

THE STRANGER

on the Road to Emmaus

John R. Cross



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THE STRANGER ON THE ROAD TO EMMAUS

Edition 5a

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*To my father and mother, both of whom
taught me that the Bible has a message that
cannot be ignored.*

*And to my wife and family, who have been
constant in their support and encouragement.*

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Centuries ago, a king known for his wisdom, wrote...

Is there anything of which one can say, "Look! This is something new"?

Certainly, as it relates to the Bible, one cannot take credit for original thoughts. I readily admit that I have included outlines and ideas that have been plundered from a thousand sources, both ancient and modern. Many of them are such common knowledge, no one would dare claim them as their own. Where sources were known, I have given credit in the end notes.

Of those I can identify, I especially want to thank Trevor McIlwain, who, in using a broad overview of Scripture, put the message in perspective. His approach to teaching has had a profound influence on my own, and for that I am deeply indebted to him.

In the same vein, I wish to thank Nancy Everson for her input and encouragement; my brother David Cross and my wife Janice for help in hashing out subject details and flow; Dr. Carl Wieland for his input on science-related areas; Paul and Kathleen Humphreys, Barney and Mary Ann Iott, John Krajec, and Russ and Karyn Smyth, for their faithful support; Rachel Bader for her hard work on formatting, and the artists: Don Dolton, Adah Biggs, Ian Mastin, and one who preferred anonymity. I also want to thank Marlin Redpath and Jim McCulley for their part in creating the cover.

This fifth edition has reaped the benefit of years of input, with scores of folk making helpful suggestions. Of those listed, and the list is far from complete, some zeroed in on content, simplicity, or grammar, while others helped with the art or administration. To all involved, my many and sincere thanks.

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To maintain ease in reading and remain consistent with the Bible 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 Bible portions are italicized and indented. Where Scripture text is boldfaced, an emphasis has been added. Square parentheses in the Scripture text indicate additions for explanatory purposes.

“The Stranger on the Road to Emmaus” introduces the reader to nine different translations of the Bible. None of the translations differ on content communicated nor affect the accompanying commentary.

PREFACE

It's not easy to write an objective book about the Bible. By its very nature, the Bible demands a response. Unfortunately, people's responses have been determined under less than ideal settings.

Many of us have experienced religious zealots, who cram shattered fragments of Bible down our throats with the predictable effect of stimulating the spiritual gag reflex. This has left people inoculated with just enough Bible information to create misunderstanding, but not enough to generate true comprehension. On such a basis, many have chosen to *reject* the book rather than *accept* it. Most try a neutral platform—they avoid it altogether.

With the above in mind, I've endeavored to stay away from that *preachy* tone that sets one's teeth on edge. I've worked to explain the Bible clearly, allowing it to speak for itself—to say what it says—letting you draw your own conclusions. Some may accuse me of losing objectivity because I've communicated the Bible as being true. I felt that was a risk I must run, as the Bible itself makes that claim. To do otherwise would not be true to the text. Indeed, I've tried to capture the spirit of the narrative to make it interesting as well as clear.

Secondly, I was determined to not *water down* the message. Where the Bible demands a choice, I've tried to illustrate that choice clearly. The Bible is quite direct about what it has to say and I've endeavored to reflect that reality by shunning any sort of vagueness. In keeping with this, I've avoided the confusion of being politically-correct at the expense of the message. Initially, I was perplexed at knowing how to express some words in our gender-neutral society. I eventually gave up on *humankind* and went with the traditional *mankind*.

As with any book, some may find it easy in the first few pages to decide that "it's not for me." I wish to challenge those who are inclined that way, to read the entire volume before deciding what to believe about the Bible. There was a time when I too would have thrown the Bible out with the proverbial bath water—but then I was challenged to pause and look again. I'm still looking, and continue to marvel over this *Book of all books*. There is a good chance you will too.

About the Bible:

...And let the one who hears say: "Come!" And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wants it take the water of life free of charge.

I testify to the one who hears the words of the prophecy contained in this book: If anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book.

