

OLD TESTAMENT THEOLOGY

Foundational Stones of the Gospel



Seminary Lecture Notes
By

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Printing 1997, 2004, 2016, 2019

Nike Insights
PO Box 884
Tijeras, New Mexico

This ministry is for the Glory of God and is supported by the Grace of God.

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2 PREFACE

The Old Testament (OT) has inspired millions throughout the centuries to think better and be better. Its seminal thoughts are the foundation of the gospel of Christ and have wonderfully impacted Europe and the whole world. All of Western Civilization and its law was founded upon the Ten Commandments and its theology. And, the demoralization of Western Civilizations can be attributed to its modern neglect.

Truly, the OT provides a government of man, by man, and for man. It's precepts are peerless and unmatched in consummate goodness. It is the foundation for the family, for the state, and for the gospel upon which the church was built.

Those who neglect Old Testament Theology invite spiritual poverty, and those who study the OT increase their treasures.

This work shines light on the foundation stones of the gospel in the New Testament.

This is a compilation of my Bible study notes, sermons, and seminary lectures over thirty years of Bible teaching. Formatted on different programs, on five different computers, under multiple formats, I found myself scrambling to get this published form my students at different intervals of ministry. I emphasize "scramble" because this work was put together in a whirlwind under the pressures of deadlines; that is, it contains a flurry of ideas organized for two semester lecture notes at the seminary level. And, like lecture notes it lacks formal editing for spelling and grammar.

My great joy in writing this work was seeing how the whole Word of God fits together like a blue-ribbon hand-stitched quilt. I'd find myself jumping for joy and staying awake at night marveling over the wonder of God's Masterpiece. I couldn't wait to arrive in class and share these studies with my students. My one regret is that I did not have the time to perfect this work and to put it into book form. That's another life time.

Psalm 19:8 the precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes;

This work on Old Testament Theology will benefit the serious Bible student, pastor, or seminary professor.

May God use this work as it is to enlighten your mind and fill your heart with a love for the Savior.

Professor Brooky Stockton,

Servant of His Majesty in Heaven

PART 1: OT THEOLOGY



3 THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

3.1 ALL MEN ARE RELIGIOUS

Who cares about religion? “Religion is not my cup of tea,” some will say. “Let each make the choice that is best for himself. There are many roads in life. Let each man find his own way.”

First of all, religion is everyone’s “cup of tea.” Religion is about ultimate concerns. Everyone has “ultimate values” and “beliefs about what happens at death.” Even atheists have ultimate concerns. Because they have a commitment to some value above others, atheists are very religious. And, they are often caught forcing their world view down our throats.

Humanists pound the drum of “separation of church from state.” The term “church” to them is synonymous with the Bible. By that, atheistic humanist mean they do not want politicians employing absolutes from Christianity to influence legislation in order that their religious convictions may prevail in political debate. All politicians are religious. It is only a matter of whose religious concerns will dominate the American mind—the ethics of God’s law or the values of humanists?

Second, the religions of this world are mutually exclusive; that is, their basic tenets and values contradict one another. Hindus are vegetarians and won’t kill rats; the rest of the world are carnivores and won’t hesitate to kill the rodent. Some religions like Christianity value life; Moslems esteem death. Some religions honor their parents; others eat their parents. Some religions protect the aged; others club them to death. A child molester’s religious orientation will be quite different than nun’s perspective. A married man’s choice whether to sacrifice his life for his family on the battlefield will be quite different than a Sodomite facing the same choice in battle. A mother’s concern for the future is at polar opposites to that of eunuch. During the 1930’s, Nazi values came into direct conflict with the values of European nations and there result was a bloody war. To say that all religions are basically the same is like saying all soups taste alike.

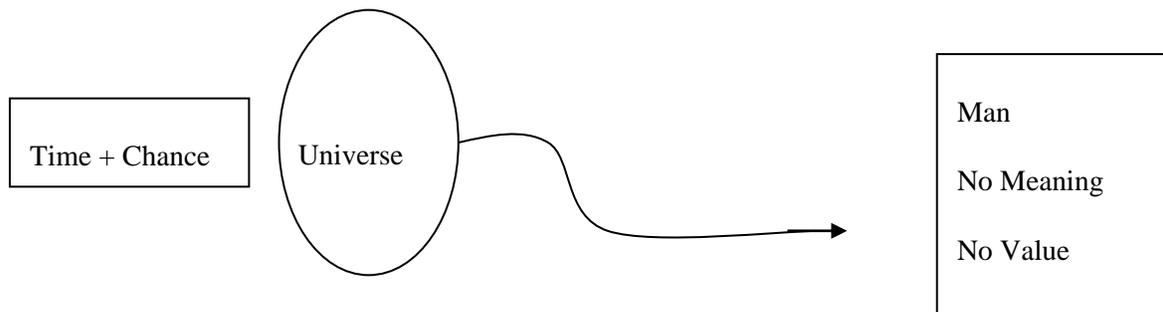
Therefore, we must entertain the question, “Is there a God? Can we know for certain? What is the evidence?” The existence of God has been a courtroom drama between prosecutors and defendants for generations.

You can understand the importance of theism by examining the evidence between two possibilities.

3.2 DOES GOD EXIST?

TWO POSSIBILITIES

There is no God (Psalm 14:1). The fool (**lb'n**, *nabal*) hath said in his heart, “There is no God” (**~yhil{a/ !yae**). “They are corrupt (**Wtyxiv.hi**, *shahat*: Hiphil), they have done(Hiphil) abominable works (Hiphil), there is none that doeth good.”



According to the Holy Scriptures, all that is wrong with man, all that is evil, all that is tyrannical, all that is malignant within men exists because of the neglects of God (Charnock, 1979, p. 23).

The word *fool* is the Hebrew word *nabal* meaning one who is stupid or lacks understanding.

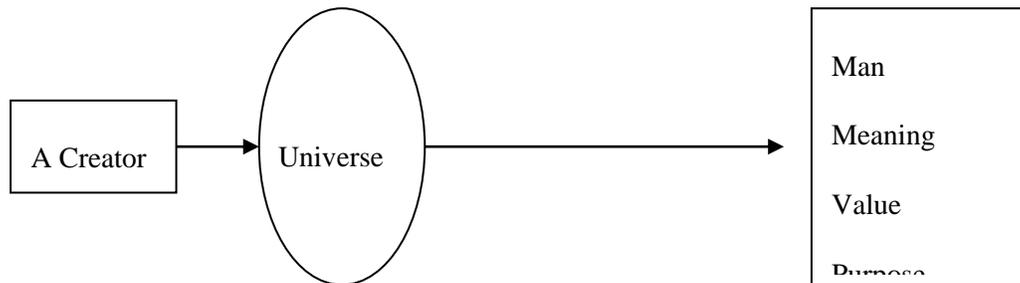
The word *corrupt* is in the Hiphil (causative); i.e., he causes corruption. The word *shahat* is translated, “destroy (Proverbs 11:9), or “pit” (Proverbs 26:27).

If there is no God, and man is a product of **Time + Chance**, then there is no hope, no meaning, no purpose, and no value.

If there is no God, there is no judgment, no right or wrong, no ultimate accountability. Man must then be a collection of protoplasm, electrons, and carbons moving through time and space. He is an animal with no more rights on this planet than an insect. It doesn't matter if one is good or bad, a liar or truth teller, thief or humanitarian. All will end up in the same state: dead-dead! Death is Lord.

There is a God: If there is a God and man is result of special creation, then there is a purpose and meaning to man's existence. It does matter how one lives. It matters whether one is moral or immoral, honest or dishonest. There is a God who sees and knows; that can hold man accountable for his actions.

There is also hope. Because He created life, He can renew life. Death is not the end. Maybe, man can live again.



Questions: If there is a God, can He be known? How can He be known? Who is He, and what is He like? The truth is that the invisible Creator Spirit can only be known if He chooses to reveal himself in time and space to men.

You can begin to discern the true God, by understanding man's need for revelation.

3.3 VIEWS ABOUT THEISM

TWO CHOICES

There are many ideas about God, but there are only **two choices**: (a) either there is a God, or (b) there is not a God. If there is a God, he must exist in some form or fashion. However, there are many views and ideas about who and what God Isaiah

All men are religious, but not all men are theists. All men have beliefs about what happens after death; but not all men have a Biblical view of what happens after death. All men have values that flow from their beliefs; but because most atheists can't live consistent with their evolutionary views, they inadvertently adopt Christians values like love and peace to make life tolerable.

Atheism: This is the belief that there is no God and that He has not revealed himself to man. There are three types of atheists: dogmatic atheists, open atheists, and practical atheists. Practical atheists may confess the possibility of the existence of a God, but live as if there is no Divine Being.

Agnosticism: An agnostic says that he does not know if there is a God. This person holds that all knowledge is relative and therefore uncertain. The Greek sophist, Aristotle, and empiricist were of this sort. But, there are problems with agnosticism.

Agnosticism fails because is rests on the false presupposition that if man can't see something it must not exist. Positivists, such as Auguste Comte (1798-1859), decided not to accept "nothing as true beyond the

details of observed facts” (Thiessen, 1992, p. 32). Comte, therefore, devoted himself to the study of natural phenomena. However, Albert Einstein’s theory of relativity nailed the lid on positivism by showing that man has to reckon with the intangibles of time and space; that is, there are realities that affect our daily lives which are not observable to the human eye.

Agnosticism fails because it is indecisive and unstable. It fails to make a decision after cross examination of the evidence. To deny something implies one has made a comprehensive investigation. To fail to investigate and then conclude the non-existence of a claim contains a dog-eared commitment to ignorance.

Agnosticism fails because it displays a false humility in that it claims to know so little.

Agnosticism fails because it does not provide a logical bases for ethics. If we do not assume God to be true, what becomes the standard for right and wrong? A majority vote? One’s own belly button? There was a time when the majority refused to let a black man vote. We are now giving special franchises and privileges to Black people by popular vote. There was a day when American executed Sodomites; now they are treated as untouchable gods. Is the majority view suitable for the basis of ethics? Hardly!

Pantheism: “A view that holds that all finite things are merely aspects, modifications, or parts of one eternal and self-existent being.” (Thiessen, 1992, p. 34). Note its forms:

Materialistic pantheism: that matter is the cause of all life and mind; that matter generates life; that all of nature is God.

There are many problems connected with pantheism. Pantheism is the primary world view of the East. Because Hindus could not separate God from creation, they failed to investigate creation and control the creative process. To mess with creation, the killing of rats which ate the grain, was to mess with the pantheistic being. But to the West, God was separate from his creation. Man could control nature without controlling nature’s God.

More Problems with Pantheism: To say, “God is all that there is” is to merely state a tautology—an asserting of the same thing in two different ways—a statement that is neither true nor false. Such a statement is trivial double think, double speak.

- Pantheism destroys morals: If all things are necessitated, then error and sin are necessitated.
- Pantheism renders rational religion and rationale science impossible.
- Pantheism denies conscious immortality and makes man’s life like a wave on the sea.
- Pantheism deifies man and creation by making both a part of God.
- Pantheism makes “matter-in-motion” eternal.

Idealism: This view holds the ultimate reality is of the nature of mind and that the world is the product of mind. Mind and reason are the basics of ethics. The problem with this view is that two “rational” minds often come to opposite conclusions. Logical socialists and logical capitalists have reasoned to different conclusions.

Philosophical mysticism: for the mystic, the sense of otherness drops out altogether and the knower realizes he is identical with the inner being of the subject. Hence, everything, including self, is a part of that thing called God.

Polytheism: This view holds there are many forces responsible for the fate and destiny of man. Early in history, the Sun, Moon, and stars were seen as symbols of influence. Fire, air, and water were identified as factors that influence man. The Greek pantheon of gods was of this sort. Paul identifies these as idols and corruptions of the truth about God (See: Romans 1:22f). John says, “Beware of idols” (1 John 5:21). Eventually in history, polytheism broke down because man invented a God for every phenomenon. These finite beings were insufficient foundations on which to build a society.

Dualism: This theory holds there are two forces, principles, or substances, which affect humanity. Some call this the Ying and the Yang:

In epistemology, it is the concept of idea and substance.

In metaphysics, it is the view of mind and matter.

In ethics, it is the view of good and evil.

In religion, it is the being of God or the Devil. This view was common in the first century and existed in the doctrines of Gnosticism.

In culture, this dualism is expressed in terms of multiculturalism; and, at the heart of multiculturalism is idolatry and a megaforce to replace God’s law with man’s law.

Deism: Unlike pantheism, which denies the transcendence of God, deism denies the condescendence and immanence of God. Deists believe in God’s power and *other-worldly existence*, but they deny that He is present and knowable and at work in present history.

Perversions of the CHRISTIAN God:

Absolute Oneness: There is only one God existing in one form with many different names: Elohim, YHWH, Father, Son, Spirit refer to the same person.

Three Gods: This view separates the tri-unity of God into three separate substances perverting the Trinity. Thus, the result of this view is that it ends up with three separate gods, three individual, three separate beings in the universe. So much for monotheism.

Bill Maher on God: A more psychopathic character you will not ever find in fiction. Just the idea that people worshiped the God of this Bible is insane. There is no more psychopathic mass murderer than God, so good luck with worrying that you picked the wrong religion, you're going to suffer for it." ...Cults pervert the truth of the Biblical God by extra-Biblical assertions or denials of Biblical truth. Mormons assert God has a body; was once a man that attained the status of deity. The Watchtower society asserts there is a Big God and a little God; the Father and Jesus, a son of God. Mormonism insists that God was once a human being and has a physical body (The Blaze.com/stories/2014/01/27psychopathic . . .)

3.4 THREE KINDS OF PEOPLE

The dogmatic atheist insists there is no God! The problem with this approach is twofold: The dogmatism must assume absolute knowledge. Can God be a part of what he does not know? The dogmatist does not live consistent with his assertion. Rather, he borrows some of his values from theism in order to make life more tolerable. When the dogmatic atheist talks about "right and wrong" or "love" or "goodness" he is borrowing Christian terms to describe his ultimate concerns. Atheists must be challenged to live consistent with their world view and to stop borrowing from Christianity to give meaning to their miserable life.

The skeptical atheist or agnostic: He attempts to be honest and says, "I don't know." Bertrand Russel said,

My position is agnostic . . . I'm not contending in a dogmatic way that there is not a God. What I'm contending is that we don't know that there is (Russel. "The Existence of God." A debate between Bertrand Russel and Father F.C. Copleston, S.J., originally broadcast in 1948 on the Third Programme of the B.B.C.)

Russel narrowed his demand for "proof" of a God to rational or philosophic proof. He totally ignored (a) the historical proof an examination of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and (b) subjective truth and the testimony of Christians. But, even here, historical investigation can never give more than a probable answer. But, probability is what all historians rely on to ascertain a historical event. You can't scientifically reproduce your elementary years in grade school, but through historical investigation, we could probably come up with enough evidence you attended an elementary school for a given year. Likewise, with religious claims. We can scientifically reproduce an event, but we can utilize the skills of historical investigation to determine if there is enough evidence for a claim.

A theist: These people have a general belief and confidence that there is a Higher Being of some kind even though they may not be able to define Him.

3.5 RELIGIOUS MOTIVATIONS

Motivation of the atheist: Everyone has a motivation for his belief. The atheist may not believe in God because he does not want to yield his will to the Divine Being. Maybe, he does not want to face a judgment. Possibly, he is doing something shameful, and does not want to give it up. Intellectually, he may not be able to reconcile why a loving God could allow evil. Regardless of what his motivation may be for his cosmological view, his belief does not create reality.

Motivation of the theist: When I consider the alternative to atheism, it becomes unbearable: no meaning, no purpose, no right or wrong, no hope, no future, no life after death, no reuniting of loved ones. But, as much as I want God to be, my belief does not create the reality of God. All the faith in the world will not make God exist if he does not exist; and all the unbelief in the world cannot destroy the existence of God if He does exist.

3.6 THEORETICAL PROOFS OF GOD

Through the centuries, philosophers and theologians wrestled with the proofs of God:

The Ontological Argument (Anselm, Descartes, Samuel Clark): “Man has the idea of an absolutely perfect being; that existence is an attribute of perfection; that therefore an absolutely perfect being must exist; that we can’t conclude from abstract to real existence.” The virtue of the argument is “I have an idea of God, therefore I have an experience of God” (Berkhof, 1993, p. 26).

Immanuel Kant stressed the untenableness of this argument, but its proofs are universal. For example, Helen Keller was born blind and deaf and without a sense of smell. After her discovery of running water, she was able to comprehend her world and develop intellectually. When she was told of God’s love in Christ she said, “I always knew there was a God, I just didn’t know His name” (Willmington’s Bible, p. 591).

The Cosmological Argument: This is the argument of cause and effect. “Everything in the world must have an adequate cause; if this is so, the universe must also have an adequate cause . . .” Hence, a cause greater than the object.

Kant reasoned: “If everything has cause, this must also apply to God” (Berkhof, 1993, p. 26). But, this reasoning could make Time + Chance the eternal cause.

Sir Isaac Newton had a friend who was a skeptic. He entered the room where Newton had finished a model of the Solar system with planets and moons suspended by wire. His friend queried, “Who made this?” The conversation went something like this:

Newton replied, “Nobody.”

Friend, “Nobody?”

Newton, “That’s right! I said nobody! All these balls and cogs and belts and gears just happened to come together, and wonder of wonders, by chance they began revolving in their set orbits with perfect timing!”

The Teleological Argument: This is an extension of the causal argument. “The world everywhere reveals intelligence, order, harmony, and purpose, and thus implies the existence of intelligent and purposeful being, adequate to the production of the world.” This idea promotes the concept of a Divine Architect who created the world with a design (Berkhof, 1993, p. 26).

The value of this argument is that it makes explicit and visible the issues at hand because the world does evidence intelligence and design.

The Moral Argument: Man has a concept of right and wrong. Therefore, there must be a Lawgiver and Judge who has placed in the heart of man (the conscience) a sense of right and wrong. Man’s quest for the highest good and for a moral ideal necessitates the existence of God (C. S. Lewis, 1981).

The Historical or Ethnological Argument: “Among all the peoples and tribes of the earth there is a sense of the divine; which reveals itself in an external cultus. Since the phenomenon is universal, it must belong to the very nature of man. If the nature of man leads naturally to religious worship, this can only find its explanation in a higher Being who has constituted man a religious being” (Berkhof, 1993, , p. 27).

The Anthropological Argument: The consciousness and moral nature of man demands a self-conscious and moral Maker (Willmington, p. 591). How can an impersonal It create a personal being? It appears impossible. This is the argument Paul used at Athens:

Acts 17:29 Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device.

3.7 THE INVISIBLE GARDENER

Two explorers wandered into a valley and were stunned by its beauty. Everything seemed to be perfectly groomed. One said to the other, “I’m sure this garden is managed by some gardener.” So, the two of them waited, but no gardener showed up. “Well, maybe there is an invisible gardener that comes to tend this garden,” said the younger. So, they set up ropes and bells around the perimeter hoping the invisible gardener would set them off and reveal his presence. But, the bells never went off. The younger said, “I’m still convinced there is an invisible gardener that comes here night after night.” The elder queried his friend, “What is the difference between your invisible gardener, and no gardener at all.”

That is the critical question about the existence of God: “What is the difference between an invisible God we can never see and no God at all?” (Warwick Montgomery)

3.8 THREE ARGUMENTS FOR THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

The first argument for the existence of God is one of contingency. Everything is dependent on something else for its existence. By observing the *Second Law of Thermodynamics*, we know everything is losing energy; Everything moves from the complex to the simple. Clocks wind down. Sand timers will empty every grain of sand. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume there was a starting point. Everything is dependent upon a single, independent Being or Cause. If the mechanical alarm clock in your bedroom is running slower and slower each hour, you can assume the clock was at one time wound up. Since the cosmos is running out of energy, we conclude that an Eternal Being wound it up at some time in the past.

The second main argument for the existence of God is Christ. The good news of the Bible is that Christ became a man; that is, the invisible Gardener entered the Garden in and through Christ.

John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

John 1:14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

2 Corinthians 5:19 To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself,

When Thomas demanded empirical proof of the resurrection of Christ and was permitted to see, touch, feel, and examine the resurrected Savior, Thomas announced his conclusion, "My Lord and my God." And, the whole Case for Christianity rests on an historical examination of resurrection.

Simon Greenleaf (1783-1853) was one of the founders of Harvard Law School. He authored the authoritative three-volume text, *A Treatise on the Law of Evidence* (1842), which is still considered "the greatest single authority on evidence in the entire literature of legal procedure."¹ Greenleaf literally wrote the rules of evidence for the U.S. legal system. He was certainly a man who knew how to weigh the facts. He was an atheist until he accepted a challenge by his students to investigate the case for Christ's resurrection. After personally collecting and examining the evidence based on rules of evidence that he helped establish, Greenleaf became a Christian and wrote the classic, *Testimony of the Evangelists*.

Let (the Gospel's) testimony be sifted, as it were given in a court of justice on the side of the adverse party, the witness being subjected to a rigorous cross-examination. The result, it is confidently believed, will be an undoubting conviction of their integrity, ability, and truth (Simon Greenleaf, The Testimony of the Evangelists: The Gospels Examined by the Rules of Evidence, Kregel Classics, 1995, Backcover.).

Sir Lionel Luckhoo (1914-1997) is considered one of the greatest lawyers in British history. He's recorded in the Guinness Book of World Records as the "World's Most Successful Advocate," 15 times with 245 consecutive murder acquittals. He was knighted by Queen Elizabeth II -- twice. Luckhoo declared:

*I humbly add I have spent more than 42 years as a defense trial lawyer appearing in many parts of the world and am still in active practice. I have been fortunate to secure a number of successes in jury trials and I say unequivocally the evidence for the Resurrection of Jesus Christ is so overwhelming that it compels acceptance by proof which leaves absolutely no room for doubt (Sir Lionel Luckhoo, *The Question Answered: Did Jesus Rise from the Dead?* Luckhoo Booklets, back page*

http://www.hawaiichristiansonline.com/sir_lionel.html).

Lee Strobel was a Yale-educated, award-winning journalist at the Chicago Tribune. As an atheist, he decided to compile a legal case against Jesus Christ and prove him to be a fraud by the weight of the evidence. As Legal Editor of the Tribune, Strobel's area of expertise was courtroom analysis. To make his case against Christ, Strobel cross-examined a number of Christian authorities, recognized experts in their own fields of study (including PhD's from such prestigious academic centers as Cambridge, Princeton, and Brandeis). He conducted his examination with no religious bias, other than his predisposition to atheism.

Remarkably, after compiling and critically examining the evidence for himself, Strobel became a Christian. Stunned by his findings, he organized the evidence into a book entitled, *The Case for Christ*, which won the Gold Medallion Book Award for excellence. Strobel asks one thing of each reader - remain unbiased in your examination of the evidence. In the end, judge the evidence for yourself, acting as the lone juror in the case for Christ (Lee Strobel, *The Case For Christ*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998, 18).

The third way to know the truth about God is human experience. Faith in Christ is self authenticating.

John 7:17 If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.

In a three dimensional world of time and space there is no such thing as absolute certainty on any subject (analytical evidence), The existence of God may be proved or disproved analytically (the realm of theory). A belief for or against theism does not produce the reality of theism. All the faith in the world won't make God true, if God is not true to begin with. Likewise, all the skepticism in the world will not make God disappear if He does exist. Prudence demands that a man **examine the evidence** and deduct a conclusion. This is called *inductive reasoning*. Reason must look at the evidence and faith must bridge the gap. Clark Pinnock, quoted by Willmington, said:

For the Scripture then, the existence of God is both a historical truth (God acted in history through the person of Christ), and an existential truth (God reveals himself to every soul); that is, truth is self-authenticating (John 7:7). His existence is both objectively and subjectively evident. It is necessary logically because our assumption of order, design, and rationality rests upon it. It is necessary morally because there is no explanation for the shape of morality apart from it. It is necessary personally because the

exhaustion of all material possibilities still cannot give satisfaction to the human soul The deepest proof of God's existence apart from history is just life itself. God has created man in his image, and man cannot elude the implications of this fact. Everywhere man's identity pursues him (Willmington, p. 592).

Conclusion: The Scriptures never seek to prove the existence of God. Unashamedly, the author of Genesis bases his documentation on, "In the beginning God . . ."— an argument of contingency. The introduction assumes a marvelous proposition: God is! It is good news God exists. It is bad news if He does not exist. However, we have more than propositions, we have empirical proof that God exist in and through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead (1 Corinthians 15:1-14; 2 Corinthians 5:19).

4 THE DOCTRINE OF REVELATION

Deuteronomy 29:29 The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed (galah) belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.

Someone has said, "God created man in his own image, and man has returned the favor."

Since there are so many views about the Cause of all things, how is man to know the truth about this Being? The subject of Revelation is the study of whether or not God has spoken to men and revealed himself to men in a way they could know and understand his communication with them. This study seeks to investigate the question, "Has God revealed Himself to man, and if so, how and when?" The Christian asserts that God has at various times in history and in different ways spoken to men. His faith is based on the presumption that the Bible is an accurate record of that revelation. His knowledge of the Trinity, salvation, heaven and hell, the eternal judgment, and the age to come is not based on human reason, or natural revelation, but on the evidence that God has spoken. No other religion claims to be the result of historical revelation. Only Islam professes some type of revelatory work of God and none of contains miracles, prophecy, or historical testimony comparable to the Bible. Muslim apologetics is thoroughly grounded in the subjective; i.e., human experience. Hindus, Muslims, Buddhists, and Christians can testify to the validity of their faith, but only Christianity is subject to historical, empirical investigation.

4.1 DEFINITION OF REVELATION

The word, "revelation" is a thought in the mind of God revealed and placed accurately into the mind of man. It does not refer to the thoughts of man that are communicated to other men, but strictly God's thoughts communicated to the mind of a Biblical author. The Bible is founded on one fundamental principle, that God has spoken and men have heard Him speak. If there were no Bible, there would be no Judaism or Christianity. If God did not speak, there would be no Bible, no Christianity, and no Judaism.

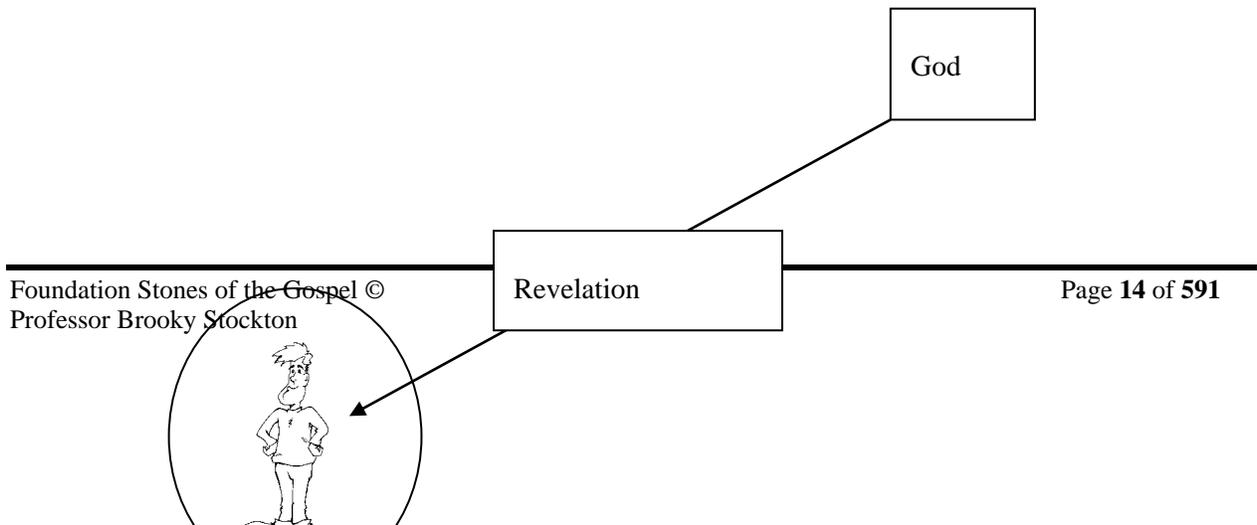
4.2 THE POSSIBILITY OF REVELATION

Men who reject the Bible do so because they possess an anti-supernatural presupposition. Naturalists reject the possibility of divine intervention and miraculous intervention into human affairs. Obviously, if God does not intervene, then there is no such thing as the Doctrine of Revelation. But, this presupposition appears to be arbitrary and unwarranted. It is deeply rooted in a philosophical bias that does not support the facts of history.

If there is an infinite God who has created this vast, huge universe and man with all his complexities, we can assume he is able to reveal himself to mankind in a way that man can understand Him. The Scripture asserts this possibility when it says, “All things are possible with God” (Mark 10:27).

4.3 THE NECESSITY OF REVELATION

The universe is infinite and man is finite. If an infinite God created an infinite world, how can finite man ever hope to discover God on his own power. For example, if this infinite God lives in Galaxy 237, 519, 189, on a planet 768, how could finite man ever travel there to investigate Him? Man cannot start with Himself in his effort to know God. The eternal Being must step into man’s experience and reveal Himself in a way man can comprehend Him. The only way man can know God is if God initiates communication and reveals Himself to the eyes, ears, or touch of man. Without revelation, man is left to navigate his investigation on the sea of human opinion.



4.4 THE PROBABILITY OF REVELATION

Men are personal beings with an intense interest in human relationships. People express genuine love and concern for their fellowmen every day. It is only reasonable to assume, that if man is a creation of God, then his nature is a product of divine will. If God loves His creatures, we would expect him to communicate with them and make Himself known to them in a way they could understand God and appreciate Him.

4.5 THE FACT OF REVELATION

Psalm 147:19 He sheweth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel. {his word: Hebrews his words}

God has spoken and an accurate record of that Revelation can be found in the Holy Bible. The English word Bible never appears in Scripture. The word “Bible” comes from the Greek word *biblion* and the Latin word *biblia* which means “scroll” or “a little book”. *Biblion* is derived from *biblas*, the bark of the papyrus plant, a reed grown in warm countries like Egypt. The word *biblos* refers to any book from this plant. The first word in the Greek New Testament, Matthew 1:1, is the word “bible” (Bi,blōj). The Bible is called “The Scripture” (Acts 8:32), “The Scriptures” (Matthew 21:42), “The Holy Scriptures” (Romans 1:2), “The Oracles of God” (Romans. 3:2; Hebrews 5:12), and the “Word of God” (Mark 7:13; Romans 10:17).

The biblical affirmation is that God has stepped into time and space and revealed himself to men through a series of revelations. In these revelations, He exposed Himself to His finite creatures.

Consider the following Biblical claims:

And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "From any tree of the garden you may eat freely . . ." (Genesis 2:16).

It not only makes sense that if God created man, he would speak to the first man, we have a record of what the LORD God said to Adam. From the very beginning of creation, we have a record of God speaking to Adam, the head of creation. That record was preserved and passed down to stewards of this dynamic revelation. In the Book of Beginnings, we see very early that God spoke to Noah (Genesis 9:8), to Abraham (Genesis 12:1, 13:14, 17:1; 18:1), to Isaac (Genesis 26:2), to Jacob (Genesis 28:13), and to Joseph (Genesis 37:6), and to Moses at the burning bush (Exodus 3). In fact, there is evidence that this Revelation was committed to writing very early in the history of man when we see the term, "book" (sepher) in Genesis 5:1: "This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day when God created man, He made him in the likeness of God." Again, in Exodus 17:14, we have God commanding Moses to write down the events of his time and putting them into a book. These ancient records were preserved through the line of Shem and eventually compiled by Moses in what is known as the "Books of Moses," or "The Torah," or "The Pentateuch."

The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed (tl{g>Nih;w>, gala) belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law (Deuteronomy 29:29).

The word, "satar" (rt;s¹) refers to something that is hidden or concealed. The term *gala* (reveal) is used in its root about 180 times in the OT. It means "to uncover" or "go into exile," that is, it refers primarily to the fact that the land of Canaan was uncovered because its people were removed from its occupation by forced exile. Here it is the Torah that is exposed and revealed to men.

Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, neither was the word of the LORD yet revealed unto him (Niphal). And the LORD appeared again in Shiloh: for the LORD **revealed** himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the word of the LORD (1 Samuel. 3:7, 21).

The duty of preserving the Torah and preserving God's Revelation fell upon Samuel, Israel's priest, judge, and prophet. But, there was a time when Samuel had no personal knowledge of God, and that there was a day when he gained a personal knowledge of the LORD. The means of this knowledge was not intuition, but revelation. God spoke directly to him.

He made known his ways unto Moses, his acts unto the children of Israel (Psalm 103:7).

The word "known" is *yadah* (ydia: Hiphil) in Hebrew. The verbal implies intensive action, that is, that God causes Himself to be known. The idea is not just cognitive, but relational. That is, one can know God and commune with Him personally.

Isaiah 1:3 The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider.

A severe criticism by YHWH was that a dumb ox was smarter than Israel because the ox knew his master, but Israel did not know YHWH. The assumption here is that God can be known, and that only mindless people fail to recognize Him.

Daniel 2:19 Then was the secret revealed unto Daniel in a night vision. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven.

King Nebuchadnezzar had a disturbing dream and wanted it interpreted. To know whether the interpretation was true, he refused to share the events of his dream with his wise men. Not only did he demand an interpretation, but he demanded to know the facts of his dream—an impossibility even for the most intelligent, clairvoyant of men! Daniel was able to interpret the dream because God made known the exact dream story to him through a vision: that is, it was divinely revealed to him.

Amos 3:2 You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.

The “you” refers to Israel. The word “known” implies impartation of knowledge and the privilege of relationship. Other nations did not possess this knowledge. Israel had the knowledge of the true God because Israel was God’s chosen vessel to receive His revelation. The nation was God’s beachhead, that is, His base for establishing His truth and Revelation among men. Israel had the responsibility to know, preserve, and act on that knowledge. Punishment followed disobedience. For this reason, Israel as a nation was called a prophet.

Psalms 105:15 Saying, Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm.

Luke 2:10 All things are delivered to me of my Father: and no man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him.

Jesus claims esoteric knowledge of Israel’s God. In the context, Jesus admits religious truth is hidden and that it cannot be discovered based on empirical investigation of the natural order. How does one really come to know this God in a personal way? Only by some act of divine intervention! God must make Himself known. One does not inherit a relationship with God by being born into a Christian family, but by being “born again,” that is, enlightened as to the truth of Christ. Every Christian understands that there was a day when he did not know God, and that there was a day when God revealed the truth of His salvation to him (John 1:10-13).

“It came through a Revelation of Jesus Christ” (Galatians 1:11, 12).

Paul claims his gospel, which he taught the Galatians did not come from men or originate with men. He did obtain his knowledge of the gospel in a classroom or synagogue or private forum. He did not obtain his knowledge by meditation, but by revelation. God exposed His thoughts to Paul in a way that Paul could know and learn them.

But God hath revealed (avpeka,luyen) them unto us (the apostles) by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God (1 Corinthians 2:10).

The Greeks prided themselves in their knowledge. But, Paul wanted this young church to be established, not on the prescience of men, but upon the power of God (2:2). He informs the Corinthians that their knowledge of the Christian faith was not rooted in the science of men or the knowledge of this age, but upon revelation, that is, special knowledge that can only be obtained when God intersects history and exposes Himself to mankind. The plural pronoun, “us” refers to the Apostles—not Christians in general. The gospel Paul taught to this church did not originate with man, but with God. Their knowledge of the gospel came through revelation.

God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they (Hebrews 1:1-3).

The author informs us that God has indeed spoken to men at various times and in different ways. But, in the days of the apostles, God funneled knowledge to Israel through His ultimate revelation, His Son. Jesus is called the, “express image” (carakth.r) of God, that is, he exact, full, and complete imprint or expression of God. He is said “to be” in the image of God, “being” (w'n), in contrast “to becoming.” The term “image” refers to the essence of God’s character and substance. Jesus is the substance, the foundation, the fullness of what God wants us to know about Him. Jesus, therefore, is God’s greatest Revelation of God to man.

There is a story about a farmer who was sitting by his fire on a cold winter night when he heard birds crashing on his window. They were trying to escape the storm. The farmer went outside, opened up his barn, and tried to herd them into his barn, but the no matter what the farmer did, the birds would not cooperate. He thought to himself, “If only I could become a bird and show them the way to the barn . . .” Well, this is what God did in Christ. Christ became a man in order to show us the way to eternal life.

4.6 THE EVASIVENESS OF GOD

Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour (Isaiah 45:15).

The necessity of Revelation is built on a fundamental reality and that reality is that truth about God is hidden. One has to question the validity of any religion that does not affirm the covert nature of God. A true religion must also offer an explanation of God's lack of self-disclosure. Twenty-six times we are told that God hides his face from men in Scripture (Deuteronomy 31:17;18; Job 13:24; Isaiah 54:8; 59:2; Jeremiah 33:5). The concealment of God frustrated Job (Job 9:11-12). To Jacob (Genesis 32), the Angel of the Covenant came to Him under the cover of darkness. David's greatest fear was that God would hide himself and not answer him in a time of need (Psalm 4:1; 13:1; 28:1; 54:2).

And, we are told one reason God hides himself, "But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, And your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He does not hear" (Isaiah 59:2). God is holy and man is sinful. What skunk scent is to the nostrils of man, sin is to a holy God. Furthermore, the Scripture declares, "There is none who understands, There is none who seeks for God" (Romans 3:10). He does not seek truth. That is, man is self-absorbed, self-occupied, and self-centered. Like a ball of twine, man is all wrapped up in himself. Only by the grace of God can selfish man be delivered from the dark cave in which he hides from God. And, this is what God's Revelation is about—the relentless pursuit of God for lost man (Luke 19:10).

In conclusion, with so many ideas and opinions about God, there is a need for an authoritative source on the knowledge of God. That source lies in the Doctrine of Revelation. God has revealed his thoughts to the mind of man, in particular, to the patriarchs of Israel. The record of that Revelation is the Bible, the endearing and enduring Word of God. The ultimate Revelation of God is Jesus Christ, the Son of God. He is the physical manifestation of the invisible God, the express image of His Person. Through Him men can know the truth about the Father and enter a relationship with Him. REVELATION V. INSPIRATION

Revelation is a thought in the mind of God revealed and placed accurately into the mind of man.

Inspiration is the superintended process whereby a thought in the mind of a biblical author has been placed accurately on paper (2 Timothy 3:16).

Illumination is the work of the Spirit whereby he sheds light or understanding about the written word.

LANGUAGE ABOUT GOD

God has revealed Himself to mankind through words. But, can these words be trusted? Even good men can mess up a translation. How do we understand words?

The term, *univocal language* means *one voice*. A word always means the same thing regardless of the context; hence, one word has one meaning: God is transcendent and defies the limitation of words.

Equivocal language refers to words, which must be interpreted by the surrounding context.

Analogous language is a description of one object or concept by the use of comparison. Human language is limited.

DEFINITIONS

(Source: Thiessen, 1992, p. 36):

Monistic world view: a belief that “all existence as having some common originating cause or principle.”

Monism: the view that the originating principle is within the world.

Monotheism: the view that the originating principle is outside this world, hence, the Christian view.

WHAT COUNTS AS EVIDENCE?

There are two types of evidence: a) **analytical evidence**—that which can be proven mathematically; that which is used in a laboratory; that which is theoretical in nature, and b) **synthetic evidence**—the cataloging of legal evidence, real evidence such as testimony to prove a premise; evidence that can be used in a courtroom. Synthetic evidence is not based on possibilities, that which could be, but that which is!

There is no such thing as absolute, 100% proof for God or for anything else for that matter. But there is evidence available to convince an average person **beyond reasonable doubt** that there is a God. The analytical philosophers labored to prove God mathematically. However, a synthetic approach is preferred. Paul used the synthetic approach to prove the resurrection of Christ; that is, the apostles told what they saw, what they touched, what they hears (See 1 Corinthians 11:5; 1 John 1:1-3).

SEVEN WAYS GOD HAS REVEALED HIMSELF

1. **Creation:** The cause must be greater than the affect. Everything about creation points to an intelligent design (Romans 1:18ff). The Scripture makes no apology regarding the Cause and effect: “In the beginning, God created (the cause) the heavens and the earth (the effect)” (Genesis 1:1).
2. **Man:** Man is certainly unique among the creatures of the earth. What animal can add and subtract or write a love poem? Man, though finite, is so unique his existence begs the necessity for a Creator.
3. **Man’s Conscience:** Unlike animals, man has a unique spiritual alarm system we call the conscience. This universal alert system recognizes common ethical values.
4. **The Word of God:** One would expect that if there is a God, He would communicate His will to man early in history and that His message would be preserved. The Bible is the record of that revelation. The Bible is the most translated, most copied, most purchased book in the world--a true miracle of preservation.

Closely associated with the historical documents is a segment of God’s Word known as Biblical prophecy. Only God knows and can appoint the future:

Isaiah 46:9,10 Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure:

5. **Israel:** One would expect God to reveal himself to a people in history and that these people would have a common history. The Nation of Israel was God's beachhead to whom the Word of God came. Their unique history and survival of the faith is unique. Today, they are the only nation existing with their original four cultural foundations: race¹, creed, land, language.

6. **The church:** Christianity has accomplished what no other religion has accomplished—universal influence. The spread of Christianity is unique in accomplishments. Today, churches exist in every country in every part of the world where it is welcome.

7. **The Person of Christ,** particularly, His resurrection. One would expect, that if there is a God, he would reveal himself to man in a way that man could know him, and that he would solve man's fundamental problem (hearing, seeing, touching) See- I John 1:1-4.

In the OT, we see God revealing Himself through (a) creation, (b) theophanies, (c) dreams, (d) direct Revelation by words at Mount Sinai, (e) indirectly through the words of inspired prophets, (f) through the history OF THE NATION OF ISRAEL.

THE GOSPEL (EVANGELION) OF GOD

Romans 1:1 "Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God . . . "

The gospel is about God revealing Himself in and through the person of Christ.

“The gospel of God” describes the ORIGIN of the gospel message. It is from God. It is good news God is; He has revealed Himself; and He has a message of good news to give to mankind through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. THE DOCTRINE OF REVELATION

INTRODUCTION

¹ Technically, that Jews are a race is greatly disputed. Judaism is a religion, not a race . . . though a minority claim to be of Hebrew descent. “What is Judaism? What does it mean to be a Jew? Most people, both Jewish and gentile, would instinctively say that Judaism is a religion. And yet, there are militant atheists who insist that they are Jews! Is Judaism a race? If you were to say so, most Jews would think you were an antisemite!” (Retrieved from Judaism 101. <http://www.jewfaq.org/judaism.htm>).

The difference between the Revolution in France and the Revolution in America is the difference between the French Enlightenment and the Reformation. The former was based on human reason and the later was based on the Word of God. The difference between Mexico and the United States is not one of natural resources, but the difference between Catholicism and Protestantism. Simply put, what has made America great is Biblical base. But, in the last fifty years, we have seen the erosion of that base and the Bible has been under assault by evolutionists, feminists, historians, archaeologists, abortionists, homosexuals, and liberal theologians. Its veracity has been challenged. For this reason, we need to investigate the questions, “Can we trust the Bible?” and “Is it accurate?”

THE HISTORICAL PROBLEM

While it is not within the scope of this paper to discuss all of criticisms the Bible has received, a short list having to do with inspiration may suffice: The secularist looks at the Bible as a product of human imagination. Some Levantine scholars believe some parts of the Bible are from God, but other parts are not; that the Bible’s theology may be correct, but the historical sections are untrustworthy. Others assert the Bible is inspired if it speaks to you. Many think the writers were inspired, but the text itself cannot be trusted. Some suppose the events of the Bible were inspired, but not the text. Some suppose the thoughts of the Biblical writers were inspired, but not their words. These ideas fly in the face of the clear teaching of God’s Word about inspiration.

CLAIMS OF INSPIRATION

Very few books claim to be of divine origin, but the Bible does. It claims to be a book inspired by God Himself. The words, “Thus saith the Lord,” are found over 2000 times. God has disclosed Himself and that Revelation has been inscripturated. Let’s take a look at some of the Biblical claims.

“I will be with your mouth, and teach thee what you shall say” (Exodus 4:10-12).

God was with Moses and spoke through Moses. Moses spoke as he was guided and directed by YHWH.

*Now these are the last words of David . . . 2 "The Spirit of the LORD spoke by me, And His word was on my tongue. 3 "**The God of Israel said**, The Rock of Israel spoke to me, 'He who rules over men righteously, Who rules in the fear of God (2 Samuel 23:1-3).*

David declares that he was instrument of Divine Revelation whereby the Spirit of the Lord communicated God’s Word to him. He claims that God’s words were on his lips and God at times spoke to him directly. This is a claim for inspiration.

Paul stated, “If anyone thinks he is a prophet, or spiritual, he should acknowledge that what I am writing to you is a command of the Lord” (1 Corinthians 14:37). Here, Paul claims his words are not his own, but the Lord’s. Further, he expected the “saints” (1:2), “prophets,” and the “spiritual” in Corinth to acknowledge inspired revelation.

“ . . . we also constantly thank God that when you received from us the word of God's message, you accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God . . . ” (1 Thessalonians 2:13).

Paul makes it clear that when the Thessalonians received his message, they received more than the word of a man. They received the Word of God. Paul seems to be cognizant that he had become a human instrument whereby the Word of God was inscripturated.

All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness (2 Timothy 3:16)

The word, “*Scripture*” is in the singular because it refers to the whole of inspired text. In one way or another, every book in the Bible is referred to as Scripture. The term, “inspired” (qeopneustoj) is made up of two Greek words, “Theos” (God) and “pneustoj” which means “wind” or “spirit” or “breath.” Paul is saying that all Scripture is “God breathed.” He is not saying the authors were inspired. The emphasis is on the authority of the text. This passage occurs at the end of chapter three because Paul has warned against a “falling away” in the last days. Only by having the Bible as one’s anchor of faith can he keep from drifting away into apostasy. Four advantages of Scripture are mentioned: teaching, reproof, correction, and training in righteousness. The Bible tells a man what is right, what is wrong, how to correct what is wrong, and how to do what is right.

God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways (Hebrews 1:1).

The text reads this way, “In many times and in many ways, God spoke. . .” Note the certainty here, “God spoke.” And he has in at least four ways (1) directly and verbally, (2) indirectly through the angel of the Lord, (3) by the prophets, and finally, (4) through the Son.

For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. (Hebrews 4:12).

Notice the term, “living” or “quick” in the KJV. It comes from the Greek word, “zao” (Zw/n) from which we get the term eternal “life.” Zao is the life of God. By using “zao”, the author informs us that the Bible takes on the characteristics and perfections of God. “The Father has life (zoa) in Himself” (John 5:26). For this reason, we can depend on the Word of God to discern our thoughts and help us achieve the purposes of God for our lives. While there are many good books in print, none are living nor do they have divine power like the Bible.

For no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God (2 Peter 1:21).

The word, “*prophecy*” refers to the OT Scriptures or the Word of God. Peter, who is also concerned about apostasy, tells us that the OT is not of human origin; i.e., the result of human will. The word, “moved” is a present, passive, participle. The passive indicates that the Holy Spirit acted upon men. The participle “moved” (fe,rw, phero) can be translated “carried,” “lifted up,” “guided,” “moved,” or “sustained.” The image before us is that of a ship being driven along by the winds. He affirms a fact, “men empowered by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.”

DEFINITION OF INSPIRATION

The term, “inspiration” may be defined as the work of the Holy Spirit whereby he aided Biblical authors to accurately transfer God’s thoughts to the original parchment. Hence, Biblical scholars have coined the term, “verbal, plenary” inspiration inferring that ALL of Scripture has a divine origin and that every word can be trusted.

This understanding certainly has merit. For example, when Jesus was arguing about the resurrection, He quoted the voice of the Father, “I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob ‘? He is not the God of the dead but of the living.” (Matthew 22:32). Jesus based His whole argument for the resurrection on the present, active tense of the Greek verb, “Egw, eivmi” (I am). In so doing he affirmed the accuracy of each word.

In Peter’s statement about Paul, we read: “just as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you, ¹⁶ as also in *all his letters*, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as *they do also the rest of the Scriptures*, to their own destruction.” (2 Peter 3:15, 16). Peter links all of Paul’s letters with the Scripture affirming to us the plenary nature of inspiration.

Furthermore, the very nature of inspiration implies that the Bible is infallible and inerrant; that is, it is not false, mistaken, or defective. If God’s thoughts have been accurately transferred to the original autographs, then inspiration implies perfection. If fallible human instrumentality precludes an infallible original document, then we must logically conclude that the whole of Scripture is errant and fallible. If, however, we preclude the Holy Spirit was at work making human instrumentation infallible, then we can properly conclude the Scripture is inerrant and infallible. The Holy Spirit is not the author of error.

INSPIRATION DOES NOT MEAN:

By inspiration, **we are not referring to the author being inspired, but to the text being inspired.**

Inspiration is not a boost of emotional energy associated with one who may be motivated to write a great song or book. Inspiration is not about motivation or genius. One can be a motivated genius and still be in error. Biblical authors were guided by the Holy Spirit to write God’s ideas accurately in a text.

By inspiration, **we do not mean the author’s thoughts were inspired, but that the words of the original text were inspired.** Thoughts must be put into words. Since words are the ships that carry thought-cargo, it is the words that become the vehicle of thought. To suppose that thought-cargo is guided

by a Captain's compass, and not the ship does violence even to the thought-cargo. If a ship is not properly guided, its cargo will not reach port. Likewise, if words are not inspired, they will not accurately convey thoughts. The result would be that we could not trust the words of the text.

By inspiration, we do not mean that some parts are more inspired than other parts. While some portions of the Bible may be more important than other parts, all of Scripture is equally inspired, the historical portions as well as the doctrinal portions.

By inspiration, we do not mean that the Scriptural is inspirational in the sense that a reader may feel good when he reads the Bible. While the Bible certainly generates great ideas and motivates people to serve God, this is not what we mean by inspiration. We must make a distinction between inspiration of the text, and the excitement of a reader of the text; between inspiration and illumination; between inspiration and motivation.

By inspiration, we do not mean the Bible contains "inspired concepts", "inspirational themes," and "motivational ideas." While the Bible does do all these things, inspiration has to do with the transfer of God's thoughts through a human instrument to a parchment. Otherwise, the reader would be constantly having to decide what concepts and themes and ideas are inspired and which are not.

By inspiration, we are not saying the events of the Bible are inspired by God, but that the text is inspired by God. If the event is inspired and not the text, then interpretive authority resides within the interpreter and not the text. Inspiration refers to God's superintendence over the inscription of the text.

By inspiration, we do not mean everything an author wrote was inspired, nor do we mean that when he was writing Scripture that at times he was inspired. Paul wrote many letters, but not all of them were instruments of revelation. Only certain letters were of divine origin and they are contained in the NT. Likewise, every word in Paul's autographs is inspired, not just part of the words.

By inspiration, we do not mean dictation. God did not dictate each word for the author to write. God used the human author's mind and vocabulary to script His Word. In this sense, the Word of God, like Christ, has a divine origin and human origin.

HISTORICAL CONFIRMATION OF INSPIRATION

Consider the following views from early church fathers. The following comes from George Duncan Berry's Book (1919), The Inspiration and Authority of Holy Scripture, A Study in the Literature of the First Five Centuries which are quoted by Harold Lindsell (1976), The Battle for the Bible. Other sources are so noted.

Josephus: Barry wrote of Josephus, "In speaking of Moses, Josephus describes him as a prophet is so exalted a sense that his words are to be regarded as the Words of God himself" (Lindsell, p. 46).

Clement: “You have carefully studied the Sacred Scriptures, which are the true utterances of the Holy Spirit” (Lindsell, p. 47).

Justin Martyr: Lindsell says of him, ‘We are told the writers ‘received from God’ the knowledge they were taught” (p. 47).

Irenaeus: Barry says, Irenaeus “insists most strongly” that the writers of Scripture “were filled with perfect knowledge on every subject . . . for they spoken by the Word of God and His Spirit” (Lindsell, p. 49).

Tertullian: Barry writes, “It would be difficult to overstate the reverence paid by Tertullian to the Scriptures of both the Old and New Testaments . . . Tertullian did not hesitate to say that the very phrases of Holy Scripture are the result of Inspiration . . .” (Lindsell, p. 49, 50).

Origen: Barry writes, “To Origen, the Holy Scriptures and the teaching of the Spirit were the final and absolute spring of Divine truth . . .” and that Origen said, “The sacred volumes are fully inspired by the Holy Spirit, and there is no passage either in the Law or the Gospel or the writings of an Apostle, which does not proceed from the inspired source of Divine Truth” (Lindsell, p. 51).

Luther: In Luther’s confession at Worms, he unabashedly said about the Scripture, “Here I Stand!” Luther was contrasting the authority of the Catholic Church with that of the Bible.

Calvin: “The Holy Spirit” declares Calvin, “dictated to the prophets and the apostles” the writings of sacred Scripture. “God was pleased to commit and consign his word to writing . . .” (Calvin: Institutes, III, 163.)

Wesley: He believed in the full inspiration and inerrancy of the Bible (J. Wesley, “Preface,” Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament, pp. 10-11).

It was not until modern times and particularly those of the Wellhausen school that inspiration came into question. Wellhausen (1844-1918) was a brilliant, radical, rationalistic German theologian that simply said, “miracles do not happen” and began to radically depart from the traditional dating of OT books. Wellhausen humanized the Bible and launched the movement known as “Higher Criticism.” Essentially, all of modern, evangelical scholarship has been aimed at reaffirming the inspiration of Scripture and answering Wellhausen’s critical movement, is still rippling through our universities and institutions. His criticism is not “higher” academically. Wellhausen did not do legitimate textual criticism to determine textual variations among manuscripts. His goal was to attack and destroy the whole concept of inspiration. He was like man on a teeter totter hanging over a cliff with his gun aimed at a theologian on the other end. In shooting the man balancing the beam on which he sat, he committed suicide.

In conclusion, while we have not “proved” inspiration, we have demonstrated the Scripture claims to be inspired. Furthermore, the church fathers have consistently affirmed the authority and perfection of Scripture. We are on solid ground when we hold fast this confidence. First, we assert the Bible is no

ordinary book. It is a living book that has the power to save souls and change lives. Second, inspiration applies to the original autography and not to translations. Our translations are only a witness to the original. Textual criticism is a legitimate and needed science. Third, the original text is verbally inspired; that is, every word is important and issues may be decided on the accurate representation of a single word. Fourth, the Bible as a whole is inspired; that is, there is a canon of sacred literature, which is limited to inspired books. There are many fine books in the world, but only one has a divine stamp. Sixth, because the Bible is inspired, scholars assert the infallibility of the original text; that is, the autography is without error and can be fully trusted. We have in our hands the endearing and enduring Word of God.

THE SEVENFOLD PERFECTION OF GOD'S WORD

Psalm 19

	TITLE	CHARACTER	BENEFIT
1	Law	Perfect	Conversion
2	Testimony	Sure or faithful	Wisdom
3	Statutes	Righteous	Joy
4	Commandment	Pure/Clear	Light
5	Fear of the Lord	Clean/pure	Eternal
6	Judgments	True	Warning (10-12)
7	Judgments	Righteous	Reward (10-12)

When you have an issue in your life, where do you go to find answers? Generally speaking, Christians today will seek assistance from a friend, a psychologist, or run down to the local bookstore and look in the "Self Help" section to find a book on self-improvement. However, it was not always this way. At one time, the puritans believed that God's Word was sufficient for all of man's spiritual needs. They were correct. Consider the following statements about the virtue of looking to God's Word to find the answer to a spiritual problem you are facing.

THE WORD OF GOD IS PERFECT

Psalm 19:7 The law (tr;AT, torah) of the LORD is perfect (hm'ymit., law-meem), converting (tb;yvim, shuv or shuwb) the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple.

The word “law” is the Hebrew word “torah” (tr;ÛAT«). “Torah” is the word the Hebrew community uses to refer to the first five books of the OT. The word “torah” is a general word that refers to God’s law, laws, instructions, or body of law. “Torah” refers to the Ten Commandments” (Exodus 24:12) as well as specific instructions on various ceremonies and rituals (Leviticus 6:2). Jesus is the living Torah, the subjective perfection of God’s Word. Christendom believed itself to be God’s realm because it was governed by the law of God as set forth in the Scriptures. Furthermore, it saw itself as the new Israel of God and no less subject to the moral teachings in Torah. It is a modern heresy that holds that the law of God has no meaning and no binding force for men and their institutions. Those who keep the torah are blessed (Psalm 119:10). It takes understanding to keep God’s torah (Psalm 119:34). It is “wicked” to depart from the torah (Psalm 119:53; Is. 30:9). Embodied in the word *torah* is the whole concept of the authority of God (Isaiah 2:3). Unlike humanistic, man-made “laws” which are spurious and often frivolous, a torah is fully sanctioned by YHWH. Every nation is responsible to the torahs of God (Isaiah 1:10; 24:5; 42:4).

YHWH is the Great Lawgiver, and to depart from Torah is to depart from righteousness.

Isaiah 33:22 For the LORD is our judge, the LORD is our lawgiver, the LORD is our king; he will save us.

The word “perfect” means “whole or complete or wholesome.” The Bible is the complete revelation of God to man. It began with God speaking to Adam and was completed during the apostolic age shortly after the Son of God appeared in history. Nothing more needs to be added. It is a completed, finished work of inspiration.

Law cannot save the soul, but it can warn sinners of error and turn a person to Christ. The word “converting” comes from the Hebrew word *shuwb* (bWv), a Hiphil participle, which means “to turn,” “to bring back,” or “to refresh.” It is translated “turn” 185 times. In Genesis 42:5, *shuwb* is translated “restored” in the story of Joseph where Joseph predicted that the chief butler in Pharaoh’s court would be restored to his former position. In Exodus 4:7, Moses’ leprous flesh was turned (*shuwb*) back to normal. In 2 Samuel 14:3 *shuwb* is translated “fetch home again.” David called for Absalom, his estranged son, and brought him home again. In Proverbs 25:13, *shuwb* is translated “refresh” where the text says a good servant refreshes his master. In Ezekiel 14:6 *shuwb* is translated “repent.” When a person repents, he turns from his sin back to God. David is telling us that the Word of God is complete, and the Hiphil verb (causative) tells us that the Bible has the power to convert the soul. A sinner who will read the Word of God can experience the “new birth” (regeneration). A straying Christian who will read the Word of God can be turned back to Christ because the Word of God can restore the heart.

THE WORD OF GOD IS SURE

Psalms 19:7b The testimony of the LORD *is* sure, making wise the simple.

The word “testimony” refers to the Torah, particularly to the **Ten Commandments**, because the Ten Commandments are a witness to the character of God. The Torah is about God’s law. Because the law is based on the character of God and comes as a direct reflection of the character of God, the law is absolute, unchanging, and immutable (Psalm 119: 137, 138, 142, 144) . “I, the Lord, change not” (Malachi 3:6). God’s character is the basis of law, of ethics, of right and wrong. To study law is to study theology; to study theology is to study law. The practice of law is none other than applied theology.

The word “sure” (חנ"מ'א/נ<, , aman) is a Niphal verb implying that the Word of God has been acted upon so that it is made “sure.” The word “sure” means “faithful” or “trustworthy” or “reliable.” The Bible is reliable and is the canon of truth; i.e., it is a ruler by one can use to measure the truth of a thing.

The word *aman* is translated “believe” (Genesis 15:6), “verified” (Genesis 42:20), “amen” (Numbers 5:22, under an oath), “nursing father” (Numbers 11:12), and “faithful” (Numbers 12:7). The Bible can be trusted because it is inspired by a holy, loving God. This cannot be said sources grounded in psychology and humanistic law.

The word “wise” (חָכָם, chakam) is the word for *wisdom*. It is translated "cunning" ten times (See 1 Chronicles 22:15 and 2 Chronicles 2:7, 14). The word "subtle" and is used to describe Jonadab's plot to rape Tamar. *Chakam* is translated “wise” 102 times in the OT. The psalmist is saying that the Word of God can make its reader sharp, intelligent, wise, and discerning. Wisdom begins with the fear of the Lord, not a master’s degree in psychology, or a juris doctor’s degree in law by the BAR association (Proverbs 1:7).

THE WORD OF GOD IS RIGHTEOUS

Psalms 19:8 The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes

The word “statutes” (צדקות, , paqad) refers to the legal regulations by God established in Israel. Statutes are specific, prohibitions against the moral law. The word “right” (יָשָׁר, yashar) is the word “righteousness” or “straight” in Hebrew. It is translated “please” in 2 Chronicles 30:4, “straight” in 2 Chronicles 32:30), “upright” in Job 1:1, and “righteous” in our present text. It means *straight or true*. The analogy before us is that of a plumb line used to construct a wall. The Bible is our plumb line for what is right. It is God’s tape measure for evaluating right and wrong. It is not only accurate on what it speaks, it is the sufficient guide for morals, ethics, integrity, virtue, and the way to heaven. Only God can define right and wrong, goodness, and evil. When man seeks to define morals, he tolerates evil and condemns truth.

The word “rejoicing” is *samach* (ble-yxeM.f;m), a Piel participle implying intense, vigorous joyfulness. It is translated "be glad" 34 times in Scripture. It is used of Jonah's glad heart over the relief he found under the shade of a gourd. In Exodus 4:14, the term is used of Aaron's joy in seeing Moses after a forty year separation. It is translated "be merry" one time in 1 Kings 4:20. In the wonderful prosperous times of Solomon's reign, the people were eating and drinking and making merry. Want to be happy? Then plunge into the Word of God.

THE WORD OF GOD IS PURE

Psalm 19:8b “the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes.”

The word “commandment” is the Hebrew word *mitzvah* (tw:c.m, mitzvah), which refers to a code or law given by God. In Leviticus 4:2, a mitzvah is a prohibition to do a thing; that is, when a person does a “thou shall not” he breaks a *mitzvah*. He injures God or his neighbor.

The word “pure” (hr'B', bar) is the word for *clean or clear*. It is translated “cleanness” in 2 Samuel 22:21 when David talked about clean hands. In law, a person who has clean hands is a person who has not violated a moral principle in dealing with others. The idea here is that God's word is like water that cleanses the eye so a man can see clearly. So often people say, “Well, the Bible is just too hard to understand.” This is not true because the Bible is clear on what it says and what it means. If there is a cloud surrounding the Bible, the fog is in the heart of man.

Because the Bible is pure we must beware of those who want to integrate humanism with Christianity, psychology with theology, and Greek philosophy with the gospel.

A teacher asked this question, “What do you get when you cross a chicken with a cow? Answer: eggnog. Well, “What do you get when you cross theology with psychology?” Answer: psychoheresy. The Bible is pure and God's man will not pollute his ministry with the teachings of man.

Colossians 2:8 Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

The word “enlightening” (tr;yaim, ore) means to light up as in when God lit up the universe on the day He set the lights in the sky (Psalm 97:4). It is translated "clear" in Amos 8:19 where Amos speaks of a “clear day.” It is translated "shine," "break of day" (2 Samuel 2:32), “kindle,” and “set on fire.” All these words refer to the giving of light so man can see clearly. The Bible is like water in that it cleanses the eyes. It is like a lamp in that it gives light so the eye can see.

THE WORD OF GOD IS CLEAN

Psalm 19:9 The fear of the LORD *is* clean, enduring for ever:

The word “fear of the Lord” (**hw"hy> ta;r>yl**, *yarat Yavah*) is another title for God’s Word. Fear is an effect of reading the Torah. A man should be afraid to disobey His commandments—to offend God or injure one’s neighbor or his property. Fear is the beginning of wisdom (Proverbs 1:7).

The word “clean” (**hr'Ahj**, *tawhowr*) means pure and unpolluted. It is translated “clean,” “pure,” and “fair.” It is pure because God’s Word is inspired. Though His Word came through sinful men, He superintended its inscription in such a way as to protect its purity. Because it is pure, it has a cleansing effect on those who read it. David could say, “Create in me a clean heart” (Psalm 51:10). A man can be clean by taking the soap of God’s Word and applying it to his heart (Psalm 119:9-11).

Further, God’s Word “endures forever.” Because the Torah is a reflection of God’s character and because God’s character is unchanging and immutable, God’s Word is permanent. Because it “endures forever” it is absolute. Because it is absolute, it perpetuates moral absolutes and cleanses men of the moral relativism that infects this age.

THE WORD OF GOD IS TRUE

Psalm 19:9 . . .the judgments of the LORD *are true and* righteous altogether.

The Bible is called “the judgments of the LORD.” The Hebrew word for “judgments” is *misphat* (**hw"ihy>-yjeP.v.mi()**). The Bible is called the *Misphat of the Lord* because the Bible is a record of God’s judicial decisions on what is right and what is wrong. Like a court recorder keeps a record of the judge’s decisions in the court record, the Spirit created the court record of God’s decisions. The word “true” (**tm,a/, 'emet**) refers to something that is firm or faithful. In this case, “true” refers to the faithfulness of God’s Word. In other words, when the Bible speaks on fornication, family, marriage, abortion, or homosexuality, you are engaging truth and righteousness. When Paul addressed Felix on “righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come” he pierced the congested conscience of a governor by using God’s Word.

GOD’S WORD IS RIGHTEOUS

Psalm 19:9 The fear of the LORD *is* clean, enduring forever: the judgments of the LORD *are true and* righteous altogether.

The Hebrew word for “righteous” is *tsadaq* (**qd;c'**) and it is different than the word “right” in the previous verse. *Tsadaq* means “just;” that is, it is balanced. Because it is balanced it can meet the needs of every person. No matter what you need, the Bible addresses your concerns. If you need hope, encouragement, comfort, strength, wisdom, or discernment, the Bible can minister to you.

THE VALUE OF GOD’S WORD

Psalm 19:10-12 More to be desired *are they* than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover, by them is thy servant warned: *and* in keeping of them *there is* great reward. Who can understand *his* errors? Cleanse thou me from secret *faults*.

Having given a sevenfold description of God's Word, *the psalmist now estimates its value*. It is more valuable than a pot of gold. Throughout history all cultures have esteemed this precious metal as a commodity, as a mineral, and precious object. Terms like "Gold fever," "Gold rush," "Good as gold," "Golden Anniversary," "The golden years," and "Go for the gold," clue us in to the historical lust men have for this shiny object. It has been a symbol of power, wealth and success. It has provoked greed and lust. It has been hoarded and unspent, and it has been spent and dispersed as a man's greatest expression of love. Over gold, brides have been won, and wars have been fought. Man's love for gold and relentless pursuit of this precious metal is well founded in history.

On January 24, 1848, John Sutter smashed a rock that did not break and upon further investigation he discovered the rock was soft and yellow. It was Gold! With this chance discovery of a few, small gold nuggets on the American River, everything changed in California. The news spread like wild fire. Men, women, and youth forsook their families and homes and comforts and headed to California. They came from the east coast, Alaska, China, Chili, Mexico, Spain, and Britain in search of gold. They traveled in ships, covered wagons, on horseback, and on foot. They worked 18 hours a day enduring the cold rainy months and the long, hot dry summers. Why? Because of unquenchable lust for gold!

What is your estimation of this Book?

If the Bible is more precious than gold, why do men study Scientology, Buddhism, Marx, Freud, Aristotle, Mormonism, Islam or Margaret Sanger to obtain wisdom? Do you view this Book as gold? Silver? Copper? Iron? Rock? Clay? Or common dirt? Are you so infected with gold fever that you've got to mine ore from God's Word every single day, or are you so insane that you can go weeks, months, even years without touching this Book? It is sad to say, but most men will labor forty, sixty, even eighty hours a week in pursuit of literal gold and silver. Most won't spend even five minutes a day pursuing true wealth. Does your Bible shows signs of digging and scratching for golden nuggets of truth?

Not only is the Word more valuable than gold, it delights the soul more than honey excites the taste buds. Some people don't understand this, but in New Mexico, restaurants will serve sopapillas and honey for dessert. There is nothing like a hot sopapillas and some mesquite honey for dessert. It doesn't do much for your waist line, but sopapillas are so goooooood!! What sopapillas and honey are to New Mexicans, the Word of God is to the hungry heart.

Moreover by them is thy servant warned: *and* in keeping of them *there is* great reward. Who can understand *his* errors? cleanse thou me from secret *faults*.

The psalmist informs us of two benefits for studying God's Word.

First, the Bible warns (rh'z>n, zahar) the man of God of impending danger. As I travel America, I notice road signs like “Deer Crossing” or “Falling Rocks.” These signs help us to avoid danger. Like a shofar (ram’s horn), God’s word announces the advancement of enemies. Like warning label on cigarette cartons, God’s Word warns of moral dangers:

- Beware of false prophets (Media personalities)- Matthew 7:15
- Beware of men (that have government as their god)- Matthew 10:17
- Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy- Luke 12:1.
- Beware of covetousness (avarice and pornography)-Luke 12:15
- Beware of scribes [lawyers]-Luke 20:46
- Beware of dogs; beware of evil workers; beware of concision- Philippians 3:2
- Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy (Platonism, psychology, evolution)- Colossians 2:8.
- Beware of the error of the wicked (subjectivism)- 2 Peter 3:17

Second, the Bible rewards. The word “reward,” (bq,[e, eqeb) has the adjective “great” before it, which means “abundance” in Hebrew. It is translated by the phrase “ten thousand,” “abundance,” “chief,” “much” and “multitude.” Not only does keeping God’s Word have an eternal reward, the Word rushes into our lives with thousands of gifts.

The psalmist ends with a question and a prayer. The psalmist realizes that sin creeps and crawls into our minds, heart, and emotions to infect us. In desperation, he cries out to God for cleansing from the secret, hidden, obscure faults that cripple and defeat us. the answer is not in psychology or Charismatic experiences. Only by diligent attention to the Word and prayer can any man ever hope to overcome the sin that so easily besets him.

INTERPRETATION

In interpreting the Old Testament, treat it as the true, inspired, and infallible Word of God. The Old Testament should be interpreted literally except when one is a poetic or apocalyptic section of the Scripture where the rules of interpretation for apocalyptic or poetic literature must apply. The New Testament rules over the Old Testament; that is, let the NT umpire the interpretation the OT. Moreover, every verse must submit to the whole of Scripture. So, let the whole of Scripture reign over the individual text. Avoid psychologizing the text as psychology is a ploy of eastern mysticism and not Biblical thinking. With the exception of the cultic laws of Israel (ceremonial) which had a temporal purpose, the OT was meant to be applied to life. So, treat the OT as authoritative on all subjects to which it speaks.

4.7 ISRAEL'S HEARING PROBLEM

The message today entertains the question, "Do you have a hearing problem?" Most people do and don't know it. Let's take a look at the text.

Zechariah 7:1 And it came to pass in the fourth year of king Darius, *that* the word of the LORD came unto Zechariah in the fourth *day* of the ninth month, *even* in Chisleu;

Like Jeremiah and Ezekiel before him, Zechariah was a prophet as well as a priest. In the 4th year of the reign of King Darius, 518 BC in the month of Cisleu / Kislev (December), Zechariah received the Word of the Lord.

2 When the *town of Bethel* had sent unto the house of God Sherezer and Regemmelech, and their men, to pray before the LORD, 3 *And* to speak unto the priests which *were* in the house of the LORD of hosts, and to the prophets, saying, Should I weep in the fifth month, separating myself, as I have done these so many years?

The leadership of Bethel, a small town about ten miles north of Jerusalem, sent a delegation to Jerusalem with a question about the continuance of a ritual that Babylonian Jews initiated some 70 years earlier during their captivity in Babylon.

Having returned to their homeland, with the foundation of the temple laid, and half of the work completed for the their temple reconstruction, and still suffering, these Jews wanted to know if they should continue to afflict their souls as they did when they were captives in Babylon following the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 BC.

Involved in the important temple restoration project and present in Jerusalem when the delegation posed their question to the priests, the Spirit of God moved upon Zechariah.

4 Then came the word of the LORD of hosts unto me, saying, 5 Speak unto all the people of the land, and to the priests, saying, When ye fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh *month*, even those seventy years, did ye at all fast unto me, *even* to me? 6 And when ye did eat, and when ye did drink, did not ye eat *for yourselves*, and drink *for yourselves*?

Like a good lawyer, Zechariah answered their question with a question. It's not as though he did not know the answer. He did. He asked the question for the benefit of the delegation to deepen their spiritual knowledge. It is a probative question: Did you fast for my benefit, or your benefit? Were you fasting so as to better understand my will, or were you fasting for your own personal profit and prosperity?

The answer to the question was obvious. They were not fasting and praying out of obedience to the LORD God, but out of presumption and self-interest.

7 Should ye not hear the words which the LORD hath cried by the former prophets, when Jerusalem was inhabited and in prosperity, and the cities thereof round about her, when men inhabited the south and the plain?

There are some minor translation problems with this text, but the King James Version has it correct. The question is a double edge sword: First, God is asking the delegates, “Did I command you to fast and afflict your soul in the Month of Av or did this practice arise because of your own self-made religious custom?”

Second, the question identifies the most fundamental deficiency of the Jews: “Shouldn’t you obey the commands I gave to Moses and the Patriarchs?” God is saying, “I’ve already revealed my will to your fathers. Why aren’t you obeying my commands that I revealed at Sinai and through the prophets. Why are you inventing religious practices I did not order, and not doing what I’ve already commanded?”

Your fathers neglected my revealed will and invented their own religion, and I sent them into captivity. Now, you are doing the same thing. Aren’t you making up your own religious ceremonies I have not commanded, and neglecting what I have clearly commanded!

Zechariah’s question was a knockout punch: boom, bam, slam!

8 And the word of the LORD came unto Zechariah, saying, 9 Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Execute true judgment, and shew mercy and compassions every man to his brother: 10 And oppress not the widow, nor the fatherless, the stranger, nor the poor; and let none of you imagine evil against his brother in your heart.

Zechariah informs the delegation from Bethel to stop practicing their religious traditions, and get back to the heart of the law which is justice and mercy—justice in the courts for criminals and victims; and, mercy and kindness toward those afflicted by the hard knocks of life. Obedience to God’s law trumps religious ceremony every time!

The law contained 613 commands which are summarized in the Ten Commandments. Moreover, the Ten Commandments can be distilled to three principles: justice, mercy, and a humble walk with God (Hosea 6:8). In truth, they can be reduced down to two commands: Love God with all your heart, and your neighbor as yourself (Matthew 23:23).

Zechariah emphasizes the “Do’s”: justice, mercy, and compassion to their brethren.

Zechariah has some “Do Nots” related primarily to the 10th Commandment: Do not devise commercial schemes to plunder the assets of vulnerable widows, the fatherless, and aliens traveling through your market place. Stop concocting fraudulent money-making tactics to pluck your neighbor’s goose with the least amount of hissing.

11 But they refused to hearken, and pulled away the shoulder, and stopped their ears, that they should not hear.¹² Yea, they made their hearts as an adamant stone, lest they should hear the law, and the words which the LORD of hosts hath sent in his spirit by the former prophets: therefore came a great wrath from the LORD of hosts.

Sometimes it takes a genius to get to discover the root of the problem. It takes skill to catch the dirty rat that's eatin' up the cupboard. Like a good physician, Zechariah moves past all the symptoms to identify the disease that caused such poor health.

Israel had a hearing problem! They would not listen to God's Word. They had no interest in learning about Torah or their Hebrew Bible. But, it was worse than this. They were stone cold deaf to Biblical instruction. When the Word of God was read, they not only turned off their hearing aids, they got up in the middle of a synagogue service to work on a business scheme to fleece their brethren. When a prophet said, "Thus saith the Lord . . ." they put their fingers in their ears like a three-year old.

Israel had a heart disease. Their hearts were rock hard and ice cold to Biblical preaching. Every prophet faced an audience with hearts as solid as millstones. When it came to planting the law of the LORD God, Bible teachers had to plow through gravel pits.

Sound familiar? Same o' same o'.

13 Therefore it is come to pass, *that* as he cried, and they would not hear; so they cried, and I would not hear, saith the LORD of hosts: 14 But I scattered them with a whirlwind among all the nations whom they knew not. Thus the land was desolate after them, that no man passed through nor returned: for they laid the pleasant land desolate.

Zechariah patiently continued to instruct the envoy from Bethel. He reminded them of their history. Because their ancestors would not listen to God, God refused to listen to them. When their fathers rejected the Word of God, God dismissed their words in prayer. Israel's hearing problem was so great, God took away their kings, their priests, and their land. Exiled to Babylon, they were instructed by their pain. Only through the operation of sorrow, could their hearing be restored. Dr. Misery, Dr. Trouble, and Dr. Affliction became their tutors.

But, Zechariah did not leave these men with a bleeding soul. He provided a cure. In chapter 8, Zechariah informed the delegation from Bethel that though their ancestors had eaten fruit from the Poisonous Tree, God still loved them (8:1-6); that He was going to save His people from Eastern Oppressors (8:7); that He was going to be their God and rebuild their nation (8:8).

Furthermore, Zechariah exhorted these men to be strong, to finish the work God had given them at this time in history, and not give into fear (8:9-15); that God intended good and not evil for His people (8:13-18). Again, he exhorted them to major on applying God's law of truth and mercy in their gates (the seat of government), and to shun all slick commercial schemes to enrich themselves at the expense of their brethren (8:16-17).

Finally, Zechariah provides us with a **picture of perfect health**.

21 And the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, Let us go speedily to pray before the LORD, and to seek the LORD of hosts: I will go also. 22 Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the LORD of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the LORD. 23 Thus saith the LORD of hosts; In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you.

How do you recognize a healthy soul? What does perfect health look like?

Zechariah saw a day in which his weak, sickly, people would harness the healing power of Almighty God. No longer would they be deaf and dumb! No longer would they suffer from chronic heart disease and a hardening of the arteries.

First, a healthy soul is a hungry soul: “Let us go . . . seek the LORD of hosts.”

Second, a healthy soul surrounds himself with others thirsting to hear the Word of God: “Let us go . . .” The Christian life is not about the “me,” the “my,” and the “I.” It is about “us.”

Third, healthy souls seek competent, knowledgeable tutors to lead them in hearing the Word of the LORD: “shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, ‘We will go with you . . .’”; that is, hungry souls seek out godly pastors who build their ministry on the sure Word of God. They do not seek out engineers turned Bible thumper, or business men turned Bible student. They seek out men who have spent a life time studying and applying God’s Word.

In conclusion, Israel had a hearing problem. Likewise, there is a stunning deafness that has afflicted the church. Christian can watch T.V. and listen to the radio, but they have little hunger for the Word of God.

They’d rather see sports or stay up all night watching movies, but they don’t have time for morning devotions or a men’s Bible study.

They’d rather read “Sports Illustrated” or “National Geographic” than plow through Leviticus or Zechariah or the Book of Romans.

They love to listen to “Funniest Home Videos” and “Sunday Night Football,” but they hate listening to the Bible being read.

Many Christians can dance the doxology in a leotard at church, but can’t do the Two-Step when it comes to reading the Scripture in their homes.

Some believers have selective hearing. Their ears prick up when they hear a salty sermon about law and justice, but seem tone deaf to an emphasis on compassion and mercy; others, however, have a hearing

impairment when it comes to listening to the law of the LORD God, but light up like a Christmas tree when they hear a sugar-slap sermon about love and tolerance.

The Shema begins with, “Hear, Israel . . .” (Deuteronomy 6:4-6)

“Hear the Word of Lord” is the most fundamental command in Holy Writ, and a healthy Christian listens and obeys.

Isaiah 8:20 To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.

A healthy soul is a hungry soul. Be careful for what you hunger, for you will become the sum total of your desires (Psalm 42:1ff).

5 DEFINING ELOHIM (GOD)

In the beginning God created (bara) the heaven and the earth (Genesis 1:1).

The generic Hebrew word for “God” is Elohim (עֱלֹהִים) a plural of *El*. It is used over 2,300 times in the OT. But, His one and only name is “the LORD” (English) or YHWH (Hebrew tetragramaton) meaning “I am” or “I am what I am.” When Christians use the term “God” they are referring to Elohim of the Bible Who is the LORD God.

When secular men use the term “God”, we have no idea of what they are talking about because they can’t or won’t define the term. Therefore, being able to define the Christian “God” is paramount to the progress of the gospel in the world.

The truth about God is found in the Holy Scriptures. The Spirit was pleased to put all the pronouns referring to God in the masculine gender and not the feminine gender. Any and every attempt to define the LORD by gender-benders in terms that please feminism has apostasy written all over it.

5.1 THE NEED TO DEFINE GOD CORRECTLY

On our coins is engraved, “In God we Trust.” But, which God are we trusting—the Moslem God, the God of the Bible, or some other supposed deity? Who is this God and what has He revealed about Himself to man? How do we distinguish between a Hindu god, a Roman god, the god of the humanist, and the God of Christianity? Religions are not equal, and in order to distinguish between them, we must attempt to accurately define the God whom Christians are called trust.

The following are attempts to define Him:

Aristotle: “the first ground of being” (Thiessen, 1992,, p. 23).

Spinoza: “the absolute universal substance, the real Cause of all and every existence...but itself all being, of which every special existence is only a modification” (Thiessen, 1992, p. 23).

Leibniz: “the final reason of things” (Thiessen, 1992, p. 23).

Kant: “the cause of nature” (Thiessen, 1992, p. 23)

Fitche: God is “the moral order of the universe” (Thiessen, 1992, p. 23).

Hegel: “God is a spirit without consciousness” (Thiessen, 1992, p. 23).

Matthew Arnold: “the Stream of Tendency that Makes for righteousness” (Thiessen, 1992, p. 23).

THE DEFINITION OF GOD

Hume, the father of modern agnosticism, denied the possibility of any true knowledge of God (Berkhof, 1993, p. 31). To Hume, science was his god. But, science is not a god because science can only make observations about what Isaiah Science tells us what is and how things work. Science isn’t qualified to be a religion because it cannot tell us what life should be nor can it become a ruler for human behavior.

But, God can be known because He has chosen to make Himself known. He can be defined, because the He defines himself in Scripture.

The Westminster Confession:

There is but one only living and true God, who is infinite in being and perfection, a most pure spirit, invisible, without body, parts, or passions, immutable, immense, eternal, incomprehensible, almighty, most wise, most holy, most free, most absolute, working all things according to the counsel of his own immutable and most righteous will, for his own glory; most loving, gracious, merciful, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin; the rewarder of them that diligently seek him; and withal most just and terrible in his judgments; hating all sin, and who will by no means clear the guilty (Westminster Catechism, quoted by Willmington, p. 592: See Hodge, 1992, p. 134).

The Westminster Confession is certainly glorious, thorough, and correct in its definition of God, but it is too complicated to remember. I prefer a simple, but accurate definition—one I can easily quote.

A SHORT ADEQUATE DEFINITION OF GOD:

There is one, infinite, personal, virtuous, triune Spirit Being who is the Creator of the universe, the God of Israel, the Author of the Scripture, and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

DEFINING THE TERMS

He is a **Spirit**. By spirit, we do not mean that which is invisible and intangible, but that the **substance** of God is an objective, conscious, existent Spirit (Hebrew = *ruah*; Greek = *pneuma*). Originally, these words meant the moving of air or breath. Later they meant any invisible power including the invisible soul of man. A spirit has substance, consciousness, character, and permanence. Old Testament anthropomorphic expressions (eyes, hands, arms, and mouth) are not literal, but condescending expressions designed to make a spiritual impact.

If God were not a Spirit He could not be one. If He had parts, those parts would be finite. If God had a body, he would not be invisible, and He would be finite. If He had a body, He could not be an independent being. If He had a body, He could not be immutable or unchangeable because parts may be divided. If He had a body, He could not be omnipresent. If God is a Spirit, then we can only converse with Him with our Spirit. If we have a spirit and it is like His Spirit, then we must value our spirit above our bodies.

Isaiah 40:13 Who hath directed the Spirit of the LORD, or being his counselor hath taught him?

John 4:24 God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

John 10:30 I and my Father are one (The word one is neuter indicating that Jesus and the Father are one in substance, not personality.)

The Greeks made the error of thinking the gods had bodies. Likewise, modern Mormonism asserts the same error when it teaches God has a material body and that sex distinctions also apply to God (Book of Moses 6:9).

He is an **infinite** Spirit. Infinite means without limitation, without hindrance, or without boundaries. God is infinite in at least four ways: **in time, in space, ability, and in knowledge.**

Jeremiah 23:23-24 Am I a God at hand, saith the LORD, and not a God afar off? Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the LORD. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the LORD.

Genesis 18:14 Is anything too hard for the LORD? At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son.

Matthew 19:26 But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.

God in Relationship to...

Time: God is eternal (Exodus 3:13, 14; Psalm 90:2; Psalm 103:19).

Psalm 90:2 Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.

Space: God is omnipresent (Proverbs 15:3; Jeremiah 23:23, 24; 1 Kings. 8:27)

Proverbs 15:3 The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.

Ability: God is omnipotent (Jeremiah 32:17; Job 11:7-10; Psalm 103:19).

Jeremiah 32:17 Ah Lord GOD! behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee:

Knowledge: God is omniscient (Psalm 147:5; Isaiah 40:28; Psalm 139: 1-10).

Psalm 147:5 Great is our Lord, and of great power: his understanding is infinite (rP's.m, mispar: without number).

He is an infinite, **personal**² Spirit.

Exodus 33:11 And the LORD spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend. And he turned again into the camp: but his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, departed not out of the tabernacle.

Numbers 12:6 And he said, Hear now my words: If there be a prophet among you, I the LORD will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream.

Nehemiah 8:10 Then he said unto them . . . the joy of the LORD is your strength.

Isaiah 57:15 For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.

Note: God is a person and He has a mind/intelligence, emotions, and a will. Because He is a person, He can be known.

He is **one**, infinite, personal Spirit.

Deuteronomy 6:4 Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD:

Isaiah 45:5 I am the LORD, and there is none else, there is no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me:

1 Timothy 2:5 For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;

² By personal, we mean a “self-being,” that is, a being that has mind, reason, emotions, will, and sense of right and wrong. God has a personality that can be understood and defined.

Note: The word “one” (Hebrew: *echad* = “one cluster”, Numbers 13:23) refers to the **solitariness** of God in contrast to the polytheism of the day. Note however, the word *echad* does not refer to absolute oneness, but to “one set.” Using such a term includes within it the possibility of concept of the Trinity.

He is one, infinite, personal, **virtuous** Spirit

NIV Psalm 25:7 Remember not the sins of my youth and my rebellious ways; according to your love remember me, for you are good, O LORD.

NIV Psalm 71:22 I will praise you with the harp for your faithfulness, O my God; I will sing praise to you with the lyre, O Holy One of Israel.

NIV Psalm 57:10 For great is your love, reaching to the heavens; your faithfulness reaches to the skies.

He is one, infinite, personal, **triune** Spirit.

Genesis 1:26 And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.

Matthew 28:19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

Isaiah 6:4 Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts:

Note: The word “Trinity” is not a biblical word, but it is a biblical truth. Perhaps a better word would be *triune*. The idea of tri-unity is *completeness, fullness, and self-sufficiency in relationship*. For you or I to be alone on the moon, would be misery. God, however, was never lonely in the *triotic* relationship of His Person.

He is the **Creator of the universe**. God has designed and constructed a universe outside of, and apart from himself. Natural laws govern, but do not hinder God from acting in creation (Jeremiah 10:12; Psalm 8:3; Isaiah 64:8)

Genesis 1:1 In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

Note: God is sovereign in Creation, but He has allowed His rule to be challenged.

Isaiah 40:26 Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power; not one faileth.

He is **the God of Israel**. The nation of Israel, fathered by Abraham, was God's beachhead whereby he established a foothold of truth historically on the Earth (Isaiah 49:3; 43:1; 45:4-6). Through this nation mankind has come to know and understand the truth about the one, infinite, personal, triune Spirit. The concept of Israel or spiritual Israel, the believing remnant, has passed on the church; that is, He is the God of spiritual Israel or church today.

Exodus 5:1 And afterward Moses and Aaron went in, and told Pharaoh, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness.

He is **the Author of Scripture**. He is the God of the Bible, not the God of the Koran or some other work. The phrase, "Thus saith the Lord" is used at least 413 times in the Old Testament. God has spoken and the record of His Revelation has been recorded, collected, copied, translated, and preserved in the document called "The Holy Bible".

2 Timothy 3:16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

Genesis 15:1 After these things the word of the LORD came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.

2 Samuel 7:4 And it came to pass that night, that the word of the LORD came unto Nathan, saying,

2 Samuel 23:2 The spirit of the LORD spake by me, and his word was in my tongue.

He is the **Father of the Lord Jesus Christ**. The Son is the ultimate perfect Revelation of God about Himself.

John 8:42 Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me.

John 12:44ff Jesus cried and said, He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me. And he that seeth me seeth him that sent me. I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness. And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.

INSUFFICIENT CONCEPTS OF GOD

Psalm 115:1-8

1. **God is personal, but not infinite.** Such was the Greek and Roman concept in their pantheon of gods. The gods were persons, but limited in power, ability, and competence.

2. **God is infinite, but not personal.** Such is the concept of pantheism. God is often seen as an impersonal, invisible force. In Hinduism, the whole objective is to lose one's personality and to become one with the universe. The movie "Star Wars" presents the idea of "The Force"—the new age concept of an impersonal agent at work in the universe.

EFFECTS OF THE TRUE CONCEPT OF GOD ON MAN

Life has meaning because the universe and all that is in it was created with purpose. Man's life has value because God fashioned it.

TOWARD MAN

Proverbs 14:31 He that oppresseth the poor reproacheth his Maker: but he that honoureth him hath mercy on the poor.

The word "reproach" (@rEåxe) means "to taunt," "blaspheme," or "rail." It is translated "winter" in Genesis 8:22. As the "winter" uses up the harvest, a low view of God wastes man. When criminals harm or injure man, they deny the Creator.

TOWARD ANIMALS

Proverbs 12:10 A righteous man regardeth the life of his beast: but the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel.

TOWARD NATURE

Deuteronomy 20:19 When thou shalt besiege a city a long time, in making war against it to take it, thou shalt not destroy the trees thereof by forcing an axe against them: for thou mayest eat of them, and thou shalt not cut them down (for the tree of the field is man's life) to employ them in the siege:

Deuteronomy 20:20 Only the trees which thou knowest that they be not trees for meat, thou shalt destroy and cut them down; and thou shalt build bulwarks against the city that maketh war with thee, until it be subdued.

Politics is a war against ideas. War is against men, not nature.

Man can rest and worship accepting His dependence on the living God for life, sustenance, and value:

Proverbs 9:10 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.

Psalm 36:9 For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light.

Psalm 95:6 O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the LORD our maker.

Man is accountable to his Creator for what he does and how he lives:

Revelation 11:18 And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth.

Jeremiah 17:10 I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.

Romans 14:11 For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.

Romans 14:12 So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.

Conclusion: A proper understanding of God as expressed in the Bible gives Christians a message of hope to bring to a modern world struggling with meaning, fear, and oppression. It is good news God is and that He can be known. He is moving all of history toward a point of ultimate accountability. When a Christian says, “In God we trust,” he is referring to the one, infinite, personal, virtuous triune Spirit of the Bible—not to some vague, undefined, impersonal entity.

5.2 THE NAME OF GOD

While men speak of the names of God, the Bible speaks of the “name” (singular) of God (Exodus 20:7; Psalm 8:1; 48:10; 76:2; Proverbs 18:10). Berkhof (1993, p. 47) says that **to know the name of a god was a means of power over him**. Knowing the name of God is not a human invention, but a product of revelation. **The condescending Creator gave a plurality of titles so that man might comprehend the nature and truth about Him.**

God has one *zeh shem* (name) “throughout all generations”—the four letters connected with the English term “LORD” or YHWH (hw"ùhy>). God’s name is who God is -- YHWH, and the title is expressive of His existence; that is, “He is, He was, He will be.” YHWH is personal; “God” defines His function (Exodus 20:1-5; Exodus 3:15).

You can know God better by learning the name and titles belonging to God.

NAMES AND TITLES OF GOD IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

1. **El, Elohim, and Elyon:** The name “El” means “first”, “strong and mighty,” or “prominent One.” It is translated “God” at least 250 times, and the name relates to the power of God (Numbers 23:22; Deuteronomy 10:17)

Elohim is derived from the root word “alah” which means to be “smitten with fear.” This word points to God as the strong and mighty one. It is used about 2300 times in reference to the God of Israel and 700 times to pagan gods. Elohim occurs 32 times in Genesis. The name is always used in the singular except in poetry. The plural form is intensive indicating fullness of power or fullness in regards to essence as in the Christian concept of the Trinity.

Elohim is strikingly in the **plural**, but Elohim always uses verbs and adjectives in the **singular**. Never does the text say, “We are your Elohim,” but “I am your Elohim.”

Deuteronomy 32:39 “even I, am he” (aWh ynla) is singular (Deuteronomy 32:39)

Isaiah 45:5 I am the LORD (ytil'Wz dA({except}!yaew> hw"hy> ynla, note singular), and there is none else, there is no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me:

When speaking of heathen gods, the plural adjectives are used (1 Samuel 4:8).

In Ecclesiastes when it says, “Remember your Creator” the word “Creator” is really “Creators” (^ya,r>AB-ta:Qal, participle, plural, masculine, construct with pl. **m** ending dropped with 2nd masculine ending).

The name “Elyon” is derived from “alah” meaning “to go up”, or “to be elevated” or “to declare or swear.” He is the high and lofty one, worthy of notice, honor, and worship. This word is generic for God and the covenant relationship to which he has sworn Himself.

To the Phoenicians, Baal was *Elohim*; but to Israel, YHWH was *Elohim* (Berkhof, 1993, p. 49). “O YHWH, thou *art* our Elohim” (2 Chronicles 14:11).

Willmington mentions El’s four compounds (p. 592):

El-Yon: “The strongest One” (Genesis 14:17-20)

El-Roi: “The strong One Who sees” (Genesis 16:13)

El-Shaddai: “The breasted One” (Genesis 18:1)

El-Olam: “The everlasting One” (Isaiah 40: 28-31)

Others have noted the following combinations: *Elohim* is combined with other words to describe certain characteristics of God. Some examples: *Elohay Kedem* - God of the Beginning: (Deuteronomy 33:27). *Elohay Mishpat* - God Of Justice: (Isaiah 30:18). *Elohay Selichot* - God Of Forgiveness: (Nehemiah 9:17). *Elohay Marom* - God Of Heights: (Micah 6:6). *Elohay Mikarov* - God Who Is Near: (Jeremiah 23:23). *Elohay Mauzi* - God Of My Strength: (Psalm 43:2). *Elohay Tehilati* - God Of My Praise: (Psalm 109:1). *Elohay Yishi* - God Of My Salvation: (Psalm 18:46). *Elohim Kedoshim* - Holy God: (Leviticus 19:2, Joshua 24:19). *Elohim Chaiyim* - Living God: (Jeremiah 10:10). *Elohay Elohim* - God Of Gods: (Deuteronomy 10:17). (Source: All About God Ministries).

2. **Adonai:** The word is derived from either *dun* or *adan*, both of which mean “to judge” or “to rule”. Thus, the title means “Ruler” to “Who all owe allegiance” and to “Who all owe obedience.” The use of this name speaks to the divine claim of obedience from man, and provision from *Adonai* (Berkof, 1993, p. 48).

Malachi 1:6 A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master: if then I be a father, where is mine honour? and if I be a master (~ynlAda)-~aiw>), where is my fear? saith the LORD of hosts unto you, O priests, that despise my name...

Some facts about the name Adonai:

The offering of a one-eyed, three-legged ram failed to honor Adonai.

Adonai is translated in the KJV by lower case letters: Lord.

Adonai is used over 300 times in the OT.

Because Adonai is in the plural (~ynlAda), it confirms the idea of the Trinity as it does with the divine name *Elohim*. When used of men, however, the word “lord” is used always in the singular (See Genesis 24:9, **wyn"doa**). In Psalm 110, the psalmist notes, “YHWH says unto my Adonai (singular)” because an individual member of the Trinity is addressed.

Adonai implies ownership and carries with it the right to be cared for: He is “Lord of lords” (Deuteronomy 10:17); Abraham appealed to Him as “Adonai-YHWH” (Genesis 15:2). A slave had a right to his master’s protection (Exodus 12:43-45; Leviticus 22:10, 11; Psalm 145:15). To those that wait for his command, He is a shield and a reward (Genesis 15:1-3). It is YHWH-Adonai who made man (Psalm 8) who has a divine claim on the whole Earth (Psalm 97:5) and to whom the psalmist looked to for defense (Psalm 89:50; 141:8; 102:21-28). In Ezekiel, it is Adonai that lays claim on all the nations (Ezekiel 13:9; 23:49; 24:24; 28:24; 29:16). When Isaiah and Jeremiah are called in to their ministry, it is Adonai that calls them (Isaiah 6; Jeremiah 1:6).

Adonai, more than anything else, figures the Master-slave relationship. We should all say, “Adonai” “I am thy servant; give me understanding, that I may know thy testimonies” (Psalm 119:125). Jesus said,

“Why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord’ and do not what I say?” (Luke 6:46). In the New Testament, Adonai is frequently implied in the word “despot” (Luke 2:29; Acts 4:24; Jude 1:4).

3. **Shaddai and El-Shaddai**: The word *shad* (masculine) refers to the male chest and shoulders and implies strength and power. It comes from the word power or strong (**dd;v**, *shadad*) or “deal violently” (BAGD). It can mean to “pour forth” as a Rain-Giver (BAGD). The particle **yD**; *da*, means “sufficient” (BAGD). It differs from Elohim in that *Shaddai* implies the ability to subject creation to his authority making all subservient to the work of grace. Berkhof (1993) says it doesn’t refer to his crushing power, but to his gentle strength as a source of blessing and comfort to man (1993, p. 49).

The name is used over 48 times in the OT and was the primary name through which the Patriarchs understood Him.

As El-Shaddai, Elohim is the one who provides strength for service:

I am the Almighty God (yD;v; lae-ynla); walk before me, and be thou perfect (Genesis 17:1).

But his bow abode in **strength**, and the arms of his hands were made **strong** by the hands of the *mighty God* of Jacob; (from thence is the *shepherd, the stone of Israel*;) *Even* by the God of thy father, who shall **help** thee; and by the *Almighty (yD;v)*, who shall **bless** thee with **blessings** of heaven above, **blessings** of the deep that lieth under, **blessings** of the breasts, and of the womb (Genesis 49:24, 25).

In the LXX (Ruth 1:20), the Greeks translated El Shaddai by the Greek word *o`i`kano.j* which means “all sufficient.” The rabbis say the word is made up of two particles when put together meaning “self-sufficient” (Stone, 1944).

A related word, **hdv**, *shada*, refers to the female breast. Interestingly, cultic symbols often portrayed their gods loaded with female breasts to symbolize nourishment (Isis and Diana). When God appeared to aged Abraham and Sarah, he revealed Himself to them as El-Shaddai, the One who strengthens and nourishes. Even though his own body was as good as dead, he knew El Shaddai could bring life back into his body. Though he tried years earlier with Hagar to produce an heir, Abraham had to learn that what God promises, only God can give! Jacob had to limp in order to know that it is El-Shaddai that gives the promised land. Jacob was blessed by El-Shaddai (Genesis 35:11) and on his death bed He blessed Joseph’s sons in the name of El-Shaddai (Genesis 49:25).

4. **YHWH** or (**hw"hy**) *Yahweh*: This is the most sacred name to the Jews and His only Name. All of God’s names are really derived from what He does, but, YHWH is the only name that refers to His essence or being. Though it is used 6,823 times, the Jews developed a tradition of not pronouncing the NAME after the exile. When read in public, the title *Adonai* is substituted.

