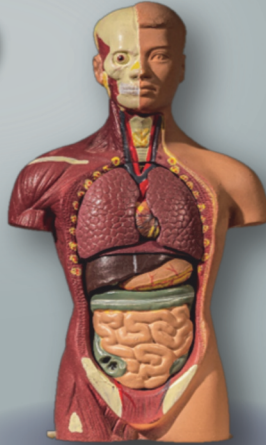


## Atheist Logic:

Has a creator



Has no creator



And what do  
you believe in ?



## ***What is worrying you in your life?***

And don't say that nothing worries you, because then you would be lying to yourself. Because even if you are 'happy' at the moment, you know very well that it will not stay that way. Suffering and death awaits each of us sooner or later. Today's health can be destroyed tomorrow by a shocking diagnosis. There are numerous ways of suffering and death in the world that can strike us at any time. No one can protect themselves. Even today's advanced medicine will not save you from it! We invest vast amounts of money in medical research and try to preserve our wealth. And yet we do not know whether we will be alive tomorrow or whether our 'happiness' will turn into profound unhappiness or suffering in the next moment. But perhaps you are already suffering from illness, distressing guilt, destroyed relationships, fears or simply a worrying hopelessness. Then you should pay close attention. For there is hope – no matter how hopeless your situation may be! We are talking about an eternal life after death, in a new world with justice, and with a new body which God has in store for those who love, honour and fear him. People want to live forever and strive for every medical straw to escape ageing, suffering and death. However, they look for it in vain. **But there is indeed a way to eternal life and a living hope despite suffering and death: Jesus Christ!**

## ***But let's start from the beginning ...***

Man actually knows that there is a God for he cannot deny that creation with its beauty, the infinite universe, the diversity of living beings and finally man itself, inevitably point to the existence of a wise and intelligent Creator. Even simple cave paintings are obvious proofs that humans existed in that place. **So how much more does creation point to the existence of God!**<sup>1</sup>

## ***If you think that science contradicts the Bible ...***

It cannot be denied that creation, with its design and fine-tuning, complexity and wealth of information (e.g., in genetic information), did not come into being by chance. You would rightly declare anyone insane who claims that,

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<sup>1</sup> Psalm 19:1-4; Romans 1:20 (you can look up all mentioned Bible passages online, e.g., at [www.bibleserver.com](http://www.bibleserver.com))

for instance, a computer with its designed hardware and especially its programmed software (information) could come into being by chance and on its own. However, today the conviction to believe in a Creator is considered insane (or unscientific), although the existence of creation inevitably and undeniably points to a Creator. Scientifically proven is the fact that no life can come from dead matter. Life always comes from life ("*omne vivum ex vivo*", L. Pasteur). Without a chicken there is no egg! And it is also scientifically proven that matter cannot develop from 'nothing'. It is therefore unscientific to deny these facts or to twist them into the opposite and to put forward so-called alternative, atheistic or agnostic theories and hypotheses (e.g., the theory of evolution). All these theories and hypotheses that deny the scientific facts just mentioned, are proven to be false.<sup>2</sup>

In addition, we are too limited and the world is too complex for us to even begin to understand it, let alone explain its origin accurately and completely through our own observation. The more we know (or may think to know), the more we see how little we actually know. Our ability to look into distant galaxies or into the depths of the smallest atoms shows us our limitation and at the same time reveals the infinite greatness of the Creator. God has deliberately placed us as a speck of dust in the universe so that we may see the greatness and glory of God and bow humbly before Him. Increasing our knowledge eventually leads to even greater depths of the unknown. Our understanding of creation is not only very little, but also flawed. But why do we rely on unsupported hypotheses and theories of limited people who speculate about origins and correlations of the universe? Do we really want to bet our life on these hypotheses and ignore the danger of being condemned by God on Judgement Day, because of a godless life? Moreover, these untenable atheistic theories and hypotheses can give you neither solace nor meaning in life and death.

Even the idea and definition of morality without God is impossible. For if we follow the atheistic theory of evolution and its principles, social Darwinism and the "survival of the fittest" is an inevitable consequence thereof. If this

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<sup>2</sup> E.g., the "irreducible complexity" of creation which makes macroevolution (upward development) impossible; the lack of "missing links"; the weaknesses of dating methods of long periods of time, etc. Creation and also man have limits and restrictions which, however, do not question God's wisdom or ability with regard to his creation since God deliberately intended his creation to be complex and the limits of man are partly a consequence of the "Fall of Man" (which is briefly explained in this booklet).

would be true, a murderer would not be morally condemned, because it would be normal behaviour within the 'animal world'. But this consequence is rejected. Yet the Bible clearly shows that man as the 'image of God' has been given a special and unique position lifted above the remaining animal and living world. This is confirmed in the created reality, and proven by the fact that only man is able to read the words of this booklet.

### ***If you think that there is no God or no absolute truth ...***

Even the agnostic must admit that his denial of 'truth' or 'knowledge' is a contradiction in itself. For if 'absolute truth' does not exist, the agnostic claim that 'there is no absolute truth', cannot be true either. **The existence of a Creator is scientifically and empirically evident to every human being. Thus atheism is in fact refuted.** It follows that 'absolute truth' is inseparably connected with this Creator, since we, with our limitations, can only know the truth outside of us. This leads to the question why the atheistic-agnostic person opposes the concept of a Creator and seeks to refute the obvious at all costs – even on the basis of scientifically false, unprovable and immoral theories. The answer to this is not to be found in technical arguments, but because man does not want a higher authority above him to whom he has to give an account at the end of his life. So he tries to deny God's existence by all means.

