

Editor's Introduction: The Purpose of this Book

The purpose of this presentation of the first four books of the New Testament is to try to assist in recovering something extremely valuable that has been lost.

What extremely valuable thing has been lost?

Before we investigate what extremely valuable thing has been lost, let us first take a small but important digression. Most people are familiar with the expression, "you should not throw the baby out with the bathwater". It is an effective saying to teach the principle of not dismissing a true or valuable or important thing that might be surrounded by, or associated with, false or valueless or unimportant things. I would ask the reader to please apply this principle to the person of Jesus (or Joshua) of Nazareth. In other words, before you throw the baby (Joshua of Nazareth) away with the bathwater (bible-christian-messianic religion), you ought to take a careful look at the baby. After all, what do you have to lose by reading Joshua's words, teaching and life story? It won't take you long to read, and you will be one of an increasingly few number of people who actually read his words and teachings.

This author would suggest that it is unfair to throw away 'the whole Jesus religious thing' as irrelevant to your life or as 'a bunch of silly or hypocritical rubbish' without first giving his words and teachings a honest and fair read. It is also a bit ignorant to deny that the person known as "Jesus Christ" has had a very significant impact on both human history as well as countless millions of individuals. You should be curious as to **why**, and as a person that might be seeking truth, it would be unreasonable to avoid his own words in order to understand the very important 'why' question. Even if you are a skeptic or critic, if you don't read Joshua's own teachings, then at best you are a lazy and poor quality skeptic or critic who doesn't bother to go to the source of the object of your skepticism or criticism. Please, be a good skeptic or critic and search Joshua's teachings YOURSELF for the faults and errors in his person or teachings that you assume account for the mess that covers much of the planet and is known as 'Christianity'.

So, what extremely valuable thing has been lost? Please allow me to first briefly address those reading who have not seriously looked into the life and teachings of Joshua (or Jesus) of Nazareth.

Every Person's Basic Need

Every living person has hope in something because it has been proven time and time again that a person without any hope (some self-perceived positive purpose for their life-existence) will seek to destroy themselves through suicide or other destructive behavior in order to try and end the horrible spiritual emptiness of hopelessness. The reader should ask, why is that? Why is it that humans alone (not animals) need a future reason for living (known as hope or purpose) or else they seek to end their existence?

What is your hope in dear reader?

Some 'better' material tomorrow...a better house, car, or vacation...a more 'successful' career? Is your hope in a better education and thus more opportunity to accumulate wealth or influence over other people? Is your hope in some better form of pleasing yourself or entertainment? Is it in sporting events, challenges, vacations or activities yet to come? Do you find your purpose in life through the work that you do? Is your hope in a person, like yourself, or some better spouse, friend or partner? Is your hope in your family or children? Is your hope in religious beliefs or practices or the associated God whom you might not really know much about?

Has having your hope in any of these things ever satisfied your soul in a deeply meaningful and PERMANENT way? Or does the pleasure of the pursuit or aurora of the lesser-hope fade as it passes, and you find yourself dissatisfied until the next time? When you largely accomplish your goals associated with your hope or purpose, what happens then? Do you just pick up a new temporary one without thought to the fact that it too will end? Do you ever take the time to just sit back and ask the import questions of life like why and I here? What is the purpose of my life?

Stepping up to a more fundamental level, have you come to the sad place of believing you are nothing more than a random accumulation of molecules with no soul and little or no meaningful purpose? Or do you realize something fundamental is missing from your life? Have you come to the place of acknowledging that your own efforts to run your life are not working well? Have you come to the place of understanding that what is most important in life is relationships with other people? That whatever pain or stress or anxiety or conflict or frustration or failure you are experiencing normally has to do with how you are relating to other people or even how you are relating to yourself? Is there a right way and a wrong way to relate to people, and if so, where can I find that way or standard? Can I be rightly related to all the people that I know and thus be a nearly perfect person and have a totally clear conscience?

Everyone has beliefs about what the purpose of their life is, including atheists (those who believe there is no God) and agnostics (those who believe one cannot know if God exists). Many atheists and agnostics are physicalists, meaning they believe a person's self-expression (or personality) can be accounted for by physics-chemical reactions alone. However, a physicalist's purpose for their life must end when their life ends, and thus their hope can only be in temporary things which will undeniably end. They will die. Their body will decay and return to dust. In their belief, all the events, emotions, friendships, relationships, expressions of love and good in their life, will all be gone forever, and perish with their death and the death of those who knew them. This is hopelessness – a meaninglessness to life that is typically denied and buried under daily busyness, religion, noise/entertainment and a denial of most things important – never peering over the edge of the approaching and undeniable event called death.

