

**IGT**, 10905 Hornby Street, Fort Worth, Texas 76108, U.S.A.  
A non-profit publication supported by churches of Christ and individual Christians in the U.S.A. Overseen by the elders of West Freeway Church of Christ in Fort Worth. Most Bible quotations are from the *New King James Version*. Brackets contain notes by the author or editor.

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Distributed in India by T. Jalam and S. Soniya

**INTERNATIONAL**



**GOSPEL TEACHER**

**Publication Number: M3002**

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*Romans 16:16 says, "...The churches of Christ greet you."*  
*Our goal is to glorify God through Christ by being His church and His people, "Christians" only (Acts 11:26).*  
*We invite you to make that your goal, too.*

## Jesus and Thomas

### Too Good to be True?

Matt. 28, Mk.16, Lk. 24, Jn. 20 & 21

Has something wonderful ever happened to you — something *so good* that you had trouble believing it was true? Let us consider the apostles of Jesus around the time of His rising from the dead.

The Jews had been waiting for centuries for fulfillment of the prophecies of a Messiah — a savior — to rescue their nation. They were looking for a political king, though, not a spiritual one who would rescue their souls. Jesus had come to earth, claiming to be the promised deliverer. They were skeptical, but He had backed up His claims with miracles, teachings, and fulfilled prophecies. Finally, many of the Jews believed. Then, before He could be made king, He was condemned as a criminal and executed! What a devastating event in the minds of His followers! Even the eleven remaining apostles, who had been with Him daily for about three years, did not understand that His kingdom was not of this world. They were gathered together mourning His death when the resurrection occurred.

On the day of Jesus' resurrection, He appeared first to Mary Magdalene. She went to the brethren as Jesus instructed, told them she had seen Him, and what He had said to her. But when they had heard that He was alive, what was their response? They did not believe it.

Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women who went to the tomb with them also saw and spoke with Jesus. Jesus told them to go tell His disciples to go into Galilee, and there they would also see Him. When the women did as He said, how did the disciples respond? They thought it was foolish talk, and they did not believe. Did they bother to go into Galilee to see for themselves? *No*.

The same day, two of the followers of Jesus were walking to Emmaus, about 7 miles (or 11 kilometers) from Jerusalem. They were discussing the recent events of the crucifixion and the women's accounts of seeing Jesus alive, when Jesus came near and walked with them. They were kept from realizing who He was. He asked them to tell Him what they were conversing about, and thinking He had not heard the news, they explained. Jesus reminded them of the prophecies, and He reasoned with them about their fulfillment as they continued toward the town. It was almost evening when they reached Emmaus, so the men invited Jesus to stay with them. When they sat down to eat their meal, Jesus was revealed to them, then He vanished out of sight. They were so excited that they went right back to Jerusalem (7 miles, remember) to tell the disciples what had happened. But did the disciples believe these two men? *No*.

So *why* do we only label *Thomas* as "doubting"? Did the other ten apostles believe Jesus had risen before they saw Him with their own eyes? *No*.

On the evening of resurrection day Thomas was not with the other ten apostles. I have often wondered where he was. Scripture says the ten were shut inside for fear of the Jews. Was Thomas not afraid? Was he sent out on an errand? We do not know, of course, but it makes me wonder.

While the ten (not including Thomas) were eating, and disbelieving the claims of the men and women who had seen Jesus, He suddenly appeared in the room with them and scolded them for their unwillingness to believe. Even after inviting them to touch His hands and feet to prove He was risen bodily, and not just a spirit, *"they still did not believe for joy, and marveled."* He actually had to let them watch Him eat, and explain the scripture prophecies — AGAIN — before they finally believed!

When Thomas, the twin (I wonder about his twin, too) came back, the others told him about Jesus' visit. But he would not more accept their word for Jesus' resurrection than the ten would accept the word of the other witnesses. He said he would not believe until he saw Jesus and touched the wounds himself.

About a week later, he had his opportunity to do that. The disciples — including Thomas — were in a room when Jesus again appeared suddenly. Again He said, *"Peace to you."* Then He immediately addressed Thomas, answering his need. He told him to touch the wounds in His hands and side, then said, *"Do not be unbelieving, but believing."* Finally, Thomas acknowledged the risen savior, saying, *"My Lord and my God!"*

Jesus said to him, *"Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."* That's me, that's me! Jesus just gave me a blessing! I want to congratulate myself!

