

**BELIEVE
IN GOD**

By,
Charles R. Chesnutt, Sr.

For God so loved the world that He gave
His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes
in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.
John 3:16

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The author's wife, Mary Chesnutt aided significantly in writing this work.

Through no merit of his own, the author came to know Jesus Christ in the manner described in this booklet in December of 1973. That experience continues to this day.

Chapter 1

Born Again

BELIEVE IN THE LORD JESUS CHRIST,
AND YOU WILL BE SAVED

ACTS 16:31

Let's face it. If God is really there, why can't we see Him? Is there really some huge invisible God out there who never speaks and never makes Himself known? How can this God, who is said to have created us, not be able to communicate? Why should anyone believe that? And why should anyone believe some ancient Jewish religious writings that talk about Him?

Isn't it true that people believe in God because they need an invisible friend, or because they need a psychological crutch? Where is this God? If there is such a God, He must be hiding.

Let's see what those ancient Jewish religious writings (the Bible) really do say about God. Then you can form your own opinion.

So, does the Bible say that God is hiding Himself?

Yes, it does.

Does that mean that He makes Himself known to some but not others?

Yes, it does.

God does not make Himself known to everyone,¹ only to those who seek Him with all their heart.²

It is certainly not unusual for people who do not know God to ask the question, “If God is real, why can’t we see him. Why is he silent?” This booklet tells you when and how God discloses Himself in no uncertain terms so you can know for yourself.

Let’s start from where Jesus says that God hides Himself. Jesus was conversing with a man named Nicodemus who is asking Him the very same question. This is what Jesus says:

Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the Kingdom of God.^{3†}

So, Jesus is saying that not everyone can see the Kingdom of God because the Kingdom of God is hidden from everyone who is not born again. So, we can give up trying to perceive or experience the existence of God by any means other than being born again.

1. Second Corinthians 4:3 “And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing,”

2. Jeremiah 29:13 “You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart.” Searching for Him with your whole heart means that you will yield yourself to His commandments not to sin.

3. John 3:3 † Christians have been preaching and singing about knowing God in this life for centuries. For instance, see *Jesus, the Very Thought of Thee*, a hymn by Bernard de Clairvaux, 1091-1153 A.D., *Worship and Service Hymnal* (Hope Publishing Co., Carol Stream IL, 2001), verse 4, “But what of those who find [find Christ]? Ah! This nor tongue nor pen can show, The love of Jesus, what it is. None but His loved ones know”

Then Nicodemus asks another question.

How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb can he?⁴

Jesus answers:

...Unless one is born of water [his mother's womb] and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.⁵

So, in order to see and enter the Kingdom of God, we must be born "of the Spirit." So, it is a spiritual thing. Jesus is saying that there is a spiritual reality that we can't see unless we are born again. That is radical statement. How can there be a spiritual reality around us that we cannot perceive?

Nicodemus wonders about this too, and Jesus answers:

Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit.⁶

4. John 3:4

5. John 3:5. Here, Jesus specifies that one must be born of water because the right to be born again extends only to humans and not any other created being, such as angels.

6. John 3:7,8

Jesus is saying that being born again is like someone who feels the wind blowing. You know the wind is there because you can feel it, but it is invisible. Jesus is telling us that we can know the Kingdom of God is there just as surely as one can feel the wind. We can see it spiritually but we can't see it physically. It's a spiritual thing.ⁿ

But it is hidden to all who are not born again.

The next question is, of course, how can we experience it for ourselves? Jesus answers this question with an analogy.

And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so the Son of Man must be lifted up; that whoever believes may in Him have eternal life.

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.⁷

Jesus is saying that those of us who believe (trust) in Him will receive the gift of eternal life and that we can experience it. With the analogy of Moses lifting up the serpent in the wilderness Jesus is speaking of the cross.⁸

The narrative of Moses lifting up the serpent in the wilderness is found in the Book of Numbers, Chapter 21 in the Old Testament.⁹ It says

7. John 3:14-16

8. Romans 4:25 "He [Jesus] who was delivered over because of our transgressions, and was raised because of our justification."

9. The Old Testament is the Jewish Scriptures. Both the Old Testament

And Moses made a bronze serpent
and set it on the standard; and it came
about, that if a serpent bit any man,
when he looked to the bronze serpent,
he lived.¹⁰

Jesus was saying that He will be like the bronze serpent
lifted up on a standard (a standard is like a flagpole with some-
thing on top). How so?

