



Front Cover

THE ONE, TRUE LIVING GOD

Who built that house? Somebody did! Who made that dress? An intelligent person did! Who made that chair? That table? That car? Someone who is greater than the chair, the table, and the car made them. Who made the trees? The flowers? The birds? The animals? The earth? The rocks? The stars, sun, moon? Who made you? Someone who is greater, more intelligent than of these made things and you.

That someone is the only true and living God. He is invisible to our eyes now, because he is a Spirit. He lives in heaven. He is eternal. He has always existed and He always will. We know Him because we see the things He has made and because He has given us a book called the Bible in when He reveals Himself to us. The Bible is composed of sixty-six smaller books: thirty-nine in the Old Testament and twenty-seven in the New Testament.

Long ago, God's prophet, David, told us that our God sees us and hears us. He knows our thoughts. He understands our thoughts afar off. There is not a word in tongues He does not know. We cannot flee from His presence. If we take wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost part of the sea, even there shall His hand lead us. The darkness cannot hide us from Him, for the darkness and the light are alike to Him (Psalm 139).

"The eyes of the Lord are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good" (Proverbs 15:3). "...The everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, neither faints nor is weary. His understanding is unsearchable. He gives power to the weak, and to those who have no might He increases strength" (Isaiah 40:28-29).

In the first book of the Old Testament, called Genesis, God tells us about His creation of the world and the heavens. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." He made the darkness and the light. He made the waters. He gathered the waters under the heavens into one place. This gathering of the waters He called Seas. After making dry land appear, He called it Earth. He made all the plants that grow on the earth and caused the plants to reproduce after their own kind. This one living God made the sun, the moon, and the stars. All the creatures of the

Let's "stand still and consider the wondrous works of God" (Job 37:14). A few centuries ago, people thought the earth was flat, but centuries before scientists learned our planet is round, God, through His prophet Isaiah, wrote in His book, "God sits upon the circle of the earth."

Of course, we know a circle is round. Long ago, people had the notion that the earth was being held up by a very strong man or perhaps a huge elephant. However, long before scientists learned that was untrue, God had written in His book that He had hung the earth on nothing (Job 26:7). The earth is just hanging in space, rotating around the sun once each year.

Consider our food from plants. All plants receive their sustenance from the soil. Some, such as potatoes, carrots, and radishes grow down into the soil. Still, no dirt gets into the plants. Is that not marvelous? Only an intelligent being could have planned and made them so wonderful.

Consider the animals. Even though most animals are in danger of being eaten by other animals, each has ways of protecting himself. God gave each kind of animal the kind of eyes needed to find food and see their enemies. Because their eyes are on the sides of their heads, some animals, such as squirrels and some birds, can see both sides of them at the same time.

Owls, whose eyes are located side by side on their faces, can turn their heads around and see in back of them. Some animals, such as owls and cats that hunt at night, are able to see in the darkness. Birds, such as hawks and eagle, have very good vision to see afar off. While they are high in the air, they can see a mouse or rabbit on the ground.

These things could not have just happened. Surely they were designed and made by a powerful Creator. Keen ears and a good sense of smell help many kinds of animals to find food and escape their enemies. Deer and cats are given long, slender legs

by our Creator to help them out run their enemies. Some animals, such as a jack rabbit, can hit their enemies with powerful hind legs.

God gave us teeth with which to chew our food. Think about your teeth. Your front teeth are for biting your food, but your other teeth are flat, just right for chewing.

The short beaks of some birds are just right for eating seeds, while the long beaks of other birds are just right for eating insects. Only an all-knowing, powerful being could plan and create such wonderful creatures, giving them just what they need. God has made so many fascinating creatures that we cannot mention all of them. However, let us consider a few.

Female butterflies lay their tiny eggs on leaves or stems of plants. Caterpillars hatch from these eggs. Being very hungry, they eat many leaves. During that time they shed their skins several times before they are fully grown. Then each caterpillar attaches itself to a limb or a stem of a plant and spins a chrysalis. Inside the chrysalis, the caterpillar is changing to a butterfly. In due time the butterfly breaks out of the chrysalis and flies away to repeat the cycle. Many kinds of butterflies do not live very long, but the Monarch butterflies take a long journey. After the parents die, somehow the young ones know just where their parents spent the winter. Although they have never been there, they fly a very, very long distance to the south to spend the winter where the parents did. When spring arrives, they fly back north to the same area where they were born. After laying their eggs, they die. Then the offspring repeats the same cycle. Is this not a marvelous work of a loving Creator?

