
all that the
PROPHETS
have spoken

John R. Cross

ALL THAT THE PROPHETS HAVE SPOKEN

2nd Edition

Copyright © 2013 by GOODSEED® International

All rights reserved. No portion of this book may be reproduced in any form without the written permission of the copyright holder. GOODSEED, www.goodseed.com, and the book/leaf design marks, are trademarks of GOODSEED International.

Published by GOODSEED® International

P.O. Box 3704, Olds, AB, T4H 1P5, Canada

Email: info@goodseed.com

Library and Archives Canada Cataloguing in Publication

Cross, John R.

All that the prophets have spoken/J.R. Cross. — Ed. 2

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-1-890082-53-6

1. Bible – Criticism, interpretation, etc. I. Title

BS511.3.C76 2007

220.6

C2007-905014-X

Scripture quotations taken from the Amplified® Bible,
Copyright © 1954, 1958, 1962, 1964, 1965, 1987 by The Lockman Foundation
Used by permission. (www.Lockman.org)

Scripture quotations marked (ESV) are from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version,
copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers. Used by
permission. All rights reserved.

Quotations marked (KJV) are from the Authorized King James Version.

Scripture quotations marked (NASB) are taken from the New American Standard Bible®,
Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The
Lockman Foundation Used by permission. (www.Lockman.org)

Scripture quoted by permission. Quotations designated (NET) are from the NET Bible® copyright
©1996-2006 by Biblical Studies Press, L.L.C. www.bible.org All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked (NIV) are taken from the HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL
VERSION®. NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society. Used by
permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked (NIV) are from the HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION.
Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society.
Used by permission of Hodder & Stoughton Publishers, A member of the Hodder Headline Group.
All rights reserved.

“NIV” is a registered trademark of International Bible Society.
UK trademark number 1448790.

Scripture quotations marked “NKJV™” are taken from the New King James Version®.
Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked NLT are taken from the Holy Bible, New Living Translation,
copyright 1996. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Wheaton, Illinois 60189.
All rights reserved.

Printed in USA -- 201308-160-0000

*...beginning with Moses and all the
Prophets, he explained to them what
was said in all the Scriptures...*

CONTENTS

PREFACE	7
CHAPTER ONE	
1 PROLOGUE	9
2 GETTING THINGS STRAIGHT	10
3 A UNIQUE BOOK	12
CHAPTER TWO	
1 IN THE BEGINNING GOD	19
2 ANGELS, HOSTS AND STARS	24
CHAPTER THREE	
1 HEAVEN AND EARTH	29
2 IT WAS GOOD	33
3 MAN AND WOMAN	39
CHAPTER FOUR	
1 SATAN	49
2 HAS GOD SAID?	52
3 WHERE ARE YOU?	57
4 DEATH	61
CHAPTER FIVE	
1 A PARADOX	69
2 ATONEMENT	73
3 THE PROPHET ENOCH	82
4 THE PROPHET NOAH	82
5 BABEL	90
CHAPTER SIX	
1 THE PROPHET JOB	95
2 THE PROPHET ABRAHAM	96
3 GENUINE BELIEF	99
4 HAGAR AND ISHMAEL	100
5 ISHMAEL AND ISAAC	102
6 THE PROVIDER	104
CHAPTER SEVEN	
1 JACOB AND JUDAH	111
2 THE PROPHET MOSES	113
3 PHARAOH AND THE PASSOVER	115
CHAPTER EIGHT	
1 BREAD, QUAIL AND WATER	123
2 TEN RULES	125
3 THE COURTROOM	132

CHAPTER NINE

1 THE TENT OF MEETING	139
2 UNBELIEF	148
3 JUDGES, KINGS AND PROPHETS	151

CHAPTER TEN

1 THE ANGEL GABRIEL	161
2 THE MESSIAH	168
3 AMONG THE SAGES	175
4 THE PROPHET JOHN	177

CHAPTER ELEVEN

1 TEMPTED	185
2 POWER AND FAME	188
3 NICODEMUS	190
4 REJECTION	193
5 THE BREAD OF LIFE	197

CHAPTER TWELVE

1 FILTHY RAGS	201
2 THE WAY	204
3 THE PLAN	205
4 LAZARUS	207
5 HELL	210
6 ACCEPTANCE AND BETRAYAL	212

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

1 THE GARDEN	217
2 THE PLACE OF THE SKULL	220
3 THE EMPTY TOMB	231

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

1 THE STRANGER	239
2 THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS	241
—ADAM TO NOAH—	
3 THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS	247
—ABRAHAM TO THE LAW—	
4 THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS	254
—THE TENT TO THE BRONZE SERPENT—	
5 THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS	259
—JOHN TO THE RESURRECTION—	