But why should I be proud? After all, it was my sins that caused Jesus' extreme suffering and death. Should I not rather be humbled, that in spite of my unworthiness, He chose to take my punishment? Rather than being proud of myself — proud that I believe without seeing Jesus — I feel ashamed. Then I feel so grateful that because of Jesus' death, God has given me mercy. I thank God He has not given me what I deserve. Instead, He has given me life eternal!

When I remember Jesus' death and resurrection, I go through many emotions. Shame that my behavior caused the sacrifice of God's only begotten Son. Sadness that Jesus suffered punishment for things I have done. Joy for God's grace and mercy. A sense of how much God values my soul. Thankfulness for the future I expect to receive in heaven. Determination to do a better job of showing my love for God and man. Hope that my influence will only be for good, and will help others to look to Jesus for salvation and eternal life.

May God help us all to teach and lead souls to forgiveness and eternal life. - Susie Frederick

*"...let him who thirsts come.  
Whoever desires, let him  
take the water of life freely."*

Revelation 22:17



Yosemite Falls Photo:Katie Schirato Designer:God

# Keeping His Word

"Jesus answered and said to him, 'If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father's who sent Me.'"— Jn. 14:23-24

People tend to retain things they consider special. Children often enjoy keeping things like flowers, beads, strings, buttons, pretty rocks, and shiny objects. Such things give them a sense of wonderment, and they consider such things precious. Most people have special or sentimental items that they treasure. Nearly everyone has people whom he or she loves. Actually, we should have a noble love toward all people (Matt. 22:37-40). Jesus gave us many precious things that people overlook. One of His most precious gifts is His word.

**His Word Gives Us Life.** From the above quoted scriptures, Jesus referred to His communication with us as both "word" and "words." Everyone needs Jesus (Jn. 14:6). He came to bring us life (Jn. 10:10). We find His words in the New Testament (Jn. 14:26; 1 Cor. 2:9-13; 2 Pet. 1:3; 3:2). They show us the way to eternal life (Jn. 5:24; 6:68-69; Rom. 1:16; 2 Tim. 1:10). We must believe that He is the Son of God (Jn. 3:16). We must repent of sin (Acts 17:30). We must confess our belief (faith) (Rom. 10:9-10). We must be baptized, immersed, in water in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit for the forgiveness of sins (Matt. 28:18-20; Col. 2:11-15). We also need to continue in faith (Gal. 5:22). Jesus' word is the revelation of His life, His gospel (good news), including all commands and instructions. Since His word has the power to give us life, we should study it carefully, teach it accurately, and live it faithfully.

## Does Psalm 51:5 Say Babies are Born Guilty?

In Psalm 51:5, David writes, "Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me." Is he teaching that all babies are born guilty of sin? First, notice that he is not talking about *all* babies. He says, "I" and "me."

David is using a *tool of language* called "hyperbole" (pronounced "high-per-buh-lee"). It is from "hyper" (over or beyond) and "ballein" (to throw). Hyperbole is *exaggeration for emphasis*. It is a statement which *goes far beyond the facts* to draw attention to *the real message*.

Hyperbole is often used today. For example, a mother tells her son, "I've told you a million times not to hit your sister!" She is *greatly over-stating* the facts, but she is not deceiving anyone. The *true message* is clear and emphatic.

Luke uses hyperbole: "For all the Athenians and the foreigners who were there spent their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing" (Acts 17:21). Does that mean *no one* in Athens cooked, ate, slept, bought vegetables, or did any other work? Certainly not. Luke uses hyperbole to emphasize the fact that people in Athens devoted *an extreme amount of time* to telling and hearing new things.

We apologize for the long delay since our last issue of *IGT*. We've been working on many new ideas and changes — and we're still trying others. Our new website is finally ready! We invite you to visit [gospelteacher.org](http://gospelteacher.org). Then, on the *Contact* page, **sign up to receive IGT by e-mail**. Due to the rising cost, we are no longer shipping *bundles* to foreign addresses. We encourage you to **forward** this to others, or **print** and share it.

**His Word is Eternal.** We keep the word of Jesus because it does more than introduce us to spiritual life. It helps us to grow in Christ and practice godliness (1 Tim. 2:1-4; 4:6-8; 6:3-6; Titus 2:12). His word is so important that it will last forever. "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away" (Matt. 24:35). His word was not just for the time when Jesus was on the earth. It does not change with time. It is the same now and forever (Jude 3). We must allow the words of Jesus to measure and correct us, because they will one day judge us (Jn. 12:48-50; Acts 17:31; Rom. 2:16; Eph. 5:6; Heb. 2:2-3). We should value and keep His word, because it is powerful and eternal.