When we sin it is as if we are bitten by the serpent of
sin and we die because sin causes spiritual death.¹¹ When we
are spiritually dead we cannot experience the reality of the
Kingdom of God or experience eternal life because it is hidden
from us.

The only cure is Jesus Christ. Just like the statue of the
serpent that was lifted up on a standard, anyone who looks to
Jesus Christ for spiritual life will receive it. That's why Jesus
is so important. We cannot experience eternal life without
Christ.

But why did Jesus compare himself to a serpent when
the serpent represents sin? Because in order to save us, Jesus
became sin for us.¹² But we are getting ahead of ourselves.

and the New Testament are inspired by God, ie. they are Truth. Second
Timothy 3:16 "All Scripture is inspired by God..."

10. Numbers 21:9

11. Romans 6:23 "The wages of sin is death."

12. Second Corinthians 5:21 "He made Him who knew no sin to be
sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in
Him."

How can we believe in Jesus Christ when He is not here? How can we believe in someone or something that we have neither seen nor experienced? The key is in the word “believe.”

Believing in Christ means to trust in Him in the same way that we trust a doctor that we don't know when we need an operation. Except when we trust in Jesus Christ, we have absolutely nothing to lose.¹³

But trust Him for what? Trust that through Him all of our sins have been totally forgiven. He said that He would be like the serpent lifted up in the wilderness. All they had to do was look and they were healed.

This is a leap of faith, but it is not a leap from the point of certainty; it is a leap from the point of trust. This is what faith is.¹⁴ And faith is not certainty.

God resolves our doubts *after* we trust in Christ because if God resolved these doubts before we come to Christ, there would be no faith, and we would always wonder if we had simply talked ourselves into believing. The awareness of God has to come from outside of ourselves or we will always be doubting.

So how does it work?

Seeing the Kingdom of God is a two-step process. The first step is to come to obtain forgiveness for all of our sins because it is sin that separates us from God. We can get forgiven

13. The original Greek word means to trust. See *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, by Bauer, Arndt and Gingrich (Second Ed. 1958, Univ. Of Chicago Press), s.v. πιστεύω, “believe (in), trust.”

14. Hebrews 11:6 “And without faith it is impossible to please God...

for all of our sins by “coming to the cross.” Christ died on the cross to pay for our sins so that we can be forgiven,¹⁵ and all we have to do is to trust in Jesus Christ alone for the forgiveness of all sin.

Trusting in Christ is simple. It may be done through prayer. For instance, one may pray “God, I will trust in Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of all my sin even though I am not certain that you even there.” That is what faith is. It is trusting even though you are not certain.

How much real faith does one need? Just enough to trust sincerely in Christ. Some people trust in Him and some do not, but the invitation is open to all.¹⁶

Jesus explained it pretty well in Matthew 13:31-32. He said the kingdom of God is like a mustard seed, which is a seed that is the size of a pinhead. But when the mustard seed is planted, it grows up and becomes the largest plant in the garden.

The mustard seed is a picture of the faith necessary to come to Christ. Coming to Christ is just a pinhead of faith that grows into something wonderful. It grows into the most wonderful thing that one can ever imagine. It grows into a life without emptiness,¹⁷ a life filled with God’s peace and assur-

15. Romans 5:8 “God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were sinners, Christ died for us.”

16. Revelation 22:17 “The Spirit and the bride say, ‘Come.’ And let the one who hears say, ‘Come.’ And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost.”

17. The internal void is spiritual death. It is cured by the forgiveness of sin and a true commitment to obey God’s word.

ance,¹⁸ a life of spiritual equanimity and it grows into a life where one actually knows Christ, a life that is eternal.¹⁹ And when a husband and a wife both come to Christ and follow Him sincerely it grows into a family that is bound firmly together by cords of love—cords of love that are as strong as iron.

And it starts with a leap of faith that is little more than a hop just to see if it all is really real. When one comes to Christ, the faith that one needs is small but afterwards one arrives in an entirely different world. This different world is a spiritual world called the Kingdom of God.²⁰

Although the mustard seed grows during the remainder of our lives, the effect of it (God's presence and peace) is not determined by time and effort and human will, but by the extent of our yieldedness to Him.