Salmon are quite unusual fish. Most of their lives are lived in the big, deep ocean where the water is salty. When they are ready to spawn, they go back to the rivers where they were born. How are they able to find their way from that wide ocean to their own river? The answer has to be that the living God gave them that instinct; that ability.

Have you watched a spider spin her web with silk threads from her body? How does she know how to make her web so nearly perfect? Surely this shows our all-knowing God made spiders and gave them this ability.

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The trap-door spider finds a little "hill" to make her home so water will drain from it when rains fall. She digs a hole in the ground straight downward and lines it with silk threads from her body. She needs a lid

or door for her home, so she uses some of the soil she has dug from the ground to make it. She knows just the right size to make the door. With her silk threads she covers the door to hold the soil together. She makes a hinge of her threads to attach the door to the hole she has dug. She crawls into her home and closes the door. When some little insect comes crawling over her door, she quickly opens her door, snatching the little creature for her food. Surely this interesting creature is telling us there is a wonderful Creator who has made her.

Although snails are small, they are amazing creatures. A snail has only one foot, but manages to get where he is going though slowly. His eyes are on the end of two "stems." He can pull his eyes through the "stems" or tubes into his head. He carries his house on his back and can draw himself into it. That is how he escapes his enemies. In time of drought, he goes into his shell and seals the opening. He does not outgrow his shell, but keeps adding to the size of his house as long as he lives. Isn't that amazing? Our loving God can do such wonderful things!

And think of yourself! You are fearfully and wonderfully made (Psalm 139)! All you need to do is eat the proper food, take exercise and sleep and your body grows and develops. Your stomach digests your food. You can think, talk, work, play, and love. God made you a living soul that will never die. Don't you think He is a wonderful creator?

The Lord, our God, is gracious and full of compassion, slow to anger, and great in mercy. He is good to all and His tender mercies are over all His works (Psalm 145:8-9).

God directed His prophet, Isaiah, to write in His Book, "I am the Lord; that is My name; and My glory I will not give to another, nor My praise to carved images" (Isaiah 42:8).

God instructed His prophet, David, to write, "But our God is in heaven; He does whatever He pleases. Their idols [that people made] are silver and gold, the work of men's hands. They have mouths, but they do not speak; eyes they have, but they do not

see; they have ears, but they do not hear; noses they have, but they do not smell; they have hands, but they do not handle; feet they have, but they do not walk; nor do they mutter through their throat.

Those who make them are like them; so is everyone that trusts in them" (Psalm 115:3-8).

Also, at God's instruction, His prophet, Jeremiah, wrote, "For the customs of the people are futile; for one cuts a tree from the forest, the work of the hands of the workman, with the ax. They decorate it with silver and gold; they fasten it with nails and hammer so it will not topple. They are upright, like a palm tree, and they can not speak; they must be carried, because they cannot go by themselves. Do not be afraid of them, for they cannot do evil, nor can they do any good" (Jeremiah 10:3-5).

Jeremiah continues to write, "Inasmuch as there is none like You, O Lord You are great, and Your name is great in might, who would not fear You, O King of nations? ...For He is the Maker of all things" (10:6-16).

So we understand that an idol that man has made is not as great as the one who made it. So why should we worship something that is not greater than we are? Why should we worship something made of stone, gold, silver, or wood that cannot see, feel, hear, speak, think, talk, or love? Such an idol is less than human. It can do nothing for us. It cannot save our bodies or our souls.

The true, living God in heaven created us. He made the heavens and the earth. He is powerful. He can do anything. Surely He is the one we should worship. He is displeased if we worship idols which are meaningless.

God told His prophet Isaiah to instruct us thus: "Those who make an image, all of them are useless, and their precious things shall not profit ... the craftsman stretches out his rule; he marks one [idol] out with chalk; he fashions it with a plane, he marks it out with a compass, and makes it like the figure of a man, according to the beauty of a man, that it may remain in the house" (Isaiah 44:9, 13). From this reading, we see that the man who made the idol is greater than the idol. So he is worshiping something less than himself. Besides, the idol cannot see, hear, breathe, think, or love because it is lifeless. It is nothing!