Most physicalists are relativists, meaning they believe there is no absolute truth. They say each person makes up their own reality. Is that true? No, because the relativist's clearest statement, like, "No absolute truth exists" is a self-defeating statement. That means that the laws of logic demonstrate that statement to be false. Can you see it? For if the relativist makes the statement, "no absolute truth exists", one only need ask them, 'is that statement absolutely true'? If they answer, 'yes', then at least one absolute truth exists and thus their statement is false. And if they answer, 'no', then they acknowledge the statement to be false. **It is undeniable that absolute truths exist, and it is reasonable to deduce that someone (a master programmer?) created reason and logic to be based on absolute truth.**

The fact that it is undeniable that absolute truth exists - that everything is not relative according to a person's (or even a collective culture's) perspective or experiences - has a very significant implication. That implication is that it is possible (even reasonable) that a Creator of that absolute truth has an absolute standard of truth which human's will be judged by. For if we do have a metaphysical part (beyond being able to sense with our five senses) to our person (often referred to as a soul, spirit or personality), and that part does survive physical death, then what becomes of us? Is religion the place where I will find those answers, or can I find those answers somewhere else?

And this brings us to a person, **not a religion**, who said, “I am the Truth”. No matter what you think about that claim, it is a very important claim that warrants investigation. The same one who said that also defeated death, at least according to the account of his life.

Religion in a general sense is human’s attempt to understand the purpose of their existence – the why’s of life. More specifically, religion is often people’s attempt to be accepted by their god(s) (either real or contrived) so that when they die, their existence will continue typically in a more favorable manner than their existence has been on the earth.

From the disciple of Joshua’s viewpoint, religion is the things that people believe and do in order to answer the why questions of life or to be accepted by their god(s), by means other than what Joshua has taught.

There are many religions and many people who hold to their religion’s beliefs and practices. But there is only One person who defeated death to prove all he said and did is true, and he is not a religion! While this person has been wrongfully used to create religion, he not only does not support that religion, but he rebukes it and its practices time and time again. **No, he doesn’t rebuke bible-based christian religion’s failures, hypocrisies, faults and abuses, but rather he rebukes the very essence, beliefs and practices which the religious leaders of the bible-based religious system build their kingdoms on.**

You have no doubt heard of the person of Jesus of Nazareth (Joshua is a more accurate translation of his name than “Jesus”), the person that the christian religions claim as their figure head. But of all the hundreds of millions of people claiming to be some type of ‘christian’ or somehow claiming that ‘Jesus Christ’ is important to them, probably less than two percent have taken seriously the reading of his Words, let alone trying to understand him or do what he says. If this is true, this should also peak your curiosity, for it certainly doesn’t make sense. And perhaps this is the reason for the obvious failures and powerlessness of bible or christian or church religion to change people towards the Standard of perfection that God has given mankind – the person of Joshua of Nazareth?

So, in your hands you have the Words of Joshua of Nazareth, the one who said, “**I am the Way Home to your Father, I am the absolute Truth that matters, and I am Life Everlasting**”. But he not only said that (for anyone can **say** that), but he performed many miracles, including defeating death, to prove that all he said and did was true, including what was just quoted.

No one else in history has done that.

Joshua addresses the most important questions of life, directly, head on, and gives clear answers. Can I have a Hope that will last? What is the purpose to my life? If I have a soul and it survives death, what becomes of me? What is true love, and can I experience that and live that out? Can I have proper relationships with all the people in my life? Can I have inner peace and joy in my life on the earth? Where can I get the power to change myself to be the way I know I ought to be? Is there a superior form of love, and if so, how can I experience it? Joshua answers all these questions and point’s people to the source of power to change.

This author can testify to this truth. I was once chasing the American dream and all it entails, and to a large measure, I had attained it. However, that pursuit and it’s ‘success’ only left me empty, selfish and hopeless. People viewing my life from the outside would say how successful I was, but I knew the truth. One

beautiful day, however, as my life was spiraling downward (even while people said I was climbing the ladder of success), I met the Person Joshua of Nazareth. I testify that he has changed my life in a way I could never have done myself, for I had not the wisdom nor the power to fix my broken and hopeless life.

So, dear reader, please don't be afraid to read and seek to understand Joshua of Nazareth's Words...he is NOT a religion, but rather a person like no other. And the chances are very good that the real Joshua of Nazareth is nothing like you have experienced through most christian or bible religious people...he is not the "Jesus Christ" of the christians/biblians.

