

Chapter 1 “Hello there, my Name is Jesus.”



Your name is what?

One of the greatest needs of man is to know who he is and why he is here.

In 1970, nine years before God came into my life, I had an interesting transaction with God. I was 30 years old and had just experienced an extremely lucrative business deal. It was something that I had dreamed about since I was young. One morning I was in the yard cutting my grass over a very noisy lawnmower. I was asking the question, “Why am I here, and who am I?” I suppose I was talking to God even though I did not have a relationship with Him.

I looked at my comfortable suburban house and I said, “I go to work every morning so that I can make the mortgage payments on that house. I do that so that I can come home to that house every night to eat and sleep. I do that so that I can get up in the morning and go make more money in order to make more mortgage payments.” I began to cry, “Is this what life is all about? Is this what it feels like to be successful? I seem to have a body that has been incredibly made. It has thousands of miles of blood vessels, a heart that beats to keep me alive, and a brain that no man could invent. I seem to have been created by God. Did God create me to live like a hamster in a cage on a wheel going around and around getting nowhere?” I began to weep uncontrollably and cried out to God.

God, in His infinite wisdom, waited nine years before He answered my question. However He did answer it in a mighty and powerful way.

To be honest, meeting God did not instantly solve all of my problems and answer all of my questions. I was simply put in touch, living touch, with God who could slowly answer all of my questions. He continues to answer them.

It was August 26, 1979, 5:30 PM. I was 39 years old and had lived my life for myself, my own way. On the surface my life did not seem too bad, but underneath it all God saw my desperation. I wanted to know where I would go after I died and where I would spend eternity. I had heard all sorts of differing opinions. Some said you just fall asleep. Some said you just go to a “better place.” Others said you would simply cease to exist. Others talked about a Heaven and a Hell.

Think about it. That is the most important question you can ask during your life here on earth. You had better not take someone else’s word for it. You better be sure. Eternity is not a long time it is forever. I knew deep down inside that I had better not cast my eternal destiny to the opinion of others. Even the people that said they knew the answer could not agree with each other.

I kind of believed in Heaven and Hell, but I thought that God graded on the curve system. For example, if there were some people that were worse than I was, like murderers, etc., then I would fall in the middle somewhere and at least get a “C” grade and make it to Heaven. I finally got real with God and asked the question, “Where do you go when you die?”

My teenage son was helping me read the Bible for the first time. I started at 12:30 PM, and at 5:30 PM I stopped and said, “Jesus is alive, He is God and He wrote the Bible. Not only that, Jesus is the final victor over all evil. God wants to be my father and take over my life.”

I heard God speak to me. He said, “And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, ‘Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away’” (Revelation 21:3,4).

All of a sudden, I experienced what John 7:37-39 says, “On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, ‘If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him.’ By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.”

Jesus became real to me. I saw Him with my spiritual eyes in a way that made Him as real as any other person I knew. He said, “**Hello there, my Name is Jesus. I love you.**” I could feel the “rivers of living

water” welling up inside of me. I told Him, “I have made a mess of my life. Thank you for becoming my Father and promising to take care of me. I will do whatever You say.” I can remember the feeling of having a real Father who would now take care of me, someone to whom I could turn to for all of my needs. I had been relying on “other gods.”

This experience caused a passion in my heart that has been the driving force of my life. When we encounter God face to face, doctrines, religions, denominations, family customs, everything goes out the window. This passion has caused me to pursue God with my whole heart. As I pursued Him, I became more acquainted with Him and His personality.

The apostle Paul had an experience on his journey to Damascus. He was a Pharisee of Pharisees. He knew the law and religious traditions better than anybody did in his day. He did not, however, know God until this experience. “As he journeyed he came near Damascus, and suddenly a light shone around him from heaven. Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?’” (Acts 9:3,4).

Notice the first thing that Paul said when the light of God knocked him down. “**And he said, ‘Who are You, Lord?’** Then the Lord said, ‘I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the goads’” (Acts 9:5).

He said, “Who are You, Lord?” Paul did not know who this Being was, but He knew that he better call Him Lord because of the power he had felt in His presence. Then Paul wanted to know who this Lord was. Paul knew he had encountered the most powerful Being in the universe, he just did not know who He was. He certainly was not the same God described by his religious tradition,

God wants to have an encounter with you. I am asking you to be honest and open and invite Him to do so. I guarantee you will never be the same!

When I stop to think of why it took me so long to find my need for Jesus, I can only come up with this conclusion: we need to understand our desperate need for God before we can really see who He is. Actually, we all have a desperate need for God and to understand that Jesus is God Himself. The problem is that we have found ways to bury our desperation. We have discovered how to manipulate people, how to control people, how to perform in life so that our apparent needs are met. When we find that these do not work, we try religion, or we turn to

different stimulants, all of which ends up making us slaves. Sometimes we feel as if they *are* working. If we are honest, we will admit that there is something inside of us that is not fulfilled by anything but the Creator.

It has been said by many that we need to fall flat on our face and fail in life before we find Jesus. I do not believe that is true (although it is the experience of many). I believe all it takes is for a person to be gut level honest with herself/himself. People all over the social and moral scale can find the true living God, the Creator of the universe, Jesus Christ. All they have to do is to be honest with themselves and with God. God will do the rest. It is His job to reveal Himself to people.

Religion (of all types) tells us that we have to struggle to do certain things or to be a certain way to find the truth or to find God. “Other gods” keep us in a struggle to control, manipulate and appease them. But the Bible tells us it is God Himself who draws us to Him and that He supernaturally reveals Himself to us. It tells us that God knows what we need and He knows how to help us.

He knows us intimately. He knows what it will take for us to see the truth. We do not have to take someone else’s word for the truth. That would be scary to put my eternal destiny into the hands of another human’s opinion! God will embrace you with His loving kindness right where you are in life, whether you are rich or poor, young or old, moral or immoral.

God is certainly capable of revealing His name to you. Be honest and listen for the words, **“Hello there, my Name is Jesus. I love you.”**