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

1 ALL THAT THE PROPHETS HAVE SPOKEN	267
2 JESUS RETURNS TO HEAVEN	268
3 DO YOU BELIEVE THE PROPHETS?	269

APPENDIX	273
--------------------	-----

To maintain ease in reading and remain consistent with the Scripture text chosen, in most cases I have used small initial letters for pronouns and certain nouns that relate to God. In areas where there might be confusion about who is being referred to, I have used capital letters consistent with traditional grammar rules.

“ALL THE PROPHETS” introduces the reader to nine different translations of the Bible. None of the translations differ on content communicated nor affect the accompanying commentary.

All Scripture portions are italicized and indented. Where Scripture text is boldfaced, an emphasis has been added. Square parenthesis in the Scripture text indicate additions for explanatory purposes.

PREFACE

We live in a world of many different belief systems. Whether you call them religions, faiths, cults, or a bunch of weirdoes doing their own thing, what people believe cannot be ignored. History is strewn with wars and scrapping over religion. In the past, these battles were fought on a local level. Now, with the advent of the global village, people of very different beliefs are being pressed up against each other, and the potential for major conflict is enormous.

It behooves us to know what our neighbours believe and why they believe it. Though we may never agree with them, when we know what people believe, at the very least, we can intelligently disagree without being disagreeable; and our neighbours, being understood, feel less threatened.

ALL THAT THE PROPHETS HAVE SPOKEN is about the most widely distributed and most vehemently disputed book in history—the Bible. If you are one of those who seriously wants to understand what the Old and New Testament Scriptures are all about, then this book is for you.

I've tried to keep this book as objective as possible. That is not easy. By their very nature, the writings of the prophets demand a response. Nonetheless, I've worked to explain the Scripture clearly, allowing it to speak for itself—to say what it says—but letting you draw your own conclusions. What you believe about it all is up to you.

Some may accuse me of losing objectivity because I've communicated the Scripture as fact. I've felt that it was a risk I must run, as the Word of God presents itself that way. To do otherwise would not be true to the text. In writing, I was determined to not water down the message of the prophets. The Scripture is quite direct about what it has to say and I've endeavoured to reflect that reality by shunning any sort of vagueness.

So, if you are one of those who would like to understand the message of the prophets as it was written long ago, come along and read ALL THAT THE PROPHETS HAVE SPOKEN. Their message may surprise you.

CHAPTER ONE

1 PROLOGUE

2 GETTING THINGS STRAIGHT

3 A UNIQUE BOOK

1 PROLOGUE

The year—circa 33 A.D. The sun burned midday hot. All was quiet. Even the birds refused to sing in the oppressive heat. Cleopas kicked a clod of dried mud from the dusty road, drew a large breath and blew out his cheeks in a weary sigh. Squinting into the haze, he could barely make out the next ridge. A few miles beyond lay Emmaus—home. Sunset would be on them before their arrival. Normally they would have left Jerusalem sooner—after all, seven miles is a decent walk—but the events of the morning had kept them hanging back, wishing for more concrete news.

Cleopas' heavy thoughts were jerked back to the present as his irritated companion asked a question for the second time. The two of them had been discussing the day's events—the last few years' events—until it seemed no detail could be dissected more. Cleopas was tired, but more than that, he was confused by all that had transpired in Jerusalem. These days, it seemed, life held more questions than answers.

Trudging down the hill they rounded a bend. It was then they met the stranger.

Hours later, the same day, the same night, when the two of them stood hot and sweaty before their friends back in Jerusalem—for it was there they had rushed—they couldn't give a good answer as to how the stranger had joined their twosome. At first, Cleopas thought he had stepped out of the shadow of a big boulder, but that didn't jive with his friend's explanation. The bottom line was, they just weren't sure where he had come from. Lamely, Cleopas had said that the stranger had “kinda, well just sort of—appeared.” That had been met with some derisive statements about the heat and too much sun.