**Proudly, the wicked claim:**

**"How should God hold us accountable?**

**When he does not even exist!"**

**(Psalm 10:4)**

Even if we have come to the conclusion that there must be a Creator, the question is where do we find this absolute truth of the Creator, who can give us external reliable divine-transcendent information about 'God and the world'? The answer to this question is as simple as the fact of God's existence. **For if we ask which is the only reliable and trustworthy source from a historical, archaeological, literary and content point of view, then the answer is the Bible!**

## *Is this a question of religion?*

There is no room here to elaborate on this in detail. However, everyone can verify that the statements of the Bible are based on historical, archaeological and scientific facts. The Bible itself makes clear that it contains the revelation of God, that is not on the same level as the dead and false gods and religions of men.<sup>3</sup> That is why believing in Christ and the Bible is not a 'religion', because religions are about subjective spirituality and experiences with a deity.<sup>4</sup> From a purely scientific point of view, you will inevitably see the unparalleled credibility of the Bible, the Holy Scriptures, in contrast to religious ideas. In terms of content, the Bible is the oldest, the best preserved and best verified scripture in the world. No other ancient scripture has so many old manuscripts which date from the time in which they were written. Many manuscripts that exist today are dated only a few years after the events written of, and they testify to the excellent accuracy of the transcription process of the text. **The revelations of God recorded in the Bible are inseparably embedded in historical events that are documented in non-biblical sources. They give an honest account of the events.**<sup>5</sup> **The fulfilled biblical prophecies testify not only to the divine origin and background of the Bible as the Word of God, but also point to Jesus as the Christ, the Messiah.** Virtually no historian doubts the life, teachings and death of Jesus of Nazareth. This is undeniably affirmed by the biblical and also by Jewish-Roman documents.<sup>6</sup>

However, it is often ignored that this Jesus was not just a man, but that he fulfilled the coming of God as the Saviour, just as it was prophesied hundreds of years earlier in the Old Testament. He would establish the New Covenant with those who belong to him and give them the Holy Spirit.<sup>7</sup> No human

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<sup>3</sup> Deuteronomy 32:17, 39; 1 Corinthians 8:4; 10:19

<sup>4</sup> No religion worldwide can refer to sources that have been documented and copied historically, archaeologically and scientifically in a reliable way. Atheists would like to move the biblical content into the realm of religion, because of reports of God, creation and miracles (e.g. the resurrection of the dead). However, if you believe that religion begins when miracles such as 'resurrection of the dead' are considered as real events, then this must also apply to the religion of atheism, which believes that dead matter and then complex life were created out of nothing.

<sup>5</sup> cf. Luke 1:1-3; 3:23ff; 1 Corinthians 15: 1-7

<sup>6</sup> Tacitus, Mara Bar-Serapion, Josephus, Pliny the Younger, Suetonius, Lucian, Celsus and others.

<sup>7</sup> Jeremiah 31:31; Isaiah 55:3; Ezekiel 36:25-27; Daniel 9:24-26; Joel 3:1-5 (cf. Luke 22:19-20; Acts 1:8-9; 2:14-22; Hebrews 8-10).

being is able to determine beforehand when, where and into which family he will be born, but God, however, can. Before the coming of the Messiah, a prophet had to appear to testify to his arrival. This was fulfilled in John the Baptist<sup>8</sup>, whose existence is historically confirmed both biblically and extra-biblically<sup>9</sup>. The Messiah had to be of the tribe of Judah (King David's line)<sup>10</sup>, be born of a virgin<sup>11</sup> in Bethlehem<sup>12</sup> and he had to perform certain exceptional signs and wonders<sup>13</sup> before the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD<sup>14</sup>. In addition, it was prophesied that he would be despised, suffer and die without guilt, and by doing so would take the sins of man onto himself.<sup>15</sup> It is precisely described that he would be hung on a wood and that his hands, feet and body would be pierced.<sup>16</sup> As a sinless lamb for sacrifice, his legs were not allowed to be broken.<sup>17</sup> Even the raffling of his robe<sup>18</sup>, the date of his crucifixion on Passover<sup>19</sup>, the circumstances of his burial<sup>20</sup> and the following resurrection from the dead after three days<sup>21</sup> were prophesied. This list of fulfilled prophecies is by no means complete, yet we already see that no normal human being could have had any influence on bringing this about by himself. HE is Christ, the Son of the living God.

At the same time, the Bible also testifies that – apart from being embedded in reliably recorded historical events – God Himself supervised the process of the writing of the Bible. He made sure that the people he called to this task did not put their own ideas and thoughts into the Bible, but wrote down exactly what they were supposed to write.<sup>22</sup> **Thus, God Himself speaks through the Bible – and through the Bible alone. It is not only a testim-**

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<sup>8</sup> Malachi 3:1, 23-24; Isaiah 40:3 (cf. Matthew 3:1-6; Mark 1:1-4; Luke 3:1-6; John 1:19-29)

<sup>9</sup> Flavius Josephus: Jewish Antiquities XVIII, 5.2

<sup>10</sup> Genesis 49:9-10; 2 Samuel 7:12-16; Psalm 89:3-4; Isaiah 55:3 (cf. Matthew 1:1-17; Romans 1:2-3; Revelation 5:5)

<sup>11</sup> Isaiah 7:14 (cf. Matthew 1:18-25)

<sup>12</sup> Micah 5:1 (cf. Matthew 2:1-6; Luke 2:1-7)

<sup>13</sup> Isaiah 35:4-6 (cf. Matthew 11:2-6)

<sup>14</sup> Daniel 9:24-27; Malachi 3:1 (cf. Matthew 25:15)

<sup>15</sup> Isaiah 53:1-12 (cf. 1 Peter 2:22-25)

<sup>16</sup> Deuteronomy 21:22-23 (cf. Galatians 3:13); Psalm 22:16 (cf. John 19:18; 20:25, 27); Zechariah 12:10 (cf. John 19:37).

<sup>17</sup> Exodus 12:46; Psalm 34:20 (cf. John 19:31-37; 1 Corinthians 5:7).

<sup>18</sup> Psalm 22, 18 (cf. John 19, 23-24)

<sup>19</sup> Exodus 12:46; Psalm 34:20 (cf. John 19:14, 31-37; 1 Corinthians 5:7).

<sup>20</sup> Isaiah 53:9 (cf. Matthew 27:57-60)

<sup>21</sup> Psalm 16:8-11; Isaiah 53:12; Hosea 6:2 (cf. Luke 24:46; Acts 2:27-32; 1 Corinthians 15:3-5)

<sup>22</sup> cf. 2 Peter 1:21 and 2 Timothy 3:14-17

**ony and the revelation of the Creator, but is in itself God's Word.** There is no other source of information in our world which, with its unique external and internal testimony, gives answers to all existential questions about creation and about ourselves.

