2：1-17

¹⁵ 耶利米书 5：23, 何西阿书 4：16, 撒迦利亚书 1：2-6；7：11-13

To God's amazement, they were influenced by people in the nations around them to worship man made gods, represented by carved wood or stone idols. These so-called "gods" were made to look like things in nature (like animals or the sun), none of which would even exist had they not been made by the one true Creator God!¹⁶ Century after century, Israel was in a constant cycle of rebellion. When God punished them for their disobedience, they would quit sinning and start obeying Him. But, just as with little children, before you could turn around, they were disobeying all over again!

Through the many centuries of their disobedience, God was a patient Father. In fact, God was working through His chosen nation to bring about a long-range plan to deal with the problem of sin. Because sin always brings spiritual death, there had to be a way to make it possible for us to live with God after we die. God's solution for sin would involve a great sacrifice on His part. But first, God had to introduce the very idea of sacrifice, so God gave a set of instructions to Israel's first great leader, Moses, to teach the children of Israel how to worship and live pure lives.

In these "Laws of Moses," God commanded the people of Israel to worship Him by killing sheep and cattle and offering them up as sacrifices, with a focus always on the animal's blood, as if that blood could remove the guilt of their sins. There were also special kinds of washings, in which water was important for cleaning a person spiritually, as if the inner soul was being washed much like

¹⁶ Jeremiah 10:1-16

以色列周围的国家敬拜用木头或石头雕刻的神像。那些偶像的外型取自大自然里的实物，如动物或太阳。如果没有创造它们的真神，这些偶像根本不会存在。¹⁶ 以色列人受这些拜假神的国家影响，一个世纪接着一个世纪，在背叛神中循环。当祂惩罚他们时，他们会服从，但如同小孩，他们很快地又再次犯罪。

在他们反抗神的许多世纪中，神一直是个耐心的父亲。祂借着所挑选的以色列国成就了解决犯罪的计划。因为罪带来了灵魂的死亡，神需要一个方式让我们死后能与祂在一起。在神的计划里，祂要为人类所做一份伟大的牺牲，但祂需要先教会人类“牺牲”是什么。因此，神给以色列的第一位领导摩西很多律法。这些律法教导以色列人如何敬拜神和过洁净的生活。

神在摩西律法里命令以色列人用杀死的羊和牛献祭。动物的血可以除去他们所犯的罪。这些动物代替以色列人承受他们该受的惩罚。律法中也要求以色列人做特别的洗礼—用水洁净外在身体

¹⁶ 耶利米书 10：1-16

we wash the outer body.¹⁷ A time was coming when both the blood of the sacrifices and the water of the ceremonial washings would find new meaning in God's great plan to save man from the punishment demanded by sin and to make way for a permanent life with God.¹⁸

It is on the second "shelf" of 27 books known as the New Testament that God's plan is finally revealed. As the New Testament begins, a child is born to a young woman, Mary, who has never had sexual relations with any man.¹⁹ Her son, Jesus, is as human as any other child who might have been born that same day, but (here is a great mystery...) He is also the Creator God Himself!²⁰ Amazingly, God actually came down into our sin-filled world so that He could solve the problem of sin.

In the Old Testament, God had appeared like a "father." In the New Testament, He appears like a "son," the Son of God, who at times talks with His spiritual "Father" even while He—the Son of Man (His own favorite name)--is walking around on the earth!²¹ You might ask: "Can that really be true?" The answer is yes, but only because the "Father" and the "Son" are both truly God. Only a God intelligent and powerful enough to create the universe could be both "Father" and "Son" while remaining One God.

¹⁷ Ezekiel 36:24-26

¹⁸ Titus 3:5-7; Hebrews 10:19-22; 1 Peter 3:20-21; Revelation 7:13-14

¹⁹ Luke 1:26-38

²⁰ John 1:1-18

²¹ Matthew 11:25-27; John 10:30; 20:30-31; Colossians 1:12-14

的同时也洁净了内在的灵魂。¹⁷ 用血献祭和用水洁净的仪式，在神的计画里后来都有了新的意义，就是神把人从因犯罪而该受的惩罚中拯救出来，使我们可以永远的和祂在一起。¹⁸

圣经的第二部分叫新约，有二十七卷书。这部分使我们看到了神的计划。新约的首卷书说到，有位叫玛丽亚的年轻妇女生了一个小男孩。奇怪的是，玛丽亚从来没有和男人有过性关系。¹⁹ 她的儿子耶稣是人，也同时是神。²⁰ 神降到人世，进入这个充满罪恶的世界来解决罪的问题。

在旧约里，神以父亲的形象显现。在新约中，祂以儿子的形象出现。祂既是人的儿子，又是神的儿子。耶稣在世时经常与祂的父亲交谈。²¹ 您可能问“这是真的吗？”答案是肯定的，因为父亲和儿子都真正是神。只有伟大全能创造宇宙的神，才有可能同时是父又是子。

¹⁷ 以西结书 36：24-26

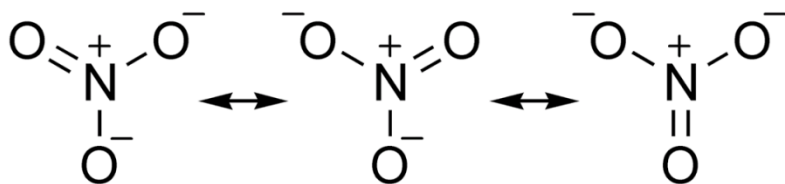
¹⁸ 提多书 3：5-7；希伯来书 10：19-22, 彼得前书 3：20-21, 启示录 7：13-14