But of one thing they were sure. The stranger had taken that ancient collection of books, the Bible, ...

... And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.

Luke 24:27 NIV

The stranger's explanation of the Holy Scriptures had made incredible sense. It was also accompanied with a rebuke.

*He said to them, “How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe **all that the prophets have spoken!**”*

Luke 24:25 NIV

Though Cleopas and his friend may have been slow to believe the prophets, once the stranger explained the prophet's message to them, all despondency and doubt had fled their minds. So thrilled were they by their new understanding that they had hurried all the way back to Jerusalem to tell their friends about the *Stranger*. Somehow, somewhere, they too needed to hear this message—the message they had heard on the road to Emmaus.

So just what did the *Stranger* say about the Bible—a book that has puzzled so many—that made so much sense? That is what this book is all about. And to understand it clearly, we will do what the *Stranger* did. We will go back to the beginning of the Scriptures for a careful look at *ALL THAT THE PROPHETS HAVE SPOKEN*.

2 GETTING THINGS STRAIGHT

When you stop and think about it, it's entirely reasonable, indeed, just plain logical to take a few hours out of your entire life to gain an understanding of the Word of God.

After all, the Scripture has some profound things to say about life ... and about death.

For centuries, the Bible—the collection of ancient Scriptures—has been a best seller. It has been the most read, most translated, most printed book in history. Anyone who claims to be the least bit informed should understand its basic content.

A PUZZLE

In many ways, understanding the message of the Scriptures is like building a house, or assembling a puzzle. To interpret the Word of God accurately, the many parts must be put together in the right way. To ensure this happening, we will apply four universal principles of learning that are used in school classrooms every day.

1. The Priority Principle

The first principle states that when you study a new subject, *learn the most important information first*. For example, if a builder wants to teach a person how to construct a house, he will stress the importance of laying a firm foundation, erecting solid walls and finishing with a tight roof. He will leave till later such things as choosing furnishings or paint colours.

In the same way, the Scriptures covers an incredible array of topics, but not all are of equal importance. In this book we will focus on the

most significant theme in the Word of God. Once you understand it, the Scriptures will make profound but simple sense.

2. The Storytelling Principle

This second principle is intuitive. When one reads a story, one doesn't start in chapter ten, jump to chapter six, read chapter two and conclude in chapter nine. No! We all know that to make sense of a story, one needs to *start at the beginning and move step by step through to the end*. That may seem obvious, but many people tend to read the Word of God in bits and pieces, resulting in confusion.

Since much of the Scripture is a narrative, we will simply follow its natural chronological progression. At the same time, we will apply the *Priority Principle*, covering the most important stories first, stringing them together in a row, like hanging laundry on a clothesline. Since this overview is far from comprehensive, expect some gaps in the storyline.



The gaps can be filled in later after one has the overall picture. Although this clothesline cannot include every story in the Word of God, the events covered will tie together in one continuous narrative.

3. The Mathematical Principle

The third principle takes the above progression and adds another dimension to it. *In learning, start with the simple and move to the complex*. For example, children are not taught algebra in kindergarten. Rather, they learn basic arithmetic—equations such as *one apple + one apple = two apples*. Over time they move to complicated mathematics, such as in $E=MC^2$. Teaching algebra in kindergarten would result in confused children.

It's the same way with the Scripture. If you skip the basics, your understanding will incorporate unusual ideas, resulting in a muddled message. To avoid that problem, we will progress through the story building on previously gained knowledge.

4. The Clarity Principle

The fourth principle addresses two issues. The first area has to do with the *meaning* of certain words. Over centuries word meanings can change, but the Scripture has a system that locks the meaning of a word in place. To define a word, the Scripture tells a story. Through the story we learn exactly what the word means. It cannot be changed. In this regard, the clarity principle advises us to *let the Word of God define its own words*.

The second area has to do with the study of topics. For example, normally we study sciences by subject—such as astronomy, chemistry or biology—without mixing them. For a beginner, listening to a lecture on the solar system and on the structure of the cell at the same time would be confusing. When content is new or unfamiliar, the clarity principle advises a teacher to stick to *one subject at a time*. We will be doing just that.