Scholars have disagreed over the exact meaning of the name. Stone (1944) sees **hw"hy** as related to the verb “to live” (**h\yh**, haya). The word “he” is also related to the Tetragrammaton: “But thou *art* the same, and thy years shall have no end.” (**WMT'yl al{ ^yt,Anv.W aWh-hT'a;w**) Psalm 102:28). See how it is related to the infinitive “to be,” **tAyh.l** (Genesis 10:8). Albright and his students saw the word as a Hiphal verb (causative) conveying the thought, “God creates” or “He who causes to be.” However, the proposition is based on the presumption that **hw"hy** is a Hiphal verbal form. But, the verb “to be” never occurs in the Hiphal form in the OT (Smith, 1993, p. 118).

YHWH is first used in Genesis 2:4 which convey a covenantal aspect in relation to man. Apparently, the name of YHWH was known before the time of Moses from the very fact that Abraham called Matthew Moriah *YHWH-jireh*.

God’s covenant name is “I Am”, spelled “**hy<h.a**” and it means, “I am that I am” (**hy<h.a, rv,a**) **hy<h.a**) or “I shall be what (or ‘that’) I am.” **a**, is the first person indicator in the imperfect verb “to be.” The word *LORD* comes from the four letters of the “to be” verb (**hw"hy**) and the Jews refer to it as the *Tetragrammaton* meaning “the four letters” (Exodus 3:2:13-15). It communicates the concept of *being*. It reflects the truth regarding God’s solitariness, His self-existence, His independence, His eternalness, and His unchangeableness. It implies that He is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow; that what He was to Abraham, He will be to the people of God in all ages. “I AM THAT I AM” can mean, “I WILL BE WHAT I WILL BE” or “I WILL BE WHAT YOU NEED ME TO BE.” Remember, “I Am” is the covenant keeping God, the relational God that meets the needs of His covenant people.

In the Middle Ages, scribes put in vowels and came up with Jehovah (“YaHoWaH”) which is pronounced “Ya way” by American scholars. Germans pronounced the word *Jehovah*. The Mesopotamian scribes left it as it was but eventually the scribes took the vowels from the Hebrew word “Adonai” and used them to pronounce the sacred name.. In Jewish tradition, the people never pronounce the name in public. They substitute the title “Adonai”.

God only has one name, which is YHWH.

Elohim is generic for “god”. The Jews would call YHWH “my God,” but they would not say “my YHWH.” They would say “the God,” but they would never say “the YHWH.” His people might say, “The God of Israel,” but they would not say, “The Jehovah of Israel.” *Elohim* is a concept that conveys “fullness” which is consistent with the Christian concept of the Trinity. YHWH is his name.

It is called the *Tetragrammaton* (Tetra = four; grammation = letters). It comes from the same Hebrew root (hayah) as Ehyeh: viz. “to be.”

His name *YHWH* infers “self-existence”-- “I am that I am”, the concept of always being. He has no beginning and no end. He constantly is and He is never becoming. He does not change, otherwise, he would be becoming. His name implies that He will be to His people what they need for He is “I shall be what I shall be” to you.

To the rabbis, the *Tetragrammaton* was not merely philosophical, but redemptive--that is, *YHWH* is always ready to act on behalf of his people. The Name describes what God is and will be to His people. Israel must learn, “Ehyeh, I will be (with you), hath sent me unto you.” He is what man needs, and, What man needs, He is! He will manifest Himself to the needs of men. He guides. He leads. He punishes. He hears. He saves.

YHWH is considered to be very personal to the rabbis. It is a covenant name that calls for relationship and faithfulness. Interestingly, when tempted, Eve did mention the name of the LORD, but she did mention God. When hiding in the garden, Adam and Eve hid from the “LORD God” (*YHWH Elohim*). And, it was the LORD God that made coats of skin to cover their nakedness. When sent forth from the garden, it was not *Elohim* that sent them forth, but the LORD God. After Cain and Abel and the corruption of early civilization, men began to call, not just upon *Elohim*, but upon the name of the *YHWH*. Likewise, when it came time for Noah to enter the Ark, it was *YHWH*, who in faithfulness, called the animals into the Ark. Man needs more than power (*El*), he needs the faithful mercies of covenant keeping *YHWH* who is *El*. Isn't this what Moses discovered about *YHWH* (Exodus 34:5, 7). In the future, Israel will proclaim that Jehovah is their *Elohim* (Zechariah 13:9).

In America, children are taught to pledge allegiance, “. . . one nation, under God, . . .” But, which God is America under? It sure isn't the LORD God Who created heaven and earth, and Who gave His law to His servant Moses. Such vague religious concepts deserve our contempt, not our devotion.

TRANSLATION FACTS

(Source: Collins, 1991, *Championing the Faith*, p. 15):

English translators used CAPS to distinguish between **Adonai** and **YHWH**: “LORD” for *YHWH*, and lower case, “Lord” for *Adonai*. In the LXX, *Kurios* is translated *Lord* for *YHWH*. In the Greek speaking Mediterranean world, they spoke of *YHWH* as *Kurios*. To a Jew, *YHWH* or *Adonai* or *Kurios* was the only *Elohim* (the general designation for God). To a Canaanite, Baal was *Elohim*. *Kurios* is translated *YHWH* in the LXX, not *Elohim*. When Jesus said, “ego eimi” he used the emphatic form “I am!” So identical was the Greek phrase with *YHWH* the Jews were going to execute Jesus for capital blasphemy.

Compound names (Stone, 1944; Willmington, p. 593):

Jireh: The Lord will provide (Genesis 22:13, 14): The word “Jehovah-jireh” (*ha,r>yl hw"hy>*) comes from the root word “to see” (*ha\,r*) and can be translated “*YHWH* sees.” The word “provide” comes from the Latin word *vid* or *vis*. Television means something we “see.” Invisible are things we do

not “see.” Provision means “to see beforehand.” Jehovah-jireh means “God’s provision shall be seen.” Because Abraham did not withhold his only son from God, God would not withhold His only Son from Abraham. God’s provision for Abraham’s sin was seen (provided) on this same mountain, Matthew Moriah (hY"rIMoh, from the root “seen:” ha\,r), on the day of Christ.

Rophi: The Lord our Healer (^a,p.ro hw"hy>, Exodus 15:22-26): The word *rophe* appears about 70 times in the OT and means *The Lord that heals you*. Its first usage appears in the story where Moses put a tree into the bitter waters of Marah to make them sweet. Here God promised freedom from disease *if* His people followed his instructions (v. 26). Man needs healing *physically*, and *spiritually*. God does both. He healed Miriam of sickness first (Numbers 12:13), then he healed her spiritually. God’s order is always to heal spiritually first, then physically: “Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; (then) who healeth all thy diseases;” (Psalm 103:3).

Nissi: The Lord, my banner (ySinl hw"hy>, Exodus 17:15): Not a flag, but a spear with a shiny point was lifted up as a symbol of God’s presence, power, might, and cause in the day of Joshua’s battle against Amalek, the first nation to battle Israel outside of Egypt. It is his presence that guarantees our protection: “Lo, I am with you always”—Jesus.

M’Kaddesh: The Lord thy Sanctifier (~k,v.Dlq;m. hw"hy, Leviticus 20:8 , Exodus 31:13): The first usage of M’Kaddesh is in Leviticus 20 verse 8. Very appropriate since Leviticus calls men to be holy in light of redemption! M’Kaddesh is a Piel verb implying intensity of action on the part of YHWH to make his people holy. But, there is a human side. God tells his people to be holy.

The verb is a Hithpael meaning sanctify yourselves ((~T,v.Dlq;t.hiw). Having been redeemed, God’s people can do something to become holy. Redemption is a sovereign act of God; Holiness is a joint effort between God and man. The Scriptures reveal three fundamentals about God: He is spirit (essence); He is light (holy); He is love. Holiness is the first, most fundamental attribute of God (Isaiah 6:3; 1 Samuel 2:2; Isaiah 45:21; Hosea 11:9). Practically, it is only when we are holy that we become beautiful people.

Shalom: The Lord is Peace (~Alv' hw"hy>, Judges 6:24): this name was given to the altar that Gideon built. In midst of political chaos, God manifested Himself to Gideon. So impressed was Gideon with God’s acceptance of his offering, he named the altar “YHWH shalom.” It is a wonderful thing not only to have peace with God, but to have the peace of God. Before one can fight a war for God, one must have peace with God. Ultimately, peace with God is grounded in the work of Christ (Romans 5:1), and the peace of God is grounded in the work of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22).

Tsidkenu: The Lord our Righteousness (>`Wnqed>c hw"hyi, Jeremiah 23:6): Israel fell in 722 B.C., and Judah was bound to fall to the Babylonians 586 B.C. Israel's sin brought her downfall. She was in desperate need for righteousness. But, where could the nation obtain righteousness? Eventually, righteousness would be provided by YHWH in the person of Christ as a free gift to those who believe (Romans 5:1). His righteousness is the ground of our peace with God. The word "righteous" (qyDlc) is a relational word meaning "one who fulfills his responsibilities in a covenant relationship" (Genesis 38: See Judah's statement). It is translated "even balance" in Job 31:6 and "just" in Job 27:17.

Sabaoth: The Lord of hosts (tAab'c hw"hyl, (1 Samuel 1:3): By "hosts" the Hebrew implies "armies" or "multitudes." All the stars, moon, galaxies belong to YHWH. All the angels worship him. He is the God of the masses, the God of the multitudes. He is the universal God that satisfies the needs of all men.

Rohi: The Lord my Shepherd (y(iro hw"hy>, Psalm 23:1): David knew there were fat sheep and lean sheep; healthy sheep and sick sheep; good shepherds and bad shepherds. David saw himself as a fat, healthy sheep and staring over the fence at the sick sheep. He looks at them and brags, "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want."

Shammah: The Lord who is Present (hM'v' hw"hy>, Ezekiel 48:35): What a sad day it was when YHWH left the temple. The Sun disappeared and darkness settled on the nation. All hope, all love, all protection, all provision vanished from the once holy city. The Babylonians squashed Israel's armies, pillaged the city, and enslaved its people. Since that day, every Jew has longed for the day the LORD would return to Jerusalem to be present among His people. That day is coming, and is now here in a first fruits way in the Assembly of God's people (Ephesians 2:19, 20).

NAMES OF GOD IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

1. *Theos*: This Greek name is the generic NT. equivalent of the OT name *Elohim*.
2. *Kurios*: This name means "lord" and it was the Greek translation of **YHWH** in the LXX (Septuagint). To the Jews, *kurios* was YHWH.
3. *Pater*: this was the most common title used by Christ. His use of the word shed new light on God's relationship to man and God's relationship to Christ. With Christ, the Father & Son relationship was a declared status (Psalm 2), but with man, God can only be "Father" by natural creation or by spiritual re-creation.

Two words describe how men should respond to Him: "fear" (*yir ah*) and "worship" (*shachah*). By fear we mean a consciousness of God that yields obedience to His law-order. It is first used in Genesis 20:11. The term "worship" is first used in Genesis 22:5 and it means "to bow down" or "to stand under" the

authority of. It use with Abraham implied “listening,” “hearing,” “obeying,” “trusting,” and “offering a gift to the LORD.” It had nothing to do with clapping hands and jumping up and down like a pogo stick.

Conclusion: It is good news we can not only know about God, but we can know Him personally. The word *God* is *Elohim*, a generic word for God. His only name is YHWH, the *Tetragrammaton*, which expresses the concept of always being what man needs. Other “names” are really titles which express Who He is in relation to His creation. Knowing His name and titles help us to understand the truth about God.

You can know God by learning His name. Father YHWH revealed Himself to men through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. By accepting Christ for Who He claimed to be, you can enter into a relationship with Elohim and know Him as Father (John 1:12). THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

Questions: What is God like? What are His virtues?

You can understand what God is like by studying three distinct attributes.

The God of the Bible is an “infinite, personal, triune Spirit.” In order to understand Him better, seekers need to understand three aspects of his being: His infiniteness, His personality, and His character.

HIS INFINITE ATTRIBUTES

Theologians refer to infinite attributes as “incommunicable,” or those distinctive capacities, which God alone possesses and does not share with His creation.

1. **His eternalness:** This defines God’s relationship to time. God is beyond time. He never began and will never end. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. He was never young, and He never ages. He is untarnished, unstained, and unchanged in all that He is (Psalm 102: 25-27).

Psalm 90:2 Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.

2. **His omniscience:** This defines God’s relationship to knowledge. If knowledge is power, He is all-powerful. He is all-powerful in that He knows all things. The Biblical God has never learned anything, nor can He be taught. He is the source of all knowledge. Strangely, He has the capacity to forget (Heb 10:17). His knowledge is perfect, comprehensive, and incomprehensible to man (1 Samuel 16:7; Proverbs 15:3; 1 Chronicles 28:9, 17; Jeremiah 17:10; Job 23:10; 24; 23; Psalm 1:6; 33: 13; Hebrews 4:13).

Proverbs 15:3 The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.

Psalm 147:5 Great is our Lord, and of great power: his understanding is infinite.

Jeremiah 17:10 I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.

1 Chronicles 28:9 And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind: for the LORD searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: if thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever.

3. **His omnipotence:** Man is frequently frustrated because he either doesn't know what to do, or knows what to do but lacks the capacity to do it. God is never frustrated, never discouraged, and never tired. His omnipotence means that God never fails; that He is never manipulated. His power is self-originating and self-sustained. He spoke and worlds came into being. He knows no limitations but that which His character demands. And while He possesses absolute power, for a time He allows men to challenge His authority and to exercise their will (Job 9:8; Psalm 89:113; Psalm 115:3; Is 40:28; Daniel 4:5; Matthew 8:3).

Genesis 17:1 I am the Almighty God.

Psalm 115:3 But our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased.

Matthew 19:26 With God all things are possible.

Being all-powerful does not mean God can contradict his character. He is without contradiction. Some have asked, "Can God make a rock so big, he can't move it?"

These polarized assertions are vainly discussed. There are some things God cannot do. For example: He cannot break His Word or tell a lie.

4. **His omnipresence:** God is the circumference of nothing and the center of everything. He is not in one place more than another, and there is no place man can go where God is not there. He knows no spatial limitations and is beyond the confines of space. Yet, he is ever-present (1 Kings 8:27; Isaiah 66:1; Acts 7:48, 49; Acts 17:27, 28).

Job 23:10 But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.

Psalm 139:8 If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.

5. **His Self-existence:** Man is dependent on all things for life: air, food, minerals, vitamins, water, and a hundred other things. But God needs nothing. He is uncaused and He is unaffected. While man is dependent on all things for life, God is independent of all things. He is not only independent of all things; He has called all things to be dependent on Him (Psalm 94:8; Isaiah 40:18; Daniel 4:35; Acts 7:25; Romans 9:19; 11:33,34; Ephesians 1:5).

John 5:26 For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself;

6. His immutability: The only things that do not need to be changed are those things which are perfect. God is unchanged and needs no change. He is perfect. He is complete. It is impossible for Him to change or be altered, while the very problem with man is that he does change (Exodus 3:14; Psalm 102:26-28; Isaiah 41:4; 48:12; Malachi 3:6; Romans 1:23; Hebrews 1:11,12).

Malachi 3:6 For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.

Isaiah 40:28 Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding.

HIS PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES

God is a person and not an infinite force. As a person, He possesses attributes. They are sometimes called communicable attributes because God shares these to some degree with His creation.

1. His Intellect:

Jeremiah 10:12 He hath made the earth by his power, he hath established the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched out the heavens by his discretion.

Psalms 8:4 What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?

Isaiah 64:8 But now, O LORD, thou art our father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand.

Romans 11:34 For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counselor?

2. His emotions or sensibility:

Joshua 23:16 When ye have transgressed the covenant of the LORD your God, which he commanded you, and have gone and served other gods, and bowed yourselves to them; then shall the anger of the LORD be kindled against you, and ye shall perish quickly from off the good land which he hath given unto you.

Psalms 103:8 The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy.

Psalms 103:9 He will not always chide: neither will he keep his anger forever.

Nehemiah 8:10 Then he said unto them, Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared: for this day is holy unto our Lord: neither be ye sorry; for the joy of the LORD is your strength.

Ephesians 3:17 The LORD thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing.

3. His will:

Numbers 23:19 God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?

Psalms 33:9-11 For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast. The LORD bringeth the counsel of the heathen to nought: he maketh the devices of the people of none effect. The counsel of the LORD standeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations.

Isaiah 43:13 Yea, before the day was I am he; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand: I will work, and who shall let it?

HIS VIRTUOUS ATTRIBUTES

These are his distinctives that make God unique, worthy of honor, and define his character. These are His virtues. Man can also possess these virtues, but because of sin, he does so with great difficulty. God's throne, the Ark of Testimony (Exodus 25ff), is foreshadowed as a continuous circle with righteousness demarcating half His virtues and mercy the other half.

Psalms 85:10 Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.

Psalms 25:10 All the paths of the LORD are mercy and truth unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies

God's Righteousness: These would include the virtues of truth, holiness, justice, anger, zeal, and faithfulness.

Psalms 89:14 Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before thy face.

Psalms 89:14 Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before thy face.

Psalms 47:8 God reigneth over the heathen: God sitteth upon the throne of his holiness.

Ezekiel 5:13 Thus shall mine anger be accomplished, and I will cause my fury to rest upon them, and I will be comforted: and they shall know that I the LORD have spoken it in my zeal, when I have accomplished my fury in them.

Isaiah 25:1 O LORD, thou art my God; I will exalt thee, I will praise thy name; for thou hast done wonderful things; thy counsels of old are faithfulness and truth.

Righteousness: the fulfilling of obligations of a legal, relational contract. When one has fulfilled his duty to another, he is said to be righteous (See Genesis 37 with Tamar where Judah says: "she is more righteous than I"). The word *justification* comes from the word righteous. Justification is a legal term and is used by a judge to declare the accused righteous in the eyes of the court.

Exodus 9:27 And Pharaoh sent, and called for Moses and Aaron, and said unto them, I have sinned this time: the LORD is righteous, and I and my people are wicked.

1 Samuel 12:7 Now therefore stand still, that I may reason with you before the LORD of all the righteous acts of the LORD, which he did to you and to your fathers.

1 Samuel 24:17 And he said to David, Thou art more righteous than I: for thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil.

2. **Holiness:** God is holy: When the Scripture says *God is holy*, it seeks to communicate at least three facts about God: (a) that God is independent and absolute, not being subject to any law or principle outside Himself; that is, He is the standard of all that is good; (b) that God is so transcendent in his position, so exalted in supremacy, so pure in His perfection, so luminous in His glory, so flawless in his character, that He is in a state of such pure perfection the best of men are not able to approach Him, are completely disqualified from doing so, and will insure their destruction for attempting to do so; (c) that God is gloriously pure and perfect: that is, He is unsoiled, unspotted, unblemished, unadulterated, untainted, and uncontaminated by evil.

Joshua 24:19 And Joshua said unto the people, Ye cannot serve the LORD: for he is an holy God; he is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins.

1 Samuel 2:2 There is none holy as the LORD: for there is none beside thee: neither is there any rock like our God.

Psalms 99:9 Exalt the LORD our God, and worship at his holy hill; for the LORD our God is holy.

3. **Faithfulness:** The virtue of God that fulfills a trust despite the difficulty or sacrifice involved.

Psalms 119:138 Thy testimonies that thou hast commanded are righteous and very faithful.

Psalm 36:5 Thy mercy, O LORD, is in the heavens; and thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds.

Psalm 89:2 For I have said, Mercy shall be built up forever: thy faithfulness shalt thou establish in the very heavens.

4. **Zeal:** God zeal is a praise worthy jealousy that arises within God to preserve a precious relationship that is threatened by a third party.

Exodus 20:5 Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me;

Joshua 24:19 And Joshua said unto the people, Ye cannot serve the LORD: for he is an holy God; he is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins.

5. **God's Mercies:** These would include such virtues as love, goodness, kindness, compassion and grace. God is not only righteous and just, He is kind and good.

Psalm 86:5 For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee.

1 John 4:8 He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.

Exodus 34:6 And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth,

God is *summum bonum*, the chiefest good. The English word *God* comes from the word *good*. His goodness causes Him to deal bountifully and kindly with his creatures-man, animals, and creation. His love causes Him to do what is best for his children. God's mercy acts toward the weak and helpless, but His grace enables to do good despite the unworthiness of the object. His goodness is not in contradiction to his duty to judge. He is still good even when He judges men for their sinful acts.

Psalm 119:68 Thou art good, and doest good; teach me thy statutes.

6. **God is also longsuffering.** The Hebrew word, *erek'aph* means "long of face." The Greek word *makrothumia* has the same idea implying slow to anger or loooooong suffering.

Psalm 86:15 But thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth.

Romans 2:4 Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?

7. **God's moral perfection:** Unlike man who tends to be viciously cruel when mercy is needed or slobberingly mushy when justice is demanded, God dispenses grace and truth in perfect proportions. This can be seen at the cross where God's justice was fulfilled by punishing sin and God's love was revealed in that forgiveness was offered to repentant men.

Psalm 25:10 All the paths of the LORD are mercy and truth unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies.

Psalm . 85:10 Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.

Psalm 89:14 Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before thy face.

APPLICATION

God is man's moral model (Matthew 5:48). That is, His character is the standard of right and wrong. He calls men to reflect His character in all they do.

Leviticus 19:2 Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say unto them, Ye shall be holy: for I the LORD your God am holy.

Matthew 5:48 Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

Man must beware of developing idols (other models and standards) for human behavior and achievement.

Exodus 32:7 And the LORD said unto Moses, Go, get thee down; for thy people, which thou broughtest out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves:

Isaiah 57:5 Enflaming yourselves with idols under every green tree, slaying the children in the valleys under the clefts of the rocks?

1 John 5:21 Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.

God calls men to dispense love and truth based on his character and work in his history.

Ephesians 4:32 And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

Conclusion: It is good news God exists and that He can be known. He has revealed Himself in history to the Jewish people and the record of this Revelation is found in the Bible. Because of Who He is, infinite and personal, just and holy, He can be known and He can be trusted.

Is this the God you know? Have you come to a place in your life where you trust His character? His message in Christ? His salvation through the cross? **THE WORKS OF GOD**

Question: What is God's job in the universe? What does He do and what position does He occupy?

AS CREATOR

The first declaration of Scripture is that God immediately and instantaneously brought all things, visible and invisible, into existence. It was an act involving the Father as Executor, the Son as the Administrator, and the Holy Spirit as the Framer.

Facts relating to God's work as Creator:

1. He created the world by the power of His word.
2. He created the world without pre-existing materials.
3. His creation was instantaneous, not gradual.
4. His creative acts were finished in six days.
5. His finished product was declared "good". Only God can define "good."
6. He rested, not because He was tired, but because His creative acts were complete.

A man asked me if I really believed the creation story. I told him I did. He derided me for believing something so fantastic. I responded, "If you think believing in creation is incredible, think of what you believe. You believe two rocks bumped hips together and produced alligators, vultures, and bumble bees . . . over millions and millions and millions of years. That's incredible, and I don't have the faith for that."

AS SUSTAINER

Thiessen says (1979): "that matter doesn't have the cause of its being in itself. It is everywhere contingent, dependent, and changing" (p. 120). Atoms, electrons, protons in all their material forms, living and non-living, are sustained by an act of God (Nehemiah 9:6; Colossians 1:17; Acts 17:28; Hebrews 1:3).

Psalm 36:6 O LORD, thou preservest (yviAt, toshe ah, meaning "save.") man and beast.

Psalm 104:29 Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled: thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust.

Colossians 1:17 And he (Christ) is before all things, and by him all things consist.

AS SOVEREIGN RULER OF CREATION

If God created the universe, it is reasonable to expect him to rule over it. Everywhere, the creation evidences intelligence and control. He is Sovereign over all!

God rules over the physical universe:

Sunshine

Matthew 5:45 That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

Wind

Psalm 147:18 He sendeth out his word, and melteth them: he causeth his wind to blow, and the waters flow.

Lightning

Job 38:25 Who hath divided a watercourse for the overflowing of waters, or a way for the lightning of thunder;

Job 38:35 Canst thou send lightnings, that they may go, and say unto thee, Here we are?

Rain

Job 38:26 To cause it to rain on the earth, where no man is; on the wilderness, wherein there is no man;

Thunder and hail

Psalm 147:18 He sendeth out his word, and melteth them: he causeth his wind to blow, and the waters flow.

Psalm 148:8 Fire, and hail; snow, and vapour; stormy wind fulfilling his word:

God rules over plant and animals (Job 12:10; Jonah 4:6; Matthew 6:28-30; Psalm 104:21).

Job 12:10 In whose hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind.

God rules over nations and it is the duty of kings and ruler to surrender to His authority (Psalm 22:28; Job 12:23; Psalm 66:7; Daniel 2:37-39; Isaiah 7:20).

Psalm 22:28 For the kingdom is the LORD'S: and he is the governor (IvemoW, Ruler or King) among the nations.

^{NIV} Jeremiah 10:7 Who should not revere you, O King of the nations? This is your due. Among all the wise men of the nations and in all their kingdoms, there is no one like you.

God rules over individuals.

*Isaiah 64:4 For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him (3rd masculine, singular: **hxx**).*

God rules over the birth of things.

*Psalm 139:16 Thine eyes did see my substance (**ymil.G**, golem: wrappings, embryo), yet being imperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned (**WrC'yU**), when as yet there was none of them.*

Luke 1:49 For he that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is his name.

God rules over our needs and supplies.

Matthew 6:32 Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

God rules over death.

Deuteronomy 32:39 See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god with me: I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal: neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand.

John 21:19 This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me.

God rules over promotions.

Psalm 75:6 For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south.

Psalm 75:7 But God is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another.

Luke 1:52 He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree.

God rules over wealth and prosperity:

1 Samuel 2:6 The LORD killeth, and maketh alive: he bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up. 7 The LORD maketh poor, and maketh rich: he bringeth low, and lifteth up. 8 He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set

them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory: for the pillars of the earth are the LORD'S, and he hath set the world upon them.

God rules over thoughts:

Proverbs 21:1 The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will.

God rules over chance (Proverbs 16:33)

*Proverbs 16:33 The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the **LORD**.*

God rules over the heart.

*Proverbs 16:1 The preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, is from the LORD (*hw"hy>meW*).*

Consequently, God's rule is Sovereign:

Daniel 2:20 Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of God forever and ever: for wisdom and might are his: And he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding: He revealeth the deep and secret things: he knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him.

AS JUDGE

Because God knows all, He is capable of judging; because he is righteous, He is qualified to judge. Through his omnipotence he will judge every work, word, and thought (Matthew 12:36; 2 Corinthians 10:5). He will reward some, and punish others (Romans 2). Judging men is His job, not ours (Psalm 37:1).

Psalm 7:8 The LORD shall judge (!ydly*) the people: judge me (*ynljep.v*), O LORD, according to my righteousness, and according to mine integrity that is in me.*

Psalm 9:8 And he shall judge the world in righteousness, he shall minister judgment to the people in uprightness.

Acts 17:31 Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.

Likewise, God's Word calls men to elect rulers and judges who are competent, fear God, and hate unjust gain (Exodus 18:19-21).

AS REDEEMER

It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God who is altogether holy and knows all (John 4:39). He told me all that ever I did). God in His mercy acts to deliver those who trust Him, consequently, He is known as Redeemer.

Job 19:25 For I know that my redeemer (y^lia)GO, go`el) liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth:

Isaiah 44:6 Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and his redeemer the LORD of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God.

Conclusion: It is good news God exists. He is known by Who He is and by what He does. Have you observed His works in history and come to know and love Him? THE DECREES OF GOD

Questions: What is a decree? Why are they important? What does this knowledge add to the Christian life?

DEFINITION

The decrees of God are his eternal purpose according to the counsel of his will, whereby, for his own glory, he hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass (Westminster Confession, Hodge, 1992, p. 194).

God's eternal purpose or purposes, based on his most wise and holy counsel, whereby he freely and unchangeably, for his own glory ordained either efficaciously or permissively all that comes to pass (Thiessen, 1992, p. 100)

SCRIPTURAL PROOF

Isaiah 14:24-27 The LORD of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand . . . This is the purpose that is purposed upon the whole earth: and this is the hand that is stretched out upon all the nations. For the LORD of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it? and his hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back?

1 Corinthians 2:11 For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.

Ephesians 1:9-11 Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: That in the dispensation of the foulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven,

and which are on earth; even in him: In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:

THE DECREE OF CREATION

God willed the universe (Psalm 33:6-11; Isaiah 45:18); its four seasons (Genesis 8:22); to destroy it (Genesis 6-8); to never again destroy it by water (Genesis 9); to distribute the nations (Genesis 10; Deuteronomy 32:8; Acts 17:26); the length of human life (Job 14:5); the manner of exit from this earth (John 21:19; 1 Corinthians 15:5ff).

The moral envelopment of the creation: The issues involved are how can a good God permit sin and allow evil in the world, or how can men's will be truly free without the possibility of sin? Several views have emerged among theologians:

Supralapsarianism: God decreed to save certain men and to condemn others; to create both; to permit the fall of both; to send Christ to redeem the elect; to send the Holy Spirit to apply redemption to the elect. *This Calvinistic view understands God planning salvation before the fall.*

Infralapsarianism: God decreed to create man; to permit the fall; to elect some of the fallen to be saved and leave others as they are; to provide a redeemer for the elect; and to send the Spirit to apply this redemption to the elect. *This view understands God's plan for salvation as a result of the fall* (Thiessen, 1992, p. 104)

God determined/decreed to permit sin, but He is not the author of it (James 1:13ff). If He had determined to prevent men from lapsing, they would have persevered in holiness. This is incomprehensible (Romans 11:33), but true.

Psalm 106:15 And he gave them their request; but sent leanness (!AZr': Isaiah 10:16; 24:16) into their soul.

Acts 14:16 Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways.

Acts 17:30 And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent:

God determined to overrule sin for the good (Genesis 50:20; Psalm 76:10). He did not permit sin in order to bring about good; rather, God has permitted sin to come for other reasons. He has decreed to overrule it for good (Thiessen, 1979).

Genesis 50:20 But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive.

Psalm 76:10 Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain.

See Daniel 3:119-30 and how good came out of Nebuchadnezzar's decree of terror.

God determined to save some from sin. All are agreed that God saves, but not all are agreed on how He does it. Man had the ability to sin and the ability not to sin before the fall. After the fall, he lost his ability not to sin; his ability to sin became inability not to sin (Thiessen, 1979).

God, therefore, must take the initiative to seek and to save. God gives prevenient grace so man can initially respond to God.

Genesis 32:24 And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man (The Angel of the Covenant) with him (Jacob) until the breaking of the day.

Acts 5:31 Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.

Romans 12:3 For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.

2 Timothy 2:25 In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;

2 Peter 1:1 Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ:

ORDU SALUTIS

What is the *ordu salutis* (order of salvation)?

God elected some to be saved.

God foreknew who would be saved.

God determined to save those He foreknew.

God gives prevenient grace to those whom He foreknew.

The elect respond by faith to God.

They are justified and then regenerated.

Not only is God's sovereign, but His grace is sovereign; that is, men are saved because God first loves his elect.

5.3 THE DECREES OF THE LORD GOD

The decrees of God are declarations or announced plans that the LORD God has made in working out His plan in the progress towards the establishment of His kingdom on earth. In the Christian faith, history is marching toward a grand climax, the dynamic, irresistible establish of His rule and His Ruler on earth. In the Christian world view, the believer understand that God causes all things to work together for good.

His decrees do not negate human responsibility. Men are not pre-engineered robots. Choices are involved, but so is God's superintendance over human affairs. Isaiah 46:9-10 says,

"Remember the former things long past, for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like Me, Declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things which have not been done, saying, 'My purpose will be established, and I will accomplish all My good pleasure."

Easton Bible defines the decrees as follow:

"The decrees of God are his eternal, unchangeable, holy, wise, and sovereign purpose, comprehending at once all things that ever were or will be in their causes, conditions, successions, and relations, and determining their certain futurition. The several contents of this one eternal purpose are, because of the limitation of our faculties, necessarily conceived of by us in partial aspects, and in logical relations, and are therefore styled Decrees." The decree being the act of an infinite, absolute, eternal, unchangeable, and sovereign Person, comprehending a plan including all his works of all kinds, great and small, from the beginning of creation to an unending eternity; ends as well as means, causes as well as effects, conditions and instrumentalities as well as the events which depend upon them, must be incomprehensible by the finite intellect of man. The decrees are eternal (Acts 15:18 ; Ephesians 1:4 ; 2 th 2:13), unchangeable (Psalms 33:11 ; Isaiah 46:9), and comprehend all things that come to pass (Ephesians 1:11 ; Matthew 10:29 Matthew 10:30 ; Ephesians 2:10 ; Acts 2:23 ; Acts 4:27 Acts 4:28 ; Psalms 17:13 Psalms 17:14).

The decrees of God are (1) efficacious, as they respect those events he has determined to bring about by his own immediate agency; or (2) permissive, as they respect those events he has determined that free agents shall be permitted by him to effect.

This doctrine ought to produce in our minds "humility, in view of the infinite greatness and sovereignty of God, and of the dependence of man; confidence and implicit reliance upon wisdom, righteousness, goodness, and immutability of God's purpose."

THE DECREE OF HUMAN GOVERNMENT

There are three institutions created by God

- The family, the institution of education (Genesis 2)
- National government, the institution of civil order and justice (Genesis 9)
- The Church, the institution of the grace (Matthew 16:15ff)

5.3.1 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE DECREES

The end of all decrees is the glory of God. Whatever he does is executed for the more perfect Revelation of His will (1 Corinthians 1:26-31; Ephesians 2:8-10).

Revelation 4:11 Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.

Romans 11:36 For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory forever. Amen.

The decrees of God have one purpose, not many. The ultimate purpose is to bring everything into subjection under and to the honor of the Lord Jesus Christ.

"Despite the multiplicity of causes and effects, however, we must understand that the vast scheme of creation, providence, and redemption lies in the divine mind as one simple purpose" (Hodge, 1992, p. 195).

Ephesians 2:7 That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

The decrees of God are eternal. Even the choices God makes which affect man in time were made in eternity (Ephesians 1:4; 1 Peter 2:20-21).

"According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ" (Ephesians . 3:11).

His decrees of God are immutable (never changing). Man lacks both. God lacks neither. His purposes are forever unchanged, unaltered, and unwavering (Psalm 33:11; James 1:17).

*“Changes of purpose arise either from the want of wisdom or from the want of power”
(Hodge, 1992, p. 196).*

The decrees of God are truly free: They are independent of another and unmitigated by circumstances (Romans 11:34; John 36:22-23). If God has to wait for an undetermined condition, then his decrees are not eternal nor are they immutable.

The decrees are efficacious (effective, efficient, and undeterred).

Isaiah 14:27 For the LORD of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it? and his hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back?

The decrees of God are related to all of history (Ephesians 1:11). Even minute detail that escapes the notice of men are said to be foreknown and predetermined (Luke 22:23) without violating human responsibility.

Acts 2:23 Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:

Acts 4:27 For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together,

Acts 4:28 For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.

If the crucifixion was foreordained, the greatest crime ever committed, then it is reasonable to assume that all (our) sins were foreordained. If the whole course of history is the unfolding of God’s plan (and the history of man is basically a history of sin), then all sin must have been fore ordained. If Joseph was sent into Egypt to save Israel, and the reason for his sending was the sin of his brethren, then the sins of Jacob’s sons were foreordained (Genesis 45:7-8). (Hodge, 1992, p. 200).

Comment: Are my sins foreordained? What sobering thought! God has appointed my sins for me to overcome in order to make me holy.

5.3.2 OBJECTIONS TO THE DOCTRINE OF DIVINE DECREES

It is inconsistent with free will:

Ans: The biblical writers believed that the free acts of men are also ordained. If God can’t foreknow the free acts of men, then he must be ignorant of the future, of future sins, and He must increase in knowledge and make adjustments as events happen.

Foreordained sin is inconsistent with God’s Holiness:

Ans: It is vain to argue that a holy God can't permit sin. If he could not, then man would not be free. It is vain to argue that God won't allow men to suffer from the sins of others, or that God would eliminate the negative effects of sin. Just as a judge in declaring a sentence upon a criminal creates bitter feelings in the criminal and yet remains guiltless, so God in making man free, knowing man would sin, and knowing the consequences, and who created the creature with a capacity to sin is guiltless in his administration.

God's decrees destroy human initiative:

Ans: Has God determined the end without determining the means? It is God who wills and grants desires, motivations, and ambitious capacities within the heart of man.

God's decrees make life fatalistic:

Ans: God's decrees are not the same as the doctrine of fate which implies a Time + Chance universe void of a loving Creator. While things are ordained in Scripture, the end is good and holy. Fatalism is negative. Decrees are positive in that they lead to the love and honor of God. Even faith is His gift (Ephesians 2:8). In fatalism, there is no reason for events. In decrees, the highest purposes are manifest.

APPLICATION

Rest: The believer can rest and be “anxious for nothing” because he knows that all things are controlled by an all wise, loving Creator.

Confidence: The believer can possess great confidence that he is on the right path because he knows the ends and the means.

Security: The believer is secure in the Father's love because he knows that he has been chosen, loved, and commissioned.

Fear: It is an awesome thing to know the sins with which we wrestle have been given us as to overcome for the glory of God.

It is good news God exists and that He is at work in history behind the scenes moving all things toward his ultimate purpose—the exaltation of Christ and the establishment of His kingdom on earth. The great question is “Do we understand his purpose, and are we living in harmony with the purpose of God.

5.3.3 CHRISTIAN VIEW OF HISTORY

History is not going through endless cycles of existence, but is rather, moving toward an ultimate end. That end is the Kingdom of God. He has been and is at work in history to accomplish His purpose. God revealed Himself through His actions in history. These events have been preserved for us in ancient

documents, which we now call the Bible. We can study His history to learn about Him and what He intends for the future.

CONCLUSION

It is our privilege to proclaim the good news that God exists. If there is no God, and man is a product of time plus chance, then life is meaningless. It does not matter what we do or how we live, the good man and the bad man share the same destiny. But, if there is a God, life has meaning and purpose and value. And, if there is a God, who is He? This work was designed to help believers to understand who the God of the Bible really is: and what He has revealed about Himself so we can accurately discuss Him with those we love.

Theologians have observed the heart of man has an insatiable thirst to know His Creator—a thirst that cannot be quenched until it is satisfied by God Himself. The Object of its greatest love can only calculate the measure of a soul. The greater a man's thirst for God, the more potential the heart has for excellence. Thirst for God and let your soul find its greatest pleasure is the knowledge of Him.

Do you know Him? God has revealed Himself in and through the person of Christ (Hebrews 1:1-3). Jesus is His ultimate revelation. By placing your trust in Him, you will be following God's plan and desire for the ages (John 14:6)

5.4 DIVINE PROVIDENCE

RELATED DEFINITIONS

Providence: "That continued exercise of the divine energy whereby the Creator preserves all His *creatures*, is operative in all that comes to pass in the world, and directs all things to their appointed end" Three element are involved: preservation, concurrence, and government (Berkhof, 1993, p. 166).

Etymologically, the word *providence* means *foreseeing*. Later, it came to mean some kind of *provision for the future*. The word *providence* is derived from the Latin word, *providentia*, corresponding to the Greek word, *pronoia*. These words means "prescience or foresight" (Berkhof, 1993, p. 165).

Theologically, providence refers to God's activity in causing all things in the material and spiritual world to work out towards His purpose. "The Scriptures say more about God's work in providence than about his work in creation" (Thiessen, 1979, p. 123).

Providence defines God's relationship to the world. It is opposed to the pantheistic confusion, which makes no separation of God from the universe, and the deistic view, which totally separates Him from the world.

Preservation: “. . . that all things external to God owe the continuance of their existence, with all their properties and powers, to the will of God” (Hodge, 1992, p. 214).

The critical passage on preservation is Colossians 1:17, “By Him all things consist.” The regular operations of what man calls “nature” is upheld and sustained by the power of God. Even animals are said to live and move and have their being sustained by the declaration of God. This would not only include existence, but sustenance, qualities, properties, and powers of all created things. Three views among men that still persist:

Perpetuation: The concept that God ordered the universe and set in motion laws which do not need his intervention. This view is held by the deists.

Agitation: This view adheres to the belief that God is at every point causing and acting on nature so that there is no secondary causes.

Conservation: This view is in the middle and attributes to God the efficiency of the universe, allows for secondary causes, but upholds God’s direct contact and control of the universe.

HISTORY OF THE DOCTRINE

(Source: Berkhof, 1993, p. 165):

The Epicureans sided with the idea that the world was ruled by chance, and the Stoics interpreted the universe as guided by fate. The church took a position against both. In contrast to chance arose the doctrine of predestination; opposed to the doctrines of fate the church fathers emphasized the free will of man.

Augustine led the way and taught that all things are preserved and governed by the sovereign will of God; that good and evil are controlled. It guarded the holiness of God and upheld human responsibility. Theologians of the Middle Ages and the Reformers followed the wake of Augustinian thought differing only on the details.

MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT PROVIDENCE

(Source: Berkhof, 1993, p. 167):

- Limiting His prescience. Some church fathers saw God’s foreknowledge as limited.
- Deism: setting the world on a course and letting man’s will determine the outcome of history.
- Pantheism: Making no distinction between God and the created, material, earthly world.

THE OBJECTS TO PROVIDENCE

(Source: Berkhof, 1993, p. 168):

Scripture: God is over the

- Universe (Psalm 103:19, Daniel 5:3; Ephesians 1:11).
- Physical world (Job 37:5, 10; Psalm 104:14; 135:6; Matthew 5:45).
- Creation (Psalm 104:21; Matthew 6:26; 10:29)
- National affairs (Job 12:23; Psalm 22:28; 66:7; Acts 17:26).
- Over man's birth and lot in life (1 Samuel 16:1; Psalm 139:16; Isaiah 45:5).
- Men's successes and failures (Psalm 75:6,7; Luke 1:52).
- Over accidents (Proverbs 16:33; Matthew 10:30).
- Over protection of the righteous (Psalm 4:8; 5:12; 63:8; 121:3; Genesis 22:8, Psalm 121: 3).

General providence refers to God's control over the whole;

- **Special providence** refers to God's control over the particulars. Objections are usually over the particulars.

PROOF OF THE DOCTRINE FROM SCRIPTURE

Deuteronomy 33:12 And of Benjamin he said, The beloved of the LORD shall dwell in safety by him; and the LORD shall cover him all the day long, and he shall dwell between his shoulders.

Deuteronomy 33:27 The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall say, Destroy them.

Deuteronomy 33:28 Israel then shall dwell in safety alone: the fountain of Jacob shall be upon a land of corn and wine; also his heavens shall drop down dew.

1 Samuel 2:9 He will keep the feet of his saints, and the wicked shall be silent in darkness; for by strength shall no man prevail.

Nehemiah 9:6 Thou, even thou, art LORD alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all things that are therein, the seas, and all that is therein, and thou preservest them all; and the host of heaven worshippeth thee.

Psalm 107:9 For he satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness.

Psalm 127:1 Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.

Psalm 145:14 The LORD upholdeth all that fall, and raiseth up all those that be bowed down.

Psalm 145:15 The eyes of all wait upon thee; and thou givest them their meat in due season.

Matthew 10:29 Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father.

Matthew 10:30 But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.

Acts 17:28 For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring.

Colossians 1:17 And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.

Hebrews 1:3 Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;

INFERENCEAL PROOF

If God is sovereign, it follows that He controls all things in this world. If something is out of His control, then God is not absolute.

CONCURRENCE

(Source: Berkhof, 1993, p. 170-171):

Definition: Concurrence is “the cooperation of the divine power with all subordinate powers, according to the pre-established laws of their operation, causing them to act and to act precisely as they do”. Some of these laws limit man. The powers of nature do not work by themselves.

Second causes are real and are not to be regarded as the operative of the Divine will. If second causes were not real, there could not be a concurrence between primary and secondary causes. However, the second cause cannot frustrate the first, else men will would frustrate the will of God. Furthermore, first and second causes are not co-operators; God is not linked with man as oxen pulling a plow.

Genesis 45:5 Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life.

Exodus 4:11 And the LORD said unto him, Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I the LORD? Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say.

Joshua 11:6 And the LORD said unto Joshua, Be not afraid because of them: for tomorrow about this time will I deliver them up all slain before Israel: thou shalt hock their horses, and burn their chariots with fire.

Ezra 6:22 And kept the feast of unleavened bread seven days with joy: for the LORD had made them joyful, and turned the heart of the king of Assyria unto them, to strengthen their hands in the work of the house of God, the God of Israel.

Characteristics of Divine concurrence:

It is previously determined in a logical sense (1 Corinthians 12:6; Ephesians 1:11).

- It is simultaneous concurrence (Acts 17:28).
- It is immediate concurrence. He employs means. For example in destroying Sodom, God used fire, a natural earthly element.

Concurrence and sin: If God predetermines sin, is He guilty of sin? Reformers argued that sins are controlled, that they are permitted so that He is not the direct agent of sin (Genesis 45:5; 50:20; Exodus 14:17; Isaiah 66:4); that God often restrains the sinner (Genesis 3:6; Job 1:12; 2:6; Psalm 76:10; Isaiah 10:15; Acts 7:51).

Concurrence of evil: If nature's God works in concurrence with nature, it could be assumed that evil works in concurrence with nature, the material world, and the social, governmental structures of society.

DIVINE GOVERNMENT

Defined: God rules all things teleologically (From his final purpose: *telos = end; logic = study of*) so as to secure the accomplishment of the divine purpose.

He does this because He is the rightful King of the universe (1 Timothy 1:17; 6:15; Revelation 1:6).

He adapts His government according the nature of his creation. God's government is universal (Dan 4:34,35). It embraces all his works.

In relation to politics, God ordains good government for the good of men; He ordains bad government to judge men and to test them. The government to which Christians are required to submit is a God-ordained government; that is, a legitimate government seeking to exercise its duties under the authority of Christ (Romans 13:1). However, not all governments are legitimate governments. And, since Jesus Christ is

Lord, it is not possible or desirable to submit tyrannical regimes. Such states demand resistance, not obedience.

A government that refuses to confess Christ as Lord over all and that refuses to submit to his law-order demands our resistance, not our respect.

MIRACLES

(Source: Berkhof, 1993, p. 177):

Belief in miracles was odious to the analytical fathers. Every “so called miracle” was explained by a natural phenomenon. In fact, they did not believe in miracles at all. This rationalistic approach to phenomenon, especially biblical miracles, destroyed the faith of many.

A miracle is not brought about by secondary causes. Rather, it is the direct intervention into nature, whereby He suspends the natural law for a purpose known to Himself.

Some say miracles can't and don't occur because they suspend the laws of nature. However, nature is not Lord. Christ is Lord, and He has a right to suspend natural law if He so chooses. The Case for Miracles is contingent upon the Deity of Christ and His resurrection from the dead. If he rose from the dead, He is God and He is Lord.

The purpose of miracles: There are only three seasons of miracles in the Bible: the time of Moses, Elijah, and Christ. Miracles occur to substantiate and authenticate a divine Messenger verifying to the people of God his veracity; thus, enabling them to change course in the direction to which the prophet was pointing. Under Moses, it meant leaving Egypt; under Elijah, it meant rejecting Baal and cleaving to YHWH; Under Christ, it meant acknowledging His divine nature. Miracles were his credentials.

Biblical miracles are impossible to prove or reproduce. Miracles must be accepted by faith based on synthetic evidence—the testimony of many witnesses. If Christ rose from the dead, then we have empirical proof that miracles occur.

Furthermore, one can reason: If God were to become a man, one would expect Him to demonstrate His authority in such a way as to convince men of His control and power over nature. In Christ, we see His power over weather, seas, demons, disease, and even death. In Christ, we have evidence that God “was in Christ reconciling the world to himself” (2 Corinthians 5:19).

5.5 REFLECTIONS ON THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD

The Holy Scripture assigns Sovereignty to the LORD God declaring Him to have supreme authority, control, and power over all things: over time, space, and matter; over heaven, earth, and hell; over animals on the land, fish in the sea, and birds in the air; over the living, the sick,

and the dying; over men, women, and children; over all that has happened, is happening, and will happen in the future between the two eternities.

As the Supreme Ruler of the Universe, He uses His knowledge, power, and authority to govern every event so that all things, good and evil, conform to His Divine will.

Genesis 50:20 “As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today.”

Comment: God is greater than the evil intents of man, and exercises veto power over the plans of sinners. Joseph’s brothers hated him and sold him as a slave to a caravaner headed for Egypt. In this instance, God used treachery as integrity training for Joseph, exalted him as Vice Regent of Egypt, and used the Hebrew to not only save Jacob’s family from famine, but the whole nation of Egypt from starvation.

1 Chronicles 29:11-12 Wherefore David blessed the LORD before all the congregation: and David said, Blessed be thou, LORD God of Israel our father, for ever and ever. Thine, O LORD, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O LORD, and thou art exalted as head above all. Both riches and honor come of thee, and thou reignest over all; and in thine hand is power and might; and in thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all.

Comment: In King David’s state of the union address he announces the completion of his plans to build the nation a temple and offers this prayer to the Lord.

Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: David attributes all that men admire and seek to the Lord: greatness and fame, power and strength, glory and beauty, victory and supremacy, majesty and honor.

for all that is in the heaven and in the earth [is thine]; Because all things are made by Him, belong to Him, He exercises exclusive rights over all things just as the creator of a thing has every right to do.

thine is the kingdom, O Lord; David attributes ownership of all creatures, all men, and all of their institutions to the Lord.

and thou art exalted as head above all; Headship, authority, dominion, and right to rule angels in heaven and men on earth belongs to God alone. The NT informs us that Christ is the Head of man, the Head of rulers, and the Head of the church.

Both riches and honor come of thee, and thou reignest over all; and in thine hand is power and might; and in thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all: Wealth, fame, political power, and strength are given by God to the noble and ignoble, that in the end God may be glorified in His dispensation of justice and mercy throughout history.

Perhaps God is more glorified by our obedience to Him in times of poverty, defamation, and ill health than He would be if we were healthy and wealthy; and, that the glory of His justice on the rich and famous on the day of judgment will be more apparent to those who have been greatly aggrieved by their wickedness and blasphemy.

2 Chronicles 20:6 “**And said, O LORD God of our fathers, *art not thou God in heaven? and rulest not thou over all the kingdoms of the heathen? and in thine hand is there not power and might, so that none is able to withstand thee?*”**

Comment: When the Moabites and Ammonites marched their armies from the east sea into Judah to wage war against Jerusalem, lips trembled and knees knocked. Jehoshaphat proclaimed a fast and prayed. Relying upon the omnipresence, authority, and sovereignty of the LORD God, he trusted the destiny of his people to infinite hands infused with unstoppable, unmovable, iron Power. The results of faith in God’s love for them, the invaders were stopped by songs of faith sung by a Levitical special operations corps who formed the tip of the spear for Israel’s armed forces.

Job 12:10, 13-14 **In whose hand *is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind . . . With him is wisdom and strength, he hath counsel and understanding. Behold, he breaketh down, and it cannot be built again: he shutteth up a man, and there can be no opening.***

Comment: Job’s theology confessed God’s disposition over the souls of mankind. Paul said, “in Him we live, move, and have our being.” In his sermon, “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God,” Jonathan Edwards’ theology taught him that God holds sinners over the fires of Hell in the same way a mischievous boy holds a spider over a fire . . . that the miscreant are powerless to protect themselves against the burning wrath of God.

In the course of life, men face two problems: (1) they don't know what to do; and, (2) they know what to do, but don't have the power to do it. But, God? He knows what to do (wisdom), and he has the power to do it (strength). He knows what works ("counsel") and why it works ("understanding"). Though His infinite and unsearchable wisdom descends to the deepest sea and ascends to the highest stars, He is the fountain of all blessing and the river that delivers it at the feet of men.

What God ruins, no man can restore! Whether He breaks the Tower of Babel, Sodom, Thebes, or Tyre, who can rebuild it to its former glory?

The doors that God shuts, no man can open! Whether it be a government prison, the chains and fetters of sin, the doors of Eden, the cycle of poverty, the unyielding grave, the gates of heaven or the gates of hell, who can open it? ([Psalms 88:8](#); [Psalms 142:7](#); [John 11:43](#); [Matthew 25:10-13](#); [Genesis 3:23](#) [Genesis 3:24](#); [Luke 16:26](#)).

Psalm 103:19 The LORD hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all.

Comment: His kingdom is not of this world. Not limited by time and space, He reigns over all of nature, all men, all the time, in every place.

Psalm 115:3 "Our God is in the heavens; he does all that he pleases."

Comment: Unlike famous idols made of earthen clay that can only be in one place at one time, the LORD is in the heavens. The dogmatics of the psalmist informs us that Elohim is not limited by time, space, and matter. There is no limit to God's knowledge, presence, or power. His pleasure controls the destiny of men. What he wills blossoms in the garden of history. His will cannot be frustrated, stonewalled, or defeated. God runs the universe. Christ "upholds all things by the word of his power" (Hebrews 1:3). Just as a dime cannot stop a turbine diesel Pacific Union Coal DTEL running from Chicago to New Orleans, all the nickel and dime schemes of rebels, renegades, and revolutionaries cannot derail the locomotives pulling the boxcars of God's will from eternity through time.

Proverbs 16:4 The LORD hath made all *things* for himself: yea, even the wicked for the day of evil.

Comment: God has made all things for His glory; likewise, the LORD has made the wicked to showcase His crystal attributes in the day of judgment; that is, their mind-boggling dissolution

and staggering downfall demonstrate the righteousness of His thundering judgment. The apostle put it this way: “Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God” (Romans 11:22).

Every dynamic story has a flat antagonist opposed to good will and a protagonist of noble character that seeks justice. In the exodus story Pharaoh appears on the stage of history as the stubborn adversary insistent on tightening the shackles of slavery on God’s people in Egypt , but the LORD appears as Israel’s Champion ordering the tyrant, “Let my people go.”

God even hardened the heart of wicked Pharaoh to increase his resistance to the authority of the LORD in order to show case the power of His salvation and the muscle of His mighty judgment ([Exodus 9:16](#)):

*Romans 9:17 For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, **that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.***

On this battlefield, circumstances got worse before they got better: “The enemy said, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil; my lust shall be satisfied upon them; I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them.” (Exodus 15:9).

But, on the “day of evil” this God of War left Egypt littered with corpses (Exodus 12:30). And, this same Champion delivered His people from bondage by blood (the Passover lamb) and by power (crossing the Red Sea) (Exodus 6:6; 15:3-6).

Proverbs 16:9 “The heart of man plans his way, but the Lord establishes his steps.”

Comment: The man referred to here is not the wicked, but the good man with a golden heart to please God and do what is right. The junkyard devices of the wicked are an abomination to Him. He has no interest in prospering rebels except to heighten the intensity of their judgment.

The righteous man can plan to succeed in an enterprise, but only God can make him successful. The industrious can develop a program, but God determines the outcome. The Lord calls a man to be faithful, not to manipulate the results. Plan, pray, and push, but trust God for the harvest.

The Lord directs the successes and failures of a man’s life. Sometimes it is better to fail, than to succeed. Men often learn more from their losses than their gains. Beware of the fallacy of praising God for the sweets and cursing the Devil for the bitters. Even the ground is cursed “for thy sake.” Give Him glory during all seasons of life.

Proverbs 21:1 The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will.

Comment: "Like rivers of water" is in the emphatic position in Hebrew stressing the simplicity of turning the heart of the king to do the bidding of Almighty God.

Many in the media treat political leaders as mini-gods with all kinds of divine powers. But, this text paints a different picture. All of the king's motives, thoughts, intentions, plans, schemes, deceptions, wishes, demands, lusts, cravings good or bad are compared to a river of wants controlled by the hands of the LORD. Kings are not gods. They are not omnipotent. They face limitations and resistance. They put their pants on one leg at a time. As a hand moves a glove, God controls rulers.

"Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain"
(Psalm 76:10).

He turneth the king's heart whithersoever He will.

The Pharaoh of the Exodus thought he was in control, but God hardened his heart in order to show case His power and authority over all Egypt (Exodus 7:13; 9:16). Ten times Pharaoh said, "No!", then the LORD broke the back of Egypt.

King Ahab did everything in a king's power to protect himself from the death sentence God pronounced upon him. But, the Lord used a lying spirit to entice Ahab into battle against the Syrians. Even though he took off his royal apparel and disguised himself as an ordinary soldier, he met his appointment with death by a random arrow that lodged between the seam in his armor into his rib cage. (1 Kings 22:22, 34).

Rezin, King of Syria: "and all the people will know, Ephraim and the inhabitants of Samaria, who say in pride and in arrogance of heart: 'The bricks have fallen, but we will build with dressed stones; the sycamores have been cut down, but we will put cedars in their place.' But the LORD raises the adversaries of Rezin against him (Ephraim), and stirs up his enemies . . . So the LORD cut off from Israel head and tail, palm branch and reed in one day" (Isaiah 9:9-12, 14).

King of Babylon: " behold, I will send for all the tribes of the north, declares the LORD, and for Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, my servant, and I will bring them against this land and its inhabitants (Judah), and against all these surrounding nations. I will devote them to destruction, and make them a horror, a hissing, and an everlasting desolation" (Jeremiah 25:9).

Pharaoh Hophra (Jeremiah 29:4): Great kings think they are in control of their destiny. Herodotus says of King Pharaoh Hophra (589-570 BC) (Jeremiah 44:30), that he was so lifted up with pride, and so secure of his happy state, that he said there was no God who could deprive him of his kingdom. But the LORD compared him to a crocodile with fishhooks in its jaws and compared his generals and princes to fish on or near the scales of a crocodile drawn out of the safety of the Nile to the killing fields of Cyrene (N. Africa) where they were fatally defeated by Amasis who then ruled Egypt from 570-526 BC. . [Note, the word *pharaoh* means “crocodile” in Arabic].

Governor Pilate expressed His humanistic perspective when he told Jesus, “Do you not know that I have power to crucify you, and have power to release you?”

Christ corrected the Pilate’s shriveled view of Providence saying, “You could have no power (authority) *at all over* me, except it were given you from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee has the greater sin.” (John 19:10 — You are not in control).

America: “How the mighty have fallen! . . . Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him . . . How shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? ” (2 Samuel 1:19b; Psalm 2:12; Hebrews 2:3).

Ecclesiastes 7:14 In the day of prosperity be joyful, but in the day of adversity consider: God also hath set the one over against the other, to the end that man should find nothing after him.

Comment: The context of this Scripture is the command, “Consider the work of God” in the previous verse.

Man has a private interest in forecasting the future. Cultists invest much of their spiritual energy attempting to divine the future, but God alone knows and controls tomorrow. Moreover, humanity tends to think good things come from God, and bad things come from Satan; that the Lord is the source of good luck; and, that the Devil is the source of bad luck. But, this text sets the record straight: God controls today and tomorrow. He is the Cause of adversity as well as prosperity. Because both are from Him, both require a godly response. Both require acknowledgment of His Providence and both require obedience to Him.

Isaiah 40:23 “who brings princes to nothing, and makes the rulers of the earth as emptiness.”

Comment: The “Who” refers to the LORD God Who created the heavens and earth out of nothing (40:22). He regards them as less than nothing (tohu and bohu); that is, they are non-factors in the accomplishment of His will upon the earth.

We think too much of politicians and credit them with too much power. Who remembers the names of the rulers of Italy, Germany, Norway, Austria, or Bolivia in the 1950s? Who remembers the Speaker of the House or the Senate Majority leader in 1890? Unless you have a triple Ph.D. in history, you don’t remember the names of any of these leaders at the time. Likewise, Isaiah reminds us that God humbles the proud and “brings princes to nothing.”

Jeremiah 27:5-6 I have made the earth, the man and the beast that *are* upon the ground, by my great power and by my outstretched arm, and have given it unto whom it seemed meet unto me. And now have I given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon . . .

Comment: The background of this text is the dramatic command of God ordering Jeremiah to make icons of bondage and to send them to Tyre, Edom, Moab, Zidon, and Judah (Zedekiah) with the message of Jeremiah 27:5 dramatizing the Babylonian invasion into these countries. All these territories would be conquered, the people decimated, and given to Babylon.

The lesson is clear: Man, animals, plants and the soil in which they grow are created by the power and wisdom of God. He establishes the nations, their boundaries, and limitations. By His right and His authority He disposes of the earth and its golden riches. The peoples are merely tenants of the land and enjoy lease rights under the disposition of His grace. The territories of nations, their natural resources, and boundaries are assets that can be given and taken away by His order. Fear God and surrender to Babylon is the message of the prophet to the people.

Daniel 2:20-22 Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his: And he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding: He revealeth the deep and secret things: he knoweth what *is* in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him.

Comment: This message given by Daniel to the King of Babylon regarding the perplexity the king experienced regarding his dream proclaimed the world is governed by the wisdom and power of God; that He changes the times and the seasons, summer and winter, rains and droughts, rulers and regimes. Wisdom and knowledge are gifts of Providence. The Source and fountain of all knowledge, He knows secret things, deep things, and hidden things obscured by

darkness, but because God is light, He reveals knowledge to men. Golden Babylonian conquests, silver Persians rulers and their stringent law-order, the bronze Hellenization of the known world, and the iron Pax Romana left their marks in history at the pleasure of Israel's God.

Zechariah 4:6 “This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord of hosts.”

Comment: An angelic messenger made this statement to Zechariah before the second blast of energy to reengage temple construction in 420 BC during the reconstruction period and before the completion of the second temple in 416 BC. God employed Haggai and Zechariah to motivate His weak remnant to complete the Herculean task of temple construction. The LORD used Zechariah to show the nation that Joshua, the ecclesiastical leader, and Zerubbabel, the civil leader, would be infused with authority to rebuild the temple; that is, they were the two olives trees that God used to fuel the candlestick, the iconic symbol of the glory of temple in Jerusalem.

Because modern man is intoxicated with Armenianism and the doctrines of “free will,” self-determinism, “Yes, we can,” and “life is a matter of choices,” this verse stands out like a rose on a thorn bush. The Lord of Hosts (armies) informs Zechariah the temple would indeed be completed, but not by the wisdom, fortitude, and power of man, but by the power and assets of God's Spirit at work among the people. Nowhere does Scripture teach that men are the captains of their souls or the masters of their fate.

Romans 9:16 So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.

This text does not deny man's will, but it does reinforce the first cause by Him Who makes it “willing in the day of his power;” Psalm 110:3.

God's work grows by His power. If Zechariah were alive today, he would say, “not by money, not by silver and gold, not by programs, and not by passionate personalities in politics but by my Spirit saith the Lord of Hosts.”

Romans 8:28 “And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.”

Comment: The background of this text is the announcement that the Spirit prays for the infirmities of man and provides provides consolation to those feeling oppressed.

First, Paul informs the readers that believers have knowledge—“we have known and continue to know that (perfect tense) . . .”

Second, “we know” that good can come out of evil; that God can turn tragedies into triumph; losses into gains; weaknesses into strengths; sadness into joy; disappointments into endowments; and, “the desert into pools of water, and the parched ground into springs.gardens” (Isaiah 41:18).

Third, “we know” that God is at work (present tense) in all circumstances doing good where man planned evil.

Fourth, “we know” that the promise brightens the future for those who love God. In no way can we comfort the lawless and promise them, “every thing will turn out all right.” This treasured promise belongs exclusively to God’s people.

Colossians 1:17 “He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.”

Comment: Here the Spirit attributes cosmic glue, the force that holds protons and electrons together in every atom to the eternal Christ. Though the atom is 99.999% space, these subatomic energy fields contain a universe of electrical energy controlled by the power of the Son.

1 Timothy 6:15 Which in his times he shall shew, *who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords;*

Comment: Our Lord wears three crowns. History moves toward its climatic epiphany when the glory of His majestic reign will be revealed to the cosmos. There is only one Ruler, one King, and one Lord. Christ reigns supreme over three institutions. He is the Head of man / the family, and the Head of the Church, the Head of all civil power. Government rulers are putty in His hands. Who can prevent the establishment of His purpose? The question, of course, is not whether Jesus is Lord, but whether proud hearts and shriveled souls will recognize Him as such. The gospel that turned the world upside down taught another king, King Jesus.

The sovereignty of God ought to be a great comfort to us. We are way too quick to praise God for our successes and blame ourselves for our failures; way too prone to attribute wealth to the blessing of God, and poverty to the failure of man; way too inclined to attribute the gains of man to his choices and the losses of a man to his weaknesses; way too human in assigning riches to the favor of God and deficit to the displeasure of God: ” . . . **in the day of adversity consider: God also hath set the one as well as the other.**”

5.6 THE MAN GUIDED BY GOD

CONDITIONS FOR GUIDANCE

Proverbs 3:5-6 “Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.”

We are living in an age of toxic feminism where the church is led by Christianettes—a society where we hear the roar of the liberated woman followed by confused men.

Where are the men who eat Iron Man Wheaties and who are led by nail-pierced hands? Where are the meek and quiet women who build their house on the foundation of Proverbs 31 and 1 Peter 3?

Before us is the advice of a loving father-king to a beloved son-prince. He wishes the future prince to be guided by the wisdom of God so he will become moral and ethical, tough and tender, strong and stately, intelligent and perceptive.

The word “direct” is the Hebrew word *yashar*. It means to “make straight” or “to make smooth.”

His direction does not mean protection from sea billows swelling like monsters on rough seas as much as it does preservation from rocky reefs and the graveyard of sunken ships. There are missions where the Lord sends his crew in the dark of midnight to face ice-cold, wet sprays and exhaustion from battling with oars. The disciples in the boat on the Sea of Galilee comes to mind.

Even though the Lord does not graduate “fair weather Christians” and “sunshine patriots” from His training academy, this wise father exhorted his son to surrender to God as the Captain of his vessel, and to trust Him to navigate his ship from port to port.

The conditions for Divine guidance contain a triad of Christian responsibility.

The first condition for Divine guidance is to trust God.

The word “trust” (*batach*) in this text is an imperative exhorting us to seek protection in the Lord. The word “trust” is translated “safety” in Leviticus 25:18, 19, “dwelt safely, every man under his vine and under his fig tree,” in 1 Kings 4:25, and “dwell between his shoulders” in Deuteronomy 33:12. Moreover, “safely” is associated with sowing, vintage, eating abundantly after a harvest in Leviticus 26:5, and “sleep” and “rest” in Psalm 4:8.

Who doesn’t want to have the hand of Providence ruling over their destiny? Even though we know that the perfect life is not a painless life, we all want God to winnow the chaff from the wheat and “to direct our paths.” While we pray that our Father will deliver us from evil, we do not pray that He would save us from the kind of struggles that make us strong.

The second condition for guidance is to shun a rebel’s stubborn self-reliance.

The opposite of trusting God is trusting in self. We are trained by humanists to install self as the captain of our soul and the master of our fate. There is even a song bragging about how “I did it my way.” But, this is the way of death (Isaiah 53:6; Proverbs 14:12).

Hebrew poetry utilizes the skill of parallelism in teaching principles, and this author wants us to know that trusting God is opposed to the self-made man (“Lean not unto thy own understanding”) in Proverbs 3:5 and the man who “trusts in riches” in Proverbs 11:28.

The word “lean” (sha an) is translated in Genesis 18:4 as “. . . rest yourselves under the tree.” One can find rest from the “rat race” and shade from the heat of the day by seeking shelter under His shield.

The idea here is to trust in the Creator not the creature; in God not man; in the Savior, not self.

We trust in His love for acceptance; in His righteousness for justification; in His blood for pardon; in His power for protection; in His authority for dominion; in His wisdom for our wisdom; in His pastures for happiness; and in His goodness for guidance.

The third condition for guidance is found in the imperative “in all thy ways acknowledge him.”

The word “acknowledge” (yada) means to “know” or “perceive” or “learn.”

The idea is to wake up each day with a conscience toward God exposing our ways to Him and seeking His counsels. And, the opposite of this is “living life my way.” If we live dependently upon Him, we can expect “God to make our paths straight.” This is His promise and our hope.

But, this does not mean that life is all sunshine and no rain or all pleasure and no pain. God has to toughen the tender and strengthen the weak. There has to be trials on this journey. Where there is no grief, there is no love. If life is all sugar and no salt, God’s children would turn into caramel Christians.

The great among us are forged on an anvil of iron with heat and hammer. Great men seem to arise off a bed of nails but never off a bed of roses.

Stress creates strength in stout men. How much pressure must a man endure under the hand of Providence? Just enough to fuse steel into his soul and love in his heart.

5.7 THE WORSHIP OF GOD

GENESIS 22: THE SWEET MEANING OF WORSHIP

Worship is man’s highest calling. It is the reason for our being.

John 4:23-24, "But the hour is coming, and now is, when true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is a spirit and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth."

The first time the word "worship" is used in Scripture is found in Genesis 22:5.

Genesis 22:5 And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you.

There is a hermeneutic principle that states the first use of a word determines its meaning throughout Scripture.

The word "worship" and other Biblical terms like "love," "grace," and "salvation" require definition that we might accurately and joyfully participate in the sweetness of our birthright.

That we might know how to accurately honor the LORD God, let's investigate the meaning of the term "worship" from Genesis 22 which is about the story of Abraham offering up his son on Mt. Moriah (the modern temple mount in Jerusalem),

First, worship is founded upon revelation from God: "And, God said . . ." (22:1).

God instructed Abraham on how to worship Him: "And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of" (22:2).

We are not free to worship God any way we please. Our Lord has revealed to us through His Word how we are to honor Him. There are laws that guide our approach to Him, and the believer would do well to discover them lest our nakedness be exposed before Him (Exodus 20:26).

Second, a requisite for worship is faith in and obedience to God's Revelation: "And Abraham rose up early in the morning . . . to go yonder and worship" (22:3, 5).

Abraham responded to God's command by faith (Hebrews 11:17); that is, his worship of the LORD was a response to His revelation to him. Likewise, true worship is a response to what God reveals to us about how to approach Him from the Bible.

The actual word "worship" (Heb: shachah) means "to bow down." Worship, first and foremost, is an act of reverence and obedience to One greater than ourselves. The Old Testament gospel proclaimed "God reigns . . . worship him!" (Psalm 97).

Third, worship involves precious time and a costly sacrifice: "And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of" (22:2).

Abraham's whole life was wrapped up in his son. That God would require that which he loved most must have pierced his soul like a jagged knife. Can you feel the pain of each word in God's directive to Abram? Every word drove the blade deeper into this father's heart: "Take thy son . . . thine only son . . . Isaac . . . the land of Moriah . . . offer him there . . .for a burnt offering."

Worship is not about getting, but about giving; not about entertainment of our pleasures, but about realignment of our priorities according to His purposes. It involves listening, obeying, doing, offering up sacrifices.

The Bible speaks about three sacrifices that please Him: (1) the sacrifice of praise, (2) the sacrifice of doing good, and (3) the sacrifice of sharing financially (fellowship) to support His work and His workers in Hebrews 13:15-16.

Worship costs. It is an expensive investment of time, emotion, and of that which is most valuable to us. "Shall I offer that which costs me nothing?" Samuel asked (2 Samuel 24:24).

If it costs us nothing, it is not worship.

Fourth, worship involves preparation: "And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him" (22:3).

Abraham rose early. There were chores to do, donkeys to saddle, preparations to make, servants to direct, and wood to collect.

Likewise for us! Worship involves preparation. There are early morning prayers to say, Bible studies to do, chores to perform, the ordering of one's household around Christian duty, preparing the sacrifice, and traveling to the place of worship.

Fifth, worship involves separation: "And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you."

In order to worship God, Abraham had to leave his wife, his tent, and his servants.

Worship for us involves leaving behind our home matters, business duties, hobbies, and cares of this life. It involves entering the world of the spirit with a mind occupied with Another.

Sixth, worship involves a death to self and its preoccupation with things of this life. Abraham said to his servants, "we go yonder and worship."

God's instruction to Abraham appeared contrary to His promises . . . and, they were definitely contrary to his own wishes and wants . . . contrary to the flesh and all its desires. The command to go worship created a conflict in the soul of the patriarch. There was wood, fire, and a knife to carry. Something was going to die . . . and the first thing to die was the will of Abraham.

Seventh, worship is the soul's occupation with the Son: “. . . and (Abraham) laid him (Isaac) on the altar upon the wood (a symbol of the cross)” (22:9).

The long three day journey to Mount Moriah . . . with Isaac . . . oh, how Abraham's entire being hummed with thoughts about his son . . . his only son. He brought Isaac to the LORD God as he was commanded and waited for their fate to be revealed.

Prayer is the soul's occupation with its needs; thanksgiving is the soul's occupation with its blessings; but, worship is the soul's occupation with God alone.

Likewise, all true Christian worship focuses on the Son . . . a reflection on Christ and His delight to the Father . . . a presentation of the Lamb to the Father . . . the occupation of the soul with the Savior . . . the remembrance of the Son in the breaking of the bread. The bread and wine . . . “Do this in remembrance of me,” Jesus instructed His disciples (See 1 Corinthians 11:24).

The believer must learn that not only does He come to God through Christ, but he must come to God with Christ. Instructions from above must guide us below.

The Christian religion is different than the rest of the religions of the world in that the worship of God requires blood . . . innocent blood to be placed on the altar. Blood is the currency of the spirit world. It is blood that redeems the soul. It was Jesus' blood that satisfied the claims of Divine justice (Romans 3:25; 1 Peter 1:18-20).

Sunday worship must center on the Son . . . not service . . . not blessings to receive . . . not fellowship with friends . . . but on Him who pleased the Father, the Burnt Offering. What delight He must be to the Father — one man on earth wholly and fully dedicated to His will (Leviticus 1).

We can do no better than to delight ourselves in the wonders of the Son of God . . . to shine a spotlight on His character and His achievements . . . and to praise the Father for the gift He has given to us.

This is the core of true worship!

Eighth, worship honors God.

Oh, how Abraham's obedience must have delighted God's heart. His reverence spoke well of Abraham, and it testified to the greatness of the LORD. Abraham placed God first in his heart and life, and this honored Him. He modeled to all what Christian men should be. The Spirit included this wonderful story in Holy Writ to be admired and to be instructed by generations to come . . . “that in all things He (Christ) might have the preeminence,” (Colossians 1:18).

Ninth, worship involves a blessing for the worshiper:

“And said, By myself have I sworn, saith the LORD, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: That in blessing I will bless thee, and

in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice," (22:16-18).

Oh the joy and happiness that Abraham and Isaac must have shared as they walked down the mountain back to the servants. The two of them in communion . . . in awe of the God they served . . . marveling at the new insights they had about Jehovah-jireh, the "LORD will provide" a sacrifice . . . of blood . . . His ram. Abraham obeyed God and was blessed . . . and, he had a son that was obedient unto death and he was blessed . . . a mirror image of God giving His Son to us at Calvary. As Isaac carried the wood, Jesus carried the cross. Oh, the wonder of it all!

God is a debtor to no man! No man will be poorer because he worships the Lord. Worship blesses our Maker, but it also enriches the worshiper. He does not need our worship to be great, but we need worship to appreciate the greatness of God.

The next time we see Isaac in Scripture is when he is presented a bride provided by his father; likewise, the next time the world sees Christ it will be with His bride, the church, the true worshipers of God who worship Him in spirit and truth.

5.8 SEVEN HEBREW WORDS FOR PRAISE

A study on the words of Praise from the Old Testament

There is power yet to be released for a praising heart. A thankful, worshipful spirit prepares the way for God to work in our lives.

*Psalm 50:23 "He who sacrifices thank-offerings (todah) honors me and **he prepares the way so that I may show him the salvation of God.**"*

Let's take a look at the Hebrew words for praise.

Hallah (Psalm 113:3; Psalm 119:164): Hallal means to praise YHWH. It is used over 200 times in the Bible; 99 times in the OT; 24 times with the name *Jah* employed.

Psalm 84:4 Blessed are those who dwell in your house; they are ever praising (hallal) you.

Yadah (Nehemiah 8:6; Genesis 29:35): *yad* is hand. It means to "lift or throw up the hands to God". It is often translated "thanks or thanksgiving." It is used 99 times the O.T; 53 times as "give thanks" and 32 times as "thank". It is a symbol of surrender, of yieldedness, of joyful adoration. No exercise in worship is

more controversial today than the use of hands in worship; and yet, the Hebrew words urges us to employ our hands in this royal occupation.

Psalm 134:2 enjoins us "to lift up our hand in the sanctuary and bless the Lord."

Psalm 63:4 "I will lift up my hands unto your name."

* God loves it, the flesh hates it, and the devil is devastated by it (Jack Taylor, 85).

Barak (Job 1:21; Psalm 96:2): When God is the object, it means to “declare God as the object of success.” It may be related to *berek* meaning “knee.” It infers “to speak well of the Lord; to give Him credit. It is used over 200 times to denote blessing from and too God; 73 times it denotes praise to God. It is wonderful to receive blessing from the Lord, but it is perfect heart that gives back to Him and blesses Him.

Judges 5:2 "That the leaders led in Israel, that the people volunteered, bless (barak) the Lord."

Tehillah (Deuteronomy 10:21; 2 Chronicles 20:22; Nehemiah 12:46): This word occurs over fifty times and it is derived from *hallel* meaning “to sing or laud.” It is perceived as involving music, especially singing (over 300 mandates in Scripture urge believers to sing).

Psalm 22:3 "But Thou art holy, o Thou that inhabitest the praises (tehillah) of Israel."

Zamar: This word is used exclusively in poetry. Its use outside the psalms are rare (only 4 times). It means “to pluck the strings of an instrument, to sing, to praise.”

1 Chronicles 16:9 "Sing to him, sing praise (zamar) to him; tell of all his wonderful acts."

Note: I Chronicles 16 uses four words for praise: *tehillah* (35), *barak* (36), and *hallal* (last verses).

Todah (Leviticus 7:11-13, 15; Psalm 100:4): this word means “to extend the hands in a sacrifice of praise, thanksgiving, or thank offering.” It is an act of faith, and is a type of praise which doesn’t see the victory, solution, or answer. This is the word used in Leviticus with the fellowship offering.

Psalm 50:23 "He who sacrifices thank-offerings (todah) honors me and he prepares the way so that I may show him the salvation of God."

Shabach (Psalm 117:1; Daniel 2:23): This word means “to shout, to address in a loud tone, to commend.” It is an exclamatory form of praise.

Psalm 63:3 "Because your love is better than life, my lips shall glorify (shabach) you."

Praise the Lord!

5.9 A KING'S PRAISE

Psalm 138

This is a kingly hymn composed by a manly king praising the merits of his eternal King to other kings.

It has been said that thankfulness is the queen of virtues . . . but, this is not so. It is the King of Virtues. **Praise is the excellence of kings, and those involved in praising the Creator engage a kingly occupation.**

A KING'S PRAISE IS WHOLHEARTED

Psalm 138:1 A Psalm of David. I will praise (todah) thee with my whole heart: before the gods will I sing praise (zamar) unto thee.

This great king shares a great song to great men about a great God and His great deliverance from a great battle. We learn from David that praise is a king's business, and that all who praise God are the true kings upon the earth.

Though composed by a king, before us is a snapshot of a healthy kingdom saint.

What a healthy heart! Praise is to the soul is what health is to the body; and, praise is to God what complaining is to the Devil.

What a healthy will! Praise was a choice: "I will" praise thee—another indicator of a solid, wholesome, resolute, vigorous, confirmed, strong, unwavering soul. Man is altogether better when He expresses thankfulness for the blessings of God in his life.

What a healthy occupation! Notice the object of praise, "Thee" (LORD God). Men are more often than not occupied with self. Our psychologized society has taught men to turn inward. Self-discovery has become the great occupation of neo-pagans. But, here is a saint that is outside of self enthralled with Another. He is Theocentric, not anthropocentric; Christ-centered, not self-centered.

Men are often enthralled with the beauty of a woman, beautiful weather, or a beautiful mountain scene. But, here is a vigorous heart that has been captured by the beauty of the LORD God. Delivered from wretched subjectivism, he takes us outside of ourselves to behold the wonders of the one, true God.

What a healthy commitment! This is no bifurcated, double-minded, divided, bi-polar, duplicitous, partite, half-hearted man. "I will praise Thee with my whole heart."

The phrase "before the gods" informs us that David was not afraid to sing the praises of God before kings, magistrates, judges, parliamentarians, and government agents who think of themselves as some kind of **god**.

Psalm 138: 2 I will worship (shachah) toward thy holy temple, and praise (yada) thy name for thy lovingkindness and for thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name.

David is no idolater. He “bowed down” to the God Who made heaven and earth; the God who revealed himself to Israel and tabernacled among them. His first concern was the honor of God’s name and the glorious fountain of virtue and truth flowing from all that His name represents. All that is wrong in society begins with the neglect of God and the debasement of His name in the minds of men. To remedy man’s dwarfed and diluted views of God, the king interjects steroids of praise about the YHWH to beef up man’s faith.

Moreover, David was more spirited about revelation than creation. The preposition “above” could just as easily be translated “over thy name.” All truth about God is controlled by His Word. All that a man needs to know about God is found in the Bible; and, if a truth claim cannot be verified by the Scriptures “there is no light in them” (Isaiah 8:20). To study Scripture, is to know God; to know God, study Scripture.

Psalm 138:3 In the day when I cried thou answeredst me, and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul.

David takes us to the first sweet reason for his hymn of praise. God’s rescues, deliverances, protections, provisions, disentanglements, and answers to prayer create a waterfall of praise within a healthy heart. A man who knows and feels God’s emancipations will rise to be a king among men. It is fitting for a king to praise the Creator; that is, those who praise God become kingly.

The most noble men among us think about Christ and extol His greatness. Praise is the excellence of kings.

A KING’S PRAISE IS KINGLY

Psalm 138: 4 All the kings of the earth shall praise (yadah) thee, O LORD, when they hear the words of thy mouth.

The Bible is good for me because it is good for all men. It not only commands my attention, but it commands the obedience of princes. Scripture was made for kings, and true kings honor Him. Those who possess the praises of God are priest-kings on earth, and all true kings praise God (Revelation 1:5).

Psalm 138: 5 Yea, they shall sing in the ways of the LORD: for great is the glory of the LORD.

A second sweet reason to praise God is addressed: “Great is the glory of the LORD.”

David anticipated a time when the kings of the earth would unite and sing praises to the way of the Lord; that is, they would promote the righteousness and justice of the God (Genesis 18:19). Like clouds, the glory of the Lord is in full view of the nations. Jeremiah confirms the international intrigue by announcing Him as the “King of Nations” (Jeremiah 10:7).

Again, kings sing the praises of God, and all who praise Him are the true kings.

The knowledge of the God of Scripture is not only good for me, but it is good for all men and all civil rulers. Oh, how much better our world would be if politicians would take time to reflect on the greatness of God and their duty to His law-order. In the present order of things, spiritual paupers rule the nations. True kings are afoot, and a fool on horseback. One day, the true kings of the earth (Christians) will be revealed and they shall reign with Him (Ecclesiastes 10:7; 2 Timothy 2:12; Revelation 20:6).

Psalm 138: 6 Though the LORD be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly: but the proud he knoweth afar off.

David expounds a third sweet reason to praise God. God's greatness, majesty, and power reaches into the stars. Yet, the transcendent God condescends to listen to the likes of you and me. He stands tall among the gods, but he bends his knee to hear our prayers. But . . . the proud? He has had enough of their blabbering, whining, and boasting.

A KING'S PRAISE PAVES THE WAY FOR REVIVAL

Psalm 138: 7 Though I walk in the midst of trouble, thou wilt revive me: thou shalt stretch forth thine hand against the wrath of mine enemies, and thy right hand shall save me.

Notice the subject and object of the verb "revive." "(You) will revive ME! Revival is of God, not man. Revival does not happen because a church plans it. Revival is an act of God in response to thankful people (Psalm 50:23). Furthermore, you can't revive a corpse. You can only revive the living. Revival is for Christians, not the pagans.

Having given three sweet reasons to praise God, the psalmist arises from his chapel of praise with a new assurance that though his life is complex and has its stormy battles, God will revive him in the midst of the dangers. A new confidence emerges that God will protect him from the plots of those who tongues are like daggers.

David not only expected general protection from those with an evil eye, but he anticipated more answers to prayer that would be characterized as personal, special, specific, particular, timely, powerful deliverances by the mighty hand of this condescending God. No wonder David expected kings to praise Him! And, all Christians do.

Psalm 138: 8 The LORD will perfect that which concerneth me . . .

A second assurance grows within this king's heart like a mighty oak. The trials of life were not there to make him bitter, but to make him better; that through it all, God would be with him to protect, to purify, and to perfect the outcome of his duties both temporal and eternal.

Psalm 138:8 . . . thy mercy, O LORD, endureth for ever: forsake not the works of thine own hands

David did not attribute his survival and military successes to his own talent, skills, or acumen. Before us is a humble man aided by a humble God. This king attributed his escapes on the battlefield and victories in combat to the mercy of God.

This king ends his praise with a prayer: “*forsake not the work of thy hands!*” Perhaps, being aware of his own moral frailty, weakness, and sinful tendencies, he cries out to God, “forsake me not.” Though having much to praise God for, the king closes his song in utter dependence on his God for future deliverances.

The most intelligent, knowledgeable, skilled men among us know God, think about God, and are inspired by His Spirit to speak about Him, write about Him, and exhort others to surrender to Him. If you are not praising the King of the Nations, you are the King’s son; and if you are not a king’s son, then you are not in His kingdom. True kings surrender to God’s law-order, and worship the King of kings (Matthew 11:29; Romans 10:9; Revelation 17:14)

1 O worship the King all-glorious above,
O gratefully sing his power and his love:
our shield and defender, the Ancient of Days,
pavilioned in splendor and girded with praise.

2 O tell of his might and sing of his grace,
whose robe is the light, whose canopy space.
His chariots of wrath the deep thunderclouds form,
and dark is his path on the wings of the storm.

3 Your bountiful care, what tongue can recite?
It breathes in the air, it shines in the light;
it streams from the hills, it descends to the plain,
and sweetly distills in the dew and the rain.

4 Frail children of dust, and feeble as frail,
in you do we trust, nor find you to fail.
Your mercies, how tender, how firm to the end,
our Maker, Defender, Redeemer, and Friend!

5 O measureless Might, unchangeable Love,
whom angels delight to worship above!
Your ransomed creation, with glory ablaze,
in true adoration shall sing to your praise!

Psalter Hymnal, (Gray)

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A man is never stands taller than when he is on his knees. Be humble, or stumble. Be prayerful and cheerful. Praise is a manly and thoughtfully kingly. When done regularly and joyfully, it puts power in your life.

John Knox, however, had the best perspective. He did not believe in the power of prayer, but in the power of God. It is not prayer that is powerful, but prayer that taps into the power of God that is power

6 THE HOLY TRINITY

(Main Source: Bickersteth, E. H. (1973).

Without the doctrine of the Trinity there would be no Christianity.

Question: What is a trinity and how can three be in one?

The topic of the Trinity has been a mind boggler to many thinkers. The word *Holy Trinity* is not found in Scripture, but if the concept is there, it must be accepted as true. Chafer quotes Lindsay Alexander, “But though a truth be not formally enunciated in Scripture, it may be so implied in the statements of Scripture that it becomes the proper and necessary expression of these statements” (1993, p. 272). The Trinity is not a truth of natural theology. It is the product of revelation. The natural mind would never conceive the concept. It is not stated in a single, solitary proof. Rather, it is a conclusion derived from a comprehensive study of God’s Word. It was given not to confuse man, but to help man understand His completeness.

6.1 IMPORTANCE OF THE TRINITY

Lewis Sperry Chafer (1947) is correct when he says, “Not only does the whole plan of salvation impinge upon the Deity of the Son, but the measure of God’s love is reduced to naught if God gave only a creature to man as His love-gift to them . . .” (p. 279). He continues to say those who deny the Trinity insult the Spirit of God by denying his work toward the economy of man’s salvation (p. 280).

6.2 THE UNITY OF GOD

The unity and oneness of God are foundational to the concept of the Trinity. God is undivided and indivisible. The fact there is one God is foundational to the Old Testament (Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 44:6; James 2:19). Chafer (1947) writes: “The Trinity is composed of three united Persons without separate existence--so completely united as to form One God” (p. 276).

His being is simple, numerically one, free from composition. Man, however, is compound, complex, having both a body and a spirit. There are not three gods; nor is God so absolutely solitary that He is lonely and incomplete as a Divine Person. Unity does imply that the three persons of the Trinity are not separate essences with the divine essence (Thiessen, 1992, p. 89).

Chafer says (1947) though no finite mind has ever comprehended how three Persons may form but one Essence, that precise truth is the testimony of all parts of the Bible (p. 272).

The doctrine of the Trinity sets Christianity apart from polytheism, from monotheism, and from Judaism.

In the Bible all Divine titles and attributes are ascribed equally to the Father, the Son, and Spirit. Each receive worship. Revelation ascribes to each the distinctives of deity (Hodge, 1992, p. 166).

The terms *Father, Son, and Spirit* do not express different relations of God to his creatures, such as: creator, preserver, and benefactor. The Father, the Son, and the Spirit all say, "I". Each says, "Thou". Each loves the other: the Father the Son, the Son the Father, the Spirit the Son. Each is both subject and object in Scripture.

The one divine Being subsists in three persons, Father, Son, and Spirit. There is one divine Being.

The Father, Son, and Spirit are divine.

The Father, Son, and Spirit are in the sense just stated, distinct persons.

Attributes are inseparable from substance. They are the same substance; and if the same substance, they are equal in power and in glory. But it is no less true that the Father is first, the Son second, and the Spirit third. The Son is of the Father, and the Spirit of the Father and of the Son. The Father sends the Son, and the Father and Son send the Spirit. The Father operates through the Son, and the Father and Son operate through the Spirit. The converse of these statements is never found. The Son is never said to send the Father nor operate through Him; nor is the Spirit ever said to send the Father or the Son. In the Holy Trinity there is a subordination of the persons as to the mode of subsistence and operation (Hodge, 1992, p. 167).

Chafer answers those who say, ". . . the 'one God' idea still remains to bless mankind, whereas the only reliable source of any knowledge of God is in the Bible and the Bible knows nothing of 'one God' who does not subsist in a threefold Personality" (1947, p. 278).

"In Christian theology, the term Trinity means that there are three eternal distinctions in the one divine essence, known respectively as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. These three distinctions are three persons, and one may speak of the tripersonality of God. We worship the triune God" (Thiessen, 1992, p. 90).

Chafer quotes Hermann Venema in his Institutes of Theology: "We say there are three *hypostaseis* or *subsistences* . . . We do not mean by this that there are three modes of subsistence or three modes of manifestation, but as we have said, three intelligent subsistences really distinct from each other" (1947, p. 277).

Chafer sites the following arguments for the Trinity based on reason (1947, p. 291):

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The Divine attributes are eternal.

There is eternal activity of the attributes.

The attributes require both Agent and Object.

God is sufficient in and of Himself.

The Agent and Object are persons.

PLURALITY IN GOD IS A TRINITY.

6.3 ERRORS REGARDING THE TRINITY

Tritheism denies the unity of the essence of God and holds to three distinct Gods (Thiessen, 1992, p. 90). The Trinity is not formed by “. . . cutting God up into three pieces, or by regarding him from three different angles” (Bray, 1993, p. 115).

Sabellianism held “to a trinity of revelation, but not of nature. It taught that God, as Father, is the Creator and Lawgiver; as Son, is the same God incarnate who fulfills the office of Redeemer; and as Holy Spirit, is the same God in the work of regeneration and sanctification . . . Sabellism taught a modal trinity as distinguished from an ontological trinity.” (Thiessen, 1992, p. 90).

Modalism holds to the thesis of a threefold nature of God in the same sense one man may be a father, a carpenter, and a musician (Thiessen, 1992, p. 90).

Arianism (d. 336): Arian was a famous heretic who believe Jesus was the highest of the creatures—a divine creature in fact—whose nature bridged the gap between the divine and the human by standing halfway between them but not combining each nature into the fullness of the other (Bray 1993).

6.4 HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

Trinitarianism is the rightful descent of Hebrew theology, while Judaism is a perversion of Hebrew thought. The Biblical mind is strongly monotheistic, but the Christ event demanded an interpretation of YHWH and His completeness. Judaism degenerated into a cult of Christianity when it refused its Messiah and failed to grapple with the person of Christ and His deity.

Judaism became a cult because it stressed the solitariness of God to the exclusion of the personality of God. Relationship with YHWH was distant. It was Christ who taught believers God was a Father and men could know Him. The Fatherhood of *Theos* was unknown to the Jewish people until Christ came.

Islam is also a cult of true Christianity. Mohammed learned about the monotheistic God from Christians and Jews. But, Mohammed could not grasp the Trinity, nor God's covenant relationship to the Hebrews, nor the concept of redemption. To Mohammed, submission to the divine will became paramount—but, his insufficient view of the personality of God led Islamic peoples into *fatalism*. The whole idea God was a person who could be persuaded is foreign to the Islamic mind (Bray, 1993).

The word *Trinity* is never found in the Bible. But the doctrine existed in the mind of the church before it was carefully articulated. Early Christians baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as early as 32 A.D. The Doctrine of the Trinity with the brilliance of a coruscating diamond was defined and romanced against the black velvet of error during early church history.

Its early form, *trias*, seems to have been used by Theophilus of Antioch (d. A.D. 181), and its Latin form, *trinitas*, by Tertullian (d. ca. A.D. 220). (Thiessen, 1992, p. 90).

Origen (185-254) believed the Father was true God, or God in himself (*autotheos*) and taught the Son was in his image. Jesus was like the Father in every way except the Son had a beginning or at least a source of some kind. The Holy Spirit was in turn in the image of the Son, divine in every way. His wrestling with the nature of the Trinity became the classical solution. There were three *hypostases* (divine natures) of a single *ousia* (being). Churchmen grappled with unity and distinctions of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Most were willing to maintain a distinction between them in names, but Arius insisted on a distinction in *ousia*. (Bray, 1993). Arius added the following: the Son was “begotten” (*gennotos*) of the Father, a term he considered synonymous with being created (*genetos*). The Spirit and the Son came into being when God created the world. This theology is called *economic dispensational trinitarianism*. Early Christians had difficulty understanding how Jesus could be begotten outside of time in eternity.

For Arius, there had to be time when the Son did not exist. Arianism was eventually defeated by the Athanasius Creed. The translation above was adopted by the CRC Synod of 1988³.

Whoever desires to be saved should above all hold to the catholic faith. Anyone who does not keep it whole and unbroken will doubtless perish eternally.

Now this is the catholic faith:

³ The Athanasian Creed: This creed is named after Athanasius (A.D. 293-373), the champion of orthodoxy against Arian attacks on the doctrine of the trinity. Although Athanasius did not write this creed and it is improperly named after him, the name persists because until the seventeenth century it was commonly ascribed to him. It is not from Greek (Eastern), but from Latin (Western) origin, and is not recognized by the Eastern Orthodox Church today. Apart from the opening and closing sentences, this creed consists of two parts, the first setting forth the orthodox doctrine of the trinity, and the second dealing chiefly with the incarnation and the two-natures doctrine (Christian Reformed Church. Retrieved from: http://www.crcna.org/pages/athanasian_creed.cfm)

That we worship one God in trinity and the trinity in unity, neither blending their persons nor dividing their essence. For the person of the Father is a distinct person, the person of the Son is another, and that of the Holy Spirit still another. But the divinity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is one, their glory equal, their majesty coeternal.

What quality the Father has, the Son has, and the Holy Spirit has. The Father is uncreated, the Son is uncreated, the Holy Spirit is uncreated.

The Father is immeasurable, the Son is immeasurable, the Holy Spirit is immeasurable.

The Father is eternal, the Son is eternal, the Holy Spirit is eternal. And yet there are not three eternal beings; there is but one eternal being. So too there are not three uncreated or immeasurable beings; there is but one uncreated and immeasurable being.

Similarly, the Father is almighty, the Son is almighty, the Holy Spirit is almighty. Yet there are not three almighty beings; there is but one almighty being.

Thus the Father is God, the Son is God, the Holy Spirit is God. Yet there are not three gods; there is but one God.

*Thus the Father is Lord, the Son is Lord, the Holy Spirit is Lord.
Yet there are not three lords; there is but one Lord.*

Another heresy developed called *patripassianism*, a belief the Father suffered and died on the cross. This view developed because heretics could not make a distinction between the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. This view became absurd because God was both impassible and immortal in his nature.

The Emperor Constantine summoned the **First Ecumenical Council** to meet at Nice in Nicomedia in A.D. 325 in order to refine, clarify, and unite the church around a fundamental statement (**The Nicene Creed**):

We believe in one God, the Father almighty, the maker of all things visible and invisible; and in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, only begotten, begotten of the Father, that is, of the essence of the Father, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten and not made, consubstantial with the Father, by whom all things were made whether in heaven or on earth...we believe in the Holy Ghost. But those who say that there was time when He (the Son) was not, that He was not before He was made, or was made out of nothing, or of another or different essence or substance, that He was a creature, or mutable, or susceptible of change, the Holy Catholic Church anathematizes (Hodge, 1992, p. 171).

It was during this stage of development Christian theologians saw a distinction in *persons*, but not of *natures*. If there was inferiority in the godhead, it was because of *status* (position or rank) not *gradus* (quality).

The main deficiency of the Nicene Creed was its statement regarding the Holy Spirit. Athanasius and other defenders of the Nicene Creed insisted that the Spirit is *consubstantial* with the Father. It was during this time theology became *diatic* (dual). Theology became *binitarian*—*the theology that accepted some kind of duality in God*. The problem with any *diatic theology* is that it demotes the person and work of the Holy Spirit.

The **Nicene Creed** and the **Athanasian Creed** declared the Son was *consubstantial (homoousios)* with the Father and that the Holy Spirit was *consubstantial (homoousios)* with the Father and the Son. It was this creed that best articulated Trinitarianism and it has stood for 1500 years. Thus, the Father is God, the Son is God, and Holy Spirit is God. And yet there are not three Gods, but one God only. The Father is Lord, the Son is Lord, and the Holy Spirit is Lord. And yet there are not three Lords, but one Lord only . . . we prohibit the Catholic religion to say that there are three Gods or Lords (Hodge, 1992, p. 172).

6.5 BIBLICAL EVIDENCE OF THE TRINITY

You can accept the Trinity as true by grasping six assertions of Scripture whether you understand the concept or not.

There is a difference between the infinite, personal God and finite, sinful man.

Man: Job 8:9 (For we are but of yesterday, and know nothing, because our days upon earth are a shadow:)

God: Psalm 93:2 Thy throne is established of old: thou art from everlasting.

Man: Luke 12:26 If ye then be not able to do that thing which is least, why take ye thought for the rest?

God: Matthew 19:26 But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.

Man: Psalm 94:11 The LORD knoweth the thoughts of man, that they are vanity.

God: Psalm 33:11 The counsel of the LORD standeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations.

Man: Romans 3:10 As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:

God: Matthew 19:17 And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is, God:

Man: Jeremiah 17:9 The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?

God: 1 John 1:5 This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

Man: Isaiah 40:6 The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodness thereof is as the flower of the field:

God: Psalm 104:31 The glory of the LORD shall endure for ever: the LORD shall rejoice in his works.

The Scripture discourages men from putting their trust in other men, and it constantly encourages men to place their trust in the God of the Bible.

Psalm 146:3-6 Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help. His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish. Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the LORD his God: Which made heaven, and earth, the sea, and all that therein is: which keepeth truth for ever:

Isaiah 2:22 Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils: for wherein is he to be accounted of?

The Scripture, by God's declaration, forbids idolatry and limits man from usurping His glorious position.

Exodus 20:3 Thou shall have no other gods before me.

Exodus 34:14 For thou shalt worship no other god: for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God:

Isaiah 42:8 I am the LORD: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images.