And if anyone takes away from the words of this book of prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city that are described in this book. *Revelation 22:17–19 NET*

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. Beyond that lay Emmaus—home. Sunset would be on them before their arrival. Normally they would have left Jerusalem sooner—after all, it was a three hour walk—but the events of the morning had kept them hanging back, wishing for more concrete news. Emmaus wasn't much of a town, but today it seemed very attractive. Any place but Jerusalem, with its yelling rabble, its Roman cohorts, its governor—Pontius Pilate.

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 starting at the very beginning, over the next several hours, had explained it in a way that made incredible sense. The stranger's message had driven all despondency and doubt from 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—start at the very beginning.

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

For centuries it has been a best seller. Anyone who claims to be the least bit informed should understand its basic content. Unfortunately, the Bible has fallen into disrepute, not because of what it says, but because some very prominent men and women, who claim to follow the Bible, have made some of the worst choices in life.

But the Bible has not changed. And despite what the hypocrites or critics say, it does make good sense to know it for **yourself**—

... for **your own** peace of mind,

... for **your own** life and death's sake.

A PUZZLE

In many ways, the Bible is like a puzzle. By this, I do not mean that its message is hidden, but rather that to understand the Bible accurately, the biblical pieces must be put together in the right way. We can do this by applying four basic principles of learning.

1. The Storytelling Principle

The first principle is especially important when learning history or reading a story. Simply put, it's this—*start at the beginning and move sequentially through to the end*. That may seem obvious, but many people tend to read the Bible in bits and pieces, never taking the time to tie them together.

In this book we will cover key events, stringing them together in logical sequence—like hanging laundry on a clothesline. Since this overview is far from comprehensive, expect some gaps on the line. If you wish, the gaps can be filled in later, after you have the overall picture.

Although this clothesline cannot include every story, the events we do study will tie together in one continuous message. If you are a typical reader, by the time you have finished this book, the Bible will make remarkable sense. Whether you believe it or not is entirely up to you. I sincerely hope you will, but that is your choice. My job is to help you understand it clearly.



2. The Mathematical Principle

The second principle is one we use all the time. To learn any new concept, it helps to build from the foundation up—to *move from the known to the unknown*. You don't start children in kindergarten by teaching them algebra. Rather, you begin with basic numbers, and *move from the simple to the complex*. If you skip the fundamentals, even rudimentary algebra will be beyond your grasp.

It's the same way with the Bible. If you neglect the foundations, your biblical understanding will incorporate some unusual ideas, resulting in the message being confused—the puzzle will present the wrong image. In this book we begin with the basics, and progress through each chapter, building on previously gained knowledge.

3. The Priority Principle

This third principle—*major on the majors*—should be applied to any learning situation where the content is unfamiliar to you. The idea is to learn the most important points first.

The Bible covers an incredible array of topics, but not all are of equal importance. In this book we will focus on one major theme—the most significant theme in the Bible. Once you understand it, the Bible will make profound but simple sense.

4. The Clarity Principle

The fourth principle is of critical importance. *Don't mix your subject matter—stick to one theme at a time.*

The Bible addresses many different issues. It might be compared to a cookbook with its many diverse recipes. Traditionally, the Bible

has been broken down into topics, such as God, Angels, Man, and Prophecy. The intention was to create better understanding, but one needs to be careful. Some people, finding certain similarities between topics, attempt to combine the ideas, often resulting in a distortion of the original meaning.

It's like jumping from a pickle recipe to a pie recipe because they both share the initial letter "p." If you begin by making pickles and end with the pie recipe, you will bake the pickles until they are well-browned! Both may start with the letter "p," but combined they make bizarre food!

The mixing of various topics is one of the contributing causes as to why we find so many different church groups, religions and cults, that to varying degrees hold the Bible as their book. The pie has been mixed with the pickles. The puzzle has a jumbled picture. In some cases, the confusion is minor. In other situations, the mix-up has had catastrophic results.

In the Bible, if you unintentionally leap from one topic to another, the end result will be confusion—your puzzle will be disjointed. To avoid this biblical chaos, we will stick to one *theme*.

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 Bible'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—including kings, peasants, philosophers, fishermen, poets, statesmen, scholars, etc.:*

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 traveling
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. By far the most unique thing about the Bible is that it claims to be God’s own words.