¹⁹ 路加福音 1：26-38

²⁰ 约翰福音 1：1-18

²¹ 马太福音 11：25-27, 约翰福音 10：30；20：30-31, 歌罗西书 1：12-14

There is another Personality to the three part nature of God. The Holy Spirit, who works through people to bring His plan for saving us into action.²² This Spirit has a different role in the nature of the Godhead, separate from the Father and Son (Jesus the Messiah). So we see God as “Father,” God as “Son,” and God as the “Holy Spirit”—yet still One God!²³ If that seems strange, imagine an egg, which has three parts: the white, the yolk and the shell. Three parts but one egg! Our universe and bodies are designed as three parts, but are simply one. Matter (mass, energy, motion), Space (length, height, breadth) and Time (past, present, future). All coexist and our universe could not survive if one were removed. Three in one! Humans are mind, spirit and body. A theory found in quantum physics which helps further explain this idea. The resonant structure of the nitrate ion has simultaneously three structures. Each structure is not one or the other, but is all three at once!

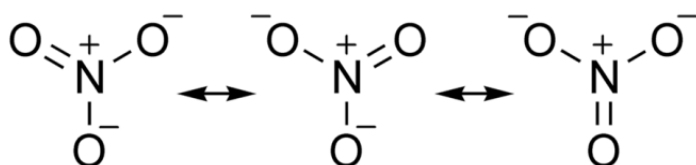


The Biblical concept of God is not polytheistic, but is simply beautiful complexity! When you think about it, it's quite

²² John 14:26;15:26,Acts 2:42;11:16-17

²³ Deuteronomy 6:4

除了圣父与圣子之外，三位一体的神中还有一位，即圣灵。圣灵和圣父，圣子的角色不同，祂是藉由人来成就神救赎的工作。²² 所以神既是父，又是子，也是圣灵，有三个不同的身份，但仍是一位神。²³ 如果很难理解的话，试想鸡蛋的构造——蛋白，蛋黄，和蛋壳。蛋由三个部分组成，但仍旧是一个蛋。我们的宇宙也是由三个部分组成——物质（质量，能量，运动）空间（长度，高度，宽度）和时间（过去，现在，未来），三者并存，缺一不可。人类有心智，心灵和身体，也是三者同时存在。量子物理学里有个理论也有助于解释三位一体的观念。硝酸根离子的谐振结构里也是有三部分，同时并存，缺一不可。



三位一体的神并非表示有很多位神同时并存。神能如此存在是奇妙，超乎人的智慧所能理解的。

²² 约翰福音 14：26；15：26，使徒行传 2：42；11：16-17

²³ 申命记 6：4

marvelous how God has created things even in nature that help us understand what is not natural but supernatural, not physical but spiritual.

Heaven

As people who live on a planet called Earth, it is hard for us to imagine a God who could be both in our world and beyond the outer edges of the universe. Where would that be? The simple answer is “in Heaven.” But it’s not as if Heaven is a place with either definable boundaries or an address. Heaven is as different a reality from this world as was our mother’s womb in which we existed before we came into this world. How could one possibly have described birds, clouds, or sunsets (or ice cream!) to us in the womb! So the Bible can only paint simple pictures of Heaven. What’s important is that Heaven is a spiritual world filled with spiritual creatures that God created long before He created our universe. Those creatures, known as angels, don’t have flesh-and-bone bodies as we have (but the spiritual bodies they do have must be incredibly glorious!).²⁴ Although many people think that angels have wings, angels don’t fly, as birds and airplanes fly. Flying would be too slow! As God’s messengers to humankind, angels move instantaneously between heaven and earth, sometimes appearing in startling brightness, but most often like

²⁴ Matthew 22:30

神甚至用自然界里的结构来帮助我们了解这个超自然，屬於心灵层面而不是物理层面的现象。

天堂

对住在地球上的我们来说，很难想象有位神能同时住在这个世界，又住在宇宙之外。那是什么样的地方呢？简而言之，就是“天堂”。天堂没有地址也没有边界。住在人世和住在天堂的差别就如同出生前住在子宫里和出生後住在这世界。人类出生前不能想象飞鸟，云彩，或日落。所以圣经只能简单地描述天堂。重要的是，天堂是个属灵的世界，充满了许多神在创造世界之前就存在的灵，这些灵叫天使。他们没有肉体，只有灵魂。²⁴ 虽然很多人以为天使有翅膀，但他们并不像小鸟或飞机一样的飞翔，这样飞太慢了！

²⁴ 马太福音 22：30

ordinary human beings. Eating and everything!²⁵ When not on earth, angels serve God in worship before His heavenly Throne, much like an earthly king might have servants in his court.²⁶

At a time long before God created humankind on earth, an angel named Satan became too proud of himself and wanted to be worshiped, like God. Many other angels joined him in a war against God's faithful angels. The outcome was never in doubt. For his rebellion, Satan and his evil angels (known as demons) were thrown out of heaven.²⁷ On earth, Satan (also known as the Devil) tried to get God's new human creatures to join in his rebellion. Satan tempted Adam and Eve to sin, causing them to be thrown out of their earthly paradise (the Garden of Eden) just as he had been thrown out of Heaven. This attitude of rebellion that Satan encouraged in the very first humans has been with us ever since, and continues every time you and I choose to disobey God. The good news is that Satan is limited in what he can do to promote evil, while God's faithful angels are not limited in the good that they can promote, particularly in those who live as God desires us to live.