The Scripture, Old and New Testament alike encourage us to put our trust and ultimate confidence in the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

Psalm 2:12 Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.

Isaiah 50:10 Who is among you that feareth the LORD, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the LORD, and stay upon his God.

John 3:36 He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

John 6:29 Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.

John 9:35-37 Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when he had found him, he said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God? He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him? And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee.

The Scripture ascribes to Christ qualities belonging only to God the Father:

Is the Father eternal? So is the Son (John 1:15; John 1:1; John 8:58; 17:5, 24; Colossians 1:15; Isaiah 9:6).

Micah 5:2 But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.

Revelation 1:8 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.

Is the Father omnipresent? So is the Son.

John 3:13 And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.

Matthew 28:20 ... lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen. (See also, Matthew 18:20)

Ephesians 1:23 Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

Is the Father omnipotent in creation? So is the Son (Isaiah 9:6 Revelation 1:8; Hebrews 1:3).

Matthew 28:18 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

John 1:3 All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made.

Is the Father omniscient? So is the Son (John 16:30; Col 2:3).

John 5:20 For the Father loveth the Son, and showeth him all things that himself doeth: and he will show him greater works than these, that ye may marvel.

John 21:17 And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things;

Is the Father immutable? So is the Son

Hebrews 1:12 And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail..

Hebrews 13:8 Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever.

Is the Father the Creator? So is the Son (John 1:3; Heb 1:3, 10)

Colossians 1:16, 17 For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.

Can the Father forgive sins? So does the Son.

Matthew 9:2 And, behold, they brought to him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed: and Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy; Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee.

Matthew 9:6 But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (then saith he to the sick of the palsy,) Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house.

Luke 7:47 Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.

Does the Father execute judgment? So does the Son.

John 5:22 For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son:

Is the Father called God? So is the Son (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:22 “Immanuel”)

John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

Does the Father receive worship? So does the Son (Matthew 14:33; 28:9; Luke 5:8)

1 Corinthians 1:2 Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours:

The Scripture ascribes to the Spirit the qualities belonging only to God the Father:

Does the Father have personality and sensibility (intelligence, emotions, will)? So does the Spirit.

1 Corinthians 2:11 For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.

Romans 15:30 Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me;

Ephesians 4:30 And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

1 Corinthians 12:11 But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.

Is the Father eternal? So is the Spirit

Hebrews 9:14 How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

Is the Father omnipresent? So is the Spirit.

Psalms 139:7 Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?

Is the Father omniscient? So is the Spirit.

1 Corinthians 2:11 For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.

Is the Father omnipotent? so is the Spirit.

Luke 1:35 And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.

Does the Father create life and raise the dead? So does the Spirit.

Genesis 1:2 And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

Job 33:4 The spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life.

Romans . 8:11 But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

Is the Father called God? So is the Spirit.

Acts 5:3 But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land?

Acts 5:4 Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.

If the Scripture says there is one God, and it teaches there are three personalities, three identities, three persons, three names, and three titles separate from the others and each is indivisible from the other, then we must conclude God is Triune.

OTHER SCRIPTURAL ARGUMENTS FOR THE TRINITY

The first name used for God is *Elohim*. The name is plural but it is joined to a single verb, *bara*. The use of “us” and “our” also fits this argument (Genesis 1:26; 3:22; 11:7)

The three persons mentioned in Genesis 18 are described the singular usage of the word “LORD.” See the use of the term “Angel of the Lord” (Gen 18:2, 17). Three people visit Abraham and they are called the “Angel of the Lord” and “Lord”.

Genesis 18:1 And the LORD appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre: and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day;

Genesis 18:2 And he lift up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood by him: and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground,

Genesis 18:3 And said, My Lord, if now I have found favour in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant:

The use of the word “one” (Deuteronomy 6:4-6): The word one is *echad*. God is one like a husband and wife are *echad*.

The plural forms of God: Creators (Ecclesiastes 12:1), Makers (Isaiah 54:5).

A trinity of action in Isaiah: (Isaiah 6:8, 48:16; 63:9, 10)

- A Holy Place:
- The Holy of Holies literally means, “the holy place of the Holy Ones” (Chafer, 11947, p. 300).
- The repetition: “Holy, Holy, Holy . . .” This is the only attribute which is repeated three times that I know of in Scripture.
- The plural pronoun “us” is used.
- John said Isaiah saw the glory of Christ (John 12:41)
- Luke says the Spirit spoke (Acts 28:25).
- The same triad is used by the living creatures (Revelation 5).

The conversation between the Father and the Son (Psalm 2).

THE FATHER SPEAKS

Psalm 2:6 Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion.

THE SON SPEAKS

Psalm 2:7 I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.

Psalm 2:8 Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.

Psalm 2:9 Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

THE SPIRIT SPEAKS

Psalm 2:10 Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth.

Psalm 2:11 Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling.

Psalm 2:12 Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.

TRIADS IN SCRIPTURE

The activity of the Godhead at the baptism of Christ. The Father, Son, and Spirit are noted.

Matthew 3:15 And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness. Then he suffered him.

Matthew 3:16 And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him:

Matthew 3:17 And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

Interestingly, when the Samaritans were baptized in the name of Jesus (Acts 8). Was the baptism defective? They sent the Apostles to rectify the problem so they could receive the Holy Spirit.

Jesus' use of the word "another Comforter" means "just like me".

John 14:16 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever;

The baptismal pronouncement (Matthew 28:19, 20). A believer is identifying with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Matthew 28:19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

The word "name" is singular. There is only one name. The titles "Father," "Son," and "Holy Spirit" are connected by the Greek word "kai"; i.e., there is one God and one name, "The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit."

The triad of Jacob: "God . . . the God. . . the Angel. . ." (Gen 48:15, 16).

Genesis 48:15 And he blessed Joseph, and said, God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which fed me all my life long unto this day,

Genesis 48:16 The Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads; and let my name be named on them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth.

Other triads: (2 Samuel 23:2,3; Isaiah 48:16 Isaiah; 63:7-10); Creators (Ecclesiastes 12:1); Makers (Isaiah 54:5).

2 Samuel 23:2 The Spirit of the LORD spake by me, and his word was in my tongue.

2 Samuel 23:3 The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me, He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God.

Use of the term spirit as an energy (Genesis 1:2) and later as an Agent is seen in various texts (Isaiah 40:13; 48:16; 59:19). (Chafer, 1947. p. 302).

Triads of Names: (Numbers 6:24-27; Psalm 29:3-5).

Numbers 6:24 The LORD bless thee, and keep thee:

Numbers 6:25 The LORD make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee:

Numbers 6:26 The LORD lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.

Numbers 6:27 And they shall put my name upon the children of Israel; and I will bless them.

NEW TESTAMENT TRIADS

Paul uses a Trinitarian framework, not to teach the Trinity, but to express the pattern of God's active involvement with His people (Bray, 1993). The main emphasis is Christological. It is through our beloved Lord Jesus we experience the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit

2 Corinthians 13:14 The grace (Nom.) of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love (Nom) of God, and the communion (Nom) of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen.

Romans 15:16 That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost.

Romans 15:30 Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me;

2 Corinthians 1:21-22 Now He (God) which establishes us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.

2 Corinthians 3:3 Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart.

Ephesians 2:18 For through him (Christ) we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.

1 Peter 1:2 Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.

From these verses we see the Father is the One who ordains, establishes, judges, and appoints. The Son is the redeemer and mediator and grantor of salvation. the spirit is the sanctifier and unifier.

THE ARGUMENT FROM NATURE

The universal triunal law as quoted by Keith Brooks states that the universe reflects the nature of the Triune God (Interest Magazine, December, 1979, Wheaton, Ill.)

Space = length x width x height

Matter = energy x movement x phenomena

Time = future x present x past

Universe = space x matter x time

AN ARGUMENT FROM REASON

While not sufficient to establish the Trinity, the following demonstrate the truth of the Trinity. Nature reflects nature's God.

Water exists in three forms: liquid, steam, solid.

Families are made up of a father, mother, and children.

People are triune: spirit, soul, body

Eggs are yoke, white, and shell

The nature of light is heat, light, and chemical reactions

6.6 HISTORICAL TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF THE TRINITY

To agree with the Trinity is to agree with the wisest men in the church (Quotes from Chafer, 1947-48, p. 282):

Augustine: "All those catholic expounders of the divine Scriptures who I have been able to read, who have written before me concerning the Trinity, who is God, have purposed to teach, according to the scriptures, this doctrine, that the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit intimate a divine unity of one

and the same substance in an indivisible equality; and therefore that there are not three Gods, but one God” (Quoted by Chafer, p. 282).

Tertullian, “He is God and the Son of God, and both are one. And thus Spirit from Spirit and God from God becomes another in mode of being, not in number; in order, not in substance but in form, not in power but in a specific distinction; but of one substance and power . . . ” (p. 282)

Athanasian Creed: “We worship one God in trinity, and trinity in unity; neither confounding the person nor dividing the substance” (p. 283).

C.I. Scofield: “God is one . . . He subsists in a personality which is threefold.”

Dean Swift: “God commands us to believe there is a union and there is a distinction . . . that God is there expressed in three different names as Father, as Son, and as Holy Ghost; that each of these is God, and that there is but one God.”

Conclusion: The Trinity, though not a biblical word, is a truth found in the Word of God. Scripture supports Trinitarianism by reason, by creeds, and by the church fathers. It is good news God exists, that He is complete, and that He can be known through His ultimate Revelation in Christ.. Do you know the Trinity? (Resource: Berhkof 1993; Bickersteth, 1973; Chafer 1947; Thiessen, 1979).

7 CREATION

7.1 THE GENESIS RECORD

In the beginning God created (bara) the heaven and the earth (Genesis 1:1).

ʼ#r,a'(h' taeîw> ~yIm:ßV'h; taeî ~yhi_l{a/ ar'äB' tyviPareB.

One person has correctly said that if you can believe the first verse in the Bible you can easily believe the rest.

The Bible provides its own commentary on the one who disbelieves, "The fool hath said in his heart, 'There is no God.' They are corrupt . . ." (Psalm 14:1). Atheistic principles are the polluted streams from which all moral corruption flows. All lust, lying, deceitfulness, adultery, homosexuality, stealing, incest, murder and all kinds of perversion are predicated on unbelief, atheism, and the neglect of God.

The creation is not an incidental of faith, but the very foundation upon which all good is built and upon which Christianity is constructed.

To disbelieve the creation account is to disbelieve God, to discredit the prophets, and to mock Jesus Christ (Mark 10:6). To believe the account is to believe God and to honor the Son.

The Creation Account is not couched in modern geologic or biological terms. It is not a scientific paper presented to the International Academy of Quantum Molecular Science.

Rather, the creation account is an accurate, simple, historical account of the creative process. It is simple enough for a child to understand, but complex enough to challenge the greatest minds.

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DAY ONE

Genesis 1:1-5

The phrase "in the beginning" marks the beginning of time . . . of matter . . . of space. It comes from the Hebrew word "bereshith" (tyviareB.) which is appropriately translated "in the beginning", at that time

when there was no time, at that time when God already was, time began when God created the universe. Who is this God and how did He create the world?

The word "God" (אֱלֹהִים) comes from the Hebrew word, "Elohim." Elohim is a word that stresses God's strength and majesty. The "im" ending indicates a plural. It could be read "gods." It is a plural name that stresses a singular meaning. Hence, the God of the Bible is a "triune being" who has the ability to create by the power of His words. However, Elohim is not a force or a power. He is an infinite, personal, triune Spirit.

The word "created" is the Hebrew word *bara* (בָּרָא). It is a word used only by God. The word *bara* expresses His ability to bring into existence that which does not exist (Romans 4:17). The word *exnihilo* means "out of nothing," i.e., the material world was created from zilch by the power of God. Man can reorganize things that already exist, but he cannot create things out of nothing. The word "create" tells us that at a point in time when there was no matter, God spoke the universe into his existence (Psalm 33:9).

Ultimately, there are only two choices as to origin of the universe: either Time + Chance brought this world into being, or there was an intelligent, powerful Creator who fathered the world. If there is no Creator, and we are a product of Time + Chance, then there is no meaning to life and it doesn't matter how we live. But if the Genesis 1:1 is true, then life has purpose and it does matter how we live. It is incomprehensible that Time + Chance, out of random particles, could produce such order and complexity as we know it today. It takes more faith to believe in the Time + Chance scheme than it does to believe the clear, simple account in Genesis.

The word "heaven" is the Hebrew word, "shamayim" (שָׁמַיִם). Like *Elohim*, *shamayim* is also a plural. It probably does not refer to the stars and the galaxies as we know them, but rather to the term "space."

The word "earth" is the Hebrew word "erets" (אֶרֶץ). It is most commonly translated "land" or "ground," and it refers to the basic elements of matter, out of which the creation was organized and formed.

In the beginning God brought into existence that which did not previously exist: time, space, and matter. From this continuum the universe was formed.

Genesis 1:2

The word "and" (וַ, waw) is a conjunction referring to the fact that what follows unfolded from what preceded it. A sequential, chronological accounting of events is being iterated.

The word "was" (ht'y>h', hayetha) is a verb expressing past tense, not a change or process of becoming. It cannot be properly translated "became." Reconstructionists (gap theorists) have wrongly concluded that the word "was" suggests a change of state from the original creation.

The words "without form and void" come from the Hebrew words "tohu wavohu" (Whbow" Whto). This phrase is translated in Isaiah 45:18 as "vain" or "empty." The word "bohu" does not mean *desolation*. It simply means "empty or void." The Spirit of God is seeking to communicate a simple truth that at the moment of birth, the first stage of creation, time-space-matter was without form, without order, without organization. Every act of God following His original pronouncement gave the universe more and more definition and organization.

The phrase "darkness was upon the face of the deep" describes the state in the first stage of development. The word "face" is the Hebrew word "panim" (ynEP.) and refers to "presence." The word "deep" (tehom) is translated "water" or ocean in other places, but here the word "ocean" is not preferred. It probably refers to the simple compounds of hydrogen and oxygen in a primeval, unorganized state of existence in the sphere known as space.

"And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." The word, "Spirit" comes from the Hebrew word, "ruach" (x;Wrw) which is translated "wind" or "breath." The metaphor refers to the activity of God, not wind. Though the formless, watery mass was present in that first stage of development, it was without order until the Spirit of God began to energize and organize the original components of matter. This "moving" is a reference to the activity of the Spirit of God. This word means "to hover" and is translated "flutter" (Deuteronomy 32:11), and "shake" (Jeremiah 23:9).

The Father is the Architect of creation, the Son is the Administrator of creation, and the Spirit is the Artisan of creation.

Genesis 1:3

The first organization of what we know as energy is called *light*. This light is not the Sun, but the whole electromagnetic phenomenon including all kinds of all light waves.

This is the first mention of the word *day*. Possibly, the earth began rotating on its axis at this time. The word *day* in Hebrew is "yom" (~Ay). It usually refers to a definite 24 hour period of time, and it does not refer to a definite geologic age. Only occasionally does it refer to an indefinite period of time. For example: ". . . in the days of the judges" (Judges 2:7), or the indefinite future "day of the Lord" (Joel 2:11).

After the creation of light the space-time-mass continuum, the elements of matter were fully energized and activated. The Prime Mover set all things in motion. He worked during the light, and He did not work during the night.

DAY TWO

Genesis 1:6

The word "firmament" comes from the Hebrew word, "raqia", meaning "expanse" (רָקִיעַ). It would correspond to our understanding of the words "space," "sky," or "atmosphere," or "vault," or "barrier," or "dome." On this day the Lord separated the basic elements of water in its vaporous, gaseous components and distanced portions of it into outer space. Some believe that it was at this time that God created the great water canopy that suspended over the earth that once existed in the troposphere and stratosphere. This canopy would make the earth a giant green house perfectly fit for the growth of vegetation.

In this cosmological description, there is some kind of division or demarcation (expanse, firmament) with waters above the expanse, and waters below the expanse. Some identify this as the Van Allen Belt--a radiation barrier with electronic charges that create a barrier between the atmosphere and outer space.

DAY THREE

Genesis 1:9

The "waters under the firmament" were a watery matrix existing in a shoreless sea. By His command dry land emerged from the waters creating the earth's crust, mantle, and core. This cataclysmic phenomenon consisted of global geologic construction that precipitated vast continents, seas, and a network of underground reservoirs and artesian wells like no man has ever imagined.

Do not think of our present continents nor of our ocean's borders as these did not exist till after the flood. Furthermore, don't even think of earth as a globe. There is nothing here that suggests God is creating a moving, wobbling ball spinning on an axis at 1,000 mph hurling through space at 30 miles per second around a Sun in a Milky Way Galaxy rushing through the universe at 600,000 mph.

The earth is center of the Genesis epic, not the universe. It is the earth, not the stars that are of great concern here. The earth is not an afterthought or a cosmic accident. It is the essential, paramount, significant part of the creation story.

Further, one gets the idea that the earth is stationary, stable, and not spinning out of control. The oceans are in no danger of spinning wildly out of control flooding continents. There is no big bang in this account. These are theories and fabrications of men hostile to God's law-order.

The "dry land" was called *earth* which consisted of rocks, minerals, top soil and all kinds of sandy particles burgeoning with organic nutrients.

Likewise, on this day God created plant life: mosses, grasses, bushes, herbs, ferns, and fruit bearing trees. All stages of life were created including mature plants and even their seeds. Each organism had its own genetic code capable of reproducing itself.

A great question arises: What came first the chicken or the egg; a tree or its seed? The answer is the tree came before the seed; that is, God planted mature trees and plants with seeds.

The word "after its kind" occurs ten times in this chapter. It must be noted that "limitations" were programmed into the genetic code so that each species would remain distinct. Though capable of variation, the "seeds" were not capable of conversion.

It also must be noted that complex systems of fruit bearing trees were created before marine animals, insects, bacteria, and animals. Such an anomaly bewilders the modern mind.

Secondly, these complex structures were created and brought into before the Sun and the Moon were created (1:14). This order of creation baffles skeptics and definitely slaps theistic evolutionists in the face. While we are prone to think that all plants are dependent on the Sun for life, God's word reveals that plants were sustained by God—a lesson for us that it is God, not the sun, whom man is to worship. Life comes from life, not the Sun. Life came from God, not a burning star. Life came from the Creator-God, not aliens.

While these creative acts baffle our minds, we must remember "that nothing is too hard for the Lord" (Genesis 18:14).

The words "evening and morning" (**rq,bo-yhiy>w: br,(,-yhiy>w**) are used over a hundred times in Scripture and always has a literal connotation. While these creative acts baffle our minds, we must remember "that nothing is too hard for the Lord" (Genesis 18:14).

DAY FOUR

Genesis 1:14

On this day God created the astrosphere with the sun, the stars, and waves of starlight. Although the earth was already rotating on its axis, the creation of the sun and moon and stars marked the beginning of day and night.

The word "light" (**troaom**) could be translated "luninaries." These great light generators are known as stars. The purpose of which was for "signs and seasons." Likewise, it must be assumed that God created not only the stars, but star light. It would be easy for Him to one as the other.

The Lord did this with relative ease. Stars are made up of hydrogen and helium, and though they are often of great size or great density, they are relatively simple compared to earth which is perfectly suitable for life.

The Sun and moon were made on the fourth day, the Sun to govern the day; and, the moon to govern the night. Further, by "made" we assume, God set them spinning and rotating in the "expanse" or sky. The great clock with its long hand (the Sun) and the short hand (the Moon) were wound up and set in motion.

Nothing is said about the earth being a globe or ball spinning around the Sun. The great work of the Heavenly Astro-physicist on this day was the creation and fixation of the stars, Sun, and Moon in the sky above the earth for the benefit of the earth, and to separate night from the day.

The phrase "and God said" occurs 10 times, and the phrase "it was so" occurs six times. The powerful mechanism of creation is the word of God. Likewise, when God finished this day, He said, "it is good."

DAY FIVE

Genesis 1:20

On the fifth day God created all the marine animals to fill the lakes and seas on earth and the birds to fill the air. All kinds of marine animals, invertebrates and vertebrates appeared.

The word "life" (**vp,n**, nephesh) appears for the first time. It is the word for "soul", something that both man and animals share together in this finite existence. The great whales of the sea, the great mammoths of the oceans that are now in existence and those that are now extinct did not emerge slowly over aeons of time but were an act of special creation. Such complexity does not evolve from a single cell, from non-life to life, but by special creation. Once again, the order of evolutionary theory is contradicted by the order of creation in placing the creation of birds prior to that of land animals.

Likewise, this is the first mention of the word "blessing." While the animals are not loved as man, they are never-the-less objects of love and desire. God has a special concern for all those that have a "nephesh."

DAY SIX

Genesis 1:24

On this day, God created land animals and the pinnacle of his creation, man himself. The terms in this verse are comprehensive. Domesticated and wild, reptiles and mammals, insects and rodents were created on the sixth day. There was no evolutionary struggle. All reproduced after "their kind."

The order of creation here is significant. Birds were created before insects and bugs, the exact opposite of the evolutionary model. Finally, the grand consummation of God's creative acts was the creation of its king and queen, Adam and Eve.

On this day God created man "in his own image." This can be said of no other created being in the water, on land, or in the air. Man alone bears the image of God.

By "image" (**WnmeI.c;B**), the scriptures does not mean a physical likeness, but a spiritual likeness. Physically, however, man's body, his eyes, ears, and voice, reflect God's capacities to see, hear, and speak.

However, like animals, man's abilities are finite. Man (anthropos) has the same needs and limitations that all animals experience. Just as animals are dependent on air, water, and fruit to live, so is man. In this way, man is like his co-habitators on the earth.

But man is different in that he bears the "image" of God. By image, the Scriptures are referring to those invisible, spiritual qualities that are possessed by God which in His sovereignty He decided to share with man. Those qualities are intellect, emotions, and will, and sensitivity. Man does not share God's infinite attributes, but he does share his personal attributes. Man and animals share finiteness, but God and man share an incorporeal personality, i.e., man was endowed with reason and sensibility, whereas, animals lack those qualities.

Likewise, God "blessed man," i.e., He bestowed upon man the ability to do what He commissioned man to do. The first command was to populate the earth, not re-populate the earth. Human sexuality was God's gift, and was to be used as an instrument of blessing for mankind. His divine commission not only included the responsibility to colonize the earth, but the responsibility to govern and to administrate the resources of his environment. Man was king and his dominion was earth. Equipped by God with a phenomenal brain and super intellect, man was fitted for the task. The first man was not a Neanderthal cave man, but a brilliant, intellectual capable of the most sophisticated and logical calculations. According to the Bible, "cave men," as anthropologists call them, were castaways driven from society because of social pressures (Job 30:6).

God also provided fuel to energize both man and beast. Man's responsibilities were great, but great was God's supply. Every kind of fruit and plant was delivered over to man for his benefit. Even the animals were sufficiently supplied. It is interesting to note that both man and animals were herbivorous. It wasn't until after the fall, that meat was consumed as fuel. Accordingly, it must also be assumed that carnivorous animals had an entirely different skeletal structure back then than they are today.

DAY SEVEN

Genesis 2:2

When God finished his creative acts, He pronounced that it was "good" (**ba**j). His creation was perfect. All the animals, insects, and rodents were "good." All man's body parts, his eyes, ears, toes, internal parts, and reproductive organs were "good. There was nothing sinful or dirty or shameful about being man or woman. There was no deterioration, no disease, no catastrophes, no drought, no survival of the fittest, and no death. His creation was perfect.

On the seventh day, God rested. Not because He was tired, but because His creative work was finished. The seventh day was declared *holy* because on that day God rested. The seventh day was not a command for man to rest, but a declaration of God's rest.

It must be kept in mind that the creative processes involved in the first six days were invigorating and dynamic, while after the seventh day the processes were sustaining and disintegrating. In the beginning God wound up the geologic clock. Since then, the universe has been winding down. The Second Law of Thermodynamics have been operative. The dynamics in those first six days of creation were events and forces are unknown to us, they are completely beyond investigation.

Modern science on cosmology is pure speculation and has little to do with science. It takes more faith to believe the big bang and its evolutionary model than it does the Bible. The believer, therefore, should not be soon shaken by some scientific speculation. Rather, he can clean to the Word of God as its makes more sense than life came from rocks

7.2 FACTS ABOUT THE ORIGINAL CREATION

The original creation was much different than most care to admit, but if we understand the original creation, many of the anomalies between science and faith, between anthropology and theology disappear. Consider the following differences between the ancient world and our world.

The creation was supernatural and sudden. What we know about creation has come through special revelation. The cosmos did not come into existence over great periods of time, but through a rapid series of creative events. God spoke, and the world was created in six days.

For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast (Psalm 33:9).

The Hebrew word *yom* usually represents a literal, twenty-four hour day. Periods of time do not have “evenings and mornings.” Feeling the pressure to bow to science, many have sought to turn a *yom* into a geologic period. Since the Sun and Moon were not placed until the fourth day in relation to the earth’s rotation, a 24 hour period did not exist until the fourth day. However, by interpreting a *yom* as a period may relieve some minds, it creates a host of problems for others. While we acknowledge the possibility that a *yom* may be longer than a 24 hour period, the normal use of the word implies a 24 hour day. God chose not to use scientific terms to describe his creative acts. Rather, he used common, ordinary words to help men understand the structure and sequence of his work.

The cosmos was created with the appearance of age. How old did a tree, mountain, river, or an adult male tiger look on the first day of his existence? Stars, mountains, animals, and plants looked older than they actually were after they were created. How old did Adam look two days after he was created? Did he have a navel? Were starlight trails seen in the sky? Were all mountains jagged? Could round stones be found in river beds? Did trees have rings? These questions excite our imagination. When Christ created wine from water at Cana in Galilee (John 2), it was declared to be the best wine. Wine takes months to ferment. When the wine was only minutes old, it tasted like aged wine. Why? Because it was created with the appearance of age.

The earth was enshrouded by a huge water canopy (Genesis 6:10). Rain did not fall until after the flood. An entirely different ecological system was in place in the beginning. This canopy created a greenhouse effect—a perfect environment for growth. The climate was tropical and plants were easily cultivated. This would explain why oil is found under the seas and why petrified forest are located just miles from the polar ice cap.

It did not rain on the earth (Genesis 2:5). There were no water cycles, no evaporation, no condensation, and no erosion. The seasons of winter, spring, summer, and fall did not exist. There were no ice sheets or snow storms or great seas. The oceans were not full until the flood. Polar ice caps did not exist. Much of ocean basin was at one time dry land. Prominent artesian wells, rivers, and an intricate system of water ways once existed that do not exist now (Genesis 2:1ff). The climate was warm, humid, and misty. This would explain how the earth was a tropical environment allowing us to extract great amounts of oil from subterranean sources.

The earth's geologic structures were different. While we can assume there were hills and valleys on the Earth's crust, great mountains such as Mt Everest and the Grand Tetons did not exist until after the geologic upheavals following the flood. Underground rivers, streams, artesian wells, were everywhere. This was a world we can only imagine.

Carnivorous animals did not exist in the original creation. All creatures including saber tooth tigers were herbivorous. Thus, skeletal structures, especially the dental features must have been fitted for consuming plants (Genesis 1:30). Fish, vultures, and lions ate plants. What was a “food chain” in the original creation? These facts cause us to contemplate the force involved in the two great Biblical catastrophes, the fall of man and the flood. When Adam sinned, he fell and all creation with him. We are told that Adam's body changed. He knew he was naked. Likewise, we can assume great biological and anatomical changes occurred in plants and animals when the king of creation fell. Death entered this pristine world and changed it forever.

The primeval creation was a harmonious world. There was no decay, no death, no competition for food, no hunting, no stalking of the weak by the strong, and no struggle for survival. It was a paradise, an ancient paradise about which we can only dream (Isaiah 11).

Species that are now extinct, walked all over the earth. Mammoths, dinosaurs, strange birds, and reptiles thrived on the earth. Man and dinosaurs walked on the earth at the same time.

Adam was king of creation. Commissioned by God to take dominion, his objective was to subdue the earth. All living creatures were under his virtuous authority. Animals, fish, and birds lived in submission to him and in harmony with each other. Animals had no fear of man. When Christ, the second Adam, was on earth, He commanded Peter to throw his net on the other side of his fishing boat. To his surprise, his net was full of fish. How did they get there? Christ ordered them into the net. In the same way, Adam must have had pet-like control over all the species, even saber tooth tigers.

Adam had an incredible mind capable of creating instant, systematic, categorical vocabularies unmatched even in modern nomenclatures. What kind of intelligence did Adam possess that he could instantly create languages. Forgetfulness simply was not a problem. He was at the top of the gene pool. We are at the bottom.

The original creation was good. There was a balance and order in nature. Death was nonexistent. Sin and death had not yet appeared. Morally, man and woman were naked, implying not only an environment fit for nudity, but perfect trust and a clear conscience. Man was king and everything was under his authority.

There is a difference between chapter one and chapter two. Peter Briggs, professor at Trinity Southwest in Albuquerque, accounts for the differences in chapter one and chapter two as the difference between the blueprint of a plan (chapter 1), and the actual construction of the plan (chapter 2).

7.3 CATASTROPHISM

Things have definitely changed since the original creation: catastrophic events, volcanoes, weather cycles, disease, fire, cruelty, pain and death plague the remnants of God's original creation. Two CATASTROPHES impacted the original creation and our modern world.

The Fall. Who can fathom the effect of sin on man and his environment? When Adam sinned he died spiritually. Death entered his body and his body changed. When Adam fell, all creation fell with him. Paul affirmed this fact saying the all of creation groans waiting for its redemption (Romans 8:22). Because God plans to redeem not only man but the earth, we can assume sin's impact on creation. Animals and plants were included in the fall. Sin impacted the skeletal structures of animals and plants. Death was inherited by all.

The Flood: The prediluvian world without rain, oceans, and gigantic mountains were transformed by the collapse of earth's water canopy and by eruptions from the subterranean rivers. Great volcanic activity, mountain orogenies, ice ages, and the warping of earth's crust occurred after the flood. The word for "flood" in Greek is *kataklysmos*. We get our word *cataclysm* from this word. The evolutionary theory maintains a uniformitarian view of geologic history. However, the Bible tell us that nature has been interrupted by global catastrophes. While all this must be grasped by faith, it is impossible to understand the primeval history without it. To disbelieve the Genesis record is to destroy the foundation upon which all of geology, theology, and morality is structured.

In summary, the Bible helps us to understand the original creation and the prediluvian world. Many anomalies in geology and paleontology are explained by the Biblical account. Furthermore, this record helps us to grasp how the two Biblical catastrophes disrupted nature leaving us with our present environment.

7.4 DATE OF CREATION

BISHOP USSHER

A popular date for the creation was fixed by Archbishop James Ussher (1581-1665) who after tracing all the dates, days, and genealogical records ascribed the creation as taking place in 4004 BC. Mr. Usher's date was published before the ascendancy of modern science, and though it is trendish to ridicule him, it ought not to be. He was a scholar and knew a great deal more about the records than most of his modern critics do.

It must be kept in mind the only way to fix a date on anything of antiquity was tracing historical records of civilized man. There was not an educated man in Usher's day that even conceived of a civilization existing before 6000 BC. Scientific dating methodology was unknown at the time. Even the records of ancient Egyptians can't be traced back any further than 3000 BC. The most reliable and concise records of any ancient chronology are the Bible.

Difficulty: Fixing an exact date of creation is difficult for the following reasons:

Some numbers are smudged and obscure in the Massoretic text and other manuscripts. There is some disagreements between the Septuagint and Samaritan texts.

The calendar year may have been different among Biblical people.

In short chronologies, gaps appear, and only major people are cited, and often shameful people are skipped.

Some discrepancies exists between the chronologies, especially when kings reigned in co-regency. This same problem is also found among the Egyptian and Babylonian records. The problem with the Egyptian records is that new Pharaohs tended to want to eradicate the memory former Pharaohs

The purpose of the lists in the genealogies was not a chronological one, to present an accurate, person-by-person record to establish a date for creation, but a spiritual one: to establish the Messianic line, to vindicate Christ's physical, genetic link to Adam.

A NEAR DATE

It is difficult, even impossible to fix an exact date for creation from Biblical chronologies, but it is not unreasonable to trace the Biblical records and to fix credible period for the creation. While very few Biblical scholars accept Ushers 4004 BC date for the creation, most accept a date near Usher's for the following reasons.

The Bible is "inspired by God," and while the Bible is not a complete book of history, it is an accurate record of history it records. To discount the chronologies, would be to discredit the Biblical account.

Though there are known gaps in some of the records; those gaps do not represent millions or even thousands of years. To stretch these lists to include millions of years would make the Biblical records absolutely incredulous.

The push to disavow Usher's date totally and completely is based on the pressure of the scientific community. However, science has its own problems with determining a date for creation:

The world was created with an appearance of age. For example, how old did the first mountain, or lake, or tree, or cow look 24 hours after it was created by God?

Science is based on the ability to make "observations." Since no scientist was present at the creation and cannot reproduce it in a laboratory, their theories of origins are just that, theories! Though unwilling to admit it, they are involved in many fanciful and unbelievable speculations themselves. When scientist speaks of "origins," they often make a leap of faith from physics to metaphysics. While they have a right to make reasonable conclusions in the area of cosmology, scientists haven't always been honest about distinguishing between theory and fact.

Modern dating methods are based on the premise of uniformitarianism (a belief present process are uniform throughout history) which believes that the geologic, physical, and chemical forces in existence today have always been in existence throughout time. Dating methods do not take into account all the variables and forces at work on our planet, indeed, no man knows.

The pressure to bow to the blow by blows of the evolutionary cosmogony is present and powerful. Many have discounted Genesis and the Bible all together. This is unfortunate, for powerful evidence exists for a young earth, and when all is said and done, Usher date of 4004 B.C. is incredibly more tenable than 4.5 billion BC

7.5 . DATE OF NOAH'S FLOOD

Did the flood occur before or after the building of the Pyramids?

That the Great Pyramids of Saqarra and Giza were built between 2500 – 2300 BC is an established fact of Egyptian history.

The Creationist's date for the flood of 2350 BC is a contradiction to the Egyptian historical chronology which has given rise to secular scholars criticizing the Bible. However, as we will discover, their contention is against the Masoretic Text, not the Original Hebrew Scriptures.

The **Masoretic^[1] Text (MT)** (1000 AD), assumed correct by Biblical scholars, is the basis of post flood chronologies.

Old Testament Theology

But, just as we are witnessing a rewriting of history in our time, there was a malicious conspiracy to redact Genesis 11 on the part of Masoretic Jews.

Answers in Genesis uses the following calculations:

Calculated BC date for creation: 4004

Calculated AM date for the Flood: - 1656

Calculated BC date for the Flood: **2348**

Current Year (minus one²): + 2011

Number of years since beginning of Flood: 4359

But, Answers in Genesis uses the Masoretic Text as its source manuscript.

According to many Egyptologists the Great Pyramids were built about 2550 BC or about 200 years before the flood. This means they would have been covered by the flood if the normative Biblical account is correct.

Other Egyptologists place the building of the pyramids between 2450 and 2350 BC.

However, many conservative scholars like Trinity Seminary in Albuquerque and associates for Biblical Research place the time of Noah's flood around 3000 BC. It is the 2350 BC date that is out of sync with the facts of history as we understand them.

Could Egyptian chronologies be wrong? Probably not. More scholarship has gone into Egyptian chronologies than any other dating system, and it is considered the most accurate of any system.

Could the conclusion of Biblical scholars be wrong? To ask this question is not the same as questioning Biblical authority! The Bible is and will remain the authority for faith and conduct. Rather, we must question the majority opinion regarding the Biblical timeline -- a timeline based on the witness of the Masoretic Text

The Septuagint (LXX), the Samaritan Pentateuch, and Flavious Josephus disagree with the source document used by Biblical translators (The Masoretic Text).

Because modern translations like the KJV, NIV, ESV, NKJV, and NASB rely upon the Masoretic Text, normative scholarship arrives at the 2350 BC date for the flood. But, the other three witnesses include and additional 650 years in the line of Shem.

ESV Genesis 11:10 These are the generations of **Shem**. When **Shem** was 100 years old, he fathered Arpachshad two years after the flood.

11 “And Shem lived after he fathered Arpachshad 500 years and had other sons and daughters.

12 When **Arpachshad** had lived 35 years, he fathered Shelah. (The LXX reads: “Arphaxad lived a hundred and thirty-five years (135), he fathered Shelah.”) + 100

13 And Arpachshad lived after he fathered Shelah 403 years and had other sons and daughters.

14 When **Shelah** had lived 30 years, he fathered Eber. (The LXX reads, “When **Shelah** had lived one hundred and thirty years (130), he fathered Eber.”) + 100

15 And Shelah lived after he fathered Eber 403 years and had other sons and daughters.

16 When **Eber** had lived 34 years, he fathered Peleg. (The LXX reads: “When Eber had lived one hundred and thirty-four years (134), he rather Peleg.”) + 100

17 And Eber lived after he fathered Peleg 430 years and had other sons and daughters.

18 When **Peleg** had lived 30 years, he fathered Reu. (The LXX reads: “When Peleg had lived one hundred and thirty years (130), he fathered Reu.”) + 100

19 And Peleg lived after he fathered Reu 209 years and had other sons and daughters.

20 When **Reu** had lived 32 years, he fathered Serug. (The LXX reads: “When Serug had lived one hundred and thirty years (130), he fathered Nahor.”) + 100

21 And Reu lived after he fathered Serug 207 years and had other sons and daughters.

22 When Serug had lived 30 years, he fathered Nahor. (The LXX reads: “When Serug had lived one hundred and thirty years (130), he fathered Nahor.”) + 100

23 And Serug lived after he fathered Nahor 200 years and had other sons and daughters.

24 When Nahor had lived 29 years, he fathered Terah. (The LXX reads: “When Nahor had lived seventy-nine years, he fathered Terah.”) + 50

25 And Nahor lived after he fathered Terah 119 years and had other sons and daughters.

26 When **Terah** had lived 70 years, he fathered Abram, Nahor, and Haran.

27 Now these are the generations of Terah. Terah fathered **Abram**, Nahor, and Haran; and Haran fathered Lot.

From Arphaxad to Serug, the LXX records one hundred years to each father (100). When we add the fifty years (50) of Nahor to Masoretic deletions, we come up with the six hundred and fifty years (650) that is missing in the genealogy of Shem. This correction pushes the flood 650 years back to 3000 BC. But, it is not just the LXX that includes those 650 years, so do the other three witnesses.

This leads us to conclude the original Hebrew text included those 650 years that the Masoretic Text excluded.

Hebrew Masoretic Text	LXX	Samaritan Pentateuch	Flavious Josephus
35	135	135	135
30	130	130	130
34	134	134	134
30	130	130	130
32	132	132	132
30	130	130	130

Chart A 12

Considering the principle of *preponderance of evidence*, the three witnesses cited above cause the scale of justice to tilt in favor of correcting the record by 650 years; that is, we are moved to believe the original Hebrew text included those 650 years, and that the Masorites made an error, intentionally, somewhere along in the copying process as early as the second century AD.

Take a look at the normative life span chart of the Line of Shem using the Masoretic Text and notice something strange – that Shem outlived all his sons and grandsons; that, according to the Masorites, Shem was alive during the lifetime of Abraham. This is totally unreasonable; that is, to think Shem bore the greatest grief of all seeing he had to witness the death of all his sons and grandsons.

In the LXX, Shem died 500 years before Abraham was born. In the Masoretic Text, the Jewish Scribes with direction from Rabbis distorted the text to make it look like Shem was alive during the lifetime of Abraham, and that he witnessed the death of all his sons and grandsons and great grandsons which is totally unreasonable.

The first rule of interpretation is to “SECURE THE TEXT.”

[Kent Hovind and Answers in Genesis propagate this distortion because they were relying upon a corrupted text. No fault to them because they were relying upon their English translations on Genesis eleven which were corrupted by the witness of the Jewish Masoretic Text.]

In the age of textual criticism and the numerous witnesses to the original, we are now able to better discern the original text.

Further, the Creationists’ date for the flood as 2350 BC was based on the calculations of James Ussher (581-1656) who also based his calculations of the age of the earth and the date of the flood based on the corrupted Masoretic text.

Biblical critics are correct when they criticize the Creationists’ chronology of a flood occurring around 3250 B.C. There simply isn’t enough time after the 2350 BC flood date to repopulate the earth, build the tower of Babel, disperse the diverse language groups, to build nations and for the Egyptians to build their pyramids.

The LXX witness of 650 additional years permits the necessary time to explain the (1) re-population of the earth, (2) the building of the Tower of Babel, (3) the dispersion of the people to other parts of the earth, (4) the settlement of Egypt, and (5) the building of the pyramids (2450 -2350 BC).

So, we conclude based on the preponderance of evidence provided by the Septuagint, the Samaritan Pentateuch, and the testimony of Flavius Josephus, that

the flood occurred around 3000 BC and NOT 2350 BC;

that the Tower of Babel was built around 2600 BC; and,

we agree with the Egyptologists that the Great Pyramids were build between 2450 and 2350 BC, and that they were untouched by the flood.

That the Jewish, Masoretic motive to redact Genesis 11 to dispute the Christian message that Jesus Christ is High Priest of the order of Melchizedek is real and in effect in the Masoretic Text.

Using the LXX as the best witness to **the Original Hebrew** promotes an accurate record of post-diluvian history consistent with historical research, and removes much of the criticism by secular skeptics.

We recommend watching, "[Were the Pyramids Built Before the Flood? \(Masoretic Text vs. Original Hebrew\)](#)". See: [The Date for Noah's Flood](#)

[1] “The Masoretic Text defines the [Jewish canon](#) and its precise letter-text, with its [vocalization](#) and [accentuation](#) known as the Masorah. The ancient Hebrew word *mesorah* (מסורה, alt. מסורת) broadly refers to the whole chain of Jewish tradition (see [Oral law](#)), which is claimed (by Orthodox Judaism) to be unchanged and infallible.” (Wiki).

7.6 THEORIES REGARDING MAN’S ORIGIN

The study of man is called anthropology. The Scripture unapologetically attributes man’s existence to special creation. The doctrine of creation is important for several reasons:

God’s word says it is true. If God did not create the world, the Bible is a lie. Genesis one and two, the foundation of the Word of God, holds up every doctrine in Scripture. If Genesis falls, the Bible falls!

God is defined by His act of creation. He is the God of creation. If He did not really create the world, then man is really deceived in his conception of God.

Psalm 89:12 The north and the south thou hast created them: Tabor and Hermon shall rejoice in thy name.

Psalm 148:5 Let them praise the name of the LORD: for he commanded, and they were created.

Jesus made reference to His Father. Jesus is said to have created the world (John 1: 1-3). If Jesus did not create the world, then He is a deceiver, a liar, or something worse.

John 1:3 All things were made by him;

The creation is easier to believe than evolutionary theory. It takes more faith to believe in Time + Chance than it does in the creation theory.

Man’s value depends on his relationship and his origin. If God did not create man, then what is man? Man has no meaning, no purpose, and no hope!

The united States Constitution was established in order to secure our unalienable rights. Where did these rights come from? God, not government, is the One who grants rights to man.

7.7 POPULAR COSMOLOGICAL THEORIES

CLASSICAL PHILOSOPHY

Sometimes called *Platonism*, classical thinkers saw the world as an emanation from God, i.e., an extension of God. Plato saw man essentially as mind. The body was either evil or at best a temporary, instrument to be used and then discarded. The *Christian Science Cult* views man as *mind*, and therefore, believes all disease originates in the mind. Correct a man's mind, and you can correct man's body positively.

THE MEDIEVAL CHURCH AND NEO-PLATONISM

As the church studied the Greek classics, Medieval theologians view the spirit as good and the body as evil. Extreme asceticism shadowed the monastic societies. Augustine saw "the days not a literal periods of time, but ineffable, god delimited days- in fact, six cognitive or logical states of the angels as they beheld the unfolding of God's creative work" (Peter Briggs, lecture, July, 1995).

MYSTICAL CULTS

Many of the cults are very spiritual in that they seek to exercise their spirit in order to escape the sensations of the body.

SCIENTIFIC EVOLUTION

The evolutionists views man as a product of Time + Chance. Man is merely a mass of protoplasm with electro-chemical reactions that survived radical enemies over millions of years. Naturalistic processes account for everything.

THEISTIC EVOLUTION

By redefining the word "day" as mentioned in Genesis one, theistic evolutionists seek to synthesize scientific theories with the Biblical creation account. In order to do this, the theistic evolutionist seeks to cram the geologic record into the 7 day creation record. The Day Age Theory, which seeks to establish the word "day" as an indefinite period of time, is the product of this movement.

GAP THEORY

This theory states that God created a primeval world with pre-Adamic men; that Satan fell between Genesis 1:1 and Genesis 1:2; that Satan's fall caused a chaotic state "tohu-wa-bohu" (**Whboêw**" 'Whto'); that Genesis one is a recreation of the pre-Adamic world. This view holds that death already entered the world and that the present fossil record represents the old Adamic world.

7.8 A DISCUSSION OF EVOLUTION

Man is distinct from all other animals from his chromosome structure to the shape of his thumb.

Man walks erect. No other animal is so stately. Man's osteological framework is different. His hand is uniquely made for work and engineering. Anthropoids have palms design for clinging to limbs. The fin of a fish, the paw of a tiger, the hoof of a camel, and the claw of an eagle exist- but only man has a hand.

Mentally, the gap between a seven year old child and the most intelligent animal is so vast it is like comparing the space shuttle with a tinker toy set. Have you ever tried teaching agronomy to an elephant, or the tango to a cat, or theology to a gorilla? The most primitive savage in New Guinea is a million times more capable of learning languages than the best laboratory monkey.

Amazingly, evolution has a firm foothold in the sciences and has captured the imagination of men. The following represent a fraction of the arguments for evolution and their counter arguments:

DEFINITIONS

The word *evolution* means "out rolling" The picture is of an outward-progressing spiral, an unrolling from an infinitesimal beginning through ever broadening circles, until finally all reality is embraced within.

Enrophe means "in turning." It comes from two Greek words *en* and *trophe* (turning). The spiral is inward upon itself which is exactly opposite of the word *evolution*. The Greek word for *entrophe* is found in 1Corinthians 6:5 (evntroph.n) and 15:34 and is translated *shame* in both cases. In the LXX it is translated *confusion* (evtrapei,hsan) in Psalm 35:26;109:29, and *dishonor* in Psalm 69:19. If a person turns inward when they can no longer face the outside world, they will become confused and ashamed.

In a closed system, a system which feeds upon itself, will eventually run down into a state of disorder. Shame and confusion will result in the system. Only in God "is there no shadow of turning" (James 1:17).

The idealism of evolution is contrary to all of science. All observed systems go from order to disorder.

The word *thermodynamics* is a compound of two Greek words, *therme* (heat) and *dunamis* (power). It is the science which measures the energy exchanged when heat transforms one substance into another.

The word *energy* is defined as the *capacity to work.*, or the force x distance through which it acts. When something has energy, it has the capacity to do work and to exert a force through distance.

The word *power* is closely related to *energy* except *power* involves time. *Power* is the work done per unit of time and it is measured in foot-pounds per second.

The *science of thermodynamics* is the study of converting heat power into mechanical power.

The *first law of thermodynamics* recognizes that while energy can be transferred from one form to another, *energy can neither be created or destroyed.* Energy is constant in the universe.

Isaac Asimov, in the Game of Energy and Thermodynamics You Can't Even Break Them (1970), said "No one knows why energy is conserved" (Smithsonian Institute Journal, p. 6). True, science does not give us the answer, but the Bible does. God has life in Himself. Only He can create energy. He created the world (energy) and then rested. Christ now "upholds all things" by the Word of His power.

The *second law of thermodynamics* is a powerful, unbreakable principle. This law stresses the cosmos tends toward conservation rather than innovation. This law states: For every naturally occurring transformation of energy processed, there is a loss of available heat energy. It is as if nature extracts a penalty or tax every time heat energy is transferred from one account to another. Simply stated, all things are losing energy; all things tend to go from the complex to the simple; from high energy to low energy. For example: heat will flow from a warm body to an ice cube, but not the other way around.

A little logic please: The second law of thermodynamics states that any closed system, energy loss will increase with time. Thus, the universe, as a system, is moving to maximum entropy or heat death. If the universe was uncreated at a point in time, then the Earth would have already reached maximum entropy. If we look at the cosmos as a giant clock, we must conclude that at some time in the past, the universe was wound up, and we are now in the process of losing energy. We conclude the universe is finite, and that at some time in the past, an Outside Force must have brought the creation into existence (Montgomery, 1973; Morris, 1974).

ARGUMENTS FOR EVOLUTION

Comparative anatomy: There are marked similarities between the anatomy of man and that of other higher vertebrata.

Answer: However, similarity to participate in the same environment doesn't explain the immense gap between man's mind and the mind of animals; between radical physiological structures such as the position of man's thumb or the structure of the big toe. A gorilla can grasp a limb, but his thumb doesn't rotate and therefore he can't pick up a pencil. So marvelous is the human thumb that a man can not only pick up a pencil, he can pick up a tiny pen and sew with it.

Embryology: The embryo of the human looks and develops like the embryo of other species. Darwin considered this field the greatest evidence for evolution.

Answer: This theory was destroyed by Professor Walter Garstank in 1921 and has little to no scientific support to day (Sunderland, 1988. Darwin's Enigma, p. 118, 119). In evolution, teeth were suppose to develop before the tongue, but in human embryos the tongue develops before the teeth; in evolution, all embryos develop a tail, but in human embryos, the embryo never has a tail with extra vertebrae extending far beyond the pelvis. Despite initial similarities, we know the chromosome structure of each animal is different from the chromosome structure of humans. Human life is human life. Lizard life, is lizard life (Sunderland, p. 122).

Bio-chemistry: Living organisms are similar in the chemical make-up.

Answer: This should not be surprising since all organisms depend on proteins, amino acids, and other minerals for existence.

Paleontology: The study of fossils demonstrates development from the simple to complex. In 1981 the spokesman for the American Association for the Advancement of Science said, “One hundred million fossils identified and dated in the world’s museums constitute one hundred million facts that prove evolution beyond any doubt however” (Sunderland, p. 41).

Answer: Men in England and Scotland before the modern explosion of geologic exploration established the geologic column before 1840. Sunderland (1988) says,

Since 1840 there have been many rock formations discovered with fossils completely out of order according to the geologic column- like Precambrian setting on dinosaur-age Cretaceous-but these have been either explained away or simply ignored (p. 43).

Sunderland (1988) quotes Dr. Gould, “I regard the failure to find a clear ‘vector of progress’ in life’s history as the most puzzling fact of the fossil record” (p. 47). The sudden appearance of species in certain formations presents a fatal objection to the transmutation of species. Truly, the fossil record reveals sudden appearance of species without any progressive modification. Likewise, the record reveals the sudden disappearance of species. So invalid is the fossil record that scientist are now saying that 75 % of evolution took place before the first fossils were formed (Sunderland, 1988, p. 45).

Genetics: From the study of genetics, the investigation of heredity and its investigations, some conclude that man is always changing whether it be in size, type of finger print, or in shapes of organs.

Answer: The differences in a *no earlobe structure* and a *unique earlobe* are a big chasm. It can’t be accounted for by genetics. The difference between the human body and a single cell is like comparing a flashlight to the electrical system of Las Vegas. The jump from non-life to a single cell is like the jump from a single battery cell to the entire city electrical network. The simplest organism capable of independent life, the prokaryote bacterial cell, is a masterpiece of miniaturized complexity, which makes a spaceship seem rather lo-tech. This single cell coming together by chance as about as likely as that of a tornado sweeping through a junkyard might assemble a Boeing 747.

SOME FACTS TO RECKON WITH

1. There is no evidence of evolution at present. No one has ever seen one species changing into another.. In fact, we see the opposite: devolution and extinction. Horizontal variations are not mutations, which are always 100% harmful.
2. There are no new species emerging. Not only could Darwin not cite a single example of a new species originating in time, neither has anyone else. In fact, the opposite is true. We do not see new species emerging. We see species becoming extinct.

3. There is no known mechanism of evolution. After 125 years with thousands of trained biologists studying the field, one would think the mechanism for evolution would be identified. No one has a clue.
4. There is no new fossil evidence: With thousands of scientist studying the fossils, no one study has yielded a single unequivocal morphologic transition.
5. There are no new orders in the fossils: Not only are there no transitional forms, there is not even a “general evidence of evolutionary progression in the actual fossil sequences” (p. 4).
6. There is no new evidence that evolution is possible: The forces of entropy and the Second Law of Thermodynamics contradict every premise of evolution.
7. There is no evidence from similarities. These similarities are easily explained by the Creator’s similar design of similar systems for similar functions for life on Planet Earth.
- 8 There is no recapitulation or vestigial organs. The idea that embryonic development in the womb recapitulates the evolution of the species, has long been discredited.

AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL CRISIS

We have a crisis in anthropology: Man is his own most vexing problem.

The evolutionist proposes that man is a product of Time + Chance wherein two fornicating rocks bumped hips in some primordial water bed that gave birth to the first cell. And over time, through a trillion perfect mutations, man emerged a noble creature due to natural selection and genetic drifts.

Some anthropologists suggest that man originated in Africa and is, therefore, an Africanus Anthropos. Buying into this myth, Black political activist, **Abhijit Naskar**, said, “If origin defines race, then we are all Africans – we are all black.” However, many modern professors think man evolved out of Europe calling the earliest anthropos “Greco Man.” If this be true, then all men are white.

Michael Denton describes the crisis of anthropology: “The complexity of the simplest known type of cell is so great that it is impossible to accept that such an object could have been thrown together suddenly by some kind of freakish, vastly improbable, event. Such an occurrence would be indistinguishable from a miracle” (Evolution: A Theory In Crisis).

Paul Davies is very transparent, “Many investigators feel uneasy stating in public that the origin of life is a mystery, even though behind closed doors they admit they are baffled.” (*The Fifth Miracle: The Search for the Origin and Meaning of Life*).

THE MORAL CRISIS

People behave according to their theology whether that theology be right or wrong.

These midget views of anthropology create a moral crisis. If man is an insect, why not spray mankind with chem trails and insecticides? If man is a sack of dung, why not flush man down the toilet? If a baby is a cancer in the womb, why not cut it out? If man is a fungus infecting the earth, then there is no moral problem with poisoning the candida parasite. If man is product of Time + Chance, then there is no God, no judgment, and no right or wrong. Just the survival of the fittest. But, if there is a God, and man is a product of creation, then it matters how men treat one another.

All evolutionary views of mankind lead to the degradation and death of man—whether innocent or corrupt. Atheists murdered more than one hundred and eighty million people in the twentieth century. A Biblical view of man promotes life for the innocent . . . and justice for lawbreakers.

The anthropological crisis can only be corrected by Biblical Theology.

Of all statements on the origin of man, the first seven words of Genesis are the most accurate,

“In the beginning, God created Heaven and earth . . . andverse 26: God said, ‘Let us make man in our image.’” See “[Evolution is Nonsense](#),” “[Evolution and Mathmatics](#),” and, “[The Creation Account](#).”

The Word of God presents a balance between the nobility of man because he is made in the image of God, and the sinful bent of humanity because he partook of the poisonous tree and is born in the image of Adam.

Because man is made in the image of God (a theological truth), and because life begins in the womb (a biological fact), it is murder to interrupt that life with a knife or poison needle (a moral law)!

7.8.1 EVOLUTION AND MATHMATICS

One way to expose the errors of Evolution is with simple math.

Evolutionists teach that millions and billions of years ago there was nothing and that everything came out of nothing.

But, this denies mathematical theory because **nothing x nothing = nothing**, and **0 x 0 = 0**

Moreover **10 x 0 = 0, and 100 x 0 = 0 and 1,000,000 = 0**. No matter what you multiply times 0 the answer is always ZERO!

Biology is the only science in which multiplication means the same thing as division, and nothing can create something.

If you break the laws of man, you go to jail. If you break the laws of God, you go to hell. If you break the laws of mathematics and conclude that everything came from nothing you get a pin on your lapel, you get to keep your job, and you may be promoted.

The Bible makes so much more sense because it begins with “In the beginning God . . .” It is much easier to believe that everything came from the Creator than to believe that everything came from nothing!

7.8.2 JESUS AND THE APES

Evolution is hemlock from the Poisonous Tree injected into the minds of children to inoculate them against the Christian faith.

Because it is so evil, it must be refuted, rebuked, rebutted, and repudiated.

But, doing so is not always easy especially when evolution comes to us by hyperfluent professors who like to entangle us in the scientific vocabularies of paleontology, geology, and genetics.

So, I like to “cut through the mustard” sort of speak and get to the kernel of truth. A simple answer is better than a profusion of scientific jargon.

Saint Paisios, a Greek Orthodox Christian, gave himself to prayer, fasting, and study.

One of the issues he had to deal with was the doctrine of evolution that had been crammed down his throat as a youth in science classes.

As a mature Christian advocate, students would ask him what he thought of the theory of evolution—particularly the canard that man descended from monkeys.

He was able to “cut through the mustard” to give this marvelous, simple answer:

“To think that Christ was descended from apes is blasphemy.”

He is absolutely correct! To believe, as evolutionist do, that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Logos of History, our Savior and Lord descended from lower life forms like apes is blasphemous.

7.8.3 SCIENTISTS BELIEVE LIFE CAME FROM ROCKS

Jeremiah 2:27 who say to a tree or a stone, ‘You gave me birth . . .’

Our text condemns those primitive people who attributed their existence to an inanimate object like stones.

But, did you know that contemporary scientists believe that man came from rocks?

That's right! Entire institutions filled with PHDs believe that millions and millions of years ago that two rocks bumped hips and produced living cells that multiplied into alligators, squirrels, and terodactyls.

Now don't misunderstand! Evolutionist would never acknowledge this to science students gulping up knowledge like a thirsty camel. It's much too simple.

Rather, they disguise their true belief behind such terms as autogenesis, natural selection, mutation, genetic drifts, DNA, and gene migration.

But, in reality and truth, these scientists really believe that life came from non-life; that all living things came from rocks, stones, pebbles, sand, dirt, and dust.

Add a little water and sunshine, and "whalla!" You have the "simple" cell with atoms, electrons, protons, nucleus, cell membranes, nucleolus, cytoplasm, mitochondria, vacuole, chloroplasts, ribosomes, lysosomes, DNA and all kinds of proteins capable of becoming more efficient and more complex over billions of years.

In reality, however, if you throw out all the non-vernacular scientific terms, these erudite minds believe that two rocks mated and gave birth to human beings. Isn't this correct?

"In the beginning the Big Bang created the heavens and the earth."

And earth was one molten rock and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of Evolution hovered over the face of the waters.

And light shined through the expanse. And, Evolution helped waters separate from the rocks. And it was so.

Waves swirled upon the stones and life appeared with vegetation and trees producing fish, birds, creeping things, and anthropos (The Evolutionist's Bible).

It may be too harsh to say that scientists are dumber than a rock, but we can conclude they aren't any brighter than the primitive people in Jeremiah's day who said, "to a tree or a stone, 'You gave me birth . . .'"

7.9 THEISTIC EVOLUTION

This theory seeks through the "Day-Age Theory" to set up a Biblical basis for evolutionary change and biological adaptation of the species. They believe that the creation is a "fact" but that the "method" of creation should be articulated by science. This theory is nothing short of an attempt to bridge faith and science, to appease theologians and evolutionists. The trouble with being in the middle is that you get bombarded from both sides. They must compromise science and the Bible to adhere to the theory.

EVIDENCES

There is no Biblical evidence for theistic evolution. These men are a part of the liberal camp of theologians whose first allegiance is to scientific theory and whose loyalty to Scripture is in question. An attempt to fit evolution into a creation model is unacceptable to Biblical scholars and to the evolutionists.

PROBLEMS WITH THE THEORY

The common sense use of the word "day" is a 24-hour period, not an "age."

The word "kind" (min) has a definite and fixed meaning. While there are differences among "kinds," one kind cannot transform itself into another kind. (See 1 Corinthians 15:40).

Theistic evolutionists deny the omnipotence of God.

It is unreasonable for God to wait until the final seconds of the geologic time table to create the crown of creation, man himself.

Instead of making evolution what it is, random mutation, it makes evolution out to be "scientific progress," which it is not.

It denies the love of God making Him out to be some sort of sadist who delights in billions of years of death and decay and fossilization of the creature.

It insults the purpose of God for his creation, the dignity of man, and the redemption of the creation.

THEISTIC EVOLUTION IS GENERALLY REJECTED FOR THE FOLLOWING REASONS.

Uses of the numerical system (first, second, third . . .). Ages are not so easily defined as the days of Genesis,

Use of the phrase "morning" and "evening" signify a time sequence which appeals to the common understanding of man.

Use of seventh day law as a day of rest and its subsequent installation as a model for man in the 10 commandments is a common sense support for a seven day creation.

Use of the phrase "from dust thou art . . . and to dust shall you return" indicates man came from the dust of the earth and not from water or from a microorganism.

The use of the word "death" infers its introduction into history as after the fall, not before. Death did not occur until after the seventh day or is it the "seventh age?" Death cannot predate Adam.

The progression of creation events indicate a fast, sudden creation. For example, if plants were created on the 3rd day, and the Sun was created on the fourth day, and a day represents ages, how then did plants survive without sunlight?

7.10 THE DAY-AGE THEORY

According to this theory the word "day" found in Genesis actually refers to an "age," thus allowing vast amounts of **time** necessary for evolutionary occurrences.

EVIDENCES

The biblical support for this position comes from 2 Peter 3:9ff "With the Lord a day is as a thousand years." The Hebrew word "yom" is the word for *day*. It can refer to more than one day: For example: "In the days of the judges . . ." The motivation for this theory is that it turns a day into aeons of time. This theory would support evolution because evolution needs time, time, and more time.

PROBLEMS WITH THE THEORY

Ages do not have "mornings and evenings."

How could plants survive being created on the third day when the Sun was not created until the fourth day?

This view assumes there was life and death and fossilization during these ages.

How long did God rest? Would he still be resting?

The word "yom" consistently refers to 24-hour period in the Bible. There are exceptions, but these are rare.

This view makes God a sadist who is only interested in death, fossils, and aeons of time.

7.11 THE GAP THEORY

This is the theory of creation, which believes the Genesis account is really a record of God's recreation of the earth following Satan's fall. This view holds to the idea that Satan fell between verse one and two, devastated the original creation, turned it into disorder and chaos, and that the rest of Genesis is the record of God's reconstruction of the planet.

EVIDENCES

Men who hold to this view cite the following evidence:

The word "was" (hayeth) should be translated "became."

The word "without form and void" (tohu-waw-bohu) should be translated *judgment and destruction*. The term *tohu-waw-bohu* has evil connotations in Isaiah 43:11 and Jeremiah 4:23.

God is light. How could God create darkness.

There is a distinction between "create" and "made." The word *create* refers to God creating something out of nothing while the word *made* refers to God creating something out of something which already exist.

Satan did fall (Isaiah 14).

PROBLEMS WITH THE GAP THEORY

The word "was" is *was*, not *became*: For example:

In Genesis 2:25 Adam *was* (Wyh.Ylw:) naked. He did not *become* naked.

In Genesis 3:1 the serpent *was* subtle. He did not *become* subtle.

In Jonah 3:3 Jonah arose, and went unto Nineveh. The text says, "Now Nineveh was (not became) an exceeding great city of three days' journey."

The word, *tohu-waw-bohu* means *empty*. It does not refer to a transition from a perfect state to imperfect state. It can refer to a *desert* (Deuteronomy 32:10) or an *uninhabited city* (Isaiah 43:18). In Jeremiah 4:23 where the phrase "void" is used, it does refer to a state of confusion, but it also refers to the *empty state* of the earth during judgment.

Is darkness evil? Not necessarily. Darkness in Genesis is positive, and good for man. God said it was "good." Darkness only became a symbol of evil after the fall.

The distinctions between *create* (bara) and *made* (asah) are artificial. Both are used of creative acts. The word *made* (asah) shows, not that the world was *refashioned*, but that the world was created *ex nihilo*, out of nothing (Smith, 1968, p. 48)

This theory assumes the death and dying of a pre-adamic man and his preservation through the fossil record. If this be so, then the creation of Adam, the fall, and the flood are pale, minor events in comparison to the death and destruction before the supposed reconstruction after Satan's fall.

The theory makes the flood a slap on the wrist compared to the havoc Satan supposedly caused in the account.

Old Testament Theology

The theory denies other biblical texts such as Exodus 20:11.

8 BIBLICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

Genesis 1:26 And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.

The Hebrew word for man is *ish* and the Hebrew word for woman is *isha*. The Greek word for mankind is *anthropos* and the Greek word for a male is *ander*, *ander* or *andros* (pl). The Greek word for woman is *gune*.

Therefore, this chapter is an anthropological study of “What is man?”

8.1 CRISIS IN ANTHROPOLOGY

WHAT IS ANTHROPOS?

Psalm 8:4 what is man ($\nu\text{An}\ddot{o}a/-hm'(:$, enosh;mankind) that you are mindful of him, and the son of man ($\sim d'a'a' \div -!b,W$:adam) that you care for him?

What is man (Hebrew: enosh, adam; Greek: anthropos)? These terms appear to be synonymous, but some scholars see “Enosh” as a particular man (fallen man), and “adam” as referring to mankind (Psalm 90:3; 144:3). But, this demands a particular word study beyond the purpose of this lecture.

Man is his own most vexing problem. What is man? He has allegedly been to the Moon and back, and he can be found in the gutters near skid row. Man has built the T.V., vast computers, and is studying DNA manipulation. However, it appears more murders have taken place in the 20th Century than at any other time in history. Man’s nobility and degradation are a perplexity to modern anthropologist.

St. Bernard: “Man is nothing but a sack of dung.”

Church: “ A mere insect, an ant . . . “

Du Maurier: A fungus on the surface of one of the minor planets.”

Schoenberg: “A hairless ape”

Gould: “An accidental twig.”

Sir Julian Huxley: "Man is a cancer upon the Earth."

Evolutionist: "Man is a collection of molecules".

The Food Fadist: "Man is a stomach on legs."

Ted Turner is reported to have said: "Let man die. Save the dolphins."

Leslie Weatherhead (Quoted from *The Significance of Silence*, 114): Man is a low form of cellular life on his way to the manure heap.

Questions: How did man originate? What is his primary nature? What are the primaries in man's constitution? Is the body evil?

IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

Chicago professor: "If we don't find out fast who man is, he'll be treated like an animal" (Quoted by Dave McCloud, theology professor, 1980).

1. The truth is that more people died without a trial by barbarous acts of atheistic humanists than during any other century in history: Hitler killed about 15 million people; Stalin executed 40 million; Mao killed about 72 million which adds up to about 127 million. Add the other killings by totalitarian states and the number quickly reaches 130 million. Some estimate that it more like 180 million. (Kennedy, J. 1994. *What if Jesus had never been born?* Nashville, TN: Nelson Publishers, p. 236)
2. A sense of well-being is dependent on one's view of man.
3. One's ethical base is directly related to his estimate of man. What is right and what is wrong is largely determined on what acts benefit or harm mankind. Who has not heard of some individual leaving their entire inheritance to their pet cat? If man is merely an animal and there is no ethical base, how can one condemn a Stalin, or a Hitler, or a Mao Tse Tung, or a Pol Pot?
4. Social issues (abortion, euthanasia, etc.) are directly related to one's view of man, his origin, and his destiny. Hitler, because of his view of man, tried to create a perfect race by discounting God's hand in creation, breeding super-intellectuals, and by eliminating the undesirables.
5. Wrong views of man cost millions of dollars. For example: how much money is being directed to locate the gene that causes homosexuality, alcoholism. The theory is that man's abnormal behaviors have a genetic basis, not a moral one.
6. Calvin said that man never receives clear understanding about himself until he has first looked upon God's face and then descended to contemplate himself.

MAN IN LIGHT OF THE BIBLICAL VIEW OF CREATION

1. Man is the product of the divine plan. He is not a product of nature, nor is he a wonderful animal, nor is he a victorious beast. No evolutionary struggle is shadowed. Man was created with design and purpose.

2. **Man is created in God's image.** Because He is created in God's image he is not dirt, trash, scum, a mass of protoplasm, an animal, or a product of evolution. Man has value and for this reason God says, "Thou shall not kill."

3. Man is created to be a king, a ruler, a prince on earth. He had nobility, honor, and authority from God to act and create and subdue the earth.

4. Man is intelligent. Adam's classification of the animals exemplified supreme intelligence. His instant linguistic skills were phenomenal by passing all known means of learning languages today.

5. Man and woman are equals. Though different, they both possessed uniqueness, nobility, and authority.

6. Man is fallen.

5. Man needs to be redeemed.

Man is not what he should be. For this reason, Rembrandt painted a picture of man with a cross in the background.

8.2 ADAM IN THE IMAGE OF GOD

Genesis 2:7 And the LORD God formed man (adam) of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul (hY"x; vp,n<il.: nephesh chay).

When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; What is man (~d'ga'h'(-ta, :adam), that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet: All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field; The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas. O LORD our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! (Psalm 8:3).

MAN'S CONSTITUTION

One of the great theological issues is the nature of the meaning "image of God" (WnmePl.c;B.) (Imago Dei).

Note in Genesis one that man's creation is set apart from the rest of God's creative acts by a detailed commentary on man's origin. Man received life by a special, creative act of God.

The term "image of God" is only found in four verses (Genesis 1:26, 27; 5:1; 9:6).

Contrast the biblical account with ancient myths:

Akkadian Myth (Prichart, 1958, Vol 1): Man is said to be the design of Marduk who came to be fashioned out of the shed blood of Kingu, a rebel who was slain by Ea (p. 37).

Memphite Theology of Creation: Man is said to be the product of Ptah who created all gods. The Ennead of Atum came into being by his semen and his fingers.

THE GENESIS FACTORS REGARDING THE SIGNIFICANCE OF "IMAGE OF GOD:"

The plural factor: Mankind is made in the image of "us." This could, a) refer to the literary "we," or b) the majesty of the divine council including angels, or c) the divine council known as the Trinity.

The linguistic factor: The words in Hebrew, *selem* (image), and *demut* (likeness) are prefixed by *be* in front of *selem* and *ke* to *demut* (likeness). The "b" is a preposition meaning "in", and the "ke" means "like." The two words have the prefix "us" at the end of each word. What is the significance of this? Are the two words synonymous? Does *selem* refer to a physical form and *demut* to a spiritual form?

Atao ar'B' ~yhil{a/ ~l,c,B. Aml.c;B. ~d'a'h'-ta, ~yhil{a/ ar'b.Ylw

The authority factor: man was supreme, head over all creation.

The inclusion factor: Both men and women are said to be made in the image of God. Thus, it is mankind that is made in the image of God, male and female.

The inheritance factor: The image of God is passed on to succeeding generations, from father to son.

The value factor: Human life is sacred. Mankind was deputized as a visible, corporeal representative of the invisible God. **The implication of this on ethics, Christ, and salvation is profound** (See James 3:9, 10; 1 Corinthians 11:7; 2 Corinthians 4:4; Colossians 1:15; Hebrews 1:3; 2 Corinthians 3:118; Colossians 3:10).

The political factor: Man is not a "thing" (a resident), or a corporation, a fiction, or legal entity. He is a living soul understanding⁴ God's laws. The Christian must resist all attempts of government to treat him as a legal presumption. He must stay out of statutory law and stake down his rights in common law. You

⁴ Understanding in law means to "stand under." When a judge asks you if you "understand," he is asking if you stand under his authority. The answer is always "No!"

are a “living soul,” and not some kind of judicial FICTION. You spell your name in lower case letters, not in all CAPS (CORPORATIONS).

WHAT THE TERM “IMAGE” DOES NOT MEAN?

- that man is physically like God because God is spirit, not flesh. However, man’s physical capacities to hear, see, taste, and feel reflect God’s capacities.
- that man is like God in his infiniteness because man is finite.
- that man is like God in his character for if he was, man would have never sinned.

IN WHAT WAY IS MAN LIKE GOD?

- Does God have intellect? So does man.
- Does God have emotions? So does man.
- Does God have a will? So does man.
- Does God have moral sensitivity? Man has a conscience.

IN WHAT WAY IS MAN DIFFERENT FROM ANIMALS?

It does mean that man is different from animals in his personality. Intellectually, animals appear to think and react, but only man has the ability to reason. Man has the ability to create; animals do not.

Emotionally, while man has great capacities for all kinds of emotions, animals exhibit only basic emotions and primary instincts. In reference to will, man has the ability to weigh decisions, calculate risk, evaluate, to determine a course and to choose between alternative. While animals operate more on base instincts and have limited capacities to choose right and wrong, to judge men, or to weigh actions.

IN WHAT WAY IS MAN LIKE ANIMALS?

Man is like animals in their finiteness in that both man and beast breathe the same air and drink the same water and are confined to a physical body. Both man and beast are finite in time, space, and ability. Thiessen quotes Hodge:

God is a spirit. The human soul is a spirit. The essential attributes of a spirit are reason, conscience, and will. A spirit is a rational, moral, and therefore also a free agent. In making man after his own image, therefore, God endowed him with those attributes, which belong to his own nature as a spirit (p. 155).

If man is essentially a spirit. He belongs to the same order of beings as God himself, subsequently; he has the capacity to commune with God.

Men and Women: Woman is called man's helper (**רזע**, *ezer*): The word *ezer* is masculine in gender but is a term for woman. It is also a term applied to God. God is our helper (Joshua 10:4-5). The term does not imply inferiority. It means "to be in front of" or "to be strong in the presence of." Woman was made a power equal to man—not an inferior, but a partner. Though a partner, the man (Adam) was appointed head of creation and head of his home. This principle became the basis of all family life in Israel.

EVIDENCE OF MAN'S MORAL AND SPIRITUAL CAPACITIES

Spiritually: God made man a living soul (*nephesh*) and he had the capacity to commune with God (Genesis 2:25; 3:8).

Intellectually: Man was given dominion over the earth, learned a language the first day of his existence, and classified the animals (Genesis 2:19).

Emotionally: Man was lonely (a negative emotion) and God gave him a companion to complete him (Genesis 2:18-23).

Will: Man was commanded not to eat of the tree of good and evil.

Conscience: Man unashamed before the fall, and after the fall he was ashamed.

Morally: If regenerated man is being renewed in the image of God (Colossians 3:10), it is reasonable to assume man possessed this moral sensitivity before the fall. Again and again the Scripture reveals that regenerated man is changing to be like God in his holiness and righteousness (Ephesians 4:24). In the beginning God made man upright (Ecclesiastes 7:29). Some consider man's original condition as con-created holiness.

Socially: Man possessed the capacity to commune with God and others (Genesis 2:18).

HEBREW WORDS FOR PERSONS

By "person" we mean the common law definition; that is, a human being, a living soul. We reject the legal definition of "person" which refers to creations of government, artificial entities, corporations, U.S. citizens, and legal fictions.

Adam is translated *man* and occurs 562 times in the OT.

Ish is translated *husband* 2160 times in the OT.

Enos occurs 42 times as *man* and means "weak or mortal."

Geber occurs 65 times as *man* and portrays the idea of strength or power.

Mat appears only in the plural and refers to men (males).

8.3 THEORIES REGARDING MAN'S CONSTITUTION

Four Hebrew Words for the Four Basic Aspects of Human Nature:

Basar or *se'er* refers to *flesh*, the physical side of materialistic man.

Ruah means *wind*, or *breath*. It occurs 378 times in the OT. Metaphorically, it speaks of the invisible power or energy that is mysterious and elusive.

Nephesh means *soul* or *throat* (Jonah 2:5; Psalm 107:9; Hab. 2:5). It has a wide variety of meanings: *soul* 428 times, *life* 119 times, *self* 19 times, *person* 30 times, *heart* 15 times, *mind* 15 times, *creature* 9 times, *dead* (body) 8 times, *body* 7 times, *desire* 5 times, *will* and *pleasure* 4 times, *man* 3 times.

Leb means *heart* and is translated 598 times in the OT. *Lebah* is translated 252 times. Thus, *leb* is the most frequent anthropological term in the OT. The mind, conscience, emotions are associated with the word *leb*.

THE DICHOTOMOUS THEORY

This theory views man as a two part creature: spirit and body. This is the Greek or Platonic view of man. Greeks saw man as having a mortal body and an immortal soul. To Plato, the soul was spirit, the intellectual side of man. Neither soul or body could exist without the other.

Thiessen quotes Strong (p. 160):

The immaterial part of man . . . is called psuche; viewed as a rational and moral agent, susceptible of divine influence and indwelling, this same immaterial part is called pneuma. The pneuma, then, is man's nature looking Godward, and capable of receiving and manifesting the pneuma hagion; the psuche is man's nature looking earthward, and touching the world of sense. The pneuma is man's higher part, as related to spiritual realities or a capable of such relation.

There is biblical support for this theory. God did breathe into man's body the breath of life. "Life" and "spirit" appear to be interchangeable (Job 27:3; 33:18).

THE TRICHOTOMOUS THEORY

This theory views man as possessing three elements: spirit, soul, and body. **The spirit** would be man's capacities to commune with his Creator; **the soul** would represent man's individual, personal constitutions of mind, emotions, and will, and that which makes each distinct from others. **The body** would be man's flesh, his capacity to relate to the physical world. Scriptural warrant for this view rests primarily in the language of the Bible.

1 Thessalonians 5:23 And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

GNT 1 Thessalonians 5:23 Auvto.j de. o` qeo.j th/j eivrh,nhj a`gia,sai u`ma/j o`lotelei/j(kai. o`lo,klhron u`mw/n to. pneu/ma kai. h` yuch. kai. to. sw/ma avme,mptwj evn th/ parousi,a/ tou/ kuri,ou h`mw/n VIhsou/ Cristou/ thrhqeí,hÅ

Hebrews 4:12 For the word of God *is* quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and *is* a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

GNT Hebrews 4:12 Zw/n ga.r o` lo,goj tou/ qeou/ kai. evnergh.j kai. tomw,teroj u`pe.r pa/san ma,cairan di,stomon kai. dii?knou,menoj a;cri merismou/ yuch/j kai. pneu,matoj(a`rmw/n te kai. muelw/n(kai. kritiko.j evnqumh,sewn kai. evnnoiw/n kardi,aj

A Reconciliation: Man is a holistic and unitary being. The difference between the two views rests in the differences between substance and function. In reconciling the two, it appears that man is a dual being in substance, that is, he has a spiritual, immaterial construction as well as an earthly, physical constitution. Functionally, man's soul, the immaterial part of his being which represents his own identity, has self-awareness as well as Divine interests.

POP PSYCHOLOGY

Modern man with its anthropomorphic center has focused on Freudian concepts regarding the nature of man. Terms like *ego*, *id*, and *superego* indicate man is a layered being and such concepts foreign to Scripture. Probably, the most common misconception is that man has a subconscious--a subliminal storage tank of information, mostly negative, that by-passes man's will, causing him to behave in a strange and irresponsible manner.

RELATION OF THE BODY AND SOUL

(Source: Berkhof, 1993, p. 195)

Monistic views: this theory proceeds on the assumption that the body and soul are the same substance; that the existence of the body creates the soul; that spirit is the product of matter. The objection to this view is the problem of difference. How can two things so different be deduced from the other?

Dualistic views: *Occasionalism* believes the soul and body are so different that there is no possibility of joint action. *Parallelism* believes that God created the body and soul so that each perfectly respond to the other; when motion takes place in the body, there is a corresponding movement in the soul. *Realistic Dualism* returns to fundamental observation that there is a body and a soul, that each are distinct, and how they relate remains a mystery.

HISTORIC VIEWS OF THE SOUL

(Source: Berkhof, 1993, p. 196)

PRE-EXISTENTIALISM

This theory holds to the view the souls of men existed in a previous state, and that certain conditions in that state affect souls now. Origen and the Alexandrian School, Scotus, Erigena, and Julius Mueller held to this view. Origen held that man's present material and miserable existence was punishment for sins committed in another state. This theory is also held by the cult, Mormonism; and by the religion of Hindus.

CREATIONISM

Creationism holds to the idea that God creates a new soul at the birth of every individual, probably at conception. Jerome and Hilary of Pictavium represent this view (p. 199).

It retains a distinction between soul and body.

The indivisibility of the soul is recognized by this view.

It explains why Christ did not inherit a sinful soul.

It is supported by passages like Numbers 16:22; Ecclesiastes 12:7; Isaiah 57:16; Zechariah 12:1; Hebrews 12:9.

Thiessen makes a distinction between *mediate* and *immediate* creation of the soul (p. 165). He argues against this view:

God is present in creation mediately rather than immediate.

Scripture speaks of Levi "in the loins" of his father (Hebrews 7:10).

Men resemble parents in temperament as well as body.

This theory doesn't account for the tendency for all men to sin.

TRADUCIANISM

Popularized by Tertullian, this view saw the body and the soul originate with propagation; that all souls were created in Adam along with the body. This became the teaching of the Catholic Church. Luther also favored this position and it is the official doctrine of the Lutheran church (Berkhof, 1993, p. 197).

Evidence for this position are:

God breathed into man and he became a living soul (*nephesh chay*). All are said to descend from Adam (Acts 17:26)

Eve's soul was connected with Adam and came out of Adam. Both are called "man," a species (Genesis 5:2; Romans 1; Matthew 12:35; 1 Corinthians 15:21). Jesus was called the "Son of Man" even though He was birthed by the Spirit through a woman.

God ceased his creative work after He created man (adam; anthropos).

Descendents are said to be in the loins of their fathers.

Scientifically, descendents have family traits.

It offers a basis for spiritual and moral depravity.

Shedd says, "man is a species...which implies the propagation of the entire individual out of it" (Thiessen, p. 165).

Adam had a son in his likeness (Genesis 5:3). This can hardly refer only to the body. Sin affects the soul (Psalm 51:5).

OBJECTIONS

- This implies a separation of soul from parents.
- This implies a soul has previous existence.
- This implies the soul is derived from matter.
- This implies that God is no longer working.
- This may imply Christ's soul was from Adam.

MAN'S ROLE IN CREATION

In God's original creation, man was given a role as the supreme administrator of the earth. He was to control, moderate, and conqueror his environment subjecting it to beneficent purposes for the general welfare of man. The implications of this are profound.

Man was not created a dumb animal with a strong sense of survival instincts. He is not a beast, an ape, or a glob of protoplasm. He was created a brilliant, noble being.

Women were created with nobility. Though created second and commissioned under the husband to live in harmony with him, she was a princess, a queen on the earth. Contrast God's original plan historical developments:

- Aristotle: “A female is just a mutilated male.”
- Darwin: “She is constitutionally and inferior being.”
- Church Father: “She is a necessary evil, a natural temptation, a desirable calamity, a domestic peril, a painted ill.”
- Jewish Rabbi: “Praise God that I am not a heathen, a woman, or illiterate.” (Quotes from Dave McCloud, Emmaus Bible Instructor, Lecture 1980).
- Modern Looney Liberals: There is no such thing as male or female. You are what you feel.

Man was created to be an artist, an engineer, an architect, a builder, a gardener, an herbologist, a prince and king over all the earth. Man is at his best when he designs, creates, and builds.

Work was a part of God’s design. Thus, work has honor and nobility.

Man was given stewardship of the earth. The environment wasn’t hostile to man, and the environment was to be subject to man and used to serve man’s needs.

Morally, man was created innocent, holy, inclined toward God.

Governmentally: Man was the head of creation, the head of woman.

MAN’S RELATIONSHIPS

One of the major doctrines of Scripture is that of human relationships; how man relates to God, to himself, to others, and to his environment.

Man was right with God. He was dependent on God for life, purpose, companionship, abilities, and law. Man was over creation, and he alone was responsible to God- not the rest of creation

Man was right with himself. He knew who he was, what he was to do, and he had the capacity to fulfill his duties.

Man was rightly related to others. He treated others with respect and dignity because they also co-shared life and God’s image.

Man was rightly related to the environment. He acted responsibly with his stewardship over creation.

Salvation, then, is the redemption of the whole man, a work of God whereby man is restored to God, to himself, to others, and to the environment.

MAN’S PURPOSE

Man's purpose is stated as one of dominion: that is to bring everything into subjection to the Divine Order. It is stated directly in the original creation and repeated in our Lord's mandate, a.k.a. the Great Commission.

Genesis 1:28 And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

Matthew 28:18-20 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: {teach...: or, make disciples, or, Christians of all nations} Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

CORRUPTION BY SIN

Nothing impacted the first marriage like eating fruit from the Poisonous Tree.

Modern man believes that man is basically good, but when bad men commit crimes, humanists blame society, or poverty, or early childhood abuse, or the environment. Because modern men can't define the problem, they offer cruel solutions like jail and drugs. The Bible tells us man's problems are due to rebellion against God. The good news is that sins can be forgiven and they can be overcome. A Biblical perspective of sin is essential to understanding man, his problems as well as its solution.

Adam and Eve were placed as head over creation and were authentic characters in history. God provided the following for happiness and well being:

- For their spirit: God communed with man and woman.
- For their mind: God gave them project Planet Earth.
- For their hearts: God gave them love for each other.
- For their wills: God gave them a prohibition--the tree of knowledge.
- For their bodies: God gave them fruit from the garden.

Adam and Eve were tested by the serpent, the beautiful instrument of Satan (Revealed as such in the New Testament). Note the progression:

Satan questioned God's Word: "Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?"

Eve misquoted God's Word: "But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die."

Satan contradicted God's Word: "And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die:"

Satan accused God of withholding good from mankind: "For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil."

Eve disobeyed God's Word: Eve measured the benefits to her body, her eyes, and her mind and partook of the forbidden fruit: "And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat."

THE IMMEDIATE EFFECTS OF THE FALL

Shame: they knew they were naked, and that the whole human race fell with them.

Knowledge of good and evil. Their conscience was active.

Physical loss of glory. The fall effected them physically. Something was lost.

Hiding: The fear of God gripped their hearts.

Blame: Adam accused Eve.

The Serpent was cursed.

The ground was cursed.

The woman was afflicted with birth pain.

Man was driven out of the garden.

The fall was real. It affected man spiritually, mentally, emotionally, socially, and physically. When Head of the human race fell, humanity fell. For in Adam, all sinned became a New Testament truth (Romans 5:11ff).

What an awful thing sin must be. Angels fell, man fell, and the Son of God became a man in order to atone for the sin of man.

EFFECTS OF SIN ON MAN

Questions: How has sin affected man?

You can understand the problems of the world by grasping **six affects of sin** upon man.

Man was made in the image of God. He was created a prince, a noble, holy, upright being. But man rebelled against the law of God and fell. In Adam all men are sinners, guilty, and in need of redemption. Sin affected not only man's actions, but his state. He is a sinner not because he sins, but he sins because he is a sinner.

HISTORICAL REFLECTIONS

Sin affected mankind. In the NT, Paul tells us that in Adam all died (Romans 5:12ff). In Pauline theology, Adam was viewed as man's representative. When the representative failed, all mankind was affected.

The rabbis noticed that the word "generations" (**tAdl.At**) in Genesis 2:4 and "generations" (**tdol.AT**) in Genesis 5:1 were different. The latter was missing the vav. Furthermore, they noticed the vav did not appear in the word *generations* (**tAdl.AT**) until

In Ruth 4:18, David's family was listed. The *vav* once again appears in the word *generations* (**tAdal.AT**) of the messianic line. The Rabbis observed that the *vav* represented what man lost in the fall and what would be restored when David's greater son would appear in history.

Sin affects man's body, mind, and soul. When Adam sinned, we see (a) his body changed, (b) fear entered his soul, (c) guilt plagued his conscience (Genesis 3).

Sin corrupts and produces fools (Psalm 14:1; Jeremiah 8:5-6).

People are born with a sinful nature:

Psalm 58:3 The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray (W(T) as soon as they be born, speaking lies.

David helps us understand the workings of sin.

David's sin poisoned his own soul (Psalm 32).

David spoke of his heart being ravaged by the claws of sin (Psalm 38).

David spoke about the power of soul-rottenness at work from birth that contaminated his entire being, thinking, and doing (Psalm 51:5).

Sin has affected man's relationships

With God: man is separated from God, spiritually dead, cut off from true life (Ephesians 2:1).

With himself: man's spirit is separated from his mind in life and his body at death (Romans 6:23).

With others: man is separated from other men (Titus 3:3; Ephesians 2:14).

With the environment: man is separated from nature, and nature is hostile to man.

Isaiah 24:5 The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant.

Sin affects the family: Look at Cain and Abel. Sin (*chata*) decays the fruit. From the black core of comes pride, anger, fear, and murder in the first family.

Cain brings the wrong offering (disobedience) and God rejects Cain's sacrifice.

Cain becomes angry (wrong emotional reaction).

Cain became downcast (depression: willful, settled emotional state)

God confronts Cain and warns him of sin's encroachment.

Cain plotted to murder his brother through deception.

Cain murdered his brother.

Cain lied.

Cain plunges into despair (4:13)

Sin corrupts culture. Look at the first civilization in Genesis 4. Sin surfaced in the Cainite Society through bigamy, murder, and songs of violence. Note the progression:

Sin in a man (Adam)

Sin in a family (Cain and Abel)

Sin in a civilization (Cainite civilization)

Sin in an entire race (Genesis 6).

Sin corrupts an entire civilization. In Noah's day, God noted every "inclination" or (*רצו*, *yesar*) of the heart was evil. Civilization deteriorated as the godly seed (Seth's line) intermingled with the descendents of Cain. This does not refer to angels copulating with the human race. It refers to the compromise of the sons of God (Genesis 4:26) with the sons of men (Cain's race). It was during these days that mighty men

(~yrlBoGh;) ruled the earth. The “mighty men,” sometimes called “giants,” were called such not because of their size, but because of their gigantic influence. In other words, the compromise and commingling of the two lines produced a generation of thugs, of gangs, the first mafia that bullied their way to power in the pre-flood period.

NEW TESTAMENT INSIGHTS ON SIN

Sin has affected man’s mind:(mind and heart are at times synonymous)

- a dull mind (Matthew 13:15)
- a stubborn mind (Acts 7:51)
- a reprobate mind (Romans 1:28)
- a hypocritical mind (Romans 2:15)
- a carnal mind (Romans 8:7)
- an empty mind (Ephesians 4:17)
- a fleshly mind (Colossians 2:18)
- a defiled mind (Titus 1:15)
- an evil mind (Matthew 15:19)
- deceived (Titus 3:3)
- Sin has affected man’s emotions:
 - vile affections (Romans 1:26)
 - lustful affections (1 Thessalonians 4:5)
 - callous affections (Matthew 24:12)
 - bitter (James 3:14)
 - evil affections (Matthew 12:34; Ephesians 2:3)
 - hateful with love of pleasures (Titus 3:3)
- Sin has affected man’s will:

Old Testament Theology

- self willed (2 Peter 2:10)
- enslaved to the flesh (Galatians 5:17)
- enslaved to lust (John 8:44)
- committed to sin (Romans 1:32)
- disobedient (Titus 3:3)

SIN AND FREE WILL

(Source: Hodge, p. 314)

Necessity: that all events are determined by a force that can't be determined or controlled.

Uncertainty (contingency): The will is independent of reason, feeling, and God, and therefore, acts indifferently to motives. The whole reason for action lies within the will itself and is not due to outside sources.

Certainty: the will is free so long as man's volitions are the conscious expression of his own mind, reason, feelings, and not another's.

Sin has affected man's body:

Genesis 2:17 for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

Genesis 3:19 In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.

Romans 5:12 Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:

Furthermore, sickness and disease are general consequences of sin, but not necessarily related to specific sin.

Sin has affected man's conscience (Five Conditions of the Conscience)

- **A good conscience** ("con" means with; "scio" means know): Hence: the conscience is a system that reveals right and wrong according to the light of God's word (1 Timothy 1:19)
- **A defiled conscience:** a system that gets dirtier and dirtier. It is like a dirty window that won't let light come in (Titus 1:15).

- **A seared conscience:** a system that is callused, hardened, and insensitive to wrong. It is jaw full of Novocain that can't feel the pain of the dentist drill (1 Timothy 4:2).
- **An evil conscience:** a system that has been errantly programmed or poisoned so that its warning system triggers when the person does good. For example, a criminal may feel guilty if he squeals on a friend who committed a murder (Hebrews 10:22).
- **A weak conscience:** a system that is upset by trifles on morally neutral issues. It is over scrupulous (1 Corinthians 8:7) and acts like a smoke detector that goes off when mom is cooking dinner.

IMAGE OF ADAM; IMAGE OF GOD

Is man just trash for whom Christ died? That mankind has fallen in Adam, and that in Adam all sin is a biblical fact. However, does depravity mean that man is no longer made in the image of God? Is man just dirt a dirt bag? I don't think so.

Though fractured and flawed, maimed and mauled, men still retain God's image be it imperfect. Otherwise, how could Christ admonish men to love others? The Apostle John argued the case of love based on the fact men still reflect the image of God (1 John 4:20). I agree with theologians who say that man is totally depraved, but I do not agree that men are junk. Though we must advance the view that men are fallen, we should not advance the idea that men are trash bags filled with maggots. Christ died for sinners, not trash.

THE NEED FOR SALVATION?

Men are born sinners, condemned in Adam, and corrupted by the Adamic nature. Man needs to be delivered and restored. It is the restoration of man's relationship to God, to himself, to others, to the environment (Is 11) that the Bible calls salvation.

Isaiah 51:6 Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath: for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner: but my salvation shall be forever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished.

Salvation in the OT is not only the salvation of a man's soul, but the salvation of the whole man. Salvation of men is God's greatest work. It cost Him everything to redeem you and me.

8.4 MARRIAGE

Genesis 2:16-18 And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou

shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die. And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.

MAN UNDER LAW

In Genesis 2:4 we see the first use of the term "LORD God."

The name "LORD" is the Tetragrammaton, the sacred name for God wherein YHWH is identified as the Creator. Here we learn that man was formed from the dust of the ground. Man is not some type of ape or mass of protoplasm or some type of legal entity in the courts. Man is called a "living soul," a living "nephesh." Man is a product of special creation endowed with God-given rights. As a creature, he has a duty to his Sovereign Creator. The Source of man's law is the LORD God.

God subjected Adam to law and expected him to keep His commandments.

Before Adam met Eve and married her, God instructed Adam in law. Adam was given the duty of being a theologian, lawyer, and law enforcement officer . . . before he met his wife. Likewise, God requires husbands to know law. How can a man who is not educated in the Law-word of the LORD God, especially the Ten Commandments and the Gospel of Grace, be competent to get married or lead a family? If Biblical law is the foundation of the family, how can a man build a family if he does not know God's precepts? He need not, of course, be a trained lawyer, but he needs to have met the LORD God and passed Biblical Law 101.

The LORD God not only introduces Adam to law, but also to liberty. God's law-order leads to freedom. God set man free to eat from all the fruits of the garden save one. Man was created a free agent. There was freedom, but not unlimited freedom. *Only God is truly sovereign.* Further, He created Adam a legal man. In fact, Adam was charged with the duty of practicing law. Eating from the Poisonous Tree was not permitted by order of the LORD God; that is, it was not only *mala prohibita* but *mala in se* in that it contained all the far reaching evils of a Pandora's Box. Adam lived in a maximum liability universe. There were consequences to actions. Thus, man's liberty was under law. Responsibility led to freedom and prosperity, but irresponsibility led to death.

God required Adam to instruct his wife in the law of the LORD God.

Eve never heard God's prohibition regarding the Poisonous Tree directly. The command was given to Adam. And, it was his duty to instruct his wife in the law of the LORD God. *Likewise, it is the duty of all fathers to teach their family the Law of God.* Consequently, a man who omits or fails to teach his family the law of the LORD God is guilty of inexcusable neglect. God's man must be a legal man.

God elected Adam to be head of his family.

Likewise, God gave men (males) the head of home and the duty of leading the family under the dominion mandate. The assignment of head is by order of creation. Adam was created first; Eve was created second.

Modern man has declared war on God's law-order and the family. Beginning with the woman's suffrage, voting, and the apotheosis of women in the work place, confusion entered society regarding male and female roles in the family. Even today we see the movement of gendercide waffling through universities. Regardless of the mounting pressure from the liberal media and apostate churches, Christians must never surrender the leadership role for men in the family.

Christian home is a patriarchal home, not a democratic organization. Paul under the authority of Christ uses the order of creation to instruct church families about headship in 1 Corinthians 11:1-16. Males are given the headship of their homes

It is the duty of Christian men to guide and protect their home; it is the duty of women to surrender to that leadership and to arrange themselves under their commanding officer. The man is not superior to the woman, nor the woman to the man. Headship is not about competence or skill or superiority, but of assigned roles in God's law-order. The created order determines the right of the male to lead a home and the duty of a woman to honor and respect that role. The duties of husband and wife are clearly set forth in Ephesians 5:25ff as case law for the family. The man is the king of the home, and the king treats the queen quite well!! Further, the woman in her assigned role is to be honored by her husband and her children (1 Peter 1:7); and in Leviticus 19:3 the mother is mentioned first in line for honor, "You shall fear your mother and his father."

MARRIAGE UNDER LAW

Marriage is good and not evil. But, it is not good to be alone. Loneliness has its own set of evils and path of thorns.

Genesis 2:18 And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.

Marriage is God's remedy for loneliness and his norm for most people.

The word "help meet" is the Hebrew word "ezer." He created the woman to be man's helper, not the man to be the woman's helper. Hear what is being said, not what is not being said. Yes, a good man will honor his wife and serve her in many, many ways during the course of marriage. But, the man was not made for the woman and her ambitions. She was made to serve her husband and his lawful ambitions.

Marriage is a contract to live together as man and wife.

A covenant is also a contract to live together as man and wife, the difference being that in a covenant, God is part of the contract as its Lawgiver and Sustainer. A Biblical marriage is covenantal wherein the man and woman commit to living together under God's law. A "civil union" is also a marriage contract

wherein permission to marry is obtained by the state. In civil marriages, the couple have a duty to State law. A Biblical marriage is a God-given right to contract and requires no permission from the State. *In fact, mature Christianity seeks NO permission from the government to do that which is ordered under Christian law.*

Without a contract, there was no *lex scripta* for marriage in the ancient world.⁵ The N.T. calls the contract a “yoke.” No contract; no marriage!

2 Corinthians 6:14 Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers:

*“If a man take a wife and do not draw up a contract with her, that woman is not a wife”
Code of Hammurabi, 128.*

In marriage, the woman is equal with the man in stature, but not in authority.

Adam said about Eve that she is "*bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh.*" She shall be called 'woman' because she was taken out of man. The word for "man" here is "*ish*" and the word for "woman" is "*isha.*" Both man and woman are part of the "*anthropos*" we call "humanity" or "mankind." But, humanity is divided into two sexes, "*ish*" man and "*isha*" woman, or male and female. In my family, my wife is affectionately called my *isha yapha* or "beautiful woman."

Marriage involves forming a new family unit under God's law-order:

"Therefore shall a man leave his father and mother . . . "

A Christian marriage involves leaving, cleaving, and weaving. Leaving a parent is part of the Biblical order. "Leave" does not mean abandon or disown. God forbid! Married children still have a duty to honor their parents and all that the Fifth Commandment requires. Leaving is a synecdoche for coming out from under parental authority to establish a new home directly under God's authority. The new husband takes the position as king of his home and the wife takes the position as the queen of the new home. Likewise, when a son or daughter marries, the marriage is a formal declaration that the parental-child relationship is taking on a new dimension.

Marriage is a union wherein man and wife become one flesh.

A marriage is sealed by sexual intercourse. There is no such thing as a marriage without this bond. Weaving is part of marriage. Man and wife become one flesh; that is, in marrying, both man and woman forsake exclusive rights to their bodies. They are "one" in Christian law and under duty to care for the physical needs of each other. For this reason, Paul condemned "fornication," "adultery," and any ploy to selfishly deprive one another of conjugal rights (1 Corinthians 7:1-3ff).