As we apply these four principles, we will clearly understand the Word of God—the puzzle will be correctly assembled.

3 A UNIQUE BOOK

There is no doubt about it; the Bible is a unique book. Actually, it's a collection of books, sixty-six in all. One author, in writing of the Scripture's uniqueness, put it this way: *Here is a book*:

1. *written over a 1500 year span;*
2. *written over 40 generations;*
3. *written by more than 40 authors, from every walk of life...*
 - Moses, a political leader, trained in the universities of Egypt*
 - Peter, a fisherman*
 - Amos, a herdsman*
 - Joshua, a military general*
 - Nehemiah, a cupbearer*
 - Daniel, a prime minister*
 - Luke, a doctor*
 - Solomon, a king*
 - Matthew, a tax collector*
 - Paul, a rabbi*
4. *written in different places:*
 - Moses in the wilderness*
 - Jeremiah in a dungeon*
 - Daniel on a hillside and in a palace*

- Paul inside a prison*
Luke while travelling
John on the isle of Patmos
others in the rigors of a military campaign
5. *written at different times:*
David in times of war
Solomon in times of peace
6. *written during different moods:*
some writing from the heights of joy and others from the depths of sorrow and despair
7. *written on three continents:*
Asia, Africa, and Europe
8. *written in three languages:*
Hebrew . . . , Aramaic . . . , and Greek . . .
9. *Finally, its subject matter includes hundreds of controversial topics. Yet, the biblical authors spoke with harmony and continuity from Genesis to Revelation. There is one unfolding story...¹*

This *one unfolding story* is what we want to look at—simply and without theological jargon. One unique thing about the Scripture is that it claims to be God's own words.

GOD-BREATHED

We are told in its pages that ...

All Scripture is God-breathed...²

2 Timothy 3:16 NIV

The whole concept of God *breathing out* Scripture is a study in itself. Just as when one exhales his breath, and that breath comes from his innermost being, so all Scripture is to be viewed as the very product of God himself. God and his words are inseparable, which is one reason the Scripture is referred to as *God's Word*.

PROPHETS

Highly simplified, it can be looked at this way. God told men what he wanted recorded about himself and those men wrote it down. Most of these men were called *prophets*.

In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets...

Hebrews 1:1 NIV

In ancient times, a prophet was a messenger who passed on God's words to the people. The message usually addressed aspects of daily living, but almost invariably, the prophets also included things yet to come. This foretelling of the future had a practical aspect to it. It was a potent test to determine whether a prophet was genuine.

If what a prophet proclaims in the name of the LORD does not take place or come true, that is a message the LORD has not spoken.

Deuteronomy 18:22 NIV

A prophet's message was validated by the accurate fulfillment of his prophecies. He had to be 100% correct—there was no room for error.

But a prophet who presumes to speak in my name anything I have not commanded him to say, or a prophet who speaks in the name of other gods, must be put to death.

Deuteronomy 18:20 NIV

God guided the prophets in such a way, that what they recorded was precisely what he wanted written. At the same time, God allowed the human writer to record *His Word—God's Word*—in the prophet's own unique style, but to do so without error. These men were not free to add their own private thoughts to the message; neither was it something they dreamed up on their own.

...you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along ...

2 Peter 1:20,21 NIV

God was not putting his stamp of approval on some literary effort of man. The phrase *carried along*³ is used elsewhere in the Word of God in reference to the transporting of a paralyzed man. Just as the paralyzed man could not walk by his own power, so the prophets did not write the Scripture at their own inclination.

EXTREME ACCURACY

The prophets wrote God's words on a scroll, usually an animal skin or paper made from plant fiber. The originals were called *autographs*.

Since the autographs had a limited life span, copies were made of the scrolls—copies made entirely by hand! The writers' awareness that what was being recorded was God's own *Word* resulted in the most remarkable duplication job ever done. In writing the Hebrew text ... *They used every imaginable safeguard, no matter how cumbersome or laborious, to ensure the accurate transmission of the text. The number of letters in a book was counted and its middle letter was given. Similarly with the words, and again the middle word was noted.*⁴ This was done with both the copy and the original autograph to insure that they were exactly the same.