**His Word is Retainable.** When things are very precious to us, we keep them foremost in our minds and hearts. Since the word of Jesus is so valuable, we should retain it and practice it as a very precious item. We are told to keep His words, His commandments, so that we will never see spiritual death (Jn. 8:51). Keeping His words means continual observance and obedience to the words of Christ and the apostles (Jn. 14:23-24; 16:12-13; 2 Pet. 1:20-21). His word is the sword of the Holy Spirit (Heb. 4:12-16; Eph. 6:17). We must "*hold fast our confession*" (Heb. 4:14), which means being faithful, or keeping His word. We must be doers of the word and not hearers only, because doing His word is an inseparable part of remaining faithful (Jas. 1:21-25). The basic truths of His word are easy for normal people to understand (Matt. 11:25; Mk. 12:37; 1 Cor. 1:18; Jn. 8:31-32). When His word is important to us, we keep it prominent in our thoughts. Then our daily actions show its influence in our lives (Eccl. 12:13; Matt. 7:21, 24-27; Mk. 12:29-31; Acts 5:29; 2 Pet. 3:10-11; 1 Jn. 2:5).

The word of Christ is very precious because it gives spiritual life, which everyone needs. His word is timeless and eternal. His word is understandable and is able to transform our lives.

"Most assuredly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he shall never see death" (Jn. 8:51).

### The Marvelous Providence of God!

The blessings which God provides are for us and for our human needs in this world. From us, by making about the providence of God, we can gain our appreciation for God and His love for us.

**TWO KINDS OF PROVIDENCE.**  
The Bible shows us that God provides many blessings for all people — and then He calls many more blessings on those who love Him and obey Him. Some people call them the "blessings of the world" and the "blessings of God." The words "blessings" and "providence" are used interchangeably and mean the same thing. They are the goodness and mercy of God's blessings, but they are not the same thing.

As we consider the blessings provided by God, we must remember that all things come from His hand — the true and living God. "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights." (Jas. 1:17).

**ISAC'S PROVIDENCE'S Blessings which God Provides for ALL PEOPLE**

There are many blessings which God provides for everyone. For example, He is the one who supplies food and shelter and life. "See, I have given you every herb that yields seed and which is on the face of all the earth, and every tree whose fruit yields seed and which is on the face of the earth. I have given them to you and the beast of the earth. I have given them to you and the beast of the earth. I have given them to you and the beast of the earth. I have given them to you and the beast of the earth. They are mine and your food. Every moving thing that lives..." (Gen. 1:29-30).



### Print These Free!

We invite you to **print** and **forward** these from the **Tracts** section of [gospelteacher.org](http://gospelteacher.org):

**The above TRACT**  
**The Marvelous Providence of God!**

**This issue of IGT**  
**M3002** with  
**Extra Pages**

**Large Color Photo**  
Yosemite Falls

- Royce Frederick

## EXTRA PAGES for E-MAIL RECIPIENTS

On this page and the next, we've included "An Overview of the Bible" as a tool for personal study and lesson preparation.

It is designed to fit inside a Bible for handy reference.

This size and a larger, notebook-size version are available on our website, [gospelteacher.org](http://gospelteacher.org), under *Charts*.

On the last *EXTRA* page of this issue is a large version of the front page photo: *Yosemite Falls and Rev. 22:17 — The beauty of God's grace in creation and salvation!*

### An OVERVIEW of the BIBLE

God used more than 40 men to write the Bible during about 1600 years. This *one* book is a marvelous "library" of 66 unified books. It is a book of *historical events*, not myths. A study of these events and books in "chronological order" (time order) can be helpful. However, a *perfect* time order is not possible, because many of the same events are recorded in more than one book.

The dates in this overview were calculated by *humans*, who often disagree. The purpose of the dates is to provide insights into the *approximate times* of the books and events.

### OLD TESTAMENT

A "testament" is a covenant, contract, or will. Genesis through Malachi (39 books) is called "the Old Testament," because it focuses on God's Covenant with the nation of Israel.

**Genesis 1-11.** Creation of the world in six days, sin, flood, ancestry of Abram. **Job.** Suffering of righteous Job; lived about 200 years (see 1:1-5; 42:12-17; Gen. 11:18-32).

**Genesis 12-50.** God calls Abram (1921 B.C.), promises to make his descendants a great nation; Isaac; Jacob ("Israel") and 12 sons; Joseph; Israel enters Egypt. **Exodus.** Israel multiplies; slavery; Moses leads them out of Egypt; Old Covenant given (1491 B.C.).