Before coming to Christ, we are spiritually dead.²¹ Spiritual death often presents itself as an internal void, an emptiness that can never be filled. When such a person trusts in Christ and makes a heart-felt, sincere surrender to God's will (a complete yielding), then he or she (like the author) will experience a salvation that may be *quite* unexpected. The void disappears and in its place there is an inner peace that is be-

18. Philippians 4:7 "And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts..."

19. John 17: 3 "This is eternal life that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent."

20. John 18:36 "My kingdom is not of this world..."

21. Ephesians 2:1 "...you were dead in trespasses and sins"

yond comprehension.²² That peace never leaves.²³ Salvation is what happens when we trust in Christ. It means that we have been saved from spiritual death.

Sound inviting? It is indeed and it is real.

Although salvation is experienced, salvation is spiritual and not material. Before trusting in Christ we are spiritually dead²⁴ and we know it. But afterwards we become spiritually alive²⁵ and we know that as well. One has to experience it to understand it—or to believe it.

The beauty of it all is that God does it. We don't. If we did it we would always know that it was us and not God who did it. At the back of our mind, we would always know that we had created or imagined a made-to-order god, like the idols of ancient peoples. That's why He does it and not us. And because we can't do it. Only Christ can pay for our sins.

When He does it, He leaves no doubt in one's mind that it is Him and not us who does it.

Awake you that sleep, and arise from
the dead, and Christ [Christ, not us]
shall give you light.²⁶

22. Philippians 4:7 “And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

23. This occurred to the author in 1974.

24. Ephesians 2:1 “And you were dead in your trespasses and sins...”

25. Ephesians 2:4,5 “But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ.”

26. Ephesians 5:14

Trusting in Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of all sin is all that is needed for eternal salvation. However, it is not all that is needed to really experience the presence of God. Indeed, some people who have trusted in Christ experience nothing as a result of it. Some people don't feel any different as a result of trusting in Christ and many believe that one can never really experience the presence and peace of God. Others simply pretend. Why do some people who have trusted in Him never really know Him? Why?

The answer to that is the second step.



Chapter 2

Knowing God

WHOEVER HAS MY COMMANDMENTS AND KEEPS THEM...
I WILL LOVE HIM AND REVEAL MYSELF TO HIM

JOHN 14:21

The first step to knowing God is to get forgiven. The second step is to yield.

Yielding means to yield to God's will. It means to obey Him and that means to turn away from sin. After all, if we trust in Christ for the forgiveness of sin but don't care enough to turn away from committing the very sins that He died to save us from, what then? What is the purpose of being forgiven for sin on Sunday if we intend to commit the same sin on Monday? It makes a mockery of the cross.

Yielding, which is explained in this chapter, is essential because it results in knowing God and knowing God is what makes Christianity experiential and really worth while. Trusting Christ without bothering to know Him is like being given an unlimited gift certificate for dinner at the finest restaurant in town and leaving after eating the bread and butter.

Truly knowing God is the apex of all human experience. It is beyond marvelous; *that's why people do it*. Christians are not building a stairway to heaven or looking for a psychological crutch. They are Christians because they have found something and it is immensely rewarding.

They have discovered the knowledge of God¹ and it is a spiritual love affair where the only love is God's love, a totally accepting and unconditional love,² the love that took Jesus Christ to the cross.³ It is not a lifestyle. It is life.

Jesus taught it in crystal clear terms how to know establish a relationship with Him. He tells us when and how He makes Himself known to us. It is, as we said, a spiritual love affair:

He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself [make myself known] to him.⁴

Jesus is telling us that if we have His commandments (that is if we bother to find out what He is saying), and then, knowing the commandments, if we *keep them* then we have shown ourselves to be someone who loves Him. And as a result, Jesus says, "I will disclose Myself to him." This is what knowing God is. It is when Jesus Christ discloses Himself to us. He makes Himself known to us. Christianity is an experiential relationship with Jesus Christ. Christianity is knowing God by yielding to His word.

1. John 17:3 "This is eternal life that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent." Romans 11:33 "Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!"

2. This love is described in First Corinthians 13.

3. John 3:16 "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son that whoever believes [trusts] in Him will have eternal life."