Then Jesus asked the twelve,  
"And you, what are you going to do?  
Are you also going to leave me?"  
Simon Peter answered him,  
"Lord, to whom else should we go?  
Your words bring eternal life.  
We believe and have known  
that you are the Holy One of God."  
(John 6:67)

There is no alternative to Jesus Christ. He is the only way to God and to eternal life.<sup>23</sup> Even the disciples realised this after Jesus asked them if they really believed in Him.

Again, the question arises why so many people do not trust the Bible despite this obvious fact? **For if God does undeniably exist and the Bible is undeniably the outstanding, unique and only trustworthy source to answer all our existential questions – why do most people believe that the Bible is not trustworthy or merely the work of man, or why do they trust world views or religions more than the Bible?**

### ***How can we know which interpretation of the Bible is correct?***

Even if you can now accept the existence of creation and the Bible as the only credible source to explain God and all being, there are many differences and interpretations within groups and organisations that refer to the Bible. They all claim to be right and to have the only true interpretation of the Bible. Who is right? The Roman Catholic Church, the Protestants, Jehovah's

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<sup>23</sup> John 14:6; Acts 4:12

Witnesses, Islam or one of the countless Protestant free churches or so-called 'sects'? Although this questions appears to be unanswerable, it is indeed easy to answer. The true interpretation of the Bible shows itself in agreement with the Bible. Thus, all those pseudo-biblical groups which postulate prophets or holy scriptures which are supposedly equivalent or superior to the Bible (e.g., Islam, the Catholic Church, Mormons or Jehovah's Witnesses) disqualify themselves from the claim to truth. Likewise, groups which interpret the Bible without its salvation history or textual context or which do not take into account the normal sense of the word, the 'literal sense', disqualify themselves from having the truth. **A biblical text must always be understood and transmitted on the basis of the original text in its salvation history and textual context (Who said what to whom, and when?) and in its literal sense (What is the meaning of the text?).**

A comparison of the Bible with the doctrinal statement, the activities or the teachings of a group reveals whether they follow the words and principles of the Bible or rather their own ideas (such as an understanding of 'love' that is contrary to the Bible and detached from truth), traditions and interests and therefore reinterpret or ignore the Bible. As early as the time of the apostles there were groups that spoke of 'Jesus', the 'Gospel' (i.e., 'good news') or the 'Holy Spirit', but meant something completely different in terms of content.<sup>24</sup> Throughout the centuries, there were 'christian' or 'bible-based' movements – and are still today – which did not and do not stick to the teachings of Christ.<sup>25</sup> It is important to emphasise that such a 'false Jesus', preached in many Christian and biblical congregations, does not lead to salvation. Not all contents of the Bible are to be given equal theological weight (e.g. the question of the manner of baptism, order of worship, or some issues not directly dealt with in the Bible or issues where biblical principles are not directly applicable). However, in the doctrinal and ethical issues of faith declared central by the Bible itself, there must be agreement with the teaching of the Bible. Furthermore, not all offences against the biblical word and its principles to which someone unrepentantly adheres, are equally relevant to church discipline.<sup>26</sup> The distinction between 'fallacy' and 'heresy' is easy to make because the Bible is a written record of God's revelation and

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<sup>24</sup> cf. 2 Corinthians 11:3

<sup>25</sup> cf. 2 John 9-11

<sup>26</sup> cf. 2 Thessalonians 3:14f ('warn him as a brother', since 'do not associate with him' in this passage refers to not providing for him if he refuses to work) with 1 Corinthians 5:9-13 ('exclusion of evil'); 1 John 5:17 and others.

everything can be measured objectively and independently of human influences against the Bible. Martin Luther, the protestant reformer, called this the 'external clarity' of Scripture. Do you really want to give yourself the answers to the questions about God, sin, salvation and right understanding of the Bible according to your own ideas and desires and rely on your own judgement, or are you prepared to submit unconditionally to the answers from God's Word? This is a very crucial question!

## ***Why does God not speak directly to us, but through an ancient book?***

There are several reasons for this. Firstly, in his history of salvation, God has given his Word only to certain people (prophets). In the last period of salvation history, he revealed himself through his Son Jesus Christ by becoming a man and living on earth. Through his life, his teaching, his death and resurrection from the dead (which his apostles wrote down in reports and letters), he fulfilled, explained and concluded the previous revelation of God in the Old Testament.<sup>27</sup> God's revelations to us were written down progressively and have since formed the Bible, the Word of God, consisting of the Old and New Testament. In this process, God himself supervised the revelation and fixation through his Spirit.<sup>28</sup> The revelation through certain appointed men (apostles and prophets<sup>29</sup>) and the resulting fixation of God's Word is to prevent people from passing on content in God's name that was not from God.<sup>30</sup> This secures God's truth from being misused by man who tried and still try to proclaim lies, false teachings or human religions in God's name.

At the same time, this written and once and for all completed and fully sufficient revelation gives us security in life and death, because we are thus protected from wrong views and, moreover, can rely on God's written Word. We even can refer to it before God – because God cannot lie. **The Word of God is like a firm anchor, like a covenant contract or a will – a notarial agreement of inheritance. Only that the notary is not a human being, but God himself, who is the truth in person and**

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<sup>27</sup> John 17:8, 14, 17; Acts 1:8-9; Colossians 1:25; Hebrews 1:1

<sup>28</sup> cf. 2 Timothy 3:14-17; 2 Peter 1:16-21

<sup>29</sup> cf. Ephesians 2:20-21; 2 Peter 3:2

<sup>30</sup> Galatians 1:8; 2 John 9; Jude 3

**cannot disown himself.**<sup>31</sup> Jesus Christ is thus the only and exclusive way to God and to eternal life.<sup>32</sup>

Another reason why God does not speak directly to us is related to our spiritual attitude towards God. God wants us to acknowledge Him as the Creator of the universe<sup>33</sup>, to love Him and to trust His Word, even if we cannot see God and His promises yet<sup>34</sup>. Without this faith it is impossible to please God.<sup>35</sup> God wants us to trust Him and to glorify Him by living in faithfulness and obedience to His commandments – even and especially in difficult times. *His Word* is to guide us to confidence and obedience, not direct voices from heaven.<sup>36</sup> This is the way God has chosen for a human being to become His child, His heir and partaker in salvation in Jesus Christ.<sup>37</sup> This is why, among other things, the salvation, power and Spirit of God are so closely connected to the Word of God.<sup>38</sup> A child recognises the voice of his father and trusts him, even if it cannot see him.<sup>39</sup> This is the way God saves His children – by listening to (acknowledging without distorting) and trusting His voice, namely His Word. As you can see, there are good reasons why God does not speak to people directly, but set out His Word in writing.