⁵ Lex Scripta: Latin for "written law."

Married couples are charged with the duty of cleaving to each other--till death do they part:

The rule of the Christian family is LEAVE, CLEAVE, AND WEAVE. "What God has joined together, let not man put asunder" - Christ (Matthew 19). By the law of God and the grace of God, problems must be worked out.

Marriage carries with it conjugal rights.

1 Corinthians 7:3 The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to her husband.

No man or woman has a right to withhold sexual intimacy from each other in marriage except in the case of sickness or ill health; or, for a religious purpose such as fasting. A woman or man who uses sex as reward or punishment won't long endure. For this reason, the State should be very leery of entertaining a charge of a husband raping a wife. If sexual intercourse is a right in marriage and a person yields the right to abstinence when marrying, the whole idea of rape is a conundrum and non-sequitur.

Marriage comes with legal rights.

Genesis 2:24 Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

The couple not only has marital rights, but legal rights; that is, the wife comes under the coverture of her husband. Black's defines coverture as follows:

"Coverture. The condition or state of a married woman. Sometimes used elliptically to describe the legal disability which formerly existed at common law from a state of coverture whereby the wife could not own property free from the husband's claim or control. Such restrictions were removed by state Married Woman's Property Acts."

Blackstone Commentaries (p. 442) has this to say about coverture:

"By marriage, the husband and wife are one person in law, that is, the very being or legal existence of the woman is suspended during the marriage, or at least is incorporated and consolidated into that of the husband: under whose wing, protection, and cover, she performs everything; and is therefore called in our law-French a 'feme-covert,' ...and her condition during her marriage is called her coverture."

By treating Americans as "individuals" and not a "family," American courts disparage the law of coverture unless that right is announced and claimed by husband and wife; that is, this truth like all truth must be defended in these statist courts.

Court rulings agree:

"A wife follows the domicile of her husband." Trayner, Latin Legal Maxims and Phrases, etc. "Husband and wife are considered one person (as one flesh and blood) in law." Coke on

Littleton, 112; Jenkins' Eight Centuries of Reports, English Exchequer.

"A wife is not her own mistress, but is under the power of her husband." Coke's Institutes, 5-108 "All things which are the wife's are the husband's." Bracton, de Legibus et Consuetudinibus

Angliae; 2 Kent's Commentaries on American Law.

"Although the property may be the wife's, the husband is the keeper of it, since he is the head of the wife." Coke on Littleton, 112.

The implications of Christian marriage are legally profound and are too numerous to be expound here. But, in summary, a husband has the duty to honor his wife and to protect her life even to the point of using legal force. He may employ every lawful means to protect his family from thugs on the streets or State actors wearing black robes on a bench called "the court."

Marriage involves trust.

The phrase, "they were both naked" imply implicit and explicit trust. Trust is the foundation of a healthy marriage and a wise couple with do everything in their power to honor the trust of their spouse by keeping promises, protecting secrets, and speaking kindly toward one another. Where there is anger, bitterness, slander, and promise breaking, the marriage shall not long endure.

In summary, the first man was not only placed under law, God placed Christian marriage under law. The failure to see admonitions to Christian marriage as law has been the product of more than a little evil.

8.5 GOD'S MODEL FAMILY

The Family that Obeyed the Fifth Commandment by honoring their Patriarch

THE RECHABITES

Jeremiah 35:6 " . . . for Jonadab the son of Rechab, our father, commanded us . . ."

Before us is a model man and a model family. The Rechabites are a model of sons obeying the 5th Commandment; of sons honoring their patriarch; and, of faithfulness to godly instruction despite allurements to do otherwise.

Those were terrible times, the worst of times. The demoralization of the nation was complete. Lawlessness and dissipation swallowed up society. Jerusalem was under siege by Babylon. Refugees fled to Jerusalem for safety. During the siege (589-596 B.C.), God ordered Jeremiah to assemble the sons of Jonadab (the Rechabites) in the temple in closed chambers, and offer them wine to drink. The sons of Jonadab refused the wine because their father had commanded the entire clan not to do so.

While in a state of awe, the Word of the Lord came to Jeremiah wherein the LORD God held up the Rechabites as an example of obedience in contrast to the delinquency of Israel. In Jeremiah's message, he announced that God would save and honor this family because they faithfully obeyed the command of their deceased father.

How many fathers are like Jonadab, and how many sons today do you know that carefully follow their father's instructions while alive, much less dead?

Oh, that fathers today were as wise as Jonadab and would model their family after his example. Oh, that fathers had sons like Jonadab!

First, Jonadab was a discerning leader of his family.

Remembering God's commandment to love the Lord with all his heart, mind, and soul, Jonadab provided spiritual leadership to his sons. Concerned about separation and holiness, Jonadab laid down laws for his grown sons and their families. It was a simple rule: do not drink wine, grow vineyards, or build houses to live in.

Further, he ordered them to dwell in tents and live as Bedouins in the land.

Even when his sons were brought into the temple complex by Jeremiah and offered wine, they refused the beverage out of deference to their father. Jonadab was not afraid to set limits, to issue orders, or to risk offending his children. He forbid them to do what other Israelite children were doing—going to wine parties and having a “good time” with their nominal religious friends.

Second, Jonadab was not a permissive parent.

Jonadab was not a legalist nor was he an authoritarian parent inclined to micromanage his sons' lives. His commands were few. Though there is nothing immoral about drinking an occasional glass of wine, Jonadab ordered his family not to do so; that is, he placed limits on his children. Though other fathers permitted their sons and daughters to drink wine and encouraged them to plant vineyards and build homes, Jonadab knew that this life style put them on a path toward the Poisonous Tree. He was concerned about holiness in an unholy age. Thus, he laid down rules, marked out boundaries, and set limits in order to prevent them from being poisoned by the hissing serpent.

To be a good father and mother requires that the parents defer many of their own needs and desires in favor of the needs of their children. As a consequence of this sacrifice, conscientious parents develop a

nobility of character and learn to put into practice the selfless truths taught by the Savior Himself. ~
[James E. Faust](#)

Third, Jonadab was a holy man and a student of the culture.

He didn't go through life a free spirit wanting to be a "cool" parent. He wasn't interested in being a "friend" to his children. Rather, he sought to be a responsible patriarch. He saw himself under the authority of the LORD God with a duty to guide his family and protect them from the hissing snake and the Poisonous Tree.

Jonadab analyzed the demoralization of his country and came up with a plan to protect his family from the dissipation he observed among his countrymen. In looking at the moral laxity and revelry of men, he must have asked himself, "What is causing the corruption of our nation?"

He observed that behind the dissipation and want of devotion to God was an open bottle of wine. He put two and two together: depraved people drink lots of wine; wines comes from grapes; grapes are grown in vineyards; vineyards are managed by people who live in stone houses; people who live in stones houses live disorderly lives. Thus, he set a course and rowed upstream away from the norm.

Fourth, Jonadab's had sons that honored him.

Jonadab gave his adult sons instructions, and amazingly they obeyed! These sons faced the same pressures from their peers that modern youth face. Surely, they were invited to wine festivals and harvest parties. Surely, there were pressures to dress like and act like their neighbors. But, they obeyed their father, and must have said "No!" to the common social life that dominated the nation.

This is a model family. There is no hint in the text that Jonadab was an over controlling grandfather micromanaging every aspect of his children's lives. Rather, his instructions were limited and few—instructions necessary for holiness in times of apostasy.

So powerful was Jonadab, his family leadership became **the model for the nation**. So wonderful was the honor his sons showed to their father, that God promised that this family would never lack a man to stand before Him. So wise was the command of this man, that his leadership was memorialized forever in the Word of God. So simple and pure was the obedience of these sons and their families to their patriarch, God blessed them prosperity and happiness.

Two powerful lessons come to mind: First, don't be a permissive parent; rather, chart a course and provide leadership for your family; and second, honor your father and mother. The honor these adult children showed for the spiritual leadership of their departed father is nothing short of spectacular. ***Oh, that all sons would honor their father as Rechabites honored theirs.***

In conclusion, we are living in terrible times—times of moral laxity, recklessness, and self-indulgence. Children are texting, on the internet, alone in front of the television being bombarded with silliness, and at

party after party with their celebratory “friends.” Few are pursuing the excellence of Christ. The times call for fathers like Jonadab with insight and courage—men that are unashamedly non-permissive—men with reasonable strictness—men with 20/20 spiritual vision and radical leadership—men who are not afraid of offending their children and who will set rules and limits on their sons.

Secondly, the Spirit weeps . . . and cries . . . and calls out to sons to honor their father as the Rechabites honored their father. No one loves you as much as your parents. Sons would do well to do all they can to appropriate their parent’s wisdom and follow it. The goal, after all, is not to be happy in one’s self-indulgence, but to be holy in the cross-walk of Christ . . . and obedience has its reward (Mark 8:35; Luke 9:24; Matthew 16:24).

Jeremiah 35:18-19 But to the house of the Rechabites Jeremiah said, “Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Because you have obeyed the command of Jonadab your father and kept all his precepts and done all that he commanded you, therefore thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Jonadab the son of Rechab shall never lack a man to stand before me.”

8.6 THE IDEAL WIFE

"Far Above Rubies"- Proverbs 31

Before us is the Biblical model of an ideal wife. She is a queen in her home and a gift of God to her family.

SHE IS A GOOD WOMAN

31:13, 14, 19 She is a diligent worker with her HANDS.

31:24 She is a smart, thrifty, quality-coupon shopper.

31:25 She is strong and dignified and honorable.

SHE IS A GOOD WIFE

31:12 She does her husband good all the days of his life.

31:11 She keeps her husband's secrets; she is tight lipped.

31:23, 24 She assists in making her husband successful.

SHE IS A GOOD MOTHER

31:21 She clothes her children well: smart, modest, fashionable.

31:15, 17 She is an early riser at work for her family.

31:14, 18 She is a woman of excellence appreciating quality products.

SHE IS A GOOD NEIGHBOR

31:20 She helps the poor.

31:20 She is aware of the needs of the elderly and assist them.

31:26 She speaks well and the law of kindness is on her tongue.

To me, a lady is not frilly, flouncy, flippant, frivolous, and fluff-brained, but she is gentle, she is gracious, she is godly, and she is giving. You and I have the gift of femininity--the more womanly we are, the more manly men will be and the more God is glorified. Be women, be only women, be real women in obedience to God ~ Elisabeth Elliot, "The Gift of Femininity."

9 CHATTA'AH (SIN)

This chapter investigates OT subject of sin (chattah'ah) or what theologians have titled the Doctrine of Harmatology (*harmartia* in Greek).

Genesis 4:7 If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin (chatta'ah) lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him.

Deuteronomy 29:18 Beware lest there should be among you man, or woman, or family, or tribe, whose heart turneth away this day from the LORD our God, to go and serve the gods of these nations; lest there should be among you a root that beareth gall (poison) and wormwood (bitterness);

THE FALL OF MAN

On April 10, 1815 Mount Tabora erupted on the Island of Subawa in Indonesia and was followed by six months of steam, smoke, and phreatic eruptions. It was called "The Year Without a Summer" which lowered global temperatures and was the cause of worldwide harvest failures. In the end, over 100,000 people were killed.

Modern man is fascinated by volcanoes and global catastrophes. But, there is nothing that compares with Tsunami that hit mankind on the day Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit on the Poisonous Tree⁶.

HEBREW STUDIES ON SIN

No definition of sin appears in the OT. The Old Testament Scripture was not concerned with philosophy and theology as a discipline as much as it was concerned with real life. Hebrews saw life as it was and passed judgment on it.

The Old Testament knows little to nothing of the Adamic sin nature or Satan, the mastermind of evil. These concepts await development in the New Testament. Not until Revelation do we learn the serpent is Satan (Revelation 12:9; 20:2).

⁶ The fruit of the Poisonous Tree is a metaphor of sin and its terrible consequences. In law, the phrase refers to evidence obtained from illegal search and seizure or coercive interrogation.

G. E. Wright (Smith, 1993) observed that *sin* to the Hebrews was not that much different than concepts used in Egypt or Babylon and Greece. To the Hebrews, sin was understood behavior in relation to the will of God. Bad things happen because men did not relate to the will of God—thus, sin.

9.1 KEY HEBREW TERMS FOR SIN

Mark 8:36 For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?

What ever happened to sin? Modern secular social engineers have done everything in their power to remove the word “sin” from society. Seldom, if ever, do you hear the word “sin” in politics, the media, Hollywood films, public schools, or in social discourse.

Country’s like Sweden, Germany, England, and the United States have replace the concept of sin and “fallen man” with psychological models enabling men and women to fornicate and commit indecent acts without shame or embarrassment. Even the wickedness of Sodomy and lesbianism has put on a patina of “gay pride” to hide the shame of their unholy acts.

But, it is worse than this. Even Christians have dropped the term “sin” from their vocabulary.

I was talking to an alleged “Christian,” who attended a large church in Dallas Texas. She said the best thing about her church is that the preacher never uses the word “sin,” because he wants everyone to feel comfortable coming to church.

If it is true that “all have sinned” and that men can “lose their own soul,” then the NWO governments have developed social policy that endangers the souls of men.

1 Corinthians 6:9

Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.

When human problems are diagnosed as “hyperactivity” instead of lack of self-control, sexual addiction instead of lust, or “bi-polar” disorders instead of “double-mindedness” then people seek false remedies in psychology rather than a spiritual remedy in Christ.

Christians, therefore, fact a choice: (1) to speak of man’s problems in secular, evolutionary, psychological terms like phobias, low self-esteem, compulsive attention-deficit disorders, anxiety disorders, and victimization, or (2) to get to the core of truth and address the real problem: man is a sinner that sins and He needs a savior.

Biblical Terms for Sin

Hata (א'x;) means “to miss the mark” (Judges 20:16) or to “miss the way” (Proverbs 19:2).

Awon (ynlwO) means “to pervert” or “to make crooked” (1 Samuel 20:1) and is translated by the word *iniquity*.

Other words related to sin are as follows:

(r, ra (bad),

(v'r', rasa (wicked),

~ymivea), asam (guilty),

rb;(, abar (to cross over),

ggEvo, sagah (to go astray),

(v;P, pesa (to act treacherously),

!(eV, sha'an (to lean away from),

l(;m', ma'al (transgression)

hM'z, zemah (wickedness)

In post biblical times, Smith (1993) says sin was defined as breaking the Mosaic law. Rabbis taught man had a good inclination and a bad inclination. Look at Genesis 2:7, “The LORD God formed

(ûrc,yYlw: , *vayyitzer*) the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils,” and

Genesis 2: 19, “And out of the ground the LORD God formed (ûrc,Ylw: ,*vayitzer*) every beast of the field.”

The rabbis point out the **two yods** used in making man, and only **one yod** used in making the animal. To the rabbis, the two *yods* represent the dual nature of man, a *yetzer tov*, a good inclination, and a *yetzer ra*, a bad inclination.

An alternative interpretation of the two *yods* was that man alone is a citizen of two worlds, heaven and earth. Rabbis taught that man was taken from the dust on the site where the Holy Temple was later to be built.

Modern Judaism takes a more optimistic view of sin and believes it is possible to overcome sin alone without divine help (Smith, 1993).

TOWARDS A BIBLICAL VIEW OF SIN

Misconceptions about sin (chat ta'ah): Cosmic theories regard the principles of good and evil as eternal. Sin is not eternal. **Matter is not sinful**, nor are spiritual things always good. **The body** is not sinful nor does sin originate within the senses of man. **Sin is not due to man's finiteness** nor his **lack of knowledge**. Sin originated with a free act of Adam (Thiessen, p. 180).

Romans 5:12 Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:

Three biblical concepts of sin:

1 John 3:4 Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.

Romans 14:23 And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.

James 4:17 Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.

LINGUISTIC HELPS (GREEK): (VINES)

Sin (*a`martolos, harmartolos*) means *one who misses the mark* (Vine, p. 35). Here the idea is that of falling short, a lack of conformity to the character of God.

Transgression (*para,bano, parabaino*) means *to go aside or beyond or above*. The idea here is overstepping the limits (Romans 5:14; 1 Timothy 2:14; Romans 4: 15).

Iniquity (*avnomi,an, anomia*) means *without law, or lawlessness*. It includes the idea of living above and beyond the law of God.

Iniquity (*avdiki,a, adikia*) means *without righteousness* and contains the idea of living irresponsibly in human relationships

LINGUISTIC HELPS (HEBREW)

(Strong's)

Sin (**taJ'x**; chata): to miss the way, go the wrong way (Genesis 4:7).

Transgress (**(v;p.yl**, pasha`): to rebel or revolt (Proverbs 28:21).

Transgress (**l(om,ma`al**): an unfaithful act, treachery (Nehemiah 13:27).

Transgress (**dlg>Abh,**, bagad): means to deal treacherously (Psalm 25:3)

Iniquity (**rib.(**, `avar): to cross over or go beyond (Numbers 14:41).

By comparison: Man was made in the image of God, but he fell. He is now made in the image of Adam, that is cracked and flawed (Genesis 5:1, 2). Regenerated man is being “renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him” (Colossians 3:10); “that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness” (Ephesians 4:24). Adam is said to have had a son who bore his image (Genesis 5:3). Sin, therefore, is any want of conformity to the character of God.

Chafer defines the following (1993, p. 267).

Transgression: the stepping to one side or overstepping the boundaries which God has marked off.

Iniquity: that which is altogether wrong.

Error: that which disregards what is right.

Sin: falling short of a standard or mark.

Wickedness: the outworking of the sinful nature.

Ungodliness: lacking any worthy fear of God.

Disobedience: An unwillingness to be led.

Unbelief: failure to trust in God.

Lawlessness: persistent contempt for divine law.

9.2 THEOLOGICAL DEFINITIONS OF SIN

1. From Thiessen (p. 171): Sin is “any lack of conformity to the moral law of God, either in act, disposition, or state,” or “anything in the creature which does not express, or which is contrary to, the holy character of the Creator.”

2. Hodge (p. 231): “Sin is a special kind of evil . . . Not all evil is sin . . . Sin is a moral evil”
3. (Mine): Sin is pride, a personal autonomy, a turning from God’s way to go my own way (Isaiah 53:6).
4. The Westminster Confession:

CHAPTER VI.

Of the Fall of Man, of Sin, and of
the Punishment thereof.

I. Our first parents, begin seduced by the subtlety and temptations of Satan, sinned in eating the forbidden fruit. This their sin God was pleased, according to his wise and holy counsel, to permit, having purposed to order it to his own glory.

II. By this sin they fell from their original righteousness and communion with God, and so became dead in sin, and wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body.

III. They being the root of mankind, the guilt of this sin was imputed, and the same death in sin and corrupted nature conveyed to all their posterity, descending from them by original generation.

IV. From this original corruption, whereby we are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil, do proceed all actual transgressions.

V. This corruption of nature, during this life, doth remain in those that are regenerated; and although it be through Christ pardoned and mortified, yet both itself, and all the motions thereof, are truly and properly sin.

VI. Every sin, both original and actual, being a transgression of the righteous law of God, and contrary thereunto, doth, in its own nature, bring guilt upon the sinner, whereby he is bound over to the wrath of God, and curse of the law, and so made subject to death, with all miseries spiritual, temporal, and eternal.

DISTINCTIONS REGARDING SIN

1. Sin is not necessarily breaking man’s law. Man’s law is often arbitrary and may embrace legality but not morality. Sin is not the lack of happiness, for expediency would rule right and wrong. Sin is not what plagues man’s conscience, for men would be a law unto themselves. Sin is any want of conformity to the law of God.

2. Sin has something to do with man’s nature and not just something he does. That is, man does evil because man is evil (Matthew 7:17; 15:19; James 1:14).

3. Sin can be negative or positive. For example doing evil to a good man is a negative aspect of sin; smothering a rebellious child with gifts can be positive sin.
4. There is a difference between sin and sins. Sin refers to the nature of sin or the principle of sin at work in human beings; sins are the product of the expression of nature.
5. Sin may be due to *omission*, a failure to do what is right, or sins of *commission*, doing what one knows is wrong.
6. Sin pollutes (Isaiah 1:5; Jeremiah 17:9; Ephesians 4:22) as well as incurs guilt ((Thiessen, p. 174).

- **PRIMITIVE WAYS PEOPLE DEALT WITH SIN: SYMBOLS**

- By washing (Numbers 8:7).
- By fire (Numbers 31:22-23); Isaiah 6:6).
- By bird (Leviticus 14:7).
- By excommunication (Leviticus 20:6, 10, 11, 14).
- By human sacrifice (King of Moab: 2 Kings 3:27)

THE CONCEPT OF ATONEMENT

The English word *atonement* is Anglo-Saxon meaning “to make one.” It implies more than a meeting of minds. It implies restoring a relationship.

The word *atonement* does not mean forgiveness. Biblical atonement necessitated restitution (Leviticus 6). It does not mean reconciliation. It means *to snatch away from death* (Hartmut Gese, *Essays on Biblical Theology*, 99).

The word *atonement* (רָפָא, kippur) occurs as a verb ninety-one times in the OT. The Day of Atonement developed a special place in Israel’s culture.

In the New Testament, the word *propitiation* (ἱλαστήριον) is the word “mercy seat.” Jesus is the *propitiation* for our sins. That is, he is the means by which God’s justice is satisfied, thereby enabling Him to show mercy toward repentant sinners and removes sin from the conscience.

9.3 THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

The word “evil” is an English translation of the Hebrew word “*ra*” which refers to actions evil in themselves (*mala en se*); things that harm and injure man. *Ra* can come from man or God (Isaiah 45:7; Amos 3:6)

The problem of evil is a theistic one. “Evil” is a Christian term and atheists have no right to use it. If man is a product of time-plus-chance, born into a hostile world where the survival of the fittest triumph, then the atheist has no complaint with evil. It is inherent in the natural, accidental, per-chance world order that he has created in his own mind.

However, the problem of evil is primarily an obstacle for the man who believes that a good God created the universe. The next door neighbor who is involved in a head on collision with a drunk driver where the mother is killed leaving the father with three children and the drunk comes out without a scratch raises the question, “Why does God permit such awful things to happen?” A bomb goes off in Oklahoma City (April 1995) and 150 innocent people are buried beneath tons of rubble raises the question, “Why does God allow such awful things to happen?” If God is good, why does He permit evil; if he is omnipotent, why doesn’t He stop it? It is a most perplexing anomaly. How do we resolve the problem?

Moral evil is far more serious than natural evil, and yet, it is the more easily understood. The reason for floods and earthquakes are more difficult to perceive.

PRESUPPOSITIONS

1. God is good.
2. Omnipotent doesn’t mean God can do anything.
3. God is wise and knows how to run the universe.
4. Satan is evil.
5. Men are sinners in state and acts
6. Sin has consequences.
7. Evil may be a product of God’s judgment on rebellious man.

FALSE SOLUTIONS TO THE PROBLEM

(Source: Trueblood, p. 235)

1. All suffering is a result of sin. While this is somewhat true, it is naive. Many good people have suffered unjustly.
2. Evil is illusory, a product of the mind. What looks like evil is really good in disguise. This explanation does not comfort the traumatized nor does it make sense.

3. Evil is necessary that good may triumph. This theory makes good dependent on evil, and not free.
4. God's power is limited. This view compromises the biblical view of God.
5. Childlike faith is needed. This pious approach is little comfort when manlike catastrophe crushes a family.

AN ARGUMENT FROM OMNIPOTENCE

(Source: Trueblood, P. 246)

Much of the difficulty with the existence of evil arises because of the fact that omnipotence is ascribed to God.

Omnipotence does not mean the ability to do anything. If it did, it would be nonsense. "God can not lie" (Tit. 1:2). C.S. Lewis taught that God can do everything "if they are not self-contradictory." The skeptic asks, "Can God make a round square or a triangle whose accumulative angles are greater than 180 degrees?" Lewis said God's omnipotence "means power to do all that is intrinsically possible, not to do the intrinsically impossible. You may attribute miracle to Him, but not non-sense." (p. 245).

Thomas Aquinas said, "Nothing which implies contradiction falls under the omnipotence of God" (p. 246). Just as it is impossible for God to make a round square, it is impossible for God to make created beings without the dangers inherent in creaturehood.

Professor Bertocci: "We simply cannot have water which will quench thirst and yet not drown people, fire which will warm homes and not scorch flesh." (246). It is absurd to expect God to create mortal being who does not have the characteristics of mortal beings.

Trueblood: If omnipotence means that God can do anything, then surely God is not omnipotent, and the problem of evil is not only insoluble, but irreducible.

AN ARGUMENT FROM LOVE

(Source: Trueblood, p. 247)

A.C. Turner: "Love is omnipotent because it can always in any circumstance give a perfect expression of itself." If divine love is the author of all existence, it follows that nothing can exist wherein love cannot find expression. Even in evil, love can find expression.

C.S. Lewis: "The freedom of God consists in the fact that no cause other than Himself produces His acts and no external obstacle impedes them- that His own goodness is the root from which they all grow and His own omnipotence the air in which they all flower."

Love might have a higher purpose than the production of man's happiness. Love and kindness are not identical. Love is sometimes cruel. Take for example a parent who may have a higher purpose than the child's own desires. A parent may have to be cruel in order to fulfill love's higher purpose. **If we do not abandon the goodness of God, we must conclude that God has a wholly good purpose.** God's purpose would be defeated if goodness were compelled, and it would not be genuine goodness.

In reference to sin, sin is our fault, not God's, though God made us with the potential to sin. "We are to blame for sin, but we can't heal it. God did not cause it, but He can forgive and overcome it." (p. 250).

AN ARGUMENT FROM FREE CHOICE

God created man a free moral agent. That is, man wasn't created with mere brute instincts, like a robot, or pre-programmed like a computer chip. He was created free with authority over his material world.

There is no such thing as freedom without real, material consequences. It is like God producing round squares. If there are no consequences, then there are no values worth choosing, worth living or dying for. True consequences are the guts of values and freedom of choice. If there is no possibility of losing, there is no such thing as victory. There is no thrill without the possibility of loss. Success can't be enjoyed without the possibility of defeat. To force men to be good involves the severance of free choice.

To deny true, evil consequences is to deny the possibility of free will. If negative choices were always cushioned, can there be free will? If degradation is impossible, is improvement possible? If irresponsibility is impossible, is responsibility possible? If immorality is impossible, is morality possible?

God is so committed to the principle of free will that He has determined not to destroy it by eliminating the consequences of free moral acts. Apparently, in God's mind, the good that men choose and the benefits that follow must be accompanied by possible negative consequences of man's choices. To destroy the one, is to destroy the other. In one sense, evil is the price we pay for freedom. However, the inverse is not true. The presence of evil doesn't guarantee freedom. Embracing evil is not the means to a relationship with goodness.

God is all powerful. But if He is obligated to exercise his power and to intervene in every possibility of evil, then his omnipotence destroys man's freedom, power, and freewill. How could man ever be truly free? What man really wants is a god of convenience, a god who will let him choose evil and prevent negative consequences, thus, allowing evil to triumph over mankind by making God a puppet.

AN ARGUMENT REGARDING NATURAL EVIL

In one sense, moral evil is more understandable than natural evil and easier to explain. What purpose could the devastation of life from an earthquake or flood have upon mankind?

(Trueblood, p. 253) suggest three main answers.

Personal life cannot develop except in a stable environment. Part of the stability that God has provided is natural law: rain drops form and fall; heat and pressure build up, and volcanoes erupt. This stability is not agreeable to all persons. Rain may help some and hinder others; it may be good for the farmer but bad for the traveler. Sharp knives are necessary to cut meat, but sharp knives can also cut fingers. Automobiles can transport people rapidly from place to place, but automobiles can also destroy lives. Therefore, natural evil is as necessary to freedom as the possibility of moral evil.

Much of suffering can be redemptive. All motivation comes from conflict. People without conflict don't invent, create, or solve problems. The two dogs with one bone, or two guys and one girl scenario create tension. But it is tension that motivates one or both to action. A life with no tension is superficial and self-centered. People often find greater peace, greater insight into life after a tragedy than before. In one sense, suffering is pre-requisite for quality, for love, for happiness.

Life is everlasting. The ravages of cancer seem unfair, but with the God of resurrection, justice can be achieved if life is eternal. Since justice is not totally achieved in this life, if God is not to be defeated, there must be another life in which perfect justice, which is denied here, is fully achieved there (p. 236).

BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVES FROM THE LIFE OF JOB

Job lost his business, his wealth, his family, his health, and his peace with God. He did not know or understand the following.

His life was used as an illustration of God's integrity.

His life, though his integrity was tested, proved genuine.

His life was used as an illustration that men can love God for who He is, not for what men can get out of Him.

His life proved the enemy (Satan) wrong.

His life proved his miserable comforters wrong.

His life has been used to comfort thousands, yea millions, who have suffered in like manner to the glory of God.

In his suffering, Job grew and matured.

In the end, he was doubly honored proving that God is fair and suffering is only temporary.

Through his suffering, we see that God had a higher purpose than Job's immediate happiness.

It was the conflict that motivated Job to think harder and dig deeper.

It appears from the Book of Job that Satan was saying that men only love God for what they can get out of Him, not for Who He is; that God isn't worth loving because of Who He is, but for what He gives. This issue raises a personal question: *Do I love God for who He is, or for what I can get out of Him?*

To show that Satan was wrong, God allowed Satan to take all of God's gifts away. Job was perplexed and frustrated, but through his ordeal, God was proved right, and Satan was proved wrong. Job did not curse His Maker, and his life became the model of suffering graciously.

9.4 HISTORY OF THEOLOGICAL VIEWS ABOUT SIN

In the modern age, we must ask: "Whatever became of sin?"

While the Bible identifies man's root problem as sin, modern man identifies man's problems as bad parenting, a corrupted environment, a psychosis, bad choices, low self-esteem, lack of money as the root of all evil, "Me Too" and the victimization movement, race, etc.

The Old Testament tells the truth: Man's problems are rooted in the fall of man (Genesis 3).

Philosophers and theologians alike have to face the Goliath of evil that has universally faced mankind. Many views exist.

Questions: What is sin? To what is it connected-- the body or the soul?

PRELIMINARY HISTORICAL VIEWS

(Source: Berkhof, 1993, P. 219):

Church Fathers: Generally held to the fall in Adamic paradise.

Gnosticism: Regarded evil as inherent in matter, a product of the Demiurge. The mere contact of spirit with flesh rendered it (spirit) defiled.

Origen: Traced sin back to man's pre-existence resulting in present punishment. To Him, the souls of men sinned in a previous existence.

Greek Church Fathers (3rd & 4th C.): Discounted the connection between Adam and present sinful conditions.

The Latin Fathers: Traced man's present sinful state back to the Adamic fall. Augustinianism saw man as polluted in Adam.

Pelagianism: Denied any connection between Adam's sin and man's present condition. This view holds that man is born neutral.

Semi-Pelagianism: Admitted the Adamic connection, but held to a limited present affect.

In Philosophy: the philosophers (Kant, Leibnitz, Schleiermacher, Ritschl) replaced *sin* with the concept of *evil*.

THE ANALYTIC PHILOSOPHERS

Kant regarded sin as belonging to the supersensible sphere which he could not explain.

Leibnitz saw sin as something due to the limitations of the universe.

Schleiermacher looked to man's sensuous nature as the origin of sin.

Ritschl saw sin as the product of human ignorance. The solution to sin was education.

Barth denied the fall and saw sin as connected with superhistory; that Adam's disobedience is not the cause for sin in the world; that sin is bound up in creaturehood; that the Genesis account is cheering information design to help man not to sin (p. 220).

THE PELAGIAN THEORY

(Source: Hodge, 1992, P. 278)

Pelagius formed his theory of sin around the fifth century. Though universally rejected by the church, Pelagius' followers were primarily in the east. His proposition was, "*the lack of ability limits obligation;*" "*If I ought, I can*" was the popular aphorism on which the whole system rests. Hodge listed eight principles of Pelagius:

Men are not responsible for what they are incapable of performing. Liberty is plenary power. If man lacks ability, he cannot be condemned for what he cannot do.

Sin, therefore, consists in deliberate choice of evil. It presupposes the knowledge of evil as well as the full power to choose or reject it.

There is no such thing as original sin or inherent hereditary corruption.

Adam's sin injured only himself--a bad example to his posterity.

Men are born into this world without contamination of original sin and have the power to do what God requires, and in many cases, obey all His commands.

Men can be saved without the gospel by obeying the law of God.

Men don't need grace or the Holy Spirit. They are equipped with the ability to obey God.

Baptism cannot symbolize or effect the remission of sin. It is only a sign of their consecration to God.

REFUTATION OF PELAGIAN THEORY

This theory was refuted by St. Augustine and others based on the following arguments:

The whole system contradicts the common consciousness of men about evil and about responsibility.

The whole system limits the definition and effect of sin by confining it to known, deliberate transgression of law.

The whole system confounds freedom and ability, and limits sin to what man volitionally chooses.

Note our modern day use of “choice.” Modern educators speak in terms of Pelagian Theory when they talk to children about good and bad choices. Good and bad behavior is simply a matter of choice to modern man. If it were that simple, there would be no more juvenile delinquents.

It doesn't account for the universal sinfulness of men.

It denies the necessity for God making man his own Savior, and independent, free, capable moral agent.

It makes redemption unnecessary or impossible.

It denies the universal affect of the fall and the need for assistance to be holy.

AUGUSTINIANISM

(Source: Hodge, 1992, P 281)

Augustine drew his doctrine of sin from his own experience. He was much too familiar with the world, his consciousness of sin and of guilt, and of the violent struggle within his soul to do right to fall for the sophistry of Pelagius.

He was conscious of abiding sin.

He knew he was accountable to God and that he had offended Him.

He knew he was a sinner from earliest recollections.

He faced his own powerlessness to do what was right.

He saw sin as voluntary.

What he saw in himself, he saw in others.

From these reflections, Augustine concluded men can not be saved on their own merit, but solely through the undeserved love of God. The regeneration of the soul must come from the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit. Salvation is of grace. Saints must persevere because perseverance is a mark of true salvation.

Augustine had no difficulty accepting the fall of Adam and its affect on his progeny. All are sinners and all are condemned. Man cannot will himself out of bad behavior.

SEMI-PELAGIANS

The monks opposed Augustinianism. They believed that they could seek God and keep his will. If not, then why submit to celibacy, vows, poverty, and obedience? They held salvation begins with man and God then aids him. Turning to God pleases him (meritorious) and releases grace. The will of man cooperates with God in regeneration.

The *Councils of Orange and Valence* (A.D. 529) decided the dispute in favor of Augustinianism (p. 284). Professor Arminius of Holland popularized this view, and it is the view commonly held by the Greek Church, the Methodists, and Arminian ranks (Thiessen, 1979, p. 186).

Arminius believed men are sick and destitute of righteousness at birth. At the age of consciousness, the Holy Spirit enables individuals to overcome depravity making obedience possible. Mankind is not guilty for Adam's sin. Only when men appropriate evil tendencies do they become accountable (Thiessen, p 186).

PROTESTANT DOCTRINE OF SIN

(Source: Hodge, p. 284FF)

The Reformers declared sin to be a want of conformity to God's law. Lutherans and Calvinist agree on the following:

Sin is a specific evil: deeds of omission and commission hurt self, others, and offend God thus making man degraded and guilty.

Sin is related to law for the law defines right and wrong. Sin, therefore, is a transgression of the law.

Sin is inherited from Adam and in Adam all fell and became co-sinners; that his sin is imputed to the human race just as sin was imputed to Christ through substitution or that righteousness is imputed to the believer through faith.

Sin is inherent in the soul as well as the body at birth.

Sin affects man in such a way that he is unable to do good; yet he remains a free moral agent.

That mankind is not only plagued with guilt feelings, man is truly guilty. Of violating God's law.

HUMANISM

Humanism, which has gained formal recognition as a legitimate philosophy denies man is born a sinner; that he inherits Adam's nature; that he is guilty by another. Humanism teaches that man is born good at

best or neutral at worst. Man is corrupted not from within, but from without. He is flawed because of parental and societal failures. Every negative aspect of man is due to his victimization by others, hence, by his environment. Change the environment and you can change the man. This philosophy is the prevailing philosophy, and it is the driving force behind social programs, tax spending, and welfare.

OTHER POPULAR BELIEFS ABOUT SIN

(Source: Berkhof, p. 228)

Greek dualism: the spirit is good. The body, because it is material, is evil. This view led to harsh treatments of the body, to irresponsible living, and to a denial of the ethical nature of sin.

Privation: This theory holds to the view that sin is any deficiency of man, any limitation of power or ability, and feeling of finiteness (Leibnitz). This view makes God the sinner and man the innocent victim.

Illusion: This view, held by Spinoza, holds that sin is due to a want of knowledge. If man's knowledge were adequate, man would have no conception of sin. Educate the man, and change the world. The problem with this is that great intellects and men of means are often the greatest sinners; poor and simple men are often good and noble people.

Sensuous nature: This view, espoused by Schleiermacher, sees sin as a want of God-consciousness. When man is conscious of God, he is conscious of sin. What keeps him from God-consciousness is his constitutional being or his sensual nature.

The problem with this view is that it tends to blame God for man's constitution, and it denies the fact that some of the most hideous sins are not physical, but spiritual. For example: what physical pleasure did the men who set the bomb off in Oklahoma City in April 1995 derive from this atrocity?

Opposition to purpose: Ritschl held that sin is not so connected to the law of God as much as it is a lack of trust or an opposition to the Kingdom of God. Failure is imputed to man's lack of trust and submission to the purpose of God. This view by passes the law of God and is thus inadequate.

Selfishness: Sin is defined as that which is the opposite of altruism and benevolence. It is putting one's self in the place of God. However, is selfishness the essence of sin? A man who steals for his family can hardly be called totally selfish. A man who has intense self-interest – an interest in bettering his salary could hardly be called "selfish." Self-interest is not equivalent with greed.

Lower nature: This view, held by evolutionists, see sin as a lack of moral development in man and a tendency to let primitive instincts prevail in a moral crisis. This view limits sin to that which is acknowledge by the conscience alone. It does not deal with sin to level of God's knowledge.

Modernism is essentially semi-pelagian and is highly offended by the doctrine that man is unable to do what is right or that men are responsible for Adam's sin (Berkhof, p. 248).

Barthinism: Barth believed in the fall of man, but did not believe that it was related to a historical fall. He called for unity of fallenness, but would not pin-point sin in Adam. Brunner concluded that “sin was an act, not a state” (Berkhof, p. 249).

Niebuhr (20th Century Theology, p. 102): He rejected the “original taint” concept of sin, but marshaled the view that man’s capacity for self-transcendence clashed with his finiteness, and therefore, created insecurity and anxiety within man. The temptation in anxiety is to turn to self-assertion- to transmute finiteness to infiniteness, our weakness into strength, our dependence into independence rather than to trust in the ultimate security of God’s love. Faith, therefore, is the virtue of accepting our dependence on God, whereas sin is the denial of our creaturehood. Sin comes in two forms:

Sensuality: the attempt to deny human freedom by retreating to the animal nature.

Pride: a denial of our dependence and an assertion of our independence. Power is a means of obtaining independence; knowledge is a means of obtaining power. Virtue is a means of claiming absolute status (p. 104).

9.5 OLD TESTAMENT CONCEPTS OF DEATH AND LIFE

Death is the opposite of life (Job 34:14-15). Hermut Gese (Smith, 1993) observed the Hebrews did not think of death as nonexistence (Psalm 6:4-5; Isaiah 14:4-20).

Death in the OT can be a metaphor for things that distract from life, as a power in opposition to the created order, and as cessation of one’s historical existence.

The grave was called *sheol* (Genesis 25:8-10; Joshua 24:30, 32; 2 Samuel 2:32). *Sheol* (אֵשֶׁת) became synonymous with destruction. It is translated *hell* 31 times. The “depths of Sheol” are mentioned six times. The idea the dead lived on after death can be assumed by the fact YHWH forbid Israel from consulting the dead (Leviticus 119:31; 20:6, 27).

Burial customs were important to the OT people. A dead man without a grave was like a man without a home.

The concept of an afterlife appears vague at best in the OT. We only see bits and pieces, glimmers and vapors of the possibility of life after death. Only in the book of Daniel, do we find a clear expression of the hope of the resurrection (Daniel 12). This became Israel’s hope—not a renewed state of Israel.

Acts 28:20 For this cause therefore have I called for you, to see you, and to speak with you: because that for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain.

It is not until the New Testament do we understand Abraham believed in the resurrection (Romans 4) and that the concept of resurrection was the hope of Israel. Martha expressed her belief in the resurrection at the last day, but this clear truth is vague in OT genre and is expressed in only about 20 verses (Deuteronomy 32:39; 1 Samuel 2:6; 1 Kings 17:22; Job 14:12; 19:25-27; Psalm 1:6; 16:10; 17:15; 49:15; 71:20; 73:24; 88:19; Isaiah 26:14, 19; 53:11; 66:24; Ezekiel 37:10; Daniel 12:2; Hos. 6:4).

Typically, the OT reflects the truth of the resurrection in the Feasts of First Fruits (1 Cor. 15), and in Aaron's rod that budded. Possibly, salt and dew are a picture of preservation and life beyond death.

Two clear passages exist which stand to rebuke the Sadduccian doctrine of no resurrection:

Isaiah 26:19 Thy dead men shall live (haya), together with my dead body shall they arise (qum). Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead.

Daniel 12:2 And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake some to everlasting life (hayye olam), and some to shame and everlasting contempt.

9. The clearest statement of belief in resurrection comes from 2 Maccabees 7:14: "One cannot but chose to die at the hands of mortals and to cherish the hope God gives of being raised again by him. But for you there will be no resurrection to life!"

PROPOSITION

Death in the Bible never refers to a non-existent state, but a separation of the spirit from the body. The word destruction (avpole,sai, apollumi) in Matthew 10:28 means *to destroy utterly*. It is, however, not the loss of being, but of well-being. In Luke 5:37, the wine-skins burst. They were ruined for the purpose for which they were created, but they did not cease to exist.

DEFINITIONS

1. Physical death: The Greek word for death is *thanatos* (o` qa,natoj), and it refers to a separation of the soul from the body. It has been reported that John Quincy Adams had a conversation which illustrates the point:

Friend: "How is John Quincy Adams today?"

John: "Thanks, John Quincy is quite well, but the house in which he is living is quite dilapidated. In fact, it will soon be quite unlivable, and John Quincy Adams will move out any day now. But John Quincy Adams is quite well, thank you."

2. Spiritual death (Ephesians 2:1): refers to the separation of the spirit from God.

3. The second death (Revelation 20): refers to the eternal destiny and final state of separation from God after judgment by those condemned by the court of the Most High.
4. Life in contrast with death: Life is a conscious existence in communion with God while death is a conscious existence in separation from God.
5. Death in the Bible is a penalty, a consequence of sin among Adam's race.

THE BODY AND DEATH

Man is not a body. He has a body (XX or XY). Man on the inside is a person. The body is his earthly suit, a temporary tabernacle (2 Peter 1:14). No man has seen God (John 1:18) and no man has seen a soul. No one has seen me. The body is a container for the soul. It is called a house (2 Corinthians 5). When man dies, only the body dies. The outward man perishes (2 Corinthians 4:16).

Man has an appointment with death (Hebrews 9:27). Like a jailbreak, the spirit escapes from this body; like a chick escaping its shell, the spirit escapes the body; like the sailor inside the wooden ship said, "we are only four inches away from death" the soul is less than an inch away from away. Glory is only a heartbeat away.

Death of the body is universal: the wealthy, the brilliant, the scholar, the miserable and homeless. Death can be resisted, postponed, but it can't be avoided. The greatest fool on earth is the man unprepared to die.

THE BODY AND SOUL AFTER DEATH

The Bible does not describe in great detail the eternal state of men or the physics of transition from time to eternity, but we do know the following:

1. After death, there will be a judgment (Hebrews 9:27)
2. Some men will be in a state of blessedness, sometimes called heaven, but the idea of souls apart from a body is foreign to Scripture. Reunited souls with a spiritual body will be the final state of the blessed.
3. What is heaven like? It is like trying to describe a rain forest to an Eskimo. We know what it is not. There will be no death, no pain, no tears in the final state (Revelation 20).
4. There will be a resurrection of the just and the unjust (Daniel 12; John 5:21ff; Revelation 20ff) All men will receive a new body, a new tux that will be unchanged, and incorruptible.
5. The final state of the wicked will be in the Lake of Fire (Revelation 20ff). The Bible call it "lost," and hardly a word in the English language expresses the condition of the wicked with greater accuracy. A.W. Tozer is reported to have said the man who is unprepared to die has squandered a rare fortune and at last he stands for a fleeting moment and looks around, a moral fool, a wastrel who has lost in one

overwhelming and irrecoverable loss, his soul, his life, his peace, his total mysterious personality, his dear and everlasting all.

A funeral director once told Erwin Lutzer that no matter how many bodies he prepared for burial, he never thinks about his own death (Moody Monthly, 1980).

A PERSPECTIVE ABOUT LIVING

Life is short. Spend it on a great purpose. Give yourself away to a noble cause. Like a seed must die before life is born, we must die that others might live. Carve your name on hearts, not on a tombstone. Make the world a better place because you are in it.

Live a life of forgiveness: bury old hatchets, wounds, and hurts. It is better to live on a mountain of forgiveness than in a valley of bitterness.

Live a life of joy. Angels fly because they take themselves lightly. Laugh everyday whether you feel like it or not.

Live a life of character. Be a person who can be trusted. It is better to cry keeping your promises than to laugh while living in palaces of pleasure.

Live to know Christ. Death is inevitable. Only one man has ever-conquered death. Make Him your friend in time, and He'll be your friend for eternity.

Conclusion: Sin is a negative force that not only separates men from God, but a destruction power that debilitates mankind as a whole, and in particular men's minds, emotions, wills, bodies, and relationships. The Old Testament testifies to its existence and the necessity of cleansing. Ultimately, the OT ends with the word "curse" (Malachi 4:6). Men are cursed because of sin. However, the New Testament opens with a hope, the hope of Jesus, the Savior, the New Joshua, who "shall save his people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21).

10 TORAH (THE LAW)

The Law (torah) of the LORD God (Exodus 20)

10.1 IMPORTANCE OF TORAH

Judge Sargus' concurrence in the October 9, 2002 *Adland v. Russ* decision acknowledged that "the Ten Commandments, which played a most significant role in the development of positive law and western civilization, may be displayed on public property in the context of their historical significance." 307 F.3d at 490.

To deny the importance of the Ten Commandments upon Western Civilization is to deny the development and progress of society. Denying inclusion of the Ten Commandments in a historical and cultural practice is denying their historical significance to American law and culture.

THE PRAISES OF ISRAEL

Psalm 22:3 But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.

This verse does not mean what most worship leaders think it means. Modern Christianity, due in part to the experiential emphasis of the Charismatic Movement, teaches that God dwells in the midst of a congregation singing hymns to the Lord. Commentary after commentary adopts this view. While there are other verses that tell us that God appreciates praise and is, in some sense, impelled by it, this is not what the text teaches here. Because the verse is mistranslated, interpretation is slightly skewed. To understand the text, we must look at three facts.

First, let's look at the meaning of the word "inhabitest." The KJV says "*O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.*" But, the ESV has the better translation: "*Yet you are holy, enthroned on the praises of Israel.*" The English word "Inhabitest" comes from the Hebrew word *yoshav* which means "to sit." It is a qal participle better translated, "the One sitting." It is a reference to God ruling from His throne.

Second, let's look at the context. This a powerful Messianic psalm and is quoted by our Lord on the cross. Though this psalm wonderfully depicts the suffering of our Lord at Calvary, it was first penned by a psalmist in the furnace of affliction. Little did the psalmist know that what his own suffering was a shadow of the agony Jesus endured as man's sin-bearer.

The psalmist is perplexed by his trials. He feels forsaken by His God. Humbly, he asks God to show him why. Then, he states the facts of his case: "O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer, and by night,

but I find no rest.” Because God has not answered his prayer or turned down the heat of his fiery trial, he concluded God had abandoned him. But, he begins to work through his plight in order to find peace in his ordeal.

He begins his journey by tethering himself to an anchor: “Thou art holy.” No matter what he feels, God knows his difficulty. He is always right; always just; always wise; always loving. Though personally confused about providence, the psalmist knows that he cannot impugn the character of God. It is the psalmist that must make adjustments, not the God of Israel.

Third, let’s look at the phrase “praises of Israel:” In working through his trials and the feelings of being abandoned, the psalmist pounds in his theological anchor: “Thou art holy.” But, he goes further, “You, O Lord, sit *or rule* upon the praises of Israel.” What is the praises of Israel? In the Hebrew mind, God was enthroned on the Ark of the Covenant which represented His throne. Inside the Ark were the stone tablets. We call them the Ten Commandments. His throne was based upon law. In other words, God ruled the world on the basis of His law. The Torah is the “praises of Israel” because the law reflects the character of God. A look at psalm one, nineteen, and one-hundred and nineteen reveal how important the law was to Israel. God’s law represents holiness, justice, and mercy. The praises of Israel are the depth and wonder of God’s law which is perfect, sure, right, pure, clean, and righteous altogether (Psalm 19:7-10). The glory of Israel was the law and the LORD God that gave it to them.

Thus, the psalmist, in working through his feelings of being deserted by God began to resolve His crisis by reflecting on the fact that God is holy, on his throne as a Sovereign governing his affairs justly and mercifully. The LORD doesn’t change. His law doesn’t change. And, since God rules fairly and justly, there must be an answer to his own suffering. The One who sits on the “praises of Israel” and rules

THEOLOGICAL ISSUES

When it comes to the subject of law, the Christian community largely suffers from bi-polar movements. The radical Messianic community seeks to re-vitalize food laws, Sabbath laws, and Jewish festivals to the neglect of the Breaking of Bread. Antinomian segments of Christianity bifurcate the OT and the NT resulting in moral anarchy and ethical relativity in the church. Good Christians have retreated into a private practice of religion. Gone are the days when the Black Regiment applied Scripture to the politics of the day. Wycliffe said, the Bible was meant to be “a government of the people, by the people, and for the people.” If God’s law is not the standard for ethics and government, then what is? The Christian simply must wrestle to attain a balanced view of God’s law. If God’s law is not relative today, then the church proclaims the death of God among men.

Continuity vs. Discontinuity: What commands are continuous in this dispensation, and what commands are discontinuous? Throughout history Christians have run the gamut of the theological spectrum of application of the law to their laws. Theonomists generally believe that every aspect of God’s law has application for the Christian life while the antinomians have abandoned nearly every aspect of the law including the Ten Commandments as applicable to Christian living. Many pastors seem to pick and

choose what they will apply to the church without a rule stick as a guide to application; e.g., some Christians will not eat pork but insist that Sabbath keeping is not obligatory. We must ask what commands from God's law apply to Christians today and on what principle is that decision to be made?

Private religion vs. public religion. Many Christians will insist that they should keep the Ten Commandments privately as part of the personal religion, but do not believe that the society around them has a duty to the Ten Commandments. Pietism is the fervent application of the OT ethical laws to one's personal ethic, but this same segment of Christianity places no onus on the non-Christian community to know and honor the Ten Commandments. We must ask, if God's law is not the standard for society then whose law will be the canon for mankind? If God's law is not the standard for all men, then we are polytheists that believe all laws, cultures have value; that is, that everything is relative and there is no absolute.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Source: The prologue introduces us not only to the Ten Commandment, but also to the First Commandment. The Source of God's law is Father Yahweh (YHWH) and He introduces Himself as the LORD thy God which brought thee out of Egypt; that is the term "LORD thy God" declares God's sovereignty, authority, self-existence, and absoluteness. Because He is LORD, He has the right to be their Lawgiver. Secondly, the phrase "which brought thee out of Egypt" declares God's grace and redemptive love. He is their Savior and because He loved these people, He issued them the Ten Commandments; that is, the Ten Commandments are a product of sovereignty and grace.

Time: The law was given at Matthew Sinai three months after the exodus sometime around 1450 BC. Israel stayed another ten months at the foot of the mountain after the received the law.

Purpose: The Law was given to reveal the character of God. His character is partially portrayed in the Law and God's character is the basis of right and wrong, of morals, of ethics, of conduct, and regulations for the health of the community (Leviticus 19:1-3).

Designed result: In obeying the law, Israel would become a "special treasure;" hence, a nation distinct from all others, a model for the international community, and a leader among nations.

Covenant: The people of Israel entered into an agreement with God; a compact or contract. The terms were simple: obey and be blessed; disobey and be cursed (Leviticus 26). Clean clothes were worn that day as a formal, external show of respect as God spoke directly to the people (Exodus 19-21).

Parts of the Law:

- The Decalogue (Exodus 20): The Ten Commandments (also called the Decalogue) were given to Moses, the great leader of the Hebrews, over 3,000 years ago after the Hebrews were delivered from slavery in Egypt.

- The main body of case law (Exodus 21ff; Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy). While the Law of Moses is made up of over 600 rules, the Ten Commandments were a succinct list of rules on which all case law is developed. They are recorded in two chapters of the Hebrew Scriptures (specifically the Torah): Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5.

10.2 OBSERVATIONS ON THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

As we come to the Decalogue of the Law, we need to realize the importance of the Ten Commandments. The Ten Commandments became the cornerstone of Israel's Constitution, the magnet of the Torah, the nectar on which every Jewish pious mind gladly digested. For 2000 years Christians have feasted at this same table. Western Civilization is deeply rooted in the Ten Commandments, and they are the moral pillar on which the Founders of our Nation initiated Revolution in 1776. Nowhere in history is there a more concise, poignant, succinct description of right and wrong. The Code of Hammurabi does not hold a candle to the loftiness of the Ten Commandments. Plato and Aristotle are crude humanistic luminaries compared the noon-day Sun of God's law.

Unfortunately, the virtue of the Ten Commandments are under attack by humanistic men even going so far as forbidding the posting of the Ten Commandments in the classroom lest students "read them, meditate upon them, respect them, or obey them" (*Stone v. Graham*, 1980; *Ring v. Grand Forks Public School District*, 1980; *Lanner v. Wimmer*, 1981).

Rufus King, a signer of the Constitution and a framer of the Bill of Rights said, "The law established by the Creator, which has existed from the beginning, extends over the whole world, is everywhere and at all times binding upon mankind.... This is the law of God by which He makes His way known to man and is paramount to all human control."

As the Anderson court noted, the Ten Commandments is at one and the same time, a secular symbol and an ecumenical symbol. See Anderson, 475 F.2d at 33. See also A. Powell Davies, *The Ten Commandments* 126 (1956). The "Ten Commandments," while a sacred text to some and an ethical code of conduct to others, is also a landmark in the history of the development of Western law. Because they have generally been characterized in history as a "religious text" does not change their secular history.

Furthermore, there are Christians who believe the Ten Commandments are no longer applicable to them since they are under grace and not under law. This segment of Christianity has not only weakened the church, but has aided secular forces in resisting the publication of the Ten Commandments in public schools.

Let us take a look at the amazing Commandment and marvel at its brilliance.

The Ten Commandments are from the Creator. "And God spoke" (20:1) indicates that the law did not come from Moses nor did it come from man, it came directly from Elohim to the house of Jacob. The

Law was a revelatory gift given by the infinite-personal Spirit to a people whom he loved. And, it is our privilege to read about them. The fact that the text uses “Elohim” (God) shows us the universal application of the Ten Commandments.

The Ten Commandments is pure truth! No man is able to receive pure truth without preparation and without responsibility. For this reason the people had to prepare themselves by washing, changing clothes, and abstaining from normal sexual relations. Pure truth requires a pure heart and a willingness to act on that truth.

The whole nation heard God announce His laws. Seeing the lightning and thunder and fire and hearing the law for the first time, men and women trembled with terror. They came to Moses begging him to silence the thunder of God’s law.

The Ten Commandments are about God’s character. These commands are not drawn out of thin air, but illuminate who God is and what He is like. The whole basis of law resides in the character of God. Every command reflects some attribute of its Creator. The commands are absolute because they are based on God’s eternal character. If He is eternal, His commandments are permanent. **If they are permanent, they are absolute:**

Psalm 119:137 TZADDI. Righteous art thou, O LORD, and upright are thy judgments.

Psalm 119:151 Thou art near, O LORD; and all thy commandments are truth.

The Ten Commandments are not a private matter demanding something from the Christian but leaving other men to do as they please. The law is valid for the Christian because it is valid for all. God’s law is not only right for me, but for all men, and all of man’s institutions.

The Ten Commandments are about the nature of true religion. Religion is the source of law and in Israel’s economy, the Lord God was the source of law. The first five of the Ten Commandments include “the Lord thy God” and detail man’s responsibility to God: the second five are connected by the word “Thou” and detail man’s responsibility to man. The first five have explanations, and the last five commandments need no explanation. The fact that YHHW uses the term “thy God” in verse two indicates that Israel existed in a dynamic relationship with the Creator. Any religion that separates duty to God from duty to man is a false religion. The Ten Commandments reflect a fundamental truth: that in following God one must love his fellow man and treat him with respect. Under God’s law, religion is taken into the market place and into the filthy streets where men live, lust, and conduct business.

The Ten Commands in conjunction with the Shema teaches that there is One, absolute, unchanging God . . . and one absolute unchanging law! He is the infinite, personal, virtuous triune Spirit who created the world, the God of the Bible, the God of Israel, and the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ. If he is the one true God and has revealed himself in history, then all other religions are false. There is one Lawgiver, Father Yah! And, therefore, there is one law, one source of law, one interpretation of law, but many application of the law (James 4:12).

James 4:12 There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another?

The Commandments are given to create fear and to awaken obedience. The fear of God is the essence of sanity and common sense. It is insane not to keep the Ten Commandments. If for no other reason, Israel should keep the Ten Commandments out fear of punishment; secondly, the Commandments are motivated by love and therefore lead to prosperity, happiness, and respect of other nations. He is their Savior and He chose them, and they should keep the Commandments out of love and thankfulness to Him for their deliverance.

The Ten Commandments are about evil in man. Eight of the commandments are prefaced negatively, “Thou shall not . . .” The negative addresses man’s depraved nature. In love, God is saying to man, “Don’t hurt yourself.” The reason God says, “Thou shall not. . .” is because man’s nature is bent toward those proscriptions (Romans 3:10-19). In other words, there always will be men in league with the Devil who will attempt to defraud other men of life, liberty, and property. Freedom takes eternal vigilance.

The Ten Commandments are about the goodness within man. Two commands are framed positively. Positive commands address the goodness within man. Though flawed and cracked, man is still made in the image of God. Positive commands indicate the need for an aggressive course of obedience and require positive energy on the part of all men to obey the commands. Obedience to positive law requires regeneration of soul and spiritual life.

The Law is about human freedom. *The Law was given to a free people. It did not make them free!* Freedom was the result of God’s redemptive work through the shed blood of the lamb and the power of God’s deliverance at the Red Sea.

The Decalogue begins with, “I am the Lord thy God which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage” (Exodus 20:2). The verb “am” is not in the original text. It should be read, “I, the Lord thy God which brought thee out of the land of Egypt . . .” If God had used the verb “am,” He would be establishing his existence. But, the fact that he does not use the verb indicates that God is establishing the fact that He is the **Source of Israel’s freedom. To assume that men are free to worship the god of their choice is to negate the Christian faith.** If the religion of a society be false, then the death of society will be true (Leviticus 26:23, 24).

The Law did not make God’s people free, but it was the means to maintaining that freedom by placing the responsibility of freedom upon the back of every individual in the nation. The purpose of grace is not “freedom from law,” but the power and resources of the Spirit to enable us to keep the law (Romans 8:4). Israel was redeemed out of bondage “to preserve us alive” and commanded them to fear the LORD “for our good always.” There is no room in the Church to set aside the law. Law and grace are not enemies, but are one in purpose.

The nation spent hundreds of years in slavery. What was going to prevent them from becoming slaves again? Because of their ignorance of evil and deception by despots, they sunk into slavery in Egypt. Only

a vivid, clear, poignant understanding of right and wrong and the vigorous defense of liberty could the nation, or any nation for that matter, remain a free people.

Within a few decades, Israel's freedom eroded. Within 800 years after giving the Ten Commandments, the nation found themselves in slavery again to foreign powers.

In America, we have witnessed the rapid depletion of liberties. The nation is trillions of dollars in debt. It has to borrow money from the IMF to stay afloat. It has mortgaged the land and wealth to survive economically. The average American is 30 years in debt and works 6 months out of the year as indentured servants of the government. Rights have turned into privileges. Licenses of all kinds are now required for what use to be common rights. Americans are inundated by administrative regulations. Every statute created robs Americans of freedoms.

The Ten Commandments are about the Responsibility of Freedom: The first five Commandments include the word "Lord" indicating man's responsibility to Divine authority. The Law treats men as Sovereigns, that is, free men. But, Freedom and Sovereignty demands responsibility. Not only must a free man take steps to protect his own freedom, he must accept responsibility for protecting the rights of his neighbor. Freedom can only be constructed on the foundation of human responsibility.

The Law is about the principles of protecting life, liberty, and property. God laid on the shoulders of every Israelite the duty to protect their neighbor's God-given rights: "Thou shall not murder;" was designed to protect their neighbor's life; "Thou shall not steal" and "thou shall not covet" to protect their neighbor's property; and, "thou shall not lie" was designed to protect their neighbor's liberty. When a nation operates under the norms and standards, the result is individual prosperity, freedom, and happiness. When a nation collectively adopts the Ten Commandments the standard of right and wrong truth, morality, and freedom reign.

The Ten Commandments are about Private Property and the Right of Privacy. Any attempt to **invade** the privacy or property of another is destructive to human freedom. The Law is not about socialism, that is, the redistribution of wealth for what appears to be the good of society. Socialism is completely destructive to human freedom and human dignity.

The Ten Commandments are about economics and the principles of capitalism. The right to work and the right to own property and the right to make an honest profit originate with the Ten Commandments. Mankind has a right to sound money which value does not change because of legislative decrees. These are rights given by God, not privileges given by government. For this reason we reject socialism, communism, and the Keynesian theory of economics. Every attempt to redistribute wealth without consent by unlawful taxation, fraudulent currency, and government initiated inflation programs is a violation of the Tenth Commandment.

The Ten Commandments are about the institution of the family. The family is protected by the principles in the Decalogue. Three commandments preserve the man-woman relationship, the Father-son

relationship, and the mother-child relationship. Only when a society forsakes the Ten Commandments as its guiding light will the family be threatened.

The Ten Commandments form the principles of right to life, war, and personal defense. One of the objectives of the Decalogue is to create a stable population, a stable economy, and a stable environment where freedom can flourish. Life and property must be aggressively defended against evil men who do not respect your life and property. A personal policy of self-defense in an evil world is absolutely essential to liberty.

The law requires two duties of a man: **obedience and enforcement**. To obey a law means to enforce it in one's own life AND ONE'S COMMUNITY. Obedience requires that we seek total enforcement of the law. Thus, this law requires the police power of every citizen. It is our Christian duty to come to the defense of a godly order. Law and order are the responsibilities of all good men.

Furthermore, a strong military made up of courageous young men who are willing to defend the life, liberty, and property of men, women, and children is essential to a moral nation. We know the Commandment, "Thou shall not kill," does not prohibit declarations of war or capital punishment by virtue of sanctioned wars and sanctioned executions in Scripture. It refers to murder. The whole idea that a nation can be secure without a military is non-sense or that non-violent response to aggression is always or the only proper response to terrorism is non-sense. Non-violence is admirable in certain situations, but there is a time and place when life and liberty must be defended. War will continue till the return of Christ. This is not to say that bad things do not happen in war. They do! But, killing the enemy is not one of them.

The Ten Commandments are about Justice in the Court. Men have conflicts. Disputes must be settled outside of vigilante justice. The means of settling disputes is sworn testimony in matters of law governed by men of integrity (Judges). God placed a premium on truth, and commanded men and women to take oaths in His name in order that truth might condemn the guilty and set the innocent free.

The Ten Commandments are about personal morality. All success worth having is based on the principles of Christian conduct. Success means that I have played by the rules and won. What joy is there in being a champion if one has to lie, cheat, and steal to win the game? Before a man accepts the challenge of life, he needs to decide the principles by which he is going to live and conduct business. The principles of purity, honesty, contentment, and integrity are essentials in the business world. Would you do business with a car salesman that has no commitment to truth or honesty and will do anything to make a buck? Or, would you rather do business with a man who will not lie to you or cheat you to make an honest wage?

The Ten Commandments are about Common Law. The commandments regarding human relationships can be reduced to two principles: (a) do not hurt people, and (b) do not defraud people. Because God's laws can be reduced to simple principles, the Ten Commandments became the basis of Common Law in England and in the original Colonies. One of the principles that came out of Common

Law was that even Kings have to submit to God's law. Our Constitution and way of life is thoroughly based on Common Law.

The Ten Commandments are about health. God commanded man to rest. We are not built to go 70 mph seven days a week thirty-one days a month three hundred and sixty-five days a year. Man needs to stop, slow down, and give all his organs a chance to recuperate. Without health, we have nothing. But, health laws are limited; and thus, the ability to regulate mankind through health laws are limited.

The Ten Commandments are about Covenants. The Decalogue and the subsequent laws became the basis on which the blessings of God were mediated to God's people under the Old Covenant. If they obeyed, they were blessed. If they disobeyed, they were cursed. Under the terms of the New Covenant, the principles of the Ten Commandments are etched on the souls of believers (written in the heart). The Holy Spirit creates in them a nature that desires to do what the Ten Commandments subscribe (Jeremiah 31:33; Hebrews 8:10).

There is one weakness with the Ten Commandments. It told a man what was right, but it did not empower a man to do what was right. This was the most frustrating thing about the law in Judaism (Romans 7:1-14). It was not until Christ came and inaugurated the New Covenant by his shed blood and the Holy Spirit descended on Pentecost that men experienced the powers of regeneration and the power to keep the law (Romans 8:4). Only through a vital, dynamic relationship with Jesus Christ can men find the desire and the will to apply the Commandments to all of life.

In conclusion, the Ten Commandments are fundamental to appreciating all that is virtuous in society. A thorough knowledge, a vigorous defense, and an aggressive promotion of the Ten Commandments are essential for correct living and a stable society. For more on the law, read John Rushdoony, [Institutes of Biblical Law](#).

10.3 SUMMARY OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

The Ten Commandments (*mitsvah*) are called the Ten Words (Deuteronomy 4:13; 10:4; 34:28). They are not about “getting to heaven.” They are about maintaining freedom in a civilized society. Look at the Ten Commandments as God’s freedom principles.

10.3.1 THE FIRST MITSVAH

Exodus 13:3 Thou shall have no other gods before me,

(Literally), “There shall not be to you any gods *beyond or above me* (y:n"P'-l(~yrlxea))” (Genesis 48:22), or “There shall not be to you any gods *other than me* (~yrlxea)” (Genesis 31:5). The command forbids polytheism and idolatry. It also requires love and devotion to YHWH.

Literally, “there shall not” is not a “thou shall not” commandment, but a reference to the prohibition of **idolatrous affections**. Since religion is the source of law, God is protecting the nation’s legal system. *God is addressing man’s soul*, the place where idolatry begins. The second commandment deals with overt idolatry. Israel did not decide to build a calf in the desert. The calf-concept was in their soul when they left Egypt. Their bodies were free, but their thinking was deeply rooted to Egyptian polytheism.

Moses’ generation and Jeremiah’s generation had much in common. The same conditions that existed in the minds of those that came out of Egypt were the same that existed in those in Jeremiah’s day that went into slavery in Babylon (Jeremiah 2:20).

This Commandment sets forth the truth of *monotheism*. Israel was delivered from pluralism in Egypt. Serving the Egyptian pantheon of gods was standard practice. All were considered a road to life. An Egyptian could care less which god a man served as long as he did not criticize his own god and the way he worshiped. The First Commandment impugned polytheism and set forth the truth of one God, one way to God, and one way to worship Him.

This Commandment informs us that Father YHWH is the *Source of everything* we enjoy. There is to be nothing beyond Him and nothing above Him. Pursuit of a false god is looking beyond the true God to something else as one’s source of joy and hope. There are other gods besides wood and stone. Money, pleasure, possessions, prestige, fame, the State, alcohol, health, and food can usurp the rightful place of God in a human life.

This commandment calls man to recognize the *supremacy and priority* of YHWH. There is only one eternal almighty Creator and Ruler. He is the Source of all man’s blessings. God will not be satisfied with a proper place, an important place, a primary place, a private place, a prominent place, or a principal place

in a people's lives. He will never be happy with second place in any person's heart. God charges men to give Him undisputed, uncontested, and unyielding preeminence in their souls.

The Commandment exalts truth as the Protector of souls. Jesus said, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free" (John 8:32). Freedom in the Garden and freedom in the desert depended upon obedience to a negative prohibition. In this case, *the true God must be in his true position in a true heart for the soul to be truly free*. Weak theology, weak doctrine, and weak understanding of God are prime pickings for competitive gods. The notion that all religions are good and that they all lead to the same God are like saying it does not matter what planet you live on, all are the same. There is only one planet in our galaxy that supports life, and there is only one God in the universe that creates life.

10.3.2 THE SECOND MITSVAH

Exodus 20:4-6). Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

This Commandment forbids the manufacturing of idols associated with primitive cultures. The First Commandment shows us *Who to worship*; the Second Commandment shows us *how to worship*. God is spirit and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and truth (John 4:24). Ultimately, God calls men to worship Him by faith and not by sight.

This Commandment demands we know the truth about God. A.W. Tozer said men perform according to their theology whether it be right or wrong. He was correct. Men live consistent with the God-concept. If men view God as weak, uninvolved, asleep at the job, or as one who winks at sin, they will wink at sin. If men view God as a strict, vengeful, severe, and austere, they will act without mercy. If men see God as a happy-go-lucky Santa Claus grandfather figure, they will tolerate evil. If one is to live accurately, it is paramount that one know the true God and possess an accurate view of Him.

This Commandment reveals the truth about man's evil nature. Man has a fetish to worship power figures, power forces in nature such as the Sun or moon or thunder or lightening, and power symbols like bulls which humans tend to personify⁷. There is a rabbit's foot up every man's sleeve.

⁷ The Teutonic forbearers were nature worshippers. The chief god was Woden; hence Wednesday. Woden married a goddess name Frig; hence we get Friday. Thor was the god of lightening; hence, we get Thursday. The Sun and Moon gave us Sunday and Monday (Maurer, B.A. (1951). The Ten Commandments will not budge. Saint Louis, MI: Concordia.

However, I do not think this command forbid paintings, sculptures, and drawings of Biblical scenes, nor do I think it necessarily forbids icons or artistic expressions of the faith. There is a difference between symbols of the faith and idolatrous forms which pretend to be true representations of the living God. Even the letters YHWH are figures that represent to us the name of God, but who among us would correlate the letters as God Himself?

“To bow down” (**hw<x.T;v.ti-al**) is a Hishtaphel verb related either to the Hiphil (causative) or Hithpael verb form (causative to one’s self). It is a physical act that is a product of an enslaved soul!

“To serve them” is a Hophal (passive) meaning man must resist enslaving systems and refuse to be captured. Freedom takes eternal vigilance. Freedom is best preserved when men serve the one and only true God. “Thy God” implies a powerful relationship between the Creator and His people.

The word *jealousy* and *zealous* (**an>q**) are the same word (Joshua 25:11). Jealousy when associated with man is a petty, immature, selfish greed. But with God, *jealousy is a praiseworthy zeal to preserve something that is precious*. If an object of affection comes between God and the one He loves, His jealousy springs into action to punish the one he loves in order to protect a precious relationship.

“Visiting iniquity” means “punish” and tells us that God charges sins of idolatry to fathers and sons. Apparently, idolatry affects generation after generation. If the father’s soul is enslaved, more than likely, his children and grand children will be enslaved⁸. Enslaved souls will eventually hate God (to them that hate me).

The word “mercy” is the Hebrew word *hesed*. This is the word for God’s royal love. He is determined to do good to those that love Him and guard His commandments.

10.3.3 THE THIRD MITSVAH

Exodus 20:7 Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

This Commandment taught Israel to honor God’s name. It forbids the individual Israelite from using God’s name in a trivial way in the mundane affairs of life as well as trivializing official oaths. His glorious name is to be exalted and honored among men. The psalmist declared, “Holy and reverend is your name” (Psalm 111:9). Jesus taught us to pray, “Hallowed be Thy name.”

⁸ Cross-reference with Deuteronomy 7:9. “God punishes the sin of the fathers in the children to the third and fourth generation in relation to those who hate Him, and shows mercy to the thousandth generation in relation to those who love Him The words neither affirm that sinning fathers remain unpunished, nor that the sins of father are punished in the children and grandchildren without any fault of their own” (Keil-Delitzsch, The Pentateuch, p. 117).

The word “vain” means “falsehood,” and can be translated “waste,” “disorder,” “empty,” or “vain.” This Commandment prohibits the employment of God’s name for empty and vain purposes. The Commandment applies to oaths and vows and the essentials of jurisprudence. The idea is not that a man is not to take an oath, but that when he does take an oath, he takes it seriously.

God commanded men to take oaths in his name (Deuteronomy 6:13). An oath is a commitment to tell the truth and to keep one’s word. Taking an oath is a matter of worship and it honors the Lord. Oaths testify to God’s existence and to the fact that He hears and sees all things (Proverbs 15:3). The word “oath” (שָׁבַח; *shabab*) in Deuteronomy 6:13 is Niphal (passive) indicating that “oath taking” is forced upon the individual due to necessity of fact finding. The root of this word is the number *seven* implying that witnesses are present to determine the truth. The idea behind an oath was to bind the soul so that it could not be loosed. The Latin *juro* and *jus jurandum* are derived from “*jus*,” that is “right and law.”

The Jews at the time of Christ found a way to circumvent this commandment in order to evade judgment by swearing by subtitles other than *HaShem*. Jesus condemned pseudo oaths. When Jesus forbid taking an oath, he did so on the principle that the Jews were taking daily oaths over trivial and unimportant matters. Furthermore, they were not taking these oaths in *HaShem*, but by subtitles of sacred things such as the throne, the gold in the temple, or the hair on one’s head. None of which had any capacity to hear and judge (Matthew 5:35).

Oaths are needed to settle disputes (Hebrews 6:16) and should be reserved for serious matters. The oath is essentially religious and necessary when seeking to clear up doubtful things by calling God to witness the testimony and to judge the witness by avenging falsehood if he departs from the truth. Oaths have four properties:

- A formal asseveration of truth.
- A confession of the omniscient, omnipresent triune God (YHWH).
- An invocation that calls upon the living God to be present and bear witness to the conscience that what is said is in accord with truth.
- An imprecation in which the testifier asks God to be the Revenger of all lies, binding himself deserving of divine punishment if he should swear falsely.

The oath is an act of worship whereby the testifier affirms the existence of God, the One who knows and owns the truth, and the One to Who all are accountable. By placing one’s hand upon the Holy Book with the other lifted toward heaven honors the One Who is in heaven and testifies to His existence as Judge of all mankind.

The following took oaths: Abraham (Genesis 21:23, 24); Abraham's servant (Genesis 24:8); Jacob (Genesis 31:53); Joseph (Genesis 48:31); Jesus (Matthew 26:63, 64); Paul (1 Corinthians 1:23; Galatians 1:20; Philippians 1:8).

This Commandment also applies to the misuse and dishonor of God's name. His name is to be honored among men (Psalm 8:9). Swearing and cursing dishonors HaShem. Furthermore, it behooves the godly to eliminate mince⁹ words from their vocabulary (Ephesians 4:28-32).

God says he will not hold guiltless the one who swears falsely. God knows, and God is able to judge perjury. When invoking His name in a test of truth, God is not only able to judge, He will punish the perjurer.

10.3.4 THE FOURTH MITSVAH

Exodus 12: 8 Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.

This is the one Commandment that is highly disputed. Jewish tradition and Christian tradition are in opposing corners on this issue.

The Hebrew word (ט'ב'ו;ח, shabbat) means "rest" or "cessation" (Lamentations 1:7). The word "remember" is a Qal infinitive. *Remember* is a mental activity. The word "holy" literally means "to set apart." Israel was commanded to remember and to rest on Saturday. The Jewish Sabbath (shabbat) is from Friday evening till Saturday evening (6:00 PM-6:00 PM).

The first Sabbath was kept by God in Genesis 2:2, 3. He rested on the seventh day, not because he was tired, but because His creative work was finished. When man was created on the sixth day, he received the benefit of God's six day creation. The creation was God's gift, an act of grace to man. The Sabbath was a reminder to the Jew that they also had received all things by grace. Israel was prepared for this command by virtue of the fact that manna did not fall on the Sabbath. On the Sabbath, Israel was commanded to cease working and to remember God's grace to them, that is, they had STOP DOING and to START THINKING. The subject of their meditation was creation and their redemption from Egypt.

Forbidden were reaping and ploughing (Exodus 34:21), pressing wine and carrying of goods (Nehemiah 13:15), bearing burdens (Jeremiah 17:21), conducting business (Amos 8:5), opening markets (Nehemiah 13:15), and collecting manna (Exodus 16:26).

In Christian thought, there are two Sabbaths: (a) the day of rest on earth, and (b) God's salvation rest in heaven (Hebrews 4:1-7). The second rest is an eternal Sabbath which can be enjoyed the minute one becomes a believer (Matthew 11:28). Because Christ rose from the dead on the Sunday, Christians have

⁹ A mince word is a substitute for a curse word such as dang and darn.

hollowed the first day of the week. Since the eternal rest is inseparable from Christ's resurrection and since Christians enjoy eternal rest now, Sunday became the Christian holy day (Acts 20:7)¹⁰. In one sense, the Jews worked and then rested on the 7th day. The Christians rest on the first day, and then work. Interestingly, the key duty for the Christian is remembrance of God's grace through the Lord's Supper.

In Christian thought, the 4th Commandment is completely different from the other Commandments in the sense that the other Nine Commandments are a direct reflection of God's character, whereas, the 4th Commandment is an indirect reflection of God's character. There is nothing inherently moral, right or wrong, about keeping Saturday sacred. But, there is something moral, right or wrong, about "thou shall not kill." For this reason, I classify the 4th Commandment as part of the cultic laws of Israel that ended with the consummation of the Jewish age and the inauguration of the Christian age. I offer the following in support of this view:

- Christ is the end of the law that is, he fulfilled the law and completed its requirements (Romans 10:4).
- All the commandments are repeated in the NT epistles as mandatory requirements for Christian living except the 4th Commandment. Why are Christians not commanded to keep the Saturday Sabbath? Because the Sabbath law was a part of the Jewish cultic codes, holy days, food laws, new moons, etc. that ended with the death of Christ (Galatians 4:1-13).
- Paul declared Christians free from Israel's cultic laws (Romans 6:14; Galatians 4:5; 5:1, 18)¹¹
- The Gentiles never were under Jewish cultic laws (Romans 7:1ff; 1Corinthians 9:20; Galatians 3:23)

¹⁰ The phrase "on the Lord's day" and "day of the Lord" are equivalent in English, but not so in Greek. In Greek (evn th/| kuriakh/| h`me,ra|), the word "Lord" is in an adjectival position, but when Scripture refers to the "day of Jehovah" the word "Lord" is in the genitive. In 1 Corinthians 11:20, Paul refers to the "Lord's supper" (kuriako.n dei/pnon) where again the word "Lord" is in the adjectival position. The use of "Lord" as an adjective implies something instituted. In the latter, it is the supper; in the former, it is a day. The general consensus is that the "Lord's Day" refers to Sunday. The day Jesus rose victorious from the dead proving that He is indeed Lord (Stockton's Commentary on Revelation 1:10-11).

¹¹ While the Christian is not under Israel's cultic laws, he is under command to do what is right however it is expressed. Nine of the Ten Commands are direct reflections of God's character and are in immutable. The believer is required to do what is right whether it is objectively stated in the Ten Commandments or subjectively observed in the life of Christ. Generally speaking, every command in the New Testament is God's will for the believer. Every expression of righteousness is God's will for the believer. The cultic laws, however, were designed to hem the Jews in and to separate them from surrounding nations until Christ entered the world. There is nothing morally right or wrong about keeping a particular day holy. The cultic laws are indirect reflections of some attribute of God, but they are not direct reflections of His character. There is nothing essentially right or wrong about keeping Thursday, Saturday, or a Sunday holy. For this reason, Christians have never felt obligated to keep Israel's Sabbath. But, they have fought to keep a day of rest and they have fought to keep Sunday a holy day.

- Paul severely chastised the Jewish segment of believers (Judaizers or legalists) who desired to return to Israel's cultic laws (Galatians 4:9-5:14).

Our Lord reminded us that man was not made for the Sabbath, but the Sabbath was made for man (that is, a day of rest and reflection was designed for man's benefit and health. Whether a Christian rests on Sunday, Monday, or Friday, it is essential that he take a break from his labor. Furthermore, it essential that man stop and reflect on the good things God has done for him.

Since the Christian has eternal rest by virtue of Christ's work on the cross, and since Christ rose from the dead on Sunday, it is very fitting for the Christian to rest on Sunday and to remember Christ and his accomplishments.

During the days of Christ, Jewish tradition gobbled up the original purpose of the Sabbath enslaving man to Herculean statutory regulations. Jesus taught the following about the Sabbath (Matthew 12:1-13): (a) Necessity has priority over sanctuary regulations (12:3); (b) Sabbath desecrations were allowed by priestly service, that is, no priest stopped working on the Sabbath, In fact, his work doubled on the Sabbath; (c) Acts of necessity take priority over Sabbath rituals, that is, servicing the needs of men and animals are more important than Sabbatical law; (d) By teaching these principles, Jesus placed Sabbath laws on the same level as other ceremonial laws, i.e., they are not absolute and morally binding like the laws against murder or stealing or lying.

Though Christians meet on Sunday and generally use Sunday as a day of rest, Sabbatical laws do not apply or carry over into the Christian era. The Christian is free from the law as a system (Romans 6:14).

10.3.5 THE FIFTH MITSVAH

Exodus 20:12 Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.

The word *honor* is the Hebrew word *kabad* (דבֹּעַק;). It means "to give weight" and can be translated "obey" or "respect." This Commandment lays the Biblical principle that respect for authority is foundational life and happiness. The duty of learning to respect authority is the responsibility of parents as well as children. When children are young, children honor their parents through obedience (Ephesians 6:1). Older children honor their parents by respecting them throughout life, and by financial support in old age.

The father is mentioned first because he is has the responsibility to lead the family. The wives as well as the children are commanded to honor, fear, and respect the head of the home (Ephesians 5:33; 6:1-2). Likewise, children are commanded to honor the mother as they honor the father. Two observations need to be made: (a) Honoring the mother by the children on the same level as the Father is what separates the Christian and Islamic values. In Islam, only the father is to be honored. Mothers are second-rate citizens in Islamic culture. God's Word exalts motherhood. For this reason love and respect generally flourish in

Jewish and Christian homes; Second (a) though a mother is to be honored, she is not the co-head of the home. In Biblical thinking it is the father who is in authority and has the ultimate responsibility to govern his family. The father, not the mother is the key figure in the family. Matriarchal rule is completely unbiblical (1 Corinthians 11:1-3).

This is called the “first commandment with promise” according to Paul. The word “that” is a particle of preposition that introduces a purpose clause. That is, this is the first commandment that promises a reward for obedience, and the lack thereof threatens a long and happy life in the land. Respect involved words and deeds, and those that failed to respect their parents were severely punished under God’s law.

A stubborn and rebellious son was to be stoned (Deuteronomy 21:21).

Whoever struck his father or mother was to be put to death (Exodus 21:15).

Whoever cursed his mother or father was to be put to death (Exodus 21:17).

The phrase “long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee” implies that the land Israel was to inherit was a gift of God. By his authority, He allowed Israel to be its steward.

In the times of Christ, Pharisees found a way around honoring parents by pronouncing *corban* over their wealth. *Corban*, a Hebrew word adopted into the Greek of the New Testament, was left untranslated. It occurs only once (Mark 7:11) It means a gift or offering consecrated to God. Anything over which this word was once pronounced was irrevocably dedicated to the temple. Land, however, so dedicated might be redeemed before the year of jubilee (Leviticus 27:16-24). Our Lord condemns the Pharisees for their false doctrine, inasmuch as by their traditions they had destroyed the commandment which requires children to honor their father and mother, teaching them to find excuse from helping their parents by the device of pronouncing "*corban*" over their goods, thus reserving them to their own selfish use.

The whole basis of authority stems from this Commandment: submission by wives to husbands (Ephesians 5:22ff); obedience of children to parents (Ephesians 6:1-2); respect for employers (1 Timothy 6:1ff); respect for authority (Titus 3:1-2; Romans 13:1ff); respect for church leaders (Hebrews 13:17); and, respect for all men (1 Peter 2:17).

10.3.6 THE SIXTH MITSVAH

Exodus 12:13 Thou shalt not kill.

This Commandment prohibits murder. It is designed to protect freedom and specifically the right to life. The Hebrew word for execution is *muwth* (T,mih) in Exodus 1:16 and *harag* (groh) in Deuteronomy 13:9. The word for slaughtering an animal is *tabach* (xb'j) in Exodus 22:1. The word for homicide or unintentional manslaughter is *ratsach* (xc'r>):Numbers 35:6 and this is the word used in the Sixth Commandment. The word is used eight times in Scripture and always refers to killing a man whether with

intent or without intent. “Thou shall not kill (XC'r>T)” refers to murder, not capital punishment nor killing that takes place during war (Numbers 35:16, 18, 21, 21).

Murder is either (a) carelessness that results in death, or (b) acts of passion, and (c) premeditated murder. Murder includes the following:

Manslaughter (Exodus 21:12): The unjustifiable, inexcusable, intentional killing of a human being without deliberation, as opposed to accidental homicide.

Premeditated murder (21): murder with forethought.

Intentional tort¹²: The intent or purpose to injure (Examples: Strike a father or use of a lethal weapon (Deuteronomy 35:15)

Reckless homicide (21:22): A death due to the neglect of responsibility.

Abortion (21:23-24), either by reckless homicide, or premeditated murder

Neglectful homicide (21:29): Death due to carelessness and neglect

Suicide (Job 27:8; Psalm 31:15; Ecclesiastes 8:15): These Scriptures indicate that it is God who gives life and has the right to take away life.

Anger (Mathew 5:21)

Acrimony (Matthew 5:21ff): harsh speech

Murder must be distinguished from manslaughter or an accidental death which we call an act of God (Numbers 35). Accidental deaths are tragic, not only to the family that loses a loved one, but to the one guilty of manslaughter. God’s compassion reaches out to those guilty of manslaughter and provided protection for them. Inclusion

Accidental homicide (21:13) is an Act of God.

Justifiable homicide such as capital punishment done by an appointed executioner is not murder.

Homicide *se defendo* or self-defense is not murder (Exodus 22:1-3). [Note: In an evil world, self-defense is a necessary virtue; that is, not only should we not murder, we shall not let a murderer kill innocent people. Humanism is training people not to defend themselves; that it is better to be a dead victim, than to strike back in self-defense. Such nonsense is a product of feministic man, not the Word of God.]

¹² Tort: Latin, to twist, wrest aside. A private or civil wrong or injury whether civil or criminal. The invasion of a legal right of another. (Blacks Law Dictionary, 6th Ed., p. 1489).

War is an aggressive, application of capital punishment against those who violate human rights.

Murder must be distinguished from declarations of war (Exodus 17:16; Numbers 31:17; Joshua 6, 11-12). In an evil world, bad men must be killed to protect freedom. Bad things happen in war, but killing the enemy is not one of them.

Murder must be distinguished from capital punishment. God ordained capital punishment as a means of deterring crime, that is, putting fear into the hearts of others.

Capital crimes included some of the following in Exodus:

Homicide (21:12)

Disrespect to parents (21:15, 17)

Kidnapping (21:16)

Accidental or intentional abortion (21:22)

Sexual perversion such as bestiality (22:19).

Idoltrous acts especially legal revolutions seeking to undermine the authority of the Word of God (22:20). The BAR association comes to mind because it does not practice true law, but legal ruling for dead, fictional entities:

The definition of the term LEGAL. "the undoing of God's Law." 1893 Dictionary of Arts and Sciences, Encyclopedia Britannica;

The law of anger: In the times of Christ, Pharisaical tradition restricted the law of murder to the act itself. This narrowing of the law of murder relieved many of guilt. Christ, however, restored the law of murder to its original borders and included anger within its boundaries (Matthew 5:21ff). In other words, anger and name calling and fighting precede crimes of passion and are likewise denounced in the command, "Thou shall not kill." Murder reaches the heart and mouth before it reaches the hand and the gun.

There is good news about anger: Anger is a virtue of God (Exodus 4:14). Furthermore, God commands man to be angry (Ephesians 4:26).

There is bad news about anger: Angry men can sin (Ephesians 4:26). For this reason, anger must be guarded by not feeding it and by not allowing the Devil opportunity to exploit injustice (Ephesians 4:29-31). There are at least three causes of anger that needed to be watched: (a) injustice (Proverbs 15:1), (b) imitation (Proverbs 22:24), (c) frustration (Proverbs 17:24).

The law of self-defense: Self-defense is necessary in an evil world. A man was ordered to defend his property and his life with lethal force (22:1-2), but he was not allowed to use unrestrained lethal force to defend his property or dignity (21:8).

The law of responsibility: Life is precious, and God ordered his people to control their animals (21:29) and to develop safety standards (Exodus 21:33; Deuteronomy 22:8) to prevent accidental death.

10.3.7 THE SEVENTH MITSVAH

Exodus 12:14 Thou shalt not commit adultery.

This Commandment was designed to protect the sanctity of marriage. The man wife relationship is precious, but it is also a pillar of a stable society.

This Commandment not only forbids adultery but it is also a summary of all sexual prohibition including fornication, incest, lust, concupiscence, fraud, bestiality, pornography, and homosexuality. Remember, the Ten Commandments are condensed version of the 613 commands in the Torah, as well as a summary of all sexual misconduct in the Scripture (Exodus 22:19; Leviticus 18; Deuteronomy 22:13-30; 24:1-4; Proverbs 6:20-35; 7:1-27; Matthew 5:27-32; 19:1-12; Ephesians 4:17-19; 5:3-14; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8; Hebrews 13:4-5).

Freedom can only be maintained as long as a relationship is free from third party interference. A third party destroys not only the man woman relationship but the mother child and father son relationship. Hollywood educates us after night that people can engage in fornication and adultery without impunity. Nothing could be further from truth. Consider the evils of sexual promiscuity and its impact upon society:

The multiplication of jealousy, anger, fear, hate, wrath, sorrow, and hurt.

Bastard children. Single parent homes. Fatherless children.

Cessation of sexual performance, abstinence, frigidity, nymphomania.

Divorce, break up of families, poverty, and loss of freedom.

Disease of all kinds, loss of wealth.

Desperation, abortion-murder, death.

Higher taxes for social concerns. No body wins.

Positively, preserving the marriage relationship provides society with the following benefits: safety, integrity, faithfulness, commitment, security, stability, family structure, production, love, less tax, goodness, wealth, and inner happiness.

So serious was adultery that God ordered the adulterer and adulteress to be put to death (Deuteronomy 20:10; 22:22). Adultery is one of two righteous grounds for divorce (Matthew 19; 1 Corinthians 7).

Sex is God's gift to married couples (Genesis 2). The prohibition of adultery includes all unlawful sexual prohibitions: rape (Deuteronomy 22:25), incest (Leviticus 18), bestiality (Exodus 22:19), fornication (1 Thessalonians 4:3), premarital sex (Hebrews 13:4), consorting with prostitutes (Proverbs 7), and homosexuality and lesbianism (Romans 1:21ff).

Sodomy and other sexual sins merited the death penalty (Leviticus 20), and misdirected pity for these perversions was forbidden (Deuteronomy 13:8).

10.3.8 THE EIGHTY MITSVAH

Exodus 20:15 Thou shalt not steal

This command is designed to protect family property. Every man has a responsibility to be engaged in an occupation of common right, to own property, and to keep what he owns.

This command prohibits not only general theft, but fraud, false advertising, embezzlement, borrowing things without returning them, kidnapping, hijacking, burglary, pilfering, extortion, pocket-picking, shoplifting, fleecing, vandalism, graffiti, lying on tax returns, failure to fulfill a contract, get-rich-quick schemes, gambling, and malfeasance of all kinds. Individuals, companies, nor the government is above this law. Man is a genius at figuring out schemes to defraud others of their property through the appearance of legality.

The opposite of stealing, is earning money. We could state the command positively: "Thou shall make money and increase your wealth." For this reason the Bible condemns sloth and encourages wealth creation (Proverbs 10:4, 10:15; 12:11, 24; 14:1, 23, 24; 16:26, 18:9; 21:5).

Furthermore, this command not only encourages wealth creation, but it mandates honest business practices (Proverbs 16:11; 20:10, 23).

This command promotes the noble ambition to create and possess wealth. Desiring wealth is not greed nor is it covetousness. Greed and covetous is the desire to make money illegally and dishonestly.

This command formed the basis of a working welfare system. In Israel, God provided a gleaning system for the poor (Leviticus 23:22). Our present system injures dignity, deters work, and destroys families.

The whole principle of capitalism is based on this verse. The Founding Fathers reasoned that (a) private ownership of property was a God-given right and that no man or no government could deprive a man of

his property without due process of law, and (b) that man has a duty to engage in fair business practices to make a profit, and that (c) self-interest¹³ was a noble, infused motive by virtue of man being made in the image of God.

Socialism is a humanistic idea, not a Christian value. Communism asserts that the rich profit from the poor and that wealth lies in capital resources. The theory of communism may be summed up in a single sentence said Karl Marx: “Abolition of private property.”¹⁴ Capitalism is the belief that wealth is created, not by exploiting the poor, but through productive enterprises, that is the production of goods and services. Wealth comes from the creativity of the people, not from the resources themselves.

The command is stated negatively, because human nature tends to covet and steal men’s property. Humanism, socialism, and communism have one error in common. They all believe that man is good, but his environment is bad—that inherently good man will flourish in a positive society where wealth is redistributed. The Biblical mind understands that utopian perfection cannot be achieved in a fallen world; that self-interest is inherent in man and that the free enterprise system affords man the most opportunity to act as a responsible steward by creating wealth through multiplication of goods and services to other human beings.

This command tells us that government does not have a right to own your property, nor does the government have a right to interfere with industry or contracts, nor does the government have a right to charge you for the right of owning private property. The sanctity of private property is one of the most basic, fundamental rights of mankind. This command forbids unlawful taxation on property, the redistribution of wealth through a graduated tax system, socialism, Marxism, and communism.

The 8th Commandment not only teaches us the right of private property, but the right to defend private property. Not only must a man not steal from others, he must not let others steal from him or defraud him of his own property. In an evil world, self-defense and a strong military are a necessity. Shammah the son of Agee the Hararite made it into David’s hall of fame because he defended a small field full of beans from Philistines who wanted to confiscate the harvest. His companions fled. It was only a little beans—just a bean tax collected by the External Revenue Agents from the Bureau of External Revenue Services of Philistine Affairs. There was just one problem. The bean field was outside Philistine Jurisdiction. Shammah stood his ground and risk arm and limb to protect God’s bean field. It is a lot easier to let people steal from you than it is to defend what is rightfully yours. We must remember that America can only be the Land of the Free as long as it is the Home of the Brave.

¹³ There is a difference between self-interest and selfishness. Self-interest is a natural, noble concern about one’s personal welfare. Capitalism is based on the principle that economies flourish when men are motivated by self-interest rather than by the good of the community as advanced by communism. In fact, it is impossible to do anything apart from self-interest. Selfishness is a perverted self-worship that deprives others for the purpose of self-indulgence.

¹⁴ Noebel, D. (1991). *Understanding the Times*, Manitou Springs, CO: Summit Press, p. 677.

The whole principle of Christian stewardship is derived from this verse. Ultimately, we are not owners of property, but stewards responsible for managing what God has given us and using for his glory. Giving and tithing will always be voluntary acts motivated by love for the gospel and for the indigent (Luke 16: Acts 2:44-46).

The command lays out the clearest principles of repentance and restitution (Exodus 22:1ff). Not only must a thief pay for damages by returning stolen items but to render compensation for emotional injuries caused by his victim's loss of property.

10.3.9 THE NINTH MITSVAH

Exodus 20:16 Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.

First, we must understand the term “neighbor.” It does not mean the person next door as much as it means “fellow citizen.” Prohibition against perjury, under oath, is in view here.

Second, the word “false witness” refers to lies against a neighbor. This would include such sins as lying, gossip, slander, false accusation, defamation, calumny, scandal, libel, vilification, deprecation, blasphemy, belittlement, disparagement, slurring, backbiting, maligning, “throwing mud,” and ad hominem reasoning. No man is safe and freedom cannot be maintained when men feel free to enslave his neighbor by destroying his reputation. Bearing false witness is theft of a different kind. It robs a man of his reputation, honor, and respect among men.

This Commandment is designed to protect the reputation of leaders: “You shall not revile a ruler of the people” (Exodus 22:28).

This Commandment forbids ad hominem reasoning. Men will find themselves disagreeing with leaders. There is nothing wrong with disagreeing with a leader, particularly a public servant. However, the manner in which one conducts that disagreement is critical. We are free to disagree with ideas, policies, and decisions made by leaders. Once spoken or enacted, ideas and policies belong to public domain. However, just because one may disagree with an idea or a decision, the disagreement does not give one the right to attack the character of the one with whom he disagrees. When we attack character instead of ideas we commit ad hominem reasoning.

The Commandment provides an environment for objectivity. In an evil world, men will do unscrupulous things and evil men must be identified and confronted. At the same time, innocent men must be protected. This Commandment does not forbid a valid accusation or complaint against a fellow citizen. But, the means of confrontation is all-important. For this reason, a man cannot be charged without a written, signed complaint and a signed warrant or without probable cause in this country. A man's reputation is preserved by the 4th and 5th Amendment of the United States Constitution.

Furthermore, this command applies to church law. Under the gospel, Christians are forbidden to entertain accusations against church leaders unless two or three witnesses can substantiate the accusation (1 Timothy 5:19). By accusation (kathgori,an, kategorian), the Scripture means something criminal or worthy of excommunication (1Corinthians 5). Trivial faults and flawed personalities are not issues at hand. We are all flawed and fractured. If trivial faults were of concern, then the church would not have any leadership because all leaders are weak and flawed. Paul refused to turn the sheep loose on the shepherds. We would do well to follow the same example.

“Thy neighbor” means that for law to be successful it must be universally applied to all citizens within the country. Any law that breaks over national boundaries is an attack upon freedom. For example, any law proceeding from the United Nations is an attack on the sovereignty of America. Men are only safe when all men are committed to God’s law.

For government (BAR attorneys) to use “words of art” or “Legalese” is a form of deception forbidden by this commandment. Multiplying meanings of words is a form of tyranny—a lie, a ruse, a trick.

However, this law does not mean we owe the truth to those who will abuse the truth. There are times it takes more courage to disguise the truth or even hide it than to expose the truth to tyrants—Abraham comes to mind (Genesis 12). Our nation recognizes the “right to be silent” because civil authorities will use any testimony to your detriment.

10.3.10 THE TENTH MITSVAH

Exodus 20:17 Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbor's.

The word “covet” (*dmox, hamad*) means “pleasant” or “desire” or “covet.” Men tend to covet beautiful, pleasant things. The name *Muhammad* comes this word. By “covet” we are not taking about desire, but energy birthed into practice.

This Commandments addresses schemes and frauds by clever men (and government) designed to control and embezzle funds from innocent, naïve men. Modern banking with their fraudulent loans and government income tax schemes comes to mind.

There is no justification for “thought police” in this verse. Civil rulers must judge the practice of fraud. Behavior is in mind, not thoughts. God can judge the heart.