Isaiah further says, "... He plants a pine [tree], and the rain nourishes it. Then it shall be for a man to burn, for he will take some of it and warm himself; yes, he kindles it and bakes bread; indeed he makes a god and worships it; he burns half of it in the fire; with this half he eats meat; he roasts a roast, and is satisfied. He even warms himself and says, 'Ah! I am warm, I have seen the fire.' And the rest of it he makes into a god, his carved image. He falls down before it and worships it, prays to it and says, 'Deliver me, for you are my god' " (Isaiah 44:14-17)! Isaiah asks, "... Shall I fall down before a block of wood" (verse 19)?

Notice that the man planted the tree, cut it down, and burned half of the tree to warm himself and cook his food. Then he took the other half of the same tree and carved an idol which he worshiped. Why would that part of the tree be better or holier than the part he burned? Is this not just his imagination? He is worshiping a block of wood, an image he carved from half of the tree. That image or idol can not think, see, hear, move, love or help him in any way, for it is lifeless. That idol is no better than that part of the tree he burned to keep warm and cook his food. In fact, did not that part he burned help him, while the idol did not help him at all?

Many centuries ago God allowed His people, because of their rebellion and their evil lives, to be taken captive to a foreign land. Nebuchadnezzar, the king of that country, made a huge image of gold and commanded the people to fall down and worship it. If anyone would not worship the idol, he would be thrown into the fiery furnace. There were at least three of God's people who would not bow down to the gold idol. So the king commanded they be thrown into the fiery furnace after it was made seven times hotter that it was usually heated. But God protected those three men from the extreme heat. Not only were their lives saved, but their clothes and hair were not even scorched. The true, living God is able to deliver His people (Daniel, chapter 3).

Our living, eternal God is patient, compassionate, loving, and kind. However, so much of the time people are very evil and rebellious and God had to punish them for their sinfulness. "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).

Since God is pure and holy, He loves the sinner, but hates sin. He wanted to redeem His human creatures, giving them a way to be saved eternally, so, nearly two thousand years ago, He sent His Son from heaven to earth to save all who would believe and obey Him. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

His Son, Jesus, who is God, too, was born on this earth in a city called Bethlehem to a good woman named Mary. Jesus was God living in a human body. When He was about thirty years of age He began His ministry. He chose twelve men to be His apostles who followed Him, listening to His teachings. Jesus taught the people about the love and righteousness of His Father, the living God in heaven. He tried to get the people to leave their evil ways and follow Him. He performed many miracles because He had compassion on the people and to prove that He had been sent to earth by the true God. He made the blind to see, the deaf to hear, the lame to walk, and the dead to live again. Jesus exposed the sins of those who were haughty and rebellious. Those people were envious of Him and wanted to kill Him. They caused Him to be crucified on a cross. His hands and feet were nailed to the cross on which He hung for six hours in intense pain. While hanging on the cross, Jesus prayed, "Father, Forgive them, for they do not know what they do" (Luke 23:34).

He died on the cross for your sins and mine that we might be saved in heaven when we die. He was tenderly buried by two men who love Him, but the grave could not hold Jesus, the Son of God. On the third day, He arose from the dead and continue to live on the earth for forty days.

During this time, He appeared to His apostles and other disciples several times. Jesus told his apostles to go into all the world and teach the gospel, the good news about salvation, to all nations.

When His apostles were assembled with Him at the end of forty days, Jesus was taken up into a cloud. He was received up into heaven and sat down on the right hand of God (Acts 1:9 and Mark 11:19). Jesus had gone back to His Father in heaven. God has given all authority in heaven and on earth to Jesus who conquered death when He arose from the grave (Matthew 18:18).

Of course, people still die physically, but at the end of time on this earth, we will live eternally with God in heaven if we have been faithful to Him.

A few days after Jesus had gone back to heaven, He sent His Holy Spirit to guide His apostles into all truth so they could preach and write the gospel without making any error. At this time Jesus' church was established. People who believed and obeyed God's will became members of the church of Jesus Christ. They were called Christians (Acts 11:26).

Jesus Christ's apostles and the other Christians went everywhere preaching God's Word, the gospel. One apostle, named Paul, went to Athens in Greece to preach. He was astonished to see so many idols in the city.