That is where the story comes full circle. It is this same heaven that God has prepared for all those who live as God desires us to live. At the great Resurrection of the dead—when all the dead are raised and judged for their lives on earth—those who are faithful to God will be with God and His angels forever! But in the

²⁵ Genesis 18:1-8

²⁶ Revelation 7:11-12

²⁷ Isaiah 14:12-15; Luke 10:18

作为上帝的使者，他们能瞬间在天堂和人世间往返。²⁵ 他们有时以明亮的光显现，但通常就以人的形貌出现，做人所做的事。在天堂时，天使在神的宝座前侍奉敬拜他，就像地上的君王在他的殿中有仆人服事他一样。²⁶

神创造人类之前，有一位叫撒旦的天使，他很高傲，要人敬拜他像敬拜神那样。很多天使跟随他与神忠实的天使对抗，毋庸置疑的，他们的下场都很悲惨。因为背叛上帝，撒旦（现在叫魔鬼）和他的天使从天堂被逐出，并且坠落在世上。²⁷ 撒旦试着引诱神创造的人类加入他反叛的阵营。他诱惑亚当和夏娃犯罪，他们因此不再能住在伊甸园（过程跟撒旦所经历的一样）。撒旦所带动的这种反叛的态度至今还在人的心中，每当我们选择不顺服神时就会显现出来。庆幸的是魔鬼鼓动邪恶的能力是有限的，而神忠心的天使推动善的能力却是无限的，在那些追求神旨意的人心里更是如此。

神为照祂旨意而活的人所准备的地方就是祂住的天堂。世界末日时，所有死去的人都会复活接受审判。忠于神的人会 and 神和天使永远住在一起。撒旦的下场对我们是个警告。在世上反抗

²⁵ 创世纪 18：1-8

²⁶ 启示录 7：11-12

²⁷ 以赛亚书 14：12-15, 路加福音 10：18

story of Satan, there comes also a warning. The destiny of those who rebel against God on earth is the same destruction that awaits Satan and his demons for having rebelled against God in heaven.²⁸ This important difference in one's destiny after death is why it is so crucial for us to learn what God wants of us in this life, and to know how we can serve our Creator God as He deserves. So what has God told us about that?

Prophets, Priests, and Kings

The Bible has so many exciting things to tell us, it's hard to know where to begin! But there are three important types of people in the Old Testament that help to introduce us to the most important figure in the New Testament, the God-man known as Jesus – prophets, priests and kings.

1. We've mentioned that God sent prophets to warn the children of Israel about God's punishment when they disobeyed Him. But these messengers also talked about a coming Prophet who would be God's Ultimate Messenger to the world. Like them, this Prophet would warn about the dangers of sin. (Unlike them, this Prophet would also talk about the world to come after death.)

²⁸ Revelation 20:1-15

神的人将面临和撒旦一样的毁灭。他们的惩罚是在地狱中承受永远的痛苦。²⁸人死后的命运非常重要，因此我们需要知道神对人的旨意是什么，也需要学习如何事奉我们的造物主。神都说了些什么呢？

先知，祭司，和国王

圣经里有很多重要的讯息，难以决定从何开始。旧约中有三种人把新约里最重要的人物耶稣基督介绍给我们。这三种人是：先知，祭司，和国王。

1) 神差遣先知来警告以色列人当他们不顺服时将受到惩罚。他们也同时预言以后会出现另一位先知，他是神最重要的使者。和旧约的先知一样，这位先知也会警告他们犯罪的严重性。但和旧约先知不同的是，他还会说到死后的世界。

²⁸ 启示录 20：1-15

To the children of Israel and the Jews of Jesus' own day, this promised Prophet had always been known as the Messiah (or Christ), the One they mistakenly thought would reign as a political and military king in a glorious kingdom on earth. Over the centuries, many pretenders claimed to be this Messiah. But they all lived and died without that kingdom ever happening. So who would that coming Prophet and Messiah be...?²⁹

2. The Old Testament also tells us about how God introduced the role of priest by setting up certain worship leaders in Israel to oversee the animal sacrifices and rituals that God commanded to be observed; first, in a big portable tent (known as the tabernacle) and later, in a permanent structure (known as the Temple) in the city of Jerusalem. Priests, and especially the High Priest, were appointed to be God's spiritual representatives to His people. They were to promote pure living as an example to the people, and also to apply the blood of the sacrifices so that God could forgive the people of their guilt. Yet, none of the priests were ever totally pure themselves, and the blood of cattle and sheep was not powerful enough to cover the people's guilt. Another Priest would be needed for that. A totally pure Priest, and a Priest who could supply blood powerful enough to deal with the people's guilt. Who would that coming Priest be...?