### ***What does genuine faith mean according to the Bible?***

Besides the above-mentioned 'external clarity', there is also the 'internal clarity' of the Bible. This refers to the fact that one may formally comprehend the facts, but cannot believe with the heart and align the whole life 'according to a book'. Only with this 'inner clarity', or as the Bible calls it 'faith/trust', do we ultimately have existential and saving access to the promises of the Bible and to God Himself. For biblical faith is not simply about 'holding the Bible to be true', but rather about denying our own ideas of truth, world views and desires – indeed our whole life<sup>40</sup> – and placing

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<sup>31</sup> Jeremiah 1:12; John 14:6; 17:17; Hebrews 6:17-20; 2 Timothy 2:13; Titus 1:2.

<sup>32</sup> John 14:6; Acts 4:12

<sup>33</sup> Psalm 19:1; Romans 1:18-21

<sup>34</sup> John 20:29; 2 Corinthians 4:16-18; 5:7; 1 Peter 1:8-9.

<sup>35</sup> Hebrews 11:1,3,6

<sup>36</sup> cf. Luke 16:30-31

<sup>37</sup> cf. Romans 5:1-2

<sup>38</sup> John 6:63; Romans 10:16-17; 1 Corinthians 1:18,21; 1 Peter 1:23-24

<sup>39</sup> cf. John 10:27; 20:29; 1 Peter 1:8

<sup>40</sup> Matthew 16:24-26; John 14:21; Galatians 2:20

ourselves trustfully in obedient dependence on God the Father through His Son Jesus Christ. Therefore, no church membership, no certificate of baptism, no church attendance and also no life as a 'good person' counts before God. Even if you can show 'good deeds' or think that you are 'not a bad person', you are still guilty before God. Good deeds are of no significance before God if you have not done them in faith and for the glory of God. Nor is it possible to compensate for even one sin which you hold on to unrepentantly by doing good works before God.<sup>41</sup>

The Bible reports that God already had a plan of salvation before the creation of the world and of man which He wanted to realise in certain people chosen for this purpose.<sup>42</sup> The reason for this, among other things, was based on the fact that He created man with a will of his own. God did not want to create robots, but responsible creatures who either honestly love him as God and obediently follow Him, or else reject Him and His Word on their own responsibility. God was already aware before the creation of man that man's own will would be in opposition with the will of God and would lead to disobedience (i.e., to 'sin'). This was inevitably demonstrated by the first human couple of creation, who already followed their own will and desires during the first temptation and met death in disobedience to God's command. **Because of the disobedience of the first human beings, humanity no longer lives in God's presence, but outside of it. As a result, man has to suffer and die. He is from now on a prisoner of his own will<sup>43</sup> and desires. God's enemies which tempted man to disobedience keep Him in this captivity.**

We do not have the ability to free ourselves from this captivity of sin, from our own will and from the devil. There is no 'free will' that liberates us from our 'own will'! We are condemned.<sup>44</sup> This is eventually the answer to the above questions, why we, despite the obvious revelation of God in creation

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<sup>41</sup> James 2:10-12

<sup>42</sup> Acts 13:48; Romans 9:14-23; Ephesians 1:3-8; 2 Thessalonians 2:13

<sup>43</sup> Man's 'own will' is often referred to as 'flesh' in the bible, cf. e.g., Ephesians 2:3

<sup>44</sup> Ephesians 2:1-10. 'Faith' or 'salvation' is a gift of God and not something that man can bring about on his own (John 6:44; Romans 9:14-18; Philippians 1:29; Ephesians 2:1-3, 8; 2 Thessalonians 2:13). It is not a person's decision that determines participation in salvation or its rejection, but whether a person is of God and belongs to his chosen sheep or not (cf. John 8:47; 10:26ff). For 'grace' is no longer 'grace' if the gift of salvation is not taught according to the election of grace (Romans 11:4-8). Ephesians 2:8-10 makes it clear that everything – the personal turn to Christ in faith as well as the works of faith – is a gift of God's grace.

and especially in the Bible and in Christ, nevertheless reject God and the Bible: it is our love of sin and clinging to our own will (i.e., we do not want to shape our life according to God's will, but according to our own wishes and desires). We do not want to give up ourselves and our life in order to obey 'a God'. We do not want to admit that we are guilty before God and that we will be called to responsibility by Him one day. We prefer to discuss away the undeniable reality of God's existence and impending judgement so that we can continue to live our own life according to our own standards without fear of God. Therefore, because of our sin, we will not only die physically, but – because we have placed ourselves in disobedience to our Creator – will also suffer a 'second death' in the resurrection which entails an eternal and agonising punishment.<sup>45</sup> Some may say that they are not bad people and that God would therefore give them little or no punishment. **But sin still is defined by God, so that every thought that is against God's will already makes you guilty before God.**