The citizens of Athens wanted to hear what Paul had to say. He said, "For as I was passing through [your city] and considering the objects of your worship, I even found an altar with the inscription: 'To the Unknown God.' Therefore, the One you worship without knowing, Him I declare to you: God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands. Nor is He worshipped with men's hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath and all things. ... He is not far from each of us; for in Him we live and move and have our very being. ... Therefore, since we are the offspring of God, we ought not think that the Divine Nature is like gold, or silver or stone, something shaped by art or man's devising."

Paul continued, "Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man [Jesus Christ] whom He has ordained. He has give assurance of this to all by raising Him [Jesus Christ] form the dead" (Acts 17:23-31).

Another city where the apostle Paul preached the gospel of Jesus Christ was Lystra in Asia. He saw a man who had never walked, having been crippled since his birth. Having been given power to perform miracles by the Holy Spirit, Paul healed him in the name of Jesus Christ. When Paul told the crippled man to stand up straight on his feet, the man leaped and walked.

“Now when the people saw what Paul had done, they raised their voices, saying in the Lycaonian language, ‘The gods have come down to us in the likeness of men!’

“... Then the priest of Zeus ... brought oxen and garlands to the gates, intending to sacrifice with the multitudes. But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard this, they tore their clothes and ran among the multitude, crying out, ‘Men, why are you doing these things? We also are men with the same nature as you, and preach to you that you should turn from these useless things to the living God, who made the heaven, the earth, the sea, and all things that are in them, who in bygone generations allowed all nations to walk in their own ways.

“Nevertheless, He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good, gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.’

“And with these sayings they could scarcely restrain the multitude from sacrificing to them” (Acts 14:11–18).

This same apostle wrote to the church of Jesus Christ in Thessalonica in Greece, “You turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God” (I Thessalonians 1:9).

Another apostle, named John, wrote, “Now I, John, saw and heard these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel who showed me these things. Then he said to me, ‘See that you do not do that. For I am your fellow servant. ... Worship God’ ” (Revelation 22:8–9).

Let us remember that all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. Our living God loves you and does not want you to treat your body badly when you sin. Three thousand of the people, of the very people who crucified God's Son on the cruel cross, fifty days later were convinced they had committed a terrible sin in so doing. They were told to repent of their sins [be sorry for them, determined to do right] and be baptized [immersed in water] for the forgiveness of their sins (Acts 2). Our living God requires the same of you and all of us. “But without faith [belief] it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him” (Hebrews 11:6).

Jesus said, "Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins" (John 8:24). God commands you to repent of your sins. Repentance means to be sorry for your sins and determine to do right.

In Matthew 10:32, Jesus said, "Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will confess before my Father who is in heaven."

In Romans 10:9, we are told "that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved." God commands you to be baptized for the forgiveness of your sins (Acts 2:38).

In Romans 6:3-6, the apostle Paul tells us that baptism is a burial in water, that as Jesus Christ was raised from the dead to live again, so you will be raised from the water of baptism to live a new life in Christ; God will forgive you of all your sins. He will remember them no more forever (Hebrews 8:12). God will add you to the church of Jesus Christ. You will be a child of God, a Christian, and have the right to pray to our heavenly Father. He requires you to worship Him and Him only, to be faithful to Him until you die.

He wants you to serve Him by helping others and telling them about God and Jesus Christ. If you are faithful to God until you die, He will give you eternal life in heaven.

Speaking through His prophet, Isaiah, God said long ago, "Seek the Lord while He may be found. Call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his ways, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the Lord, and He will have mercy on him; to our God, for He will abundantly pardon" (Isaiah 55:6-7).

In Old Testament days God spoke directly to His people and to His prophets. He dealt directly with them, taking care of them, delivering them from their enemies.

Since Jesus Christ came to earth, died on the cross, was raised from the dead, and has gone back to heaven, God speaks through Jesus Christ, His Son, and His written word. He loves us and has promised to be with us until the end of the world.

This has been written with love for your soul in the hope that if you worship idols, you will forsake them and turn to the living God, worship and serve Him the remainder of your life. It is our hope you will read the Bible.

The Old Testament tells us about God creating the heavens and the earth and about His dealings with His people through several centuries. Also, in the Old Testament, God promised that Jesus would come to earth. The Old Testament has many good lessons for us, but we are not living under it now.

The New Testament tells of Jesus' coming to earth, of His miracles, of His teachings, of His death, of His resurrection, and of His will for us today.



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