The Dead Sea Scrolls, which were discovered in 1947, prove just how meticulous these scribes were. No significant variations were found between the Dead Sea scrolls (written 100 BC) and

manuscripts resulting from centuries of copying and recopying to a period of time 1000 years later (900 A.D.).⁵

Josephus, a Jewish historian from the first century A.D., summed it up for his people when he stated *...how firmly we have given credit to those books of our own nation, is evident by what we do; for during so many ages as have already passed, no one has been so bold as either to add anything to them, to take anything from them, or to make any change in them; but it [is] natural to all Jews ... to esteem those books ... divine.*⁶

These men were absolutely convinced that to meddle with the text was to tamper with God himself. We have ample reason to be assured that what we have today is essentially the same as what the prophets wrote.

TRANSLATIONS

The autographs were originally written in Hebrew, Aramaic or Greek. Of course, the copies were made using the same speech. Since many of us do not know these tongues, the Scripture has been translated into many other languages. These translations work from an original text that finds its roots in the ancient past.

For example, translations of the Old Testament, (the Law, Writings and the Prophets) use manuscripts that we can still read today—manuscripts dating from 100 years before the birth of Christ. Jesus quoted from a Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures that was completed at least 150 years before he lived on the earth. That translation still exists and can be read today. The New Testament (which covers the life of the Messiah) uses over 2700 Greek manuscripts that date from the second century. Any one of these ancient sources can be used to check the accuracy of what we presently read. Once again, it can be safely said that what the ancient prophets wrote is essentially the same as what we read today. The prophets themselves testified that God would preserve his written Word in such a way that it would never change.

The grass withers, the flower fades, But the Word of our God stands forever.

Isaiah 40:8 NASB

Jesus, the Messiah, also said,

"For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law [or The Holy Scriptures] until all is accomplished."

Matthew 5:18 NASB

God is great, and consistent with his character, has faithfully preserved his Word.

GOD'S WORD

Whether you remember the details about translations is not critical. The important thing to keep in mind is that the Scripture claims to be God's written Word—his message to mankind. We are told that through its pages we can become acquainted with God. Such a claim should cause even the most indifferent person to pause and consider what it has to say.

Your word, O LORD, is eternal; it stands firm... *Psalm 119:89 NIV*

NAVIGATION AIDS

For those unfamiliar with navigating their way through the Word of God, it may be helpful to know that most editions of the Scriptures are divided into sixty-six books, which are further sub-divided into chapters and verses.

The Scriptures written before the coming of the Messiah are called the *Old Testament*, with the remainder being called the *New Testament*.

Historically, the Old Testament portion was divided into three categories:

1. The Law of Moses: Depending on the person, this section is sometimes referred to as *The Torah*, *The Books of Moses*, *The Law*, *The Taurat* or *The Pentateuch*.
2. The Writings: Sometimes called the *Psalms*, the *Books of Poetry*, the *Psalms of David* or the *Zabur*.
3. The Prophets

The phrase, *the law and the prophets*, is a way of referring to the entire Old Testament, a part that comprises approximately two-thirds of the Scripture.

The remaining one-third is called the *New Testament*. It includes the accounts of the life of Jesus, best known as the *Gospel* or the *Injil*, depending on your background.

In many parts of the world, the Scripture is referred to as the *Bible*—a Latin word simply meaning *book*. The usage of the word *Bible* should not be identified with any particular belief group. In this book we will be using terms that are found in the Scripture themselves, such as *Word of God*, the *Word*, and of course, the *Scripture*.

CHAPTER TWO

1 IN THE BEGINNING GOD

2 ANGELS, HOSTS AND STARS

1 IN THE BEGINNING GOD ...

God is great! The Scripture declares it over and over again. God's greatness is embedded in the very first sentence of the Bible—in four very profound words. It says:

In the beginning God...

Genesis 1:1 NASB

There are no opening arguments for the existence of God—it is assumed he exists. God is just *there*.