3. A large part of the Old Testament contains story after story of Israel's kings. Good kings, bad kings, minor kings, and super kings. God had warned His people against having kings, but they insisted

²⁹ Luke 1:69-70; Hebrews 1:1-2; 1 Peter 1:10-12

以色列人和耶稣当时的犹太人知道，这位将出现的先知叫做弥赛亚（或称基督）。以色列人以为他会是位军事和政治领导。在耶稣来之前的几个世纪，很多人声称他们是弥赛亚，但一直到去世，他们所应许的国都不曾出现。所以先知说的弥赛亚究竟是谁呢？²⁹

2. 神在旧约里设立了祭司的职务。他们负责监督动物的献祭和仪式。起先在一个移动的帐幕里（叫做会幕），后来则在耶路撒冷一座永久性的建筑物里（叫做圣殿）进行。大祭司被任名为神的代表，他们要以圣洁的生活作人民的表率，也要呈上祭牲的血，所以神可以藉此原谅百姓的罪。但没有一位祭司是完全圣洁的，牛和羊的血也不足以洗净人们所犯的罪。人需要另一位更完美的祭司，是完全圣洁的，只有他献上的血可以完全抵销人类所犯的罪。那位祭司会是谁呢？

3. 旧约大部分讲述的是以色列国王的故事。这些国王有的好，有的坏，有些不重要，有些重要。

²⁹ 路加福音 1：69-70, 希伯来书 1：1-2 彼得前书 1：10-12

that they wanted kings like the nations around them. So God allowed them to have their kings—not because He thought it would be good for them (which it never was), but because God was slowly introducing them (and the whole world!) to the One who would be the King of Kings. By God’s incredible plan, this coming King would be a descendant of one of Israel’s best kings, King David. David was a good king among many bad kings of Israel, but even David was a sinful man who committed adultery and went so far as to have the woman’s husband murdered.³⁰ Yet, God loved David’s heart! Unlike so many others who deny their sins and refuse to change their actions, King David was very sorry for his sin. He had a strong desire to be God’s man.³¹ How he would have loved to have seen the King who one day would be called “the Son of David.” So who would be that coming King…?

Jesus, the Messiah Christ

- When Jesus, the God-Man, was miraculously born in the little town of Bethlehem, everything about His humble birth felt wrong to the Jews who for many centuries had been looking for a Messiah they thought would be the great warrior-king of Israel. Although Jesus was a distant descendant of King David, His family’s simple background was not what anyone would have

³⁰ 1 Samuel 13:14

³¹ 2 Samuel 11:2-12:23; Psalm 51; Acts 13:22

神很早就警诫以色列人不要有国王，但他们坚持要和周围有君王的国家一样。虽然神不认为那是明智之举，却容许他们这么做。神藉着国王的设立逐步将一位万王之王介绍给他们和全世界。在神的计划里，这位君王是以色列最好的国王大卫的後裔。大卫是个好国王，但他犯了奸淫罪，甚至设计杀害了情妇的丈夫。³⁰ 很多人犯罪之後拒绝悔改，大卫却深深地认罪悔改，强烈想要成为属神的人，神喜欢他的心。³¹ 那位未来的王被叫做“大卫的儿子”，他是谁呢？

耶稣：弥赛亚，基督

当耶稣在伯利恒出生时，祂卑微的身份和犹太人几百年来所期望的救世主有很大的差异。他们以为弥赛亚会是位勇猛的战士。虽然耶稣是大卫的後裔，但祂的父母是平民出身，没有显赫的家世。

³⁰ 撒母耳记上 13：14

³¹ 撒母耳记下 11：2-12：23, 诗篇 51, 使徒行传 13：22

expected. He didn't even have the physical appearance of someone who would stand out in a crowd. Nor was He educated by the Jewish rabbis (teachers) as a priest might be. In fact, for the first thirty years of His life, He kept mostly to Himself, working with His (not biological but earthly) father, Joseph, and then, after Joseph's death, taking care of His mother, Mary.

When Jesus finally left home to become a religious teacher, He surprised almost everyone, including His family and friends. Because He could perform the most incredible miracles (like changing water into wine³², healing the blind,³³ and making wild waves calm!³⁴), Jesus quickly became popular among the common people. And how they loved His teaching! Unlike the rabbis' complicated teaching, what Jesus taught was easy for anyone to understand.³⁵ One of Jesus' favorite methods of teaching was to use parables—simple examples from nature or ordinary life situations that Jesus would use to teach spiritual truths.³⁶

Jesus' teachings were not like anything the world had ever heard. They were filled with hope, grace, love, and mercy. He spoke about loving one's enemies and doing good to all people no matter if they are deserving or not. Jesus taught His followers not to judge people by their position in life, how much money they might have, or by their gender or race. Jesus spoke frequently

³² John 2:1-12

³³ John 9:1-41

³⁴ Mark 4:35-41

³⁵ Mark 1:21-22

³⁶ Matthew 13:10-17

祂貌不出众，没有受过正式犹太人的神学教育。在三十岁之前，耶稣过着不为人知的生活，为祂的父亲约瑟工作，父亲去世之后就照顾祂的母亲玛丽亚。

但当耶稣离家开始到处讲道，每个人都大吃一惊，包括祂的亲友。因为能祂行神迹（比如：把水变酒，³² 让瞎子重见光明，³³ 平息巨浪控制自然³⁴）。耶稣很快就受到百姓的爱戴，他们也十分喜欢祂的教导。当时的宗教老师用词艰深，耶稣的语言浅显易懂。³⁵ 他最喜欢用的方法之一是比喻，从大自然和日常生活中简单的例子来说明属灵的道理。³⁶

耶稣的教导不同於一般世人的教导，充满了希望、恩慈、爱和恩典。祂说要爱你的敌人，而且要善待每个人，不管对方值不值得你如此对他。耶稣要他的跟随者不根据地位、收入、性别或种族来判断别人。