4. John 14:21

Notice how carefully this scripture is written. This is not formula; it's a love note. Keeping His commandments to get God to do something will not get us there. But keeping His commandments in order to know Him will. Just like a human love affair, the thing that makes a difference to God is that we keep them because we want to be with Him. This is why the scripture says "He who has my commandments and keeps them is the one who loves me."

It's a *relational* thing, not a *duty* thing; it is a love thing, not a set of rules. It is all about love because that's what God is. God *is* love.⁵ But although it is a spiritual love affair and love is all over it, don't worry about loving Him enough, so quit trying. He takes care of the love part. When He makes His presence known, you will love Him. You won't be able to stop yourself and you won't want to.

But there is a problem and that problem is sin. Sin kills love and sin kills relationships. It kills relationships with other people and it kills relationships with God. Sin kills, period. From cover to cover the Bible repeatedly warns us that sin kills. Like a loving spiritual Father, God works with you, enables you, encourages you and weans you away from sin by replacing it with Himself. But He is very serious about it. Move away from sin. Sin is death.

That is why God requires us to have His commandments and *keep them* in order to know Him. Because He is *very* serious about sin. That means that if you or anyone wants to know God, you must sincerely commit not deceive, not to lie,^{6†} not to cheat, steal, injure, commit adultery, fornicate,

5. First John 4:8 "...God is love." God's love is described in First Corinthians 13.

6. † Lying is viewed as a very significant sin. Revelation 21:8 "...all liars,

commit homosexual acts, do drugs, fail to forgive, be greedy, take advantage of others,⁷ condemn others or yourself,⁸ or commit whatever sin separates you from Him.⁹

The Bible is not a book about religion. The Bible is a book about spiritual life and spiritual death. It is a warning that sin kills spiritual life.¹⁰ And it is a warning that those who live a life of spiritual death will ultimately die an eternal death.

We live in a world that is filled with sin and spiritual death. The most prevalent symptom of spiritual death is an internal void, an emptiness that will not go away. Some people spend lifetimes trying to fill this emptiness. That void is spiritual death and the desire to fill it is hunger for spiritual life. The analogy of scripture is a sheepfold, a pen where sheep are

their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.”

7. First Corinthians 6:8-10 “...you yourselves cheat and do wrong, even against your own brothers! Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who submit to or perform homosexual acts, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor verbal abusers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God...”

8. Luke 6:37 “Do not judge [criticize], and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven.”

9. Galatians 5:19,20 “The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity, and debauchery; idolatry and sorcery; hatred, discord, jealousy, and rage; rivalries, divisions, factions, and envy; drunkenness, carousing, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God...”

10. There are 48 scriptures teaching that sin kills, too many to quote here. They are exhaustively listed and discussed in *Fate of Unbelievers, the Book* found in biblebooks.co.

fed and protected. The door to the sheepfold is Jesus Christ.¹¹ Once inside the sheepfold we are fed with spiritual food¹² and we drink the water of spiritual life.¹³

Jesus Christ is the light of the world¹⁴ but He cannot be known outside of the sheepfold.¹⁵ So don't expect to find Him or understand anything about Him¹⁶ until you walk through the door¹⁷ and discover for yourself that it is all true.

Knowing God does not automatically happen when we cease from sin and it does not automatically cease because we fall back into sin. It is a not a contract. It is a spiritual love affair. Sin does kill, but we can always repent and find forgive-

11. John 10:9a "I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he will be saved." Note that the door is not a church, not a religion, not a denomination. The door is Jesus Christ and .

12. John 10:9b "... if anyone enters through Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture."

13. John 4:10 "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water."

14. John 8:12 "I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life."

15. John 1:9 "There was the true Light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man. He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him."

16. First Corinthians 1:18 "For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God."

17. John 10:9a "I am the door..." John 14:6 "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me."

ness.¹⁸ But lovers can eventually kill love with sin and knowing God will eventually cease when we choose darkness rather than light.¹⁹

So why doesn't He just stop all our sin? Because He will not interfere with our love. *Love is the one thing that we can give to Him.* Free will (free choice) is necessary for love because love must be a choice. One cannot love if one is not free not to love because love without the freedom to choose is not love; it is duty. Religion because of fear is duty; religion because of obligation is duty; religion because of habit is duty. God does not settle for duty. Nor should you settle for a relationship where love is a duty.

God does not settle for imaginary love nor should you settle for an imaginary God.