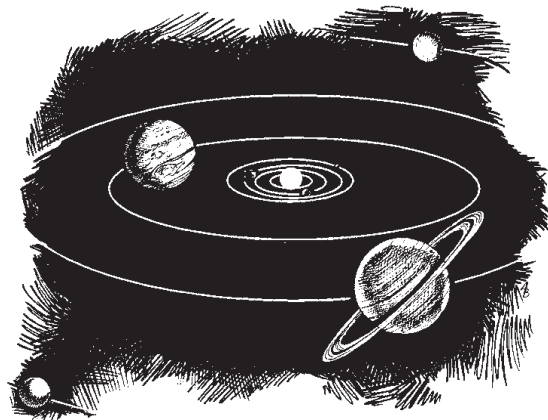
ETERNAL

God has been there all along. God existed before plants, animals and people, before the earth and the universe. He had no beginning and he will have no end. God has always been and will always be. The Scripture says that God has existed from everlasting past to everlasting future. God is eternal. Moses, one of God's prophets, penned these words:

Before the mountains were born Or You gave birth to the earth... from everlasting to everlasting, You are God. Psalm 90:2 NASB

The concept of an eternal God is difficult for us to grasp. It's so troublesome to our intellect that many people simply declare it to be *impossible*. But there are illustrations to help our comprehension. For example, we can compare eternity with the cosmos.

Most of us can fathom our solar system—the sun surrounded by orbiting planets. We know it's vast, but space probes have made the farthest distances seem reachable. But go a step further and begin to measure the universe. If we were to climb into a spaceship



and travel at the speed of light, we would circle the earth *seven times in one second!* How did you enjoy your tour? A little brisk, perhaps? Heading out into space at the same speed, we would pass the moon in two seconds, the planet Mars in four minutes, and Pluto in five hours. From there you are off into our galaxy—the MILKY WAY.

At the speed of light
you circle the
earth seven
times in one
second...



...pass the
Moon in two
seconds...

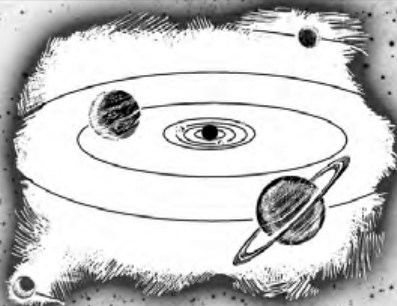


...and Pluto
in five hours.

...Mars in
four minutes...

**At the speed of light, you will reach
the closest star in 4.3 years,** which
means each second of those years
you travel 186,000 miles or 300,000
kilometres—a total distance equivalent
to 25,284,000,000,000 miles or
40,682,300,000,000 kilometres.

Our star, the sun, is near the edge of
the Milky Way Galaxy. Our entire Solar
System with its orbiting planets could
fit in this box.



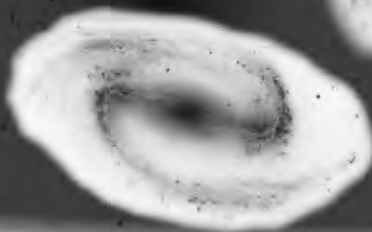
The Milky Way Galaxy

The band of stars you see in the night sky is part of a gigantic family of stars called the Milky Way Galaxy. Travelling at the speed of light, it would take 100,000 years to cross it from one side to the other. There are an estimated 100 billion galaxies in the Universe, many comprising billions of stars. Galaxies come in clusters and super-clusters. There are about twenty galaxies in our cluster, and thousands of galaxies in our super-cluster.

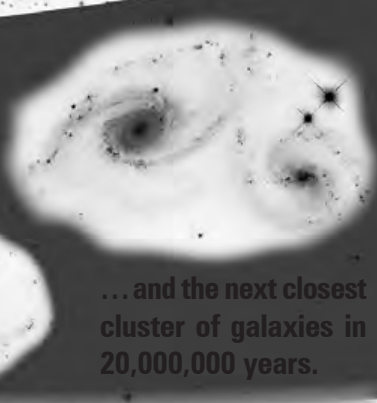
Want a star named after you?²

Based on the present population of the earth, you could have 16 *galaxies* named after you. That means *billions* of stars could carry your name!

At the speed of light, you will reach the next closest galaxy in 2,500,000 years ...



... and the next closest cluster of galaxies in 20,000,000 years.



At this point you have only begun to travel the Universe.