³² 约翰福音 2：1-12

³³ 约翰福音 9：1-41

³⁴ 马可福音 4：35-41

³⁵ 马可福音 1：21-22

³⁶ 马太福音 13：10-17

about helping children, widows, orphans, and the poor. Most importantly of all, Jesus spoke about, not simply a person's actions, but their heart—one's inner desires, motives, and reasons for their actions. To be sure, God judges our actions, but mostly our hearts!³⁷

For all His popularity among ordinary people, Jesus was not liked by the religious leaders of the Jews. He was quick to point out how arrogant and hypocritical they were when they insisted that the people should act one way when they themselves acted another way. It was not God's moral and spiritual laws they were teaching, said Jesus, but their own little rules. You can imagine how they reacted!³⁸ How could this uneducated, wandering Teacher possibly be the Messiah-Christ that the prophets of old had spoken about? How could anyone who refused to keep *their* own special rules be a priest? Worse yet, how could this man of peace be a great warrior-king to overthrow the rule of the Roman Empire? What upset them most, however, was Jesus' bold claim to be God! How dare He say He could forgive sins? Only God could forgive sins!³⁹

³⁷ Matthew 5:1-6:42

³⁸ Matthew 15:1-14

³⁹ Mark 2:1-12

他常鼓励大家要帮助小孩、寡妇、孤儿和穷人。耶稣最重要的教导是，内在的动机和欲望比外在表现出来的行为更重要，神不但审判我们的行为，更会审核我们的内心。³⁷

老百姓很喜欢耶稣，犹太教的领导们却不是如此。因为耶稣指出他们的骄傲和虚假，那些领导说一套做一套。耶稣说他们教的不符合神在道德和心灵上制订的律法，而是他们自己制订的规则。³⁸耶稣基督没有受过正规的神职训练，犹太教领导们觉得祂不可能是先知所预言的弥赛亚。他们也无法接受这位拒绝服从他们所订的法则的人是位祭司。而且，这位和平之子怎会是推翻罗马帝国的战士？让他们最气愤的是耶稣声称祂是神，祂能赦免人类犯过的罪。在领导人的心里，只有神才有那样的权能。³⁹

³⁷ 马太福音 5：1-6：42

³⁸ 马太福音 15：1-14

³⁹ 马可福音 2：1-12

So when Jesus' challenge to their teaching and their positions of authority became too much, they decided Jesus must be killed.⁴⁰ Using false claims and lying witnesses⁴¹ (as well as an act of betrayal by one of Jesus' closest disciples, Judas⁴²) the Jewish leaders persuaded the Roman government to crucify Jesus by nailing Him to a wooden cross until He died.⁴³

With Jesus now dead and buried, the religious leaders had finally gotten rid of this disturbing troublemaker. Or so they thought.... In the most amazing supernatural act in history, after three days in a sealed tomb, Jesus walked out of that tomb, *alive!*⁴⁴ Many hundreds of witnesses saw Him, and several touched His risen body, still with the holes in His hands and feet where He had been nailed to the cross.⁴⁵ What else could explain such an incredible resurrection but that Jesus was Who He claimed to be: the Prophet, Priest, and King spoken of by Israel's prophets? And, indeed, the very Son of God!

⁴⁰ John 11:45-53

⁴¹ Mark 14:55-59

⁴² Matthew 26:14-16

⁴³ John 19:1-37

⁴⁴ Mark 16:1-14

⁴⁵ John 20:26-29; 1 Corinthians 15:3-8

所以当耶稣不断挑战他们的教导和权威时，他们就决定要杀死祂。⁴⁰ 犹太领导用不实的控诉⁴¹（加上耶稣门徒犹大的背叛⁴²），说服罗马帝国的官员把耶稣基督钉在十字架上。⁴³

当耶稣死在十字架上，又被放进坟墓之后，犹太宗教领袖觉得他们终于成功了。但耶稣却在三天之后复活！⁴⁴ 祂从密封的坟墓中走出来。五百个人看到祂，并且好几个人触摸了祂的身体和钉痕。⁴⁵ 如果祂不是弥赛亚，上帝的独生子，祂怎能从死里复活？祂的死和复活足以证明祂是先知所预言的那位先知，祭司，和君王，而且是神的儿子。

⁴⁰ 约翰福音 11：45-53

⁴¹ 马可福音 14：55-59

⁴² 马太福音 26：14-16

⁴³ 约翰福音 19：1-37

⁴⁴ 马可福音 16：1-14

⁴⁵ 约翰福音 20：26-29, 哥林多前书 15：3-8

What's more, He was the ultimate sacrificial Lamb of God who had shed His own blood as the perfect sacrifice for sin.⁴⁶ On that cruel Roman cross, God's plan to save us from our sins was made complete. And in His incredible resurrection from the tomb came the undeniable proof that we, too, can have life beyond death!

“For God so loved the world, that He gave his only Son, so that whoever believes in Him might not be destroyed, but have a forever-life with God.” (John 3:16)

The Apostles

During the three years that Jesus was teaching and performing miracles, He was preparing twelve of His disciples to be special ambassadors, or apostles, to spread the word about Jesus; first to the Jews and then to all the world.⁴⁷ Like Jesus Himself, these twelve men were outsiders to the religious establishment. Unlike Jesus, each of them had character flaws and sins that sometimes make you wonder what potential Jesus saw in them. Yet they are a reminder that God uses flawed and sinful people like ourselves to tell other flawed and sinful people how much God loves them!