This Commandment is designed to create liberty in the human mind and heart. Unless the heart is free from covetousness, no man’s property is safe. God is commanding his people to guard their heart, to control their affections, and to monitor their thought life. All behavior stems from thought and desire. We would do well to learn from Achan’s confession (Joshua 7:21ff): I saw; I coveted; I took; and, I hid.

This is the Commandment that slew the Apostle Paul (Romans 7:7), all Jews, and all men.

This Commandment demands deep devotion to God, an intense spirituality, and eternal vigilance. Only a man of prayer, of conscience, of the Word of God can truly keep his heart free of covetousness.

This Commandment reveals the beauty of Christianity. Only Christianity can create a free society. Democracy will not work where Christianity is not respected. There is not enough policemen in the world to restrain a non-Christian society. Only Christianity places a policeman over the human heart. For this reason, freedom can only be obtained by Christian people.

In Summary, the Ten Commandments are designed to protect human freedoms. Truth is the custodian of freedom. Only when men bind themselves to truth and to the God of truth will life, liberty, and property be protected among men.

10.3.11 **TREMBLING AT HIS WORD**

ISAIAH 66:1-2 TO THIS MAN WILL I LOOK

A Description of a Healthy Soul

Isaiah 66:1-2 Thus saith the LORD, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest? For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the LORD: **but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.**

“Thus saith the Lord” is the trumpet of authority announcing a profound truth.

We have here a contrast between the delights of men, and the delights of God; between the values of men, and the values of God; between stone temples and tender hearts.

Before us is a description of a healthy soul:

The great need in the world today is not more money . . . or more government . . . or more self-esteem claptrap, but broken, flawed men who thirst for God in their life.

Augustine got it right,

“Thou hast made us for thyself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it finds its rest in thee.” – Confessions

To appreciate this passage we must try to understand the importance of the temple in the mind of ancient Jews as well as modern religious Ashkenazi so called “Jews.”

1 Kings 6:1 places the date of the beginning of building the temple “in the fourth year of Solomon’s reign over Israel” (970 to 931 B.C.).

Solomon’s temple was destroyed in 586 B.C. during the Babylonian invasion of Jerusalem. The Second Temple was completed in 516 B.C., expanded under Herod the Great (20 B.C.), and destroyed again in 70 A.D. under Titus.

[Note: Herod had no interest in God, but the LORD used him to expand the temple complex as a stage to host His Son and the great drama to be played out in the Jerusalem theater.]

Religious Ashkenazi Jews pray three times a day for the Temple’s restoration in modern day Jerusalem. It is rumored that the funds to build a third temple are already collected in hope of replacing the Mosque of Omar with a third temple.

The Bible’s description of Solomon’s Temple (also called The First Temple) was given in cubits which suggests that the inside was 180 feet long, 90 feet wide, and 50 feet high. The highest point on the Temple externally was about 120 cubits tall or about 20 stories or about 207 feet. That is a third of a football field high.

Just the gold and silver lining of the temple are estimated to be worth \$216,603,576,000. And, this does not include the wood, stone, or holy furnishings (Wiki—a Jewish website).

Inside the sacred sanctuary called the Holy of Holies (*Kodesh Kodashim*) was housed the two tablets of the Ten Commandments inside the Ark of the Covenant – archeological artifacts lost in history, of which no value can be placed.

Isaiah penned his work during the 8th century B.C. while the temple of Solomon was still standing.

Modern so called “Jews” see the land of Israel as the holiest land on earth; Jerusalem as the holiest city on earth; the temple as the holiest place in Jerusalem; the Holy of Holies as the holiest place in the temple; themselves as the holiest people on earth; Levi as the holiest tribe; and, the sons of Aaron as the holiest men on earth.

Nothing could be further from the truth as the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ changed everything. Stephen got it right:

“Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised (Jews) in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye” (Acts 7:51).

Though the contextual thinking of the Jews at the time Isaiah wrote is difficult to grasp, the central truth of the passage is not.

Since the LORD made the heaven and the earth and is bigger than His creation, what kind of house can man build that will contain Him? The answer is closer to nothing than something. Since God does not live in a box, there is no sacred complex that can house the Creator.

This passage informs us that true God is not looking for golden temples. Rather, He seeks true men that are “poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.”

Take a look at the text again:

-“all those things” refers to the physical matter that He made during the week of creation, of which, He needs none of it. The most stately temple is of little value to Him. Rather, He informs us of what really interest Him — a certain kind of man!

-“to this man will I look” is translated “*in whom I will dwell*” in the Syriac version. He does not seek temples, but the fellowship of men.

-“saith the LORD” is the prophetic preface informing us of *the voice of authority* and paramount importance of this statement.

First, God dwells among men with a “poor spirit.”

A “poor spirit” is a needy soul. It refers to a person that requires God in his life. It is the opposite of a poised, proud, arrogant, haughty, and self-assured heart that has the “wind in its sail” and a “tiger by the tail.”

According to psycho drivel, mental health is defined as “a state of psychological well-being in which one has achieved a satisfactory integration of one’s instinctual drives acceptable to both oneself and one’s social milieu; an appropriate balance of love, work, and leisure pursuits” (Medical News Today, August 2017).

“Achieved”?

Another phrase adds, “*Mental health* refers to people’s cognitive, behavioral, and emotional well-being; in other words, how we think, feel, and behave.” (Ibid)

Can anything be more sterile? Nothing is said of God or a man’s relationship to Him.

If God exists, the knowledge of the LORD and His law is the backbone of mental health; and, since this be the case, the atheist and secularist must be cuckoo. Only a fool says in his heart “there is no God” (Psalm 14:1).

But my sin was this, that I looked for pleasure, beauty, and truth not in Him but in myself and His other creatures, and the search led me instead to pain, confusion, and error. – Augustine, *Confessions*

“The punishment of every disordered mind is its own disorder.” Augustine, Confession

Healthy people know they need Christ to be complete. They don’t “achieve,” they yield to the truth about God and about themselves as His creatures.

A poor spirit realizes that he is not self-sufficient or an island unto himself; that he is not rich and honey-coated. Aware of his Adamic deficiencies, he carries in his heart a sense of need – a quiet desperation to know God, to be right with God, and to be near Him.

A poor spirit is the essence of spiritual health because it conforms with reality. All men are poor in spirit. Healthy men know it; the mentally ill pump themselves full of fictions and inflated doctrines of self-worth.

Psalm 138:6 Though the LORD be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly: but the proud he knoweth afar off.

Again, let us hear Augustine,

“O Lord my God, tell me what you are to me. Say to my soul, I am your salvation. Say it so that I can hear it. My heart is listening, Lord; open the ears of my heart and say to my soul, I am your salvation. Let me run toward this voice and seize hold of you. Do not hide your face from me: let me die so that I may see it, for not to see it would be death to me indeed.” Augustine, Confessions.

Second, God dwells among men with a “contrite spirit.”

The word “contrite” means “broken, crushed, stricken, afflicted, or smitten.” It is translated “lame” in 2 Samuel 4:4.

A contrite heart knows he is a lame sinner in need of a Savior; guilty with a need to be forgiven; broken with a need to be fixed; lost with a need to be found; ignorant in need of the knowledge of God; bent with a need to be straightened; weak with a need to be made strong; and foolish with a need to be made wise.

The most mentally sick among us are those that have no need for Christ; have no time for Jesus; and, have no interest in the Savior of mankind. “These have chosen their own ways, and their soul delights in their abominations,” (Isaiah 66:3).

Third, God dwells among men that “tremble at His Word.”

The word “tremble” literally means “to shake with fear” (Genesis 42:28); but, it is used metaphorically to describe the soul that hears and honors God’s Word. Try to find this attribute in a modern article on mental health. Let us hear Augustine,

“The Bible was composed in such a way that as beginners mature, its meaning grows with them . . . Tolle, lege: take up and read.” Augustine, confessions.

God dwells with the Bible-man who fills his heart with Scripture. Before us is one who loves truth, Bible history, theology, law, grace, and the knowledge of God as revealed in the canon of sacred literature. He fears displeasing the LORD, and prays, “Hallowed be Thy Name, Thy Kingdom Come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” He delights in new insights into the Sacred Text, and expands his understanding of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, the law of the LORD God, the themes of the Books of the Bible, the history of Christ, and the theology of the cross.

The lesson is clear: Forget temples. God seeks men. He does not dwell in sticks and stones, but in Christian souls and their communities of worship. Forget being religious as the LORD does not dwell with Muslims or Buddhist or Hindus or philosophers. Forget positive thinking and self-image courses. Forget pop psychology with their malignant doctrines of self-esteem. Be humble or stumble. Cultivate a hunger for the Creator. Realize your need for Christ, and seek Him. For . . . He dwells with those who need Him.

The great need in the world today is not more money . . . or more government . . . or more education, but more people who need Christ and know Him.

10.3.12 THE SOURCE OF LAW

Isaiah 33:22 For the LORD is our judge; the LORD is our lawgiver; the LORD is our king; he will save us.

James 4:12 There is only one lawgiver and judge, he who is able to save and to destroy. But who are you to judge your neighbor?

The word “Lawgiver” is the Hebrew word *chaqaq* (**khaw-kak’**) which means “to cut, to decree, inscribe, or to engrave.” It refers to right, power, and authority to make law. All law is written!!!!!! If it is not written, it is not law! (See e.g., you will often hear the phrase “everyone has to pay taxes” or “everyone has to pay their fair share.” Really? Where is that written? It’s not in the Bible and it certainly isn’t in any of the 50 U.S.C. Titles.

Only the living God makes law; man makes statutes applicable to fictions. Since gods are the source of law, all laws are religious. When legislative bodies call their statutes “law,” they are making a claim that they are some kind of god which men must obey. What nonsense! There is only ONE LAWGIVER, KING, AND JUDGE. Only One! Treat His law seriously, and man-made statutes cautiously and suspiciously. Most laws benefit the lusty State, not the people.

Because protecting the Source of Law was vital to the nation, the Lord Commanded the death penalty to any who sought to abrogate or derogate the Source of Law (Deuteronomy 13).

10.3.13 THE PURPOSE OF THE LAW

The law was given as an accurate, but partial Revelation of the character of God in history in the midst of a fallen world. His character is the center of truth that God wanted men to know about Himself (Deuteronomy 10:1-5; Exodus 40:20, 21; Numbers 1:53). Given historically to Israel, this objective law also reveals man's moral flaws and cracks (Galatians 3:10ff). It has no life producing qualities (Romans 7), but it does define right and wrong in a fallen world. Furthermore, it becomes the expression of what God demands and will accomplish in His work in history.

10.3.14 THE NAME OF THE LAW:

The Law was called "The Testimony" (Ex 40:20).

Exodus 40:20 And he took and put the testimony into the ark, and set the staves on the ark, and put the mercy seat above upon the ark:

The Law was placed in the ark and the ark was called "The Ark of Testimony" (Exodus 40:5).

Exodus 40:5 And thou shalt set the altar of gold for the incense before the ark of the testimony, and put the hanging of the door to the tabernacle.

The Ark was placed in the tabernacle and the tabernacle was called, "The Tabernacle of Testimony" (Numbers 1:53).

Numbers 1:53 But the Levites shall pitch round about the tabernacle of testimony, that there be no wrath upon the congregation of the children of Israel: and the Levites shall keep the charge of the tabernacle of testimony.

The nature of the Law: The Law is eternal. God's righteousness is everlasting (Psalm 119: 42). Since God's law flows from His character, His Law is forever the standard of righteousness (Psalm 119:144; 152). Because they are permanently true, they are absolute (Psalm 119:142, 151, 160)!

Psalm 119:142 Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and thy law is the truth.

Psalm 119:151 Thou art near, O LORD; and all thy commandments are truth.

Psalm 119:160 Thy word is true from the beginning: and every one of thy righteous judgments endureth for ever.

The Law is holy. Because the law reflects God's holy character, his law is the standard for right and wrong (1 Peter 1:15ff). Man's opinion about what is right and wrong apart from God's Word is like listening to Al Capone give a lecture on honesty.

The Source of law, then, is the LORD God. The source of law is not WE THE PEOPLE. God is the only Lawgiver and the only Source of law for Christian men (James 4:12). The whole purpose of the First Commandment was to protect Israel's Source of law. Multiculturalism means many gods and many sources of law and many problems for a society. We can be multi-racial and have a stable society, but we cannot be multicultural and have a stable society. One law-order must prevail. For this reason a legal revolution in Israel was punishable by death (Deuteronomy 13).

In American law, Congress and State legislatures produce "statutes," "codes," and "regulations" toward corporations. Congress has no authority over the individual Citizen unless that Citizen agrees to subject himself subject to the jurisdiction of the "United States, Inc." Congress only passes laws towards "U.S. citizens," government employees, government agencies, government corporations, officers, and elected officials."

Notice the terms related to God's law in Psalm 119:

*Psalm 119:1 ALEPH. Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in **the law** of the LORD.*

*2 Blessed are they that keep his **testimonies**, and that seek him with the whole heart.*

*3 They also do no iniquity: they walk in **his ways**.*

*4 Thou hast commanded us to keep thy **precepts** (statutes) diligently.*

*5 O that my ways were directed to keep thy **statutes**!*

*6 Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all **thy commandments**.*

*7 I will praise thee with uprightness of heart, when I shall have learned **thy righteous judgments**.*

*8 I will keep thy **statutes**: O forsake me not utterly.*

*9 BETH. Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to **thy word**.*

*10 With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from **thy commandments**.*

*11 **Thy word** have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.*

MEANING OF THE DIFFERENT TERMS OF THE LAW:

- **Law** (torah or torahs): general instructions, prohibitions, and rules that govern relationships.
- **Testimonies**: a witness of God's character.
- **Statutes**: means "engrave"- notes the permanent character of God's law. "It is written . . ."
- **Judgments**: means "verdict"- the Law declares God's values and decisions on moral issues.

- **Commandments:** (mitzvah) refers to a particular enacted, published, written law. A single command is called a mitzah, and the collection of his laws are called mitvahs. Thus, we get the term, “the Ten Commandments (mitsvahs).”
- **Charges:** means “watch” or “guard”- A charge is an order that places a duty on man to not only keep the law, but to preserve the whole body of law from adulteration and dissolution.
- **Judgments (a Judicial duty):** These are judicial decisions by a Judge designed to settle cases and resolve disputes between two parties based on the rule of law.
- **Decree (A legislative duty):** a decree refers to a proclamation, announcement, or publication of a ruling or judgment or executive decision.
- **Word:** a word is an expression of a thought, idea, thing, action, description, wish, command, question, or rule. The Bible as a whole is called the "Word of God" which is about God's revelation to man.

The negative structure of the Law: The Ten Commandments are generally preceded by negatives: “thou shall not . . .” They are in the negative because man’s character is adverse to God’s character. The Law represents normal, holy behavior; but man’s character is abnormal and unholy. The Law is stated in the negative forbidding an action which implies “self-restraint,” and “self-discipline.” If it isn’t proscribed, one is free to do as he pleases.

A **positive law** requires positive spiritual energy. There is no limit to positive law.

10.3.15 TWO PARTS TO THE LAW

The Ten Commandments were initially spoken verbally by God to Israel and then put on stone tablets. Later, the expanded Law was given to Moses and passed on to Israel (Exodus 20:18-21; 21:1). The Torah contained two types of laws:

DIRECT REFLECTIONS

These laws are sometimes referred to as the moral Law. These laws are like the “Sun” whose brilliant rays beam directly to earth. They are eternal, permanent, and absolute because they reflect the direct and true nature of God. Men have an earthly responsibility to model the nature of God and will, therefore, be held accountable for their obedience eternally (Micah 6:6-8; Leviticus 19:15-18, 33, 34; Deuteronomy 10:14-22; Matthew 7:12; 22:34-40; 23:23).

INDIRECT REFLECTIONS

These laws do not mirror God’s character directly, but like the moon, illuminate the source of all light. These laws contain:

- Indirect expressions of God’s righteousness (Leviticus 19).
- Instruction examples of God’s righteousness (Leviticus 19).
- Ceremonial practices (Leviticus 1-9; 23-24).
- Cultic practices (Leviticus 11:11-15).
- Civil laws that provided the framework for the nation’s judicial system.

Consequently, the “indirect reflections” are not “morally binding” for all ages, for all men. But they do contain shadows and examples and illustrations for men in this dispensation.

The cultic laws made Israel distinct from the other nations and kept her from merging morally with her neighbors.

Ancient religions of the Near East built temples for their gods. In the holy of holies they would place a statue- an icon of their god. But in YHWH’s temple, no icons were allowed. In the Holy of Holies was the Ark. Inside the ark was the stone tablets. On the tablets were words- words that represented the character of God. As worshippers reflected on these words, they understood God better.

10.3.16 THE LAW DEFINED

The Law is summarized in the 10 Commandments (Exodus 20:1-17).

There are 613 commands in the Torah. They can be reduced to ten and even to three virtues.

Micah 6:8 He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?

During a day when men were cutting off fingers and testicles to gods, Micah’s Revelation was dynamic. No god ever required so little from man as YHWH!

The Law is summarized by three main virtues in the NT (Matthew 23:23):

Matthew 23:23 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.

- Faithfulness to God
- Justice toward men
- Mercy toward man

The Law is summarized in two virtues (Matthew 22:34-40)

Matthew 22:34-36 Master, which is the great commandment in the law?

Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment.

And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

- Love for God
- Love for one's neighbor; that is, do your neighbor no harm!

In common law: the rule is “do you neighbor no harm.” If no harm is done, there is no crime!!

In American law, U.S. citizens (government employees) are under the statutes passed by Congress; free men, state citizens, are under the rules common law (Amendment VII) and have no duty to laws passed by Congress unless they have a nexus connecting them to an obligation.

Every command in the book of Exodus through Deuteronomy can be classified as seeking to teach faithfulness to God, justice in the courts, or mercy towards the unfortunate.

10.3.17 THE TEN COMMANDMENTS AND THE CHARACTER OF GOD:

The Command	God's Character	Man's Character	Response
1. No gods before me	Preeminence	Unfaithful	Devotion
2. No idols	Jealous	False	Accurate
3. No misuse of name	Respect	Careless	Reverence
4. Remember the Sabbath	Holy	Unholy	Holiness
5. Honor father & mother	Sovereign	Disrespectful	Respectful
6. No murder	Author of life	Angry	Love
7. No adultery	Faithful	Unfaithful	Loyalty
8. No stealing	Integrity	Dishonest	Honesty
9. No false testimony	Truth	Liar	Trustworthy
10. No coveting	Content	Covetous	Contentment

10.3.18 THE LAW AND THE NEW TESTAMENT BELIEVER

1. God's character as expressed objectively in the Law gives us the basis for saying there are absolutes. If there was no God, then there would be no ultimate right or wrong (Psalm 119:142).
2. The objective law defines and exposes sin in a fallen world. Without the Law sin is undefined, and depravity becomes "normal" behavior. The Law also exposes the sin in man and the truth of man's bondage in sin and his ultimate responsibility to God (Galatians 3:19, 22; Romans 7:9-14; 2:5,6).
3. The righteousness of God (expressed in the law) is what God demands and will accomplish in His work in history (Psalm 96:1, 11-13, 97:1, 2; Isaiah 9:6, 7).
4. The Law has no life-giving properties. It defines what is right, but doesn't empower mankind to keep it (Romans 7).
5. The Christian is not under "the Law" as a means to attaining life (Romans 6:13). However, believers can look to the law as an expression of the character of God to see what God wants to accomplish in him. (Galatians 3:21; 22; 5:13-14, 22, 23).
6. Christ is the Living Torah. He is the ultimate model of right and wrong. The believer is to model Christ, and in modeling Christ, he will ultimately fulfill the law (Romans 8:2-4).
7. The believer is not free from the responsibility to keep the Ten Commandments because they reflect the character of God. The believer is responsible to reflect the character of God however it is expressed whether in the Torah (the objective standard of righteousness) or in the Living Torah, Christ, the subjective standard of righteousness.

10.3.19 TRUST AND OBEY

INTRODUCTION

Are you frustrated with politics? So was the prophet Habakkuk.

The prophet calls his masterpiece a "burden," because his work is serious, weighty, and heavy (1:1).

The Book of Habakkuk is for anyone who is grouchy about politics.

If you are not weighed down with how politicians are pushing this country to brink of destruction through the madness of open borders, anchor babies, abortion, pornography, LGBTQ school agendas, evolutionary nonsense, the lies of the press, and globalism, you must have the sensitivity of a barbell.

Habakkuk was a prophet in Judah who wrote His work sometime before the Babylonian invasion of Israel (605-586 BC).

Like Asaph in Psalm 73, Habakkuk was burdened down by the prosperity of the wicked and a “do nothing” God, who from his perspective was neglecting His judicial duties to punish lawlessness in Jerusalem.

Habakkuk is a righteous man, but his soul ached over upside down government policies of his day and the unfaithfulness of his people.

The main message of the Book is to “be quiet” and to listen to God, “to trust and to obey” (2:4, 2:20). But, God had to take Habakkuk on a spiritual journey before he gained a state of peace.

Habakkuk was a man of faith (2:4), but he had “God problems:” that is, he did not understand the “delays” of God and why his Lord did not do something to stop the growth of wickedness in his country. His difficulties are not much different than Christians who don’t understand why the Lord permits the likes of a Barack Obama, Hillary Clinton, or the Democrat liberal press to get away with their political shenanigans.

If you are burdened down by the government’s promotion of Planned Parenthood, LGBTQ perversions, deep state corruption in Washington D.C., and treasons against the Constitution, then this study is for you.

HABAKKUK’S FIRST PROBLEM

Habakkuk 1:2-4 O LORD, how long shall I cry, and thou wilt not hear! even cry out unto thee of violence, and thou wilt not save! Why dost thou shew me iniquity, and cause me to behold grievance? for spoiling and violence are before me: and there are that raise up strife and contention. Therefore the law is slacked, and judgment doth never go forth: for the wicked doth compass about the righteous; therefore wrong judgment proceedeth.

When Habakkuk saw the depth of wickedness, lawlessness, and injustice in his day, he fell on his knees and prayed. Oh, how he must have prayed. But, heaven was like brass. His prayers seemed to bounce off the ceiling. God’s silence suddenly became more of a problem in his own mind than the corruption of his time.

He wanted God to act . . . to squash the wicked . . . to bring the lying, stealing government officials to justice . . . and to “hang ’em” high. But, the LORD seemed so dilatory in his duties.

God was silent and all Habakkuk saw was more theft, more killing, more bribes, more adultery, more perversion, and more lies among the leaders of the nation.

But, the LORD heard the prayers of this Godly man and was pleased to give him an answer in His time.

THE LORD’S FIRST ANSWER

In answering his prayer, the LORD warned the prophet that His answer would appear incredible to him ; that is, it would stun and astonish him ([1:5](#)).

Habakkuk 1:6 For, lo, I raise up the Chaldeans, that bitter and hasty nation, which shall march through the breadth of the land, to possess the dwelling places that are not theirs.

The word “lo” means to stand at attention. The Lord commands His prophet to look, behold, see, understand, and know that the LORD sees the wickedness of His people and that He is going to raise up a caravan of young, lusty, military-age Babylonian males to invade and plunder the nation.

Oh, how the metaphors of the Chaldean cavalry being like swift leopards, fierce wolves, and birds of prey plucking out eyeballs and ripping off the flesh of Habakkuk’s people must have sent chills up and down his spine (1:8).

Surely, God’s answer caused the hands and knees of the prophet to shake like a freezing child.

In time, after Habakkuk calmed down, God’s answer raised another problem for the prophet.

HABAKKUK’S SECOND PROBLEM

Habakkuk 1:12-13 Art thou not from everlasting, O LORD my God, mine Holy One? we shall not die. O LORD, thou hast ordained them for judgment; and, O mighty God, thou hast established them for correction. Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity: wherefore lookest thou upon them that deal treacherously, and holdest thy tongue when the wicked devoureth the man that is more righteous than he?

Habakkuk accepts God’s answer and endorses the righteousness of the LORD to use the military muscle of the Chaldeans to judge evil within his nation.

He knows that God is eternal, holy and just, mighty and powerful. He seems to understand that though the LORD was going to use the Chaldeans to chastise his people, they would not end up in the graveyard of nations.

But, he was bothered by God’s instrument of chastisement.

Habakkuk doesn’t understand why God would use such a profane, derelict pagan nation like the Babylonians as a rod to pummel his people. In the prophet’s mind, Israel had acted badly . . . but they weren’t as rotten as the idolatrous infidels from the Land of Nimrod.

So, Habakkuk waits for the LORD to answer him. Like a good soldier, the prophet serves guard duty. He stands like a sentinel on a tower to wait . . . in darkness . . . for the light that is sure to come. He knows his own perspective is shallow and hazy. But, he wants to be instructed.

HABAKKUK 2:1 I WILL STAND UPON MY WATCH, AND SET ME UPON THE TOWER, AND WILL WATCH TO SEE WHAT HE WILL SAY UNTO ME, AND WHAT I SHALL ANSWER WHEN I AM REPROVED.

Again, God was pleased to answer the legitimate objections of His prophet.

THE LORD'S SECOND ANSWER: (2:2-20)

First, the LORD orders Habakkuk to write down His answer so that it would be clear and plain to those with a mind to understand the will of God (2:2).

By way of application, the goal of all preaching is to be clear! Not fancy, not loud, not cute, not fleshly indulgence in human dramatics, but to be CLEAR AND ACCURATE.

Second, the LORD assures his prophet that He will dispense justice on the Babylonians; that he will punish them in His own good time. But, the LORD does not tell the prophet when that will be (2:3). Thus, the prophet had to wait in trust.

Third, the LORD informs Habakkuk that he is right about the wickedness and evil of the Chaldeans (1:13). Their soul “is lifted up is not upright in him” (2:4).

This is the Lord's way of telling Habakkuk that the Babylonians were proud and arrogant; “big headed,” too “big for their britches,” “all strut and no stride,” “all smoke and no fire.” They were rich by man's yardstick, but they were bankrupt by Divine standards.

Pride is the opposite of trusting in the Lord. Personal autonomy is the enemy of theonomy. Pride is best identified when you see “every man doing what is right in his own eyes.” There is no room for arrogance or “self law” in the Christian life. Be humble or stumble. “By faith . . . the just . . . shall live.”

Swollen with pride, the autonomous man shuts out faith. Taking the helm, the proud seek and to steer their own ship into the port of prosperity a pleasure. Their motto is “I am the captain of my ship, the Master of my fate.” Life is matter of choices, and I will choose my own destiny.”

Fourth, the LORD instructs Habakkuk (and all good men) how to live in an age of corruption among wicked people who deserve judgment. ***This is the main message of the book!***

“By faith . . . the just . . . shall live!” (2:4)

God had already informed Habakkuk that his future plans for judgment on the nation would be hard to believe (1:5). Now it was time for the man to exercise faith, and to do the work of believing the LORD (1 Thessalonians 1:3).

This is God's way of telling Habakkuk, “to trust and obey”

During an age of apostasy, the Christian man is exhorted to believe God's Word, trust God's Word, and to obey God's Word.

“When we walk with the Lord in the light of His Word,
What a glory He sheds on our way!
While we do His good will, He abides with us still,
And with all who will trust and obey.

Trust and obey, for there’s no other way
To be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey.

Not a shadow can rise, not a cloud in the skies,
But His smile quickly drives it away;
Not a doubt or a fear, not a sigh or a tear,
Can abide while we trust and obey.

Not a burden we bear, not a sorrow we share,
But our toil He doth richly repay;
Not a grief or a loss, not a frown or a cross,
But is blessed if we trust and obey.”

10.4 SHABBAT TO THE LORD YOUR GOD

“Sabbath to the LORD your GOD”

10.4.1 THE LAW AND THE SABBATH

There are two important Sabbaths in Scripture: the seventh-day Sabbath (OT) and the First-Day Sabbath (NT). The later is as superior to the old as noon-day solstice is to sunset.

Sadly, among the Adventists and the Messianic communities, we are seeing a renewed zeal to keep the law, especially the old Sabbath (Shabbat). Since many are being attracted to these groups, we need to have a clear understanding of what the Scripture teaches about the Sabbath (Shabbat).

The New Testament is the final authority on the OT (Hebrews 1:1-3). That which was binding in the OT is not necessarily binding in the Christian era; but, that which is binding in the NT is absolute for all Christians.

The New Testament nowhere commands Christians to observe the Sabbath nor does it rigorously command believers to keep the Sunday as a Christian Sabbath. All of the Ten Commandments are repeated in the N.T. except the 4th Commandment indicating that the Christian has a responsibility to obey all the Ten Commandments. However, the Sabbath law appears to be changed in the NT to the First-day of the week in grace without the harsh penalties attached as under the law.

“Throughout the New Testament we do not find a single place where we Christians are commanded to celebrate the Sabbath” (Plass, E. M. 1959. What Luther says, an anthology. Saint Louis: Concordia.).

There is no Biblical record requiring anyone to keep the Sabbath until the time of Moses. Neither is there an account of God requiring anyone to keep the Sabbath except Israel.

Genesis contains no ordinance requiring man to observe God’s Sabbatical rest. God rested on the 7th day, not because He was tired, but because His work was finished (Genesis 2:2-3). In the Noahic Covenant, God repeats His command for men to multiply on the face of the earth, but Noah was not given a command to keep the Sabbath. When God made a covenant with Abraham, he was told to walk before God and be perfect (Genesis 17:1), but keeping the Sabbath was not one of the requirements.

The Sabbatical requirement was given to Israel (Exodus 20:7; Deuteronomy 5:12-15). The law required the mental activity of “remembering,” and it was patterned after God’s creation rest for the purpose of making Israel reflect on their redemption out of slavery by blood and by power.

There is no evidence God required other nations to observe the Sabbath. Though Israel’s prophets often chided surrounding nations for their sins, breaking the Sabbath was not one of them. Only Israel was punished for breaking the Sabbath.

Orthodox Judaism, before and after Christ, required its people and Gentile converts to keep the Sabbath. Circumcision and Sabbath keeping were requirements for proselytes. Jesus also kept the Sabbath as a requirement for righteousness (Matthew 5:20), but he did not comply with cultic, rabbinical tradition that engulfed, swamped, and distorted Sabbatical law.

When Jesus’ disciples were chastised by the Jewish authorities for breaking Pharisaical laws, Jesus parceled out some valuable lessons regarding the Sabbath (Matthew 12:1-13). He taught them the following: (a) acts of necessity take priority over Sabbath regulations; (b) priests desecrated the Sabbath every Sabbath by working in the temple. They worked twice as hard on the Sabbath as the rest of the days because more sacrifices were offered on this day; (c) Acts of mercy take priority over Sabbath rituals, that is, servicing the needs of men and animals are more important than a Sabbatical rest; (d) by teaching these principles, Jesus placed Sabbath laws on the same level as other ceremonial laws, i.e., they are not absolute and morally binding like the laws against murder or stealing or lying.

Jesus placed the 4th Commandment on the same level as Israel’s cultic, ceremonial laws which served as a tutor to the nation until Christ came to suffer and to die (Matthew 12:1-13; Galatians 4:1-4). Having totally fulfilled the law (Romans 10:4), Christ released the believing Jew and Gentile proselyte from any obligation to keep the Sabbath or to be circumcised (Galatians 4:1-5:4; Colossians 2:16, 17).

Paul taught the age of Moses and the Torah was superseded by the age of Christ and the Spirit. The Law acted as a custodian until the Savior entered the world (Galatians 3:19, 24, 25; 4:1-4). The word “redeem” in Galatians 4:5 is *exagorazo*. It means *to take out of*. Jewish believers were bought and released from the

law. Since Christ has come and since the Spirit enables men to keep the law by nature (Romans 8:1-4), Christians are released from any obligation to Israel's cultic and ceremonial laws and are no longer under its supervision (Acts 10:15; Romans 6:14; Galatians 3:25; 5:18).

This does not mean, however, that Christians do not have a responsibility to keep moral standards of righteousness or the other nine commandments. Paul considered himself under moral obligation to the law of Christ (1 Corinthians 9:20-23). Christians are responsible to do what is right and to keep the other nine commandments because they are direct reflections of God's character (Psalm 119:142, 151-152). The Sabbath law is not part of God's moral laws nor is it a direct reflection of God's character. There is nothing morally right or wrong about resting on a Saturday, or Sunday, or Wednesday. But there is something morally wrong about lying and stealing.

Paul taught that the Old Covenant and its ceremonial requirements for Israel were superseded by the superior administration of the Spirit under the New Covenant arrangement (2 Corinthians 3).

Paul taught that the Torah law with its ceremonial regulations (the Sabbath) that were designed to isolate Israel from the Gentile nations until Christ came, and that had caused great hostility between Jews and Gentiles was broken down and abolished by the Christ's redemptive history (Ephesians 2:14, 15).

The Torah laid three ceremonial requirements on the OT Jew: circumcision, Sabbath keeping, and food laws. In Paul's letters, there is evidence that Judaizers opposed the gospel by insisting that Jewish and Gentile believers must submit to Israel's cultic laws. In order to preserve the gospel, Paul confronted the legalists:

Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ (Colossians 2:16, 17).

But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labor in vain (Galatians 4:9-11).

One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind (Romans 14:5).

We learn that Paul never wrote to Gentiles about Sabbath keeping except in a negative way. He wanted them free from Torah's binding restrictions (Galatians 1:5). It is astonishing to observe that Paul wrote so many letters to Gentiles who had no background in Sabbatarianism and which letters had so many practical instructions on righteous living and to observe the fact that Paul did not mention any requirement to keep the Sabbath! We conclude from Paul's controversy that any return to Israel's cultic laws, feasts, and rituals including the Sabbath requirement is a denial of the gospel. This does not mean, however, that Christians should not study the OT and be refreshed by its shadows of Christ.

Historically, we observe the following from Christian history: (a) Early Jewish-Christian observance of the Sabbath actually hindered the mission of the gospel (Acts 2-5); (b) The gospel broke beyond the borders of Israel into Samaria precisely because Phillip and the Apostles ignored Israel's cultic laws (Acts 8). After the gospel spread into the Mediterranean world and the Gentiles found life apart from Jewish law, the gospel was again threatened by Judaizers who wanted to require Gentiles to submit to Torah's ceremonial laws. The move to compel Gentiles to be circumcised and to keep the Sabbath was a step backward. This was severely debated. Freedom won, and the gospel flourished (Acts 15)¹⁵; (c) In an age when the Roman world did not keep a day of rest, there is no evidence that the Christians suffered persecution because of the Sabbath; (d) The apostles did everything within their power to liberate Christianity from Sabbath laws, food laws, and Jewish rituals: Baptism and the Lord's Supper are the only ordinances recognized by the church; (e) The N.T. is not concerned about holy days any more than it is concerned about holy places; (f) a study of heresy in the early church reveals that heretics were Sabbatarian and that thriving Christianity was non-Sabbatarian.

The Gentile Christians were free to choose the time and place of their own assembly. They were not bound by OT instructions on this matter (Acts 2:42; 20:7).

Finally, the character of the seventh-day Sabbath is different than the other nine commandments. The other nine commandments are moral in nature, and therefore absolute! That is, when one breaks one of the nine commandments someone is hurt. But, not so with the Sabbath. It can be broken without violating someone else's rights. That is, its purpose was not moral, but didactic—intended to refresh, renew, instruct, remind, educate, inform, and reflect on the LORD God, His law, and His redemptive work in history.

Moreover, all health laws flow out of the Fourth Commandment. It was beneficent to man. Man was not to be a slave to his work. And, this benefit is shared in the First-day Sabbath.

10.4.2 THE FIRST DAY SABBATH

Paul mentions the “first day Sabbath” (*mian sabbatou*) in 1 Corinthians 16 as if the practice of honoring Sunday was **a rule in the first century**.

1 Corinthians 16:2 Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.

¹⁵ The reader should note that the duties laid on the Gentiles such as “not eating blood” was derived from the Noachic Covenant, not the Law. Abstaining from idols and fornication is a moral requirement beholden to all men for all time without specificity and restriction to the Torah.

GNT 1 Corinthians 16:2 kata. mi,an sabba,tou e(kastoj u`mw/n parV e`autw/| tiqe,tw qhsauri,zwn o(ti eva.n euvodw/tai(i(na mh. o(tan e;lqw to,te logei/ai gi,nwntai

Since Sabbath breaking had such a harsh penalty in the OT and was fiercely enforced, **it would make since this rule would have some type of application in the NT!** The “first day Sabbath” rule appears to have been a solid practice in the church requiring “rest” regulations on Sunday---but, without capital law enforcement. It appears the “first day Sabbath” is a restoration of the original Sabbath. If this be so, **then Christians have a duty to honor the “Lord’s Day” and NOT the old seventh-day Sabbath.**

The phrase “on the Lord’s day” and “day of the Lord” are equivalent in English, but not so in Greek (Revelation 1:10). In Greek (evn th/| kuriakh/| h`me,ra|), the word “Lord” is in an adjectival position, but when Scripture refers to the “day of Jehovah” the word “Lord” is in the genitive. In 1 Corinthians 11:20, Paul refers to the “Lord’s supper” (kuriako.n dei/pnon) where again the word “Lord” is in the adjectival position. The use of “Lord” as an adjective implies something instituted. In the latter, it is the supper; in the former, it is a day. The general consensus is that the “Lord’s Day” refers to Sunday. The day Jesus rose victorious from the dead proving that He is indeed Lord.

In Christian thought, there are two Sabbaths: (a) the day of rest on earth, and (b) God’s salvation rest in heaven (Hebrews 4:1-7). The second rest is an eternal Sabbath which can be enjoyed the minute one becomes a believer (Matthew 11:28).

Because Christ rose from the dead on the Sunday, Christians have hollowed the first day of the week, but they have not generally applied Sabbatical restrictions to it. Christians could meet on Monday, Thursday, or any day of the week and fulfill their mission. Since the eternal rest is inseparable from Christ’s resurrection and since Christians enjoy eternal rest now, Sunday became the day Christians worship (Acts 20:7). In one sense, the Jews worked and then rested on the 7th day. The Christians rest on the first day, and then work.

Interestingly, just as the Jew **remembered** his redemption from slavery on the Sabbath (Deuteronomy 5:12-15), the Christians **remembers** his redemption by the blood of Christ at the Lord’s Supper (1 Corinthians 11:24, 25). Since the Christian has eternal rest by virtue of Christ’s work on the cross, and since Christ rose from the dead on Sunday, it is very fitting for the Christian to worship on Sunday and to remember Christ and his accomplishments. But, this is not a legal requirement nor should Sabbatical laws be applied to this day as Sabbatical laws were applied to Israel’s holy day. In fact, Christians who claim the Bible designates Sunday as a Sabbath with its legal prohibitions and punishments are clearly in error.

Our Lord reminded us that man was not made for the Sabbath, but the Sabbath was made for man (that is, a day of rest and reflection was designed for man’s benefit and health. Whether a Christian rests on Sunday, Monday, or Friday, it is essential that he take a break from his labor. Furthermore, it essential that believers stop and reflect on the good things God has done for them.

History teaches us the futility of trying to synthesize Judaism and Christianity. Judaism never broke beyond the borders of Israel, but Christianity by virtue of the fact that it was freed from Torah restrictions has extended itself to every corner of the earth not only to win new tribes to Christ, but to win each new generation to the Savior.

We conclude, therefore, that (a) the ceremonial-cultic laws of Israel ended with Christ; i.e., there is discontinuity (Romans 10:4); and (b) The Gentile-Jewish church was never Sabbatarian in keeping Saturday as a day of rest; and (c) that Sunday is a First Day Sabbath has application to N.T. living, but does not carry with it OT enforcement. Those who return to Sabbatical laws in the Torah and attempt to apply these to the church today deny the gospel and hinder its mission to reach the world for Christ.

10.5 SHABUAH IN TORAH

“Oaths” (shabuah) in Scripture

*Deuteronomy 6:13 Thou shalt fear the LORD thy God, and serve him, and (you) **shalt swear (shaba)by his name.***

REASON FOR THIS STUDY

Our juristic and commercial society requires way too much oath taking and people are often legally trapped by the abundance of oaths required on behalf of the State. Oaths are the primary reason for loss of freedom. On the other hand, our Lord’s prohibition in Matthew 5:24, “Swear not at all,” appears on the surface to forbid any oath taking at all. But, such an interpretation would contradict other well established Scriptures, and, therefore, deserves our honest attention.

Because we live in a juristic society where the State requires statements under penalties of perjury and because we will all appear in court some day, a person needs to think through his response under such circumstances.

Would you believe that when you take an oath in court which ends with "so help me, God," that - according to juristicrats - you are publicly professing that you are *not* a Christian? The Supreme Court has held that the Constitution forbids the Government from giving Christian law any preference over atheistic law. Probably some of the most famous words in recent First Amendment jurisprudence are those of the Court in *Everson v. Board of Education*: That is, in order to accommodate humanists and atheists, the use of the term “God” has been broadened to include the concept of deism, Allah, “no god,” any god, the government as god, or virtually any being of any faith. In no way, will you ever get a judge or a politician or lawyer to say that the term “God” refers to the Holy Trinity. Never!

Thus, if you are a baptized Christian, the only name you are allowed to swear by is “the father, the son, or the Holy Ghost.”

PRINCIPLES OF INTERPRETATION

The Scripture is inspired by God and without contradiction; that is, conservative Christian scholars believe in the verbal, plenary inspiration of Scripture; that is, that is authoritative on the subjects on which it speaks.

Both Old the Old and the New Testament are inspired by God (2 Timothy 3:16) and have instruction for the Christian life. But, not all commands in Scripture are addressed or applicable to Christians. Many commands are addresses to classes of people in another culture: priests, Levites, kings, etc.

Every text must submit to the whole teaching of Scripture; that is, we cannot allow one verse to control other well established texts.

There is only one true interpretation for every passage howbeit there may be many applications of a text to life's varied circumstances.

A SURVEY OF TAKING OATHS IN THE SCRIPTURE

There are over 30 references to oaths in the Bible, most of which are in the Old Testament.

Genesis 21:23- Abraham required his servant, Eliezar of Damascus, to take an oath to find a qualified bride for his son Isaac.

Genesis 47:31- Jacob made his sons take an oath they would bury his bones in the Holy Land and not leave them in Egypt. His desire confirmed the hope that the twelve tribes would someday leave Egypt and return to the Land of Promise.

Genesis 50:5- Joseph gained leave of duty from Pharaoh to fulfill the oath the made to his Father to bury him in Hebron.

Exodus 6:8- God rained down the plagues on Egypt in fulfillment of His oath to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob that He would deliver Israel out from underneath the power of Pharaoh and bring the nation back to the Promise Land.

Exodus 20:7- The Third Commandment presumes people would call themselves by YHWH's holy Name and would take oaths in His Name. This commandment forbid the spurious, disingenuous, perfunctory, and frivolous use of God's Name in public and private. Likewise, it proscribes the profane. All speech should reflect religious values.

*Leviticus 19:12 And ye shall not swear by my name **falsely**, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God: I am the LORD.*

**Deuteronomy 6:13; 10:20- YHWH ordered His people to take oaths in His name and to take them seriously: "Thou shalt fear the LORD thy God, and serve him, and shalt swear (;be(V'Ti: shabah = take an oath) by his name."*

Deuteronomy 29:12, 14- God made Israel take an oath to follow Him and to keep His laws. The term "Old Covenant" refers to the Oath between YHWH and Israel.

Joshua 2:12- Rahab made the spies take an oath that the nation would protect her on the day of Israel military victory over Jericho. The nation kept their oath. Rahab was protected. God was honored. Rahab's faith became a model of salvation to all who trust YHWH.

1 Samuel 20:17- David and Johnathan took an oath of friendship and loyalty. After Jonathan's death, David protected his son Mephibosheth from famine and obscurity by adopting this orphan into his home. Mephibosheth was rescued. David increased in integrity. God's name was honored because an oath was kept in His Name (2 Samuel 9).

1 Kings 1:13- Solomon replaced Adonijah on David's throne because of the oath David made to Bathsheba which was made in conjunction with God's command.

1 Kings 2:42- Solomon executed Shemei, an enemy of the family of David, because he took an oath to do so if Shemei disobey his royal command; that is, Solomon's throne was secured because he was a man of His word.

Nehemiah 13:25- Nehemiah made the unfaithful men of Israel take an oath not to mingle with the heathen nations and to marry only Hebrew brides. This oath taking protected Israel from dissolution and spiritual compromise.

**Psalm 15:4- A righteous man is described as one who keeps his promises/oaths no matter what!! That is, he does not change his witness to suit his own interests.*

*Psalm 15:1,4 LORD, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill?
... In whose eyes a vile person is contemned; but he honoureth them that fear the
LORD. He that **swareth** to his own hurt, and changeth not*

Being under God means the godly man's word is in one sense always under oath.

Psalm 50:14 Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the most High:

Psalm 119:17-19- The Scripture pronounces a curse on the profane as profanity is an attempt to overthrow God's Law as the rule for society; that is profanity, appeals to man's lower nature rather than his religious nature and desire to please the Creator: "As he loved cursing, so let it come unto him: as he delighted not in blessing, so let it be far

from him. As he clothed himself with cursing like as with his garment, so let it come into his bowels like water, and like oil into his bones. Let it be unto him as the garment which covereth him, and for a girdle wherewith he is girded continually.”

Jeremiah 4:1- Revival of the nation was dependant on God’s people taking an oath to follow YHWH and Him ONLY!

Amos 8:14- Oaths in the name of others gods is strictly condemned and judged by YHWH: “They that swear by the sin of Samaria, and say, Thy god, O Daniel, liveth; and, The manner of Beersheba liveth; even they shall fall, and never rise up again.”

Without any requisite **all other religions are condemned in the Bible**. Modern man sees good in all faiths while denying them in favor of antonymous man. Modern man is at war with Christianity and its exclusive truth and assaults it by confessing the alleged virtue of all religions. The modern mind is politically religious and believes ultimate authority and value is germane to the State. Thus, the modern mind is intolerant of exclusive Christianity and denies the validity of the Christian Law-order that is alien to its own ideal, utopian, dream-state—the state that controls the health and wealth of its people.

All law is religious in nature. Every non-Biblical law-order represents an antichristian religious system that is destructive to society (Rushdoony).

*Zechariah 5:4 YHWH condemned the man that did not keep oaths taken in His name. He did not condemn the man for taking an oath, but for taking an oath and breaking it: “the house of him that sweareth **falsely** by my name.”*

Matthew 5:34- Christ condemns frivolous oath taking for common and casual causes.

Matthew 26:63-The high priest bound Jesus to an oath: “I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God.”

Hebrews 6:17- God took an oath and because he made the promise, He sent His only Son to be the Savior of the World.

James 5:12- James condemns frivolous, trivial, wearisome oath taking for common, mundane reasons.

A LOOK AT THE THIRD COMMANDMENT

Exodus 20:7 Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

Negative law: Eight of the Ten Commandments are expressed in negative terms. A negative command deals with a realistic, particular evil bent within men. In this case it is the sinful tendency to break promises when keeping promises is difficult or in-advantageous to the promissor. *The negativity of the*

law is the best way to preserve the freedom of man. Negative law limits state function because negative law limits the jurisdiction of the state; e.g. the law, “thou shall not steal” narrows the State to focus its energies on governing theft. It is the difference between a silver bullet and a shotgun. Negative law functions more like a silver bullet that targets thieves while positive law has a wider spread pattern that is destructive to the freedom of all.

In the Biblical mind, responsibility leads to freedom. In the unbiblical minds of Americans, the fight for freedom is about the rule of unrestrained lawlessness. Americans see “rights” in the Poisonous Tree.

Positive law creates an *unlimited State because positive law knows no restrictions*; e.g., Rome advanced the legal principal that “the health of the people is the highest law.” The principal is unlimited; thus, Rome’s intrusion into the private affairs of its citizens was unlimited. Thus, tyrannical Rome new no boundaries; i.e., it could do anything in the name of health. Consequently, the modern all-competent State is unlimited under the “welfare” clause of the constitution. The more the State assumes responsibility for the “health” of the people, the less control people have over their own health and wealth.

Breaking oaths and contracts is more serious than theft or murder. Theft robs a man of wealth. Murder robs a man of his life. But, false oaths are an assault on the system of justice upon which all of society depends. If fact, the seriousness of oath taking is the barometer of the robustness of a society. A society that does not punish perjury is in decline.

The 3rd Commandments proscribes frustrated swearing, cursing, profanity, blasphemy, obscenity, vulgarity, and frivolous oath taking. The word “profane” comes from the Latin *pro*, before, *fanum*, temple; i.e., before our outside the temple. Thus, the command forbids all speech which is outside of God. Thus, in England and America, swearing is outlawed. Profanity invokes, not God, but the world of the illicit, the perverted, and the obscene. All swearing is religious. To proscribe God, the Bible, and religious talk in the classroom is to profane our youth and to witness social degeneration (Ashley Montague. (2001). The Anatomy of Swearing, p.2).

A LOOK AT DEUTERONOMY 6:13

Deuteronomy 6:13 Thou shalt fear the LORD thy God, and serve him, and shalt swear by his name.

We have here a positive command. The nation of Israel was commanded to take oaths in the name of the LORD. The text contains no negative particle; that is, it does **not** say, “Thou shall **not** swear by his name.” Unlike negative prohibitions, taking an oath takes positive human energy to keep a promise. Men of integrity exercise no restraint to keep a promise. The Lord anticipated that men would love him and identify themselves with His Name, and in important matters, take an oath in His Name.

A LOOK AT MATTHEW 5:33

Matthew 5:33-37 Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths: But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by

heaven; for it is God's throne: Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black. But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.

BACKGROUND

During the Intertestament Period, a.k.a. the “Silent Years” (400 B.C. to 2 B.C.), the world was Hellenized by Alexander the Great. The Hebrew people were scattered over the Greek world. Greek Hellenization created a reaction among Jewish people. A new zeal for the law became the heart and soul of Judaism. Emerging out of this enlightenment were a whole new class of scholars called “scribes”-- men zealous for the knowledge and obedience to the Word of God. In the Lord’s time, Judaism was influenced by three main centers: Babylon, Alexandria, and Jerusalem. **The Babylonian Jews** planted Judaism with the seeds of monotheistic theology, the heritage of the Mishna, and the institution of the synagogue. **The Alexandrian Jews** sowed Greek into the Hebrew soil, and influenced Judaism by helping provide the Hebrews with a Greek translation of the Tanach. **The Jerusalem Jews** preserved the land, Jewish society, and the temple traditions (Jensen).

Around 200 BC, Rabbi Jehuda compiled the works into the **TALMUD** (Baxter, p. 34). Judaism was sparked by a burning passion to keep the torches of truth alive by studying the Scriptures. But over time, Scribes and pedagogues arose that formalized the law choking the life out of true religion. Around the vine of Scriptures grew the shoots of tradition, formalism, legalism, and radical interpretation. It formed two parts:

The Mishna, or **Oral Law**, was a series of legal exegesis called the *Halachoth*, and subservient to it was the *Haggadoth*, the moral and legal explanations of the Law. The concern of these references were the correct interpretation and application of the Torah. The Mishna is divided into six orders or divisions covering rules relating to agriculture, festivals, women, civil and ceremonial law, and purifications (Baxter, p. 82).

The Gemara: a commentary on the Mishna. These commentaries contain discussion, illustrations, and explanations regarding the Mishna. A Babylonian and Jerusalem version of the Gemara ensued.

It was against this backdrop that Jesus said, “You have heard it said . . . but I say unto you . . .”

OATHS DURING THE INTERTESTAMENT PERIOD

The question that faced Rabbis was, “Under what circumstances should a Jew require oath taking?” Commentaries and opinions abounded. Oaths moved from the public into the private; from the courts into the market place. Instead of being rare, oath taking became common place. Men began to question the integrity of their brethren and demanded oaths to satisfy claims. Thus, the real purpose of oaths was lost and profaned. A series of non-binding oaths emerged with various degrees of certainty. Oaths by heaven had more integrity than oaths by the earth. Oaths by God’s throne had more validity than oaths by heaven.

Oaths by the gold on God's throne sounded more legitimate than an oath by God's throne alone. The bottom line is that these oaths made liars out of men because none were binding.

THE MEANING OF JESUS' INSTRUCTION

Jesus' words do not contradict the 3rd Commandment; rather, His words preserve and protect the 3rd Commandment from the whims and compromises of men. Jesus "did not come to destroy the law, but to fulfill it" (Matthew 5:17).

"Swear not at all" means do not swear regularly as a matter of custom (A. Pink).

Jesus is not forbidding the proper use of oaths, but the improper use of oaths-- frivolous, non-essential oaths on matters that take place in daily dialogues among people. In the mundane affairs of life, life in the market place, there is simply no need for binding men. A man's word should be his bond. This passage is a warning against thoughtless contracts and statement's under penalty of perjury. The State's propensity to bind citizens by an oath under penalty of perjury must be thoroughly questioned and scrutinized—especially when agents of the State are not bound by the same standard!!

Oaths should be reserved for important issues of life (marriage), matters of common law (theft, rape, murder, fraud, etc.), controversy in courts where the truth must be discerned because actions have life altering consequences.

Not only does Jesus' words condemn oaths taken in the name of sacred objects (earth, heaven, God's throne, etc.), it condemns taking an oath in any name other than the name of YHWH. It proscribes taking an oath in our own name. So, what's wrong with taking an oath in our own name on our own authority?

- Man sets himself up as his own god.
- Man has no authority to swear in his own name.
- Man will redefine truth in his own terms instead of God's terms. Only the living God can define right and wrong. When man defines right and wrong he ends up in bed with his secretary mistress.
- YHWH is the source of all things and the ground of being—not man.
- Only YHWH can judge the human heart. Perjuring man will not judge himself.
- Oath taking in one's own name is a declaration of war against God's law order, and man against his neighbor.

Taking an oath in our own name is kind of like asking the fox to guard the hen house or being our own notary on public documents. Taking an oath in your own name is kind of like "forgiving yourself." Sins are against God, not ourselves. Only God can forgive sin.

THINGS YOU WANT TO KNOW ABOUT OATHS

First, taking an oath in the name of the LORD honors the LORD. An oath acknowledges His existence and His ability to judge our testimony. It confesses His omnipresence (presence) and His omniscience (knowledge) and His omnipotence (power to judge). It is a witness that YHWH is God and not Allah and not the State and not Zeus.

Second, taking an oath in the name of the LORD and doing so falsely, carelessly, or treacherously is a serious matter and invites the judgment of God.

Third, taking an oath should be done infrequently, cautiously, thoughtfully, and only on weighty matters.

PARTS TO AN OATH

Convocation: Oaths are reserved primarily for serious, public matters in public gatherings involving facts in dispute.

Invocation: Biblical oaths invoke the name of Almighty God and humbly request His presence during testimony. Oaths in the name of false gods, or no gods, or oaths based on our own character are strictly forbidden.

Invitation: The promissory invites Almighty God to hear his testimony and to judge him if he does not tell the truth. False gods can't see, hear, or judge. Men can't read the heart. Men can be deceived. Slick testifiers can deceive juries. A canny perjurer can fool men, but he can't fool men. Therefore, proper oaths invoke the name of the LORD and His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Asseveration: Those bound by an oath are promising to state the facts of what they saw, what they heard, what they did, or what they know.

WOE TO YOU LAWYERS

During serfdom in Europe, a squire was a servant to a knight. Later, an esquire became an agent of the king to do *atornment*; that is, to secure the allegiance of serfs to a new lord appointed by the king. His job was to "turn over" the property to the lord by creating a new contract between the serfs and the lord. Thus, we get the term "*adornment*" or "*attorney*." The term "attorney" means "to turn over"; that is, the act of turning over property to a lord. In the days of the pilgrims, they posted a sign outside their cities, "No Vermin Allowed"; that is, "No Lawyers Allowed. It is no accident modern day lawyers are called "attorneys" and entitle themselves as "Esquires." They are agents of the government designed to secure the allegiance of people to the state and to turn over their property to government.

No wonder our Savior said, "Woe to you lawyers." Woe to attorneys today. In advising churches to become 501 c 3 churches, these Esquires have "turned over" the authority of the church to the IRS. In so doing, the pastors/churches have not "held to the head" of the church (Colossians 2:16) and unwittingly subjected their organizations to a new god called "the state."

APPLICATION

You can take an oath in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ or “in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost”

- Refuse to take oaths before people who cannot be trusted with the truth.
- Refuse to take oaths for light and transient causes.
- Refuse to take oaths regularly or frivolously or casually.
- Refuse to take oaths where there is no a level playing field.
- Refuse to take oaths unless sworn in properly; that is, in the name of the LORD.
- Take oaths when matters of justice and truth are at stake in common law concerns: justice, marriage, death, sickness, for honor, for safety.
- Take oaths in the Name of the LORD for His glory and His honor. An oath is a witness to the humanistic, man-centered society that there is a God who judges men’s words and deeds.

11 MISPHAT (JUDGMENT)

Eternal judgment (mishpat) is another Biblical word that Secular Engineers have successfully removed from politics, schools, entertainment, and social discourse. Such governmental, political policies have endangered the souls of men.

The world of skepticism has repudiated the idea of everlasting punishment. Although Albert Einstein believed in some sort of a “God” who revealed himself “in the orderly harmony” of the universe (Jastrow 1978, 28) he did not believe in the God of the Bible, for, said he, “I cannot imagine a God who rewards and punishes the objects of his creation” (*Free Inquiry* 1996/97, 31).

Bertrand Russell, Britain’s celebrated agnostic, proposed that one of the reasons he could not be a Christian was because Jesus Christ “believed in hell.” (At least he knew what Jesus believed!) Russell postulated that no person “who is really profoundly humane can believe in everlasting punishment” because it was profoundly at odds with his sense of justice (1957, 17).

Strangely, Russell did not complain about the Christian view of “eternal happiness.”

AT LEAS WE SHOULD LOOK AT WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT MISPHAT.

Isaiah 13:6 Wail, for ‘the day of the LORD’ is near; as destruction from the Almighty it will come!

The expression, “day of the Lord” (hw" + hy> ~Ayæ: YHWH yom) is the key phrase announcing judgment—judgment that may happen in time or eternity.

Judgment is an Old Testament concept and rightly belongs to OT Theology, but the theme carries through the entire Bible.

THERE IS A JUDGMENT DAY

At the conclusion of every human life, a judgment has been appointed.

Hebrews 9:27 And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:

1 Peter 4:5 Who (godless Gentiles) shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead.

*2 Peter 3:7 But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the **Day of Judgment** and perdition of ungodly men.*

The word “appointed” or “reserved” (apokeimai)” means “to reserve” or “to lay away.” The “lay away” plan is death followed by judgment.

THE REASON FOR JUDGMENT

The reason for judgment is inextricably linked to creation. God created man and man has a duty to his Creator. Man was given a purpose; authority to conduct His business; laws and rules not only to empower man, but to limit abuse of power. Man is created by God and has a day he must appear before Him to give an account of his stewardship. We are his by right of creation and by right of redemption. Nonfeasance¹⁶, misfeasance, and malfeasance occurs when man does “as he pleases”.

Psalm 148:5 Let them praise the name of the LORD: for he commanded, and they were created.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own ?For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

1 Peter 4:17-19 For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator.

WHAT IS JUDGMENT?

In the Bible, a judgment consists of an appearance before a judge. First and foremost the purpose of judgment is for examination in contrast to punishment. For this reason, the Psalmist could pray,

Psalm 43:1 “Judge me, O God, and plead my cause against an ungodly nation.”.

Deuteronomy 25:1 If there be a controversy between men, and they come unto judgment, that the judges may judge them; then they shall justify the righteous, and condemn the wicked.

Judges 4:5 And she dwelt under the palm tree of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in mount Ephraim: and the children of Israel came up to her for judgment.

Secondly, judgment can refer to punishment.

¹⁶ Nonfeasance: neglect of duty; Misfeasance: willful neglect of duty; Malfeasance: hostile injury to another.

Exodus 12:12 For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD. {gods: or, princes}

2 Peter 2:9 The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished:

A judgment consist of an appearance before a judge, a settlement of standing, of jurisdiction, a presentment of a complaint or issues, an examination of evidence, a declaration of guilty or not guilty or righteous, and a sentence.

JUDGMENT IS COMPLICATED BY SIN

Justice demands inspection, examination, retribution, and punishment now in this life and in the age to come. Judgment not only consists of accountability for one's stewardship regarding God's dominion mandate (Genesis 1:26), but the entrance of sin into history has complicated judgment.

*Isaiah 53:6 All we like **sheep** have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way*

Judges 21:25 In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes.

*Psalms 58:3 The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go **astray** as soon as they be born, speaking lies. {as soon...: Hebrews from the belly}*

Judgment is complicated because sin has entered history and mankind walks in rebellion toward God's law. The consequence is that man's sin frustrates the dominion mandate. Judgment is also complicated because good men do bad things; and bad men often do good things. Men sin. People injure, maim, defraud, and kill one another. There are predators and victims among us. There are individual sins, family sins, and national sins. There are open sins and secret sins. Who can possibly sort it all out and untangle the crinkled yard of man's wickedness?

THE COMPETENT JUDGE

Abraham in pleading for the life of Lot in Sodom, discovered a truth. There is a competent, fair, just Judge who can sort it all out—a Judge Who sees all, knows all, and who is impartial in judgment—a Judge who will not destroy the righteous with the wicked.

Genesis 18:25 That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked: and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee: Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?

Psalms 96:10 Say among the heathen that the LORD reigneth: the world also shall be established that it shall not be moved: he shall judge the people righteously.

Psalm 98:9 Before the LORD; for he cometh to judge the earth: with righteousness shall he judge the world, and the people with equity.

Isaiah 30:18 And therefore will the LORD wait, that he may be gracious unto you, and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you: for the LORD is a God of judgment: blessed are all they that wait for him.

2 Peter 2:9 The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations(from a trial), and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished (by a trial in God's Supreme Court):

WHO IS THIS JUDGE?

The Judge is none other than the Creator, the Lord Jesus Christ, risen from the dead.

*Isaiah 3:13 The **LORD** standeth up to plead, and standeth to **judge** the people.*

*Isaiah 11:1-4 And there shall come forth **a rod out of the stem of Jesse**, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD; And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: }But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.*

*Romans 15:12 And again, Esaias saith, There shall **be a root of Jesse**, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles trust.*

*Romans 2:16 In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men **by Jesus Christ** according to my gospel.*

*2 Timothy 4:1 I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, **who shall judge** the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom;*

11.1 TYPES OF JUDGMENT

A JUDGMENT FOR THE UNRIGHTEOUS

Psalm 35:28-29 For the LORD loveth judgment, and forsaketh not his saints; they are preserved for ever: but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off. The righteous shall inherit the land

Psalms 96:13 Before the LORD: for he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth: he shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his truth.

Matthew 25:46 And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

A JUDGMENT FOR THE RIGHTEOUS NOW

Psalms 35:22-28 This thou hast seen, O LORD: keep not silence (now): O Lord, be not far from me (now). Stir up thyself, and awake to my judgment (now), even unto my cause, my God and my Lord. Judge me, O LORD my God, according to thy righteousness (now); and let them not rejoice over me (now). Let them not say in their hearts, Ah, so would we have it: let them not say, We have swallowed him up (now). Let them be ashamed and brought to confusion together that rejoice at mine hurt: let them be clothed with shame and dishonor (now) that magnify themselves against me. Let them shout for joy, and be glad, that favour my righteous cause: yea, let them say continually, Let the LORD be magnified (now), which hath pleasure in the prosperity of his servant (now). And my tongue shall speak of thy righteousness and of thy praise all the day long.

A JUDGMENT FOR THE GODLY IN ETERNITY

2 Corinthians 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

1 Corinthians 3:13-14 Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.

**There is a difference between the judgment of the righteous and the judgment of the wicked: The wicked are judged for their sins, for they trust not in Christ. The righteous are judged for their service to Christ which is a matter of reward, not punishment*

A JUDGMENT FOR SIN IN TIME

Psalms 94:2 Lift up thyself, thou judge of the earth: render a reward to the proud.

1 Timothy 5:24 Some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some men they follow after.

Romans 1:18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;

A JUDGMENT FOR THE CHURCH

*1 Peter 4:17 For the time is come that **judgment** must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?*

A JUDGMENT OF SIN AT THE CROSS

If the cross means anything, it means judgment.

*Colossians 2:14 Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his **cross**;*

All the dead lambs, the entire throat slitting, and all the bloody altars in the Old Testament find their fulfillment at the cross. The good news of the Bible is that Christ died for sin. If he paid for all our sins, how much sin is there left for the Christian to pay? If He took the believer's sins and was punished for them, how much punishment is left for the believer to endure? It is good news that our Savior was judged at the cross as our substitute. Since he was punished for all our sin, the Court has been propitiated. For the believer to appear in court and have to stand trial for his sins is double jeopardy and a denial of the finished work of Christ. The Serpent in the wilderness has been lifted up and all who look to God's remedy find their cure in Him who was lifted up and "became sin for us" (John 3:14).

A JUDGMENT OF NATIONS

Exodus 12:12 For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD. {gods: or, princes}

*Psalms 82:8 Arise, O God, **judge** the earth: for thou shalt inherit all nations.*

11.2 THE SEVEN WOES OF ISAIAH

THE SECOND WOE: WOE ON CITY PLANNERS

Isaiah 5:8 Woe (Hoi) unto them that join house to house, that lay field to field, till there be no place, that they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth!

We'll call this the second woe and we'll see the first woe in a minute.

A condemnation of greed in commerce: Isaiah pronounces his second woe upon city planners and land-owning class. Selling land permanently in a walled city was permitted in Israel, but selling one's permanent inheritance in the country was unlawful. What was happening here was that real estate moguls were confiscating people's inheritance permanently and not returning it as commanded in the year of Jubilee. These greedy speculators did not need the land, but their covetousness drove them to obtain more

and more. Further, these land confiscators were so busy in the business, they did not have time for God. In fact, they found business so lucrative and exciting they were disinterested in the law of the LORD God (5:12).

These speculators are building the city of man, not the city of God. The Babylonian spirit controlled the civil rulers, and the civil rulers controlled men by herding them into cities where humanity would be easy to manipulate. Urbanization, taxation, and regulation characterized this society. Land was leased, not sold. Entire families were forced into city ghettos. Big government replaced the nuclear family. Corruption abounded.

THE THIRD WOE: WOE TO THE PLEASURE SEEKERS

Isaiah 5:11 Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink; that continue until night, till wine inflame them . . . they do not consider the work of His hands.

This woe is also pronounced on the super-wealthy who had the time and money to drink away the whole day. From morning to night, these people enjoyed their distilled spirits made from grapes, raisins, honey and barley. The grand event of the day was a sip of wine . . . and another sip . . . and another. These wine tasters got their kicks out of tasting a wine of a new vintage and from wines stored in the cellar. Party, addiction, revelry, drunkenness, pleasure, shame, excess and disgrace characterized high society. They sought the joy of man and not the joy of the Lord. Indulging their appetites, these people were indifferent to divine claims; that is, they were disinterested, detached, and unresponsive to God's Word. They emphasized business and pleasure, not theology and service.

THE FOURTH WOE: WOE ON THE WILLFUL SINNERS

Isaiah 5:18 Woe unto them that draw iniquity with cords of vanity, and sin as it were with a cart rope:

Isaiah now condemns the wealthy for their choices. They did not fall into sin, but yoked themselves to the poisonous tree. The prophet paints a picture of His people as oxen drawing wagons loaded with iniquity. They expended horrific amounts of energy to lug their sins with them in all their activities. In modern terms, we might say they carried a wheel barrow of vices with them on every occasion. These people had an obsessive, compulsive disorder and could not stop sinning. The deep rooted, long established customs and daily habits made it impossible for these people to change their lifestyle. Sin was part of their daily routine. The "cords of vanity" speak of the uselessness of the labor. These people defied God's law. Personal autonomy replaced humble dependence on the Lord. Proud selfishness replaced humble service. Possibly, God is condemning legislators acting under color of law for sinful, commercial hedonistic purposes. Oppressive laws impoverish the majority in order to enrich the few. Furthermore, it appears the nobles were challenging God to judge them—not to his face, but to one another in a jesting, joking sort of way (5:19).

THE FIFTH WOE: WOE ON THE MORAL REBELS

Isaiah 5:20 Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!

A condemnation of immorality: This is a reference to the moralists of the age who did what was right in their own eyes. We have here an upside down society where lawmakers replaced the rule of law with the rule of man; where man-made laws replaced God's laws; Rex Lex crushed Lex Rex; moral relativism overrode moral absolutes; rule by law inched passed the rule of law. Wicked vices were declassified and virtue was reclassified as a vice. Debauchery was not just tolerated but applauded. Those who promoted immorality as acceptable were hailed as heroes. Those who opposed perversion were, of course, labeled perverts.

Sounds like our day wherein social engineers seek to create a brave new world:

- Where nasty is clean, and clean is filthy;
- Where the defiled is normal, and purity is abnormal.
- Where fornication is respected, and virginity is insulted;
- Where backward is called forward, and forward is backward.
- Where murdering a baby is considered a right, and executing a convicted criminal is considered murder;
- Where Sodomites are viewed saints, and saints are viewed as sinners;
- Where motherhood is shamed, and the working mother is
- Where Moslems are considered decent citizens and Christians are branded terrorists;
- Where the powerful rule over the powerless;
- Where the rich get richer and poorer get poorer;
- Where the incompetent black man is promoted because he is black and the competent white man is demoted because he is white;
- Where justice is not blind; where the privileged receive leniency and where blacks and Latinos go to prison;
- Where the poor man has a right to the rich man's wealth;
- Where the TSA official can grope you anyway he pleases, but if you touch him it is assault and battery;

- Where civil rulers are immune from prosecution, and where the ordinary man is prosecuted without mercy;
- Where taxation under color of law is not fraud, but seeking to preserve one's own natural right to one's personal income is considered a crime;
- Where all whites are racists and all blacks are impartial and non prejudicial;
- Where increasing taxes is considered fair, and decreasing taxes is considered unfair;
- Where government has a right to your wealth, but seeking to keep your wealth is selfish and hedonistic;
- Where virginity is considered a weakness, and promiscuity is considered a virtue;
- Where adultery is considered recreation, and monogamy is considered a perversion;
- Where not repaying government debt is sound, fiscal policy, but where not repaying personal debt is immoral and irresponsible.

THE SIXTH WOE: WOE ON THE PROUD

Isaiah 5:21 Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!

A condemnation of autonomous man: The prophet Isaiah addressed the egotistic, hedonistic, conceited intellectuals of his day that opposed his ministry. These people had a reservoir of self-esteem and self-confidence—so much so God says they are wise . . . in their own eyes. In their pride, they revolted against God's government in favor of personal autonomy. We are talking about the self-made, self-governed aristocrat who lived detached from God's law order. They even had the audacity to criticize the Word of God.

The problem reminds us of academics who are a few tacos short of a combination plate. In their wisdom, they became fools. The caboose was pulling the engine. They consider themselves wiser than the prophet, but couldn't quote two Bible verses back to back. They had an antenna, but their radio didn't pick up any of God's channels. They were men of the earth, not heaven; men of the senses, not the Spirit.

THE SEVENTH WOE: WOE ON CORRUPT JUDGES

Isaiah 5:22-23 Woe unto them that are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink: Which justify the wicked for reward, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him!

A condemnation of the judicial system: Those who justify the wealth wicked and condemn the poor pious man are judges in Israel. The mixing of wine may refer to the integration of alien law into Israel's judicial

system; the adoption of sophistry that subverted God's law by replacing it with man-made statutes; or, it may refer to their malicious, reckless, ruthless judicial decisions against the poor—a decision that poisoned justice by depriving the poor of their property rights. Using their judicial office to service their lusts instead of serve the rich landowners, they perverted justice. Hosea and Amos call it “hemlock justice” (Hosea 10:4; Amos 6:12) Two criminal justice systems existed. One for wealthy who could afford top-notch lawyers, and the other justice system for everyone else. Judges were drunk with commercial interests. The powerful ruled over the powerless. They condemned the poor; and justified the rich. The root of all evil in these courts was the love of money. Money bought privilege, prestige, and power . . . but it also brought God's condemnation.

Isaiah 5:24 Therefore as the fire devoureth the stubble, and the flame consumeth the chaff, so their root shall be as rottenness, and their blossom shall go up as dust: because they have cast away the law of the LORD of hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel.

Fire and flame; rottenness and dust, speak of judgment. The corrupt judicial system of Israel was reduced to stubble, chaff, rottenness, and dust. The reason for all this chopping and burning of the nation's judicial system was “they cast away the law of the Lord,” and “despised the law of the Lord.” How did they do it? The rule of man replaced the rule of God; rule by law replaced the rule of law; what was legal became more important than what was lawful; the lion of justice was lost in the jungle of adjudication; man-made law supplanted God-ordained law; and the love of money was more alluring than the love of truth.

The Lord God was the source of Israel's law. If the First Commandment means anything, it means the nation was required to vigorously protect its source of law. Inch by inch, hour by hour, step by step human tradition subverted divine revelation; man's imagination became more important than God's inspiration; emotion triumphed over devotion; reason excused obedience; fideism replaced empiricism; legalism choked the gospel; propaganda captured knowledge; and, men chose slavery instead of freedom.

In the midst of all this corruption, Isaiah says that God's “anger burned against His people” and that Israel's Judge lowered His gavel to crush his people in judgment (5:25). So loud was the verdict of “guilty” that the “mountains quaked” and “corpses” littered the street. Isaiah saw a roaring lion coming from the east (Babylon) to seize Israel like a lamb, carry it away, and devour its flesh.

THE FIRST WOE: A WOE FOR ISAIAH

Isaiah 6:1-5 In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory. And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. {door: Hebrews thresholds}

Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts. And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged.

Isaiah's ministry began in the year of King Uzziah's death (740 BC). Uzziah became king at age 16. He was a popular ruler and the nation prospered under his 52 year administration. Some people live their entire lives under this great king. His great acts include rebuilding Eloth, a sea port on the Red Sea; conquering Gath and bringing the Philistines under his control; defeating the Arabians; making peace with the Ammonites; growing the economy; building towers and city gates in Jerusalem; construction of military fortresses around the nation; and, digging many wells to assist the watering of cattle and sheep. He build a huge standing, professional army which brought a sense of security to the nation. The troops were well equipped with swords, shields, horses, and military gear. He built siege engines for offensive purposes. It is not without significance that Isaiah had a vision at this time. Uzziah's death was a blow to the nation, and ended an era of prosperity and peace. All were wondering what would become of the nation.

As the nation grew strong, Uzziah's heart grew proud. Typical of kings, Uzziah over stepped his authority. Violating the boundaries of his executive office, he donned the attire of a priest and was afflicted with leprosy while performing a ritual in the temple. His latter days were lived in seclusion. After Uzziah's death, young Isaiah was transported in spirit into the Holy of Holies where he saw the Lord upon his throne and heard the angels crying, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty." Overwhelmed with the holiness of the triune God and his own sense of uncleanness, Isaiah blurted out, "Woe is me, for I am ruined!" Isaiah probably thought he was about to suffer the same fate as King Uzziah. Interestingly, Isaiah's first woe was pronounce against himself, not the nation. This vision of God exposed his own inner corruption. Before he became a prophet, he had to face the leprosy at work in his own soul. Fortunately, Isaiah was not elected to destruction but for salvation. An angel took a burning coal from the brazen altar from which a bull had been slain and touched his lips. Cleansed by the death of another, God qualified Isaiah to be a prophet to the nations.

Who did Isaiah see? The word "Lord" is the Hebrew name "Adonai." John 12:41 informs us that Isaiah saw Jesus. Men are not allowed to see the face of Almighty God (John 1:18; 1 Tim. 6:16). The Scriptures warn us that no man can see God and live (Moses in Exodus 33: 19-23; 19:21; 20:19; Genesis 32:30; Judges 6:11-24). Thus since Lord or Adonai is the N.T. equivalent to Lord- kurios- which is Jesus' titled. Jesus is called the King of kings and the Lord of lord. This is the pre-incarnate Christ. (Let it be noted that Christ can also be equated with YAHWEH, the Angel of the LORD and I AM WHO I AM (Exodus 3:2, 14).

When Isaiah came to the temple there was a crisis of sovereignty in the land. The long reigning monarch Uzziah was dead. Then the eyes of Isaiah were opened and he was ushered in to see the real King of the Nations. Isaiah saw God seating upon an eternal throne with all power and all dominion.

12 YESHUW'AH (SALVATION)

Genesis 49:18 I have waited for thy salvation (Yeshuw'ah), O LORD.

12.1 PSALM 97: THE GOSPEL OF GOD'S REIGN

The Lord Reigns!

Before us is the gospel from an Old Testament (O.T.) perspective.

What was the O.T. gospel and what is the language of proclamation?

Since there is only one gospel, it behooves the Bible student to understand its O.T. presentment in order to expand one's understanding of that glorious message.

The Gospel of God's Reign

Psalm 97:1 The LORD reigneth; let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of isles be glad thereof.

Before us is the heart of the gospel: "the LORD reigneth."

The "Need of the Hour" said Dawson Trotman, Founder of the Navigators, is not more staff, more equipment, more books, better health, or even more money, but faith to believe that our God reigns (Psalm 99:1). Amen!

While we take great comfort in our Lord's redemptive work, His core message was "the kingdom of God has come unto you" (Mt. 12:28); that is, the central message of Christ was the reign of God.

God's rule entered history in and through the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ to defeat man's great enemies: Satan, sin, and death. God is offering men peace with Himself on the grounds of Christ's person and work.

Paul quoted a verse from Isaiah declaring the excellence of gospel proclamation: "How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace."

Paul's quote is from Isaiah 52:7 which says in total, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings . . . that saith to Zion, 'Thy God reigneth!'"

Thus, the theme “the LORD reigneth” is the crux of the Old Testament gospel; and, the New Testament is simply the grand manifestation of the reign of God in action through Jesus Christ.

By “LORD” we are not referring to any god or some god or some god like Shiva or Allah, but the God of the Bible, the Creator of Heaven and Earth, the Great “I Am,” YHWH in Hebrew, Jehovah in German, and Yahweh in English. The LORD is His name!

We do not always feel like the LORD God reigns. Madmen come to power to steal property under color of law. Baby butchers are protected by legislative statutes. Criminal officials are granted limited immunity. Rulers permit “donations” (bribes) to high ranking officials. The State protects Sodomy and radical feminism. Government agencies oppress and bully the weak into submission. Disease and death visit every family. Jobs end. Stock markets plunge. Automobiles crash. Things seem out of control . . . and they are depressing . . . unless, of course, we believe God reigns over all things in our lives.

The good news is that the LORD reigns over nations, over politics, over weather, over disease and tragedy, over health, and the nasty storms hovering over us . . . and for those who have repented of their rebellion against God’s law order and surrender to His authority, His reign brings great joy and comfort.

One great cause of melancholy in our lives, is that we fail to take sufficient comfort from simple, but profound statements in Scripture.

“The LORD reigneth” is the lightning bolt that lights up the cloudy skies during the cold, dark nights of our lives.

The verbs “rejoice” and “be glad” are Hebrew jussives that enjoin all God’s people to consider the dominions of our Lord and to join the triumphal procession celebrated in Zion, the city of Almighty God, the general assembly of spiritual Israel. The people on vast continents as well as tribes on tiny islands, the great and the small are urged to take comfort in the Sovereignty of Christ. He is not asleep. He doesn’t await an alleged millennium to reign. He reigns now.

Notice that the locus of joy is outside of man and in the Lord’s dominions. Joy is not connected to introspection and self-esteem or inner exploration. It is not associated with profit in business or a large bank account. This psalm takes us outside of self, outside of our pride, outside of human choices, to the Sovereignty of the Lord God. Rejoice!

The Gospel of Righteousness

2 Clouds and darkness are round about him: righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne. 3 A fire goeth before him, and burneth up his enemies round about. 4 His lightnings enlightened the world: the earth saw, and trembled. 5 The hills melted like wax at the presence of the LORD, at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth. 6 The heavens declare his righteousness, and all the people see his glory.

The reign of the LORD is good news for those who have made their peace with God and surrendered to His law-order, but it is not good news for rebels. For the self-willed, self-governed lawless man hell-bent on self-governance and asset accumulation, the reign of Christ tastes like garlic.

The psalmist takes us back to Mt. Sinai. The clouds and darkness reminds us that the Lord is holy and unapproachable. There is a veiling of His splendor lest man be destroyed. Fire is an instrument of destruction stoked to torch the proud who refuse to acknowledge His supremacy. If the earth quakes and mountains melt in His presence, how much more should pagans with rock-hard hearts melt like wax / lava and tremble before Sovereignty and Glory.

Gospel Instructions to Idolaters

7 Confounded be all they that serve graven images, that boast themselves of idols: worship him, all ye gods.

A better rendering of the original text is as follows: “Let all be ashamed who serve idols. Worship him all ye gods.”

There are two jussives (commands) in this verse informing us of the response the Lord seeks from those outside His fold.

The first is “confounded be” or “Be ashamed.” If a person understands the Lord reigns and that his law is the supreme law, then shame is the proper response to gospel proclamation. The gospel announces the naked sinfulness of man and its effects by eating fruit from the Poisonous Tree.

Man is not sick or mentally ill. He’s a sinner that sins.

Shame is the sense of failure and guilt one has because of disobedience to law. The proper response to God’s reign is fear, alarm, anxiety, trembling, shaking and a deep sense of shame that causes the naked soul to reach for fig leaves.

The second reasonable response to the reign of God is “worship.”

The word worship is a rare Hithpael verb form, and it is difficult to translate because the verb is a reflexive action wherein the subject is expected to act on himself.

But, the psalmist is not asking men to worship themselves, but Him who reigns. Thus, the verb should be treated as follows: “Fall down and make yourself the object of the LORD’s affection” by ceasing your war against Him and surrendering to His authority. He is not calling for sacerdotal worship here but total surrender of the total man to total Sovereignty.

This is Spirit’s way of calling rebels to repent and to make peace with Him. Since the Lord reigns, the only reasonable, sensible response is acknowledgement of the rule of the Lord God and acceptance of his terms of peace.

Now if “be ashamed” and “bow down before Him” is the proper response, then the opposite action exposes the plight of humanity.

All the social ills and problems we face as a society are because men have rebelled against God’s law order . . . and are not even ashamed about it.

What is wrong with men that are not humiliated by their filthy talk and raw cursing; of their fornications and adultery; of their scams and schemes and fraud?

Isn’t the reason we need a government police force because men have declared war against God’s law order? Is not all the corruption in government a result of men who reject God’s law order—men who do not execute the duties of their office with a conscience educated by God’s Word?

Notice the terms “idols” and “gods.” An idol is a fiction, a man-made thing or entity or corporation. The word “serve” (abad) is the word used of a slave who renders service to his masters. Think of it. People are absolutely in love with fictions of the mind and man-made creations.

What’s wrong with man? Men have time to work, watch sports, take their kids to soccer games, watch T.V., eat and sleep. But, they don’t have time for God.

He calls “the gods” to bow down and worship, but the “gods” he is talking about are not “so-called” gods, but proud, arrogant man who sees himself as his own master. After all, Satan said to the first couple, “You shall be as gods;” that is, self-governed, autocratic people.

This text is God’s way of telling humanistic man to repent of sin and to surrender to the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ. The New Testament equivalent of this text is “Take my yoke upon you and learn from me;” (Mt. 11:29) or, “If we confess with our mouth that Jesus is Lord” and believe in our heart that God raised him from the dead, we shall be saved (Rom. 10:9); or, “God now commands all men everywhere to repent” (Acts 17:30).

8 Zion heard, and was glad; and the daughters of Judah rejoiced because of thy judgments, O LORD. 9 For thou, LORD, art high above all the earth: thou art exalted far above all gods.

The fact that God calls the pagans and infidels to repent and surrender to the LORD are sweet sounds in Zion.

Zion is the community of the redeemed, and they rejoice in God’s reign and His attention to call the rebels to order. The redeemed have repented of their sins and made peace with God on His terms. Because of their deep desire for others to find grace and forgiveness at the foot of the cross (judgments), there is joy for Christians in gospel proclamation. That “the LORD reigns” is golden gospel!

Gospel Instructions to God’s People

10 Ye that love the LORD, hate evil: he preserveth the souls of his saints; he delivereth them out of the hand of the wicked. 11 Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart. 12 Rejoice in the LORD, ye righteous; and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness.

Just as the LORD has instructions for the pagans, God has instructions for believers. Between the two commands He reminds His beloved of the benefit of living under His authority: preservation (eternal life), deliverance, light (increase light and perspective on truth), and gladness.

The first command: “hate evil.”

The first command is not to “believe in yourself; or “to love your neighbor as yourself;” or, “be all you can be,” or “reach your full potential;” but TO HATE! Something modern Christians don’t seem understand!

Our youth are trained to be open minded and to tolerate evil. Moral laxity marks our age. Hate is associated with bigotry and racism. “Hate” of any kind is often viewed as crime by those who have turned “justice” into commercial gain. We define problems as a lack of money. Everything is a commercial problem. We don’t see the sinfulness of sin or the ugliness of ugly. We are deaf to hissing snake near the Poisonous Tree. Americans are more concerned about the economy and equality than we are about evil at work in their own hearts.

To hate evil is a positive command. It takes moral energy to hate evil. We are ordered by our Heavenly Father to break from the pack and to stoke the fires of hatred; i.e., to hate evil and evil men that manufacture evil.

While modern humanists separate man from his actions, Scripture does not bifurcate the man from his sin. Evil is not out there in the environment. It is in the human heart. Man is seen a whole unit. Actions are evil because man’s heart is evil (Mark 7:21).

Voltaire taught that man was good and that evil was in the environment. Only a Voltaire could sleep with a prostitute then try to convince her to take the path of virtue. He sent his bastard children off to boarding school, then wrote a book on how to raise children. Thus, severing the man from his actions has been a product of more than a little evil.

The second command: “rejoice in the Lord.”

Gladness is a benefit of the gospel (97:11), but in this verse the LORD commands His own to rejoice (97:12). Because we live in a negative world, it takes moral energy to “rejoice” and “be glad.”

Thus, the Lord commands his saints to add fuel to fires of gladness by an act of the will. A singing saint is a strong saint. For this reason, Satan tries so hard to keep the Christian defeated and depressed.

The result of surrendering to the reign of the LORD God is “preservation,” “deliverance,” “light” and “gladness” are O.T. concepts for salvation. He saves those who surrender to be ruled by the yoke of Christ the King.

In conclusion, the O.T. gospel is not the offer of “fire insurance” against the flames of hell, but the proclamation of the reign of the LORD God.

Because He rules, men should repent and bow the knee to His authority. Those under His authority will find “preservation” and “deliverance.” Likewise, those who have accepted the yoke of His authority have a duty to hate evil (evil men) as well as to rejoice in His reign.

12.2 THE TABERNACLE

Leviticus 25: 8 And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them.

How do you prepare a nation to receive the wonder of God’s Son coming to Earth? One way God did it was through the shadows and types of Israel’s institutions.

The Tabernacle is one of those prototypes that prefigured the Redeemer. The Tabernacle and its furniture is to Christ what a shadow is to the Sun. He is the fulfillment of what the Tabernacle represented to the nation of Israel.

We look at the Testimony and then see how Christ was the living fulfillment of the Tabernacle in the Book of John as the Door, the Lamb on the Brazen altar, the Laver, the Table of Shewbread, the Lampstand, the Altar of Incense, the Veil, and the Mercy seat.

GOD AMONG MEN

God was pleased to dwell in the camp of His people. Think of it! God living among men! Forget aliens from outer space. Nothing compares with God having a tent among this Bedouin nation. The Creator of heaven and earth lived among men, on earth, in His tent, the Tabernacle. Likewise, God was pleased to be in Christ dwelling among men.

John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

John 1:3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

*John 1:14 **And the Word became flesh, and did Tabernacle** (skenoō) among us, and we beheld his glory, glory as of an only begotten of a father, full of grace and truth.*

THE DOOR

The Tabernacle had a fence around it to keep men out—an outward reminder that God is holy and that sins separate man from God (Isaiah 53:6). His justice and holiness prevented men from direct contact with Him. But, God in His love and mercy provided a way for men to approach Him. There was a door—one door whereby men could enter the courtyard to secure their relationship to Him.

Likewise, there is one way to God and that is through Christ.

*John 10:7 Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the **door** of the sheep.*

*John 10:9 I am the **door**: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.*

John 14:6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

Note: In Exodus 25, we see God drafting His blueprint with a description of the ark of the covenant, the table of shewbread, and the candlestick. This is a presentment of God starting with Himself and reaching out to man. The tabernacle panorama ends where man starts, with the five sacrifices in Leviticus 1-5. Man, in his understanding of Divine matters, begins where God ends, with the need for him to bring an acceptable sacrifice for his sins. Thus, in Exodus God's draft begins with the ark, a symbol of His throne, and ends with a description of the sacrifices needed for man to approach Him.

There are lessons here for us. In our Christian journey, we must unravel the truth that each piece of furniture represents in order to grow in his understanding of redemption. Our course of spiritual growth begins with understanding Christ as the door, the sacrifice, the altar, the laver, the bread, the candlestick, the altar of incense, the veil, the mercy seat, and an understanding of the sovereignty and authority of Christ on the throne as represented by the ark of testimony.

Note: that all religions are a door or path to God is sheer blasphemy, the ultimate expression of human ignorance about all things Divine. While there is only way to God, there are many ways to hell . . . and paths are overcrowded.

THE BRAZEN ALTAR

The first object a man would see when entering the Tabernacle area was the brazen altar with acacia wood overlaid with brass—the place where a man's lamb was offered. The bronze (usually symbolic of judgment on sin in the Bible), measured 7.5 feet on all four sides and 4.5 feet deep. Four horns projected from the top four corners and a bronze grating was inside to hold the animal. The brazen altar represented the grand exhibition of **the meeting-place** between a holy God and a sinner.

Since blood is the currency of the spirit world, blood was required to pay for the sins of the man. It was there at the brazen altar a lamb became man's substitute wherein the believer was redeemed by blood.

There were five offerings in Leviticus 1-5 foreshadowing the different accomplishments of Christ's sacrifice. The believer would do well to investigate all five aspects of these offerings because they represent the fullness of what Christ accomplished at Calvary.

Thus, to worship God, the worshiper needed a lamb. In the Book of John, John the Baptist, Israel's true high priest, announced Jesus as the Lamb of God destined to die for men on the altar of God, the cross.

John 1:29 The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

John 3:14 And as Moses lifted up the (brass) serpent in the wilderness (on a brass pole), even so must the Son of man be lifted up:

Hebrews 9:22 The law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.

"For you know that ... you were redeemed ... with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect." (1 Peter 1:18-19)

THE BRAZEN LAVER

Between the brazen altar and the veil into the holy place stood a brazen laver filled with water. It was used to wash the hands and feet of the priest before he entered the holy place to trim the candlestick, service the table of showbread, and offer incense on the golden altar of incense. The laver and its water inform us that the one approaching God must not only be cleansed by blood, he had to be washed periodically with water. The blood secured the worshiper's position before God eternally, but water was needed to practically cleanse the believer from defilement he picked up from walking in this world. Likewise, Jesus not only cleanses us with His blood, but he washes our souls with the Word of God to qualify us to fellowship with Himself on a day-to-day basis.

John 3:5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

*John 13:5, 8 After that he poureth **water** into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded . . . Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.*

*John 15:3 Now ye are **clean** through the word which I have spoken unto you.*

Note: There is a relationship between the brazen altar, the altar of incense, and the mercy seat. In God's mind, there is only one altar. But, they are broken down and separated to facilitate the weakness of man and to assist His people to understand the various facets of this diamond we call redemption.

In the brazen altar we see Christ meeting the fire of divine justice; in the golden altar, we behold the virtuous Christ feeding the divine affections. At the brazen altar the fire of divine wrath was quenched; at the golden altar, the fire of priestly worship burned before the throne. The soul delights to find Christ in both. The brazen altar is what meets the need of a guilty conscience. It is the very first thing for a poor, helpless, needy, convicted sinner. There cannot be settled peace, in reference to the question of sin, until the eye of faith rests on Christ as the antitype of the brazen altar. The golden altar is what meets the needs of a thankful soul caught up with the wonders of Christ. The mercy seat is the place where man meets with God and is a culmination of what both altars represent.

THE TABLE OF SHEWBREAD

The table of showbread was a small table made of acacia wood and overlaid with pure gold. It measured 3 feet by 1.5 feet and was 2 feet, 3 inches high. It stood on the right side of the Holy Place across from the lampstand and held 12 loaves of bread. On this table was placed the food of the priests. For seven days those twelve loaves of “fine flour with frankincense” were presented before the Lord, after which, being replaced by others, and then used to feed the priests who fed upon them in the holy place.

Likewise, Jesus is the bread of life that feeds the souls of believers.

John 6:32 Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven.

John 6:35 And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

John 6:48 I am that bread of life.

John 6:50 This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die.

Note: One should understand that the twelve loaves typify the humanity of Christ, and the golden table the deity of Christ. He is the God-man—the Word made flesh, fully God and fully man. The “fine flour,” of which the loaves were composed, represent His perfect, refined manhood containing both grace and truth (the glory of God-John 2:13). The “frankincense” foreshadowed the entire devotion of our Lord’s manhood to God. Here was one man on earth totally and completely devoted to the will of God. What a marvel to Heaven’s eye! Further, those who minister the things of God must have food to eat. Christ is not only the subject of preaching, but the motivation of preaching, He is the food that feeds and sustains the soul of the pastor-priest. Sermons are simply an overflow of the heart captured by the wonders of the Son.

THE CANDLESTICK

The golden candlestick had one main trunk with six branches filled with olive oil. It provided light for the priest in the holy place in their service of the Tabernacle. Without light, the priests would be stumbling around in the darkness unable to perform their duties accurately. Likewise, Jesus is the light and sunshine that shows men the way to the Father.

John 1:4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men.

John 1:9 That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

John 3:19 And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

John 8:12 Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

John 9:5 As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.

Note: God' priests needed light as well as food. Both food for the soul and light to perform their ministry accurately was provided in Christ. In this candlestick there is no mention of any material but pure gold. "All of it shall be one beaten work of fine gold." "The seven lamps" with wick and olive oil which "gave light over against the candlestick," express the perfection of the light and energy of the Spirit of God, founded upon and connected with the glorious perfections of Christ. Our Lord was one full of the Spirit, and Who conducted His ministry in the power of the Spirit. Thus, the seven perfections of the Spirit were upon Him (Isaiah 11:2; Revelation 1:4; 3:1).

Aaron had to keep the candlestick burning continually reminding ministers of the gospel they must always perform their duties in the light and power of Another. Nothing human was permitted to be added to the ministry. It was strictly forbidden to sweat in the service of the Lord (Ezekiel 44:18). As priests of Almighty God, we serve in the heavenlies, and our energy is by the Spirit founded upon Christ. Let's keep our lamps trimmed and full (Ephesians 5:18).

THE ALTAR OF INCENSE

The altar of incense was a box about three feet high and a cubit square. It was made of acacia wood and overlaid with pure gold. The priests would take coals from the brazen altar, place it on the golden altar, and burn incense in the holy place. It shadowed many things. First, it is a type of the Father enjoying the perfections of the Son; "All thy garments *smell* of myrrh, and aloes, *and* cassia, out of the ivory palaces, whereby they have made thee glad" (Psalm 45:8). Secondly, it provided a type of the intercession of Christ on behalf of His people who "ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Hebrews 7:25).

In the book of John, we see Christ interceding for His disciples in His High Priestly Prayer in John 17.

*John 17:1, 15 These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said,
Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee . . . I pray not*

that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.

Note: This altar typifies the wonderful position of believers in Christ. We claim not only the efficacy of His work at the cross, but the efficacy of His intercession for us before the Father. In contemplating the altar of incense we enjoy the reality and efficacy of Christ's intercession. Forever done with self and our attainments as reasons God should bless us, we are occupied totally with the goodness of Christ and our righteousness in Him. Our Lord intercedes for us in heaven and it is our privilege to rest in and enjoy what He has accomplished for us. If we look inward to self, we find nothing but defilement; if we look at Christ, we find that we are "accepted in the Beloved."

Men need a priest to service them at the brazen altar, but believers are now called priests who have a duty to burn incense at the golden altar—to offer up praises to God (1 Peter 2:5-9). Our energy to worship is fueled by ambers from the brazen altar, and our grand theme is the fragrance and beauty of Christ.

THE VEIL

Between the holy place and the holy of holies was a four inch thick veil said to be weaved by the virgins of Israel. The veil was a symbol of separation. It informed men that the way to God had not yet been provided. When Jesus died, the veil in the temple was rent in two announcing to mankind that Christ had opened the way for men to come to God through the cross.

John 19:23 Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus,

Matthew 27:51 And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent;

Mark 15:38 And the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom.

THE MERCY SEAT

Behind the veil in the Holy of Holies was the ark of the covenant, a rectangular box made of acacia wood and overlaid with pure gold. It was 3 feet, 9 inches long and 2 feet, 3 inches wide and high. No measurement was ascribed as to its height as the mercy of the Lord is higher than the heavens. On top of the ark was the atonement cover also called the mercy seat with the cherubim. Inside the ark was the two tablets of the law, a golden cup that held manna (Exodus 16:32), and the Aaron's rod that budded (Numbers 17:10).

The ark represented the throne and sovereignty of God: "O Lord Almighty, God of Israel, enthroned between the cherubim, you alone are God over all the kingdoms of the earth." (Isaiah 37:16).

Likewise, the mercy seat was the place blood was sprinkled once a year by the high priest to cover the sins of the people. Once blood was sprinkled on the mercy seat, the price of sin was paid, and the

sprinkled blood quieted justice and enabled God to be merciful to His people. Thus, the mercy seat was the place man had to meet with God . . . with blood, the price of redemption.

*“There, above the cover between the two cherubim that are over the ark of the Testimony, **I will meet with you** and give you all my commands for the Israelites.”*
(Exodus 25:22)

Likewise, Jesus is the mercy seat, the place where man can meet God. His blood secures eternal redemption for all who believe.

Thus, we see a marvelous picture of Christ as the mercy seat in John 20. Imagine the scene when Peter and John peered into the tomb seeing two angels, one standing at the head, and the other at the feet of where Jesus’s body once laid in the tomb. He was risen, but just as important, Jesus was to them the ark, the mercy seat, and the blood that secured their eternal redemption.

*John 20:12 And seeth two **angels** in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain.*

Note: The ark of the covenant and the brazen altar present, as it were, two extremes. The ark represented the throne of God established in “justice and judgment” ([Psalm. 89:14](#)). The brazen altar was the place of approach for the sinner where “mercy and truth” kissed each other. It was the place where the law was upheld, and mercy became available to men. Man, in himself, dared not to approach the ark to meet God, for “the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest” (Hebrews 9:8). But, once Christ died and rose again, the way into Heaven’s kingdom was made clear to all men.

Let us never forget that the greatest event of all time was the invasion of the Kingdom of God into history in the person and work of Christ. Nothing compares to the marvelous event of “God with us.” Since Christ has come, men can come and meet God at the mercy seat (the cross): He is the grounds upon which all who desire to be right with God can find acceptance:

“Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.” (Hebrews 4:16)

Thus, in the Book of John the apostle leads us on a journey into the Holy of Holies through Christ Who is our Door, our Lamb, our Laver, our Bread, our Lampstand, our Altar of Incense—the One in Heaven who intercedes on our behalf, and our Mercy Seat where we can meet God.

12.3 THE LEVITICAL SYSTEM

Dealing with sin in the Old Testament centered around the following:

- God’s law

- Human responsibility
- **The Tabernacle or Temple**
- The Levitical Sacrifices
- The Priesthood

God sought fellowship with man (This is main truth of the tabernacle). The tabernacle was called “The tent of meeting.” Designed to be a meeting place between God and man, the tabernacle signified greater things to come.