Yes, the thought of an eternal God is difficult to grasp, but so is the vastness of our universe. Both are mind-boggling, yet both are real. The Scripture speaks emphatically on this point. God's eternal existence is such an inherent part of his greatness that the Word of God refers to it as his name ...

... the name of the LORD, the Eternal God ... *Genesis 21:33 NIV*

MANY NAMES

God has many names or titles, each declaring something about his character—his greatness. We will look at three:

1) I AM

God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." *Exodus 3:14 NASB*

The closest one can get to an explanation of this statement is this: *I AM the One who is* or *I AM the self-existent one*. God exists by his own power. We need food, water, air, sleep, light—an endless supply of essential items to live—but not God. He requires nothing—nothing at all! He is *the self-existent one*, the *I AM*.

2) LORD (YAHWEH)

The title *I AM* is not commonly used in the Scripture because its meaning is embedded in the word *YAHWEH*. *YAHWEH* is God's personal name, just like people are named Ken, Samir, Amy or Fatima. Bible translations show reverence for this great name by translating it with the title "LORD."

LORD [YAHWEH], there is no one like you! For you are great, and your name is full of power. *Jeremiah 10:6 NLT*

The title *LORD* not only highlights God's eternal self-existent state, but also focuses our attention on his position—a position that is higher than all others. He is *LORD* of lords.

3) THE MOST HIGH

This name ties in with the name *LORD* by emphasizing God's role as a sovereign ruler.

That they may know that You alone, whose name is the LORD, are the Most High over all the earth. *Psalms 83:18 NASB*

Just as ancient empires had absolute leaders or sovereigns who reigned over their domains, so God is King of the universe, the God Most High. Even the word *God* itself emphasizes his position as supreme ruler. The word *God* means *strong one, mighty leader, supreme Deity*.

*The LORD is in his holy temple; the LORD is on his heavenly throne.
He observes the sons of men; his eyes examine them. Psalms 11:4 NIV*

God rules from Heaven. We don't know much about Heaven, but the little we do know is incredible. We will discuss this in more detail later on, but for now it is enough to know that this great God is the supreme Ruler.

ONLY ONE GOD

The term *The Most High* means that God is unquestionably unique—another aspect of his greatness. There is no one else like him. He stands alone, the sovereign LORD of all.

I am the LORD, and there is no other; There is no God besides Me.
Isaiah 45:5 NKJV

Before me no god was formed, nor shall there be any after me.
Isaiah 43:10 ESV

There is no hierarchy of gods, with one big God ruling over the others. Whether self-existent or created, no other gods exist out there.

*This is what the LORD says... "I am the first and I am the last;
apart from me there is no God."*
Isaiah 44:6 NIV

The Scripture is emphatic—there is only one God.

*There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the One who is able to
save and to destroy...*
James 4:12 NASB

A SPIRIT

Before we leave this subject, we need to understand one last thing. The Scripture tells us that God is invisible because...

God is spirit...
John 4:24 NASB

Think of a funeral where someone has died. The body was there, but where was the person? He was gone; his spirit was no longer there. When we look at someone, we only see their house, the human body—but we don't actually see the real person, the spirit.

The Scripture indicates in many different ways that man's spirit starts at a point in time and then lives on forever. But God is different; he never had a beginning and he will never end. He is the only eternal spirit living from everlasting past to everlasting future.

God: He is a **Spirit**.

He is **eternal**.

He is the **I Am**—the self-existent one.

He is the God **Most High**, the Sovereign Ruler of all.

He is the **only** God.

2 ANGELS, HOSTS AND STARS

God's first creative act is revealed throughout the pages of the Bible. It has to do with the origin of spirit beings.

NAMES

The Scripture calls spirits by many different names, some singular, some plural. We often call them angels, but the Word of God uses many terms to define them: cherubim, seraphim, angels, arch-angel, morning stars—the list goes on. Collectively they are referred to as multitudes, hosts, or stars.*

*Not to be confused with stars in the night sky.

The host of heaven worships You.

Nehemiah 9:6 NKJV

They may all have personal names but the Scripture only records a few, such as Gabriel and Michael.

INVISIBLE, INNUMERABLE

As with God, spirits are invisible. They do not have bodies of flesh and blood like you and I. Even though we can't see them, they must be everywhere. The Scripture indicates that there are ...