For forty days after His resurrection, Jesus spent time with His eleven apostles, preparing them for their mission. (The twelfth

⁴⁶ Hebrews 9:1-10:18

⁴⁷ Matthew 10:2-4

还有，祂是为我们钉在十字架上，以他的血为我们赎罪的羔羊，⁴⁶ 成就了神救我们的计划。耶稣从死里复活证明了我们死後也会有生命。

“神爱世人，甚至将他的独生子赐给他们，叫一切信他的不致灭亡，反得永生。

（约翰福音 3:16）

使徒

在耶稣教导众人和行神迹的三年里，祂在追随者中培养了十二位使徒。他们被托付的职责是把福音先传给犹太人，然後传到全世界。⁴⁷ 这十二个人如同耶稣，没有正规的宗教背景。他们都有性格上的缺点，也都有罪，有时让人奇怪耶稣在他们身上看到什么可堪造就的潜力。但从他们的被选，我们知道神会使用像我们这样不完美的人，来帮助其他不完美的人认识神的慈爱。

耶稣复活后，花了四十天与十一位使徒在一起，准备他们传福音的使命（使徒犹大因背叛耶稣已

⁴⁶ 希伯来书 9：1-10：18

⁴⁷ 马太福音 10：2-4

apostle, Judas, had committed suicide after betraying Him.) Jesus told them that He had to go back into Heaven, but that He would send them the Holy Spirit to encourage them and guide them in their mission.⁴⁸ Then, in the presence of His apostles, Jesus ascended into heaven from which He said one day He would return to judge the world.⁴⁹

When Jesus had gone up out of their sight, the apostles returned to Jerusalem as Jesus had instructed them, and selected a replacement for Judas. They then waited for the appearance of the promised Holy Spirit which came upon them with great power at the Jewish feast of Pentecost.⁵⁰ To the crowds at the feast, the apostles preached the good news that the man, Jesus, whom they had caused to be killed, was the promised Messiah, now risen from the dead. When the crowd heard this (miraculously, each in his own native language!), they were crushed with guilt and asked what they could do to be saved from their great sin. Peter and the other apostles told the crowd to repent (meaning, to straighten out their lives) and be baptized (immersed completely in a pool of water) for the forgiveness of their sins and then they would receive the Holy Spirit in their own lives.

The baptisms of 3,000 people that day in Jerusalem at the beginning of the first century (dated from Jesus' birth!) began a movement that has not stopped from that day until this day. Believers then and now are still taking hold of Jesus' saving blood

⁴⁸ John 14:25-26

⁴⁹ Luke 24:50-51

⁵⁰ Acts 2:1-41

自杀)。耶稣告诉他们祂将回到天堂去，但是祂会派圣灵来鼓励和引导他们，⁴⁸然后就在门徒面前升了天，并且说将来祂会回来审判世上的人。

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耶稣在视野中消失後，使徒照祂的吩咐回到耶路撒冷，选了另一位使徒取代犹大。接下来，他们等待圣灵的降临。在犹太人过五旬节那天，圣灵降在他们身上，赋予他们巨大的能力。⁵⁰使徒向来过节的群众传讲福音，告诉他们被处死的耶稣是应许中的弥赛亚，已经从死里复活。在场的人以各自家乡的方言听到了福音，他们觉得自己罪孽深重，想知道他们的罪如何能得赦免。彼得和其他的使徒告诉他们，要悔改和受洗。全身浸入水中，罪就能得赦免，并且接受圣灵进入他们的生命。

在第一世纪（从耶稣诞生开始）的那一天，有三千人在耶路撒冷受了洗，为接受基督信仰的世代掀起了开端，直到今天都没有停止。现在信耶稣的人仍和当时一样，藉着洗礼与耶稣基督同死，

⁴⁸ 约翰福音 14：25-26

⁴⁹ 路加福音 24：50-51

⁵⁰ 使徒行传 2：1-41

by reenacting Christ's own death, burial, and resurrection; not in a tomb, but in a "grave" of water through which God scrubs them spiritually clean and raises them up to live a pure life in hope of the Final Resurrection yet to come!⁵¹

The Early Church

Under the leadership of the apostles, this movement of baptized Jesus-followers (soon called "Christians" after their Lord and Savior, Jesus the *Christ*) began meeting together for worship and fellowship. These Jewish Christ-believers praised God in the Temple for sending His Son as the promised Messiah. But there were important differences between their former worship as Jews and their new worship as disciples of Jesus. Instead of their special Sabbath (our "Saturday") worship in the Temple or in synagogues (places of religious instruction), they met together in private homes on the first day of the week (our "Sunday"), the day on which Jesus walked out of the tomb.⁵²

The central focus of their simple worship each week was remembering Jesus' sacrificial death by drinking wine and eating unleavened bread, just as Jesus had taught His disciples to do in His memory. The wine represents Christ's blood, while the bread represents Christ's body on the cross, given to take away our sins.