When you define 'sin', but do not also include adultery in thought<sup>46</sup>, remarriage after divorce<sup>47</sup>, practising or accepting homosexuality<sup>48</sup>, extra-marital sex, but also a living according to your own standards/desires/covetousness (in thought, word and deed – i.e., an arbitrary use of time and money independent of God), loving pleasure more than God (i.e., investing more enthusiasm, joy, time and money for personal well-being than for God's kingdom), speaking badly and/or untruthfully about others, ingratitude towards God, envy, binge drinking, etc.<sup>49</sup> then you have to realise that you define 'sin' differently than God does (see also the notes in the appendix). God does not only judge the abhorrent sins of Adolf Hitler or Josef Stalin. He is also interested in your words to your annoying neighbour, in your gaze and thoughts regarding your married work colleague, or whether you participate in the promotion of sins by voting for a political party. When the Bible speaks of 'refraining from evil', this does not only refer to explicit commandments, but also to the principles behind them, as well as to actions that

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<sup>45</sup> Luke 12:5; 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9; Hebrews 9:27; Revelation 14:11

<sup>46</sup> Matthew 5:28

<sup>47</sup> Matthew 5:32; Mark 10:1-12; Luke 16:18; Romans 7:1-3. In 1 Corinthians 7:10-11 Paul makes clear that Jesus' teaching regarding divorce and remarriage knows no exception, and Matthew 19:9 must be interpreted according to the language as an 'exclusion clause' ('even fornication is not a legitimate reason for divorce and remarriage').

<sup>48</sup> Romans 1:24-32

<sup>49</sup> Mark 7:22; Luke 9:23-25; Romans 1:20-31; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10; Galatians 5:19-21; 2 Timothy 3:1-5 and the notes in the appendix.

are already orientated towards sin. A general attitude of the heart that refrains from evil also protects us from misinterpreting God's commandments.<sup>50</sup> **'Sin' comprises more than small or large deeds in thought, word or action. It is a general attitude detached from God's will and shaped by self-centredness.** God is not concerned with the number or severity of sins alone, but with your heart and how you view your life, the lives of others and above all, the will and glory of God. The reason for the indescribably harsh punishment in hell is not primarily the size or quantity of the sins, but rather the greatness and holiness of the true God – the God to whom we are guilty and have not sought His glory.<sup>51</sup> The holier the holiness and the brighter the light, the more weight the sins carry.

### ***What are the consequences of biblical faith in the life of the individual and for the Christian congregation?***

If in your Christian congregation concepts such as grace, election, sovereignty of God, judgement, hell, sanctification, purity, faith struggle, commitment to the Bible, self-denial, willingness to suffer, willingness to sacrifice, segregation, church discipline<sup>52</sup> etc. are hardly or not preached and lived, then essential biblical doctrines are missing. If instead a comfortable, liberal, tolerant, worldly, ecumenical, sin-tolerating, undermining the Bible through seeking direct speech from the Holy Spirit (e.g., through personal impressions or 'inner voices'<sup>53</sup>) or entertainment and prosperity oriented 'gospel' is

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<sup>50</sup> Psalm 97:10; Job 1:8; 23:10-12; Proverbs 14:16; Romans 12:9; 14:21; Matthew 5:21f, 27f; Jude 23; Mark 3:4 and many more.

<sup>51</sup> 1 Samuel 2:25,30c

<sup>52</sup> Matthew 18:15-17; 1 Corinthians 5:9-13; 2 John 9-11. It should be noted that passages such as Revelations 2:12-29 make it clear that membership of a church also entails collective co-responsibility. You are guilty of the sins and false theological views of others if you are part of a church that unrepentantly holds on to sin, holds false theological views or even just tolerates such people in its midst. The only options in such a case are either to point out this wrongdoing to the congregation or – if no repentance occurs – to leave that congregation and look for a church that is consistently faithful to the Bible. Otherwise, you will share in these evil works and in the judgement (cf. Revelation 18:4).

<sup>53</sup> Cf. (a) the inseparable connection between God's Word and God's Spirit (e.g., Nehemiah 9:30; John 6:63; Acts 7:51-52; Ephesians 6:17) or the indwelling of the Spirit as the indwelling of the Word in faith (e.g., Ephesians 3:16-17; cf. Ephesians 5:18 with Colossians 3:16; 1 John 1:10; 2:14; 3:9) and the presence of God and His power 'in the Word' (e.g., Haggai 2:5; Acts 20:32; Romans 1:16; 1 Corinthians 1:18) and (b) the confining and limiting of miraculous phenomena such as prophecy to the New Testament period (cf. Hebrews 2:3-4).

preached and lived, then you should leave the 'broad way' as soon as possible and look for a real church committed to the bible that accompanies you spiritually and helpfully on the 'narrow way' to the Kingdom of God. For the 'broad way' which – as Jesus clearly taught – leads to destruction is not primarily atheism, but a pseudo-Christianity which calls Jesus 'Lord, Lord' but does not consistently do from the heart what Christ commanded in His Word.<sup>54</sup>

Another feature of the 'broad way' is therefore that many people walk on it. If the 'Christian life' causes little or no offence in the unbelieving world, when you reinterpret God's Word and its statements, if you dismiss unpleasant biblical passages as supposedly 'unclear' and rely only on the 'pleasant' ones, if your life is hardly different from that of an unbeliever, if you lead a life without self-sacrificial deprivations or when you do not experience vilification etc. – this path of least resistance is a trap. And many people are blinded by the fact that the masses and 'mega-churches' can be found there. But according to Jesus, it is not normal for hundreds of various 'Christian churches' to exist in one place. For it is a few who walk the 'narrow way'. Even if a minority does not automatically have the truth (the standard for truth is still conformity with God's Word in doctrine and life), a large number of 'believers' in a congregation should always puzzle you. Normally, people do not follow a path that is burdensome, conflictual and costly to them. **However, Jesus made clear that only those who give up their own lives and follow the way of the cross of Christ in loyalty to faith will receive eternal life.**<sup>55</sup>

If there are churches and preachers who offer eternal life without or with a moderate standard, then many will follow this 'broad way'. In congregations

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<sup>54</sup> Matthew 7:13-14,21-26