GOD-BREATHED

Often referred to as Scripture, the Bible states 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 ultimately all Scripture is to be viewed as the very product of God himself. God and his words are inseparable, which is one reason the Bible is often referred to as *God’s Word*.

Highly simplified, it can be looked at this way. God told men what he wanted recorded 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

Today, we think of prophets as those who foretell the future, but in Bible times a prophet was a messenger who passed on God’s

words to the people. Sometimes the message had to do with future events, but more often than not, it was concerned with daily living.

God guided the prophets in such a way that what was 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.

...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

The phrase *carried along* is used elsewhere in the Bible in reference to the transporting of a paralyzed man.³ Just as a disabled man could not walk by his own power, so the prophets did not write the Scripture at their own inclination. The Bible is clear on this point—it was *God’s* message from beginning to end.

EXTREME ACCURACY

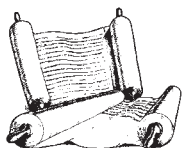
The prophets wrote God’s words on a scroll, usually an animal skin or paper made from plant fiber. The originals were called *autographs*. Since the autographs had a limited life span, copies were made of the scrolls. But the writers’ awareness that what was being recorded was God’s own Word resulted in one of the most remarkable reproduction jobs 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.

These scribes were so accurate in their transcription that, when the Dead Sea Scrolls were found (written in 100 BC), and

Dead Sea Scrolls



100 BC

essentially no change
in 1000 years
of making copies

Previous Oldest Manuscript



900 AD

compared with manuscripts resulting from centuries of copying and recopying to a period of time 1000 years later (900 AD), there were no significant differences in the text.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 becomes 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. We have ample reason to be assured that what we have today is essentially the same as what the prophets wrote.

Truly, the Bible is a unique book by any standard. No wonder the Bible is ... *the most quoted, the most published, the most translated and the most influential book in the history of mankind.*⁷

OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT

As we begin to navigate through the Bible, it may be helpful to know that the Scriptures are divided into two major sections—the *Old Testament* and *New Testament*. Historically, the *Old Testament* portion was further sub-divided into another two⁸ categories:

1. the Law of Moses (sometimes referred to as *The Torah, The Books of Moses, or The Law*)
2. the Prophets (Later on, a third section called *the Writings*, was sub-divided out of *the Prophets*.)

In the Scriptures, the phrase, *the law and the prophets*, is a way of referring to the entire Old Testament—a part which comprises approximately two-thirds of the Bible. The remaining one-third is referred to as the New Testament.

GOD'S WORD

Remembering the biblical categories is not critical. The important thing to keep in mind is that the Bible claims to be God's 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, LORD, is eternal; it stands firm ...

Psalms 119:89 NIV

CHAPTER TWO

1 IN THE BEGINNING GOD

2 ANGELS, HOSTS AND STARS

1 IN THE BEGINNING GOD...

The Bible starts with four very profound words:

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

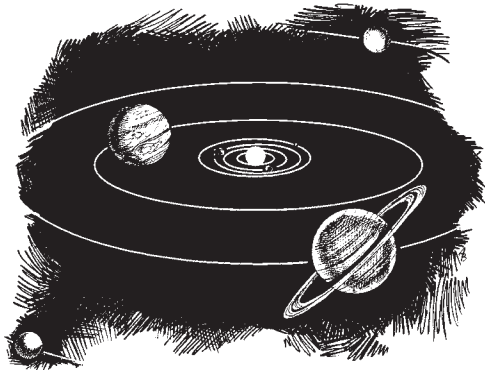
God has been *there* all along. God existed before plants, animals and people, before the earth and the universe. He had no beginning and he will have no end. God has always been and will always be. The Bible says that God has existed from everlasting past to everlasting future. God is eternal.

Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the earth ... from everlasting to everlasting you are God.