... thousands upon thousands of angels ...

Hebrews 12:22 NIV

The idiom used to number just those surrounding God's throne communicates an unfathomable sum.

Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands ...

Revelation 5:11 NKJV

SERVANTS

The angelic beings were created to serve God and do his pleasure. They are called *ministering spirits*.

Praise the LORD, you angels of his, you mighty ones who carry out his plans, listening for each of his commands. Yes, praise the LORD, you armies of angels who serve him and do his will!

Psalms 103:20-21 NLT

Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve ... ?

Hebrews 1:14 NIV

The word *angel* is derived from a Greek term, meaning *messenger* or *servant*. Because God created them, they belonged to him and were to do whatever God asked them to do.

CREATOR-OWNER

The concept of the creator also being the owner has lost its meaning in our modern society. I remember walking through a tribal village in Papua New Guinea. Every item I asked about—*“Whose paddle is this? Whose canoe is that?”*—elicited a response that designated an owner. Upon inquiring how they knew who the owner was, they looked at me incredulously. *“Well, the owner is the one who made it!”* The creator-owner connection was very strong. When I questioned them if it would be all right for me to break a paddle, they were just as emphatic that it would not be a good idea—unless I wanted to have trouble with the creator-owner. Taking it a step further, I asked if it was acceptable for the owner to break it. They gave a tribal shrug and a nod: *“It’s okay for the owner to break it—he made it.”*

God created the angels and so it was not out of place for them to be considered his possessions. And since they belonged to him, they were to do his bidding—as his servants, as his messengers. This was not some ancient form of servitude. There are no parallels here to forced bondage. The angels could have had no better Creator-Owner.

EXTRAORDINARY INTELLECT AND POWER

To carry out his directives, God created the angels with great intellect and power. Some of these angelic beings had more capability than others. The angels were created perfect, without any evil. But they weren’t robots either; they had their own will which gave them the ability to choose.³

SIMILAR BUT DIFFERENT

Angels share some similarities with man, though they are greater than man in intelligence and power. The Scripture says that God made man ...

... a little lower than the angels ...

Psalms 8:5 NKJV

Though similar, angels are distinct from man. Angels never die.⁴ They neither marry nor reproduce.⁵ Though normally unseen, on certain assignments they make themselves visible. When they talk to man, the language they use is understandable to the hearer.

THE ANOINTED CHERUB

The most powerful, the most intelligent and the most beautiful spirit ever created was a cherub. His name is translated as *Lucifer*,⁶ which means *shining one*.

... *O Lucifer, son of the morning!*

Isaiah 14:12 NKJV

Lucifer was referred to as an anointed cherub. The meaning of the word *anointed* has its origins in the ancient rite of pouring oil on someone or something to set it apart to God for a special task. This act was considered sacred and not to be taken lightly.

You were an anointed guardian cherub. I placed you; you were on the holy mountain of God ... You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created ...

Ezekiel 28:14-15 ESV

It seems that Lucifer's job kept him in the presence of God at all times. Perhaps, he somehow represented the rest of the angels and led them in their worship and praise of their Creator-Owner. We will learn more about this anointed cherub later.

WORSHIP

The word *worship* means *to declare a person's worth*. The Scripture says that all the angels worshiped God.

You preserve them all, and the angels of heaven worship you.

Nehemiah 9:6 NLT

Since God is the Sovereign King, he rightly deserves to have his worth declared. By way of contrast, if I boast about a friend's deeds, someone could call into question whether my friend deserves as much praise as I have given him. But the Scripture says that this great God is worthy of all praise. It is impossible to praise him too much.

You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; For You created all things, And by Your will they exist and were created.

Revelation 4:11 NKJV

...you are great and do wondrous things; you alone are God.

Psalms 86:10 ESV

ALL THE ANGELS WATCH CREATION

God's creative act had begun. Now, as the entire angelic host watched and rejoiced, God fashioned his next great work of art.

God's words to the prophet Job remind us of our Creator's incomparable greatness.

"Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Tell me, if you know so much. Who determined its dimensions and stretched out the surveying line? What supports its foundations, and who laid its cornerstone as the morning stars [or spirit beings] sang together and all the angels shouted for joy?"

Job 38:4-7 NLT