**Leviticus.** Laws for priests (from tribe of Levi) and for Israel. **Numbers.** Counting the people; wandering 40 years. **Deuteronomy.**

Review of wandering; review of the law; Moses' farewell. **Joshua.** Conquest of Canaan (1451-1427 B.C.). **Judges.** Cycles of prosperity, sin, oppression, deliverance by "judges," new prosperity (1427-1120 B.C.). **Ruth.**

David's great-grandmother; during judges (1322-1312 B.C.). **1 Samuel.** Eli and Samuel (judges); King Saul (reigned 1095-1055 B.C.); anointing of David; Samuel dies. **2 Samuel.**

King David (reigned 1055-1015 B.C.). **1 Kings 1-2.** David dies. **1 Chronicles.** Genealogy from Adam; Saul dies; David reigns, dies.

**Psalms.** Songs by David and others. **1 Kings 3-11.** King Solomon (reigned 1015-975 B.C.). **2 Chronicles 1-9.** Solomon's reign.

**Proverbs.** Wisdom from Solomon and others. **Ecclesiastes.** Solomon shows life is vain

without serving God. **Song of Solomon.** A love song. **1 Kings 12-2 Kings 14.** Kingdom divides (975 B.C.): Northern Kingdom (10 tribes, "Israel"); Southern Kingdom (2 tribes, "Judah"). Many kings, to mention of Jonah (2 Kgs. 14:25). **Jonah.** (860 B.C.). **Joel.** (800 B.C.). **2 Chronicles 10-26.** Kingdom divides; Uzziah dies. **Amos.** (787 B.C.); in Uzziah's reign. **Hosea.** (785-725 B.C.); in reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. **Isaiah.** (760-698 B.C.); in reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. **Micah.** (750-710 B.C.); in reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. **2 Kings 15-23.** Southern Kings Uzziah ("Azariah"), Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. Northern Kingdom falls, taken into captivity by Assyrian Empire (721 B.C.); Judah's last kings before captivities. **2 Chronicles 27-35.** Reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah, and Judah's last kings before captivities. **Nahum.** (713 B.C.); foretells fall of Nineveh (Assyria's capital). **Zephaniah.** (630 B.C.); in Josiah's reign. **Habbakuk.** (626 B.C.). **Jeremiah.** (629-586 B.C.); foretells New Covenant; Jerusalem falls. **2 Kings 24-25.** Babylonian Empire takes captives from Judah (606 and 597 B.C.). Jerusalem falls, temple destroyed, more captives taken (586 B.C.). **2 Chronicles 36.** Jerusalem falls; mentions the start of returns. **Lamentations.** Jeremiah "laments" (weeps) over siege and fall of Jerusalem. **Obadiah.** (586 B.C.); foretells return of captives. **Ezekiel.** Early captive (593-574 B.C.); foretells return of captives and rebuilding the temple. **Daniel.** Early captive (606-534 B.C.); foretells of God's everlasting kingdom. **Ezra 1-4.** First group returns to Jerusalem with Zerubbabel (536 B.C.); rebuilding of temple begins; enemies stop it. **Esther.** Captive Jewish girl becomes queen, saves lives of Jews (521-495 B.C.). **Haggai & Zechariah.** In Jerusalem, Haggai (520 B.C.) and Zechariah (520-487 B.C.) urge people to resume building temple. **Ezra 5-10.** Zerubbabel and people finish temple. Ezra (7:1) leads second group to Jerusalem (457 B.C.). **Nehemiah.** Leads third (last) group to Jerusalem (446 B.C.); rebuild walls. **Malachi.** (397 B.C.); rebukes people for breaking the Covenant again; foretells punishment, coming of forerunner (John), coming of Christ, and His Covenant. [gospelteacher.org](http://gospelteacher.org)

We try to prepare all *IGT* materials in *Simple English* so they can be useful to many people worldwide.

We encourage you to share this with your contacts in your own area and in other nations.

#### "OLD" and "NEW"

The covenants are called "first" and "second" (Heb. 8:6-7; 9:15), "old" and "new" (Heb. 8:8, 13; 2 Cor. 3:6, 14; Lk. 22:20).

**Moses began revealing** God's Covenant for Israel in Ex. 12. They agreed, and the Covenant between God and Israel began in Ex. 24. It was an agreement to obey every word which God *would speak* through any prophet or angel — an agreement to live "by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord" (Dt. 8:3; see Ex. 20:3; 23:20-25).