From the book of Hebrews, we learn the Levitical sacrifices symbolized the ultimate truth of Christ’s sacrifice. Two sacrifices were mandatory (unsweet offering), and three were voluntary (sweet offering). Like all Israel’s symbols, the sacrifices represented the full work of Christ at Calvary.

THE LEVITICAL OFFERINGS:

- The **trespass offering** cleansed sin to the extent of man’s knowledge
- The **sin offering** cleansed sin to the depth of God’s knowledge.
- The **peace offering** resented the joy of fellowship—the results of a restored relationship between God and man.
- The **meal offering** signified the perfect humanity of our Lord, a joy to the Father.
- The **burnt offering** signified the obedience and devotion of our Lord to the Father.
- **The priesthood** existed as a statement that mankind needs representation before the presence of YHWH. No man has a right to approach God on his own. He must have Another mediate for him. The Sacrificial System was a system of mediation through the Aaronic Priesthood.
- **The Unsweet Offerings:** The trespass offering and the sin offering (Leviticus 4, 5) were two offering that represent the nature of God’s sacrificial system. What is the difference between the two? A sacrifice offering (trespass offering) was necessary to satisfy man’s consciousness of sins, that is, when man knew he sinned, the trespass offering helped satisfy the conscience of man. A sacrifice offering was needed not only to satisfy man’s conscience, but God’s knowledge of sin. The sin offering dealt with sin to the level of God’s awareness of sin’s activity in a man’s life. When Christ died, he died not only for the sins that plague our understanding, but his death dealt with sin to the depth of God’s knowledge of sin’s work in our lives.

REPENTANCE

There is absolutely no thought of forgiveness apart from repentance in the Old Testament.

The word *repent* (מ.ח;פני), means *to turn*. It occurs 1054 in the Masoretic text. William Holliday (Smith, 1993) insist the word means “to move all the way back to the point of departure” (p. 305). He believes the word may be classified as *covenant usages*. By covenant, he means a change of loyalty on the part of Israel or God, each for the other.

There is no doctrine of repentance in the Old Testament because there is no noun for repentance. Where there is no vocabulary, there can be no concepts (Smith, 1993).

Jeremiah used the word “repentance” 111 times. It means “to turn back.” Repentance was a painful process involving plowing up ground and being circumcised in heart (Jeremiah 4:11-4).

When people repented, God restored his people (See Judges; Psalm 32; 38). Forgiveness (*kipper or nasa*) was conditioned on repentance (Amos 5:15; Jonah 3:8; Ephesians 2:3).

Forgiveness says Smith (1993) was not the remission of a penalty, but the full restoration to fellowship with God. It was not based on human repentance. It was dependent on the free act of God.

The problem of sin was never fully satisfied in the OT. We know from the New Testament (Romans 3:24ff), the basis of forgiveness was true justice dispensed at Calvary on our Lord Jesus Christ. The suffering and affliction of “The Servant of the Lord” was the ultimate means of healing and forgiveness to many (Isaiah 53:5, 11).

Restitution was a vital part of repentance, that is, when a man was guilty of sin, he not only needed forgiveness, but he needed to repair the damage caused by his sin. Restitution and repentance are sisters as we learn in Leviticus 6:5.

12.4 OT CONCEPTS OF FORGIVENESS

God removes sin like washing out a dirty stain from a woolen garment.

Isaiah 6:7 And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged (rP'kuT, covered).

Psalm 51:2 Wash me (seB.K) thoroughly from mine iniquity (ynlwO()m), and cleanse me (ynlreh)j;) from my sin (ytiaJ'x).

God removes sin like taking off dirty clothes:

*Zechariah 3:4 And he answered and spake unto those that stood before him, saying, Take away (**Wrys**) the filthy garments from him. And unto him he said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment.*

God erases sin like wiping off chalk on a blackboard.

Isaiah 43:25 I, even I, am he that blotteth (wipes, destroys) out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.

He purges sin, that is, He de-sins and un-sins the sinner.

Psalms 51:7 Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

He covers sins like a blanket covers nakedness so the rawness cannot be seen.

*Psalms 32:1 Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered (**yWsk**, see Genesis 7:19).*

He propitiates himself in regards to sins offenses (forgives or pays the penalty for):

*Ezekiel 16:62-63 And I will establish my covenant with thee; and thou shalt know that I am the LORD: That thou mayest remember, and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more because of thy shame, when I am pacified (**%l'-yrIP.k;B**, kaphar, covered, pacified, atoned, propitiate) toward thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord GOD.*

He forgets sin: He cannot remember them anymore.

*Isaiah 43:25 I, even I, am he that blotteth (**hx,m**, wipe out) out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.*

Jeremiah 31:34 for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

He cast sins behind his back: He can't see them.

*Isaiah 38:17 Behold, for peace I had great bitterness: but thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption: for thou hast cast (**T'k.l;v.hi**, hurl) all my sins behind thy back.*

He tramples sins into dust: That is, He squashes them like a spider under foot.

Micah 7:19 He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities (tread our iniquity under foot). . .

He casts sins into the depths of the sea so that we can't find them.

Micah 7:19 . . . and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.

Someone has said that God throws our sins in the sea and then posts a sign: NO FISHIN' ALLOWED.

We must remember that God cannot forgive sins apart from blood, in particular, the shed blood of Christ at the cross!! If God could just snap his fingers and make sins disappear like a Nevada magician, there would have been no need for Christ to come and suffer on the cross. Forgiveness is only possible because of the substitutionary, propitiatory, redemptive death of Christ. It was Christ's sacrifice that removed the accusation that God was soft on sin (Romans 3:26ff). In His death, He not only died for sins future (ours), but for sins past (OT saints).

The implications of this are profound. Praying five times a day with all the sincerity of an Islamic fanatic will not grant a stay of execution. God must punish sin. He does not forgive sin because men pray or ask him to forgive their sin. Sin is forgiven based on the work of His Son at Calvary!

REMOVAL OF SIN IN THE OT

All removal of sin in the Bible is based on shed blood. Blood is the currency of the spirit world, and redemption is the only currency excepted. All religions but Christianity are based on human performance. Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.

12.5 THE IMPORTANCE OF BLOOD

*Hebrews 9:22 And almost all things are by the law purged with **blood**; and without shedding of **blood** is no remission.*

Blood is the currency of the spirit-world.

The difference between Talmudic Judaism, Islam, the pantheistic cults, and Christianity is that Christianity teaches that blood, not good deeds, is the currency that must be paid to redeem the soul.

Christianity is a bloody religion through and through. In ancient Israel, blood flowed like a river from the temple into the Kidron Valley. Hundreds of thousands of lambs, birds, goats, and bulls spilled their blood at the site.

From the animals killed to provide clothing for Adam and Eve (Genesis 3) to the death of Christ (John 18-19), the Scripture teaches one fundamental truth: Blood must be shed to pay for sin! Blood must be on the altar to gain acceptance before the LORD God of the Bible. God is just, and He cannot ignore,

whitewash, avoid, overlook, or turn a blind eye to transgressions against His law. Blood is the only currency received by the Great Spirit in exchange for the soul.

Modern man with his love of money and psychological gimmicks fall short of achieving his spiritual ambitions because he fails to grasp that blood is the only lawful tender accepted between spirits and mortals. Talmudic Jews substitute prayer for propitiatory blood sacrifice. Muslims practice the five pillars of Islam: faith, prayer, alms giving, fasting, and treks to Mecca. Hindus believe karma marga (works) is the way of salvation.

Humanly speaking, blood is a powerful subject.

There is something in all of us that causes us to react to blood. The sight of that bright red fluid -- whether it was coming from an enemy or friend or yourself – provokes fear and awe. Hemophobia is the fear of blood. Blood is associated with such powerful concepts that some people can't stand the sight of it. Many faint at the sight of a bloody scene.

Blood is life. Blood is power and vitality—when you push yourself, your heart pounds and your pulse races as your blood rushes to supply oxygen to exhausted cells. A woman bleeds during her menstrual cycle, there's blood at childbirth. A drop of blood is your human signature. Your blood contains DNA and not only identifies your individual characteristics, but your entire family history. If you donate blood you might be saving someone's life. Blood banks are the first aid of life. Transfusion saves lives.

Genesis 9:4 But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat.

Leviticus 17:11 For the life of the flesh is in the blood:

Even in the French Quarter of New Orleans where Voodoo Queens practice love spells and curses, necromancers understand that to summon the gods of the underworld, blood must be mixed with frog hairs and toenails to attract the spirits.

Blood magic is the use of a few drops of blood, usually your own, to summon the gods of power. Even ancient Egyptians understood that mediation between the goat-gods and man required blood—lots of blood. Drinking blood, washing in blood, and sprinkling blood on symbolic objects guaranteed the Grand Zombi access to demonic powers.

Blood is associated with death on the battlefield, the slaughter of animals, cycles of fertility, and pagan rituals wherein occultist bath in blood or offer blood up to spirits of power.

But, modern man seems oblivious to the necessity of blood redemption. The only legal tender Americans understand are worthless FRNs and Citibank Credit Cards. "Money" is the American religion.

Even in the Christian community, people pray the rosary, offer money in exchange for spiritual favors, and practice oil anointing in hopes of contracting for power in the spirit world. But, why would a spirit be interested in gold or silver or those worthless green FRNs with pictures of dead presidents?

Will Americans wake up and realize that blood is the currency of the spirit world; that only by blood can men escape the penalties of their naked arrogance, shameful lusts, and outbursts of anger?

Gold and silver are of no interest to the Eternal Spirit . . . but blood?

The Great Spirit is attracted to blood . . . the blood of Abel's lamb . . . and the shed blood of Abel . . . and most importantly, the blood of Christ.

Notice that blood speaks to the Almighty; that blood is of utmost interest to the Great Spirit; that blood speaks a message.

Genesis 4:10 "And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground."

Hebrews 12:24 "the blood of Jesus speaketh better things than that of Abel."

The blood of Abel's lamb cried out for pardon; the blood of Abel cried out for vengeance upon his murderer. The blood of Christ cries out "forgiveness" for trusting sinners.

Which raises the question: How can a transgressor appease the offended Spirit he has neglected all his life? How can a proud miscreant who has plunged into sensuality, fornication, and abominable idolatries be reconciled with his Creator?

The Bible from beginning to the end drills in one truth. Blood has to be brought to the altar. Blood is the only currency recognized in the spirit world. Blood is the only consideration accepted for a contract. The rituals of religion won't do. Feeling sorry for your wicked deeds can't buy spit. Saying "I'm sorry" to an offended Spirit will get you thrown into hell.

Cain was a farmer. Cain's offered vegetables to God and was rejected. Abel was a shepherd. Abel offered the blood of a lamb and found acceptance (Genesis 4).

From this account we learn there are **only two religions in the world**--(1) the religion of beans, beets, and broccoli--a religion of works; and (2) the religion of blood redemption. Judaism, Islam, and the pantheistic faiths are based on the belief that one's good deeds commend a man to God; that is, they follow the way of Cain and practice a vegetable religion. Christianity is based on the blood sacrifice of the Son of which all the Levitical sacrifices are a type.

The only tender accepted for ransom is blood . . . and a very special kind of blood--innocent blood, pure blood, sinless blood! Is there such a rare treasure as this? Yes, there is!

In His grace and mercy, the great Spirit offered the blood of His Son as currency for redemption: "knowing that you were ransomed from the corruptible ways inherited from your forefathers, not with worthless things like silver and gold, **but with the precious blood of Christ**, like that of a lamb without blemish or defect" - 1 Peter 1:19.

Therefore, if you are trusting in your miserable money or worthless religious rituals or feeble beliefs that you are not that bad of a person, flee to the cross and lay hold of the horns on the altar. Plead the blood of Christ might be applied as payment for your sins. "Under stand" ("stand under") the blood of the Lamb and its authority. It is the only currency accepted in the spirit world.

This is our gospel.

12.6 BUT, HE WAS A LEPER

*2 Kings 5:1 Naaman, commander of the army of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master and in high favor, because by him the LORD had given victory to Syria. He was a mighty man of valor, **but he was a leper.***

Due to the prolific writings of the lawless French philosopher, Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778), American institutions have adopted the idealistic view that man is good; that evil is not within man, but in the environment: poverty, parenting, negative experiences, etc. Theologians call this view "environmentalism." Parading psychologist after psychologist before the courts, the wards of the judiciary seems to be tenaciously committed to identifying the environmental factors that contribute to a specific crimes. Consequently, Americans lean toward excusing serious errors made by people because the "experts" in society blame the negative circumstances coeval with reprehensible acts. But, Christianity is not built on the sands of idealism. It advances a realistic view of man. Let's illustrate by taking a look at Namaan the leper. Turn in your Bibles to 2 Kings 5:1 and notice the phrase, "but, he was a leper."

Before continuing with our theme, notice the six statements about this historical figure--and the only man in the Old Testament that found a remedy for leprosy.

Naaman was a general in the Syrian Army; and,

He was a great man in the nation's hierarchy of power; and,

He was highly esteemed and well-favored by the king of Syria; and,

God gave him success in battle even against apostate Israel; and,

He was a man of valor; i.e., he possessed all those attributes that make a great soldier: strength, courage, skill, decisiveness.

What else could a man want in this world? Namaan seemed to have it all--power, prestige, success, wealth, fame, and respect. He was the envy of all men. But, the Holy Scripture informs us he had a fly in his buttermilk that soured his life--he was the victim of a debilitating, incurable disease: "he was a leper."

Who can fully understand the conflicting emotions at work in his soul. Such a condition no doubt robbed him of joy and cast a dark shadow over his future. He had it all, but being a leper, he had nothing!

Namaan's condition of leprosy is a Scriptural picture of what we all are by nature. Leprosy in the Bible is not only a horrible, incurable disease but a fitting symbol of man's sinful, wretched, corrupt, defiled nature--that is, of man's total depravity. Instead of being born a sweet, little angel, man is born a moral leper; that is, sin infects and corrupts all that man touches throughout his miserable life. Notice the following texts:

Psalm 58:3 The wicked are estranged from the womb; they go astray from birth, speaking lies.

Psalm 51:5 Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.

Psalm 39:5 Behold, thou hast made my days as an handbreadth; and mine age is as nothing before thee: verily every man at his best state is altogether vanity. Selah.

*Luke 18:19 And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me **good**? none is **good**, save one, that is, God.*

Romans 3:10 As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:

Romans 3:11 There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.

Ephesians 2:1 And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;

The Scripture flatters no one. It does not transgress the truth by idealizing mankind as some kind of chocolate factory bursting with sweetness. Yes, man is born in the "image of God" with capacities for great achievements, but the Bible tells us the truth that man in his best state is a sinner-- cracked and flawed "being alienated from the life of God" (Ephesians 4:18).

God's law required a leper to rend his clothes, to cover his face, and to cry out in public "Unclean, unclean." That is, he was not allowed to disguise and camouflage his condition. No masks allowed. He had to live and speak the awful truth. No physician had the cure. No remedy was provided for this horrible disease in the Mosaic law. No instructions were given to the priests to assist healing. The leper was simply examined, pronounced unclean, excluded from the community, and left to the consignment of God. Whether the leper was healed or not, lived or died, was wholly decided by the LORD God.

Thus, we come to our first application: The Scripture lays upon us the duty of speaking truth about ourselves and others. Instead of painting idealistic, flattering pictures of human nature, God calls us to be real and truthful about men--man in his best state is wholly a sinner. Like the leper, there is no remedy for sin apart from the revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ in history. God must save. Man is wholly incapable

of improving his condition. Man cannot legislate healing. Only by the grace of God can any man hope for a sinner's cure.

Even the best businessman or politician or stock broker is corrupt and flawed; that is, we are not to trust men until they prove they are trustworthy. We are not to be fooled by blue suits and sophistry; or advertisers who sell only the positive side of a product; or business men who are over optimistic; or politicians who say "read my lips. No new taxes," or teenagers who have an innate attraction to mischief. Victims are people who showed good faith to criminals.

There is good news in our story. Naaman does find a solution to his wretched condition. A captured Hebrew maid tells Namaan that there is a man of God with the power of God in Israel that can cure his leprosy. Introduced to Elisha, Namaan is instructed to dip himself seven times in the River Jordan in order to be clean. He does, and Naaman is miraculously healed of his disease.

Now there is nothing medicinal or magical about the River Jordan. It can't wash away sin any more than it can wash away leprosy. The lesson to idolatrous Namaan was that there is only one true God, the God of Israel. Just as healing could not be found in any of the rivers of Syria, salvation cannot be found in the religions of the world. Only Jesus can save a man from his sin, and when he does, "he saves to the uttermost that come to God by him" (Hebrews 7:25).

Which, brings us to our second application. Man is a moral leper. Sin has infected the body, the mind, the will, and the heart of mankind. He is totally incapable of healing himself. He needs the power of Another.

*Isaiah 1:6 From the sole of the **foot** even unto the **head** there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment.*

Mankind will not improve. Because he is made in the image of God, he can make great technological advances. But, he remains a moral leper. Sin is always at work in man corrupting conduct and relationships. He cannot change himself. He can't even make the right choices. He needs a savior. And, the good news of the Bible is that God sent His Son to save His people from their sins (Matthew 1:21). Christ can save to the uttermost! The answer to sin is not in the religions of the world or on top of some mountain in Tibet. The answer to moral leprosy is in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. The first miracle in Matthew is that Christ cleansed a leper; that is, Israel's true King cured the impossible. "If you will, you can make me clean," announced the leper. He did! And, what Christ did for the leper, he can do for you and me. He can save us from sin and do it "to the uttermost."

Enough of this nonsense that man is good; that evil is in the environment! Speak truth, and the truth shall set you free.

12.7 THE CLEANSING OF THE LEPER

Leviticus 14:1-7

When Jewish people celebrate the Passover, they like to be inside **with the doors shut**. The idea behind the “door shutting” is that death always stalked the nation. When the Jacob left Palestine to go to Egypt, he did so because famine knocked on his door. On the night of the Passover when the angel of death stalked the first born, the door was shut. Death was not welcome in the Jewish home.

John Donee wrote these lines:

"No man is an Iland, intire of itselfe . . .no mans death diminishes me, because I am involved in Mankinde; And therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; It tolls for thee." (MEDITATION XVII., Devotions upon Emergent Occasions by John Donne)

A funeral is always a sad occasion for someone. The 'Corpse Way' story gives one a good vision on how a corpse in 1827 was carried a distance of three miles or so to be buried in Wakefield. The undertaker walked in front of the procession like a solemn crow. His first act on arrival at the deceased's home was to go inside and invite the mourners to have a last look at the corpse before the coffin lid was nailed down. Each nail was driven in with an almost slow-motion action, very quietly. There was just a faint thud on each nail except for the last one. The last nail was driven in with such great force, the coffin shuddered with the vibration. It was then carried to the hearse and placed in a specially designed cradle. Wreaths and sprays of flowers were then laid on the coffin and surrounding it. As the mourners left for the cemetery, the bells in the church would ring out. After they entered the cemetery, the bells would stop. And, the bell would be struck again, each ring represented one year of the deceased's life.

What a solemn sound the church bells made. No one has felt the haunting sound of the tolling of the death bells like the Jews, and probably no one felt more like death was stalking him than a Jewish leper.

The Plague of Leprosy

Leprosy is a horrible bacterial disease that destroys nerves and tissues. Because a leper can feel no pain, sores are unattended. Scabs form, but never really heal. The oozing invites more infection and weakness. It is not uncommon in India for a leper to wake up and find his toes were eaten in the middle of the night by rats. Lepers die a slow agonizing death, and he is constantly aware that death is stalking him. And, what leprosy is to mankind, sin is to God.

The Place of the Leper

It is difficult to describe the miserable life of a leper. The place of the leper was “outside the camp” (14:3). He lived alone away separated from God and His beautiful people. His dreary existence was lived in silence. Every conscious thought was haunted by his wretched condition. Every step and every movement of the hand was an instant reminder of his leprosy. Everything he touched was unclean. No

man could help him. No doctor could cure him. No pill could alleviate the pain. He could not help himself. He could not cure himself. He could not cleanse himself. He could not make his way to God. Everything had to be done for him.

The Priest and the Leper

It is clear that the leper was a debtor to grace. The text says, “The priest shall go outside the camp.” It does not say, “The leper shall go to the priest.” There was no use talking to the leper about “Four Steps to God” because he could do nothing to improve his position or condition. He was defiled and helpless. He might desire cleansing and fellowship with God and to enter into the camp, but his desires were impotent. However, God loves lepers and the Bible anticipated that many would be healed and restored.

Before the healed leper could be pronounced “clean” a work had to be done for him. The priest left the camp to inspect his person. The priest offered a sacrifice. The priest sprinkled him with blood. The priest did it all. The leper did nothing. The Bible is not about what man must do to reach God, but about what God has done to reach mankind. The Bible says, “That God so love the world He gave His only begotten Son . . .” It does not say, “Man so loved God, that he built churches to worship him.” The Bible is not about how wonderful man is or his potential or his great achievements. It does not announce the giving of Oscars to the most noble or brilliant among us. Rather, it announces our wretched condition. Like lepers, sinners are separated from a holy God. Listen to the nightly news and we hear of murder, terrorism, rape, incest, theft, drunk drivers, homosexual perversion, and fraud. The newscasts are a daily reminders that man is a moral leper in need of cleansing. I am constantly amazed at how radio talk show hosts address people’s problems as if it was all a matter of choice. “All you have to do is make the right choice,” they say. Telling a sinner to choose not to sin is like telling a duck to stay of the water. Like the leper who can’t cleanse himself, sinners cannot change themselves. Government can’t help us. Universities and colleges and schools cannot help us. We cannot help ourselves. We need a priest, a Savior.

The Two Pigeons and the Leper

“Then the priest shall give orders to take two live clean birds and cedar wood an a scarlet string and hyssop for the one who is to be cleansed. The priest shall also give orders to slay the one bird in the earthenware vessel over running water” (14:4, 5).

The Pigeon Marked for Death.

Like the leper who needed cleansing, the sinner needs cleansing. As the priest left the camp, the Lord Jesus left His Father’s side to go outside the camp to seek and save sinners. He did not come part way. He did not send an angel. He did not come in spirit. He was born of flesh and blood that he might be the pigeon whose neck was wrung and whose blood was captured in the clay pot. In the tough job of saving sinners, God sent His Son.

Hebrews 13:12 Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.

1 John 4:9 In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.

The priest did not merely inspect the leper. If mere inspection could qualify the healed leper to enter God's camp, God would have done it. But more than an inspection of lepers was needed. Blood needed to be shed: "Without the shedding of blood there is no remission" (Hebrew 9:22). Likewise, inspecting a sinner and telling him about his faults or even his good points is not what a sinner needs. He needs a Savior.

The bird had to be killed in a clay pot over running water. We have here a type of Christ "who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God" (Hebrews 9:14). The bird was type of God's Heavenly Gift and the water was a type of the eternal Spirit that empowered the Savior to leave heaven and to fulfill His commission on earth--His death on the cross. How terrible sin must be that God had to send His Son to die the cruel, painful death of Calvary. And, what a type of sin we have in leprosy. Who would imagine that that first red spot would have disqualified him from being in the camp and eventually would have covered his whole body?

The Living Pigeon

"And he shall dip the live bird in the blood of the bird that was slain over running water" (14:6). The priest could give orders to kill the one bird, but now the priest acts himself to dip the living bird in the bowl of blood and to set him free. Here we have one of the most beautiful types of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. The two birds are a single shadow of two aspects of our one Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ-- His death on the cross and His resurrection from the grave.

First, the living bird was not set free until the first bird was killed. Likewise, the Lord Jesus could not leave this earth until His blood was shed for our sins. Once His work on the cross was finished and death substantiated by His burial in the tomb, then He could rise from the grave. Second, the bird could not be set free until his wings were dipped in blood. A thousand birds could be set free and not one of them would qualify the leper to enter God's camp. Only the living bird with blood on its wings could satisfy the claims of a holy God. We have here a beautiful picture of Christ ascending into the heavenly tabernacle. The blood on the wings of the dove is a symbol of His glorious, achievements at the cross. It was at the cross the Savior faced all the forces of evil, all the infantry of Satan's vast armies, and all the filth of man's sins. The bird's flight into heaven is a symbol that our justification was complete and that Jesus was set free from His sacred trust.

KJV Romans 4:25 Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.

It should be noted that three ingredients were placed into this bowl of blood: scarlet, cedar, and hyssop. The Bible speaks of cedar and hyssop.

*KJV 1 Kings 4:33 And he spake of trees, from the **cedar tree** that is in Lebanon even unto the **hyssop that springeth out of the wall**: he spake also of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes.*

In the minds of the Hebrews, cedar was the largest living tree and hyssop was one of the smaller plants known to man. They represent two extremes of nature. Cedar represents the glory of man, the pride of man, or the grand sins of man (Jeremiah 22:15). The Bible says that even our righteousness is as filthy rags (Isaiah 64:6). Hyssop represents that which is tiny and small and sometimes hidden from the view of man. Big sins or little sins, all disqualify a man from entering heaven. All sins, small and large, must be cleansed by blood. The scarlet thread represents the brilliance of sins in the eyes of God; that is, sin is something that stands out in the eyes of God like the red vest of a highway flagman. You can't miss it.

*KJV Isaiah 1:18 Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though **your sins be as scarlet**, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.*

We have here a beautiful picture of man being delivered not only from the guilt and condemnation of sin, but from the nature of sin; that is, from sin's power. When the Bible says that "He came to save His people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21), it means that Christ not only saves a man from the penalty of sin, but the power of sin. Both are contained in the accomplishments of Christ.

The setting free of the living bird is a glorious picture of the risen, ascended, triumphant, glorified Christ passing into the heavens to present to the Father the accomplishments of redemption. Here the Father smiled and said, "Well, done!" The angels burst into a song exulting in His glorious achievements. Our sin cleansed and righteousness bestowed, heaven's gates are open wide for thousands upon thousands of sinners.

A Picture of Resurrection

The living bird is one of the OT resurrection shadows that finds its antitype in the first Easter morning. The living bird declares a fundamental truth that Christ is alive; that death is defeated. Since religion is about man's fundamental problem (death), the living bird announces the victorious triumph of Christ over the grave. He literally, physically rose from the grave. In this, religions are not the same. Only one has given forensic proof that death can be defeated.

Second, releasing the living bird with blood on its wings announces to us that the Father accepts the death of Christ on our behalf as our substitute; that all our sins, the good, bad, and ugly were taken to the cross and cleansed by the blood of Christ. It announces that not only were our sins imputed to Christ, but that righteousness is imputed to us.

The resurrection is the heart and soul of the gospel. Chuck Swindoll tells the story of a woman who committed a crime and sentenced to life in prison. She was terribly angry and swore she would not die in jail. After being in the penitentiary, she noticed that everytime a prisoner died, the chapel bell would ring.

In the prison, there was an old man who was responsible for burying the dead. He would place the body in the coffin, nail it shut, and take it outside of the prison, and bury in the graveyard. The woman noticed this procedure and over time persuaded the old man to help her escape via the coffin. They agreed that at the next ringing of the chapel bell, she would slip into the coffin next to the corpse, and after the coffin was buried, the old man would come back and dig her up. The night came, and sure enough the bell was tolled. She managed to slip into the chapel and crawl inside the coffin. Later, the coffin was nailed shut, put on a wagon, and taken to the gravesite and buried. Inside the coffin filled with the stench of a decaying body, the woman waited, and waited, and waited. Way past the time, the old man was to come back and dig her out, she decided to light a match. When she did, she looked at the corpse---and, behold, it was the old man.

For whom do the bells toll? It tolls for thee. The point of Swindoll's story is that if you want to escape the coffin of death, make sure you trust someone who is alive. All the great religious leaders of history have all died, but only One has escaped the grave. What the two birds typified, has its historically corollary in death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus.

12.8 YOM KIPPUR

The Day of Atonement: A Picture of Redemption

Leviticus 23:27 Also on the tenth day of this seventh month there shall be a day of atonement [yom hakippur]: it shall be an holy convocation unto you; and ye shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD.

The *Day of Atonement* is based on the English translation of the Hebrew Holy day *Yom Kippur*. The original Hebrew has the day *Yom Hakippurim* which means "the day of covering." Unlike other feasts where there was joy and celebration, You Kippur was a very solemn, serious occasion. This holy day was entered into with fasting (24 hours) and later came to be known as "the Fast", "the Day of the Fast," or "The Great Fast."

Acts 27:9 Now when much time was spent, and when sailing was now dangerous, because the fast [Yom Kippur] was now already past,

Yom Kippur was so important to the nation of Israel, that it was announced by the blowing of the *shofar* ten days before the Fast. Studying the Levitical instructions on this day can help a Christian understand the accomplishments of Christ on the cross and ground him in the faith.

THE DATE

In the *Hebrew* calendar, the Day of Atonement begins at sunset on the tenth day of the month of Tishri (which falls in September/October). Usually, Jews will begin a 24 hour fast starting at 6:00 PM on the

night before Yom Kippur in keeping with the Jewish calendar. While many Jewish holidays are celebrated over a two day period, Yom Kippur is a one day event.

BIBLICAL ORIGIN

The *original* rites and practices for the Day of Atonement are set forth in the sixteenth chapter of Leviticus (cf. Exodus 30:10; Leviticus 23:27-31, 25:9; Numbers 29:7-11).

And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: "Also the tenth day of this seventh month shall be the Day of Atonement. It shall be a holy convocation for you; you shall afflict your souls...It shall be to you a sabbath of solemn rest, and you shall afflict your souls; on the ninth day of the month at evening, from evening to evening, you shall celebrate your sabbath (Leviticus 23:26-27,32).

What *does* “afflict your souls” mean? Historically, the phrase "afflict your souls" has been interpreted by the Jewish community as a day of fasting. It lasted from sunset to sunset by those who were in good health—the sick, the infant, and the pregnant were exempt since they were already afflicted.

*Isaiah 58:3 Wherefore have **we fasted**, say they, and thou seest not? wherefore have we **afflicted our soul**, and thou takest no knowledge? Behold, in the day of **your fast** ye find pleasure, and exact all your labours.*

THEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

Yom Kippur and the day of fasting can hardly be appreciated or admired by Westerners who eat sumptuously every day. Because we under value suffering and have mocked holiness, virginity, and purity, the importance of Yom Kippur has been lost to the average American.

The word “holy” (*kadosh* in Hebrew) is used at least 80 times in the book of Leviticus and over 600 times in the KJV. Leviticus, more than any other, drives home the point that the LORD God is holy; that man is sinful; that sin mars and destroys; and, that sin must be atoned for before sinful man can enjoy fellowship with his Creator. God is holy and to fellowship with Him the communicant must also be holy:

Leviticus 19:2 Be holy for I am holy.

Holiness is Divine attribute. The word *kadosh* means “to be set apart” or “to cut” or be “*uncontaminated*.” God is clean, holy, pure, untainted, and without iniquity. The Lord is good, always good, even in judgment. He is the paradigm of virtue; the tallest tree in the forest; the purest stream in the mountains; the most polished of brass; the clearest diamond in the universe of man’s metaphors. Man, on the otherhand, is infected with self-centeredness, self-interest, and the pursuit of personal pleasures. Man wears tattered, soil-stained clothes and is a scrub in the forest; the muddy water in the gutter; corroded brass; and, the dull quarts in common rock in the universe of man’s metaphors; Consequently, man adulterates everything he touches. His interests are sensual and material. He is totally unfit to enter into

the beautiful presence of pure Holiness. Though man is a sinner, he is not trash. Though he is unqualified to commune with God, Divine grace found a way to qualify man for fellowship with a holy Creator.

The Book of Leviticus is about the holiness of God, but it also about the astonishing grace of YHWH. All through the book, we see grace cleansing and purifying man so he can commune with a perfect God. The whole sacrificial system is an illustration of love drawing and wooing and cleansing man. Israel's Lawgiver demands obedience to His law. His law is good. His perfections require man to be holy as He is holy. But, the all-knowing, all-wise, all-holy, all-loving Creator planned a way "to cover" sin so that man could be restored to fellowship with Him.

Thus, the Day of Atonement was a day where God acted to cleanse the nation of Israel, to make *atonement* for their souls, to forgive sins, and to restore man to fellowship with God. Of course, the offerings on this day could never cleanse the conscience. Sins were remembered year-after-year. But, the offerings on Yom Kippur did foreshadow the glorious accomplishments of God's Lamb that could make the "sanctified" "perfect" by the blood of Christ.

Hebrews 10:14 For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.

FIVE ELEMENTS OF YOM KIPPUR

First, this day was a *holy mikra* ('vd,qo'-ar'q.mi()), holy convocation, a yearly sacred assembly of the people. This was a holy event that called the people together to focus on the nation's atonement.

Second, this was a day that the priesthood was cleansed. The people were not qualified to mediate for *themselves*. They needed a priest—a very holy priest. But, their priest were mere men with moral flaws and fractures. They too needed blood to cleanse them. On this day, the high priest entered into the holy place to procure the forgiveness of God for his sins. Sprinkled with blood, the high priest qualified as a mediator for the people.

Third, this was a day of reflection, repentance, confession of sin—a day of fasting, beating of the breast, and humiliation (Isaiah 58:3-5).

Fourth, *this* was a day of special offering—animal sacrifices commemorating the death of Christ which propitiates a holy God.

Fifth, this was a special sabbaton, a day when no man worked, a day when every business was closed. Nothing was for sale. Nothing could be purchased. Commercial interests paused in order to secure God's blessing for the following year.

Leviticus 16

EVENTS ON YOM KIPPUR

Leviticus 16:1 And the LORD spake unto Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron, when they offered before the LORD, and died; 2 And the LORD said unto Moses, Speak unto Aaron thy brother, that he come not at all times into the holy place within the vail before the mercy seat, which is upon the ark; that he die not: for I will appear in the cloud upon the mercy seat.

Rather than *taking* the reader forward to view the holy events of Yom Kippur, YHWH takes the reader back to the events of Leviticus ten and the death of Aaron's sons, Nadab and Abihu. The two novice priests offered "strange fire" to the LORD which He had not commanded. A fire came out of the Holy of Holies and burnt them to a crisp. How terrible is man-made religion! How terrible is the sin of *presumption*! How terrible is the sin of arrogance and pride that feels qualified to enter the holy presence of the LORD! God is so holy that even Aaron, an appointed priest, was not permitted to enter the Holy of Holies but once a year---and that to atone for his sins and the sins of the nation! How terrifying this day must have been for Aaron who lost two sons inside the veil. Would he experience a similar fate?

This is a tough lesson for the average American who has been taught by government school teachers that he or she is God's gift to mankind and the greatest thing to hit the market since sliced cheese. Americans are into self-esteem, self-improvement, self-fulfillment, and self-actualizations. In American thought, the greatest calamity among us is damaging a child's self-esteem—not disobedience to the Creator. In the minds of the modern men God should bless America because He is fortunate to have such good, wholesome, wonderful, cute, cuddly people on planet earth. It doesn't enter the American mind that "we are **all** as an unclean thing, and **all** our righteous**nesses** [plural] are as filthy rags [a menstrual cloth]" (Isaiah 64:6). But, then again, how many Americans read the Bible? Oh, that we had more men like Peter who would fall "down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord" (Luke 5:8).

It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. He is holy. We are sinful. We deserve judgment. But, out of His perfect love the LORD provided a way to cover sins so that sinners could be *released* from the fear of judgment and find acceptance in His sight. Yom Kippur is love in action.

CLEANSING OF AARON

3 Thus shall Aaron come into the holy place: with a young bullock for a sin offering, and a ram for a burnt offering. 4 He shall put on the holy linen coat, and he shall have the linen breeches upon his flesh, and shall be girded with a linen girdle, and with the linen mitre shall he be attired: these are holy garments; therefore shall he wash his flesh in water, and so put them on.

To enter the Holy of Holies, the priest took a complete bath—a symbol of personal purification. Next, he would dress himself in pressed, clean, white linen undergarments—a symbol of personal righteousness. These were specially prepared garments designed to high light the importance of the occasion. The breastplate with "urim and thummin" is not mentioned. Some believe it was not worn on Yom Kippur because on this day the high priest met "face-to-face" with the King of Israel. A bull, the most valuable animal on a cattle ranch, was to be sacrificed to cleanse the high priest. The sins of a priest are more

serious than the sins of a common man. Therefore, the most powerful remedy for high sins was required on this day.

Next, a *powerful* ram among the herd was offered to the LORD. The ram symbolized the perfections of Christ and His total devotion to the will of His Father. The two sacrifices represent the Savior discharging the sinner's debt for disobedience (forgiveness) and also supplying His righteousness in order to perfect standing of the repentant before the Father (justification).

THE OFFERING ON THE YOM KIPPUR

5 And he shall take of the congregation of the children of Israel two kids of the goats for a sin offering, and one ram for a burnt offering. 6 And Aaron shall offer his bullock of the sin offering, which is for himself, and make an atonement for himself, and for his house. 7 And he shall take the two goats, and present them before the LORD at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. 8 And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats; one lot for the LORD, and the other lot for the scapegoat. 9 And Aaron shall bring the goat upon which the LORD'S lot fell, and offer him for a sin offering. 10 But the goat, on which the lot fell to be the scapegoat, shall be presented alive before the LORD, to make an atonement with him, and to let him go for a scapegoat into the wilderness.

We have here the special offerings ordered for the Day of Atonement. The priest's day would begin at sunrise. Dressed in his high priestly garments, he would offer the regular, daily sacrifices and burnt offerings for the day. Other festive sacrifices were also prepared. After the morning offerings, the high priest would take off his priestly garments, take a bath, and then adorn himself in his white, linen garments. The breastplate would not be worn till after the special ceremony for Yom Kippur was completed.

The *special* offering for the Yom Kippur included a bull to cleanse Aaron, his family, and the priesthood and two goats offered for the people. One goat was selected for the sin offering by casting lots. This goat would be killed and his blood taken into the sanctuary and sprinkled on the mercy seat; the other goat, called the *Azazel*, was sent into the wilderness bearing the iniquities of the children Israel.

ORDER OF THE SERVICE

11 And Aaron shall bring the bullock of the sin offering, which is for himself, and shall make an atonement for himself, and for his house, and shall kill the bullock of the sin offering which is for himself: 12 And he shall take a censer full of burning coals of fire from off the altar before the LORD, and his hands full of sweet incense beaten small, and bring it within the vail: 13 And he shall put the incense upon the fire before the LORD, that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy seat that is upon the testimony, that he die not: 14 And he shall take of the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it with his finger upon the mercy seat eastward; and before the mercy seat shall he sprinkle of the blood with his finger seven times. 15 Then shall he kill the goat of the sin offering, that is for the people, and bring his blood within the vail, and do with that blood as he did with the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it upon the mercy seat, and before the mercy seat:

The order of entrance into the Holy of Holies is significant. First, Aaron prepared the incense by placing *coals* in a pan and then sprinkling a handful of incense on the burning flames. He took his smoking censor, entered the Holy Place waiving the censor back and forth, and then---then he pulled back the veil and entered the Holy of Holies so that the room was filled with the fragrance. The smell of sinful man was not permitted.

Second, he would walk back out of the Tabernacle, take the blood of the bull in a bowl, and walk back into the Holy of Holies and sprinkled the mercy seat with the blood of the bull seven times to atone for his sins and the sins of his fellow priests.

Third, *with* this ceremony complete, and his ministry accepted, Aaron went back outside the Tabernacle to fetch the bowl of blood from the goat, and then proceeded behind the veil a third time to sprinkle the goat's blood on the mercy seat to atone for the sins of the people.

CLEANSING THE ALTAR

16 And he shall make an atonement for the holy place, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all their sins: and so shall he do for the tabernacle of the congregation, that remaineth among them in the midst of their uncleanness. 17 And there shall be no man in the tabernacle of the congregation when he goeth in to make an atonement in the holy place, until he come out, and have made an atonement for himself, and for his household, and for all the congregation of Israel. 18 And he shall go out unto the altar that is before the LORD, and make an atonement for it; and shall take of the blood of the bullock, and of the blood of the goat, and put it upon the horns of the altar round about. 19 And he shall sprinkle of the blood upon it with his finger seven times, and cleanse it, and hallow it from the uncleanness of the children of Israel.

Having made atonement for himself and the priesthood, and atonement for the people, Aaron had the duty of cleansing the Holy Place, the furnishings, and the brazen altar.

Fourth, he mixed both bowls of blood into one bowl and proceeded to cleanse the Holy Place and its furnishings and the Brazen Altar. Once the Holy Place was sprinkled with blood, Aaron approach the brazen altar. Because the altar, as well as and the holy things, were defiled by the sins of the people, he sprinkled the brazen altar and its horns seven times. He poured the remainder of the blood to the side of the Altar. The Holy Place, its furnishings, and the altar was now clean and accepted as holy ground for future offerings.

How *terrible* must sin be! Water and soap was an insufficient detergent for removing the blots caused by the sins of Aaron and his people. Only blood could remove the filthy stains. How holy must be the LORD God of Israel that required all this blood shedding for perfecting a relationship with Him.

THE CONFESSION OVER THE AZAZEL

20 And when he hath made an end of reconciling the holy place, and the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar, he shall bring the live goat: 21 And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness: 22 And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited: and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness.

Taking the Azazel, Aaron confessed the sins of the nation over the goat. The Azazel was led by a priest to the edge of the wilderness, and pushed over a cliff. Once the animal met his fate, the priest would signal lookouts in an established system of communication and the message would be delivered back to the Tabernacle.

The *death* of the two goats represent two aspects of atonement. The blood on the altar taught the nation that the claims of Divine righteousness are met by the death of the goat (propitiation¹⁷), and that their sins were carried away into the wilderness never to be found again.

1 John 2:2 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

Psalms 103:12 As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.

The *death* of Christ satisfied the claims of divine righteousness and enables God to lawfully forgive sins. The Hebrew word for “forgive” is *nasa* which means to “take up” and “carry away.” in Greek, the word for “forgive” is *apheimi* which means “to send away.” It is the word used for divorce, the sending away of a covenant-breaking spouse. The Azazel provided a physical demonstration of God sending man’s sins away from His presence.

CLEANSING THE ALTAR

23 And Aaron shall come into the tabernacle of the congregation, and shall put off the linen garments, which he put on when he went into the holy place, and shall leave them there: 24 And he shall wash his flesh with water in the holy place, and put on his garments, and come forth, and offer his burnt offering, and the burnt offering of the people, and make an atonement for himself, and for the people. 25 And the fat of the sin offering shall he burn upon the altar.

¹⁷ Propitiation does not mean “to cover.” Rather, it means “to satisfy the claims of holiness.” He announced a long standing truth, “the wages of sin is death.” In the sacrifice of Christ, the Father’s holiness was satisfied by the death of His Son; that is, His righteousness demanded payment for sin—the death of the sinner! If God “just forgave” sin, and did not extract payment of sin, He would be unjust. Nothing else would suffice but death for sin. But, in providing a substitute for man’s sin, God fulfilled His own claims against sin in the death of Christ; that is, He was satisfied with substituting Christ to die in the sinner’s stead.

Following the death of the Azazel, Aaron's service was almost complete. He took a second bath, and then put on his entire priestly apparel to finish the day's requirements. Robed in the garments for the High Priest, Aaron offered burnt offerings for himself and his people. The burnt offering was not an *unsweet* offering for sin, but a sweet offering for the enjoyment of God alone. In the burnt offerings, the shadows of the perfections of the Lord Jesus Christ passed before the Father. With sin atoned, the Father delighted in the perfect obedience of Christ—one man on earth totally dedicated to the will of the Father. What a thought!

THE NEED FOR CONSTANT CLEANSING

26 And he that let go the goat for the scapegoat shall wash his clothes, and bathe his flesh in water, and afterward come into the camp.

We *have* here another picture of how defiling sin must be. With sins passed on to the Azazel, the priest executing the death of the goat was defiled by the ceremonial goat on whom sins were transferred through the priestly confession. His bathing was a statement that sin defiles and that even though a man is involved in the service of the Lord, he must regularly, continually deal with sin's contamination in his own life.

27 And the bullock *for* the sin offering, and the goat *for* the sin offering, whose blood was brought in to make atonement in the holy *place*, shall *one* carry forth without the camp; and they shall burn in the fire their skins, and their flesh, and their dung.

The bodies of the sacrificed animals were taken outside the city and buried. We have here a picture of the rejection of Christ who was crucified "outside the camp". Rejected by men, but received by God! The N.T. includes an exhortation is for believers to leave the city of man and to go to the rejected Christ bearing his reproach (Hebrews 13:11-13). Israel's religion is too bloody for most! The world *prefers* a neat, works-based righteousness system and has no toleration for all the bathing and cleansing and blood splattering connected with true religion.

28 And he that burneth them shall wash his clothes, and bathe his flesh in water, and afterward he shall come into the camp.

We have here another lesson on sin's contamination and the need of the servants of Christ to regularly and perpetually separate from evil.

But, *even* after all of this, the High Priests job was not finished. He had to service the evening sacrifice. Once completed, he took off his priestly robes, bathed, and went home to enjoy a warm meal with family and friends. The fast was over . . . for this year.

YOM KIPPUR AS A SABBATON

29 And *this* shall be a statute for ever unto you: *that* in the seventh month, on the tenth *day* of the month, ye shall afflict your souls, and do no work at all, *whether it be* one of your own country, or a stranger that sojourneth among you 30 For on that day shall *the priest* make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, *that* ye may be clean from all your sins before the LORD. 31 *It shall be* a sabbath of rest unto you, and ye shall afflict your souls, by a statute forever. 32 And the priest, whom he shall anoint, and whom he shall consecrate to minister in the priest's office in his father's stead, shall make the atonement, and shall put on the linen clothes, *even* the holy garments: {consecrate: Heb. fill his hand} 33 And he shall make an atonement for the holy sanctuary, and he shall make an atonement for the tabernacle of the congregation, and for the altar, and he shall make an atonement for the priests, and for all the people of the congregation. 34 And this shall be an everlasting statute unto you, to make an atonement for the children of Israel for all their sins once a year. And he did as the LORD commanded Moses.

Yom Kippur was a serious day in the year for Israel. It was declared a Sabbaton. No work was to be performed. People fasted and ceremonially afflicted their souls for sins committed. Light hunger was the means of affliction. This was the only time a man could prostrate himself and beat his breasts and mourn over his sins. On all other feasts, joy was the dominating feature of Israel's festivals.

The *purpose* of Yom Kippur is clearly stated. It is for atonement. Ceremonially, Israel's sins had to be covered in order for God to bless the nation. These sacrifices were a mikra, a rehearsal preparing for the main act of history—the coming of the ultimate Lamb of God. All this bathing and blood shedding taught the nation a N.T. truth: “Without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sins” (Hebrews 9:22). The shadows of Yom Kippur found their fulfillment in the death of Christ.

*Hebrews 9:12 Neither by the **blood** of goats and calves, but by his own **blood** he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.*

The *lesson* of Yom Kippur is perfect love securing a relationship with His creatures. Perfect love sent the Lord Jesus Christ to be man's Kippur. Jesus is the bull and the goat that was slain and the Azazel that cleanses the conscience and perfects the sinner. Because of the offering of Christ there is forgiveness. He remembers our sins no more (Hebrews 10:1-18). What a shame it is for modern day Jews to believe that sins can be covered by works of righteousness. If this were true, all this blood splattering would not have been codified into the Levitical law. Men are saved by blood, not their “good deeds;” men can find atonement for sins through the shed blood of Christ which could never be achieved by the offerings of bulls and goats. Christ was crucified “outside the camp” and the sin stained sinner would do well to go there to find forgiveness through the blood of Christ as his Kippur.

YOM KIPPUR AT THE TIME OF CHRIST

Yom Kippur at the time of Christ is quite interesting and the zealous student would do well to consider the following developments.

In *Jesus* day, Yom Kippur was performed by priests at Herod's Temple on the 1st of Tishri. The temple was considered one of the wonders of the world. Because the Ark of the Covenant was lost during the exile (586-536 BC), there was no mercy seat on which to sprinkle blood. The blood was sprinkled on the rock occupying the center of the Holy of Holies.

The High Priest ruled the temple complex. The priesthood at the time of Christ was quite political. A high priest was appointed by Herod and bribery for the honor of being the high priest was not uncommon. Graft and corruption created a stench that marred all the festivals.

There were 24 divisions of Levitical Priests. Over 500 were employed on Yom Kippur to service the duties of this affair.

The high priest arrived in Jerusalem at least a week in advance of the Day of Atonement. For a week he would study, quote scripture, and answer questions by his tutors. Passages would be read to him and he was expected to repeat them back word-for-word. The high priest was not allowed to eat the night before he performed his duties nor was he allowed to sleep. Younger priests kept him awake by snapping their fingers and making him recite the law or sequences in the ceremony. If he dozed, younger priests made him stand up bare foot so the cold stone would force him to stay awake (Yoma 1:5-7).

THE MORNING SERVICE

Temple services began at dawn. The pious walked in the dark to be at the temple as the first rays of the Sun peaked over the Mount of Olives.

The *priest* would take a shower behind a curtain before he put on his priestly vestments to perform the morning offerings. On normal days, the priest washed his hands and feet. But, on Yom Kippur he took five baths and washed his hands and feet at least ten times. Having washed, the priest robed himself in his full high priestly attire. What a sight: a gold mitre, the gold breastplate, the purple outer vestment, and pomegranates and bells ringing as he walked!

His *first* duties of the morning included filled the candelabra with oil, placed incense on the altar, and officiated the morning offering. Having accomplished the regular duties of the day, he transitioned to perform the duties assigned to Yom Kippur.

THE SERVICES ON YOM KIPPUR

Again, he took off his priestly apparel and took another bath. When he was finished, he put on linen *garments* and left the outer robe behind. When he came out from behind the curtain he was dressed in the finest linen provided for this occasion. His solemn duty began.

The animals already having been selected, the high priest took the bull and confessed his sins over the animal. The Talmud explains:

He came over to his bullock. Now his bullock was set between the Porch and the Altar [two places in the Temple]. Its head was to the south and its face to the west. And the priest stands at the east, with his face to the west. And he puts his two hands on it and states the confession. And thus did he say:

"O Lord, I have committed iniquity, transgressed, and sinned before you, I and my house. O Lord, forgive the iniquities, transgressions, and sins, which I have done by committing iniquity, transgression, and sin before you, I and my house. As it is written in the Torah of Moses, your servant For on this day shall atonement be made for you to clean you. From all your sins shall you be clean before the Lord (Lev.16:30)."

And they [those listening] respond to him: "Blessed is the name of glory of his kingdom forever and ever."

When speaking of God, the Jews spoke hashem as "Adonai" (Lord). The sacred name the LORD ('hw"hy>, YHWH) known as the Tetragrammaton (the 4 letters) was rarely used in human communication, but during this prayer the high priest pronounced the sacred name three times. During this day, the Tetragrammaton would be pronounced ten times.

The bull was led away and the two goats were brought before the High Priest. Lots were thrown and one goat was chosen to be the sin offering and the other the Azazel. A crimson ribbon was tied on the horn of the Azazel. It was considered a good omen if the lot for the goat "for the Lord" was in the right hand of the priest. The Talmud taught that 40 years prior to the destruction of the temple, the lot fell in the left hand and not the right; that is, it was a sign of God's displeasure with the nation" "*the Talmud teaches that for the last 40 years of the Temple, God did not accept the Yom Kippur sacrifice that was supposed to atone for the sins of the nation (Yoma 39a).*

The high priest then approached the bull again, laid his hands on it, and then repeated his confession . . . this time adding the phrase "and the sons of Aaron, the holy tribe." The bull was then slaughtered and his blood poured into a gold basin. On all other days, the priests used silver vessels but on this day, they used gold vessels.

INTO THE HOLY OF HOLIES

Taking the censors, the high priest made his first solemn journey behind the veil to perform a ceremony of swinging the censor and allowing the smoke to fill the Holy of Holies. Afterward, he retreated backward while saying a prayer. When the priest appeared out from behind the Temple doors, the people breathed a sigh of relief.

The high priest then took his second fearful journey into the Holy of Holies to sprinkle blood on the altar to atone for his sins and the sins of the Levites. But, the altar was not there. Only the rock—today known as the rock of Omar over which stands the Mosque of Omar on the temple grounds. In a ritual of upward

and downward motions, the priest sprinkled blood on the rock seven times. Carefully, he counted each application. Again, he retreated backward. Again, the people felt a sigh of relief.

Next, the high priest slaughtered the “goat for the Lord”, placed it into another golden bowl, and entered the Holy of Holies a third time. He sprinkled the blood seven times, retreated back, and appeared in the outer court. The two bowls of blood were then mixed together.

THE AZAZEL

The priest then approached the Azazel, placed his hands on its head, and confessed the sins of Israel over the goat. Yoma 3:8 explains:

He came over to his bullock. Now his bullock was set between the Porch and the Altar [two places in the Temple]. Its head was to the south and its face to the west. And the priest stands at the east, with his face to the west. And he puts his two hands on it and states the confession. And thus did he say: "O Lord, I have committed iniquity, transgressed, and sinned before you, I and my house. O Lord, forgive the iniquities, transgressions, and sins, which I have done by committing iniquity, transgression, and sin before you, I and my house. As it is written in the Torah of Moses, your servant For on this day shall atonement be made for you to clean you. From all your sins shall you be clean before the Lord (Leviticus 16:30)."

As the priest spoke the words “you shall be clean” the people bowed saying, “Blessed be His name, the glory of His kingdom is forever and ever.” (Yoma 3:8).

While the High Priest remained in a temple, another young priest took the Azazel twelve miles to the nearest wilderness area. He took the ribbon, divided it, kept one part, and tied the other to the horn of the goat. Once tied, he pushed the goat over the cliff sending it to its death. The deed accomplished, he relayed the message back to the temple through a series of posts established for that purpose.

One tradition says there was an accompanying sash placed on the temple door. When the Azazel met its fate, the sash would turn white indicating that the people had been purified.

Isaiah 1:18 Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.

THE CLEANSING OF THE ALTAR

Next, the Priest proceeded to sprinkle blood in the Holy Place on the holy furniture. Afterward, he approached the brazen altar sprinkling blood on the horns of the altar. Afterward, he poured the blood into the basin.

The Scripture obeyed and Yom Kippur complete, the High Priest pronounced eight blessings on the people.

THE EVENING SERVICE

After the benedictions, the priest took another bath and put on his golden, priestly robes to officiate the *Musaf* or the evening sacrifice which was performed at sunset.

THE EVENING FEAST

With the duties of the day accomplished, the high priest took off his clothes, washed himself, and went home to eat a meal with family and friends. A great feast was prepared by the elite who longed to be near this important person in Israel.

Another tradition that developed during this day was the dressing in white by the maidens in Jerusalem. Dressing in white linen nullified class distinctions. Of course, the young men paraded through town in search of a suitable mate.

The effects of Yom Kippur were short lived. The ceremony had to be repeated year after year. The blood of bulls and goats could never take away sins. But, the holy mikra was a rehearsal of the main event of history. Through the doing and dying of Jesus, man can find eternal redemption and freedom from a guilty conscience. Yom Kippur was not concerned with guilt feeling, but true guilt that deserved the death penalty. Likewise, the debt of sin has been discharged through our Lord Jesus Christ freeing the sinner to serve God with a pure conscience (Hebrews 10).

The N.T. is silent about any duty for Christians to practice a celebration on Yom Kippur. But, it is not silent about its fulfillment in Christ. Hebrews 9, 10 iterate how the shadows of Yom Kippur were fulfilled in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. When believers celebrate communion, we remember the meaning of Yom Kippur and how our Lord Jesus is the substance of this feast and all feasts in Leviticus 23. It is his blood that provides eternal redemption, not the blood of bulls and goats.

12.9 THE JOY OF THE LORD

The *chadvah* of the LORD is your strength

Nehemiah 8:10 Then he said unto them, Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared: for this day is holy unto our Lord: neither be ye sorry; for the joy of the LORD is your strength.

The text says, “the joy of the Lord is your strength” (~k,(Z>[um'(ayhiî hw"ßhy> tw:ïd>x,-yKi) or the “gladness of the LORD is your protection.” Joy is not a charismatic experience. It is not psyching one's self up into some kind of religious frenzy. It isn't positive thinking. Nor is it some kind of zealous

fervor for the Lord. It is necessary because strength and vitality is derived from "the joy of the Lord." But, we have to grasp it.

You can have the joy of the Lord by grasping its meaning.

Nehemiah chapter 8 begins with the post exilic Jews gathering together on the 1st of Tishri, the first month of Israel's civil year known as **Rosh Hashanah**, the Feast of Trumpets. In modern times, the Jews blow the Ram's horn on this day to announce the new year, to call for a solemn assembly for reflection and contemplation, and to consider man's responsibilities to God. The ram's horn is blown in part because man needs God's grace. The horn is a symbol of grace because when Abraham offered up his son on Mount Moriah, God substituted a ram for Isaac in God's call to worship. Too few understand that Isaac was a picture of Jesus Christ and that on Mt. Moriah / Calvary God provided the true Ram as the One "Who takes away the sins of the world" (John 1:29).

During this festival, the Jews of Nehemiah's day gathered together to read the law from morning till noon. A special pulpit was built for the occasion (8:4). Ezra read the law so people would know God's Word and obey it. The failure of their fathers a century before was fresh on their minds. They understood that God judged their forefathers because of their disobedience and this generation wanted to obey God and His Word. So, as Ezra read the Torah, the people began to mourn and grieve over their disobedience. The disparity between the written Word and their lives was apparent to all. An electrifying wave of guilt and emotion gripped the crowd, and they began to weep. Like losing the Super Bowl, there wasn't much joy in the locker room that day. Hearing the weeping, Nehemiah and the Levites rushed into the crowd telling the people to stop weeping and to enter into the "joy of the Lord."

But, what is the "joy of the Lord" and how can we enter into it?

Three times in Nehemiah 8 the people were told, "This is a sacred day. Do not grieve." This sacred day was "the feast of trumpets."

Look at Numbers 28 and 29. Notice the term "bread" in the first few verses. **The joy of the Lord is "God's bread."** In Numbers 28 and 29, God instructed the Levites to offer certain sacrifices on each of Israel's special days. He called these sacrifices "My offerings . . . my bread . . . for my sacrifices . . . for a sweet savor unto me . . ." (28:1-2). There are 71 verses in these two chapters. Eight time settings are described. Thirteen verses in this section address sin offerings, and 58 verses are occupied with the sweet savor offerings. It was the sweet offerings that God considers his bread. **The prince of the sweet offerings is the burnt offering.** In chapter 29:1, the burnt offering is the first in the list followed by the grain offering. It was the burnt offering in which God took special delight. It is mentioned in this section over thirty times.

What is so special with the burnt offering and what does it have to do with the joy of the Lord?

In a very special way, *the burnt offering foreshadowed the deep devotion of Christ to his Father.* In view is not Christ as a sin-bearer, but Christ as the One totally and completely devoted to the will of the

Father. He is the servant with the pierced ear who loves His Master (Psalm 40:8): “Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; **mine ears hast thou pierced**: burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required. Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book *it is* written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law *is* within my heart.”

What interest this must be for Heaven--one man on earth totally devoted to doing the total will of God from first to last without reserve, without regret, and without retreat. The joy of the Lord, then, is none other than His obedient, devoted, Son. On the 1st of Tishri, as the offerings burned on the altar, the shadows and fragrance of His Son passed before the Father on that day. God's heart was filled with joy at the remembrance of His Son who was “obedient unto death” (Philippians 2:10-12).

It is not our tears, our grief, or our sorrow that captures the heart of God. It is not our frail, fractured, faulty devotion that delights His soul. How could our skimpy, shallow, inconsistent obedience amaze God? It is not our fickle, patchy, and spurious devotion that brings joy to the Father. Rather, what delights Him is the self-emptying Christ, the total devotion of the Son to His will. Who can comprehend the love played out by Son at the cross towards His father? Who can enter into their pain and pleasure, their joy and sorrow, their admiration for each other and their hate for sin? This perfect love and obedience the Son unto death is something only the Father fully knows and appreciates. This is His joy. His joy is His beloved Son.

Now you can see what went wrong on the 1st of Tishri in Nehemiah’s day. While the Father was in the temple enjoying the shadows of the Son in the ashes of the burnt, the people were occupied with their sins and failures as a nation. Instead of rejoicing in the obedience of Christ as foreshadowed in the burnt offering, they were depressed over their own disobedience.

LESSONS FOR US

Joy comes, therefore, not when we are occupied with our failures, but when we are occupied with the victories of the Son. It is improper for God’s people to afflict themselves when the Father is rejoicing in His Son. It is twisted worship that looks within instead of looking up at Christ. It is a perversion to be occupied with our sins when we should be occupied with Jesus. It should be our aim to adore that in which God is most pleased—the Son.

The great thought here is what Christ is to God, and not so much what Christ has done for us in meeting our needs at Calvary. Though He died for our sins, that is not the key thought behind the burnt offering. The great thought here is not our devotion to God or the lack thereof, but the devotion of the Son and what His motivation means to the Father. When we are able to enter into the delights of God about His Son, then we will begin to know something about the joy of the Lord. ***The joy of the Lord comes to us from God when we take our eyes off ourselves and off our failures, and choose to rejoice in the success of His Son.***

Secondly, man's great need is not more devotion to God or self-esteem or making better choices, but to get outside of self and to understand the joy the Father has in His Son. We need to escape from the

gravitational pull of a self-centeredness and the wretchedness within, and to understand the delight the Father has in One man who was totally and completely obedient to him--obedient unto death, even the death on the cross.

Do you ever feel bad that you are not more holy and more loving and more devoted? The next time you feel like beating yourself for your failure, consider this: The joy of the Lord is your strength. Your joy is not in your victory, but His victory. Your joy is not in your devotion, but His devotion. Your joy is not in yourself, but in Another—the Lord Jesus Christ. It pleases the Father when you enjoy His Son and are thankful for Who He is and what He accomplished through His pure devotion to God. When you fail, rejoice that He never failed. When you blow it, rejoice that Jesus never blew it. This is the joy of the Lord, and this is your strength.

12.10 THE PASCHAL SEH

“The Passover Lamb”

As thunder of judgment rumbled along the Nile Valley, the face of death appeared in the dark, gray clouds. During the blackness of the night, death rained upon Egypt.

By morning, all the firstborn would be dead. Gloom and depression crept through the Land of the Pyramids like a Seattle fog. No family was exempt. The Judge of all Mankind determined to “by no means to clear the guilty” (Exodus 34:7).

However, one community escaped the shroud of death—the tribes of Israel. The difference between the Egyptians and the Israel was not a moral one, but a religious one—blood sacrifice. Like the Egyptians, the Israelites had all the fractures and flaws of humanity. Why were the Israelites spared and the Egyptians not spared? Simply because of the blood of the Pascal lamb. Blood is the basis of redemption.

You can understand the shadows of the Passover by letting the light of the cross shine upon this event.

No passage of Scripture prefigures the death of Christ better than Exodus 12. The Passover is a wonderful shadow announcing the coming of God’s Lamb.

THE FIRST PASSOVER

“And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron . . .” (12:1):

Moses and Aaron represent Israel's civil and ecclesiastic authority.

The Passover was not something created by man for man. The Lord instituted the feast because of His sovereignty and love. Obeying the instructions given for the Passover saved the nation. Because God instructed His people on the means of salvation, this chapter ought to be of tremendous interest to us as it

is a mammoth illustration of the wonders of Christ and the glories of His accomplishments at the cross effecting our salvation.

Moreover, the Passover became a pivotal sacrament that not only saved the nation, but the memorialization of the Passover became a landmark festival in the life of the nation -- a festival that found its perfection in the cross and remembrance of Christ during the Breaking of the Bread (1 Corinthians 11:17ff).

Exodus 12:1-2 And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, This month *shall be* unto you the beginning of months: it *shall be* the first month of the year to you.

The Passover changed the Jewish calendar. The First of Nisan marked the beginning of Israel's redemptive history and was the first month in Israel's religious calendar. Likewise, the coming of Christ to this earth changed the world calendar. History is signed, not from his death, but from his birth. We live in *Anno Domini*, the year of our Lord. Furthermore, life begins, not when one is born, but when one is reborn.

3 Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth *day* of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of *their* fathers, a lamb for an house:

On the 10th day of Nisan, every family selected a lamb (*sey*) from the flock and marked it for death. The lamb was inspected for four days, and then slain. Likewise, the Lord Jesus was foreordained to be God's Lamb before the foundation of the world (1 Peter 1:29). About four years before His death, John the Baptist singled out Christ among the Hebrews and said, "Behold the Lamb of God . . ." (John 1:29).

4 And if the household be too little for the lamb, let him and his neighbor next unto his house take *it* according to the number of the souls; every man according to his eating shall make your count for the lamb.

Notice that *the term "lamb" is in the singular*. Though many lambs were slain on Passover night, there is only one lamb in view. Even though many lambs were slain throughout Israel's history, there is only one Lamb capable of taking away sins. All the shadows of Israel's bloody religion point to the True Lamb. Furthermore, *notice the sufficiency of the lamb*. The question was not whether the lamb was too small for the house, but whether the household was "too little" for the lamb. God's Lamb is sufficient to deal with the sins of single **man** (Abel), or of an entire **family** (Exodus 12), or of an entire **nation** (Leviticus 15-16), or of the sins of the whole **world** (John 1:29).

5 Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take *it* out from the sheep, or from the goats:

The lamb had to be *perfect*. It could not be lame, blind, or sick. A lamb with a defect was to be rejected. Only a perfect sacrifice can satisfy the claims of a perfect God. This lamb typifies the "Beloved Son" who was without "blemish and without spot" (1 Peter 1:19). The lamb had to be a *yearling male*. It was young

and not old; young, but not immature. When the Lord Jesus died on Calvary, he died at the peak of his manhood.

6 And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening.

The lamb was selected on the 10th day and then watched for four days. *The four days* were a time of inspection. Four is the number for testing. Our Lord Jesus was tested for 40 days in the wilderness. His test was not designed to search for weakness, but to show us His perfections, i.e. His temptation was not arranged to see if He would sin, but to prove to us that He could not sin. Christ was presented to the nation in 29 A.D. and was crucified in the 4th year of His ministry in 32 A.D. The Jews had four years to inspect the Lamb of God. Also, it is true that the Lord Jesus Christ appeared to the nation for inspection on Palm Sunday (the 10th of Nissan) four days before he was crucified on Wednesday, the 14th of Nissan. Without a lamb no man can survive judgment.

Though each family head slew a lamb to protect their families. We see here that the lamb was slain representatively for *the whole congregation*. In view is a single lamb slain for God's people. This lamb was killed between 3:00 and 6:00 PM on the evening of the 14th day. Likewise, the Lord Jesus died for His people on the cross at 3:00 PM in the afternoon on the 14th of Nissan, Wednesday, 32 A.D.

7 And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper doorpost of the houses, wherein they shall eat it.

Once the lamb was slain, the blood was poured into a bowl and applied to the door frame on the house—above the door and on the two sides. It was not enough to have a dead lamb. Its blood had to be painted on the house. Blood above and beside reminds us of the cross. Blood flowed from his brow, his hands, and his feet. When the blood was applied to the door frame, the Hebrews unknowingly made the sign of the cross.

8 And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; and with bitter herbs they shall eat it.

Roasting speaks of suffering. At the cross, all the suffering of the Savior was compressed in his statement, "I thirst." The Passover lamb was to be eaten. Eating speaks of fellowship. The blood protected Israel from dangers on the outside, but the flesh provided nourishment for those on the inside. The lamb not only saved them, but satisfied them. Christ not only saves us, He sustains us. His blood secures us for eternity, and his sacrifice supports us for our pilgrim journey. Christ is not only to be taken as a Savior, but to be enjoyed as food for the soul. Unleavened bread speaks of separation from evil—a lifetime of repentance. Christ can only be enjoyed when the Christian separates from the world to fellowship with Him (Hebrews 13:13). God used the taste of bitter herbs to arouse sorrow. We can only fellowship with his sufferings when we remember that it was our sins that caused his death.

9 Eat not of it raw, nor sodden at all with water, but roast *with fire*; his head with his legs, and with the parts thereof.

Fire is a symbol of judgment. Roasting the flesh is a shadow pointing to the suffering of the Savior, not at the hands of men, but at the hands of God. On the cross, the Lord Jesus tasted the cup of wrath for our sins. “He became sin for us” (2 Corinthians 5:21). The Israelites were told *to eat the roasted lamb*. Likewise, Christians are to feed where the fires have burned, i.e., to receive strength from cross. All the benefits of salvation are available to us through the death, burial, and resurrection of our Lord. Though the cross brought death to Jesus, it brings life to us. Strength comes when we understand the height, and depth, and width of God’s love revealed at Calvary.

10 And ye shall let nothing of it remain until the morning; and that which remaineth of it until the morning ye shall burn with fire.

The lamb was to be eaten the same night it was slain. Likewise, fellowship with Christ must not be separated from the accomplishments of redemption. Strength for the pilgrim life comes when an understanding of the cross. As we feed on the virtues of Christ and his accomplishments, we are strengthened in the faith. Communion with Christ is based on light from the gospel. The further removed we are from the cross, the less light we enjoy. Wealth of fellowship is based on our appreciation of the Lamb. Leanness of soul is associated with distance from the sacrifice.

Hebrews 12:3 For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.

11 And thus shall ye eat it; *with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand*; and ye shall eat it in haste: it is the LORD’S Passover.

Israel must not only be saved from the death angel, but from Egypt. Likewise, believers must not only be saved from wrath, but from the world. *Girded loins* speak of mental and moral preparation to leave Egypt (the world). Lust-like-thorns threaten to snag and tear the soul. The pilgrim must have his loins girded (1 Peter 2:11). Having *sandals* on the feet speak of preparedness to obey and follow Christ in the walk of fellowship. *The staff* is a symbol of the pilgrim journey. It reminds us that we are but pilgrims and strangers on this earth, citizens of heaven, and that life is but a journey to the Heavenly City. *Eating in haste* was another command designed to help Israel understand the nearness of redemption.

Notice that this is called the “Lord’s Passover” (Pesach of the LORD). This title points to the merits of Christ as one who not only satisfies man’s need, but satisfies the claims of holiness. There are two sides to redemption: (a) the Divine Side, and (b) the human side. As God’s Lamb, Jesus was the perfect lamb who was fully qualified to bear God’s judgment against sin. As God’s Pesach, He satisfied the claims of law; that is, God was propitiated in Christ. As our Lamb, Jesus died as our substitute so we could be set free from God’s judgment. If Christ died for our sins, how many sins are left for us to pay for? What a Savior!!

12 For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD.

Passover night was a judgment on Egypt. No family was immune from punishment! Even Israel was not spared. The difference was, however, that Israel had a substitute bear that punishment for them. In a prairie fire, it is safe to stand where the fire has burned. Stand near the cross and when judgment falls on the “living and the dead”, you will be spared.

13 And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt.

The phrase “pass over” (pasach) implies “to protect” more than it does “to skip over.” The participial form of *pasach* (X;SOP') is found in Isaiah 31:5 where God's protection of Israel is compared to a mother bird who shelters her young when under attack.

Israel was spared, not because they were morally superior to the Egyptians, but because they were protected by blood.. When judgment came, it mattered not whether the house was a mansion or a shack. God's eye was not upon the house, but upon the blood. Furthermore, it mattered not whether the residents were good or bad. His eye was not upon the people inside the house, but upon the blood. It mattered not how reformed the soul. His eye was on the doorposts, not the heart. The promise to protect was not based on quality of life, but upon the application of blood to the residence. Likewise, the locus of salvation is not the heart of man but the cross of Calvary.

14 And this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to the LORD throughout your generations; ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance forever.

So important was this day in Israel's history that He appointed it to be a yearly memorial for the nation as a family worship service. The Passover symbolized Israel's redemption from slavery in Egypt and was instituted to prepare Israel to receive God's Lamb as the means to “eternal salvation”. Interestingly, keeping of the feast is only mentioned about seven times in Scripture. Since the True Passover Lamb has been slain in history, there is no need to keep on memorializing the shadow. Since *Yeshua* (Jesus) fulfilled the symbol and obtained “eternal salvation” for us, we should remember him in the communion service. He is the “end of the law” (Romans 10:4); that is, He is the fulfillment of every OT shadow and type. The simplicity of the Lord's Supper replaced this festival for those who are splattered with the blood of Christ. Here, sweet thoughts about the virtues of our Lord Jesus Christ and the accomplishments of redemption feed the soul. Why return to the shadows when one can enjoy the light? The Lord's Passover was to be memorialized by the Hebrews until the appearance of the true Lamb in history. Now that Christ has come, we are to remember His eternal redemption and not Israel's political deliverance from Egypt. Moreover, to return to the shadows and to forsake the Lord's Supper is a denial of the accomplishments of the Passover Lamb. Is it not?

15-17 Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread; even the first day ye shall put away leaven out of your houses: for whosoever eateth leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel. And in the first day *there shall be* an holy convocation, and in the seventh day there shall be an holy convocation to you; no manner of work shall be done in them, save *that* which every man must eat, that only may be done of you. And ye shall observe *the feast of unleavened bread*; for in this selfsame day have I brought your armies out of the land of Egypt: therefore shall ye observe this day in your generations by an ordinance forever.

Closely associated with the Passover is *the Feast of Unleavened Bread*. From the 15th of Nisan until the 22nd of Nisan, the Hebrew was forbidden to eat leavened bread. Leaven is a frequent symbol of evil (1 Corinthians 5:2-6). Like leaven, sin works while hidden and concealed. Having been saved by the blood, Israel was required to clean house. What *substitution* is to the Passover, *holiness* is to the Feast of Unleavened Bread. The Feast of Unleavened Bread represents the responsibility of redeemed men to identify hidden sins and to separate from evil during the course of this present evil age. "Purge out the old leaven," said Paul. Christians are to feed on the sweetness of Christ, not the pleasures of this world.

1 Corinthians 5:7-8 Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us: Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity(probity) and truth (in the sunshine without concealment).

THE ALL SUFFICIENT LAMB

Christianity is a bloody religion. It is different from Judaism and Islam in that these religions believe one is saved by doing good deeds. Christianity informs the world that men must be saved by blood . . . by the blood of a Lamb.

- There is a lamb sufficient to pay for the sins of one man (Genesis 4).
- There is a lamb sufficient to protect an entire family (Exodus 12). [Note the use of the singular "lamb" at the Passover]
- There is a lamb sufficient to provide for the sins of a nation which was offered on the Day of Atonement or Yom Kippur (Leviticus 16)
- There is a lamb sufficient to pay for the sins of the world (John 1:29).

John 1:29 The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"

Blood is the currency of the spirit world, and when the Lord Jesus died on Calvary, He shed His blood for you . . . and it is sufficient to pay for all your sins . . . even for the ones of which you are most ashamed.

Hebrews 9:14 how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.

Are you stained by sin? There is a Lamb's blood that can make you white as snow.

If Christ paid for all your sins and God accepted His sacrifice by raising Him from the dead to sit at His right hand, how many sins are there left for you and I to pay for?

Peace comes, not by doing more, by believing in the sufficiency of the blood sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Lamb of God Lyrics

Your only Son, no sin to hide
But You have sent Him from Your side
To walk upon this guilty sod
And to become the Lamb of God

Your gift of love, they crucified
They laughed and scorned Him as He died
The humble King, they named a fraud
And sacrificed the Lamb of God

Oh, Lamb of God, sweet Lamb of God
I love the holy Lamb of God
Oh, wash me in Your precious blood
My Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God

I was so lost, I should have died
But You have brought me to Your side
To be led by Your staff and rod
And to be called a lamb of God

See Twila Paris - Lamb Of God Lyrics | MetroLyrics

Israel was delivered from God's judgment, not because they were superior to the Egyptians, but because the blood of a lamb protected them. Millions of lambs were slain in Israel's history. This bloody religion pointed to the fact that salvation is not based on man's goodness or upon man's effort to please God, but upon the protection of blood. It is not enough to be religious; one must find shelter under the doorposts sprinkled with innocent blood. God's Lamb appeared in history and shed his blood to save sinners. If you will trust Christ to protect you from the coming wrath, the Holy Spirit will apply the merits of His bloody death to your life. "It is appointed unto man once to die, and after this the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27).

Religions like Islam or Hinduism or Buddhism will not protect you on the Day of Judgment. But, the blood of Christ will! Are your doorposts splattered with the blood of God's Lamb?

12.11 THE ASHAM OFFERING

GUILT AND RECONCILIATION WITH GOD

(Guilt Offering)

Leviticus 6

INTRODUCTION

In the Prison Fellowship newsletter, *Jubilee*, Charles Colson told of a young boy who became excessively fearful during the great New York blackout of 1977. He became so fearful, he did not want to go outside and play. He hid in his room and avoided contact with family and friends. When his parents questioned their son about his sudden change in behavior, he confessed that at the exact moment the lights went out, he had kicked a power line pole. As darkness engulfed the city, he thought he was to blame and would be punished. Shakespeare said, "The mind of guilt is full of scorpions." Wordsworth said that from the body of one guilty deed a thousand ghostly fears haunt the soul. Guilt in the soul is like rust upon iron that corrodes and destroys it. Guilt is like a whip that bites and stings the flesh. Bryron wrote,

"Oh, that pang, where more than madness lies, the worm that will not sleep, and never dies."

It is a terrible thing to be stalked by the judgment of a holy God. How can one possibly escape.

MAN'S SOLUTION

I recently read a document by two psychologists that have apparently counseled many people with guilt. They define guilt as "feeling of responsibility . . . feelings of regret or remorse . . . or feelings of bewilderment" but not once do they suggest that guilt is actually more than a feeling that involves true condemnation before God. Further, they offer five humanistic ways of managing guilt including recognizing the role of guilt in one's life, redefining the problem, giving the problem back to the one who caused it, and other humanistic instructions. They treated the "guilty" as victim instead of an irresponsible predator. Not once, however, did they suggest that guilt reflects failure to respond to God, or that the person might actually be guilty before God. I did agree, however, that guilt is a horrible tormentor.

THE GREAT QUESTION

Israel escaped enslavement in Egypt from the oppression of its Pharonic government by the blood of the lamb and the power of God splitting the Red Sea. But, is there freedom from the guilt-ridden soul? The

word “conscience” means “with knowledge.” The conscience is to man what a smoke alarm is to a homeowner. Man can never have peace until he knows how his Creator will dispose of him. When man contemplates his own disposal, and the fact that he must stand before this omniscient, holy Being, the heart is naturally filled with fear and guilt. On what grounds can a haunted conscience find rest? Looking down the corridors of history and hearing the heart’s pain and longing, God graciously provided a way to restore peace to the guilt-torn conscience. God loves freedom, and this chapter is about freedom from guilt and fear.

Before us is a shadow, a type of one facet of the power of the death of Christ—the power to cleanse and restore peace to a guilty conscience.

THE TERM “GUILT”

When an Israelite offended God, he could satisfy the claims of divine holiness by bringing a trespass offering. The trespass offering is also called the “guilt offering” (אָשָׁם, *asham*) in Leviticus 6:6. The word *asham* means “guilt.” The first time the word *asham* is used in Scripture is in reference to Abimelech chastising Isaac for calling Rebecca his sister (Genesis 26:10). Abimelech feared condemnation would fall on him or one of his people because of a breach of moral conduct. Guilt is that screeching voice inside the soul that condemns a man for trespassing on one of God’s moral absolutes. This is not just a “guilty feeling” but true guilt. We have all heard *asham*’s cry—the cry that we are guilty and deserve punishment. “The soul that sins shall die,” says the Lord (Ezekiel 18:4). The issue before the Israelite was not only freedom from guilt feelings but freedom from God’s judgment and promised punishment. “Do the crime, pay the time.”

When an Israelite responded to this knowledge, the man could bring an *asham offering* to the priest to propitiate YHWH.

TWO CLAIMS

Two thoughts are before us: ***a trespass against the Lord and a trespass against man.*** Defrauding men is portrayed as a sin against the Lord. We have an amazing ability to bifurcate our relationship to God from our relationship to our neighbors. The transgressor needed to open his eyes and see that his crimes against others were due to his sin and neglect and disobedience to his God. Even though the sin might have been done through ignorance, it could not be passed over. God can forgive all kinds of sins, but He cannot pass them over. Because He is gracious, He can forgive sin; but because He is holy, he cannot pass over a single sin. Iniquity can be blotted out, but it cannot be overlooked. Here, **the transgressor was called upon to satisfy the claim of God upon him.**

Secondly, the transgressor had to address the claim of his neighbor upon him. *The trespass offering not only recognizes the claims of God against a sinner, but the claims of the injured against the transgressor.* Man is prone to disregard the claims of men in divine affairs. Man has a tendency to bifurcate his relationship to God from his fellow man. Having suffered the loss to the transgressor’s

oppression, the offended was shackled to his own demons of anger and fear. He too needed to experience freedom. It was not only the transgressor's job to seek personal freedom, but to free his neighbor by restoring all that was lost through the transgressor's fraud. The transgressor not only needed to satisfy God's claim against him, but to satisfy his neighbor's claim against him first.

SEVEN STEPS TO FREEDOM

When the Samurai in Japan failed and shame filled their soul, they escaped the pain by committing suicide. Guilt not only threatens one's eternal destiny, but one's temporal happiness. The Great Redeemer loves His people and does not want any of His people to be in bondage to the horrors of guilt and so provided a way to be free of guilt.

You can experience freedom from the horrors of guilt by taking the following steps.

Step One: Confession:

The transgressor had to acknowledge his guilt.

“When a person sins and acts unfaithfully against the LORD, and deceives his companion . . . and becomes guilty, he shall restore“ (6:1-4).

The word “sins” (*aj'êx/t*, *tehetaah*) means “to miss the way.” One time I was driving in Chicago on a the freeway, and I missed the turn off to my destination. After two hours of wandering the deserted streets in some ghetto, I managed to find my way back to my turnoff. “Missing the turn off” is our word for “sins.” Several sins are mentioned: deceit, robbery, extortion, and lying in order to defraud a man of wealth.

Notice, God is addressing an offender, not a victim. There is a lesson for us here. As long as men and women play the victim, there is no means of restoration. Salvation is for sinners, not victims.

The word “unfaithful” (*hl'î(m')*, *maal*) is the priestly word for “treachery.” It refers to an act of adultery or unfaithfulness in a covenant relationship. We are not talking about the petty hurts and pains we experience in the hustle and bustle of life, but an act of treachery that damages a person or their property. When a person was guilty of an act of treachery, he offended a holy God.

The text uses the term “when” (*yK*, *ki*) and illustrates a truth that it is not a matter of “if” a man sins, but “when” he sins. God knew that each Israelite would at some time during his life break God's law and become shackled to guilt (*asham*). When he became guilty (*asham*), the sinner needed an *asham* offering. The term *asham* is translated “condemned” several places in the OT (Psalm 34:22, 23). Without awareness of sin, the sinner could not satisfy the claims of a holy God. It is a wonderful thing to be aware that one has sinned. Without the knowledge of sin, one will never take the proper steps toward restoration. The text is not addressing those with guilt feelings, but those with true guilt, whether one feels it or not.

Step Two: Instructions.

The freedom seeker had to follow God's instructions. He was not to make up his own religion or to find his own way to God. God knows how to satisfy His own holiness, and He provided a way for the Israelite to be restored. Fig leaves are not acceptable. Vegetables will not do. The Lord God has provided a way for men to get right with Him.

Step three: Restitution.

The transgressor had to satisfy the claim of neighbor against him. "He shall restore" (6:4) what was lost or stolen or taken. The word "restore" (שָׁלַם, shalem) is our word "restitution." Before the sinning Israelite attempted to address the claims of God, the sinner had to get right with his fellow man by repairing the damage done. When a man steals or damages the property of another, the injured had a right to compensation. The transgressor not only sinned against God, he sinned against his brother. God instructed the transgressor to go to his brother and say, "I have stolen some money from you" and I am returning it to you. He had to address the claim of his fellow Israelite. Until he restored what he defrauded, he could not pray, confess, or seek forgiveness from God. And, this is what is missing in today's church—the **principle of restitution**. When is the last time you have heard a counselor say, "Go get right with your brother before you confess your sins to God?"

Step Four: Compensation.

The transgressor had to pay compensatory damages for pain and suffering to his neighbor. Restitution meant that not only did the sinner have to restore what was lost, but to pay compensatory damages by adding 20% of the value to the payback. The principle here is that sin causes collateral damage. Not only did the injured lose money, but he lost sleep and peace. Adding 20% to the payback was designed to minister to the pain caused by the deception. Likewise, when we injure others by what we say and do, we need to do the best we can to repair the damage done. This may involve something as simple as listening to the injured party express their pain and anguish over our actions, or it may involve paying money to repair the damage done.

PERSONAL ILLUSTRATIONS

When I was a little boy, everyone with long hair and a skirt was considered an enemy. One day my friend and I were tossing dirt clods at two girls that lived next door. A bad shot, my clod hit the living room window and knocked a hole in it. We fled the scene and hid in the back alley for about two or three hours. The rumor around the neighborhood was my friend, Bill, tossed the rock that hit the window. But, I knew differently. Overwhelmed with grief, I told my Dad. Dad listened and instructed me that I had to pay for the window. Crying profusely and with four silver dollars in my hand, Dad led me to go next-door and fess' up. With the window paid for, the man forgave me. Forgiven, strawberry joy filled my soul. I will never forget the lesson.

Recently, I needed to apply that lesson again. A friend sent me a newsletter containing some valuable legal research. After several months, he wrote me and asked for it back. I looked for hours, but for the life of me I could not find it. I was greatly distressed over the ordeal because I did not want to fail this man. In order to reconcile, I sent him two books I had on the same subject and fifty dollars for pain and anguish. I called the publisher and paid ten dollars to have the same newsletter sent to my friend. My carelessness cost me ninety dollars, but I have a clear conscience I did the best I could to restore what was lost and to restore trust.

Step Five: Mediation.

The transgressor needed a priest. The transgressor needed a priest to help him be reconciled with God. In his sin, he was not qualified to approach God or to offer a sacrifice for his own cause. Likewise, sinners need a NT priest to help them to be restored to God. It is sheer arrogance for men to think they can get right with God without the help of another.

Step Six: Propitiation. The sinner had to bring an *asham offering* to the priest. The purpose of the ram was to make atonement for the sinner. The word “atonement” is the same word as “propitiate” in Romans 3:25. The idea behind the term *propitiation* is appeasement of the wrath of God. When a sinner breaks God’s law, he offends God’s holiness. Only by the shedding of blood, could justice be served. Blood shedding satisfied the claims of holiness.

Step Seven: Appropriation.

The freedom seeker had to appropriate the joy of forgiveness by faith. With the claims of man and the claims of God settled, the man was promised forgiveness (6:7). His assurance of forgiveness rested on the fact that God’s instructions satisfied the claims of His holiness. Likewise, faith is the key to the guilt stricken conscience. A man will not find peace by following the dictates of his conscience or by transferring blame to others. For no matter how sensitive his conscience may be, he will exclude something God demands or tolerate something God forbids. But, having followed God’s instructions instead of his own ways, the believing soul could find rest in the promise of God.

Hebrews ten informs that for all this blood shedding, not one sin could be erased. Removal of sin did not happen until the true Sacrifice appeared in history. It was the blood of Jesus that made propitiation on behalf of the sinner. God was never pleased with animal sacrifice, but He was pleased with His Lamb on Calvary. Because God is pleased with the substitutionary work of His Son, every sinner can experience liberation from the bondage of guilt. In fact the word “redemption” (*avpolutrw,sewj*) means “to be set free” and it is built on the foundation of propitiation (Romans 3:24, 25).

THE PRIESTLY PORTION

Let us close with one more interesting tidbit from Leviticus 7:6. Once the *asham* was slain, the priest who served the transgressor was awarded a portion of the *asham* to eat. Here the priest was maintained by the sacrifice. Because the priest worked hard in an effort to restore the Israelite to God and man, he was

rewarded with meat from the altar. There is a lesson for us here. It is priestly work to liberate individual sinners by restoring transgressors to God and man on the ground of propitiation. It takes spiritual energy to make another's sin problem one's own and an enormous degree of priestly energy to help reconcile men to God. How can a Christian have the energy to visit and pray and counsel transgressors? Only by feeding on the energies of Christ and the accomplishments of redemption! Those who huddle around the cross arise to be leaders in the church of Jesus Christ.

In conclusion, is guilt at work in your soul? Don't go to a psychologist. Find a NT priest. Confess your sins; make restitution where possible; flee to the cross, and beg Heaven's mercy. God forgives sinners when they come to the fount for cleansing power. Judaism was a bloody, gruesome religion. For nearly 1500 years the blood of lambs flowed on Israel's ancient altars. All of this throat slitting, entrails burning, and blood sprinkling was merely a shadow to prepare mankind for the Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world (John 1:2).

12.12 TORAH TSARATH

“THE LAW FOR LEPROUS DISEASE”

Before us is a huge lesson on sin, sanctification, and church discipline.

PURIFICATION OF THE LEPROUS HOUSE

The cleansing of the house tainted by leprosy contains many valuable lessons for the engaged Christian man that begs to be studied. A brief summary is provided here.

The God of the Bible loves clean (rh:Üj: *taher*). When Isaiah received his vision, the angels proclaimed, “Holy, holy, holy” (vAdßq' vAdßq' vAdßq': kadosh, kadosh, kadosh) is the LORD God Almighty. The holiness of God, not the love of God, was announced.

The instruction in Leviticus 14 is about the necessity of clean bodies, clean clothes, and clean houses. It anticipates a time when Israelites will enjoy the light of victory and inhabit Canaan. Canaan is not a perfect land. It also anticipated a day when Israelites would despair in the gloom of darkness because of a plague of leprosy (mildew) sent by God to humble his people—a plague -- a discipline ordered by God upon his disobedient children with a deeper purpose of showing them how to deal with their sins.

All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness that the man of God may be perfect (2 Timothy 3:16); and, Leviticus 14 is no exception.

Which of us has not felt despair due to our own sin? The sinning heart has no happiness. The conscience screams with pain because sin has pierced its peace. The mind rages with doubts about God’s love; emotions turn dark and ugly; like a wounded warrior in a Roman coliseum, the body is drained of strength. The sleep of death appears to be a friend.

But, God does not permit despair to rule his own. There is hope even for the most leprous heart. Before us is a home ravaged by a deadly mildew which the King James version labels “leprosy.”

The Lord used leprosy as an illustration to us on how contagious sin can be, and how the home infected by the deadly mold can be cleansed and free—a home where the sounds of joy and happiness can be heard again.

Let us read verse Leviticus 14:33-57. This section takes us to the ceremony of the sacrifice of the two turtle doves, a wonderful and beautiful type the death, burial, and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We will look at the steps involved in cleansing a house of leprosy / mildew and how it applies to the Christian. The lesson on cleansing a house of leprosy / mildew is a vivid illustration on how Christians need to clean up their lives which is so often infected by sin (sanctification).

STEPS OF TAHER (CLEANSING)

STEP ONE

The owner had to recognize the mold of fungus growing in his home.

Leprosy whether it literally be a mold or fungus is a picture of sin that can infect our habits, our house, and those that live with us. Mold grows in the darkness, while sunshine is the best disinfectant. The problem in our lives is not primarily economic, but fundamentally spiritual—the spread of sin (leprosy) in our home. Sin is contagious. It contaminates the man and it impacts members of his household. Unless identified, marked, and removed, it can destroy entire families.

God loves clean. We need to be clean. Our house needs to be clean. When sin breaks out, we need to remove tainted stones lest sin increase and contaminate entire communities.

Though the Israelite was out of Egypt and in the land of Canaan, leprosy could still affect his life. Likewise, though a person has been redeemed by Christ, he can still sin. Sin can impact him and others; and if not guarded, can lead to his house being condemned.

So the first step involved in a problem is to identify sin in one's life or home.

STEP TWO

God required the owner to call a priest for help.

The homeowner was not competent to address his mildew problem. He had to call a priest. He needed an objective, third party expert to inspect the house and determine breadth and depth of the problem.

The lesson tells us about human nature. If the homeowner had been permitted to resolve his mildew problem, he more than likely would choose the quickest, cheapest, most superficial remedy possible. And, the plague would keep coming back and coming back and coming back.

Likewise with Christians! When Christians sin and there is a habit of sin in a family, they need the help of an objective, experienced, qualified pastor / priest. Like the Israelite homeowner, will choose the quickest, cheapest, least burdensome way to deal with deep sins in their lives. "I am sorry," comes to mind. When it comes to sin, sinners are not competent in identifying sin, defining the particulars, and proscribing a remedy. Further, Christians seem to know little about deep repentance, and the spiritual reconstruction needed to rebuild one's house after sin has been identified.

During the Baltimore riots in 2015, Fox News asked Dr. Keith Ablow, psychologist, what he thought the problem was in the black community. He said the reason the black youths burned buildings and looted stores was because of a lacked self-esteem. Such wrong diagnoses are common among secular humanists.

When sin breaks out in our lives, we need a priest. The Lord Jesus is our priest (Hebrews 2:17; 4:14; 6:20; 8:1-4; 9:7, 11, 25), but our Lord often uses his ministers on earth to assist in this process. When sin impacts relationships, asking for the help of a qualified man of God is something many Christians have a hard time doing, but it is often necessary when sin prevails in the home.

STEP THREE

God ordered the priest to inspect the house and mark off the infected areas.

God ordered all the furnishing in the house to be removed so a thorough inspection could occur. Just as the priest had to identify the contamination, its depth and breath, sin within Christians must be identified, evaluated, and marked. A wrong diagnosis could be fatal and expensive. It is not sufficient to call sin a mistake or error. Areas of sins must be identified whether they be sins of the spirit, sins of the emotions, or sins of the body (Galatians 5:19-24). Specific sins and violations of the Ten Commandments should be marked. Once catalogued, they can be properly repented of and judged.

If the infected area are not marked and eliminated, the poisonous mildew could spread to the rest of the house.

By way of illustration, take a look at Judges 1:24-26. The Canaanites were under condemnation. Israelites were commanded to kill all of them because the society had degenerated to a point that rehabilitation was impossible. When they came to a city of Luz, they let an informant escape. Notice that they let the one man go. What does he do. He goes out and builds another city just like the old one. Thus, they let one man go, he rebuilt an immoral, godless Canaanite city just like the one Israel destroyed. The lesson is clear: let one sin go, and it multiplies.

STEP FOUR

The house was quarantined for seven days.

Once the mildew was identified and marked with chalk, the house was quarantined. After a week, the priest would return to see if the spores had spread. There was no need to dismantle the entire house, only the infected parts. In other words, the priest needed to know what kind of leprosy / blight was growing in the home in order to make sure that during the deconstruction stage, all infected stones could be removed.

Likewise, those involved in the care of souls need to know the know the complexities that active sin is causing in the heart, mind, and soul of people; how it is being transmitted and spread; and, how it affects others.

STEP FIVE

The priest re-inspected the house to see if the mold / leprosy had spread.

Likewise, the shepherd of souls must be vigilant to inspect those under his care in order to determine if sin is at work among the flock.

STEP SIX

After the second inspection, the priest ordered the infected stones to be removed and the house scraped, scrubbed, and cleansed.

We can only imagine the amount of intense labor, time, and money it took to wheelbarrow contaminated stones out of the city, and to scrape the debris out of the home. We are talking about long hours of tedious, backbreaking work.

The lesson for us is that sin must be repented of deeply. God not only calls the sinner to confess his sins, but to “forsake his way” (Isaiah 55:7). Just as the Israelite priest ordered the removal of every infected stone from the house, sinful habits must be removed stone by stone in the sanctification process lest its leaven take possession of the whole man and his house.

The deconstruction of the house educates us about true repentance, deep repentance, and thorough repentance.

By way of illustration: a woman person came into a pastor’s office one day to tell him she wanted to get right with God. After an intense discussion, the woman confessed to having lived a very immoral life. Thirteen other lovers were involved. The pastor called in his secretary as a witness and spent the rest of the day calling these lovers, confessing sin, and assisting her in breaking off relationships. She wrote letters to three or four that could not be contacted. The pastor’s secretary stamped and mailed them. The next day, the pastor called in his secretary again to witness the woman spend two hours in prayer confessing all related sins. Afterward, the pastor spent time discussing God’s Word, the cross, and forgiveness. Having removed the infected stones in her life, the pastor pronounced her clean. He then called an older sister in the Lord, and introduced her to the young woman. The two agreed to meet together for a period of time to work on her Christian walk. This is repentance; this is dealing with sin deeply and thoroughly.

STEP SEVEN

The home owner had to repair the damaged areas, bring in new stones, and re-plaster the remodeled areas.

The lesson here is that not only must a sinner repent and forsake his sins, he must rebuild his house on different principles—principles based on the Word of God. God’s thoughts must replace man’s thoughts; new paths of obedience must replace the habits of sins.

STEP EIGHT

After the house was repaired, the home remained under surveillance. After a period of time, the priest returned to inspect the house.

If the mildew fungus / leprosy returned, the priest condemned the entire house, and ordered it to be deconstructed, and all the stones carried outside the city (Leviticus 14:45). This was necessary to protect the rest of the city. It can be compared to the NT instruction on excommunicating believers who continue to practice leprosy sins (1 Corinthians 5:1ff).

This ought to scare the heave jeeves out of every responsible Christian man. There is sin that leads to death (1 John 5:16).

If the leprosy / mold did not return, the LORD God instructed the priest to accept the renovation, and then perform the Ceremony of the Two Turtle Doves—a type of our Lord Jesus Christ. Though practically cleansed, the cleansing was not complete without the Ceremony of the Turtle Doves.

STEP NINE

The priest performed the Ceremony of the Turtle Doves.

Two turtle doves were selected. One was killed, and its blood collected in a clay pot of water containing cedar wood, scarlet thread, and hyssop. The live bird was dipped in the water, and then released. He then sprinkled the house seven times. Afterward, he publically pronounced the house clean.

We have here a wonderful type of our Lord Jesus Christ who died for our sins. He was the bird that shed his blood to cleanse the believer of all sin (1 John 1:5-7); likewise, He is the bird with blood on his wing sent to the heavenly Father to intercede for sinners in his present, risen life.

The dove killed is a picture of Christ dying on the cross to save us from the penalty of sin; The dove set free with blood on his wing is a reminder of Christ's ascension into heaven and his intercession at the right hand of the father which saves us from the power of sin.

*Hebrews 7:25 Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make **intercession** for them.*

We have here a lesson on justification and sanctification. When one first believes in Christ, he is pronounced clean. This cleansing is based on the substitutionary work of Christ. It is called justification by faith. *The believer's conscience is cleansed from sin by virtue of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection* (Leviticus 14:53; Hebrews 10:1-17). His death at Calvary secures the believer's standing before God.

But, after one becomes a believer, he then begins his struggle to overcome the power of sin.

How is a Christian delivered from the power of sin? How can he be clean if the power of sin overcomes him, and its leprous spores taint the stones of his house? The answer is in Leviticus 14:33-57; Romans 3:21-8:34.

In justification, the *ordu salutis* (order of salvation) is believe and be saved (judicially).

In sanctification, the *ordu liberatio* (order of freedom) is do your duty and be delivered (practically).

The priest is a picture of the High Priestly ministry of Christ at work on behalf of the believer to deliver him from the Power of sin! We are not only saved by the death of Christ, but by his intercession for us at the right and of God.

The cedar is a picture of the big, black, ugly sins; the scarlet, a picture of outstanding sins; and, the hyssop is a picture of those small, defiling sins.

The water sprinkled on the house is a picture of the Word of God; and, the **reflection of believer upon the work of Christ** at the cross that relieves him from the penalty of sin, and reflection upon the intercessory work of Christ that cleanses him from the power of sin.