Does YOUR life need fixing? What have you got to lose, and perhaps, you've got everything to gain?

Do you want true freedom? You can have it, but it does cost something. To gain the things which are eternal and which you really need, you must be willing to forsake the temporary and that which this world (and yourself) considers valuable.

"He who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it to life eternal."

"If you continue in my word, then you are truly disciples of mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

May the Words of the Rescuer and Freedom Giver in the pages to come do their beautiful work in your life!

Recovering That Which Has Been Lost...

To those who think they know Joshua of Nazareth, the following illustrations will help you understand that which has been lost.

Imagine you were kidnapped and put in a horrible place, and other than the kidnapper, there was only one person on the planet who knew where you were. Fortunately, this person cared about you and although they were half way around the planet, they knew someone near you who could rescue you. So, they wrote a message to the prospective rescuer, telling him exactly where you were and how you could be rescued. They then mailed the message to the prospective rescuer. The message arrived safely at the remote post office, however, the post office employee only delivered mail to the rescuer occasionally. So, he took the letter and placed it in a large envelope with many other letters to the rescuer, and on the outside of that envelope was written, "The Book of Important Messages". By the time the rescue letter was delivered to the rescuer, it was just one note among many hundreds in the large envelope labeled, "The Book of Important Messages". Therefore, your note was 'drowned' in a sea of other people's notes, and thus you had little hope of being free from your bondage any time soon.

Here is another illustration to help you understand what has been lost.

Imagine you are stranded on a remote island with only one piece of paper, pen and bottle. So you write a note to tell those who find the bottle where you are and your situation and you throw the bottle into the ocean. The bottle finds a current which carries the bottle towards land, but there are thousands of other bottles in that current as well. It seems there were many people who, while not desperately needing to be

rescued like yourself, never-the-less greatly enjoyed putting messages in bottles and throwing them in the ocean. Unfortunately for you, all those other bottles found their way to the same current which carried your bottle, and thus your bottle arrives at the beach with thousands of other like bottles containing ‘urgent’ (but pretend) messages. Thus, you have little hope of your message being found anytime soon, and little hope as well of getting free from the island.

Perhaps the most accurate illustration of that which has been lost, would be as follows. Let us say you wandered into a huge and dangerous city and got yourself lost in a maze of streets, and you desperately need directions out of the city. Let us say that a person who knows the way out of the dangerous city has clearly and concisely written the directions down in two sentences on a page of paper. That person makes those clear directions available to any who request them and many groups and organizations of people take the directions and use them for their own purposes. In your case, the person you request the directions from is a member of one of those organizations, and they feel they need to add to the directions, even though they don’t know for certain the way out of the city because they have never been out of the city. So they write, on a copy of the correct directions, their beliefs on how to get out of the city. And so, when you are handed the one page document, the two sentences containing the way to freedom are surrounded by many sentences which contain errors and which at best confuse you and at worst, hide the truth in the two sentences of the way out of the dangerous city. Thus, you don’t find your way out of the dangerous city because in your sincere efforts to read the directions, you get more and more lost due to the errors.

To continue that illustration, let us say that many people regularly get lost in the large and dangerous city, and so there is a regular need for clear directions out of the city. However, the main authority of the city benefits economically from having more people in their city, even if some are lost and don’t want to be there. The paper with the two sentences of clear directions becomes well known amongst the city dwellers, as well as the one page that contains both the two sentences of clear directions surrounded by the erroneous opinions of others. The city authority wants to give to those people lost in their city, the confused one full page of ‘directions’ instead of the two clear sentences out, since they gain city members and make more money that way. So that authority formally makes a diligent practice of telling the people that the one page document is one-hundred percent truth and they ought to believe all that is written on that page. They also tell the people that the page with the two clear sentences of correct directions is ‘inadequate and incomplete’ and people should not rely solely on that document or its instructions. Now, if a person looking to escape the city respects that authority-person more than wanting to know truth (correct directions), then what will happen to their ability to find their way out of the city? Will it not be compromised at best, or destroyed at worst? If disagreeing with the authority will have uncomfortable consequences, or even cost the person something they want, won’t they be in even a worse situation to find the truth buried in that one page?

One final step to complete the illustration...