**God continued revealing** His will for Israel through many prophets (1 Sam. 3:20; 15:1-23; 1 Kgs. 12:22-24; 2 Chron. 29:25; 36:12). Even the Psalms were part of Israel's "law" (Jn. 10:34 with Ps. 82:6; see Jn. 15:25). Some of the Psalms refer to Old Testament ways of worship, not worship today. Some examples are: special holy days (Ps. 81:3-4), animal sacrifices (Ps. 51:19; 66:13-15), instrumental music and dancing (Ps. 68:24-29; 149:3; 150:3-5), and praying *against* enemies and *their children*, instead of *for* enemies (Ps. 55:15; 58:10; 149:3-9; 109:1-20). Jesus did not include any of these in the New Covenant.

**The Old Covenant ended** when Jesus died (Col. 2:14; Eph. 2:14-18). However, we need to continue believing it and learning many things from it (Gal. 3:24-25; Rom. 15:4; 1 Cor. 10:11).

**Jesus began revealing** God's New Covenant while He was living under the Old (Gal. 4:4; Matt. 5:21-22, 28-32; Jn. 12:48). After He died, the New Covenant became God's will for His people (Heb. 9:15-17). In Acts 2, people began entering this Covenant by obeying the gospel.

**Jesus finished revealing** the New Covenant to His disciples through the Holy Spirit in the first century A.D. (Jn. 16:12-13; 2 Pet. 1:3; Jude 3).

#### NEW TESTAMENT

Matthew through Revelation (27 books) is called "the New Testament," because it focuses on God's New Covenant for all people.

**Matthew, Mark, Luke, & John.** The "good news" of God's *grace* through Jesus, His Son: birth (about 4 B.C. by present Gregorian calendar), life, teachings, miracles, fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies, death for our sins, resurrection, and return to heaven (A.D. 29).

Each book is for everyone, but **Matthew** writes primarily to Jews, **Mark** to Romans, **Luke** to Gentiles, and **John** to all. **Acts 1-14.** People begin entering the New Covenant of Christ and His church, the Kingdom (Acts 2; A.D. 29) when they believe, repent, confess faith, and are baptized in water for the forgiveness of sins. Paul and Barnabas make their 1st preaching Journey. **Acts 15-Acts 18:17.** Discussion in Jerusalem; Paul begins 2nd Journey. **1 & 2 Thessalonians.** From Paul in Corinth (Acts 18:18) to Christians in Thessalonica (A.D. 53). **Acts 18:18-22.** Paul finishes 2nd Journey. **Acts 18:23-Acts 19:20.** 3rd Journey begins; teaches in Ephesus two years. **1 Corinthians.** From Paul in Ephesus to Christians in Corinth (A.D. 59). **Acts 19:21-Acts 20:2.** 3rd Journey continues. **2 Corinthians.** From Paul in Macedonia (Acts 20:1-2) to Christians in Corinth (A.D. 60). **Galatians.** From Paul in Corinth (Acts 20:2-3) to Christians in Galatia (A.D. 60). **Romans.** From Paul in Corinth area (Acts 20:2-3) to Christians in Rome (A.D. 60). **Acts 21-28.** 3rd Journey ends; imprisonment in Jerusalem, Caesarea, and Rome. **Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians.** From Paul during 1st imprisonment in Rome to Christians in Ephesus, Philippi, and Colossae (A.D. 64). **Philemon.** From Paul during 1st imprisonment in Rome to Philemon at Colossae (A.D. 64). **Hebrews.** Probably from Paul, during 1st imprisonment in Rome, to Jewish (Hebrew) Christians (A.D. 64). **1 Timothy.** From Paul during a brief release from Roman prison, to Timothy at Ephesus (A.D. 65). **Titus.** from Paul during brief release from Roman prison, to Titus on island of Crete (A.D. 65). **2 Timothy.** From Paul during 2nd imprisonment in Rome, shortly before death, to Timothy (A.D. 66). **James.** From James, possibly brother of Jesus, to scattered Christians. **1 Peter.** From Peter in "Babylon" to scattered Christians. **2 Peter.** From Peter, shortly before death, to scattered Christians (A.D. 66). **1 John.** From John to all Christians. **2 John.** From John to a church or a Christian lady. **3 John.** From John to Gaius. **Jude.** From Jude, possibly brother of Jesus, to all Christians. **Revelation.** From John in exile on island of Patmos, to seven churches — and everyone willing to hear; visions of severe troubles and final, eternal victory for faithful Christians! [gospelteacher.org](http://gospelteacher.org)

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Revelation 22:17