⁵¹ 1 Peter 3:21

⁵² Mark 16:9; Acts 20:7; Romans 16:5

同埋葬(在水中)，同复活。生命中的过犯藉着水被洗净，重新开始纯净的生活，为最终与神共享永生的日子做准备。⁵¹

第一个教会

在使徒们的领导下，这些受了洗的门徒开始聚会敬拜上帝（不久他们就被叫做基督徒）。他们大部分是犹太人，一开始仍然在圣殿敬拜，感谢神派祂的独生子耶稣基督来当他们的弥赛亚。不过，他们不再像过去是星期六在犹太人的会堂聚会，而是在一星期的第一天（也就是我们的星期日）在基督徒的家里聚会，因为耶稣是在星期天从坟墓中出来的。⁵²

他们每周敬拜的重心是用圣餐来纪念耶稣基督的牺牲，这是耶稣吩咐他的门徒要做的。无酵饼是代表十字架上耶稣为我们受刑的身体，葡萄酒代表耶稣为我们所流的血。

⁵¹ 彼得前书 3：21

⁵² 马可福音 16：9, 使徒行传 20：7, 罗马书 16：5

As we drink the wine and eat the bread, we look back to the cross and the empty tomb with thankfulness, and forward with hope to Christ's return.⁵³

In Christian worship, no longer are there any animal sacrifices, human priests, complicated rituals, special feasts, or any of the other acts of worship that had been required under the Laws of Moses. Jesus Christ is our High Priest! He is our Sacrificial Lamb whose blood once and for all time has done what the blood of animals could never do!⁵⁴ As the spiritual body of Christ, the early church (all those who were baptized believers) joined together in prayer, in singing, and in listening to the teaching brought by mature disciples of Christ. As any physical family would do, this spiritual family regularly ate together as a way of having closer fellowship. They also generously shared their financial resources to take care of anyone who might be in need.⁵⁵

During those early years, the Holy Spirit was actively working among those on-fire believers, and especially through the apostles, who were given the power to perform miracles as signs to their hearers that their "good news" message was truly from God. It was an exciting time for those very first Christians, and they couldn't help but share the good news with their families, friends, and even strangers. So many of them were converted to Christ that the church grew enormously; even though many of these new Christ-followers were persecuted by being put into

⁵³ 1 Corinthians 11:17-34

⁵⁴ Hebrews 10:1-14

⁵⁵ Acts 2:42-47

当我们领用圣餐时，以感恩的心回想耶稣为我们所做的牺牲和祂之後的复活，也盼望祂的再来。

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基督徒敬拜时，不需再遵守旧约时期摩西的律法以动物献祭，也不用再跟随祭司举行复杂的仪式。耶稣基督就是我们的大祭司，是我们献祭的羔羊，祂流的血一次就为我们完成了这个仪式。

⁵⁴ 作为耶稣属灵的身体，早期的教会（由受过洗的基督徒组成）常常聚在一起祈祷、唱歌和聆听成熟门徒的教导。这些最早的基督徒彼此分享他们的钱和时间来关照别的基督徒。⁵⁵

在早期，圣灵常常积极帮助那些火热的基督徒，尤其是透过使徒行神迹，让观者相信神的力量。早期的基督徒因此忍不住要向家人朋友，甚至陌生人传福音。很多人接受耶稣基督为救主，所以教会快速成长。虽然很多基督徒被关、被迫害、被杀、被家人排斥，他们还是要做基督徒。

⁵³ 哥林多前书 11：17-34

⁵⁴ 希伯来书 10：1-14

⁵⁵ 使徒行传 2：42-47

prison, killed, or simply were shunned by their own families for converting to another faith.

If you want to know more, all of these exciting events are recorded in the New Testament book known as the Acts of the Apostles, or simply “Acts.”

In order for these new Christians to grow and mature spiritually, the apostles wrote letters of instruction, encouragement, and sometimes even rebuke. These letters are formally known as the Epistles. Most of them were written by a specially-appointed apostle named Paul, a former Jewish superstar who was in charge of persecuting Christians until the day that he was personally confronted by the risen Christ.⁵⁶ That life-changing experience led Paul to become the most well-known of the apostles, preaching the Good News about Jesus all over the ancient Mediterranean world. His three missionary journeys took him to modern-day Turkey, Greece, and Italy.

Paul’s first challenge was to convince his fellow Jews that, as believers in Jesus the Messiah, they no longer needed to follow many of the legalistic regulations of the old Laws of Moses. However, the basics of the Ten Commandments continue to be utilized in most modern day cultures as standards that promote harmony, peace and social justice.

⁵⁶ Acts 22:1-21

在新约的使徒行传里有很多这方面的记载，如果您有兴趣，欢迎您去研读。

为了帮助新信徒在属灵上长大成熟，使徒们用写信来教导、鼓励或训诫他们。这些信叫做“书信”，大部分是被使徒保罗写的。保罗原先是个迫害基督徒的犹太人，直到一天他和耶稣相遇，⁵⁶ 那个经历终生改变他，使他成为最着名的使徒，沿着地中海广传福音。他长途跋涉传讲福音三次，足迹远及今天的土耳其，希腊和义大利。

保罗的第一个挑战是劝说成为基督徒的犹太人不需要遵守过去摩西严苛的律法。不过，十誡的基本原则在今天的社会仍是被用来作为促进和谐，和平和维护正义的标准。

⁵⁶ 使徒行传 22：1-21

Over and over, Paul had to remind them that they were being saved by God's grace, not by doing good works or by the human effort of strict law-keeping; even though doing good works comes automatically to those who accept Jesus as their Messiah.⁵⁷ This was not a teaching that lifelong Jews were eager to receive. More challenging yet, Paul was telling them that salvation in Christ was for everyone in the world, not just for the Jews. Well, you can imagine their response. How dare God save the "sinful Gentiles" who weren't part of His chosen nation of Israel! But Paul insisted that Jesus tore down the wall separating Jews and Gentiles, even as Jesus himself had begun to demonstrate during His own ministry when He reached out to people who were not Jews.⁵⁸

As the New Testament comes to an end, we find a book known as The Revelation to John, or simply "Revelation." While the apostle John was living as a prisoner on the Greek island of Patmos, he received a series of visions directly from Jesus, telling him to write letters to seven churches located in what we know as modern-day Turkey.⁵⁹ The letters complimented those churches for various acts of faithfulness, but mostly they warned about ways in which the disciples in those churches needed to improve their attitudes and actions.