In the same way, what if there is a book which contains sixty-six chapters, and only four of the sixty-six chapters contain what you need to be set free. And what if an authority that many people respect including yourself, and who claims to know the book better than you, tells you that all sixty-six chapters contain the truth that you need to be set free. And what if they tell you that the four chapters which contain what you need to be set free is “inadequate and insufficient”? If you respect the authority more than wanting to know the truth, then what will happen to your ability to find the actual truth in the four chapters? Will it not be compromised at best, or destroyed at worst? And what if the cost of rejecting the authority’s beliefs about the book will mean you will be rejected from family and your cherished social or religious circles of friends?

Perhaps you will pretend the dangerous city is not so bad after all? Or perhaps you actually like the dangerous city and thus you are not looking to be set free since you have deceived yourself and think that you already are?

Which brings us directly to that which is most valuable which has been lost.

What if there was a man who said...

I am the Way, **the Truth** and the Life, and no one gets to the Father except through me.”

...and...

"If you continue in **My word**, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth, and **the truth** will **set you free.**"

...and he performed many miracles including defeating death to prove what he said was true...

...but other's come along after he leaves and place his Words in a big book with many other people's words and say, 'this whole book is truth, not just the person who says, "I am the truth"...

...and the religious authorities who like exercising authority over others say, 'you need more than the red letters, you need the whole counsel of God's Word, and you need us to understand it'...

...and as years, decades and centuries pass, the book is handed down from generation to generation, each generation before it saying that the whole book is the truth that people need. And if a person can't understand the book due to the errors and contradictions, the people's religious leaders say, "well, you need us or christian leader so-and-so or bible scholar so-and-so to properly understand the book"...

...and the religious leaders, whose authority the people respect, point people to the book as well as many other voices, both dead and living, in addition to the one who says, "I am the truth", and say, "the book and all these other voices which quote the book are "the truth" you need to be set free, not just the one who says, "I am the Truth" ... not just the one who says, "If the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed".

If this happened, then isn't the truth of the statements above by the one who says, "I am the truth", LOST as the people look to the book and other's words and other voices, and those other words and voice's nullify, cancel or make of no effect the one who says,

I am the Way, **the Truth** and the Life...", and "All who are of the truth listen to **MY voice.**" ?

Those eternally valuable truths...

I am the Way, **the Truth** and the Life, and no one gets to the Father except through **me.**"

"If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

...have been drowned out ... buried ... LOST.

...and so, that which is extremely valuable, and which as been lost, has been revealed. The Father sent One beloved, error-free Messenger who can bring freedom from your hopelessness, but his voice has been drowned out, hidden, obscured.

It is a difficult truth to receive, but in truth, the teachings of the One who calls himself the Light of the world have been covered, buried and for all practical purposes, lost. His Voice has been drowned out by thousands of other voices. In fact, at the most essential level, his Voice has been replaced by a book, 'the Bible', by a clever slight-of-hand which says that **the book** IS (or accurately represents) his voice.

His statement, "**All who are of the truth listen to MY voice**", has been changed (and thus corrupted) to, 'All who are of the truth listen to the bible' with all its millions of words and its many contradictory precepts, accounts and teachings. Perhaps the reader has believed the lie that the bible has no contradictions? Here is just one of many:

"Do I not hate those who hate You, O LORD? And do I not loathe those who rise up against You? I hate them with the utmost hatred; they have become my enemies." (Psalms 139:21-22)

Versus

"You have heard that it was said, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR and **hate your enemy.**' "But I say to you, **love your enemies** and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. (Matthew 5:43-45)

One can pretend there is no contradiction, but that only proves that one is NOT listening to the one who says, "I am the Truth".

And so, the time for the printing of this book is quite long overdue. It should be curious to the reader that there are no similar books easily available given the thousands of books **about** "christ" and many dozens of bible versions available. Why is it that so very few are concerned about focusing whole-heartedly on his person and teachings ONLY? Perhaps, just perhaps, these things are true...

"This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil."

"But because I speak the truth, you do not believe me."

Maybe the truth is that the one Voice that brings freedom, offends the vast majority (including the religious people who claim him as their 'Lord'), and they do not want to let his simple and uncompromised truth shine forth? Perhaps christians/biblians are especially loath to turn to the light because they very much like believing they are "saved" while they continue to not forsake anything and thus continue to love their life in the world?

...beware of the all too common self-justification and self-deception of, 'oh yes, that is true, but not of ME or MY church'...

This editor hopes that those who are in the darkness of bible and christian religion will allow the Light of the world to shine on their hearts. Seek to understand this key saying of his...

"He who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it to life eternal."

...and then, please, come, follow HIM!