<sup>55</sup> Luke 9:23-24; 14:26-35. This is why the apostolic churches were mostly small house churches (Romans 16:15; Colossians 4:15; Philemon 1:2 and others), which subsequently became smaller rather than larger due to church discipline (cf. Romans 16:17; 1 Corinthians 5:9-13; 2 Timothy 2:20ff; 3:5; Titus 3:9-11). Even the apostle Paul experienced this shrinkage in his circle of co-workers, as it was often only after his mission that it became clear who was really serious about Christ and who was not (cf. 2 Timothy 1:15; 4:10). In the letters of Revelation 2:12-29, we also see that the churches are not admonished at any point to 'increase in number'. On the contrary, Christ admonishes the churches because they tolerated people in their midst who unrepentantly held on to wrong views and sins and thus made themselves complicit with their sins (cf. 18:4). It is not size, but faithfulness to the word of God in life and teaching that characterises a church that is pleasing to Christ (cf. 3:8).

where the 'narrow way' is preached, you will not see masses of people and meet few wealthy or 'noble' believers. 'Winning people for Jesus', formally confessing Him as 'Lord', being a member of a church or congregation or organising large worship services means nothing before God if you do not consistently live in accordance to the will of God in everyday life and in the congregation<sup>56</sup> (in marriage, family, at work, in handling time and money, by segregating yourself from sin and sinners, etc.). Giving up your life for the sake of Christ is not 'righteousness by works', not something that has to be fulfilled as a precondition for receiving faith or salvation<sup>57</sup>, but is the natural consequence of a life with God on the 'narrow way', shaped by the Spirit and by gratitude, in confrontation with your own will, sin, temptation and an evil world.

The point is not to complete or contribute to the saving work in Jesus Christ. It is about a repentant seeking of practical holiness in all your life, caused by the grace of God and through His Spirit and love. This holiness corresponds to the position as a child and heir of God that a believer has through the sacrifice of Christ which cleansed him from sin.<sup>58</sup> The believer is guided in his thinking, acting and speaking by the will of God and avoids sin and even indirect participation in it<sup>59</sup> with abhorrence<sup>60</sup>. Even in upcoming cases of ethical questions not directly addressed in the Bible, he examines its background and seeks God's will through the application of biblical-spiritual, wise and God-fearing principles<sup>61</sup> without disregarding biblical reasonableness<sup>62</sup> or important commandments<sup>63</sup>. In seeking sanctification day by day, the believer knows that his salvation is in Christ alone. Christ is the advocate in heaven, who has a forgiving compassion for failures, weaknesses and limitations.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Matthew 7:21

<sup>57</sup> 2 Timothy 1:9; Titus 3:4-5

<sup>58</sup> Ephesians 4:1; 5:1,8; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; Titus 2:11-15; 1 Peter 1:1f,15-16

<sup>59</sup> Psalm 26:4-5; Luke 11:47-48; 1 Corinthians 5:9-13; 2 Corinthians 13:2 (Revelation 2:20, 24); Ephesians 5:7, 11; 1 Timothy 5:22; 2 John 9-13

<sup>60</sup> Proverbs 14:16; Romans 12:9; Jude 23b

<sup>61</sup> Psalm 119:11, 24; Proverbs 2:6; 9:6; Psalm 25:12-14; Ephesians 5:10, 15, 17; 1 Timothy 6:3; 2 Timothy 3:14-17; Titus 1:1; Hebrews 5:14

<sup>62</sup> Deuteronomy 11:36; 21:1-3; 2 Chronicles 30:18-20; 1 Corinthians 5:9; 7:12-16; 10:25

<sup>63</sup> Matthew 10:37; 22:17-21, 37; 23:23; Mark 3:4; Romans 13:6; 1 Corinthians 7:17-24; 1 Timothy 5:8

<sup>64</sup> Hebrews 2:18; 4:15; 1 John 1:9; 2:2; 3:20-21

Salvation is the starting point and cause of sanctification, not the other way round. For the Lord is concerned for your heart, from which comes a sincere life of obedience to Christ, motivated by love.<sup>65</sup> Those who do not strive for sanctification in this way, or who unrepentantly cling to sin till the end, do not turn away from faith, but show that they have never really been part of it.<sup>66</sup> Therefore, in the final judgement, loyalty in faith, in doctrine and living will reveal whether or not a person has truly received justification in Christ.<sup>67</sup> Your saving call to the Lord for salvation and forgiveness implies also the prayer for the Spirit of God and a new heart in obedience and self-denial.<sup>68</sup>

### ***A brief overview of God's plan with man***

As already said, God established his plan of salvation before creation. This plan was not just about giving some people forgiveness of their sins, salvation from the judgement and wrath of God, deliverance from the dominion of sin, the devil and death, but also to reveal many other things about God and His plans. God began to carry out this plan of salvation immediately after the fall of man. First, He lets people go their own ways (which is already a kind of judgement) and chooses individual men and through them His own people, to whom He reveals himself and with whom He realises His plans of salvation. He liberated His people Israel from slavery in Egypt and gave them His law and His commandments. Through these, His people could have forgiveness, salvation, instruction and above all fellowship with God in a certain although imperfect way. Through Israel and the prophecies, God prepared everything for the actual goal of salvation: the revelation of God's holiness, the pointing out of God's will and of man's sin

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<sup>65</sup> Deuteronomy 10:12-13; 1 Kings 15:14; 1 Chronicles 28:9; 29:17-18; Matthew 22:37; John 14:15, 24; Acts 15:9

<sup>66</sup> 1 John 2:3-4; 3:7-10; Hebrews 12:14

<sup>67</sup> Ecclesiastes 12:13f; Matthew 7:21f; 13:41; 16:27; 25:34ff; John 5:29; Romans 2:6-8; 14:10; 1 Corinthians 6:9f; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Galatians 5:21; 6:7-10; Ephesians 5:5; James 2:22,24; Revelation 2:23; 20:12f. Faith alone saves – but this faith does not remain 'alone' and without works (cf. Galatians 5:5-6 [cf. 1 Corinthians 7:19]; Ephesians 2:8-10; James 2:22,24-26 etc.).