⁵⁷ Ephesians 2:8-9

⁵⁸ Ephesians 2:11-22

⁵⁹ Revelation 2:1-3:22

保罗再三提醒他们，神的拯救不是来自他们所做的好事或因为他们奉公守法，而是来自上帝的恩典。虽然好事是基督徒该做的，但好事不能拯救他们。⁵⁷ 犹太人并不想听这个，而且他们不想让非犹太人接受上帝的恩典。保罗更大的挑战是告诉他们，神的救恩不是只给犹太人，而是为世上所有的人准备的。您可以想像他们的反应——神为何要拯救带罪的外邦人，他们不是神的选民！但保罗坚持耶稣已经拆毁了犹太人和外邦人之间的墙，耶稣在世时就开始帮助非犹太人，做了很好的示范。⁵⁸

新约的最後一卷书叫启示录。当时使徒约翰被关在一个叫拔摩的希腊岛，他眼见了从耶稣基督而来的信息。耶稣吩咐他写信给在今天土耳其的七个教会。⁵⁹ 信里表扬他们信实的好作为，也提醒他们需要改进的态度和行为。

⁵⁷ 以弗所书 2：8-9

⁵⁸ 以弗所书 2：11-22

⁵⁹ 启示录 2：1-3：22

Being faithful as a Christian is no easy matter. In countless ways, a non-believing, materialist world tells us that our faith is a waste of time and that believers in Christ are missing out on all the pleasures this world has to offer. They would also say that there is no life after death, and therefore no ultimate accountability for our actions. Using highly-figurative, often mind-blowing words and images, Jesus paints a picture in The Revelation of fantastic events related to His return to the earth to judge the living and the dead. When that day comes, Jesus will appear with frightening sight and sound; all the dead will be raised from their graves; each person will be judged for how they have responded to God; the faithful will enter into God's own forever-world; and the wicked will be punished and destroyed forever.

What is the message of this incredible last book of the Bible? Quite simply: God calls us to remain faithful no matter what obstacles might be put in our way, and to remain morally pure in a world that laughs at moral purity. God himself will take care of everything else, including the triumph of good over evil, and the defeat forever of suffering, struggle, disappointment, and death.

当一个忠心的基督徒并不容易。这个重视物质的世代声称，信仰既浪费时间，又使人错失生活的乐趣，而且人死后没有生命，最终不必面对後果。耶稣基督在启示录里用鲜明的字眼描述了当他再回来时，会审判活人和死者。 当那天来到，祂会突然出现，伴随着惊恐的声响和景象，所有的死人会从坟墓里复活，每个人都会依自己对神的回应受审。顺服神的人会进入天堂，邪恶的人会受到永久的惩罚。

圣经最後的这卷书要传递的是什么讯息？简而言之，神呼召我们无论多艰难都要忠心地追随祂。不管世风多败坏， 祂要我们坚守道德上的洁净。祂会照顾我们所有的需要，帮助我们打败邪恶，战胜痛苦挣扎失望和死亡。

A Special Invitation

Does this promise sound good to you? Are you ready to further explore the good news of a forever-life in Jesus Christ? Do you like the idea of having joy and peace in this life (right now!) as well as in the life to come? If so, commit yourself to reading the Book that tells you all you need to know about God, His love for you, and what He has in store for your life. Millions of others have gone on this life-changing journey. Your time is now!

To find the scripture verses listed in the end-notes, use any Bible that may be available to you. If you are not familiar with the Bible and how it is arranged, in the front of each Bible is a Table of Contents that gives a page number for each book. Or just ask anyone around you who might be familiar with this marvelous book. They will be more than happy to help.

特别的邀请

您觉得这个应许如何？您想要进一步探索在基督里永恒的生命吗？您想要现在和死後都享有喜乐和平安吗？如果是的话，请打开圣经，您会读到所有跟神有关的事——祂对您的爱和对您的计划。无数的人已经迈上这个旅程，现在轮到您了！

如果您想找到文内引用的经文，任何一本圣经里都找得到。您若不熟悉圣经的编排，每本圣经前面都有目录，列出每卷书的页数。您也可以请教身边的基督徒，他们都会乐意帮助您。

Many thanks to F. LaGard Smith and Yun-Mei Salina Ho for their wisdom, insight and translation in the text of this booklet. Also, thanks are given for the financial underwriting of the publication, provided privately by devoted Christians.

My grandfather was named Rufus Burton Parkes. There is an obscure reference to “Rufus” in Romans 16:13 as being a “choice man in the Lord”. Mark 15:21 mentions that Simon of Cyrene, the father of Alexander and Rufus, was pressed into service to carry the cross of Jesus as He was being led away to His execution.

May we all be found to be “choice brothers and sisters in the Lord”!

Dedicated to Rufus and Stella Parkes, and my parents, Roger and Sara Church, who taught their children to love the Lord.

Susan Saunders, Hillsboro Church of Christ, Nashville, Tennessee, USA