Psalm 90:2 NIV

The concept of an eternal God is difficult for us to grasp. It's so troublesome to our intellect that often we file it in our cranium under the label *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 ...**



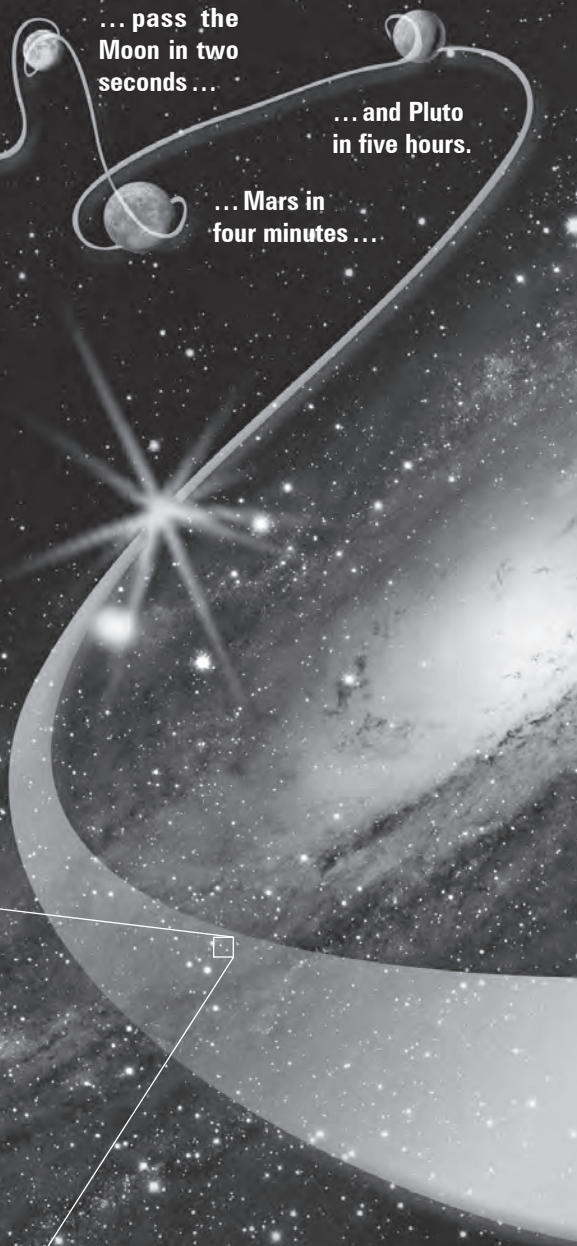
**... pass the
Moon in two
seconds ...**



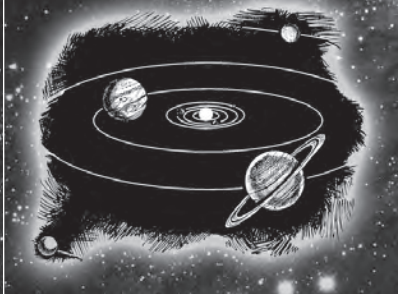
**... Mars in
four minutes ...**

**... and Pluto
in five hours.**

**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
kilometers—a total distance equivalent
to 25,284,000,000,000 miles or
40,682,300,000,000 kilometers.**



**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.**



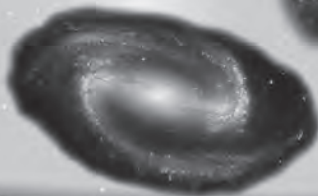
The Milky Way Galaxy¹

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.

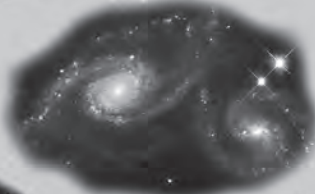
Want a star named after you?²

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 2,000,000 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 Bible speaks emphatically on this point. God's eternal existence is such an inherent part of his nature that the Bible refers to it as his name ...

... *the name of the LORD, the everlasting God.* Genesis 21:33 KJV

MANY NAMES

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

1) I AM

God said ... "I AM WHO I AM." And he said, "Say this ... 'I AM has sent me to you.'" Exodus 3:14 ESV

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) LORD³

The title *I Am* is not commonly used in the Bible because its meaning is embedded in the word LORD.

No one is like you, O LORD; you are great, and your name is mighty in power. Jeremiah 10:6 NIV

The name 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.