<sup>68</sup> Psalm 51:9f; Ezekiel 36:25-27; Luke 11:13; Acts 2:38; Romans 10:13; 1 Peter 1:1f; 3:21 (see the synonymous use of 'conscience' and 'heart' in Romans 2:15; Hebrews 9:14; 10:22 and the fact that salvation, in addition to forgiveness, always includes the renewal of the mind by the Spirit, cf. 2 Thessalonians 2:13; Titus 3:5; 1 Peter 1:2).

and depravity, and the perfect salvation in Jesus Christ, the Son of God. God's holiness and righteousness makes it impossible for man with his sin to stand before Him on judgement day.

Since the end of the Old Covenant and the coming of the Messiah Jesus, there is only one way to participate in the holiness of God: through faith in Jesus Christ, the eternal and sinless Son of God. God confirmed Him as the Son of God to many witnesses through signs and wonders and finally through the resurrection from the dead.<sup>69</sup> This confirmation through signs and wonders which are historically undeniably attested by eyewitnesses in and outside the Bible<sup>70</sup> is only questioned by unbelievers on the basis of atheistic world views and not on the basis of historical-scientific arguments. **God the Father has placed His Son Jesus Christ as a faultless, sin offering and atoning sacrifice<sup>71</sup>. Because of His vicarious death and resurrection, He has now the authority to absolve from sin and condemnation anyone who places their confidence in Him in faith<sup>72</sup>.** The sacrifice of the sinless Son of God, His blood, has such sanctifying and cleansing power – in contrast to the foreshadowed and limited law of Moses in the Old Testament – that it can completely sanctify and cleanse even the worst sinner and heathen.<sup>73</sup> Thereby he is liberated from the death sentence of sin before God in Christ, is declared righteous and sanctified and will inherit eternal life as a child of God. This sanctification is not just about the forgiveness of sins, but also the renewal of the mind away from 'your own will' to submission to 'God's will'.<sup>74</sup> The access to this salvation in Christ is faith.<sup>75</sup> It is about giving gratitude and honour to God and His action in creation and salvation history with faith.

**Everyone who believes in Jesus Christ will not be condemned, but will at Christ's return and the resurrection of the dead inherit eternal life – without suffering and death – in God's new world.<sup>76</sup> Whoever believes**

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<sup>69</sup> 1 Corinthians 15:3-7

<sup>70</sup> cf. Flavius Josephus: Jewish Antiquities XVIII 6-11-3-64

<sup>71</sup> Romans 3:25; 1 John 2:2

<sup>72</sup> John 1:12

<sup>73</sup> Hebrews 10:10,14; 1 John 1:7

<sup>74</sup> Jeremiah 31:33-34; Ezekiel 36:25-27; Romans 8:9,13-14

<sup>75</sup> It is not faith that saves, but the content of faith: Christ! Faith as the gift of God (Ephesians 2:8) is the way in which we receive a share in Christ and thus in salvation (Romans 5:1-2; Ephesians 3:16-17).

<sup>76</sup> John 5:28-29; 1 Corinthians 15:52-57; Hebrews 2:14-15; Revelation 21:1-6

**in Jesus Christ will live, even if he has died.<sup>77</sup> But whoever abides in his sin has to await judgement and eternal punishment.**

**He who believes in the Son  
has eternal life,  
but he who does not obey the Son  
will not see life  
but the wrath of God abides on him.**

**(John 3:36)**

The connection with Jesus Christ in faith ('being in Christ') makes it possible for people from all nations to belong to God's chosen people 'Israel'. Thus, they receive a full share in the sonship of God and the promises of salvation of the Old Testament which have become reality in Jesus Christ<sup>78</sup>. Therefore, for believers in Christ, the Old Testament in addition to the New Testament is also the Word of God and they read and understand these Scriptures in the light of the messianic New Covenant.

In addition to the redemption of His chosen people and the disempowerment of the devil and sin through the sending of His Son, God the Father also wanted to establish His only Son as the regent of all things. He also wanted to demonstrate – besides His greatness, holiness, wisdom, glory, love and justice, etc. – that only a life under His will and the loving guidance of the heavenly Father leads to life; and that a life in opposition to God and His will leads to death and destruction. Thus, God had different purposes in mind with His creation and His plan of salvation. In the end, everything serves His glory. Regardless of whether it is the salvation of His elect or the judgement of His enemies – in everything God is glorified, who has revealed himself in one identity in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

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<sup>77</sup> John 11:25

<sup>78</sup> Galatians 3:28-29; Ephesians 2:11-21

## ***Now, what is your personal response to this message?***

**If this message goes to your heart, then call on Jesus Christ as Lord and God in faith and ask Him for forgiveness of sins and for a new heart that is no longer devoted to your own will but to the will of God.** This does not mean that you can then live without sin, but it does mean a life for God's glory which strives for God's will, carefully examines all thoughts and decisions on the basis of God's Word and is guided by it, confesses known and unknown sins before God and does not cling unrepentantly to any sin.<sup>79</sup> This new life in faith does not mean that your problems, causes of worry, sufferings or illnesses will disappear. On the contrary, further difficulties are added through faith, because the Holy Spirit in your heart stands against your own will and, moreover, in a world far away from God the life of faith in Jesus Christ will be decried and antagonised.<sup>80</sup> The believer in Christ is a 'stranger' in this world, because he has his real home with God in heaven and lives his life accordingly.<sup>81</sup>

The path of salvation is 'narrow' and burdensome. God wants us to trust His invisible promises, to love Him, even if in this life we do not see Him or the fulfilment of His wonderful promises. God wants us to deny the visible in order to receive the invisible – that we believe His revelation in Christ and thus glorify Him. Genuine, saving faith is evident in 'giving up' the earthly-visible life because you see God and the invisible and its 'prize' (God's glory, love and heavenly riches, praise and honour) as far more precious.<sup>82</sup> The believer will put his own life aside in service and sacrifice for the sake of this heavenly-invisible treasure for the glory of God. He is willing to be 'last' here on earth because he would rather be 'first' in heaven.<sup>83</sup> Only those who truly believe in the invisible Christ will walk this path of life with joy, love and conviction. God knows our limitations and weaknesses and He meets them with mercy and understanding, if our heart is sincere. This is the feature of

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<sup>79</sup> A life of sanctification also includes a fundamentally humble penitent attitude that examines and addresses even hidden and indirect sins before God (Psalm 19:12-14; 1 John 1:9).