The Ceremony of the Turtles Doves occurs **after** the house has been cleansed and renovated and inspected. It was **not performed before** the house was renovated. Notice that the priest gives the order to cleanse the house practically and pragmatically before the religious ceremony of the two turtles doves was performed. Why?

The **Ceremony of the Two Turtle Doves** was performed after the house was pronounced clean; that is, the home owner was **called to acknowledge the agent of cleansing and the power of cleaning**; that is, to know and understand that it was the blood of the turtle dove and not the homeowners work and doing that satisfied the claims of holiness. Selah.

Cleansing is only possible because of the shed blood of Christ, the currency of the spirit world. It is blood that satisfies the claims of divine holiness as seen in the death of the turtle dove (Leviticus 14:49-51). His blood can take away the big, black ugly sins (cedar), the outstanding scarlet like sins (Isaiah 1:18) and the tinier, small sins (hyssop) that defile our house (Leviticus 14:51). A man is not saved by trying to remove all the sins in his life, salvation is possible because Christ died for all his sins; that Christ is both the sacrifice and the priest.

After one becomes a Christian he may discover leprosy / sin in his house. He will struggle with thoughts and habits of sin. As he grows, the believer learns that Christ has paid for the Penalty of sin at Calvary (justification), but that he still struggles with the Power of sin at work in his members (sanctification). The water informs us of the necessity of being renewed and cleansed by the washing of the water of the Word. Christ need not die again! But, the believer needs to pray to the risen Christ interceding for him with blood on his wing, and to be renewed and cleansed by reflecting on what Christ has and is doing for him.

STEP TEN

After the house has been cleansed, the stones removed, new stones positioned, and the house inspected, the house was pronounced clean (practically), and then pronounced clean (ritually) after the Ceremony of the Turtle Doves.

Notice the work involved in cleansing the house! Inspection, marking, removing stones, scraping the floors and walls, repairing the walls and plaster, more inspection, and a final summary judgment by ANOTHER!

So much for easy confessions and quickie pleas for forgiveness! Repentance is hard! Sin has to be identified, forsaken, and purged! Real repentance is lots of work, and no forgiveness can be claimed until the specific outbreak of sin is identified, quarantined, eliminated and forsaken. Then, and only then, can one go to the cross and claim his blood and water rights.

But, once sin has been deeply repented of while relying upon the intercessory work of Christ, the believer can be pronounced clean; and, “it will be clean” (Leviticus 14:43).

Finally, notice that the inspection of the house containing leprosy found its fulfillment in the ministry of Christ.

Sin was in the House of Israel. Jesus inspected the House of God in John 2:14ff, and removed the contaminated stones. He sought to remove the infected stones and reconstruct the House of Israel through his ministry of teaching, healing, forgiving, casting out demons, and marking the infected areas of the nation. He returned 3 ½ year later to re-inspect the House of God. Leprosy had returned, and he ordered the House to be destroyed (Matthew 24:2). In 70 AD, the temple was destroyed by Titus. The old house of Israel was destroyed; and, a new house called the church is being built by the proclamation of the gospel.

12.13 CLEANSING BY THE RED HEIFER

Purification by the *parah adoma* (hM'ødua] hr''p': red heifer).

A lesson for believers on being cleansed by water and blood.

2 Timothy 2:21 Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from what is dishonorable, he will be a vessel for honorable use, set apart as holy, useful to the master of the house, ready for every good work.

How clean are you? If you are honest, you will have to admit that being clean in this messy, mixed-up nation is quite a challenge. Before us is God's remedy for defilement we pick by living in an unclean world.

A statute is an ordinance or regulation enacted by authority to promote peace and prosperity.

A statute is an ordinance or regulation enacted by authority to promote peace and prosperity.

The law of the red heifer directs us to the law of cleansing for a Christian, without which one could not commune with the living God and His people.

GENERAL OVERVIEW

The ordinance of surrounding the Red Heifer is found in Numbers 19. If the Bible was merely a man-made work, these instructions would have been written in Leviticus alongside the other offerings.

The fact that the statute is in Numbers and not Leviticus is of critical importance.

The sin offerings in Leviticus were offered in the tabernacle complex in the midst of the camp; the sacrifice of the Red Heifer was offered **outside the camp** (19:3).

The Levitical sacrifices provided the basis of fellowship, while the offering of the Red Heifer provided for **maintenance of fellowship**.

The sacrifices of bull and goats provided a man standing before God; the Red Heifer **provided a man with cleansing** to fellowship with God.

The Levitical sacrifices removed sin and personal guilt by the sinner; the ashes and water of the Red Heifer **removed defilement** from the man **caused by others**.

The emphasis in Leviticus is on cleansing by blood (Justification); the emphasis in Numbers is on **cleansing by water** (Sanctification); for the “soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and immediately there came out blood and water” (John 19:34).

The Levitical sacrifices foreshadowed the death of Christ for the removal of sin as an impediment to relationship; the Red Heifer foreshadowed the death of Christ for the removal of contagions that interfere with fellowship.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SIN AND DEFILEMENT

A man faces the challenge of harnessing sin within. When a man sins against the law of the Lord God, **he incurs personal guilt**. God’s answer for personal guilt is the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ which cleanses us from all (1 John 1:7). This remedy is alluded to in the law of the red heifer by the fact its blood was sprinkled seven times toward the tabernacle.

A second challenge a man faces is trying to avoid contamination by the sins of others. Men’s anger, obscenities, filthy, lusts, apathy, moral indifference, lethargy, and insensibilities defile him. Just going to and from work one comes in contact with sins of men. Because people in this world are spiritually dead,

it's just not possible to go through life and not be polluted by the words, thoughts, and actions of sinners. Thus, there is a need to be cleansed from defilement caused **by others**. And, God's remedy for defilement is found in the law of the red heifer.

THE NEED FOR CLEANSING

The word unclean or impurity is used about sixteen times in this chapter; that is, **uncleanness** or **impurity** or **defilement** is the problem dealt with here. Personal guilt is **not** the focus in this cleansing ceremony; that is, the cleansing referred to here is not in regards to man's willful, consensual, open-rebellion type sins, but the subtle contamination that come from mixing with sinners, to wit:

Ephesians 2:2-3 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

Leviticus 19 follows the rebellion at Kadesh-Barnea (13-14) and the rebellion Korah (16). In the rebellion of Korah nearly fifteen thousand people died. All of these people had to be buried; and, handling all these corpses defiled the pall bearers.

Thus, this chapter deals with the believer's defilement. Death and corpses defiled the tent, people in the tent, open jars, and everything inside the deceased's dwelling (19:14).

The major lesson before us is that sin defiles. In walking through the wilderness of this world, the believer is contaminated when he touches dead things; things that produce death or are dead. In the course of life it is not possible to avoid unspiritual people with the foul breath of obscenity, lusty thoughts, and evil intent of those around us. Thus, the believer's constitution is defiled and needs cleansing in order to fellowship with God and his people.

Furthermore, it is not possible to be a pastor or a Christian worker and not get dirty tending filthy sheep. In fact, it is not God's will that pastors wear white suits, hide in their study, and avoid the nasty problems of shepherding a flock. Sheep get caught in briar bushes and fences. They need rescue. And, God's man has to roll up his sleeves, and wrestle with sheep stuck in muck, mud, and mire where they pasture. A good pastor doesn't smell much different than a sludge-soaked sheep he shepherds.

The Red Heifer was a **wilderness offering** provided by God to remove defilement from the man due to his passage through this defiling world. Sentenced to wander in the wilderness for forty years, the Israelites were forced out of necessity to come in contact with dead bodies that had to be taken outside the camp for burial. Duty to man and God made it necessary to handle corpses, but the handling of corpses defiled the man and made him unclean. Thus, handling dead bodies made cleansing necessary so they could walk in the company of God's people. Thus, the purpose of the offering of the Red Heifer was to **remove defilement**, and the focus in this offering is on **cleansing by water**.

THE REASON FOR THE RED HEIFER

God instructed “the people” to bring “an unblemished red heifer in which was no defect and on which a yoke was never been placed” (19:2).

Why the people? Here is an offering chosen by the people, not the priest. God anticipated that his people would love him and want to be clean so they could fellowship with Him. Thus, the heifer is the people’s choice; the people’s representative to qualify them to be in the camp of the redeemed.

Why a heifer? Many of the Levitical offering required a male offering. While male offerings indicate strength and vigor, and female sacrifice **suggests *subjection to the will of another*** (Genesis 3:16). Even our Lord said, “Not my will, but thy will be done (Luke 22:42).

Why a heifer and not a lamb? A heifer was a beast that plowed fields. It was a working animal. The focus here is not on the innocence and helplessness of a lamb, but upon the strength and perfection of the heifer. The heifer is a picture of the purity our Lord Jesus Christ who was undefiled in his service to the Father.

Why all red? Possibly, pure red represents a pure breed; a pure ancestry. Our Lord was both God and man (of red earth) that could trace his lineage back to Adam. Thus, the red heifer reminds us that “**it behoved him in all things to be made like to (his) brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things relating to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people; for, in that himself has suffered, being tempted, he is able to help those that are being tempted**” (Hebrews 2: 17, 18).

Why unblemished? The red heifer had to be without defect (19:2). Perfection is implied. The unblemished heifer foreshadows the Lord Jesus “had no sin,” (1 John 3:5), Who “did no sin” (1 Peter 2: 22), “knew not sin” (2 Corinthians 5: 21). He was perfect within and without. So He “offered himself spotless to God” (Hebrews 9: 14). Further, unlike us, he was able to be on this earth without being contaminated by the sins of others. Selah!

Why no yoke? A yoke was used on beasts of burden by plowmen to control the animal and to get them to perform according their will. No yoke typifies the consensual submission of the Lord Jesus Christ to the will of the Father; and the fact, that He was not controlled or manipulated by men. He was not employed by man; managed by man; or defiled by sinners. He was the Servant of the Lord, and not the servant of men.

Why bring him to Eleazar the priest? A priest is a mediator between God and man. Here we have a type of our Lord as both the high priest and the sacrifice.

Hebrews 5:1 For every high priest chosen from among men is appointed to act on behalf of men in relation to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins.

Why was the heifer slain outside the camp? Unlike the Levitical offering, the blood was not sprinkled on the brazen altar. Eleazar did not ignore the tabernacle as he did sprinkle blood with his finger “seven times” facing the tabernacle (19:4); that is, the entire ceremony was done according to the instructions of the LORD God in the sanctuary. The blood here is not so much “for the Lord” as for the cleansing of the people. Christ is not only God’s representative to man representing His concerns to men, He is the people’s representative to God and the locus of blessing for them. Thus, He was slain outside the camp to cleanse men contaminated in the wilderness; that is, He came to them to cleanse them so they could re-enter the camp of the redeemed.

Why seven times? The number seven is a picture of perfection. Sprinkling the blood seven times is a witness of how the precious blood of Christ satisfies the court and settles the issues of personal guilt. After this, there is no reference to blood in the rest of the chapter. The focus now shifts to the water of purification.

The lesson here is significant. The shed blood of Christ cleanses us from all sin; that is, his death on the cross was “once for all.” His blood cleanses the guilty sinner and qualifies him to be in God’s camp (1 John 1:7). If the believer sins again after he becomes a Christian, he does not need another sacrifice—he needs only to claim the power of the blood. Christ does not need to come down and die again for his sins. Once a man is sprinkled with blood, sort of speak, he is always God’s child and a member of God’s household.

The issue for a defiled Christian is not “standing.” Once one becomes a Christian he is always a child of God; always a “son of light;” always endowed with the rights of a son. If a believer sins, he does not cease to be a member of God’s family. Rather, the issue for Christian who sins is one of cleansing or presentment or qualification for service. God loves clean and he don’t like ugly.

Notice in this chapter that a person who was defiled by handling corpses is considered unclean and unfit to enter the camp (19:11-12). He did not lose his rights or his standing as a member of Israel. Rather, he was unqualified, or unfit, or unsuitable, or debilitated or ineligible to enjoy all the benefits of the redeemed. Once contaminated, he needed to go through a spiritual decontamination ritual so he could enter the camp and fellowship with God and men.

We understand this because we are familiar with people who work with highly toxic chemicals—people who have to enter a decontamination chamber to wash off contaminants—contaminates that could harm them and the general public.

Likewise, God is showing us how contaminating sin can be. He wants us to understand that sin is not “fun,” or “recreation,” or a harmless pet snake. It’s bite kills. It defiles. It contaminates. It poisons everything it touches . . . even uncovered clay pots (19:14). To fellowship with God, once must be cleansed of sin’s contaminating properties.

Notice in this chapter that God used clean people to clean up unclean people: “a man who is clean shall gather up the ashes” (19:9). To be used of God, a man must be cleaned up; and when he gets dirty in the process of serving sinners, he must be cleaned up.

We can understand this. Take for example a chef in a restaurant. We want a clean chef handling our food. When a chef gets his hands dirty from handling junk, we insist he wash his hands. It is law! Only a chef with clean hands is qualified to handle food! Right?

Likewise, a man can have all the training in the world to be a deacon, but if he isn't clean, he is not qualified to minister to God's people.

THE BURNING OF THE RED HEIFER

“And one shall burn the heifer before his eyes” (the priest's) “its skin and its flesh, and its blood, with its dung, shall he burn” (19:6).

The law of cleansing defilement in the wilderness requires more than shed blood.

Here, the whole animal had to be burned to ashes. This reminds us that we are saved not only by the death of Christ; but by the life of Christ; not only by his substitutionary death, but by His life of obedience to God's law; that is, His life and death, and the remembrance of His sacrifice is sufficient, not only to redeem the man, but to cleanse and purify the man. God not only redeems the whole man; he cleanses the man all the way back to Adam.

The burning of the red heifer informs us that all of our Lord Jesus Christ, His death, burial, and resurrection to save and purify the sinner.

While the Spirit separates the Levitical sacrifices from the Number's sacrifice, they are really one and the same sacrifice. They are separated for our benefit so we can see the double action of our Lord's sacrifice: redemption and sanctification; the power of the blood, and the power of the water; purification from the guilt of sin, and cleansing from the defilement and power of sin. The former secures our place in the camp; the latter secures our fellowship in the camp.

One of the great problems we experience as Christians is the consciousness of sins. This awareness of sin makes us feel unqualified to pray to God, to be in the company of other Christians, and unfit for service. The remedy is understanding the water with the ashes of the red heifer. Washing with this water cleanses us, purifies us, and washes us from the defilements we pick up on our pilgrim journey through this world—“. . . and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one” (1 John 5:19).

THE ASHES OF THE RED HEIFER

The sacrifice of the red heifer was a one-time event. Once the ashes were placed in the water, the water purified everything. The ashes suggest the calling to mind of the accomplishment of Christ at Calvary.

One of the benefits of the Breaking of Bread Service (communion) is the remembrance of Christ. Remembering Him not only refreshes the soul, only cleanses the believer (1 Corinthians 11:32).

The Cedar-wood, Hyssop, and Scarlet

Before us are shadows and types of what happened at the cross on our behalf.

The cedar-wood was the largest plant in Israel; hyssop was among the smaller, usable plants. They represent big sins and little sins; the proud, stubborn, deeply rooted sins that defile us and make us ashamed; and, the small, tiny troublesome sins that hinder fellowship and service. Some sins are scarlet red and stand out like an Arab in a synagogue. Some sins are just dirty grey. While many sins have gloss and glitter, other sins are just pale—like a corpse.

The pilgrim's journey through the wilderness toward the Promised Land is dirty, dusty, and defiling.

The lesson here is that defiling sins (1 Timothy 1:10), and filthy sins (Colossians 3:8), and wilderness sins that war against the soul (1 Peter 2:11) are cleansed by the water and the ashes of our Red Heifer, the Lord Jesus Christ.

1 John 2:16 For all that *is* in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE WATER

The ashes of the red heifer were mixed in the water. Over time, more water was added to the caldron, but its power never diminished.

The water with ashes is called the “water of cleansing or purification” (19:9). People who handled corpses (dead things) were defiled by contact. Moreover, they contaminated everything they touched—a lesson on how one sin in family members can defile the whole house and the whole family. What parents permit in moderation often become an excuse for children to do in excess.

Cleansing was the need; the water with the ashes of the red heifer was the remedy.

Once cleansed by water, the Israelite was permitted back into the camp. Moreover, the water was sufficient to cleanse persons, vessels, clothes, and tents (19:18).

All things need to be cleansed: bodies, hands, dishes, clothes, floors, refrigerators, and cabinets. Much of life involves washing things with water. Water with the ashes of the red heifer was the means of removing defilement in the wilderness.

This is the same lesson the Lord taught the disciples in John 13 at the Last Supper.

The Lord instructed the disciples that if they did not permit him to wash their feet, “thou hast no part with me” (13:8). When Peter objected and wanted Christ to wash his whole body, the Lord stipulated that Peter did not need to have his whole body washed because, spiritually speaking, he was already clean; but, because of his journey on public roads, he needed to have his feet washed. Thus, John 13 is a NT lesson found in Numbers 19 on the cleansing needed by water.

Thus, the water symbolizes contact with the Word of God (John 7:38; Ephesians 5:26).

The blood redeems; water cleanses; the blood justifies; the water sanctifies. Blood was necessary to redeem a man out of Egypt; water was necessary to cleanse the pilgrim traveling in the wilderness. The means of redemption is blood; the means of sanctification is washing of the water by the Word:

Ephesians 5:26 that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word,

Hebrews 10:22 let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

Blood is the currency of the Spirit world. Blood is the price the Spirit requires to redeem a man up for sale at the slave auction. The sure Word of God is the cleansing agent that removes defilements of this world from the soul of a man and readies him for fellowship and service in the kingdom of God.

To say that blood must be shed every time a Christian sins is to deny the efficacy of the shed blood of Christ at Calvary. The believer has been “sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all” (Hebrews 10:10). Once the blood of Christ has been sprinkled on the believer the question of sins and guilt has been SETTLED FOREVER!

But, defilement is another matter! Redemption by blood happens once; cleansing by the washing of the Word must happen again, and again, and again. Justification by blood is a onetime event that secures our standing in God’s kingdom; but sanctification by renewing our minds with the Word of God is a daily, continuous process that is necessary to affect communion with the Holy Father.

THE METHOD OF CLEANSING

First, notice that unclean person had to mentally know that he was in contact with a corpse; that he was contaminated and unclean. A person who ignored his impurity “defiled the tabernacle of the LORD” (19:13). Everything he came in contact with became contaminated (19:13, 22). Ignorance, denial, or avoidance of recognizing defilement was a cause for disciplinary action by the assembly (19:13, 20).

The lesson for us is that sin must be identified, confessed, and forsaken (1 John 1:9; Isaiah 55:7). Failure to confess sins is unclean and disqualifies a man from fellowship. Such a condition is subject to disciplinary measures by a godly church (1 Corinthians 5:1ff; Matthew 18:15ff).

The good news here is that just as the water of purification cleansed the defiled, confession of sin and a renewing of the mind by the Word of God cleanses, renews, and transforms the believer (Romans 12:1-3).

A PERPETUAL STATUTE

“So it shall be a perpetual statute for them” (19:21).

*Matthew 19: 19-20 But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the **heart**; and they defile the man. For out of the **heart** proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: These are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man.*

We live in a world of dead things: lusts, obscenities, pornography, anger and the like. Defilement can come from within or without (Matthew 19: 19-20). It is just not possible for God’s people not to be defiled on their pilgrim journey through this life. Sin defiles. Sin contaminates. Sin destroys. It is in us and in our neighbors. The sins of apathy, resignation, and cowardness is all around us. Defilement can progress into a spiritual disease and spell disaster for a family.

Thus, the Lord gave us a means of cleansing, of moving from a state of being unclean and moving into a state of being clean. Clean is beautiful. Just as we love clean clothes, clean beds, and clean foods, God loves clean. And, the lessons from the sacrifice of the red Heifer point not only to the need for cleansing, but God’s remedy in and through the sacrifice of His Son. Just as the application of the water of cleansing from the red heifer became a perpetual statute in Israel, the cleansing power of the cross runs through time and is sufficient to cleanse every Christian from the defilements of the world.

(One final note: any attempt by modern day Jews to find and qualify a red heifer for this wilderness cleaning ritual is a statement of their utter rejection of the sacrifice of Christ—an act of unbelief and rebellion against the gospel.)

12.14 THE PRIESTHOOD AND STRANGE FIRE

*Leviticus 10:1-2 And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and **offered strange fire before the LORD**, which he commanded them not. And there went out fire from the LORD, and devoured them, and **they died before the LORD**.*

Israel had a priesthood; the church is a priesthood.

If the priesthood teaches one truth it is that no man is holy enough to come into the presence of God. Every sinner needs a mediator. In the Old Testament that mediator was a priest; in the New Testament that Mediator is the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Timothy 2:5).

Here is a modern day application of the Old Testament ordination of priest that Churchmen would do well to learn.

Nadab and Abihu, newly ordained priests from the family of Aaron, offered strange fire to the Lord. That they were immediately executed by God, and that the surviving family of priests were not permitted to mourn their deaths ought to be of tremendous interest to the seeker of truth.

Nadab and Abihu were not pretenders or false men. They were legitimate, properly sanctioned priests . . . yet, the LORD executed them.

What did they do wrong? What was their sin?

Apparently, the two men put fire and incense in their censer, went into the Holy Place to trim the candlestick, and to service the ordination of burning incense on the golden altar.

- (1) They each took their own censer instead of the sacred tabernacle utensil designated and consecrated for this purpose ([Exodus 40:9](#)).
- (2) Instead of using coals from off the brazen altar to burn incense, they used coals from another source to burn incense.
- (3) They presumed to go into the Holy Place together. The duties to service the tabernacle inside the Holy Place were to be done by one priest only. Never two priests.
- (4) Servicing the inner tabernacle was not their job; that is, it was the duty of the High Priest (Aaron), and not the subsidiary priests to service the rituals inside the tabernacle proper (Exodus 30:7).
- (5) They offered the incense in their own censers and went into the Holy Place at an unauthorized time; that is, the chores of servicing the candlestick and the provision for the golden altar were to be performed twice a day, once in the morning and once in the evening.
- (6) Possibly the two men were slightly inebriated. In verse ten Moses instructed Aaron, after the fact, to not drink wine while on duty in the tabernacle.

These men offered strange fire, and died by fire.

There are at least three lessons for us in this passage:

First, those who serve God must regard Him as holy.

Leviticus 10:3 Then Moses said unto Aaron, This is it that the LORD spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified. And Aaron held his peace.

To sanctify God means to treat Him as the highest authority in all matters -- to honor him with obedience, dignity, reverence, and our most excellent service. Where God is obeyed, God is glorified. Where men

follow His Word instead of their own feelings, He is honored. When men are more concerned about obedience to God's law than the laws of the State, they sanctify God as holy.

This passage ought to give us pause to consider how Christians can offend the holiness of God by offering strange fire . . . things not commanded . . . in the worship of the church today.

Do not Christians offer strange fire to the Lord when unqualified men lead the congregation in prayer ([1 Timothy 2:8](#)).

Do not Christians offer strange fire to the Lord when women preach or lead the congregation in prayer (1 Timothy 2:9ff)?

Do not Christians offer strange fire to the Lord when its ministers and Sunday School teachers perform the duties of the church absent the power of the Spirit of God (Ephesians 5:18-20)?

Do not Christians offer strange fire to the Lord when speaking in pseudo tongues, performing acts of “holy laughter,” and doing all kinds of undignified gyrations, jerking, and gymnastics in theatrical performances on stage in a Pentecostal church?

Do not Christians offer strange fire before the Lord when young musicians “rock out” the church in some “rap” or “jam” session in the sanctuary? [Do not hear what is not being said. There is a place for dignified, God-honoring compositions using electric guitars and drums]

Do not Christians offer strange fire before the Lord when men pray to God with a hat on their head and women pray in church with their [head uncovered](#) (1 Corinthians 11:1-16)?

Do not Christians offer strange fire before the Lord when they drink [coffee and eat donuts](#) in a “worship” service?

Do not Christians offer strange fire before the Lord when they offer prayers to God in the name of Mary or some saint?

Do not Christians offer strange fire before the Lord by incorporating with the IRS and subjecting it to the rules of the State? A church that permits godless, pagan IRS agents to inspect its tabernacle records is not only blasphemy but strange fire in the Holy Place.

Do not pretender Christians offer strange fire before the Lord by smoking “weed” as a substitute for the elements of the Lord’s Supper in the “[Church of Cannibis](#)”?

Do not pretender Christians offer strange fire when they conduct services in the nude like the Whitetail Chapel apostate church in New Jersey?

Do not pretender churches offer strange fire when congregants are composed of practicing gays, homosexuals, transvestites, and lesbians dressed in rainbow colors ([1 Corinthians 6:9-10](#))?

Do not so called “Messianic churches” offer strange fire before the Lord by wearing Jewish prayer shawls, yarmulkes, tallits, and phylacteries in church?

Do not pretender churches offer strange fire when preaching all religions are a way to God . . . or there are many paths to God and not many paths to hell?

Do not pretender churches offer strange fire before the Lord when preaching psychological theories in substitute for or alongside the Word of God?

Do not pretender churches offer strange fire when preaching salvation without blood currency . . . or repentance . . . or the cross . . . or the Lordship of Christ?

Do not pretender Christians offer strange fire to the Lord when people [handle rattlesnakes](#) on the podium to demonstrate supernatural powers?

Do not pretender churches offer strange fire when preaching a gospel that encourages Christians to always obey the government and presumptions of law?

Do not pretender churches offer strange fire to the Lord by adopting the State's definition of marriage as a union between two people?

Surely, such doctrines and practices grieve the Holy Spirit who has instructed us how to please Him: “And grieve not the Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption” (Ephesians 4:30).

Second, the surviving priestly family was not permitted to mourn the death of Nadab and Abihu informing us that all Christian ministers must identify with, rejoice in, and side with the judgments (law) of God as presented in His Word.

The flower and hope of Aaron's family was suddenly destroyed by the terrifying justice of God. Yet, he was not permitted to yield to his natural emotions of sorrow, shock, and grief. He had to identify and uphold the righteous judgment of the LORD God of Israel. There is a place for human emotions and grief, but not while Aaron had the anointing oil upon him in the service of the LORD God.

God’s Word, not human affections, is the only authority for faith and practice. We are not permitted to let natural desires determine the course of ministry or to adopt modern sympathies as standards for conduct in the Church of Jesus Christ.

Third, this page of history reminds us how sin taints everything man touches.

Oh, how the joy of the day turned to sorrow. Four times in Leviticus 9, it says Moses did as the LORD commanded in the ordination of the priests (9:5, 6, 7, 21), and then suddenly, without warning two priests offered that which “He commanded them not” (10:1-2) to offend the holiness of God.

No sooner had the first couple been placed in the garden that they partook of the forbidden fruit of the poisonous tree (Genesis 3). In the new world, Noah quickly corrupted himself with wine to the shame of his family (Genesis 8-9). No sooner had the tabernacle and the priests been consecrated, they followed the ways of their own heart and subjected themselves to the fires of God's wrath (Leviticus 10). During the first battle in the Land of Canaan, Achan took the forbidden Babylonian garment and hid it in his tent (Joshua 6-7). As soon as Israel captured the land, they "forsook the Lord, and served Baal and Ashtaroth" (Judges 2:13). Saul, Israel's first king, quickly became corrupt (1 Samuel 14-15). When Solomon achieved the pinnacle of power, he gave his heart to foreign women (1 Kings 11). In the first church, the people witnessed the judgment of Ananias and Sapphira for their deception (Acts 5). No sooner had the blessings of the gospel been preached around the Mediterranean than it became needful for the Holy Spirit to warn the new churches about "grievous wolves," "apostasy," and all manner of deception (Acts 20:29; 1 Timothy. 4:1-3; 2 Timothy. 3:1-5; 2 Peter 2; Jude). And, to crown all, we have the prophetic record of human apostasy from amid all the splendors of millennial glory (Revelation 20:7-10).

The passage in Leviticus 10 warns those in the priestly service of ministry not to be under the influence of wine in the service of the Lord. This would include being under the influence of drugs or the mind being under the influence of the madness of political correctness and the rewriting of history produced by universities and the media today.

Let's be careful to do "what the Lord commands," and to shun all "strange fire" (that which He has not commanded) in the service of the Lord.

PART 2: OT THEOLOGY



13 ISRAELOLOGY

*Isaiah 43:10 **Ye are my witnesses**, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after*

First of all, one would do well to distinguish between ancient Israel and modern Ashkenazi Israel; between Hebrews and Jews; between ancient Jews and modern so called “Jews;” and between ancient Judaism (a NT cult-like religion) and the Biblical faith.

This chapter takes a look at the purpose of ancient Israel and at no time relates to the modern political phenomenon of European Ashkenazi Zionists and their successful “land grab” in the middle east wherein they created a new, modern nation with the appellation “Israel.” The two titles and two people groups are entirely different and must be distinguished at all times.

God has revealed Himself in history to and through the nation of Israel (originating and sustaining them) and He has set out actively, through the development of the nation, to bring blessing (salvation) to the whole world. Although not qualitatively different from the rest of man, the Jewish people and their history demonstrate the existence, reality, and faithfulness of God.

THE REVELATION OF GOD TO ISRAEL

That the subject of “Israel” is a major doctrine of the Old Testament is undisputed. However, we must distinguish between “modern Israel” made up of Ashkenazi Gentiles from the Kazarian Empire and ancient Israel made of of the descendents of Heber.

Moreover, we must distinguish between Israel, Hebrews, ancient Jews, modern so called “Jews,” and Zionist.

The descents of Abraham became knowns as “Israel” because this was the name of Jacob, the father of the twelve tribes. The twelve tribes were not called “Jews” until the time of Esther. Abraham was NOT a Jew! Jews came from the tribe of Judah. Moreover, the survivors of the Exile (586-536 BC), though made up of survivors of all the tribes, were given the name “Jews.” In the New Testament, the term “Jews” became associated with “Judaism” and the cultic practices of the Pharisees.

In a religious sense, Jesus was not a “Jew”¹⁸ nor did he practice “Judaism.” He was from the tribe of Judah and could be called a “Judite,” but he was not a “Jew” that added to Judaism. In fact, He was Judaism’s worst enemy and this is why the Jews crucified Him. Likewise, those who call themselves “Jews” today are NOT Semitic nor are they descendents of Abraham. They are Ashkenazis from Europe. Moreover, while a few are Russian Orthodox Hasidic Jews in the religious sense, most are secular-atheists.

Zionism, while made up of many non-religious Jews, is a Marxist political philosophy about world dominion. You don’t have to be a “Jew” in the racial sense to be a Zionist. Zionists are people who seek total dominion of the total world under total government. Many religious Jews, Gentiles who follow Judaism, refuse to call themselves Zionists.

The Old Testament Revelation About Israel

The God of Creation is the God of Israel and He revealed Himself in and through this nation. (Psalm 146:5-6, Psalm 124:1-5, 8).

*Isaiah 43:1 But now thus saith the LORD that **created** thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine.*

Psalm 146:5, 6 Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the LORD his God: Which made heaven, and earth, the sea, and all that therein is: which keepeth truth for ever:

Psalm 147:19 He sheweth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel.

Israel’s origin: The covenant to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Genesis 12:1-7; Genesis 26:1-6; Genesis 23:10-14, 35:9-12; Exodus 3:6; 1 Kings 18:36; 1 Chronicles 29:18; Genesis 17:1-3, 21; Exodus 6:2-4)

Genesis 12:2 And I will make of thee a great nation (National clause), and I will bless thee, and make thy name great ; and thou shalt be a blessing(Personal clause): And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee (International clause): and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed (Messianic clause).

Meaning of the term Israel: The name “Jacob” means “heel grabber” or “contender.” Some translated the name as “supplanter” meaning a “humble supplicant.” Jacob is described as a “plain” man (Genesis

¹⁸ The word “Jew” did not come into existence until the year 1775. Its modern connotation points to someone who follows and adheres to a faith similar to that of the Pharisees of Judah, but is not of the tribe and stock of Judah. In other words, Jews are people from nations other than the 12 Hebrew tribes who practice a religion known as Judaism/Pharisaism, the doctrine of the Pharisees.

25:27, ~T, ,Tam). The Hebrew word “plain” means “integrity” (Genesis 20:5), “perfect” (Job 1:1), or “upright” (Proverbs 10:9) In comparison to his profane, fornicating brother, Jacob was an honest, hardworking, upright man. His reputation as a total deceiver or cheat is undeserved and preachers better beware of maligning a man whom God honors.

“El” in Israel (laer'f.yl) is the word for God. Sara (aer'f) means “prevail or contend or have power.” Sarah (yr'f') means “princess or ruler.” It also means “strength or ability” (Hosea 12:3). *Jeshurun* (At('vuy>) means “upright one.” Albright says the root comes Arabic and can be translated “healing.” YaShaR (rvuy>) is the Hebrew word depicting honesty and straightforwardness toward man (The last 5 commandments of the 10 Commandments). Add “El” and Israel means “awareness of God” (the first 5 commandments). It seems that Jacob’s name was changed to Israel to imply “Contender with God.” Hosea 12 reinforces this interpretation. In his grace, God took a good man and gave him a marvelous status with Himself.

The word *Israel* is made up of a verb and a nominative noun. If Daniel means “God judges” and “Ezekiel” means “God is my strength,” then “Israel” means “God contends” or “God prevails” or “God rules.” In the jussive, it may mean “Let God heal.” In this case, the meaning is that God healed Jacob spiritually. It was the Lion who took the initiative in this contest. It was the Lion’s desire to bless Jacob. It was the Lion’s grace that enabled Jacob to prevail. But, he could not bless until Jacob yielded to His rule and threw himself at the Lion’s feet and clutched Him with all his might. The Lion won, but so did the Earth’s champion. The Angel got his man. Jacob got his blessing. Stunned at his own victory, Jacob named the place “Penuel,” the face of God.

Israel (laer'f.yl) begins with the smallest letter in the Hebrew alphabet (a yod) and ends with the largest letter (a lamed). The Torah begins with “In the beginning” (tyviareB.) and ends with the word “Israel.” In the beginning, Israel was a single man; In Deuteronomy Israel was a nation. In Revelation 21:12, Israel encompasses redeemed humanity in the City of God. Likewise, the first step toward spiritual healing begins when one sees himself poor in spirit (Matthew 5:3).

Ultimately, the name “Israel” belongs to Jacob’s greater son, the Lord Jesus Christ, the True Israel, the True Vine. Victorious over death, He rose to be seated at the right hand of God until all things are put under His feet (Acts 2:34-36; 1 Corinthians 15:25). Those who believe in Christ are united to Him and join the messianic community and are pronounced Over Comers (1 John 5:4).

13.1 ISRAEL’S PURPOSE:

- To be a witness for God (Isaiah 43:1,10; Psalm 102; Psalm 105:15; Isaiah 49:3); of His work (Ex 34:10; Isaiah 44:6-8, 21, 23), and of His word (Psalm 147:19, 20; Psalm 119:144, 142).

Isaiah 43:1 But now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine.

*Isaiah 43:10 **Ye are my witnesses**, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me.*

- To be the epicenter of blessing to the whole world (Genesis 12:3; 13:17).

Genesis 13:17 Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee.

However, the people of Israel are not qualitatively different from the rest of mankind (Deuteronomy 9:1-6). Abraham, the son of Terah, was a descendent of Shem. As a reward for righteousness, God promised that He would reward Shem's descendents with a spiritual blessing.

Genesis 9:27 God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem.

13.1.1 ISRAEL'S HISTORY SPEAKS FOR GOD (LEVITICUS 26:1-46)

- Their laws reflect the character of God (Leviticus 19:1-3; 26:1-3, 46).

Leviticus 19:2 Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say unto them, Ye shall be holy: for I the LORD your God am holy.

Their blessings are uniquely given by the Lord (Leviticus 26:4-13).

Their calamities were uniquely distributed by Him (Leviticus 26:14-39)

Calamities in their land (14-26).

Calamities of exile from their land (27-35).

Calamities among the nations ((36-39).

- Their history is a witness to the faithfulness of God (Leviticus 26).

13.2 PRINCIPLES OF NATION BUILDING

THE SONG OF MOSES

The Last Will and Testament of Moses

DEUTERONOMY 32

INTRODUCTION

This is a declaration set to music to remind nations of the foundation of successful **nation building**.

Build on the LORD God and succeed, or build on man and fail.

Moses is credited with writing this canticle. To attribute this to 6th century authors is to rob the passage of its designed effect.

This is the Song of Moses. It has a beginning and an end; and earthly application and a heavenly fulfillment. It includes Miriam's Song of Moses in Exodus 15 written after Israel's redemption from Egypt, and this chorus in Deuteronomy 32 written after the 40 years of wandering in the desert. This is Moses' last word to the people he served before he died. It could be called his "Swan Song," or "Moses' Last Will and Testament."

This song was designed to memorialize truth liturgically to empower the nation towards obedience and greatness (31:8-13).

Every person in Israel had to learn this song. It became Israel's national anthem to remind them that the LORD God and His law was the foundation of the nation, and that to depart from His law was the short cut to utter ruin, poverty, and enslavement.

Likewise, the song is a prophecy—a witness to carnal Israel's stubborn rebellion against the goodness of God (31:19-22). Its ultimate fulfillment is the redemption of the saints who will sing this song afresh once they have crossed the great sea, Revelation 15:3.

Being Israel's National Anthem . . . Americans would do well to remember the LORD God is the only Rock upon which to build a nation . . . that all other foundations (liberalism) perpetuated by Congressional leaders are "sinking sand."

REMEMBER THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS SONG

Deuteronomy 32:1 "Give ear, O heavens, and I will speak, and let the earth hear the words of my mouth.

So important is this message, Moses calls the heavens and the earth as a witness to the solemnity of this declaration. The heavens and earth act like a notary public confirming the gravity, authenticity, and veracity of the claims contained herein. Age brings with it certain wisdom, and the last things said can be simple, but quite profound and insightful. And, this is the case here.

2 May my teaching drop as the rain, my speech distill as the dew, like gentle rain upon the tender grass, and like showers upon the herb.

As rain gives life to vegetation, Moses' words are the words of life and health to this nation. They are not "nice" poetry, but vita-words that bring health to the bones.

REMEMBER THE NAME

Before us are **two foundation stones for nation building.**

3 For I will proclaim the name of the LORD; ascribe greatness to our God!

The first foundation for building a successful nation is true and correct theology.

As in the Lord's prayer, Moses' first concern is honor of the name of the LORD. Not any god will do. The people are exhorted to thoughtfully contemplate the greatness of the LORD God, credit Him with greatness, and to center decision making in the hub of His counsels.

A nation's future is based on the importance they place on pursuing the true God. A correct theology is the bedrock of a nation. Any other foundation is sinking sand. Moses holds up the Name of the LORD God and Who He is as the contingency for successful nation building.

He urges his people to have a single heart and to be truly devoted to remember the priority, preeminence, and prerogatives the LORD God has over His creation. He does not encourage them to honor the sun, moon, and stars. Nor does Moses exhort his nation to venerate man. Unlike the Greeks who were anthropocentric, Israel was Theocentric.

The honor men have for the LORD determines their destiny. Since theology is the queen of the sciences, contemplation of God is man's most important occupation.

Moses presented Israel with a *Yahwistic World View*—a world view based on the supremacy of the LORD God and His law-order. He set before them a vision to make the LORD their contingency, their rock, their banner, their standard, their pride, their hub in the middle of the wheel, and their canon of right and wrong.

Are Americans listening?

4 "The Rock, his work is perfect, for all his ways are justice. A God of faithfulness and without iniquity, just and upright is he.

The title "Rock" is mentioned five times as the only sure foundation for nation building. This song calls for continuous allegiance to the LORD God as the bedrock upon which to build a civil society. What hope!

Five attributes of God that nations would do well to emulate are as follows: perfection (exemplary), justice, truth or faithfulness, righteousness, and morally straight or accurate. This is Moses' way of ordering the nation to model, imitate, follow, pattern, and organize their behavior around the character of

God. Man is more than an animal. He is called to be God-like; not a god, but to emulate the Lord's transient attributes.

Gods are the source of laws. If you want to find a nation's god, look at its source of law. Nation's enact laws based on their theology whether it be true or false. In America, the source of law is in "the People," and its god is "whatever" the people imagine him, it, or she to be. In Israel, the Source of law was the LORD God, not fickle man with his love of freedom (anarchy).

5 They have dealt corruptly with him; they are no longer his children because they are blemished; they are a crooked and twisted generation.

The second foundation stone upon which to build a nation is accurate anthropology. Mankind has partaken of the fruits of the Poisonous Tree. Man has fallen. Men are sinners and are prone to twist, turn, and manipulate matters for their own benefit.

This is the history of mankind: crooked, perverted, and distorted.

Nations are wise to distrust human nature and to build into their legal systems checks and balances. There is nothing more scary on earth than an effective, efficient government with unlimited power. Stalin comes to mind.

Everyone who trusts government obviously failed history class.

Both the French and the Americans built their respective governments on the rights of man. But, the French had a utopian view of man. In the end, 20,000 people lost their heads under the guillotine. In America, the Founders distrusted human nature and built into their government a system of checks and balances. No lives were lost due to internal discord during the revolution.

6 Do you thus repay the LORD, you foolish and senseless people? Is not he your father, who created you, who made you and established you?

A correct view of human nature is a prerequisite for good government. While man is made in the image of God, there is none of this nonsense that man is born good; that man's problems are a result of lack of self-esteem, lack of empathy, or malfunctions of the brain.

Moses gets to the heart of anthropology. Man is fallen, foolish, and senseless. He must be governed by the rule of law, or he will be governed by his own perverted lusts and utopian views of mankind. Moses believed in the rule of law . . . but not ruling men by law! A nation must build its government with checks and balances . . . always suspicious of flawed, sinful rulers.

REMEMBER YOUR HISTORY

7 Remember the days of old; consider the years of many generations; ask your father, and he will show you, your elders, and they will tell you.

Those who cannot **remember** the **past** are **condemned to repeat** it. George Santayana (16 December 1863 in Madrid, Spain).

Winners of wars write history the way they want you to remember it, attributing God-like virtues to themselves while smearing all that is good about their opponents. This is called propaganda, not history. Only the truth about the past can assure accuracy for the future.

Not all victors are virtuous, nor are all foes full of evil. The Civil War comes to mind.

REMEMBER GOD CREATED THE NATIONS

8 When the Most High gave to the nations their inheritance, when he divided mankind, he fixed the borders of the peoples according to the number of the sons of God.

Notice here that God created the nation and gave them boundaries. We call them borders. God promoted distinctions, differences, limitations, and jurisdictions.

The Scripture promotes nationalism, not globalism; NATIONALISM, not internationalism; independence and self-sufficiency, not servitude and dependency. This separation is necessary to prevent globalism, a one world totalitarian government as in Genesis 11.

Conservatives believe government officials take an oath to support America, not to support and fund a world government. Enemies foreign and domestic believe America should be fair, practice the principles of equality (communism), and drain its resources to build Africa and third world countries. The United Nations and the NWO comes to mind.

REMEMBER GOD'S SUPREMACY

9 But the LORD's portion is his people, Jacob his allotted heritage.

God takes pleasure in His people, and assigned them special benefits and entitlements.

The potential for greatness of ancient Israel was their recognition of God's prerogatives over them by virtue of redemption; that is, to recognize their election and special privileges granted to them as a called out people among the nations.

Her greatness was in her nearness to God and the profound righteousness of the Torah. To the degree she honored the name of the LORD God and His law-order, to that degree she glorified God among men. The opposite was also true, to the degree she neglected God and rejected His authority over them, to that degree she was shamed and disgraced.

The benefit of nationalism is stated by St. Paul in his speech at Athens, "He determined (for all nations) times before appointed, and the setting of the boundaries of their habitation, that they might seek the Lord."

Next, Moses rehearsed Israel's history to show them how "God shed His grace on thee." Americans would do well to do the same.

10 "He found him in a desert land, and in the howling waste of the wilderness; he encircled him, he cared for him, he kept him as the apple of his eye.

11 Like an eagle that stirs up its nest, that flutters over its young, spreading out its wings, catching them, bearing them on its pinions,

12 the LORD alone guided him, no foreign god was with him.

13 He made him ride on the high places of the land, and he ate the produce of the field, and he suckled him with honey out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock.

14 Curds from the herd, and milk from the flock, with fat of lambs, rams of Bashan and goats, with the very finest of the wheat- and you drank foaming wine made from the blood of the grape.

REMEMBER THE REBELLION

15 "But Jeshurun grew fat, and kicked; you grew fat, stout, and sleek; then he forsook God who made him and scoffed at the Rock of his salvation.

What is about nations that their leaders reject the authority of the LORD God over them?

The name "Jeshurun" is an affectionate, ideal term meaning "upright one;" that is, Israel had the potential to be straight and true because she had the advantage of having God's written law among them. To the degree they kept that law, to that degree would they be the "upright one;" to the degree they neglected that law, to that degree they would be crooked and perverse.

Like Adam in the garden, Israel had its fall as a nation. When God blessed the nation with prosperity under David and Solomon, the nation grew fat, careless, and proud. They forsook God during the most prosperous years of their history. It was during the reign of Solomon, that the liberal, sophomore king developed introduced pluralism and multiculturalism to the nation. The Biblical word for multiculturalism is idolatry. Diversity is not a strength; it is a weakness to overcome (1 Kings 11:1-5)

16 They stirred him to jealousy with strange gods; with abominations they provoked him to anger.

"gods" are the source of law. In adopting the gods of the nations, Israel became increasingly permissive and tolerant of evil. Governments always seek to appeal to the broadest base in order to gain adherents and to enlarge its economy. We call it "liberalism." As the affections of the nation were diverted to court the values of other nations, their unfaithfulness aroused the jealousy of YHWH.

Jealousy is not a vice, but a praiseworthy zeal to preserve something precious.

Anger is not a vice, but a virtue of the LORD God. He can be hurt and grieved by man's disobedience, and this is the case here.

What angers God are "abominations" (*tohebah*). What sheep are to cattlemen, sin is to a holy God (Genesis 43:42; Exodus 8:20). Abominations include homosexual acts, incest, adultery, rape, murder, fraud and the like (Leviticus 18:22).

17 They sacrificed to demons that were no gods, to gods they had never known, to new gods that had come recently, whom your fathers had never dreaded.

How bad was Israel's apostasy? How low did they sink? They not only forgot God, they worshiped demons.

Brian Bates, in "the Way of the Actor" says, ". . . All Actors are modern day shamans...Ancient shamans would use masks or rocks or some sort of magical object that had power to it to invoke spirits".

And, it appears in looking at promoters of some policies that many politicians have lost their minds. David Freedman of the Huffington Post even asks the question, "Are Politicians Psychopaths?" His answer is worth sharing, "Could they be right? If these pundits mean that the targeted office-seekers are evil or "crazy," probably not. But if they are pointing out that politicians and psychopaths share certain characteristics, they could be on to something."

18 You were unmindful of the Rock that bore you, and you forgot the God who gave you birth.

The great command in Deuteronomy is to "remember" (*zachar*) God and His law (Deuteronomy 8:18). The great sin of nations is to forget the Creator and His laws.

The word *zachar* is used 19 times in Deuteronomy, and is translated 14 times as "remember" in English.

Remembering the LORD God and His law was the means to achieving His noble purpose for them. And, the great warning in Deuteronomy was to not "forget" (*shackah*) God and His commandments.

The nation was warned at least nine times in Deuteronomy to not "forget" the LORD or His law-word. YHWH has prerogatives over the nation. Their success was based upon keeping His name holy. But, the presumption in Deuteronomy is that the nation would forget God and His law-order--thus, the reason for the commands to "remember" and not "forget."

Next, Moses iterates the terrible consequences of forgetting the LORD God. Forgetting God is the sin of Congress, of Presidents, of bureaucrats, and judges.

19 "The LORD saw it and spurned them, because of the provocation of his sons and his daughters.

20 And he said, 'I will hide my face from them; I will see what their end will be, For they are a perverse generation, children in whom is no faithfulness.

21 They have made me jealous with what is no god; they have provoked me to anger with their idols. So I will make them jealous with those who are no people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation.

22 For a fire is kindled by my anger, and it burns to the depths of Sheol, devours the earth and its increase, and sets on fire the foundations of the mountains.

Note: Israel inflamed the anger of the Lord God by their abominable acts. The whole idea that God is a God of love and is never angry with man is product of humanism, not Biblical theology. Modern man's fascination and attraction to homosexuality is not a virtue, but a vice . . . and it angers the LORD God.

23 "" And I will heap disasters upon them; I will spend my arrows on them;

24 they shall be wasted with hunger, and devoured by plague and poisonous pestilence; I will send the teeth of beasts against them, with the venom of things that crawl in the dust.

25 Outdoors the sword shall bereave, and indoors terror, for young man and woman alike, the nursing child with the man of gray hairs.

Modern man would do well to remember that as God chastised His ancient people for their violations of God's law, He judges modern nations for their abominations and rebellion against His law-order. Taxes, social conflict, and natural disasters come to mind. See God's judgment upon Egypt (Isaiah 19).

"Last year . . . the world sold us \$796 billion more in goods than we sold to the world. A nation that spends more than it takes in from taxes, and consumes more of the world's goods than it produces itself for export, year in and year out, is a nation on the way down" (Pat Buchanan, June 12, 2018).

REMEMBER GOD WITHHOLDS HIS WRATH

26 I would have said, "I will cut them to pieces; I will wipe them from human memory," 27 had I not feared provocation by the enemy, lest their adversaries should misunderstand, lest they should say, "Our hand is triumphant, it was not the LORD who did all this."

The phrase "cut them to pieces" is translated "diaspora." It means "so scatter" in the LXX, but the likely meaning is "to diminish," "weaken," "reduce to naught." This judgment came to fruition in 722 & 586 BC.

Further, the restraint of God's chastisement on Israel is also motivated by a concern for His own reputation. Israel was spared from total annihilation in order to not feed the defiant pride and skepticism of Israel's enemies.

[Note: Deportation is one way God judges nations, immigration of foreigners who neither know a nation's history or respect its laws is another. In our time, Americans are being judged, not by deportation, but by immigration from nations that hate us.

The United States is not a nation of immigrants anymore than Great Britain is a nation of immigrants. Most of the people living here today were born here.]

REMEMBER THE TWO ROCKS

Our Lord discussed two possible foundations on which to build a life, rock and sand (Matthew 7:24-26). Likewise, nations have a choice of two foundations: (1) build their legal system on corrupt man or (2) build the nation on the incorruptible Christ and His law-order (1 Corinthians 3:11).

28 "For they are a nation void of counsel, and there is no understanding in them. 29 If they were wise, they would understand this; they would discern their latter end!

The “they” here could represent carnal Israel who was disciplined for their apostasy. Because they adopted the laws of the Mesopotamian kings and forsook the God of antiquity, they became fool hearted and undiscerning.

But, Mayes, Nelson, and Sanders argue that the nation void of understanding refers to Israel’s enemies. Israel’s enemies are described in Isaiah 10:13; 19:11-13; Jeremiah 49:7, and Obadiah 7-8 as foolish and without insight. (glos.ac.uk/2123/1/Lee, Boon-Hui Andrew, p. 112).

Wise men seek God; fools ignore Him. Great nations build their country with a consciousness of God; ordinary people built their nation on the whims of man.

30 How could one have chased a thousand, and two have put ten thousand to flight, unless their Rock had sold them, and the LORD had given them up?

The LORD is called their “Rock.” A small nation, they crushed larger, more developed nations.

But, they were sometimes defeated by the smallest forces. How could Israel be defeated by their enemies unless God had forsaken them because of their radical disobedience to His law. So terrible was Israel’s defeat that it is said that one of their enemies had the strength of a thousand. But, the opposite is also true. When Israel walked with God, one Hebrew could chase a thousand. Samson comes to mind.

31 For their rock is not as our Rock; our enemies are by themselves.

A second “rock” is mentioned, the boulder of pagan nations. Here we have the two foundations: “their rock,” and “our Rock;” the gods of the nations, and the God of Israel; the source of cruelty and falsehood, or the LORD God as the Source of truth and justice.

Religion is about ultimate questions and ultimate values. We would do well to remember that all men are religious—especially atheists. Godless men have values and a rock on which they seek to build their utopia.

"I have dream" cry the revolutionaries, "to use the government to take money from the rich and give it to the poor." Their dream rock is built on man-made utopian ideals . . . and OPM (other people's money), not workable plans; our Rock is the LORD God and His plan is based on genuine application of His law across society.

Man's political dreams (their rock of idealism) leave every man with a political nightmare crushed by redistribution of wealth using the force of government and heavy taxation to take money from the productive and give it to the unproductive. We call this dream "welfare" or the "nanny state."

32 For their vine comes from the vine of Sodom and from the fields of Gomorrah; their grapes are grapes of poison; their clusters are bitter; 33 their wine is the poison of serpents and the cruel venom of asps.

The metaphor switches from rocks to vines. The vine of the pagan nations (like America) is called the "vine of Sodom" because its law comes from the Poisonous Tree — the source of all misery and human suffering.

Genesis 18:20 And the LORD said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because **their sin is very grievous**;

The fruit Sodom is compared to poisonous grapes, bitter plants (hemlock), and the poisonous bite of serpents and venomous snakes.

Sodom is mentioned because of its extreme wickedness. Nations that eat from the fruit of the Poisonous tree become infected with fornication, adultery, homosexuality, lesbianism, transvestitism, and the social ills of broken homes, unwanted pregnancies, bastard children, crime, famine, and hunger.

The sad tale of this song is that Israel left the Lord's garden and ate fruit from the vine of Sodom. Thus, the reason for their severe discipline in 32:23-27.

Just as frightening is to see how American politicians grafted the nation into the vine of Sodom and Gomorrah by adopting same-sex marriage statutes and the promotion of gender-bender ideologies.

The News in 2018 read:

Gender-neutral Scouting sparks debate.

States are Beginning to Recognize Third Gender.

How Companies are grappling with the neutral-gender society

Elementary School Designates 'gender-neutral' bathrooms.

REMEMBER GOD'S JUDGMENT AND SALVATION

THE CERTAINTY OF GOD'S JUDGMENT

34 "' Is not this (verdict) laid up in store with me, sealed up in my treasuries?

The LORD's speech resumes after Moses speaks. The "this" refers back to God's verdict on Sodom and the Poisonous Tree. Although God uses the enemy to chastise Israel, YHWH holds the enemies of His people accountable for their unrestrained cruelty and overreaching wrath. There is a day the enemies of the LORD's people will stand before His bar of justice.

God's use of Israel's historic enemies to chastise Israel must also be seen as evidence of His faithfulness to her. Keeping a negative promise, even though it hurts, proves the character of His jealous love for Israel. The chastening of God's people was necessary to protect YHWH's honor as holy and righteous.

Chastisement is not punishment; it is discipline for God's people. Since Calvary, there is not one drop of wrath remaining for the true Israel. However, wrath is leaking from heaven now against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth . . . and, there is a day when all his enemies will face the full fury of an angry God (See Romans 1:18ff; 2 Thessalonians 1:10ff).

"My treasuries" must refer to secret counsels in the vault of God's Wrath. He will punish the wicked . . . but only He knows when, where, and how.

35 Vengeance is mine, and recompense, for the time when their foot shall slip; for the day of their calamity is at hand, and their doom comes swiftly.'

Here judgment is announced on the Vine of Sodom, and the grief they cause the people of God. Terms like "slip," "calamity," and "doom" announce the certainty of justice upon the pagans.

The Lord claims total authority over vengeance on Israel's enemies. While He often uses civil authority to administer justice upon His adversaries in time, He claims exclusive jurisdiction over the administration of justice as King of the Nations (Revelation 15). He is both the hope, controller, and Judge of history.

THE VINDICATION OF GOD'S PEOPLE

36 For the LORD will vindicate his people and have compassion on his servants, when he sees that their power is gone and there is none remaining, bond or free.

In contrast to God's judgment on pagan nations is His mercy toward His flawed people.

Vindication and compassion on His servants is another way of telling us there is always hope for God's people. Here salvation is announced to the true Israel of God.

Judgment and salvation are kingdom of God concepts; that in the end, the wicked will be judged and the righteous will be saved. It is analogous to John the Baptist's announcement, the "baptism of wrath,"

(judgment and punishment for the wicked) and the “baptism of the Holy Spirit” (Salvation / regeneration for God’s people).

GOD CHALLENGES THE FICTIONS

37 Then he will say, 'Where are their gods, the rock in which they took refuge, 38 who ate the fat of their sacrifices and drank the wine of their drink offering? Let them rise up and help you; let them be your protection!

Moses offers a soul searching question. On the day of wrath, how will your puny god-rock abominations help you? He mocks them. How will your self-made religion and pseudo world view help you in the time of trouble? Put it another way. On your death bed, what comfort will your faith in evolution, the occult, atheism, naturalism, humanism, feminism, and statism be to you?

Thus, all apologetics is designed to bring men to see how foolish and helpless are the anti-God belief-systems and spider webs to which they cling on the day of calamity.

GOD JUDGES AND GOD SAVES

39 "'See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god beside me; I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand. 40 For I lift up my hand to heaven and swear, As I live forever, 41 if I sharpen my flashing sword¹ and my hand takes hold on judgment, I will take vengeance on my adversaries and will repay those who hate me.

42 I will make my arrows drunk with blood, and my sword shall devour flesh- with the blood of the slain and the captives, from the long-haired heads of the enemy.'

43 "Rejoice with him, O heavens; bow down to him, all gods, for he avenges the blood of his children and takes vengeance on his adversaries. He repays those who hate him and cleanses his people's land."

44 Moses came and recited all the words of this song in the hearing of the people, he and Joshua the son of Nun.

God takes vengeance on His enemies. Before us is the image of an skilled archer and expert swordsman soaked in the blood of His enemies.

"I kill, and I make alive."—This truth was repeated by Hannah in her song, “The Lord killeth and maketh alive” (1 Samuel 2:6).

The Hebrew verb to "kill" is a Hiphil meaning "He causes death;" and, the Hebrew word for "make alive" (chayah) is a Piel verb adding intensity to the action to infuse hope into concerned hearts.

Since there is one, singular, solitary God who saves and destroys nations, a wise people will surrender to His law-order and seek His will. This is Moses' way of inviting pagan nations to glorify God and to seek the Son (See Romans 11:12; Romans 11:15; Romans 15:10.)

God has a claim to universal worship, and that all the nations of the earth are under **obligations** to adore him as the true God. Contemplation of the LORD God is a duty of all men. "He is not the God of the Hebrew people only, but of all people; his praise should be celebrated not merely by one nation, but by all" (Barnes Notes: Psalm 117:1).

What a magnificent theme, the Gentiles rejoicing in God's salvation to His people and His judgment upon their enemies! The design of the quotation in Romans is "to show that the Old Testament speaks of the Gentiles as called on to celebrate the praises of God; of course, the apostle infers that they are to be introduced to the same privileges as his people" (Barnes Notes).

Co-beneficiaries of the blessings of Israel, believing Gentiles are able to rejoice in their commonwealth and in the judgment of God upon His adversaries.

In conclusion, this canticle has four simple, but grand themes: God as the bedrock of society; men as fallen sinners; God as judge of his people as well as the wicked; and God as Savior of His people composed of Hebrews and people from all the nations.

The Last Will and Testament of Moses are words of life. He commanded his people to construct a Theocentric society and to build their nation on the Rock. He exhorted them to remember God and not forget His commandments. But they did.

In turn, the LORD chastised His people. That discipline, though severe, was always limited and restrained. The whole of His wrath, He reserved for the enemies of Israel. Moses reminded the nation that the One who wounds also heals. Therefore, seek Him. Obey Him. Beware of the vine of Sodom. Build your nation on the Rock, for their rock is not like our Rock.

If God's Word is not the staple and stock of nation building, then what is?

Americans would do well to remember that those in the graveyard of nations were poisoned by eating from the Vine of Sodom; that there is only one Rock upon which to build a nation and that is the Lord Jesus Christ and His counsels.

13.2.1 ISRAEL'S EFFECT ON THE NATIONS

Israel is the historical basis of God at work in history even today (Psalm 105:15; 1 Chronicles 16:22; Ezekiel 36:22-24). The nation as a whole is a prophetic voice.

*Psalm 105:15 Saying, Touch not mine anointed, and **do my prophets** (the nation) no harm.*

Israel's history can build and confirm faith in God's existence and intervention into history.

Jeremiah 33:25 , 26 Thus saith the LORD; If my covenant be not with day and night, and if I have not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth; then will I cast away the seed of Jacob, and David my servant, so that I will not take any of his seed to be rulers over the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: for I will cause their captivity to return, and have mercy on them.

We can see the historical infrastructure of the nation of Israel as God's work to bring salvation to all men through Christ (Isaiah 49:6; Galatians 3:8, 14).

Isaiah 49:6 And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth.

13.3 MAIN EVENTS IN ISRAEL'S HISTORY

Rough Dating BC

*3000 **BC The Flood**

2650 The Tower of Babel

2100-1850 The Period of the Patriarchs

1850 Enslavement in Egypt

*1446 Exodus from Egypt

1400-1000 The Period of the Judges

966 Building of Solomon's Temple

*931 Divided Kingdom

*722 Destruction of the Northern Kingdom (Israel)

*586 Babylonian Captivity (Judah)

*536 Return to the land of Canaan

516 Completion of the 2nd Temple

458-445 Ezra and Nehemiah

400 Canon complete

400-4 BC Intertestament Period (Hellenization of Israel)

70 AD Destruction of Jerusalem by Titus

13.4 THE COVENANTS OF ISRAEL

- The Abrahamic Covenant (Genesis 12, 13, 17)
- The Mosaic Covenant at Sinai (Exodus 19).
- The Davidic Covenant (2 Samuel 7).
- The New Covenant (Jeremiah 31).

13.5 THEOLOGICAL VIEWS ABOUT ISRAEL

We should be thankful for God's grace and election. Everything that is precious to Christians came through the Hebrews and its people called "Jews."

BIG QUESTIONS

- Is everyone who calls themselves a "Jew" a Jew?
- Is every Chinese Muslim and Arab?
- Is modern national "Israel" the same as ancient national Israel in the Old Testament?
- Are modern day "Jews" the people of God or are Christians the chosen people of God?
- What are modern Ashkenazi Jews? Do they have any Hebrew blood in them? Even if they did, what that commend them to God?
- What is a Jew? A religious preference, a race, a child of Jewish mother, a true Christian?

There is no place for anti-Semitism, at least in the Biblical sense. Our best friends are Abraham, Jacob, Moses, David, Jeremiah, and Jesus. But, use of the term "antisemitic" is a political sledgehammer used in modern times to bludgeon opponents of Zionism. We not have to support every political or legal decision made by modern so called "Jews." Most are enemies of the gospel. John called the Jews of his day members of the "synagogue of Satan" (Revelation 2:9; 3:9).

Interest: the scriptures come to us through the lens of the Jewish culture. To understand the Bible, one must understand Hebrew history and culture. However, Christians are not expected or asked to become Jews or to surrender the faith to the Jewish cult.

The proper understanding of Israel and their history gives us a proper understanding of the living God entering history to actively carry out His great purposes, which ultimately means our salvation. It also gives us the basis to say that God exists and is knowable in history.

13.5.1.1 QUESTIONS IN REGARDS TO ISRAEL

- Who is Israel as a people? Past, present, and future?
- What is the holy land? Past, present, and future?
- Who is Israel as a person? Past, present, and future?
- Does the Bible predict a glorious future for national Israel?

The Historical Point of View: Israel's history as an instrument of God ended with its rejection of Christ. There is only one people of God—those who believe that Jesus is the Messiah. These people, called the church, are the true Israel of God and the true people of God.

Israel purpose came to an end in 70 A.D.

Israel was a type of the church and superseded by the church. The church replaced Israel on the day of Pentecost. God made spiritual and physical promises to Israel. These promises have either been fulfilled in Christ or set aside because of disobedience (Cox, 1966).

There is only one people of God. Today, the people of God are composed of believing Jews and Gentiles which have become the true Israel of God, a New Israel, or Spiritual Israel.

- God's promises to Israel were conditional.
- The Land Grant promises were fulfilled at the time of Joshua.
- All earthly promises have been fulfilled or invalidated because of unbelief and disobedience.
- The church was prophesied in the OT in OT language.
- The first advent of Christ completed Israel's redemption and manifested the Israel of God.
- Christ instituted the Jewish-Gentile church. This demonstrates progressive revelation.

The Futurist Point of View: (Dispensational point of view): Israel will experience a final national revival, be grafted again into the olive tree (the tree of privileges to enter her exalted nation status in the millennial kingdom; that God has two separate people: Israel and the church; The belief that God has different plans for each; that God has an earthly plan for Israel, and that God has a heavenly plan for the church; that Jesus offered to the Jews an earthly millennium, but that Israel rejected this offer and that the Davidic kingdom was postponed until the time of a (supposed) millennium (Chafer, 1948; Walvoord, 1959).

- God's promises to Abraham haven't been fulfilled.
- God's promises to Israel are unconditional and are still binding on God to have them fulfilled.
- God's promises of Israel returning to the land and rebuilding the temple haven't been fulfilled. They have returned to the land (1948 A.D.).
- Though Israel is a type of the church; the two will always remain separate.
- Christ came the first time to establish an earthly millennial kingdom with Israel, but it was rejected.
- The church is a parenthesis in God's program. Israel is God's earthly people; the church is God's heavenly people. Israel rejected him, then God postponed this plan until the second advent.
- Israel will be saved to enjoy millennial blessings (Romans 11:29).
- The other Israel which is not Israel declaring themselves a nation in 1948 is seen as miracle.

*The essence of dispensationalism is that God has a theocratic program for Israel and a redemptive program for the church. (Ladd, Christianity Today, October 12, 1959: Quoted by Cox, 1966).

Alvord said future events are as much determined by ecclesiology as they are by eschatology.

13.5.2 INTERPRETING ISRAEL (HERMENEUTICS)

The dispensational position is based on several hermeneutic principles:

- a literal hermeneutic;
- the principle of double fulfillment;
- the principle of two peoples of God;
- unfulfilled OT prophecy.

- The covenant position is based on several hermeneutic principles:
- a literal hermeneutic;
- the fulfillment of OT prophecy in Christ;
- that there is only one people of God;
- and that the Israel and its institutions are fundamentally a type of the true church.

13.5.3 THREE VIEWS OF ISRAEL (KAISER, RESPONSE, 1992, P. 360)

1. **Replacement Theology:** This view holds that the geopolitical, national Israel was replaced by the church which is the **New Israel**. This view is opposed to dispensationalism. **The covenant view** maintains that spiritual Israel and the church are one and the same throughout all of history; namely, they are the faithful from all of humanity. This one body is embraced in a covenant, the covenant of grace (not mentioned in Scripture). All the promises of the covenants are fulfilled in the gospel. The church, therefore, is **Spiritual Israel**. This is the view held in this work.

3. **The Dispensational View** that holds that Israel and the church have separate and distinct identities, destinies, and promises. The Church is **an Intercalation in Israel's Program** and one day, the people called "Israel" or "Jews" who are not Jews in the Holy Land today will one day REPLACE the church in God's redemptive program. Where is this taught in the New Testament?

13.5.4 THREE FACTS ABOUT ISRAEL ACCORDING TO KAISER

The church is grafted into Israel, not Israel into the church.

The new covenant (Jeremiah 31) was made with the "house of Judah and the house of Israel", not with the church. It is not a covenant with all humanity, but all humanity may be grafted into it.

God has always had a faithful remnant since the beginning of the human race. The church is that part of the faithful remnant among the Gentiles which is now grafted into the faithful of Israel. "There is a distinction between Israel and the church, but not a separation; there is oneness in which distinguishable aspects of that oneness may be seen without implying or necessitating a division of identity or destiny" (Braising and Bock, 1992. *Dispensationalism, Israel, and the Church*. A response. p. 360-376).

13.5.5 TWO FUNDAMENTAL VIEWS REGARDING ISRAEL'S FUTURE

The **Historical Point** of view: Israel's history as an instrument of God ended with its rejection of Christ and the historical destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.

The **Futurist Point** of view: Israel will experience a final national revival, be grafted again into the olive tree--the tree of privileges—a symbol that Israel will enter her exalted nation status in the millennial kingdom.

13.5.6 ARGUMENTS FOR THE HISTORICAL VIEW

PREMISE NUMBER ONE

The promises given to Israel were conditional--that is, God's promises blessings were conditional upon the nation's obedience.

God's commandments to Israel were conditional (Deuteronomy 28:1-15; Joshua 24:20; Genesis 17:9-14; Exodus 19:5ff; Deuteronomy 20:15-19; Joshua 8:34; 1 Kings 2:3,4; 9:2-9; 11:11; 2 Kings. 21; 8b; 1 Chronicles 28:7b; 2 Chronicles 7:19-22).

Exodus 19:5 Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine:

Leviticus 26:13 I am the LORD your God, which brought you forth out of the land of Egypt, that ye should not be their bondmen; and I have broken the bands of your yoke, and made you go upright. Leviticus 26:14 But if ye will not hearken unto me, and will not do all these commandments; Leviticus 26:15 And if ye shall despise my statutes, or if your soul abhor my judgments, so that ye will not do all my commandments, but that ye break my covenant: Leviticus 26:16 I also will do this unto you; I will even appoint over you terror, consumption, and the burning ague, that shall consume the eyes, and cause sorrow of heart: and ye shall sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it.

Abraham obeyed (Genesis 12, 15, 17, 22, 26). See Genesis 17:1, 30. He immediately circumcised all his men. The covenant was renewed because he obeyed (Genesis 26:5).

Genesis 26:5 Because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws.

John the Baptist taught that fruit bearing was conditioned on faith (Matthew 3:7-12). Jewish tradition did not automatically place one inside the boundaries of kingdom promises.

Matthew 3:7-12 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance: And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. And now also the ax is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh

after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire: Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.

Christ is the end of the law: To reject Christ is to reject Torah and to become guilty of breaking the whole law (Romans 10:4, Galatians 3:10). He was that to which the law pointed (Cox, 1966, p. 51).

Jesus demolished arguments of privilege based on genetic descent (John 8:fff).

John 8:33 They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?

John 8:39 They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham.

John 8:44 You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

PREMISE NUMBER TWO

God rejected Israel because of her national disobedience.

Acts 13:45 But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming.

Acts 13:46 Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.

Matthew 3:9 And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.

Matthew 3:10 And now also the ax is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

Matthew 21:19 And when he saw a fig tree in the way, he came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and said unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward forever. And presently the fig tree withered away.

Matthew 21:42 Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes?

Matthew 21:43 Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.

Matthew 23:38 Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.

Luke 14:24 For I say unto you, That none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper.

Philippians 3:2 Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision.

1 Thessalonians 2: 16 The wrath of God has come upon them at last.

PREMISE NUMBER THREE

Prophecy regarding Israel has already been fulfilled.

The nation received the promised seed/Messiah (Galatians 3:16).

Abraham's descendents became a great nation.

Genesis 17:4 As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations. (Edom, Arabs, Israel).

Kings came out of Abraham: Saul, David, Solomon, Hezekiah (Genesis 17).

Genesis 17:6 And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee.

They inherited the land promised to Abraham.

Joshua 11:23 So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the LORD said unto Moses; and Joshua gave it for an inheritance unto Israel according to their divisions by their tribes. And the land rested from war.

The promises were inherited by the remnant (Romans 9:27-29). As godly desires were supplanted by the majority of unbelieving Jews, promises increased to the remnant.

*Zechariah 8:12 For the seed shall be prosperous; the vine shall give her fruit, and the ground shall give her increase, and the heavens shall give their dew; and I will cause the **remnant** of this people to possess all these things.*

Malachi 3:16 Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name.

Romans 9:27 Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved:

Romans 9:28 For he will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth.

Romans 9:29 And as Esaias said before, Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrah.

The book of Exodus contains/begins the fulfillment of the promises to Abraham regarding the land.

Joshua 11:23 says that all that Jehovah gave all the land to Israel as promised to the fathers- thus, a fulfillment; 1Kings. 4:21 & 5:4 fulfill Genesis 15:18.

1 Kings. 4:21 And Solomon reigned over all kingdoms from the river unto the land of the Philistines, and unto the border of Egypt: they brought presents, and served Solomon all the days of his life.

*Deuteronomy 1:10 says that Israel was as the stars of heaven; thus, we have a fulfillment of the Abrahamic promise (note past tense: **hB'r>h**, Hiphil, perfect).*

Nehemiah 9:23 acknowledges the fulfillment as well as Hebrews 11:12.

*Nehemiah 9:23 Their children also multiplied (**t'yBir>h**, Hiphil, perfect) thou as the stars of heaven, and brought them into the land, concerning which thou had promised to their fathers, that they should go in to possess it.*

Criticism by Cox:

“The futurist creates more problems than he solves by his insistence on a separate plan for national Israel” (1996, p. 58). Examples: two peoples; two resurrections; two temples; two purposes; two wives.

This does not preclude a national conversion toward the end of history, but it does exclude two purposes, two peoples concept. A grafting in again is dependent on faith (Romans 11:23).

Cox (1966, Amillennialism, p. 46): “All the earthly promises to Israel have been either fulfilled or invalidate because of disobedience. All spiritual promises are being fulfilled through the church, which is made up of Jews and Gentiles alike.”

PREMISE NUMBER FOUR

Most or all of the passages that futurist use to support a future program for Israel to our day (2000 AD) were future to the prophets during their day (600 B.C.). These promises are used incorrectly because those promises were fulfilled after Israel's return from Babylon in 539-536 B.C.

The promises dispensationalists use to support Israel's return to the land and rebuilding of the temple are promises that belong to the Return under Zerubbabel in 539-536 B.C. This is a violation of hermeneutic principle. Dispensationalists justify this hermeneutic discrepancy by advocating a hermeneutic principle called **the Law of Double Reference**—the belief that promises carry a double reference, a near and a far implication. This slimy, slippery hermeneutic can grease the wheels of any interpretation advanced by men.

Are not all the promises related to the land, a return, preservation, and a temple fulfilled in Israel's return from Babylon (539 B.C.)? Nothing in the **post exilic prophets** indicate a concern for a temple, or land, or a return.

The promises of a conversion, a return, the rebuilding of the temple, the preservation of the nation, and reconstruction of Jerusalem were fulfilled after 536 B.C. The temple was completed in 516 BC.

Malachi: He mentions nothing of land, temple, or a return because these promises were already fulfilled. Rather, Malachi, focuses on the unfulfilled prophecies: the coming of the Christ and His messenger (4:1ff). God's crown jewels are the remnant, that is, those who inherit the promises by faith. Following 516 B.C., there are no promises regarding the land or temple.

Isaiah refers to the fact that Israel shall return a "a second time" (Isaiah 11) back to the land. Dispensationalists tend to interpret the "second time" as 1948 A.D.: How should this passage be interpreted? God said he would bring the remnant out of a *diaspora* a second time: The first time was the Egyptian bondage and the exodus led by Moses, the second return occurred in the 536 B.C. when Zerubbabel led the people from Babylon back to Palestine. This verse cannot be correctly used to refer to an eschatological future for Israel.

The theme of the remnant becomes the focal point after national rebellion. The hopes of the godly were dashed as their genetic, ungodly brethren directed the affairs of state. Hope was given to the remnant as national blessing decreased in the nation because of her disobedience to the Lord (Jeremiah 23:3; Ezekiel 14:22; Zechariah 8:12; Romans 11:5). The Messiah was promised, not to the Jews, but to those "who fear my name" (Malachi 3:16).

PREMISE NUMBER FIVE

The church has correctly perceived itself as the beneficiary of Israel's promises.

Recipient of the new covenant. The Christian church . . . has from the beginning believed that this promise (Jeremiah 31:31-34) was fulfilled at the coming of Christ, and for this reason very early wrote over its own collection of sacred writings the collective title: “‘He Kaine Daithke,’ the New Covenant” (Albertus Pieters, *The Seed of Abraham*, p. 61- Quoted by Cox ,1966).

*“It was abundantly clear that the brotherhood, in claiming Jesus as the Messiah, asserted itself to be God’s Israel, able to speak of the patriarchs and the prophets as his own, seeing in the new society the fulfillment of God’s promise to Abraham.” (George Johnston, *the Doctrine of the Church in the New Testament*, pp. 61,62 Quoted by Cox, 1966).*

Jesus said he would create his own *ekklesia*, his “called out ones” (Matthew 16:15-18). Peter, James, John and **the early disciples were the remnant**, the spiritually responsive of Israel, the **true Israel**, the spiritual Israel of Israel, the true people of God. The spiritually **responsive among the Gentiles** joined this community to become Abraham’s children (Galatians 3), the true Israel of God.

The church received the Messiah as their own.

Acts 2:30 Knowing . . . that he would “set one upon his throne; he foreseeing this spake of the resurrection of the Christ. . .

Acts 2:36 Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.

Ladd (1974, p. 335): The exaltation of Jesus to the right hand of God means nothing less than his enthronement as king . . . taken out of context this could mean that Jesus became Messiah at his exaltation and represents “adoptionists” Christianity . . . (but) the context makes it clear that Peter means to say that Jesus has entered in upon a new stage of his messianic mission. He has now been enthroned as messianic king.”

Ladd (1974, p. 337): If the first stage of the eschatological resurrection has taken place, then the messianic age has begun and the messianic blessings have been given because the Messiah has already begun to reign.

The church appears to be the locus of OT fulfillment: Acts 2:16, Hosea 1:10, 2:23, 1 Peter 2:10; Jeremiah 31:31 & Hebrews 10:15-20).

2 Corinthians 6:16 And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

Series One:

Isaiah 52:11 Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch no unclean thing; go ye out of the midst of her; be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the LORD.

Genesis 17:8 And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.

Jeremiah 24:7 And I will give them an heart to know me, that I am the LORD: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God: for they shall return unto me with their whole heart.

Jeremiah 32:38 And they shall be my people, and I will be their God:

Ezekiel 11:20 That they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances, and do them: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God.

Ezekiel 37:23 . . . but I will save them out of all their dwelling places, wherein they have sinned, and will cleanse them: so shall they be my people, and I will be their God.

Ezekiel 37:27 My tabernacle also shall be with them: yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

2 Corinthians 7:1 Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

Series two:

Hosea 1:10 Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered; and it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God.

Hosea 2:23 And I will show her unto me in the earth; and I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to them which were not my people, Thou art my people; and they shall say, Thou art my God.

1 Peter 2:10 Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.

Series three:

Jeremiah 31:31 Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah:

Hebrews 10:15-20 Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before, This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin. Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh;

Cox's thesis (1966): ". . . that every Christian is a spiritual Israelite, and that Christians are therefore subject to all unfulfilled promises." (p. 58)

Series four: God is seen as raising up of the tent of David through the believing Gentile community.

Acts 15:14 Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name.

Acts 15:15 And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written,

Acts 15:16 After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up:

Acts 15:17 That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things.

PREMISE NUMBER SIX

The church has perceived itself as the spiritual Israel, or at least a new Israel.

If Jesus is a Jew (a spiritual Israelite and of Jewish descent), the inheritor of the promises of Abraham (a non Jew), and all believers are united to Christ and share in his inheritance, then all are spiritual Israel (Cox, 1966).

Romans 2:28-29 For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God. (Believing Gentiles have been circumcised in heart and now qualify as true Jews--mine)

Romans 9:6 Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel (the true people of God, spiritual Israel by faith), which are of Israel (political, ethnic Israel): Parenthesis emphasis mine.

Romans 11:26 And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob:

Matthew 19:28 And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Ephesians 2:11-13 Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called 'Uncircumcision' by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. (Near to what? Israel's promises!)

Ephesians 2:14-15 For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:

Galatians 6:15 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.

Who does "all who follow this rule" refer? Obviously, believers. Walvoord interpreted "and" (kai) as "and", meaning Israel. But, Hoekema (1994) disagrees and says believing Jews are already included in "all who follow this rule."

1 Peter 1:1 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia,

1 Peter 2:9 But ye are a chosen generation (Isaiah 43:20), a royal priesthood (Exodus 19:6), an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light:

* Hoekema (1994): "no longer is Israel by itself a people of God's own possession" (p. 198).

Hoekema (1994) gave three arguments that the church is spiritual Israel (p. 198):

- The use of the term *Israel*:
- The church as a fulfillment of OT promises (1 Peter 2:9).

- The use of the term “*seed of Abraham*” (Galatians 3:28-29).

PREMISE NUMBER SEVEN

The New Testament does not discuss the future of ethnic Israel!

Amillennialist, Bruce Waltke said:

“If revised dispensationalism produced on passage in the entire New Testament that clearly presents the resettlement of Israel in the land, I would join them. But I know of none.” (A Response, Blaising and Bock, 1992, p. 357).

Hoekema says,

“The Bible does not teach a millennial restoration of the Jews to their land.” Note His counterclaims to the following statements advanced by futurists:

Objection: Israel will return a second time:

Answer: The phrase “second time” in Isaiah 11:11-16 refers to (1) the Egyptian deliverance (v. 16), and (2) the return from the exile in 539 BC.

Objection: There will be a regathering of Israel (Jeremiah 23:3, 7-8):

Answer: this is referring to the return under Zerubbabel.

Objection: God will save his people from a far country (Zechariah 8:7-8):

Answer: Zechariah’s purpose (520 BC) was to encourage more Babylonian captives to return to Jerusalem as the remnant had already done.

Objection: Israel will never to be plucked again (Amos 9:14-15):

Answer: this passage gives no proof of a millennium, only the assurance that God’s people a permanent rest in the future. Why restrict the passage to the millennium.

Objection: “I will return” to restore David’s fallen tent (Acts 15:16): This appears to teach a future restoration.

Answer: “I will” is future to Amos. In the Book of Acts, James seems to indicate that the salvation of Gentiles is a fulfillment of God’s promise to rebuild David’s fallen tent

*Acts 15:16 After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of **David**, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up:*

17 That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things.

18 Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world.

The NT is strangely silent about the future of Israel.

OTHER ASSERTIONS

- Most promises in the OT of Christ were fulfilled in the NT.
- The fig tree refers to Israel who was cursed.
- There is no postponed kingdom.
- Kingdom of God and heaven are the same today.
- There is no secret rapture of the church.
- The time of Jacob's trouble was in 70 AD
- Daniel 9:27 refers to Christ, not the antichrist.
- Temple hopes were fulfilled in post exilic years.
- The Roman Empire will not be revived.
- Israel's hope should not be in a millennium, but in Christ.
- Blessing will not come to a Jew except through Christ.

The postponement theory of dispensationalism fuels the fire for a Jewish national hope--a false hope to be sure. The theory has no basis in Scripture and makes the church age a plan-B in God's redemptive program. This view is repugnant to the loft view of church in Paul's writings.

Likewise, the parenthesis church idea that fuels the fire of a Jewish political future has little basis in the NT.

PREMISE NUMBER EIGHT

Paul's theology exalts the new creation, the church; it lacks proleptic teaching on Israel's future.

Israel was given the privilege of being the steward of His law and was responsible to God's law (Romans 2:17,18; Romans 3:1,2).

Israel was also given privileges: the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, service of God, the promises, the fathers, and the Christ (Romans 9:4, 5).

Romans 9:4 Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises;

Romans 9:5 Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen.

Israel was obligated to keep the covenant, but failed (rebelled) against it (Romans 9:31,33; 10:3,4; 2:3; 3:19)

The Jews are not only hostile to God, they are hostile to all men (I Thess. 2:14, 15).

Calvary destroyed the wall between Jew and Gentile so that all men are blessed in Abraham by faith (Galatians 3:8,9; 26-29; Ephesians 2:11-19; 4:6-6; Galatians 3:16).

Galatians 3:8 And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.

Galatians 3:9 So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.

Galatians 3:26 For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

Galatians 3:27 For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

Galatians 3:28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

Galatians 3:29 And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

Israel is compared to the bondwoman which was cast out:

Galatians 4:30 Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman.

Salvation depends on faith, not physical ancestry (John 1:12,13; Colossians 3:11; Galatians 3:6,7) Jews boasted of their ancestry, circumcision, and nationality, but God is no respecter of persons (Romans 2:11)

The Gentile is now on equal standing with believing Jews and both own Him as their Messiah. Both inherit the promises. Both participate in the commonwealth of Israel. Both have equal standing before God (Romans 4:16,17; 3:23; Galatians 3:13,14; Ephesians 2:12ff).

It is the remnant, not the entire nation that is destined to be saved (Romans 3:4, 9:27-29; 11:5).

Romans 11:5 Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace.

The law, circumcision, and national Israel were shadow (Colossians 2:17; Hebrews 10:1). The reality is Christ and His church.

13.5.7 WHO IS ISRAEL TODAY?

(Major Source: Robertson, The Israel of God)

This question will help us clarify present day misconceptions about God's people. The key issue here is not a political question or a cultural question, but a spiritual question. **Who is Israel in God's eyes?**

Was Abraham a Jew? No, he was actually a Gentile from the family of Shem, but because he believed God, he was declared to be Father Abraham, the father of the Jewish nation, but more importantly, the father of all who believe.

Was Isaac a Jew? No, he was a Gentile, a physical and spiritual son of Abraham.

Was Jacob a Jew? Jacob was first called "Israel" because he wrestled with God—that is, he trusted God like never before.

Was the wife of Moses a Jew? No, she was a Gentile.

Was Ruth a Jew? No, she was Moabite who was included in the Messianic family.

Paul tells us directly that it is not one's physical relationship to Abraham that identifies them with Israel, but their spiritual relationship: "For they *are* not all Israel, which are of Israel," (Romans 9:6) that is, one is not a Jew or a member of Israel because of a genetic relationship with Abraham. "For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither *is that* circumcision, which is outward in the flesh." *In other words, Jewishness in the good sense is a matter of the heart, not of the flesh.*

Was Jesus a Jew? He was a Hebrew from the tribe of Judah, but He was not a Jew in the religious sense of the term.

Is a Jew one who decides to be a Jew? No! Paul is emphatic, He "is not . . ." (Romans 2:28). Not all who claim to be Jews are Jews (Romans 9:6). They may possess a genetic relation to Abraham, be circumcised, be living in Canaan, and associate with Jewish people, and still not be a Jew. To be a Jew, one must have a heart that is right with God—a heart that has placed its faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Even Nicodemus, a part from the new birth, had no inheritance in the Kingdom of God (John 3). Jews living in the promised land, unless born from above, do not have a stake in God's promises.

Positively, everyone who has faith in Christ and has been circumcised in heart is Abraham's seed, and "heirs according to the promise" (Galatians 3:28, 29).

Jacob was the first to be called "Israel." He was but an imperfect shadow of the Prince to come. Though he grew as a spiritual person, he remained imperfect until the day of his death. Were his twelve sons part of Israel? His sons were shady characters at best. While we must admit a filial relationship, the question remains whether all 12 were sons of Jacob in the faith.

Moses predicted that **a star** would rise of Jacob (Numbers 24:17), this star would be the true **Israel of God**. He is **David's greater son** (2 Samuel 7:14), the **Righteous Branch** who stands in stark contrast the other unrighteous branches in David's line. He was the true Israel of God because like Israel he was called out of Egypt, passing the tests in the wilderness, and arriving on Jordan's shore by virtue of His resurrection. He promised to create a new nation, his "called out" ones, the church (Matthew 16), the sons of the true Israel of God. As the 12 sons of Jacob were called the sons of Israel by virtue of natural birth, Jews and Gentiles become sons of Israel to form "spiritual Israel" through faith by virtue of a spiritual birth (John 3: Galatians 3). It is through the gospel that Gentiles share together in the promise of Christ Jesus (Ephesians 3:6), draw near to the common wealth of Israel and become fellow citizens of the saints of the household of God (Ephesians 2:12ff).

DOES POLITICAL, GENETIC ISRAEL HAVE A FUTURE?

One looks in vain through the New Testament to find a word that offers a hope for any Jew apart from Christ. Salvation belongs only to those who place their faith in Christ. Together, Jew and Gentile, will inherit paradise because of their faith in Christ. Only the debatable passage in Romans 11 appears to offer a hope for geo-political Israel, but after looking at this passage closely, one will notice that "all Israel will be saved," i.e., all true believers will be saved, are being saved, and have been saved.

WHAT IS THE HOLY LAND?

What makes a land holy? Is it not the manifestation of God? "Take off your shoes," God said to Moses the land is holy. The spot where God manifest himself became a holy site. **But, was it holy after God departed?** If someone today were walking on that site, would he desecrate it? No, because God is no longer there.

What made Canaan holy? Was it the presence of Abraham or the 12 sons of Jacob? No, it was the fact that shekinah glory tabernacled among men in that land for a thousand years. God departed and the land was ravaged by the Babylonians. When he left, was the land still holy? Did He ever return, and if not, is the land still holy? Is the temple site still holy?

The land grant promise foreshadowed God's ultimate redemptive plan to redeem all of earth. Paul said that when God promised Abraham the land he was actually promising him the "cosmos" (Romans 4). The goal of redemption is not Palestine, but Adam's pristine garden, paradise restored. The land could only serve as a shadow, a typological anticipation of the final goal of history, paradise restored.

In 70 AD, Israel lost her land, her religion, and her temple. These shadows were destroyed to remind humanity of God's larger purpose which is to redeem not only the Jews but the Gentiles, not only Canaan, but the whole cosmos. When Stephen gave his famous sermon (Acts 7), he reminded his audience that God's purpose was greater than the Jews, greater than Palestine, and that God's throne was greater than the shadow of the temple: "Heaven *is* my throne, and earth *is* my footstool: what house will ye build me? (7:49). Stephen lost his life because **he repudiated the false notion that God's redemptive program was limited to Israel, her land, and her temple.**

PALESTINE AND ESCHATOLOGY

Does Palestine have a future eschatological program?

Dispensationalists would say, "Yes." No doubt, the modern state of Israel, has fueled this belief. However, as one looks at all the "return" promises and "temple" promises, they have to do with the return of 536 BC, not with something future to us! Selah!

When Joseph gave orders for his bones to be buried in Canaan, it was not that Canaan was more holy than Egypt, but somehow he wanted to make a statement that he believed in the God of resurrection and that one day he would participate in ultimate redemption of God's people. The return of his remains symbolized his hope in the resurrection (Hebrews 11:22; Exodus 3:6; Matthew 22:32; Mark 12:26; Luke 20:37).

Ezekiel's vision of the valley of dry bones, not only pointed to the hope that Israel would return to the promised land after their 70 years of exile, but it also prefigured the complete redemption of God's people in a redeemed cosmos of which Abraham and his spiritual children will inherit (Romans 4:13).

The fulfillment is always greater than the promise. When God promised Abraham the land (Genesis 13), Paul interpreted this promise, not as Canaan, but the WHOLE WORLD (Romans 4:13). Believing Jews and Gentiles will share the promises to Abraham in the New Heaven and New Earth.

WHO IS ISRAEL AS A PERSON?

Jacob was first called "Israel"—a prince with God. But, this weak man never embodied princely characteristics needed to complete God's plan of redemption. A star out of Jacob would complete God's redemptive plan (Numbers 34:17). Jesus is God's Israel, the Star out of Jacob, the Prince who will establish the Kingdom on earth.

The dispensational view holds to the belief that Israel's promises are unfulfilled. In contrast to the dispensational view is the covenant belief that all of Israel's promises are fulfilled in Christ.

God gave promises to Israel's patriarchs. God promised to bless Abraham and His seed not seeds. He renewed those promises with Isaac and Jacob and Israel (Exodus 2:23, 24; 6:1-8; Psalm 105:8-10).

The seed came lived, died, and rose again.

God's promises are fulfilled in the resurrection of Christ. During Paul's day, Jews were still looking for those promises to be fulfilled. Paul declared,

. . . we bring you the good news that what God promised to the fathers, this he has fulfilled to us their children by raising Jesus [from the dead] . . . (Acts 13:32, 33).

The resurrection of Jesus was declared by Paul to be the *fulfillment* of what God promised to Abraham, Israel, and David. If those Jews in Paul's day were considered backward for not believing that God fulfilled His promise in Christ, what must be said about those (Jews and dispensationalists) who are still waiting for the promises to be fulfilled?

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places (Ephesians 1:3).

The blessings enumerated by God's promises were distributed based on the response and obedience of the people. If they obeyed, they would be blessed. If they disobeyed, they would be under a curse (Exodus 19:5; Deuteronomy 28:1, 2, 13; Psalm 106:3; Isaiah 1:19).

They promised to obey (Exodus 19:8). Israel could only receive all the promises if they obeyed all the commands. But, their history records one failure after another.

The last word in the OT is the word "curse" (~ר, **xe**, cherem). It means "to mutilate," "ban," "slit," or "destroy." Israel's throat was slit (cursed) in 70 AD because they refused to believe.

The **True Israel** was born from the stock of Abraham, and a new voice was heard, "Lo, I come (in the volume of the Book it is written of Me), to do Thy will, O God" (Hebrews 10:7).

He was the Surety of the Covenant (Hebrews 7:22). A "surety" means pledge. He was the mediator of the covenant (Hebrews 9:15), the One given "for a covenant of the people" (Isaiah 42:6). *Christ became a double agent.*

As Israel's Representative, He became the One through Whom Israel could fulfill all her promise to God.

As God's Mediator, He became the One through whom God would bless His people Israel.

God promised to bless Israel. Israel promised to obey God. Total blessing could only be obtained for Israel through total obedience. Christ was not only God's Agent to fulfill His promises to Israel, He was Israel's Agent to fulfill obedience to God.

Christ was not only God's Agent to fulfill His promises to Israel, He was Israel's Agent to fulfill obedience to God.

In His life, the Agent kept all of God's law on Israel's behalf. In His death, He took the curse belonging to Israel in order to protect them from the curses of the law. Because of the Agent's obedience, God blessed

Him. As God's Agent, the resurrected Christ becomes the sphere, the land, the realm where believing Israel can obtain the blessing promised to Abraham (Galatians 3:10-14).

In Christ, Israel fulfilled all her obligations to God. In Christ, God fulfilled all His promises to Israel.

Thus, Paul was correct when He said, ". . . we bring you the good news that what God promised to the fathers, this he has fulfilled to us their children by raising Jesus {from the dead} . . . (Acts 13:32, 33).

"All the promises of God find their 'Yes' in Him" (2 Corinthians 1:20, RSV).

Thus, the apostles interpreted the OT Christologically, that is, they scanned the OT through the lens of the historical Christ.

All the promises of God are but a shadow of the ultimate reality which is Christ.

Israel was from the stock of Abraham, and so is Jesus. The promised Seed is Jesus.

Israel kept the Passover, but Jesus is the true Passover (1 Corinthians 5).

Israel was healed by the brazen serpent which foreshadowed Christ the One made sin for us (John 3:14; 2 Corinthians 5:21).

Israel's greatest king was David, and Jesus is David's greater son.

Israel was circumcised, but real circumcision happens in the heart (Romans 2:29).

Israel had a temple, but Jesus said he was the true temple of God (John 1:14; 2:12ff). In believing, the church joins that temple (Ephesians 2:22, 23).

Israel worshipped on Matthew Zion which foreshadowed the real heavenly Jerusalem (Hebrews 12:22).

Israel had a temporal priesthood, but Jesus is a high priest forever (Hebrews 5-8).

Israel offered sacrifices in the temple to God, but Jesus was the sacrifice (Colossians 1:19-24; Hebrews 9, 10).

Israel found hope and salvation in the land (Palestine), but the people of God now find hope and salvation in a new land, "in Christ."

Israel was led out of Egypt by Moses the great deliverer, but Christ is the Great Deliver (Deuteronomy 18:18) who led a new exodus out of sin into righteousness (Isaiah 52; 53; Romans 5-8).

Did Israel come out of Egypt? So did Christ (Matthew 2).

Was Israel tested in the wilderness (failed)? Jesus was tested in the wilderness and succeeded.

Did Israel receive God's Law (the Torah)? Jesus is the living Torah, Israel's new subjective standard of righteousness.

Jesus was Israel representative that fulfilled the law where Israel had failed. Because of His obedience on their behalf, the Father could bless Him. Because He was God's mediator of the new covenant, true Jews could inherit the blessing of the new covenant in Him. Christ is the Redeemer, the Greater Moses, the Greater High Priest, the Ultimate Sacrifice, the New Temple, the New Land, the True Israel of God.

NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES OF FUTURISM

To believe that Israel has a future place in God's program apart from the gospel or the church, or to believe that the church will be displaced has several negative results:

This belief produces a false hope about salvation:

. . . it is today helping to encourage and deceive Jewish people with a false hope of salvation (T.H. Salmon. What about Palestine? Chapel Library. Venice, Florida).

Those who do not know the gospel will be punished, including unbelieving Israel (2 Thessalonians 1:7-10). The need is to come to Christ; the hope is the kingdom of God.

This belief erects a false eschatological scheme involving a restored Israel that cannot be supported exegetically. As recent history has shown us, a belief in Israel's return to the land and a rebuilt temple, produces a false time table about future events that cannot be sustained by Scripture.

This belief fails to grasp the wonder and splendor of what God is doing through his people to spread the gospel today. When the church is seen as a "parenthesis" or "intercalation" in God's program, we fail to grasp the historical shift and the queenly place the church stands in God's plan to colonize the earth with Christians, Jews and Gentiles.

This belief creates a false belief that the modern state of Israel is a fulfillment of Scripture.

This belief creates a false belief that the land of Palestine is somehow more holy than the ground on which the church worships

This belief fosters the notion that the Jews are still God's people and that physical Jerusalem is God's city.

This belief discriminates against Arab Christians who, as sons of Abraham, have as much right (and more so) to own land in Canaan than a non-believing Jew.

This belief misdirects prayer. Many are prompted to pray "for the peace of Jerusalem" not realizing the historical transition that took place during the church age. Our prayers should not be for Jerusalem, Washington D.C., or London, but for the true people of God, the church destined for New Jerusalem.

Conclusion: As one looks at the issues, this student is forced to side with the covenant camp in regards to the nation of Israel. Israel's place in the premillennial dispensational scheme is profound. Israel's rejection, kingdom postponement, the parenthetical church, and Israel's alleged future conversion. All of dispensational eschatology hinges on the belief of Israel's future, geo-national conversion. *If this dispensational presupposition is faulty, the whole system crumbles.*

The promises made to Abraham were conditional. Because he believed and obeyed, God was pleased to fulfill his promise to Him.

The land grant promises were fulfilled during Joshua's day.

Joshua 22:4 And now the LORD your God hath given rest unto your brethren, as he **promised** them: therefore now return ye, and get you unto your tents, *and* unto the land of your possession, which Moses the servant of the LORD gave you on the other side Jordan.

Israel was displaced from the land because of unbelief and disobedience.

All the return promises about the land and about the temple were fulfilled prior to the return or before 516 BC.

When Christ came to his people, Israel rejected him. Because they rejected Christ, the ultimate fulfillment of God's promise, God ultimately judged this nation and retired them from service.

Believing Jews and Gentiles form the new Israel, the true people of God.

Jesus is the true Israel, the star out of Jacob—the One who merited and inherited all the promises and hopes of Israel.

If Jews want to be saved, they must come to the Lord Jesus Christ through the door of the gospel, not through the door of Judaism. Any attempt to rebuild a temple, set up sacrifices, or establish a priesthood or rabbinic traditions would be an act of unbelief, not faith.

In understanding eschatology, we must study what is revealed, not build on phantom theories. Therefore, the reader needs to beware of elaborate eschatological systems that build on an alleged geo-political conversion of national Israel and a return of Israel to her native land by using prophecies targeted for the return of Israel in 539 B.C.

The land was merely a shadow of God's ultimate plan to restore paradise lost.

13.5.8 ISRAEL AND ROMANS 11:25

The New Testament is strangely silent about a future conversion of Jews unless it is Romans 11:25ff.