Does that mean that we have to be sinless in order to know God? No. Living a perfect life is not required. God created you. Don't every think that He is not fully aware of your imperfections, weaknesses and sins. Our fallen nature is the reason why Jesus Christ died on the cross. Don't ever think that God requires perfection. God does not require perfection; what God requires is heart. God is all about heart.²⁰

Why? Because it is a relationship, not a religion.

18. First John 1:9 "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

19. First John 3:19 "And this is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their deeds were evil."

20. First Samuel 16:7 "God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."

God responds to heart, just like we do.²¹ He does not require perfection in order to love any more than we require perfection before we love someone. What He wants is heart. Why does He want heart? He wants heart because ultimately what He wants is *you* and He will not settle for fake.

He made us to be imperfect and He knows it. Christianity on the outside is a progression from sin toward sinless. But Christianity on the inside is a magnificent journey toward knowing God better and deeper, a journey that is motivated *because* of the relationship, not for the purpose of obtaining the relationship. The relationship and the yielding occur together. We do not journey out of obligation or out of fear, but out of a relationship.²² God is all about heart because love is all about heart and God is all about love because God *is* love.²³

Within the scope of our relationship with Him, life is a progression toward righteousness.²⁴ The progression toward righteousness is based upon knowing Him because it is only through knowing Him that we can become righteous. He empowers us through our relationship with Him. Everything is based upon knowing Him.

21. John 14:21 “He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me”

22. See Second Peter 1 (the entire chapter)

23. First John 4:8 “The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love.” See the author’s *Endless Love* which discusses the three human loves and the fourth love, which is God’s love.

24. Second Peter 1:1-10. This entire progression is enabled through the actual knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ (2 Peter 1:2,8).

His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness through the true knowledge of Him...²⁵

Not only does He grant us everything pertaining to life and godliness through the knowledge of Him, but He also enables us to partake of His divine nature.

He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises in order that by them you might become partakers of the divine nature...²⁶

That's the tree that we were discussing, the tree that grows from the mustard seed. It can grow slow or it can appear suddenly. It all depends on the sincerity of our surrender. That is what Christ was talking about when He referred to the Kingdom of God. It starts with salvation and grows into a tree when it is watered with righteousness and heart. It grows like the a plant that we planted. We plant and we water, but it grows on its own.²⁷

When we yield to Him, He lives in us.

25. Second Peter 1:3

26. Second Peter 1:4

27. Matthew 13:23 “And the one on whom the seed was sown [the Gospel of Jesus Christ] on the good soil, this is the man who hears the word and understands it; who indeed bears fruit, and brings forth, some a hundred fold...”

If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him.²⁸

And when we sin, we can confess and He forgives us.

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.²⁹

The result is knowing God, and one of the greatest benefits of knowing God is a supernatural peace:

And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.³⁰

Once a person has truly perceived and experienced a full measure of this peace, he cannot turn away. It is overwhelming, magnificent and irresistible. But it is spiritual,³¹ not physical. It is like the wind. One can feel it but not see it.

28. John 14:23

29. First John 1:9

30. Philippians 4:7

31. John 18:36 “My kingdom is not of this world.”

The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from or where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit.³²

That is why we cannot simply decide to believe in God. Someone who is spiritually dead cannot see the things that are spiritually alive because they can only be spiritually discerned.

The natural man does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God. For they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.³³

It is for this reason that Jesus taught that one must be born again before one can perceive the Kingdom of God.

Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God³⁴

Try it yourself and see. He does it; not you.

32. John 3:8

33. First Corinthians 2:14 (Berean Study Bible). See also the King James translation, “But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”

34. John 3:3

To the one who truly wants to find God but wonders if there is a God to find, let me say that I, the author, have been where you are. I was just as doubting as you are or even more so. But I found God exactly as this booklet describes, and then I opened the Bible and read about what had happened to me.

I found Him by trusting in Christ for the forgiveness of all sin and the sincerely yielding to Him at the same time. I did this through a silly, fumbling prayer that I prayed one evening long ago—doubting all the time but meaning every word.

I had no idea what would happen, if anything. Well, I found out. He came to me with His immense peace and love and He is still there. He made me new, just like He will do for you if you come to Christ and sincerely yield to His will. All it takes is a decision to trust in Jesus Christ. After that, it is all about heart.

My time was in 1973. Your time is now.