<sup>80</sup> Suffering, vilification, divisiveness and persecution are not only consequences, but also characteristics of true faith (cf. Matthew 10:34ff; John 15:18f; Philippians 1:28f; 2 Timothy 3:12; 1 Peter 4:14).

<sup>81</sup> Hebrews 11:13-16; 1 Peter 2:11-12

<sup>82</sup> Mark 8:34-38

<sup>83</sup> Mark 10:31

genuine faith. Any other 'Christianity' that tries to justify its faith without this standard is self-deception and a dead faith.<sup>84</sup>

**Read the Bible!** It is best to start with the New Testament, because only from this perspective you can understand the message of the Old Testament. In addition, it is very important to join a biblical congregation that is verifiably and correctly guided by the Bible. There you will find encouragement and admonition on the shared path to Christ.

If this message means nothing at all to you or if you even reject it, then you will die in your sins and thus not persist before the holy God on judgement day. Eternal condemnation then awaits you, and there will be no way out for eternity. And in this life you will be dominated by sin and the God-opposing powers which will have a destructive effect on your life and your environment in one way or another. Only Christ can truly set you free.<sup>85</sup> Only a life according to the Creator's orders is wise and sustained by hope and strength in every situation of life. So if this should be the case with you after reading these lines, please pass this booklet on to someone else. Perhaps God will be gracious to someone else so that they may not see just 'religious nonsense' in this Gospel of Christ's vicarious death, but what it really is: **life and power in abundance and true words of eternal life!**

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<sup>84</sup> Galatians 6:3; James 1:22; 2:14-26 and the comments in the appendix.

<sup>85</sup> John 8, 31-36

## **Appendix**

**Brief explanation of sin as defined in the above scripture passages (in particular footnote 49), as an aid to self-examination (cf. 2 Corinthians 13:5):**

'Selfishness, self-love, love of money, greediness, loving pleasure more than God': Take a look at how much time and money you spend on your own interests (luxuries and goods that go beyond the necessities of life, or when the supposedly 'necessities of life' have to be of special quality) and how much you invest for others/those in need or for the sake of the Kingdom of God. Or when you are more concerned with yourself and your own well-being than with pleasing God. This means striving for earthly things and pleasures which ignores the view of spiritual and heavenly goods and/or the need to serve others (cf. Luke 16:19-31; James 5:1-6), according to the motto 'The main thing is to satisfy yourself'.

'Boastfulness': Boasting about money, brands, intelligence, profession, success and possessions is widespread, even among Christians. It is particularly noticeable when people post on social media or messengers their great holiday, their splendid meal, their great Christmas presents, etc. Yet these boasts are a testimony to what is really important to you.

'Submission and responsibility': Biblical instructions on submission are generally unpopular – especially in the context of marriage and family.

'Ingratitude': Those who do not thank God for life and all things ultimately express their contempt for Him. Yet gratitude is not simply a quick prayer, but an attitude to life. Gratitude towards other people is reflected in your general behaviour towards them. This is all the more true for God. So anyone who thanks God for, e.g., earthly goods, but gives hardly anything of it to others and uses these gratefully received gifts mainly for themselves, has not understood biblical gratitude. Prayer and religious exercises are worthless without a general devotion of life to God.

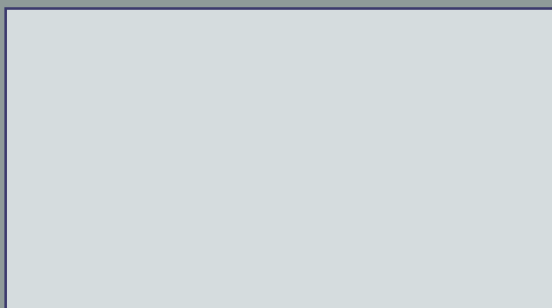
'Piety in pretence, half-heartedness, not abhorring and avoiding evil, unholliness': The believer seeks God's will and wants to avoid sin with abhorrence and at the greatest possible distance. However, those who prefer to live in peace at the boundaries of God's will and even partly beyond it (Romans 6:1,15; Galatians 5:13; 1 Peter 2:16), are fooling themselves in matters of

faith, love and being filled with the Spirit of God. They do this under the guise of a falsely understood 'freedom from the law' and under hypocritical warnings against 'works righteousness'. If the narrow way is too strenuous for you and the law of Christ with its requirement of self-denial that goes beyond the demands of the law is 'too much', then you have not yet understood what it means to have sins forgiven and eternal life as a child of God. If you don't care about or if you are even uncomfortable with issues such as time, money, mission, giving things up, dressing demurely and the needs of others, then you definitely have a spiritual problem. If your garden and the short-mown English lawn, the decoration or optimisation of your house, the next holiday, hobbies, nice food and other earthly pleasures take up more thoughts, time and money than the kingdom of God, then you are definitely not on the 'narrow way'. You can ask yourself whether your life is really that different from the life of your unbelieving neighbour apart from table prayers and church attendance.

This holiness also includes a consistent rejection of 'idolatry' and 'witchcraft', for example by refraining from participating in or using occult, religious or esoteric healing methods. This includes, besides, e.g., acupuncture or homeopathy, also the healing concepts based on 'essential oils' (e.g., from doTERRA or Young Living) which are also aligned with unbiblical self-love and profit-seeking. God is interested in whether you carelessly use ethically questionable medical therapies. For example, almost no one is interested in the fact that every contraceptive pill on the market has an abortive effect and thus leads to murdering unborn children. If all this 'goes too far' for you, then you urgently need to examine your heart and your faith (2 Corinthians 13:5).

'Guile, deceit; spreading of slander, defamation, false testimonies': It is interesting that in some Christian congregations, e.g., murderers or homosexuals are (rightly!) excluded from the community. On the other hand, church members who practice, legalise or accept, e.g., slander, love of money, remarriage after divorce, are tolerated in the church (even in responsible ministries), although these actions are put on the same level in the Bible as murder, homosexuality and adultery etc. (1 Corinthians 5:9-13; 6:9-11).

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