Let them know that you, whose name is the LORD—that you alone are the Most High over all the earth. Psalm 83:18 NIV

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 idea of God as king may conjure up an image of an old man seated on a gold throne floating somewhere in the stratosphere. The Scripture nowhere illustrates God as an old man, but it does refer to God's throne—not ensconced in a cloud—but rather in a *holy temple* situated in Heaven.

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

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

ONLY ONE GOD

The term *The Most High* speaks of God's unique place in the universe. There is no one else like him. He stands alone, the Sovereign LORD of all.

I am the LORD, and there is no other; Besides Me there is no God.
Isaiah 45:5 NASB

Before Me there was no God formed, And there will be none after Me.
Isaiah 43:10 NASB

There is no hierarchy of gods, with one big God ruling the roost as it were. No other gods exist *out there*, whether self-existent or created.

This is what the LORD says ... "I am the First and the Last; there is no other God."
Isaiah 44:6 NLT

The Bible is emphatic—there is only one God.

A SPIRIT

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

God is spirit ...
John 4:24 NASB

You can't see a spirit because it doesn't have flesh and bones like we do. But just because you cannot see somebody doesn't make that person any less real.

Think of a funeral of a friend who has died. If the casket was open, you may have looked at the body. The body was there, but where was your friend? He was gone; your friend's spirit was no longer present. When we look at someone, we only see

their house, the human body—we don't actually see the real person, the spirit.

We will see that the Bible 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**.

And that's the way it was—*In the beginning ...*

2 ANGELS, HOSTS AND STARS

God's first creative act is scattered across the pages of the Bible. You can pull together enough information to answer rudimentary questions, but that is where it stops. The Bible is not written to satisfy man's endless curiosity. It gives basic information on some events, but when it comes to further details, the pages fall silent. This is precisely the case with the subject of spirit beings.

NAMES

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

The host of heaven worships You. Nehemiah 9:6 NKJV

They may all have personal names but only a few are mentioned, such as Gabriel and Michael.

*Not to be confused with stars in the night sky. Context reveals which meaning is in question.

INVISIBLE, INNUMERABLE

As with God, spirits are invisible, having no bodies of flesh and blood like you and me. Even though we can't see them, they must be everywhere. The Bible 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 heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne ...
Revelation 5:11 NIV

SERVANTS

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

Praise the LORD, you his angels, you mighty ones who do his bidding, who obey his word. Praise the LORD, all his heavenly hosts, you his servants who do his will. Psalm 103:20–21 NIV
Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve ...?
Hebrews 1:14 NIV

The word *angel* is derived from the 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 strength in our industrialized, money-driven economy.

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 and messengers. This was not some ancient form of servitude. There are no parallels here to forced bondage. The angels could not have had a 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 as perfect beings, without any evil. But they weren't robots either; they each had a will which gave them the ability to choose.⁴

SIMILAR BUT DIFFERENT

Angels share some similarities with man, though man is not nearly as powerful or intelligent. The Bible says that God made man ...

... a little lower than the angels... *Psalm 8:5 NKJV*

Though similar, angels are distinct from man. They never die.⁵ They neither marry nor reproduce.⁶ 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 in Latin as *Lucifer*,⁷ 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 anointed as a guardian cherub, for so I ordained you.
You were on the holy mount of God... You were blameless in
your ways from the day you were created... Ezekiel 28:14-15 NIV*

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 worship and praise of their Creator-Owner. We will learn more about this anointed cherub later.

WORSHIP

The word *worship* comes from an old English word meaning *to declare a person's worth*. The Bible says that all the angels worshipped God.

*You impart life to them all, and the multitudes of heaven
worship you. Nehemiah 9:6 NET*

That is only fitting since God is the Sovereign King and, as such, rightly deserves to have his worth declared. By way of contrast, if I am boasting about a friend's deeds, someone else could call into question whether my friend deserves as much praise as I'm giving. But the Bible says God is worthy of all praise.

"You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, since you created all things, and because of your will they existed and were created!"

Revelation 4:11 NET

For you are great and do amazing things. You alone are God.

Psalms 86:10 NET

ALL THE ANGELS WATCH CREATION

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

His canvas: the universe

His subject: the whole earth.

"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