THE FUTURIST INTERPRETATION

(Campbell and Townsend, p. 214)

Dispensationalism: The critical distinctive of dispensationalism is the *sin qua non* (the absolutely indispensable part), the separation of Israel and the church; two people; two purposes. This difference is driven by a literal hermeneutic, and sometimes a wooden, literal hermeneutic.

Beliefs of dispensationalism: Israel has a glorious future. Israel will experience a national revival toward the end of history, be regrafted into the tree of privileges, and be exalted as God's people among the nations in the millennium. Israel will inherit the Promised Land. Christ will literally reign in Jerusalem as the King-Messiah of the nation.

PREMISES GUIDING THE INTERPRETATION OF ROMANS 11.

The Old Testament promises are unconditional. The promises to Israel will be literally fulfilled.

The Old Testament has supremacy over the New Testament eschatologically.

Exegetical: Romans 11 predicts Israel's return, future conversion, and place in God's eschatological program.

Theological: There is a difference between Israel and the church. The church is a parenthesis in God's in God's program. A temporary, secondary work, a parenthetical even in history. The main feature is yet to come: Israel's glorification in the millennium.

Hermeneutical: The church is not Israel, and Israel is not the church. They are two totally separate entities.

CRITICISMS OF THE FUTURIST'S VIEW

A criticism by Cox: Jesus has one fold (John 10:16); the church is one new man (Ephesians 2:14-16); . . . the dispensationalist teach that the church is doomed to failure, that it is a temporary instrument, and that national Israel will have a far greater ministry following the removal of the Holy Spirit than the church will have under the guidance of the Holy Spirit (Cox, 1966, p. 49).

A criticism by Oswald T. Allis: the church is the fulfillment of prophecy, but to dispensationalist, the church disrupts that prophecy.

Israel's future in the New Testament is strangely silent. If Ethnic Israel has a future, there is only one verse on the subject--Romans 11:25,26.

The interpretation of *kai houtos* ("and thus," v. 26).

F. F. Bruce says the phrase has a temporal sense. Others say the phrase is inferential force. Some take it as correlative, meaning ("just as"), or with a comparative sense.

Many commentators see this as a **comparative force**: “and so”, or “and in this manner.” Henrickson, Ridderbos, and Robertson take it to mean: “in this manner shall all the remnant of Jewish believers being saved in this age.” Thus, there is no future for Israel in this interpretation. “And thus” means true Israel will be saved, or grafted back into God’s tree when each individual Jew believes throughout history.

Lewis Johnson says, “all Israel shall be saved” refers to historical Israel (Romans 11:23-25):

Universalism is the belief that all genetic descendents of Israel will be saved. But, this is not what the passage teaches. Dispensationalists do not believe this.

Johnson says Israel as a whole will be saved--not each individual, but the nation as a whole. The nation rejected Christ as a whole (though not every individual) and the nation as a whole will one day be saved.

Cox says all the remnant of Israel shall be saved. That is, the elect of Ethnic Israel will be saved as each one individually trust Christ as Savior.

Dispensationalism teaches that this salvation refers to a Jewish Millennial reign. However, to place the premillennial view of the millennium in this passage is eisegesis not exegeses. The teaching on the millennium is simply not found here.

The Historist’s Interpretation of Romans 11:26 (Cox, 1966: Hoekema 1979: Ladd, 1974):

The historical or covenant view believes that blessings of Israel’s covenant promises were conditioned upon obedience; that Israel forfeited her right to these blessings because of disobedience; that the blessings of the nation are now shared by believing Jews and Gentiles, the church; that there is only one true people of God who will inherit the kingdom of God, and that Israel only has a future on church ground (faith in Christ); that the believing remnant has inherited all Israel’s promises in Christ; that a revitalized, national Israel at the center of redemptive history is a false hope.

If ethnic Israel has a hope, it is only found in one verse in the NT--Romans 11:26. What does it mean to the historist?

The context is national Israel, Jews. The object is turning to Christ, not Palestine; this involved the remnant, not the entire nation.

The futurist interprets “all Israel” as a geopolitical-national conversion. All Israel shall be saved at later date. But Paul was dealing with the present, not the future.

“so” does not mean “therefore”, but “similarly” or “in like manner”.

“shall” does not always mean future fulfillment.

Dispensationalist interpret “in part” to mean “for a while.”

The Redeemer shall come to Zion (Isaiah 59:20) does not refer to Jesus second coming, but to his first coming. Dispensationalists say it refers to Christ's second coming.

"All Israel" according to the historicist means the believing remnant. The emphasis of Paul is God's present work of saving the Jews, not an eschatological framework.

The dispensationalist errors by interpreting the NT by the OT. 1 Corinthians 10:11 says that Israel's history is "an example" and were for **intended for us** upon "whom the end of the ages are come."

1 Corinthians 10:11 Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.

"all Israel shall be saved" simply means that all the believing remnant in this dispensation shall be saved by faith and experience grace on the same grounds that believers are saved. If God does have a future for Israel, they will come in on the same grounds as everyone else--by faith.

VanGemeren quotes Burns (A response, 1992, Blaising and Bock, p. 341): "the nation will enjoy what only a remnant has presently experienced."

Cox: Paul spoke of turning to Christ, not Palestine.

Observation: It isn't contextually impelling to see a Jewish, millennial kingdom in these verses. If the Bible teaches a Jewish millennium, it must be found somewhere else in the Bible, not here.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE ON ROMANS 11

Charles Hodge and John Murray affirm future ethnic Israel.

Anthony Hoekema writes of the possibility of a large scale conversion. Ladd, likewise, believes the door is not shut for a future, national conversion to Christ.

Calvin: He took Israel to mean the church, that is, Israel includes all the people of God, the full number of Gentiles and the full number of Jews. (Note: the use of the term Israel in the NT is against this view).

Hendriksen (Dutch view): God's promises attain fulfillment not in the nation as such, but in the remnant according to grace.

Johnson argues against this point to the fact that (1) the text has to do with the whole nation, ethnic Israel; (2) the sum total of the remnant is still the remnant. He argues the passage is not discussing the constant grafting of individual believers into the tree, but the cutting off of an entire nation, and the regrafting in of the entire nation. He argues,

The remnant is not equated with Israel, as Hoekema submits, but contrasted.

Grafted in “again” does not refer to the remnant, they were never cut out. The “again” refers to national Israel.

The insipient argument of Hoekema lacks the force of the passage. Of course the remnant will be saved!

Isaiah 59:20-21 and 27:9 does not agree with the “Dutch” view for the passage fits more with the second coming than the first coming.

Ladd (1974) argues for the following:

The church is the new people of God. Apostate Israel is no longer His people. The church is the recipient of His electing benefits (Hosea 1:10; Romans 9:24, 25)

The title *laos* (people) is not stripped from Israel. They remain in “some sense” the people of God (p. 538). They are still titled “holy”, a people belonging to God.

Paul distinguishes between ethnic Israel (empirical Israel) and spiritual Israel--between the people as a whole and the faithful remnant.

The remnant is the true Israelite, one who is a Jew inwardly (Romans 2:28f), the spiritually responsive of the nation, the “good ground” of Matthew 13.

The olive tree is the one people of God. Natural branches, unbelieving Israel, was broken off. The church lives from this root, the patriarchs (Romans 11:5ff).

All believers (Jews and Gentiles) are the true circumcision who worship God in spirit and glory in Christ Jesus (Philippians 3:3; Colossians 2:11). They are the true children of Abraham who have been brought near to God (Romans 4; Ephesians 2).

This does not mean that God has shut the door to Israel after the flesh. While the natural branches have been broken off, God’s sovereign pleasure is to yet to graft them back in again (Romans 11:23-24).

Paul’s argument is circular: Israel is broken off; Gentiles are grafted in; Israel becomes jealous; their fullness means riches for the Gentiles. How much more will their full inclusion mean? This does not mean that every Israelite will be saved as a whole, Paul does not speculate on when or how the whole will be saved. The door is open. If they do come in (to salvation), they will come in on the terms of faith the same as the Gentiles (on church ground).

REYMOND ON ROMANS 11

Reymond gives six reasons to reject the futurist’s interpretation of Romans 11 (*A New Systematic Theology of the Reformed Faith*, 1998, p. 1029).

Paul's employment of a single olive tree: The idea that a separate future, salvation, or spiritual organism for saved Jews is excluded here. Jews obtain the blessings of redemption the same way Gentiles do, by faith!

The phrase "until" (*axris ou, achris hou*) in Romans 11:25 has the force of a *terminus ad quem* with no indication that a prevailing circumstance will then be reversed. The condition of partial blindness extends until the fullness of the Gentiles comes in. Nothing is said about a reversal after this time.

The term "then" (*tote, tote*): Paul does not say Israel has experienced a hardening in part until all the Gentiles come in and *then shall all Israel be saved*. The idea that Israel shall be saved after this period is missing in this section. Jews are saved by placing their faith in Christ now.

The third "now" in verses 30-31: The three "nows" indicate that Israel is receiving mercy now, throughout this age. Now they are bound over to disobedience, but now they can come into the fold by repentance and faith.

The binding of all men over to disobedience (11:32): This view strengthens the significance of the gospel for Jew as well as for Gentile. As Jews believe throughout this age, they experience the "riches" of 11:12 or "life out of the dead."

Romans 11:26: This verse refers to Christ's first coming, not his second. After God takes away Jacob's sins, He will come and comfort them. He did this in at Calvary.

I would add that the Greek word "kai" can be translated "even." "Even so, all (true) Israel shall be saved." Israel here refers to all believing Jews, not the nation. In other words, the real, true, spiritual, believing Israelites will be saved.

BEN MERKLE ON ROMANS 11

Ben Merkle list four reasons why Israel in Romans 11 refers to the elect (JETS 43/4 December 2000, 709-721)"

The context of Romans 9-11: God's promises never included unbelieving, ethnic Israel or ethnic identity (9:6). True Israel are children of the promise, not the flesh. God never promised that all Jews would be saved. Only the elect of Israel will be saved and this is true Israel . . . and that through the proclamation of the gospel and not through some eschatological intervention. Paul shows two examples. Ishmael and Esau were descendents of Abraham, but were not children of the promise. God's promises only apply to the spiritual within Israel.

The nature of the question: Paul asks, "Has God cast off his people?" The question is not, "Has God cast off ethnic Israel with respect to his special plan for the future?" The second question prejudices interpretation. The same is true of the question, "have they stumbled that they should fall?" He is not asking if there is going to be a mass conversion of the nation. He is asking if Israel, by failure, has

completely forfeited their privilege. There stumbling is not as serious as it sounds. It is not a complete fall.

The emphasis is on the present situation, not a future conversion (vv. 1, 5, 13, 14, 30-31):

“For I am an Israelite” If you doubt, look at me now (v. 1).

“at this present time there is a remnant of grace” The emphasis is now, in Paul’s day.

“For I speak to you . . . I am an apostle . . . I magnify my ministry.” The means of provocation of Israel to jealousy is not a future conversion, but his own ministry!

The three “knows” in verse 30, 31.

The nature of “mystery” (v. 25): The mystery includes (a) the partial hardening, (b) coming of the fullness of Gentiles, (c) the salvation of Israel. What is this “hardening in part?” “In part” should not be translated “for a while.” He does not mean, “all Israel is partially hardened,” but, “that some are fully hardened” while the elect remnant is being saved.

The word “until” does not mean something is going to happen afterward. The phrase “until” refers to eschatological termination. The hardening will continue throughout the whole of the present age until the return of Christ. He is not suggesting the “hardening” will be reversed.

There are three usages of “ou(tws”): (a) temporal, (b) logical, (c) modal. The word “ou(tws” in verse 26 never has a “temporal” usage, i.e., it is not “but, then, after that” all Israel will be saved. If it were logical the verse would read, “and in consequence of this process (v. 25b) all Israel will be saved.” The best usage is modal; i.e. “in this manner all Israel will be saved.” The fact that it is the manner which is under consideration is supported by Paul’s argument in 11-24.

Merkle says “Israel” can refer to (a) Israel, both Jews and Gentiles, (b) ethnic nation of Israel as a whole.

Conclusion: In my opinion, Israel was a title adopted by the Hebrews. This nation contained the false and true. In the OT, the true Israel or the spiritual of Israel was *the remnant* to whom the promises were intended. In the New Testament, the term *Israel* has least three usages: (a) the ethnic Hebrew nation, (b) Christ, the true Israel, and (c) true people of God.

Jesus is the true Prince; Jacob is but a shadow.

Peter, James, and John were a part of the remnant, the true Israel of God, the ecclesia, the church. As Gentiles believed they joined this Messianic community and inherited the promises given to Abraham. They became sons of Abraham by faith. **Both believing Jews and Gentiles are the true people of God, the true Israel, the family of God.**

Old Testament Theology

Unbelieving ethnic Israel will never inherit the promises. And, while there may be a future harvest of Jews out of unbelieving ethnic Israel, they must come into the kingdom on church ground, not Hebrew, geo-political ground.

14 THE PROMISE OF MASHI'AH (MESSIAH)

Genesis 12:3 And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed (The fundamental Messianic Promise).

*Psalms 2:2 The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed (Ax*yvim., mashi'ahh, mashiyach), saying,*

14.1 INTRODUCTION TO THE MESSIANIC HOPE

The word “messiah” is a title, not a personal name. It comes from the Hebrew word *hamashiyach* and is translated “the Lord’s anointed” in Psalm 2:2. The Greek name for “Messiah” is the word “Christos.” Jesus was called “Christos” in the New Testament, not “hamashiyach.” That is, the term “hamashiyach” is not superior to the title “Christos” or “Christ” as some ignorantly claim.

That Jesus is the Messiah is a pillar of the gospel (Mark 1:1).

OUR TIME

We live in a marvelous age. Giant metal birds soar in the above the clouds like eagles carrying hundreds of passengers devouring 1000's of miles in few hours. Floating pleasure palaces cruise the Caribbean seeking nothing but happiness. Tiny factories of time are strapped across our wrist, and by pushing a few buttons, pocket size computers display answers that would have taken ancients weeks to calculate. Housewives are surrounded with machines and conveniences that would have required a dozen slaves 200 years ago. Medical science is in an explosion of breakthroughs with triple- by-pass surgeries, kidney transplants, and invitro-fertilization procedures. What an age!

However, this is a frightening time. Over 500 unique species in the animal kingdom are threatened with extinction

Giant oil spills devastate our shore lines and threatened entire populations of marine life. Third world armies terrorize entire countries. Nuclear weapons capable of annihilating entire continents by a push button are still activated. At times we feel like men standing in knee deep in gasoline playing with matches. Where is it all headed? Are we like a ship without a rudder, or does mankind have a destiny?

Every philosopher has dreamed of something better, an ideal age where man is free from the plight of sickness and political upheaval. Marx described his ideal in terms of a redistribution of wealth. Hitler

fashioned it in terms of genetics and white supremacy. Huxley envisioned escape through hallucinogenic drugs. But the Jews saw the ideal age in terms of the Kingdom of God. They looked for a day when God's reign would intersect history in a dynamic, convulsive way to judge the wicked, reward the righteous, and reverse the effects of Adam's fall: sickness banned, war annulled, death destroyed, relationships restored and the environment transformed. This day was called the Kingdom God and it would come when "the branch" from the stump of Jesse would catapult God's reign from heaven to earth. For this reason the Jews have looked for a special person in history they call the Mashiyach, the Executor of God's kingdom (Isaiah 2: 11, 35).

THE NEW TESTAMENT KERYGMA

In the first century, a handful of Jews born in Israel were convinced that they had had an encounter with **AxyviM**, "the Christ." So convinced were they of a Divine visitation, they turned the world upside down with their message. To them, Jesus was the "Christ." Early evangelists went from city to city proclaiming that Jesus was the Christ (Acts 17). Were they correct, or were they deluded beyond description?

The NT *kerygma* contained proofs that Jesus was the Messiah promised in the OT. Has Christianity been weakened today because we have lost sight of and lack the ability to prove that Jesus is the Christ?

The word "Christ" (Cristo,j) is used 522 times in the New Testament (Strong's). With a lance through the hearts, Peter pierced the conscience of the Jews who crucified Him, ". . . that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36).

A few years later the Apostle Paul scurried through Mediterranean ". . . convincing the Jews, (and that) publicly, shewing by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ" (Acts 18:28). When Mark, a disciple of Christ and investigator of the resurrection, documented his finds, his theme was, "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God" (Mark 1:1).

THE MEANING OF THE NAME "CHRIST"

Believers call Him "Jesus Christ." The word "Christ" is English for the Greek word "Christos." Christos is the Greek word for the Hebrew, "*mashiyach*" (**AxyviM**). The word "Messiah" is taken from this word and it means, "anointed." The word "anointed" may not mean much to an American, but to the Jew the term blistered with significance.

The word "Christ" is not someone's last name. There is not a Mr. or Mrs. Christ. The word is a title much like our word "president." "President" is an office, a position, a role that exist among sovereign nations. So it is with the word "Christ." It is a title for a Jewish office. There were three offices the Messiah would fulfill. Furthermore, He has other titles: "the Son of David" (Isaiah 11), "The Servant of the Lord" (Isaiah 42:1-6), "King" (Micah 5:2), "Anointed One" (Psalm 2), "the Branch" (Zechariah 3:8), "Shoot" (Isaiah 11:1), "Lord" (Psalm 110), "God" (Ephesians 3:17), "LORD" (Zechariah 14:9), "Son of Man" (Daniel

7:13), “Holy One” (Psalm 16:10), “Immanuel” (Isaiah 7:14), “Prince” (Isaiah 55:4), “Sun of Righteousness” (Malachi 4:2) .

THE OT BACKGROUND OF THE MESSIAH

As mentioned above, the word *mashiyach* means “anointed.” The word “anointed” is used 98 times in the Old Testament (Strong’s). Kaiser (1991) says Messiah is used 39 times, but only 9 times as possible references to the person (Kaiser, 1991). There are about 456 OT passages that refer to the Messiah according to the rabbinical writings. The term “Servant of the Lord” is used 31 times in the Book of Isaiah culminating in the enigma of Isaiah 53.

In biblical times, when a man was inaugurated into office, he was anointed with oil. This symbolic act was a statement of authority, the right to function in a public office. Of those anointed was Aaron the priest (Exodus 28:41), David the king (1 Samuel 16), Saul (1 Samuel 10), Cyrus the Persian king (Isaiah 45:1), and others. The name began to appear in the post-exilic years and began to be associated with the “end times” so that the Messiah was viewed as an eschatological figure (New Bible Dictionary, 1982, p. 764).

The Messiah was a specially anointed for two reasons: (1)He would be a special person; and, (2)

He would have a special task.

THE PROTOEVANGELIUM

The *protoevangelium* is the Mother Promise of all prophecy which contains the coming of the Messiah and the crushing of the anti-god forces of history.

Genesis 3:15 And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

The “I” is God. The “thee” is a reference to the serpent and the spirit behind the serpent, Satan himself. The woman is Eve, Israel, and Mary the mother of Christ all rolled into one.

“Thy seed” refers to evil men, the anti-God, anti-Logos, antichrist forces and all its political forms that arise during history. The “seed” of the serpent is “Cain,” “Nimrod,” Babylon, Jezebel, Athaliah, Assyria, Rome and its scorpion children. “Her seed” is the Son of God, the son of Mary, the Christ-child, the Logos of the Greeks and the Messiah of Israel.

The term “bruise” refers to injury, wounds, and a crushing defeat. Before us is the imagery of man crushing the head of the serpent with his foot. God is telling us that a Champion will be born among men, the seed of a woman, who will smash Satan, reverse the effects of eating the fruit from the Poisonous Tree, and cleanse the planet of evil.

The phrase “thou shall bruise his feet” is a reference to an injurious, serpent-smashing Champion will be wounded in the confrontation between good and evil. We know this Champion as Christ, and the wounds he received at the cross.

All of prophecy is about the conflict between good and evil, the kingdom of God v. the kingdom of darkness, Christ and Satan, God’s children and the Devil’s seed, true Israel and the anti-God forces. All prophecy tells one truth: the wicked will be crushed and destroyed and God’s children will be saved by the woman’s Seed, the Prince of Peace, the Son of God, the Arm of the Lord, the Messiah of Israel, and the Christ of God. This is the protoevangelium, the first Gospel!

Further, we must simply notice how God immediately slew animals and clothed Adam and Eve. Fig leaves had to go (self-righteousness), blood had to be shed. The currency of the spirit world is blood. There is no salvation without blood. Fig leaves won’t do! Prayer won’t save a man. Religion is a broken crutch. Law-keeping is a taskmaster. Only blood, only the currency of the spirit world can purchase redemption. And God did, through the precious blood of the Messiah, the Seed who crushed the Serpent, who paid the price

ONE MAN, THREE OFFICES

Not everyone was anointed in the OT Only men who were designated with a divine trust: a **prophet, a priest or king**. These three offices in juxtaposition to one another maintained separate purposes: The prophetic office guarded and declared the will of God; the throne was reserved for the executor who administered justice and mercy based on God’s will; and the priests were intercessors who represented men towards Elohim. Unlike many pagan countries (the Egyptians and the Canaanites), where the King was also a prophet and a priest, Israel’s designates could not hold more than one office. Severe penalties were attached when a man sought to do so (2 Chronicles 26:19). This honor was reserved for only One, Messiah.

Israel looked forward to a day when One born of Abraham, the Seed of David, would come as the perfect prophet, priest, king. Holding all three offices, he would be God’s special anointed, the Messiah of Israel. He would be God’s Prophet more wonderful than Moses (Deuteronomy 18:18); He would be God’s Priest more effective than Aaron (Psalm 110); He would be God’s King, more powerful than Goliath-slaying David (Jeremiah 33:15; Ezekiel 37:24; Isaiah 9:6).

- Prophet: (Deuteronomy 18:18ff)
- Priest: (Psalm 110; Jeremiah 30:21)
- King: (Jeremiah 33:15; Ezekiel 37:24).

As prophet, the Messiah would represent God to the people; as king, the Messiah would enforce the Law of God among the people; as priest, the Messiah would mediate the interests of the people to God.

MESSIAH'S MYSTERIOUS PERSONALITY

What would the Messiah be like? The personality of the Messiah is riddled with intrigue and mystery. He is born a man and he is called a son- both human qualities (Isaiah 7:14; Isaiah 9:6). Yet, there is divinity about him: He is called “Wonderful,” “Mighty God,” “Everlasting Father,” “Prince of Peace.” God’s Anointed is called the “Son of man”, a human term, but in his transcendental presence He appears before “the Ancient of Days” and is given authority, glory, and power. Furthermore, men worshipped Him (Daniel 7:14). He is called:

- The Son of David (Isaiah 11:1).
- The Son of Man (Daniel 7).
- The Servant of YHWH (Isaiah 53).
- Lord (Psalm 110)

MESSIAH'S UNIQUENESS

What do we know about his ancestry? Another title for God’s Anointed is “the seed” - a reference to the genetic relationship of his lineage. In seeking to prepare Israel and the world for the arrival of His Anointed, God announced the following about “the seed” so no one would miss this special, unique person in history:

HIS UNIQUE ANCESTRY

- To the world (Genesis 3:15) Through the seed of a woman
- To a nation (Genesis 12) Through the seed of Abraham
- To a tribe (Genesis 49:10) Through the seed of Judah
- To a family (11 Samuel 7) Through the seed of David.

The Messiah would be a man, from the seed of a woman (possibly a reference to the virgin birth), from the nation of Israel through Abraham, from one of the 12 tribes (Judah), and from the kingly family line of David.

HIS UNIQUE PERSON:

A child/mighty God (Isaiah 9:6,7)

Born in Bethlehem/from everlasting (Micah 5:2)

HIS UNIQUE WORK:

King/Servant (Micah 5:2; Isaiah 42:1-4; 49:1-6)

Installation of the kingdom (Isaiah 9:6,7; Zechariah 9:9, 10; Jeremiah 30:8-10; Daniel 7:13, 14)

HIS UNIQUE CHARACTER

He would be a man of steel and of velvet.

A perfect man possessing the seven spirits of God (Isaiah 11:1-5)

A just, humble king (Zechariah 9:9, 10)

A powerful, righteous monarch (Jeremiah 23:5, 6).

A merciful administrator (Isaiah 42:1-4)

HIS UNIQUE ROOTS

Is there anything in the Tanach that reveals geographical information about the location of His mission? Isaiah tells us that something significant would happen in northern Israel- a great light would shine in the region of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali (Isaiah 9:1). This is the region of Galilee, Capernaum, and Nazareth. We also know the Ruler would come from Bethlehem whose roots are “from ancient times.” (Micah 5:2). Nowhere in Scripture does it discuss the Messiah’s coming anywhere else but in the Land of Canaan.

THE MESSIAH’S ENIGMA

- He would be resisted before He established His rule.

Psalm 2:1-13

Psalm 110:1-7

Micah 5:2-5

- He would suffer before His exaltation to glory (Isaiah 40:6, 7; Isaiah 52:13-53).
- He would be marred first then exalted.
- He would be rejected by men then accepted.
- He would be rejected by God then received.

The time of the Messiah’s suffering is dated by Daniel (Daniel 9:24-37). See the Appendix in this work.

THE MESSIAH’S MISSION

Messiah is a royal prestigious individual who has broad powers to destroy evil and restore life. He would usher in the dynamic kingdom of God, and in so doing would cause the earth to stagger like a drunken man under his judgment. Two themes occur throughout Scripture in regard to His reign: justice and mercy, judgment and salvation, or righteousness and love.

- He would bring justice (Isaiah 2:4; 32:1)
- He would destroy death (Isaiah 25:7):
- He would heal diseases (Isaiah 35:5; Isaiah 61:1ff)
- He would renew the environment (Isaiah 11:6ff)
- He would accomplish this in a dynamic, cataclysmic, convulsive manner at the conclusion of history (Zechariah 14).

In justice, the Messiah would shake the world's political system causing tremors all through society; in mercy, He would bring God's salvation to earth, reverse the effects of the fall, restore life to men and health to the nations.

THE MESSIAH'S ACCEPTANCE

One might think with such a rich personality and unique powers that the Messiah would be readily accepted by men. Strangely, the Scriptures reveal something different. Instead of acceptance, the nations and people of the world would denounce him. David spoke of a day that the nations would conspire against the "Lord's Anointed" and throw off their "fetters" and cast off His rule. Isaiah reveals that "Servant of the Lord" would be "rejected" of men, "oppressed" and "afflicted" (Isaiah 53). These are not the terms of acceptance but of rejection.

THE MESSIAH'S VICTORY

How could he be Messiah and still be resisted? This is a paradox unresolved in the Tanach . Even though opposed the scripture says, "He will see his offspring and prolong his days and the will of the Lord will prosper in his hand" (Isaiah 53:10 NIV). He will rule over the nations (Isaiah 2), and His reign will be everlasting (Isaiah 9:6). On that day He will destroy the enemies of Israel (Zechariah 14), and he will establish a new covenant with his people (Jeremiah 33). Paul proved the resurrection from the Old Testament. How did he do it?

Isaiah 53:11 He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.

Psalms 110:7 He shall drink of the brook in the way: therefore shall he lift up the head.

THE TIME OF THE MESSIAH

Does the Bible say anything about the time of the coming Messiah?

Yes, Daniel spoke of the exact time (Daniel 9:25). Some scholars believe Daniel's prophecy pinpoints the time of Messiah rejection. According to these scholars, this verse was written sometime after 586 BC and before 535 BC and it says that "69 weeks" were determined before the coming of the Messiah. The "69 weeks" equal 483 years (69 X 7), or a 173, 880 day (483 X 360 da./yr) interlude between Daniel's time and the day the Messiah would be "cut off" (9:26). The key date to begin the countdown was "from the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem . . ." (Ezra 1). This happened in the reign of Artaxerxes, March 14, 445 BC. By subtracting 173, 880 days from 445 BC we come to April 6, AD 32. This would put the coming of the Messiah somewhere near the Passover at the time Jesus of Nazareth was crucified. But this is not all. Following the Messiah's "cutting off", the great city of Jerusalem and its beautiful sanctuary would be totally destroyed (Dan 9). (Collins, 1991, p.228)¹⁹.

Furthermore, in Genesis 49, Moses predicted that the Messiah ("Shiloh:" the one whose right to rule) would come before Judah, the ruling and dominate tribe lost its sovereignty (scepter). The loss of sovereignty is a horrible tragedy. History tells us that the Jews lost their right to rule when the Romans controlled Palestine during the reign of Caesar. This happened sometime around 9 B.C. For this reason the Jews, when seeking to put Christ to death, ask Pilate for permission to execute Jesus. Even if one doesn't agree with this date, one has to acknowledge that the Jews lost their complete sovereignty in AD 70 when Titus decimated the nation, totally destroying the city and its political infrastructure. The Messiah's appearance must have come before this catastrophic event.

IS JESUS THE MESSIAH?

The great message the early disciples delivered to the people of their day was that Jesus was the "Christ." Were they right? Did Christ measure up?

Was the Messiah to be from the line of David? Jesus was a descendant of Abraham, Judah, and David (Matthew 1:1, 16).

Was the Messiah's roots associate Bethlehem and Galilee? Jesus was born in Bethlehem and ministered in Capernaum (Matthew 2:1).

Was the Messiah's personality a mystery encompassing humanity and divinity? Jesus is the logos made flesh (John 1:1-14).

Was the Messiah's mission associated with the office of prophet, priest, and king? Jesus' Sermon on the Mount certainly reveals his prophetic preponderance; His death demonstrates a priestly function (Hebrews 2); and His miracles evidence the power of a mighty king among men.

¹⁹ Daniel 9 is called the swamp of OT criticism. It is a difficult passage to interpret and is filled with difficulties. Nevertheless, it is a much relied upon passage by Evangelicals to signal the times of Messiah.

Was the Messiah to conquer disease and death? Jesus demonstrated the powers of the world to come (Matthew 8, 9).

Was the Messiah to suffer and be resisted? Jesus was misunderstood and condemned (John 18,19).

Was the Messiah to be an over comer? Can anything be more victorious than the resurrection? (John 20).

Was the Messiah to be “cut off” after 173, 880 days? Jesus was crucified at the end of this period.

Was the city of Jerusalem and its sanctuary to be destroyed following the Messiah’s rejection? The city of Jerusalem and its temple was leveled in 70 A.D just 38 years after Jesus died.

Was the Messiah’s coming predicted? Jesus fulfilled those prophecies. According to Ray Mondragon, professor at Trinity S.W., there are 333 Messianic prophecies, of which, 109 were fulfilled by Jesus at His first coming; 224 are reserved for the Messiah’s second appearance (Oct 27, 1994). Josh McDowell (1972) agrees saying,

All of these were fulfilled in Christ {Jesus} and they establish a solid confirmation of His credentials as the Messiah (Evidence that Demands a Verdict: p. 147).

THE JESUS-MESSIANIC PROBLEM

It must be acknowledged, however, there is a difference between the Messiah in the Tanach and of Jesus in the Gospels. The Messiah spoken of in the prophets would come in glory and power. He would enter history in a dynamic, cataclysmic, universal way that would rock the entire world. He would slay His enemies and usher in everlasting righteousness.

Jesus’ presence was anything but cataclysmic and convulsive. His entrance into the world was quiet. Only ten to twelve people knew about the event. His ministry was not dynamic and cataclysmic disrupting society and overturning classic orders. His ministry was composed, obscure, and unobtrusive. Though He did marvelous things, His powers were not overpowering nor were they extended globally. They appeared to be limited in scope to his near presence. Marvin Wilson notes the same unobtrusive nature of Jesus’ ministry:

Jesus opted to keep his messiahship secret in order to avoid a revolution or other crisis that could hinder him from completing his ultimate mission (Our Father Abraham, 1989, p. 57).

Jesus compared his own mission to that of a thief: unexpected, quiet, and unobtrusive:

Matthew 12:29 Or else how can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house.

He saw himself as One who entered the domain of Satan to deliver men out from under his power, not with force, but with persuasion.

In fact, this is what confused some of his disciples. Even John the Baptist who was expecting the dynamic convulsive entrance of the kingdom of God (Matthew 3) to appear in his day and queried Jesus, “Are you the one to come, or do we look for another” (Matthew 11:1ff).

Fortunately, Jesus interpreted his own mission to resolve the conflict for us (Matthew 13). In his parable of the “Sower and the Seed,” Jesus discussed the conflicts regarding His messianic task. As the Sower (Jesus) went out to sow seed (the word of God), the semination was met with resistance in the soil. The kingdom of God was present in the person and ministry of Jesus, but it did not come with irresistible power. His ministry was characterized by sowing. It worked quietly and secretly among men and He did not force itself on man in an irresistible way. He worked through persuasion rather than brute force. In fact, the kingdom of God could be resisted! The varying responses noted by the four kinds of soils were dependent on the varying conditions of men's hearts.

Was Jesus the Messiah? Yes, He was. But He did not come the first time with irresistible force. In His refutation to the Pharisees (Matthew 12:25), Jesus portrayed his mission as a restrained invasion into the domain of darkness to rescue men out from under the power of Satan and to demonstrate the powers of the world to come.

APPLICATION

1. Are you rescued? He will come again, not as a lamb, but as a lion; not locally, but globally; not with salvation, but with wrath and judgment; not quietly, but gloriously. You can be His friend on that day, but you must confess Him as the Messiah today. You can do it willingly now, or by force later, for “. . . one day every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Philippians 2:11).
2. This is the eternal gospel. The hope of the ages has dawned upon us!
3. The suffering of the Christ (D, B, R, PRL) provide the basis of our life now with God, and His coming glory is the destiny to which we also will share with Him.
4. If we confess Jesus as the Christ today and share in His suffering now, we will stand unashamed when He is revealed in glory.
5. The truth that Jesus is the Christ, demands the total worship of our lives. He is Lord.

14.2 MESSIANIC PROPHECIES

SHORT LIST OF MESSIANIC PROPHECIES

- He will come through the seed of the woman (Gen 3:15).
- He will come through the line of Shem (Gen 9:25-27).
- He will come through the line of Abraham (Gen 12:3).
- He will come through the line of Judah (Gen 49:8-12).
- He will come through the line of Jesse (Is 11:1a).
- He will come through the line of David (2 Sam 7:10-13; Ps 132:11b).
- He will come from the town of Bethlehem (Micah 5:2).
- He will come as a child and a son (Is 9:6a).
- He will be born of a virgin (Is 7:14).
- He will be called “Immanuel” (Is 7:14).
- He will be called “the Lord our righteousness” (Jer 23:6; 33:16; cf. Mal 4:2).
- He will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace (Is 9:6c).
- He will come in humility (Zech 9:9).
- He will serve as a prophet in Israel (Deut 18:15, 18; cf. John 6:14).
- He will bring good news to the afflicted (Is 61:1-3).
- He will crush the head of the Serpent (Gen 3:15).
- He will wash away the guilt of sinners (Is 4:1-4).
- He will serve as a channel of divine blessing to the world (Gen 12:1-3).
- He will be rejected by man, pierced by the Jews, and crushed by God the Father (Is 53:1-12; Zech 11:4-14; 12:10; 13:7; cf. Ps 22; cf. Dan 9:26a).
- He will die as a substitutionary sacrifice for guilty sinners to provide forgiveness and salvation (Is 53:1-12; Zech 3:9).
- He will be resurrected from the dead (Ps 16:10; cf. Acts 2:31).
- He will come again in judgment upon the nations (Is 63:1-6).
- He will bring destruction to the enemies of Israel (Num 24:15-19).
- He will reign in perfect peace, justice, and righteousness as King over the entire earth (Gen 49:10; Num 24:17-19; Ps 2:6-12; 110:1-7; Is 9:6b-7; 11:1-16; 42:1-4; Jer 23:5; 33:14-2; Zech 9:10).
- He will build the Temple of the Lord and rule on His throne as Priest (Zech 6:12-15).
- He will unify and restore the nation of Israel (Ezek 36:16-38; 37:15-28).
- He will feed and protect Israel as her divine Shepherd (Ezek 34:23-31; 37:15-28).
- He will bring salvation to Israel and reign over her as King (Is 49:5-6a; Micah 5:2; Jer 23:5-6; 30:21; 33:16; Ezek 37:15-28).
- He will be appointed as a covenant to the people and a light to the nations of the earth (Is 42:5-6; 49:6; cf. Is 55:4; cf. Mal 3:1).
- He will be given glory and everlasting dominion over all the nations of the earth, and His kingdom will be established forever (Dan 7:13-14; 2 Sam 7:10-13; Ps 132:11b).

Here is a list of some of the prophecies about Jesus. First the topic, then the Old Testament prediction, and the New Testament fulfillment.

THE SEED OF THE WOMAN

Genesis 3:15 And I (God) will put enmity (hb'yaew, abah: hatred) between you (serpent/Satan) and the woman, and between your seed (ungodly) and her Seed (Christ); he (Christ) shall bruise (^p.Wvy>) your head (serpent/Satan), and you (serpent/Satan) shall bruise (WNp,WvT) His heel.

This is called the *protoevangelium* or the first gospel. The Seed of the woman is Christ. The Seed will be victorious, but will be wounded in the process.

Galatians 4:4 But when the fullness of the time had come (to. plh,rwma tou/ cro,nou), God sent forth His Son, born of a woman (Eve to Mary), born under the law.

A SEMITE

Genesis 9:27 God shall enlarge Japheth, and he (God) shall dwell (sakan) in the tents of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant.

Jesus was a Hebrew from the line of Shem (Semite), and He was from the tribe of Judah. But, He was not a “Jew” in the religious sense, nor was He the “King of the Jews;” Rather, He is the King of kings, the Price of the Rulers of the Earth. Furthermore, modern day so called “Jews” are not real Jews; rather, they are Ashkenazis from the Khazarian Empire.

THE SEED OF ABRAHAM

Genesis 12:1-3 Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: I will bless (hk'r)b'a:w:) those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.

The word “bless” is used 5 times in this passage (Genesis).

The Seed will come through the Semite Abraham.

The use of the *waw* indicates purpose or result.

Galatians 3:16 Now to Abraham and his Seed (Kai. tw/| spe,rmati, sou) were the promises made. He does not say, "And to seeds," (toi/j spe,rmasin) as of many, but as of one, "And to your Seed," who is Christ.

THE TRIBE OF JUDAH

Genesis 49:10 The scepter (jb,v, shaybet) shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver (qqexom.W, khaw-kak) from between his feet, until Shiloh comes; and to Him shall be the obedience of the people (hl{yviÀ aboy"-yKi d(;`~yMi(; th;Q.yl Alw> îalyvi aboy"-yKi).

The scepter is a symbol of authority, the right to rule.

A lawgiver is one who inscribes, engraves, cuts, or governs. It can be translated “ruling staff” or the “ruling person.”

“Shiloh” appears to be a proper name. Strong’s says it means “the one to whom it rightly belongs.” The Vulgate translates it, “He who is to be sent.” The word, however, means *prosperity, peace, tranquility, alone, private, or quiet*. The word may mean “the peaceful One.” The tabernacle was set up at a quiet, obscure place and they called it “Shiloh” (Judges 21:19).

The idea is that Judah’s leadership among the tribes would not be terminated until Shiloh appears, then, when Shiloh appears, there will be a global expansion of his authority.

The verb (**aboy"**) is a Qal, perfect, 3rd p., singular). Shiloh is the subject, not the object. Translate: “until Shiloh comes.”

Matthew 1:2 Abraham begot Isaac, Isaac begot Jacob, and Jacob begot Judah and his brothers.

THE SEED OF JACOB

Numbers 24:17-19 "I see Him, but not now; I behold Him, but not near; a Star shall come out of Jacob; a Scepter shall rise out of Israel... Out of Jacob One shall have dominion, and destroy the remains of the city."

A star is a symbol of uniqueness, of power, of significance, of permanence.

Jacob, the 3rd patriarch, name was changed to Israel, “God contends.”

A scepter, here a person, shall rise out of Israel. Because it is God who contends for Jacob, the True Israel would arise in history to rule in Israel.

The One out of Jacob is seen as having authority to destroy the enemies of God’s people.

This Star, this Scepter out of Jacob will be the true Israel, the true Prince with God.

Luke 3:34 the son of Jacob, the son of Isaac, the son of Abraham, the son of Terah, the son of Nahor,

THE SEED OF DAVID

Psalm 132:11 The LORD has sworn in truth to David; he will not turn from it: "I will set upon your (tyvia, Qal imperfect, 1st, sing.) throne the fruit of your body.

David's "Seed" was to be adopted as "my son." God himself declares that He will be "his father" (2 Samuel 7:14). What a staggering promise! David's kingdom would never end (7:16). No wonder David was overwhelmed!

A PROPHET LIKE MOSES

Deuteronomy 18:15-19 "The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear... I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him. And it shall be that whoever will not hear My words, which He speaks in My name, I will require it of him.

Moses was a Deliverer: Jesus delivers men from the slavery of sin.

Moses was credentialed by miracles of judgment: Jesus by miracles of healing.

Moses gave the Law; Jesus was the Law, the Living Torah.

John 6:14 Then those men, when they had seen the sign that Jesus did, said, "This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world."

AN INSTRUMENT OF THE LORD

1 Samuel 2:10 The adversaries of the LORD shall be broken to pieces; out of heaven shall he thunder upon them: the LORD shall judge the ends of the earth; and he shall give strength unto his king, and exalt the horn of his anointed (messiah).

A pure theocracy existed during the judges, and the people did not have a king.

Hannah seems to have a grasp of the fact that the LORD would rule through a specially anointed king. Here he is called "his anointed," or "his Messiah."

THE SON OF GOD

Psalm 2:1 Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?

2 The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD (YHWH), and against his anointed (Axyvim), saying,

3 Let us break (hq'T.n:n>, Piel, 1st, common plural: pluck up, break) their bands asunder (AmyteArs.Am-ta,, 3rd person, masculine, plural), and cast away their cords from us.

4 He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord (Adonai) shall have them in derision.

5 Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure.

6 Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion.

7 I will declare the decree (qx, command or ordinance): the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee (^yTid>liy>, Qal, perfect: given birth).

8 Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.

9 Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

10 Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth.

11 Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling.

12 Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.

The Messiah is mentioned in verse two as “my anointed” (Axyvim, the anointed of Him). The holem vav at the end of the word implies possession.

He is the LORD’s Anointed and rulers unite against the YHWH ((hw"hy>-l()) and his Anointed.

- In verse 1, the Spirit speaks.
- In verse 3, the pagans speak.
- In verse 6, the Father speaks.
- In verse 7, the Son speaks.

- In verse 12, the Spirit speaks.

The LORD is the Father who begets the Son. It appears to be a declaration of relationship, not a birth event in time. The purpose of the Messiah is to act as God's Ruler and Administrator over the affairs of the Earth. The Admonition is to Kings: Submit, yield, kiss the Son.

Proverbs 30:4 Who has ascended into heaven, or descended? Who has gathered the wind in His fists? Who has bound the waters in a garment? Who has established all the ends of the earth? What is His name, and what is His Son's name, if you know?

Wisdom is personified and Wisdom asks the name of the Son of the Creator

Matthew 3:17 And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

Resurrected from the dead

Psalms 16:10 For You (hw"hy>) will not leave my soul in Sheol (IAav.I), nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.

A personal/prophetic psalm, David, declares his confidence that God will not leave him in the grave forever. David, of course, never realized this hope. However, the NT writers point out that David's Greater David was victorious over the grave. Because David's Greater David was the first fruits of resurrection, David's personal hope is guaranteed.

Acts 13:33-37 " God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee . . . Therefore He also says in another Psalm: `You will not allow Your Holy One to see corruption.' "For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell asleep, was buried with his fathers, and saw corruption; "but He whom God raised up saw no corruption.

In the resurrection event, Paul saw the fulfillment of OT hope.

CRUCIFIXION

Psalms 16

10 I was cast upon thee from the womb: thou art my God from my mother's belly.

11 Be not far from me; for trouble is near; for there is none to help.

12 Many bulls have compassed me: strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round.

13 They gaped upon me with their mouths, as a ravening and a roaring lion.

14 I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels.

15 My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death.

16 For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet.

17 I may tell all my bones: they look and stare upon me.

18 They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture.

This is a typical prophetic psalm—a plaintive psalm. David was in trouble by Saul and cried for help. The language is figurative and metaphorical and not representative of David's personal history. It is a **hyperbole** about his own suffering. Little did David know that in pictorially exaggerating his own suffering, he was really being used of the Spirit to describe the actual agony of Christ on the cross in a prophetic way. By way of the Spirit, David speaks of the suffering of the Messiah. Christ, speaking through David, describes His own suffering. There is no greater depiction of the cross than this psalm.

BETRAYED BY A FRIEND

Psalm 41:9 Even my own familiar friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted up his heel against me.

Matthew 26:48-49 Now His betrayer had given them a sign, saying, "Whomever I kiss, He is the One; seize Him." Immediately he went up to Jesus and said, "Greetings, Rabbi!" and kissed Him.

ASCENT INTO HEAVEN

Psalm 68:18 You have ascended on high, you have led captivity captive; you have received gifts among men, even from the rebellious, that the LORD God might dwell there.

The psalmist is describing God's glorious reception at Matthew Sinai. It was there he received gifts from his people Israel.

Paul, however, interprets this as relating to the ascension of Christ and a greater exodus, not from Egypt, but from sin; not to receive gifts, but to dispense gifts to men.

Acts 1:9 Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight.

Ephesians 4: 7-11 But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.) And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

A PRIEST LIKE MELCHIZEDEK

Psalms 110:1 A Psalm of David.> The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.

2 The LORD shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.

3 Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth.

4 The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.

5 The Lord at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath.

6 He shall judge among the heathen, he shall fill the places with the dead bodies; he shall wound the heads over many countries.

7 He shall drink of the brook in the way: therefore shall he lift up the head.

The psalm bears the threefold impress of the number seven—the number of oath and a covenant. LORD is mentioned 3 times; Adonai 2 times.

This a pure prophetic-Messianic psalm. It is quoted by Jesus in Matthew 22:41-46 and in Hebrews 5:5-6 and is psalm depicting a Future Reality.

It may have an historical basis in David's own life: His bringing the ark to Jerusalem/Matthew Zion where David accompanied the ark in a linen ephod (2 Samuel 6) and David's victories in the Syro-Ammonitish Wars (2 Samuel 8, 10). After this, David received Revelation about a Future Victor, a priest/king who brings salvation to the people of God.

The phrase "my Lord" (**ynldoal**; **hw"hy**: my Adonai) was picked up on by Christ as evidence He was the son of David. "David" is the subject here, not the term "king."

YHWH is the one who commands victories for Adonai as King. Adonai is priest by virtue of an oath. He demolishes armies in his march to conquest. Afterward, he is refreshed and holds his head high.

Matthew 22:41-47 While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, saying, What think ye of Christ? whose son is he? They say unto him, The Son of David. He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? If David then call him Lord, how is he his son. And no man was able to answer him a word,

Hebrews 5:5-6 So also Christ did not glorify Himself to become High Priest, but it was He who said to Him: "You are My Son, today I have begotten You." As He also says in another place: "You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek"

SEATED AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD

Psalms 110:1 The LORD said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool."

Matthew 26:64 Jesus said to him, "It is as you said. Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven."

The rejected Stone is to become the chief cornerstone.

Psalms 118:22-23 The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone (הַנִּיבָר, rosh penah). This was the LORD'S doing; it is marvelous in our eyes.

The background to this psalm is the building of the Second Temple after the exile. Tradition says that a large, irregular, rectangular stone arrived at the temple site. No one could figure out its purpose and rolled it down the hill. When the builders began to lay the foundation, they could not find the first, guide stone. It was then the builders realized that they had discarded the most important stone in the temple.

Others (Keil and Delitzsch) argue that it was the key-stone that was concealed or lost and that when Zerubbabel found it and brought it forth to complete the erection of the temple, the people shouted with great joy (Zechariah 4:7). Little did they know that the error committed in building the first temple would be repeated later by rejecting Christ, the firstborn of God's creation, the pure temple of God, the *rosh penah*, the head of the corner.

Isaiah 28:16 Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: "Behold, I lay in Zion a stone for a foundation, a tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation; whoever believes will not act hastily."

Matthew 21:42-43 Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the Scriptures: 'The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. This was the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes'? 'Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it.

BORN OF A VIRGIN

Isaiah 7:14 "Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin (hm'l.(;h, almah) shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel (lae WnM'(l, with us El).

Amßv. tar'iq'w> !Beê td,l,äyOw> 'hr'h' hm^al.(;h' hNEâhi tAa+ ~k,Pl' aWh± yn"ïdoa) !Te'yI !kel'
`lae(WnM'ï(i

LXT Isaiah 7:14 dia. tou/to dw,sei ku,riou auvtou.j u`mi/n shmei/on ivdou. h`parqe,noj evn gastri. e(xei kai. te,xetai ui`o,n kai. kale,seij to. o;noma auvtou/ Emmanouhl

Emmanuel means “God with us.” It is used here and Isaiah 8:8.

The word “virgin” is *almah* in Hebrew, and *parthenos* in Greek.

There is another word for virgin and it is **hl'WtB**, *bethuwlah*, or *bethulah* (Genesis 24:16; used of Rebekkah). Both *almah* and *bethulah* can be used to identify a virgin.

Luke 1:27 To a virgin (parqe,non, parthenon) espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary.

Luke 1:34-35 Then Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I do not know a man?" And the angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God.

There is only one, true virgin birth in history.

The virgin (almah) in Isaiah’s prophecy refers to the pregnancy of Isaiah’s young wife. The miracle is not that she was a virgin and conceived, but that her pregnancy was predicted—a sign to Ahaz. NT authors see in this a prediction of the virgin birth of Jesus through Mary, the betrothed wife of Joseph.

The NT authors worked from a premise that Jesus was the grand fulfillment of all prophecy; that is, what was prophesied about Israel and what happened to Israel were shadows of a greater reality in the Christ of God, the true Israel of God. Isaiah’s prophecy (a shadow) about his young wife having a baby had its

greater, blazing fulfillment in Christ. Mary's conception and the birth of Christ was the true and only virgin birth in history.

This same idea was claimed when baby Jesus went into Egypt and back again; that is, as Israel was called out of Egypt during the days of Moses, Jesus was also called out of Egypt back to Palestine to redeem His people as the greater Israel or the true Israel of God (Hosea 12:13; Matthew 2:13)

However, extraordinary claims demand ordinary proof.

Joseph put Mary away privately because to do so publically would create a crisis of public shame (the usual way)--a Jewish *nuddui* (30 days of curses, blast of a horn, and treatment like a leper).

SEVEN REASONS TO BELIEVE IN THE VIRGIN BIRTH

A prophetic reason (Genesis 3:15): The promised seed was to be born of a woman. The Babylonian imitation cult (Samurais and Tammuz and Nimrod) was the deceptive caricature of the virgin birth.

A doctrinal reason (Romans 5): Sin was passed through Adam-and, if Jesus was to be the sinless Son of God, He could not inherit Adam's nature. The virgin birth informs us that Jesus was free of sin's curse, nature, and defilement.

A linguistic reason (Grk: virgin = parthenos): The LXX uses the term *parthenos*; the Hebrew encased two options: *Almah*, a maiden or a young unmarried woman, or *be thulah*, a word that can refer to a virgin or a widow who was formerly sexually active. Isaiah chose the term *almah*, a term focusing on youth, not virginity, even though the term *almah* could refer to virgins.

Matthew, however, chose the Greek word "parthenos" which refers to a virgin which refers to a young girl who was not sexually active. Matthew used this term to focus Christians on the miraculous nature of the incarnation and that Mary conceived through the work of the Holy Spirit and not a conjugal act. Keep in mind, Mary's conception was a miracle of God; her delivery of her son Jesus was natural.

The typical reason: The virgin birth accents and highlights Jesus as the "spotless lamb" (1 Peter 1:18, 19).

The textual reason: The text says, "before they came together."

An Immaculate conception, "Yes!"

An immaculate birth, "No!"

An unusual birth, "Yes".

Perpetual virginity, "No!"

The mother of God, "No!"

Intercessor, "No!"

The Dispenser of grace, "No!"

A blessed woman, "Yes!"

Legal reason: It is the legal testimony of Matthew, Joseph, and Dr. Luke.

The spiritual reason: Salvation depends on it. He is called “Immanuel,” God with us! If he was a sinner, He is not God: hence, not a Savior. Jesus means: “YHWH saves.” It is not enough to believe in a god, a good spirit, a spirit of good, or the spirit of Christmas; one must believe that Jesus is God and Savior.

Note: The promise was directed toward Isaiah and his young wife; however, the Spirit of God picks up this prophecy and applies it to the Messiah where **fulfillment IS ALWAYS greater than the promise.**

MINISTER IN GALILEE

Isaiah 9:1-2 Nevertheless the gloom will not be upon her who is distressed, as when at first He lightly esteemed the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, and afterward more heavily oppressed her, by the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, in Galilee of the Gentiles. The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, upon them a light has shined.

The Land of Zebulun and Nahtali is in the region of the Sea of Galilee.

The “sea” is the Sea of Galilee.

All throughout Israel’s history, northern Israel became the first region ravaged by war from foreign invaders. It was truly a land of darkness, invasion, war, and death.

When Christ was upon earth, he conducted his Galilean Ministry in this region and what a light it was to the Jewish people who lived in this area.

Matthew 4:13 And leaving Nazareth, He came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is by the sea, in the regions of Zebulun and Naphtali,

UNIQUE PERSONAGE

Isaiah 9:6 For unto us a child (dl,y<-yKi, a child.) is born (Wnl'-dL;yU),pual, 3rd p., mas, s):, unto us a son is given (Wnl'-!T;nI !Be) and the government (hr'f.Mih;) shall be upon his shoulder (AMarkv,) masculine, singular construct): and his name shall be called (Amøv.)

+*, arq) Wonderful (al,P, pele'), Counsellor (#(eAy, Qal participle, “one counseling”), The mighty God (rABGI la), The everlasting Father (d(;ybia), The Prince of Peace (~Alv'-rf;).

al,P, Amv. ar'q.YIw: AMarkvi-l(; hr'f.Mih; yhiT.w: Wnl'-!T;nI !Be Wnl'-dL;yU dl,y<-yKi WTT

Isaiah 9:5 ~Alv'-rf; d(;ybia) rABGI lae #(eAy

“Wonderful” (*pele’*) is used exclusively of God in the OT, never of man. This name is given to a child (Exodus 15:11; Psalm 77:14).

“Counselor” is a participle meaning “One counseling” or “Counseling.”

All these titles appear to apply to the child, not to God.

HUMBLE CHARACTER

Isaiah 42:1 Behold (!h) Hey! Stop and look at) my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.

2 He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street.

3 A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth.

4 He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law.

Isaiah 53:7 He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth; he was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth.

Matthew 26:62-63 And the high priest arose and said to Him, "Do You answer nothing? What is it these men testify against You?" But Jesus kept silent.... Bring Salvation to the Gentiles

Isaiah 11:10 "And in that day there shall be a Root of Jesse, who shall stand as a banner to the people; for the Gentiles shall seek Him, and His resting place shall be glorious."

Isaiah 42:1 "Behold! My Servant whom I uphold, my Elect One in whom My soul delights! I have put My Spirit upon Him; he will bring forth justice to the Gentiles.

Isaiah 49:6 Indeed He says, `It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles, that You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth.'"

Matthew 15:21 Then Jesus went out from there and departed to the region of Tyre and Sidon.

Isaiah 50:6 I gave My back to those who struck Me, and My cheeks to those who plucked out the beard; I did not hide My face from shame and spitting.

Matthew 26:67 Then they spat in His face and beat Him; and others struck Him with the palms of their hands,

THE SERVANT OF ISAIAH

THREE ENNEADS: THREE SERVANTS

SUBJECT ISAIAH 40-48 ISAIAH 49-57 ISAIAH 58-66

Key Figure Cyrus Servant Spirit filled Messiah

Godhead The Father The Servant The Spirit

Work Creator Lord of History Ruler-the Eschaton

Message God of all Savior of all End of all history

Key word “made” “servant” “new”

Idea YHWH is salvation Israel’s salvation Earth’s salvation

FIRST ENNEAD

“I am Yahweh”, “I am the first and the last”, “I am He”, “I am God” who has “created” *bara*, “made” *asah* or *pa’al*, “spread out” *natah*, “stretched out” *raqa*, “established” *kun*, and “founded the heavens” *yasad*. God is also the *go’el*, kinsman-Redeemer (Exodus 6:6 and Isaiah 45:15,21, 43:5-7; 45:13)

SECOND ENNEAD

The word “servant” is used 20 times (20 X). 12 X the word is used of all Israel. 8 X the word “servant” refers to an individual who ministers to Israel. He is “my chosen”, “my servant”, “a light to the nations”, “called me from the womb”, “named my name.” There are four servant songs:

42:1-7

49: 1-6

50:4-9

52:13-53:12

THIRD ENNEAD

The inauguration of the Eschaton is contrasted with “former things”. God does “a new thing”, creates a “new Jerusalem”, a “new heavens”, a “new earth through a spirit-filled Messiah to give Israel a “rest. (Kaiser, 1991, p. 212).

WILL BE “THE ARM OF THE LORD” IN ISAIAH 53

The Call for a New Exodus:

Isaiah calls upon God, “the arm of the Lord,” for a new exodus (51:9-10).

The Promise: God will create a new exodus. He will return to Jerusalem, and the Lord will lay “bear his arm” (Isaiah 52:10).

The fulfillment: Who has believed our message? (no one). The arm of the Lord was revealed in Christ at Calvary: Looking back, those who disbelieved are the ones who now believed give this report in Isaiah 53: When the arm of the Lord was revealed,

He looked unpromising (53:2).

He was unimpressive (53:2). The “we” refers to those who later believed.

He was undervalued (53:3).

Jesus was the Wounded Healer

He had his own personal pain. No one ministered to Him (53:2).

He went about ministering to the pain of others (53:4).

He entered into the Father’s pain by taking the iniquity of us all (53:6).

By his wounds (his pain), he healed those who wounded Him.

WILL ESTABLISH A NEW COVENANT

Jeremiah 31:31-33 "Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah-- "not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the LORD. "But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

Matthew 26:28 "For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

WILL HAVE TWO MISSIONS

Isaiah 61:1-2 "The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me, because the LORD has anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor; he has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; Will perform Miracles Isaiah 35:5-6 Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the dumb sing. For waters shall burst forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert. John 11:47 Then the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered a council and said, "What shall we do? For this Man works many signs.

WILL UNITE TRUE ISRAEL

Ezekiel 37:15-28

From the Valley of Dry Bones we learn there will be “one nation” under “one God” with “one king” over God’s people who will be “my servant David.” But, this applies directly to the remnant in 536 BC and the revival of the nation under Cyrus. It simply does not apply to the other Israel of 1948; that, “all Israel will be saved” applies to all true Hebrew believers and all who have trusted Christ as Savior.

WILL SMASH KINGDOMS

Daniel 2

As the Rock out of the side of the mountain, he will level governmental authorities. At his coming the Mount of Olives will split in two (Zechariah 14:4-5).

WILL BE CALLED JEHOVAH GOD

Jeremiah 23:5-6 "Behold, the days are coming," says the LORD, "That I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; a King shall reign and prosper, and execute judgment and righteousness in the earth. In His days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell safely; now this is His name by which He will be called: THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

Some translators want to make this translate “The Lord is our righteousness.” They insist that if the phrase means “The LORD our righteousness” then it would make our Lord divine—something many are not willing to concede.

``Wnqed>ci hw"hy> Aar>q.yl-rv,a) AmV.-hz<w>s`

My translation: And this is the name which he shall be called (or Israel shall call him): “The Lord our Righteousness.” It does not appear that “is” should be placed between “the LORD” and “Righteousness” since it is the character and identity of “the branch” that is to be revealed.

Literally: "And this his name which he shall be called YHWH our righteousness."

YHWH is speaking, not men. He does not say, "My name will be called . . ." He says, "His name will be called . . ." Why? Because the "Branch" is the subject of discussion here.

John 8:24 "Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I Am, you will die in your sins."

John 8:58 Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM."

WILL BE BORN IN BETHLEHEM

Micah 5:2 "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting."

There are two Bethlehems: one north in Zebulun (Joshua 19:15), the other south of Jerusalem in Judah. What specificity! The term "Ruler in Israel" is a reference to the Messiah.

"From of old, from everlasting" identify the eternalness and divinity of Christ. Note that he was born in Bethlehem, yet his origins are in eternity. What truths held in balanced juxtaposition to one another.

Luke 2:4-6 Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed wife, who was with child. So it was, that while they were there, the days were completed for her to be delivered.

WILL ENTER THE TEMPLE WITH AUTHORITY

Malachi 3:1 "Behold, I send My messenger, and he will prepare the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight. Behold, He is coming," says the LORD of hosts.

Matthew 21:12 Then Jesus went into the temple of God and drove out all those who bought and sold in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves

WILL ENTER JERUSALEM ON A DONKEY

Zechariah 9:9 "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; he is just and having salvation, lowly and riding on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey.

Matthew 21:2-3 saying to them, "Go into the village opposite you, and immediately you

will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her. Loose them and bring them to Me. 3 "And if anyone says anything to you, you shall say, 'The Lord has need of them,' and immediately he will send them."

WILL HAVE TWO COMINGS

Zechariah 12:9-10 And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.

Modern rabbis will not admit that the “me” refers to “him” in verse 10. “that day” appears to refer Earth’s final hour. Yahweh and His Servant are here identified as one and the same. Ancient rabbis saw the “him” as *Messiah Ben Joseph* (Kaiser, 1991, p. 112).

WILL BE PIERCED

Psalms 22:16 For dogs have surrounded Me; the congregation of the wicked has enclosed Me. They pierced My hands and My feet;

Zechariah 12:10 "And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they have pierced; they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn.

Isaiah 53:5 But He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed.

John 19:34 one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out.

WILL BE FORSAKEN BY HIS DISCIPLES

Zechariah 13:7 "Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd, against the Man who is My Companion," says the LORD of hosts. "Strike the Shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered; then I will turn My hand against the little ones.

Matthew 26:31 Then Jesus said to them, "All of you will be made to stumble because of Me this night, for it is written: 'I will strike the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.'

WILL HAVE VICTORY OVER DEATH

Isaiah 25:8 He will swallow up death forever, and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces; the rebuke of His people he will take away from all the earth; for the LORD has spoken.

Hebrews 2:14 Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil,

John 19:30 So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit.

The exact time of His death predicted

Daniel 9:26 "And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off..."

Notes: About Messianic Prophecy by Rusty Russell A) The Importance of Prophecy

Beginning in Old Testament times there were men known as prophets who declared or spoke forth God's word. These prophets were "mouthpieces" of God with personalities similar to ours, and they would get a Word from the Lord and speak it out using their own personalities, and the message spoken out or written was the very word of God. Therefore it says:

2 Peter 1:20 knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit

These prophecies declared blessings or curses, dealing with the present or future. They were given ideally to strengthen the people and give them hope in the Lord. The Jewish faith was preserved through the prophets and the Lord was brought near to Israel. Jehovah was seen as the ruler of the world, in whose hands are the destinies of the future. Through these prophecies the Jews recognized their God and realized His presence and divine providence. As a nation they experienced oppression and sorrow, and so also as a nation they were often cheered up by the prophets with messages of future deliverance and victory over their enemies. They could say with the Psalmist:

Psalms 46:1 God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

God used the prophets to strengthen His people and give them hope. Something I often wonder about when the kingdom of Judah was overthrown by Babylon, the holy temple that Solomon built, destroyed, the vessels and riches taken, and the people led captive to Babylon, a land 600 miles across the desert known to the Jews as "the land of idolatry." They might have thought "where is our God now," if it wasn't for the strengthening words of Jeremiah the prophet that there was a limit to their banishment, and that after 70 years the Babylonian empire would be destroyed, and they would be restored to "the land" of

their fathers. And what's amazing is that we actually find Daniel, one of these exiles, calculating these 70 years, strengthening himself through the Word of the prophet, though unfulfilled:

Daniel 9:2-3 In the first year of his reign I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem. And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes:

God's promises bring His people near to Him, regardless of exactly when they will be fulfilled.

The most important prophecies to the Jewish church and nation were the "Messianic Prophecies", words about a Messiah King who would reign in righteousness. This was the Jewish faith and hope. In His days Judah would be saved, and Israel would dwell in safety. This more than anything else, preserved the faith of the nation to Jehovah their God. Though beaten down by their enemies, though carried captive into foreign lands, yet their spirits rose with the hopes of final deliverance and future greatness. They looked forward to a time when Messiah their anointed King, to whom the heathen would be given for an inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for a possession, would rule over them.

It may be that they misunderstood the nature and meaning of their prophecies; it may be that they overlooked the predictions relating to the sufferings of the Messiah, thinking only of His glorious reign, but still these Messianic hopes were the life of the nation, and the source of all that was beautiful in it. Were it not for the hope in a Messiah, the Jewish religion would have degenerated into a dry performance of ceremony and ritual, without any insight into their meaning, without any understanding of the nothingness of mere form and outward religion and of the necessity of spiritual worship.

We sometimes think that the priests were the heart of Judaism and the ceremonies within the temple and tabernacle, but the prophets made very clear that Jehovah was there, in their midst, and they were to come with clean hands and a pure heart. When the people would dry up spiritually and just exercise outward observance the prophets would wake them up and denounce their sacrifices and offerings and foretell their discontinuance. These prophets were the great spiritual preachers among the Jews continually reminding them that sacrifices were worthless unless performed by pure hands and a good heart. Fasts, and assemblies, and new moons, if done outwardly, were worse than useless. As Isaiah said:

Isaiah 1:11-13 "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices to Me?" Says the LORD. "I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams and the fat of fed cattle. I do not delight in the blood of bulls, or of lambs or goats. "When you come to appear before Me, who has required this from your hand, to trample My courts? Bring no more futile sacrifices; incense is an abomination to Me. The New Moons, the Sabbaths, and the calling of assemblies-- I cannot endure iniquity and the sacred meeting

The Messianic future was to be an era of moral purity, war was to cease, and total peace was about to dawn upon the earth; God's Spirit was to be poured upon all flesh; and on and on were the blessings promised to Jerusalem, as Isaiah said:

Isaiah 62:1-7 "For Zion's sake I will not hold My peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until her righteousness goes forth as brightness, and her salvation as a lamp that burns. The Gentiles shall see your righteousness, and all kings your glory. You shall be called by a new name, which the mouth of the LORD will name. You shall also be a crown of glory in the hand of the LORD, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God. You shall no longer be termed Forsaken, nor shall your land any more be termed Desolate; but you shall be called Hephzibah, and your land Beulah; for the LORD delights in you, and your land shall be married. For as a young man marries a virgin, so shall your sons marry you; and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you. I have set watchmen on your walls, O Jerusalem; they shall never hold their peace day or night. You who make mention of the LORD, do not keep silent, And give Him no rest till He establishes and till He makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth."

Therefore it was by the messianic prophecies that true religion was preserved and nourished among the Jews, spiritual worship which alone pleases God. The true worshippers realized that God's promises brought them near to Him, regardless of exactly when they would be fulfilled.

The Jews could find great hope in promises yet to come, but even more important are the promises already fulfilled. Our faith and hope rest on a still surer foundation, the fulfillment seals the prophecy with the stamp of divinity. That which was to the Jews as a light shining in a dark place, is to us the dawning of the day, the rising of the day-star in our hearts. And if, among all the prophecies in the Old Testament, the Messianic predictions were of special importance to the Jews, just think how much more important they are to us, who believe that we see the fulfillment in Jesus of Nazareth.

All other prophecies are of minor importance. The prophecies about the ancient cities of Babylon, Tyre, and Nineveh are very important and strengthen our faith in the Bible as prewritten history, but the prophecies concerning Messiah are so much more important and so interwoven with Christianity and an essential evidence of our faith.

- Genesis 3:15- A promised Savior
- Genesis 12:3- Descendent of Abraham
- Genesis 49:10- Descendent of the Tribe of Judah. Time of coming
- Deuteronomy 18: 18- A prophet like Moses
- 2 Samuel 7:11,16- Descendent of David
- Psalm 2:7, 8- The Son of God declared
- Psalm 16:9, 10- Resurrection concept

Old Testament Theology

- Psalm 22:14-18- Nature of his death
- Psalm 23- The character of the Shepherd
- Psalm 24- Triumphant of the Shepherd
- Psalm 45- Character of the King
- Psalm 72- His eternal kingship, universal dominion, character
- Psalm 110- His kingship and dominion
- Isaiah 4:2- Called the Branch of the Lord
- Isaiah 7:13ff- Sign of David's eternal house
- Isaiah 7:14- His name is "God with us."
- Isaiah 9:1ff- Origin: out of Galilee
- Isaiah 9:6- His names, "Wonderful"
- Isaiah 11:1ff-Descendent of Jesse, wisdom consummate kingdom plan
- Isaiah 11:10- Nation would seek Him
- Isaiah 35:5,6- Powers to heal diseases
- Isaiah 40:3ff- An ambassador to prepare his way
- Isaiah 49:6-Light not only to Israel, but to the earth.
- Isaiah 50:4ff- Suffering of Messiah
- Isaiah 52:13- Unusual marring
- Isaiah 53- Suffering of Messiah
- Isaiah 61:1ff- Good news to the afflicted
- Ezekiel 21:27- Right to reign
- Ezekiel 34:24- Referred to as the Lord's chosen Shepherd
- Jeremiah 23:5,6- Reign as King over Judah

- Daniel 7- referred to as the “Son of Man”
- Daniel 9-Time of his coming, his death.
- Hosea 3:4,5- Israel would seek Him after expulsion
- Micah 5:2- Place of birth
- Zechariah 3:8 Guilt taken away in a single day.
- Zechariah 6:10ff King and priest
- Zechariah 9:9- His humble appearance
- Zechariah 11:12,13- value appraised, 30 pieces of silver.
- Zechariah 12:10- Jewish people would pierce Him.
- Malachi 3:1- Messenger prepared the way. Like a refiner’s fire.

14.3 PSALM 2: KISS THE SON ALL YE NATIONS

Psalm 2

We live in times of political chaos where madmen grip the helm of government. Against the backdrop of surf and foam of political strife is the source of peace and prosperity. Before us is the reason for all political conflict in the world today, and the solution to every political problem in seed form.

THE PSALMIST SPEAKS

Psalm 2:1 Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?

The word “why” is an interrogatory that can be translated “how” or “what” or “how much.” It is a question asked for our benefit. The word “heathen” should be translated “nations.” The word “*go'em*” is translated “people” and “nations” in Genesis 10:5. In Jewry, the term *goy* is a derogatory term for non-Jews, but that is not the case here. Jews are part of the rebellion.

The verb “rage” (“*raqash*”) is only used here, and it means to be in “tumult” or “commotion.” The psalmist is asking, “Why are the nations always in a furor, a frenzy, a constant state of irritation, full of madness and hostility? The word “imagine” is the imperfect Hebrew verb “*hagah*.” It is translated “roar” or “moan” or “growl” in Isaiah 31:4 of a lion roaring over its prey. It is translated “plot” in the ESV and “meditate” in Psalm 1:2. The word “vain” is the Hebrew verb “reek,” used adverbially. It is translated “armed” in the KJV and “led forth” in the ESV in Genesis 14:14. It is translated “the seven empty ears”

blasted with east wind which is a reference to the seven years of famine in Genesis 41:27; and, “emptied their sack” in Genesis 42:35. The idea here is of kings “emptying their nets” of destruction and mercilessly killing people. We need only look at the madness of the Bolsheviks, Lenin, Stalin and others to grasp the harvest of this rage against God.

Before us is the question of the ages. Why can't nations live in peace? Why are they always at war, always in an uproar, always existing in the surf and foam of the sea of conflict? As we listen to the news, it seems that there is always a regional dispute, a political debate, an infringement, a group of rebels protesting some perceived inequity, a nation in political chaos ravaged by civil war. Some nation somewhere is “emptying his net” aggressively shelling another country for power and wealth and **revenge, or defending itself against rocket fire with weapons of mass destruction.**

2 The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying,

The kings have set themselves against the LORD. The name “LORD” is the Tetragrammaton and clearly refers to God's sovereignty and authority. The title “anointed” is the Hebrew name for Messiah, *mashiyach*, meaning “anointed”—a reference to Christ, the Son of God.

Several facts about the verb “set” needs to be noticed. First, the verb “set” (*tithyetsebu*) is a Hebrew Hithpael, reflexive verb; that is, the kings of the earth are stirring themselves up. The hostility clearly resides in the kings who are constantly declaring war against the LORD God; that is, they want to be gods among men and the only sovereigns on earth. Secondly, the verb “set” is in the emphatic position in the sentence and clearly emphasizes the intense, independent, rebellious nature of kings. The preposition “against” is properly translated, but could also be worded “upon” or “over” the LORD; that is, the kings of the earth have stationed themselves as masters over men, and they claim sovereignty over matters pertaining to the LORD God. The rulers of the earth do not recognize the authority of God and His Law-word over them. They see themselves as the only sovereign.

When Chief Justice Roy Moore placed the Ten Commandments in the corridor of the Alabama courthouse and explained that it represented the need of all Judges to surrender to the authority of the LORD God and His Law-word, the federal judge would have nothing to do with it. The Federal Court declared that, “the state may not acknowledge the sovereignty of the Judeo-Christian God” (morallaw.org).

Before us is a continuation of the question: “Why have the kings of the earth set themselves up as lords and masters in opposition to the sovereignty of God and His anointed King, the Lord Jesus Christ?”

THE RULERS OF THE EARTH SPEAK

3 Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.

Now the kings speak to one another. The Hebrew Piel, plural verb “let us break” is cohortive in form and meaning . . . and it is in the emphatic position. The Piel verb communicates intense determination to break from Puritan Christianity. Being in the emphatic position this verb clearly communicates the excessive vigor and profound madness of political leaders united in a new world order that incites rebellion against the Triune God and His law-order.

The term “their bands” is a feminine plural, a reference to the Trinity. “Their” would be a reference to the “us” of Genesis 1:26-28. The words “bands” and “cords” refer to chains or ropes that tether animals. These terms designate the Claim the Creator-God has on all the people of the earth. They are used metaphorically of the sovereignty of the LORD God and the absolute binding authority of His law over mankind.

The new world order encourages rebellion against the authority of Christ and His Law-word, and is hell-bent on bringing in a new world order to build the utopia of kings—wealth, power, and control of man’s destiny.

Today, there are no kings who have taken an oath to the LORD God and His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ to uphold His law and to honor Christ save one—the Queen of England. But, she has so violated her oath, she has committed treason against God and the British people. At best, kings take oaths to uphold the laws of man—which by the way, are almost always hostile to God’s law-order.

HEAVEN’S REACTION TO THE REBELLION

4 He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision.

To an informed Christian the hostility of congressmen and our nation’s leaders is like a burr under our saddle. We are constantly irritated and agitated by the insanity of our political leaders. Rightly so. Thus, we pray, “Hallowed be thy name; thy Kingdom come;”

How does God respond to the psychotic, sociopathic madness of kings? Well, He certainly isn’t threatened by any . . . or all of them! “He laughs!” The term “laugh” (*shachaq*) is translated “to make sport of” in Judges 16:25. It is a term of contempt. The word “derision” (*la-ag*) means “to mock” and is translated “laughed thee to scorn” in 2 Kings 19:21. The temporal power of weak, proud rulers is no threat to the omnipotent power of the eternal God.

5 Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure.

What is the future of the rebel kings? He has a message for them. The verbs “speak” (Piel) and “vex” (Piel) in Hebrew poetry are complementary terms. Both clearly state intense energetic action. The word “vex” is translated “troubled” (Genesis 45:3), “dismayed” (Exodus 15:15) and “terrified” (ESV 1 Samuel” 28:21). God is not some sweet, indulgent passive Santa Claus type figure. Before us in the image of deliberate, controlled, intense action of an angry God.

The word “wrath” and “sore displeasure” are also complementary terms. The Hebrew word for “wrath” is “nostril” (*aph*); that is, when a man feels wronged, his nostrils flare. The Hebrew word for “sore displeasure” means “heat” or “burning anger.” The imagery before us is that of an angry dragon with flared nostrils blasting balls of fire upon his adversaries. The sudden, stroke illness, stroke, and death of Lenin (1924) after his order (1922) to starve five million Russian peasants comes to mind.

To put it bluntly, God is not happy with the nations. Today, there is no government committed to His law-order. Consequently, He is opposed to the proud, humanistic states. It is not his will that any of them succeed. All will fail. He will vex them in His wrath.

THE FATHER SPEAKS

6 Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion.

The Father speaks. “I have set” is the Hebrew Qal perfect verb *nacak* which means “to pour out.” The imagery before us is that of a metallurgist heating iron ore in a blast furnace at a smelting plant to pour hot iron into a mold to make steel. The Father emphatically states that He has His king, and He has installed him permanently on His holy hill.

The “holy hill” is a reference to the Heavenly Mount Zion, the city of the living God, the assembly of the saints, the heavenly Jerusalem of which carnal Jerusalem was a type.

This is a decree “written in stone” sort of speak! It is an iron-clad, perpetual, indisputable fact. In contrast to antlers that fall off every season among deer and elk, are permanent horns of power like that of a ram. In contrast to the changing winds and the sands of time are the eternal shores; in contrast to the fading grass on the prairie are the mighty rocks and boulders of the earth; in contrast to the fragile tents of man are the pyramids of Almighty God. In contrast to fragile, weak, temporal rulers is God’s eternal, immutable, anointed King. In contrast to the weak, flawed egotists that arise to power out of the sea of politics to ride the wave of temporal power to the sand castles of nations is God’s chosen King, the Lord Jesus Christ, established forever on God’s holy, eternal mountain. God rules, not man!

Before us is the SOLUTION to all political disputes—recognition of and submission to the Lord Jesus Christ as Head of the Nations. Oh, that the kings of the earth were humbly submitted to the authority of Christ, under oath to obey His Law-word. How different the evening news!

THE SON SPEAKS

7 I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.

The Son speaks. A public notice is given. The term “decree” refers to a resolve, order, or statute. The first usage of the word “decree” (*choq*) is in reference to land given to the priests by Pharaoh which Joseph, Vice-regent of Egypt, was not permitted to seize or sell (Genesis 47:22); that is, Pharaoh’s decree was set

in stone. His decree was absolute and permanent. It is like an executive order, but more firm. Thus, God's decree to the Son is absolute, permanent, forever, immutable, and unchangeable.

The decree is one of relationship. The Son is very God of God, eternal, from the beginning. But, at a point in time, if we dare use the term "time," the Father declared His relationship to the Second Person of the Triune God as that of a father to a son. He is now "The Son." The term "begotten" does not refer to an actual birth, but the genesis of a legal relationship. In the movie "Ben Hur," Ben Hur wins the affection of a Roman Senator, receives his freedom, and is declared a son. He existed before the declaration. The decree did not initiate his existence; only a new status. Likewise, between the Father and the Son. The Second Person of the Triune God was declared a Son.

8 Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. 9 Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

Favored by the Father, the Son is granted special favors. All He has to do is ask, and the nations are His. This is the Spirit's way of informing us that Christ claims jurisdiction over all men and their institutions. Both the right and power to rule the nations belong to Christ: "Who is the head of all rule and authority" (Colossians 2:10). But, Christ has done more than ask. He has purchased the nations with His own blood, the currency of the spirit world. The iron sceptre is in nail pierced hands. The nations are as fragile as pottery. The One who made a whip and cleansed the temple will use His rod of iron to smash the nations. Rebels who will not bow the knee will be broken into hundreds of pieces.

THE SPIRIT SPEAKS

10 Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth.

The Spirit of God gives sweet counsel to the rulers of the earth. The object of instruction are kings, presidents, parliaments, public officials in the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government. They are exhorted to be wise and receive the following instruction. Unfortunately, however, the nations seems to be in the hands of fools and madmen.

11 Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling.

The word "serve" means "to work" or "to labor" or "to obey." The kings of the earth are exhorted to serve the LORD; that is, to obey His Law-word. The command "rejoice" refers to voluntary service. Holy fear must mix with joy and the privilege of serving the LORD God. Governments are in place to serve the interest of Heaven and the law of the LORD God; to protect human rights and freedom; and, to punish those who infringe on the rights of others.

The phrases "with fear" and "with trembling" is a call to careful and precise obedience to His commands and purpose (Deuteronomy 5:29; 6:2, 13, 24; 8:6; 10:12, 20; 13:4; 17:19; 19:20).

The Spirit is calling for allegiance to the Word of God, not allegiance to a political party or the new world order or to the U.S. Constitution. Oh, what a different place the world would be if we had Christian leaders committed to the will of God and served His purposes to the best of their knowledge and ability. Today, however, it seems we have madmen ruling nations who are hell bent on serving their own lust or **Marxist program or the agenda of the new Zionist world order to mention a few.**

12 Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.

“Kiss” refers to the ancient tradition of subjects kissing the ring or sceptre of a king; that is, of demonstrating devotion and loyalty to the crown. Kings take no pleasure in rebels. To arouse the wrath of a king is to perish like Haman before Xerxes. After the Earl of Essex “half” draw his sword against Queen Elizabeth, she determined to have him executed.

All the kings of the earth all called to “kiss the Son:”

- Kiss Him as the Son of God, the historical Christ who appeared in Bethlehem.
- Kiss Him as the Creator for “by Him all things are Created.”
- Kiss Him as the King of the rulers of the earth.
- Kiss Him as the only Lawgiver, King, Priest, and Prophet.
- Kiss Him as the Savior King Who gave His life to save His people from their sins.
- Kiss Him as the Way, the Truth, and the Life.
- Kiss Him as the Gateway to God.
- Kiss Him as the Mediator between Heaven and Earth.
- Kiss Him as the Lamb of God, the Sin-bearer.
- Kiss Him as the Way of Salvation.
- Kiss Him as the True Israel of God, the fulfillment of all OT promises.
- Kiss Him as the Head of the Church.
- Kiss Him as the risen, ascended Savior and Lord sitting at the Right hand of God.
- Kiss the Son lest He be angry you perish in the way.
- Kiss the Son that you may be truly blessed of God with eternal life and enter His kingdom.

Kiss the Son is equivalent to invitation terms like “receive Christ as Lord and Savior,” “believe,” “repent,” “bow the knee to Christ,” and “Confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God raise him from the dead” (Romans 10:9). The psalmist is telling us to “look to Christ” and be saved. To reject Christ is to perish, for “whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God” (John 3:18).

The term “blessing” refers to salvation. To “kiss the Son” is to be reconciled to God and to possess eternal life and the blessings of the age to come.

A blessing is promised to rulers and all those who put their trust in him. Trust here is more than an occasional glance toward heaven, but a genuine commitment to trust and obey. “In God we Trust,” is our nation’s motto. Oh, that it would be more than mere words. Oh, that we might acknowledge there is only one God and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus.

The schism between the United States and Russia or between Hamas and Israel are the result of the nations rejecting God’s Law-order. The solution between the United States and Russia and between Gaza and Israel is for all parties to “kiss the Son.” There is peace at the cross. If Jews and Gentiles can find peace at the cross, so can Arabs and Jews, Americans and Russians.

Before us is the reason for all political conflict in the world today, and the solution to every political problem known to man in seed form. The problems are not political, but spiritual; likewise, the solution is not political diplomacy or war, but confession of and surrender to the Son. Kiss the Son and be reconciled to God.

PSALM 110:

14.4 THE CORONATION OF GOD'S KING-PRIEST

Before us is a royal psalm.

The most quoted psalm in the New Testament, its importance is staggering (Matthew 22:44; Mark 12:36; Luke 20:42; Acts 2:34; Hebrews 1:13; 7:11, 15, 17; 8:1).

It has been said *the first duty of man is not to submit to authority, but to question authority.*

The writ that challenges authority is called a *Quo Warranto* requiring an individual claiming authority to produce in writing his writ of authority to exercise certain powers.

This is Jesus' response to any man's quo warranto. It is proof of claim that He was called to be the Ruler of all matters pertaining to God.

Before us is *the glorious coronation of Messiah to the office of king and priest*. A contract with offer and acceptance is announced. The acceptance of the appointment to office contains rights and privileges, and imposes duties and responsibilities on the Messiah.

Here the powers of government and the obligations of King-Priest are conferred upon this human agent, the Messiah. The Psalm serves as constructive notice of His appointment a thousand years before He walked the earth.

MESSIANIC APPOINTMENT AS KING

Psalm 110:1-2 A Psalm of David. The LORD (YHWH) said unto my Lord (Adonai), Sit (yashab) thou at my right hand, until I make (shiyth) thine enemies thy footstool (hadom). The LORD shall send the rod (matteh) of thy strength out of Zion: rule (radah) thou in the midst of thine enemies (oyeb).

Five persons are introduced in the first three verses: David, LORD, Lord, the enemy, and thy people.

When the Pharisees quibbled with Christ and tried to trap him in a contradiction, He queried them about the identity of the "Lord" David mentioned in this psalm, "If David then called him 'Lord,' how is he his son?" (Matthew 22:41-46).

David

When David wrote this psalm He was God's duly anointed king.

The word "anointed" is the Hebrew word for "messiah."

A messiah is someone with *olive* oil poured over them. In Israel, kings and priests were anointed with oil as a symbol of their divine appointment. David was God's de jure *messiah*.

But, in this psalm the anointed One is not David, but "the Lord." The only reference to David is in the inscription and the word "my" when he referred to "my Lord."

In the New Testament, the Greek word *christos* means "anointed." Consequently, our Lord Jesus was called "the Christ" or the "Anointed One." This psalm, therefore, is not about David, but about the coronation of the Lord Jesus Christ and His commission as king and priest.

LORD / Lord

The name "**LORD**" (YHWH) is the Tetragrammaton meaning "I Am." This is God's official name and the covenant name whereby God made His contract with Israel. Jesus taught us to address the LORD as "our father."

The title "**Lord**" (Adonai)^[1] in lower case letters means "master" or "owner." The word *adon* comes from a Ugaritic word meaning "lord" or "father." The plural form, *Adonai*, is like the plural form *Elohim* which is regularly used with singular verbs and modifiers. It is proper to construe the Name as an "emphatic plural" or "plural of majesty." The plural form occurs over 300 times in the Old Testament, and it always refers to God. Adonai is our Lord Jesus Christ.

That the LORD is the supreme authority over all creation was unquestioned in Israel by virtue of the fact the LORD is the Creator (Genesis 2:4), and that He is the Redeemer of the nation (Exodus 20:1; Isaiah 41:14; 43:14).

Because He is sovereign, He rules! Because He loves His people, He redeems! He rules His people with their needs on his heart; that is, Israel's God is an all-powerful, all-holy, all-benevolent Sovereign.

"**Sit**" is an imperative. It is YHWH that summons Adonai and bestows on Him the duties and privileges of the Messianic office at His right hand. He was commissioned because of His virtue and His competence.

"**Right hand**" is a Middle Eastern symbol of authority and power. It is a position or throne whereby Messiah exercises jurisdiction over His domain.

"**Footstool**" or "under feet" is an idiom for conquest over enemies.

"**Rod**" or "staff" is a scepter, a symbol of authority. Today we use stamps and embossers and seals to declare the authority of a written instrument. In Biblical times, a king's staff represented His authority.

"**Zion**" is Jerusalem, the residence of King David, and where God ruled over the nation from the tabernacle / temple. But, this coronation does not occur in carnal Jerusalem, but in the presence of Almighty God in Heavenly Jerusalem, the place of God's eternal rule before Christ came to this earth (Psalm 87).

Rule: The term "rule" (*radah*) is an imperative; i.e., we have here a grant of authority to execute the duties of the Messianic office. The duties of Messiah include at least two obligations: (1) to save His people from their enemies and (2) to crush the enemies of God.

Enemies: The term "enemies" means that not everyone accepts this king or His grant of authority. Many rebels against God's law-order resist His reign.

God's enemies (*oyeb*) are proud and foolish men who reject His rule over them . . . and His mission of salvation. Anyone who refuses to surrender to this King . . . is an enemy! Terms like "wicked," "unbeliever," and "antichrist" come to mind.

Luke 19:27 But those mine **enemies**, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me.

Messiah's Appointment and the Consent of the People

3 Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth.

In this verse we have a lovely description of the King's people using rich and refreshing metaphors of morning dew sparkling in the sunshine of the unveiled Christ.

"**Thy people**" refers to God's covenant people; those who confess Him as their King, Lord, and Master; those who surrender to His law-order and live out a life of love. We call them "converts," "the elect," or "believers," or "Christians." Jesus called them "friends" (John 15:13-14; Romans 10:9-10; Matthew 11:28-29; Luke 18:7).

"Thy people" are not Jews, as there was no such thing as a "Jew" in David's day. Moreover, Jesus was from the Tribe of Judah, but He was not a "Jew" in the religious sense of the term. The Jews of Jesus's day murdered Him. They were His enemies. Those Hebrews who believed in Him were called Christians, God's chosen ones, believers, and God's people. Today's "Jews" who live in the "other" Israel are not Hebrews but Khazarians from the Ukraine . . . and, they too are antichrists and enemies of Jesus, our Lord and Savior.

Modern so called "Jews" have no Hebrew blood them . . . and, even if they did, race / genetics does not make one "God's chosen people" (Matthew 3:1-10; John 1:10-13).

"**Willing**" (*nedabah*) refers to consent. It is a word *connected with free-will offerings*, something *voluntary* and not mandatory. In order to experience the benefits of the contract (salvation), one must consent to be ruled by the Lord-King. Everyone in God's kingdom is there because they want to be there. These are people with "no king, but King Jesus" (Acts 17:6-7).

"**Day of power**" is a reference to the day the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ will be unveiled to mankind. It is the day of the Lord and the day of resurrection. The New Testament calls it the "apocalypse" (2 Thessalonians 1:7; Revelation 1:1).

"**in the beauties of holiness.**" God's people are seen dressed in holy garments. Justified and sanctified in Christ, the saints shine "in the beauties of holiness." In contrast to His enemies, the church sparkles with devotion to their King.

The "**womb of the morning**" is glorious reference to the arrival of the Eschaton in its fullness and universal power. The long night of distress, disease, and death is over.

The "**dew of thy youth**" is a lovely description of the bodily resurrection of the holy dead. These holy ones are described as the morning dew that refreshes the meadow after a long summer drought.

This is an ideal picture of God's people robed in the holy garments of kings and priests. Raised from the dead (spiritually and bodily), they sparkle and shine like fresh crystals of dew on a mantis-green meadow.

MESSIAH'S APPOINTMENT AS PRIEST

4 The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou *art* a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.

We have **a second pronouncement** -- The public declaration that God has made His selection for the office of priest, and installed Adonai to be not only a king, *but a priest!*

This **royal coronation** is a grant of power and authority by our Father-God to Messiah to enter heaven's sanctuary in order to mediate the needs of mankind to the LORD God.

The oath verifies the acceptance of Christ as man's representative in Divine affairs. He is not only *God's Representative* to man, but *man's Representative* to God. What an advantage to have one man Who loves us and Who represents our concerns before the throne of Almighty God.

Glory! Hallelujah! We have a wise, virtuous, competent King-Priest that rules, and represents us before the Father (cf. 1 Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 5)!

Sworn: No man has a duty to perform public service unless he is commissioned to do so and voluntarily accepts the appointment. Consequently, assignments to office require a public oath.

This was true in David's time, and it is true in our time. Public officers are required to take the prescribed oaths and to post bond . . . or they are imposters acting under color of office, color of authority, and color of duty.

The wording in **Hale v. Henkel** declares a political truth: the citizen "has no duty to the state or his neighbors to divulge his business . . . his rights are such as existed by the law of the land *long antecedent* to the organization of the State . . ."

Because a man has **no** duty to the State, upon acceptance of a commission to serve the public, the man must *take an oath to faithfully perform the duties of public office*. Likewise, every contract requires an oath or promise to faithfully perform the duties of a contract. In most states, the duly sworn must also post a bond they will faithfully perform their duties according to the contract (the constitution).

Thus, we have in this verse the LORD's oath and appointment of Messiah to the office of the Melchizedek priesthood.

Will not repent: This appointment of Messiah as King-Priest is irrevocable and unalienable -- not capable of being taken away or denied for all eternity.

"Thou art a priest" means that the Messiah is not only a king that *kings*, but a priest that *priests*. Before us is an ideal king--a King that mediates the affairs of God to man; and, a Priest that mediates the concerns of man to God. He is *God's representative* to men as King; and *man's representative* to God as Priest. He serves God and dispenses justice as a king, but he serves mankind and shows mercy as a priest.

We have here for the first time in history a **King** that serves *the law of God*, but also a **King-Priest** that serves *the needs of the people*. What a concept – a King committed to God’s law-order -- a benevolent King - a King-Priest that cares - a King that executes justice toward the wicked, but a King-Priest that exercises mercy towards kingdom citizens!

As King *He purges society of evil men*; and, as Priest *He saves sinners to the uttermost!* Hallelujah!

"Melchizedec:" The title "Melchizedec" means "king of Salem" (King of peace or at peace).

One of the unique features of Melchizedek is that He appears suddenly in the Genesis record. His origin is shrouded with mystery as the Spirit reveals nothing about his human ancestry. The writer of Hebrews used this strange feature to signify the eternal nature of the Melchizedek priesthood with which our Lord is identified. He was the first king-priest mentioned in the Bible and was either a Theophany of Christ or an ideal king-priest to the people living near Jerusalem at the time of Abraham.

Melchizedec refreshed Abraham after Abraham's return from pursuing the five plunder-kings that captured Lot by supplying him with bread and wine. So great was Melchizedek, that Abraham tithed a tenth of his equity to this king-priest. Melchizedek was not a Jewish priest ministering in the carnal temple with sacrifices that can never take away sins. Rather, He was a true catholic king-priest that used his resources to meet the needs his people, and specifically, Abraham.

Our Lord's kingly priesthood is the archetype of the competent, charitable, cosmopolitan Melchizedek priesthood.

MESSIAH'S CONQUEST, TRIUMPH, AND REST

5-6 The Lord at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath.

O, how the kings, princes, rulers, presidents, legislators, judges, and parliamentarians anger us!

Adonai, when His glory is revealed, shall judge among the heathen; He shall fill *the places* with the dead bodies; and, he shall wound the heads (rulers) over many countries.

The Lord at thy right hand: Before us is an apocalyptic pronouncement of the bone-crushing victory by Adonai, God's appointed King-Priest, over stubborn and rebellious kings that have resisted God's rule and His law-order. This is not "sweet Jesus," but the Lord Christ, the righteous, conservative, "tough on crime" Judge who will "drain the swamp" and *deny relief* for corrupt government officials.

Strike (machats): The word "strike" means "to smite, shatter, or wound severely." Here it represents the Messiah faithfully executing the duties of His office to punish evil doers and to purge society of evil men . . . and self-promoting, greedy, hedonistic politicians.

This is the "day of the Lord."

Kings: The "kings" refer to proud and defiant rulers on earth that shake their fists at God to maliciously and recklessly violate the rights of man.

These are rulers who defy the law of the LORD God and rule lawlessly as tyrant-taker-taxers over men. All presidents, sultans, prime ministers, Caesars, queens, emperors, dukes, generals, and government officials included in this word "kings."

Wrath: The word "wrath" (aph) means "nostril" in Hebrew. An angry man has his nostrils flared and is an appropriate expression for wrath.

This is "eternal wrath," the wrath of the Eschaton, the wrath associated with the Last Judgment. This is "sinners in the hands of an angry God." This is the irresistible, dynamic, cataclysmic, universal "day of vengeance" and the "baptism of fire" mentioned by Malachi and John the Baptist (Malachi 4:1-2 Matthew 3:1-12).

Jeremiah described a limited, local day of wrath on rebel Jews prior to 586 BC, but one day this local judgment will break forth into a final, ultimate display of wrath for which there is no escape.

Jeremiah 46:10 For that day belongs to the Lord God of hosts, A day of vengeance, so as to avenge Himself on His foes; And the sword will devour and be satiated And drink its fill of their blood; For there will be a slaughter for the Lord God of hosts, In the land of the north by the river Euphrates.

Dead bodies and wounded heads: Before us is imagery of the Skull-cracker smashing and crushing the enemies of God littering an ancient battlefield with bleeding, broken bodies. The psalmist assures us that the enemies of God will suffer ultimate, irreversible, eternal defeat.

7 He shall drink of the brook in the way: therefore shall he lift up the head.

On this canvas of Holy Writ, the Holy Spirit sketches a scene of the Champion King-Priest returning home as a Victor from a fierce battle.

With blood on his garments and sweat on His brow, He stops by a stream to refresh himself with a drink of water and to reflect on the marvels of this victory. With His enemies crushed, and His people safe, He holds His head high with dignity, honor, and joy.

The battlefield was Calvary wherein our Lord faced man's fierce threefold enemies: Satan, sin, and death. Having given His all to save His people, He returns to the Father as Heaven's Champion -- a reference to His ascension to the right hand of the Father (Acts 2:32-37).

This is the King-Priest of the psalm; the Lion-Lamb of Revelation chapter five; the One with a "sword in His mouth; "He *that* treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God;" the "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS;" and, He that orders the fowls of the air to "eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great" (Revelation 19:15ff).

The Lord Jesus Christ has been crowned, and he is sitting at the right hand of God.

Does this King-Priest know you as one of His own? Your eternal destiny will be determined by your relationship to this King. Acknowledge Him now, bow the knee now, own Him as your Lord and Master in this life, and He will be your Savior on the day you are called to cross Jordan's River into the next life (Romans 10:9, 10).

[1] "The plural form *Adonai*, like the plural form *Elohim*, is regularly used with singular verbs and modifiers, so it is best to construe the Name as an "emphatic plural" or "plural of majesty." When the plural is formed using a singular possessive ending ("my Lords"), it always refers to God, and occurs over 300 times in the *Tanakh* in this form" (Source: http://www.hebrew4christians.com/Names_of_G-d/Adonai/adonai.html).

15 THE BERIYTH (COVENANT)

Genesis 17:2 And I will make my covenant (ytiPyrlb., beriyth) between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly.

*Exodus 19:5 Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my **covenant** (ytiPyrlb., beriyth), then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine:*

Jeremiah 31:33 But this shall be the covenant (ytiPyrlb., beriyth) that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.

OT COVENANTS

Both the Old Testament (OT) and the New Testament (NT) are correctly called the Old Testament and the New Testament. The concept of “covenant” is the theme of both the OT and the NT. It is, therefore, incumbent upon the Bible student to understand the covenants of the Bible.

A covenant is a contract with (1) an offer, (2) acceptance, (3) considerations, (4) duties, (5) benefits. All of life is about contracts!!

A covenant differs from a contract only in the fact that God is part of a covenant; He may not be part of an ordinary contract. Christians call marriage a covenant because God is part of the common law contract. A marriage license, however, leaves out “God” and replaces Him with the State as the Third Party.

It is an advantage to be in a covenant relationship. For this reason, nations make treaties (covenants) with each other. Covenants obligate, therefore, privileges are obtained. If one understands the obligations and the privileges, the relationship can be enjoyed. However, when duties become slavery, benefits are scurred.

Evangelical theological systems seem to hinge on the student’s understanding of covenants. Two great theologies, covenant theology and dispensational theology are rivals on this subject. To understand these theologies, one must understand the issues and the presuppositions driving these systems. A study of the covenants will enlarge one’s thinking and turn one into a Bible student.

Salvation is based on a covenant contract. During the flood of Noah, only those who had a covenant with God were delivered from the deluge. Likewise, only those who have a covenant relationship with God, will be saved from the wrath to come.

However, the subject of covenants is surrounded heated disputations between dispensationalists and covenant theologians.

THE FUTURIST POINT OF VIEW:

Classical Dispensationalists (CDs) believe in a New Covenant (NC). They do not believe, however, the NC will be enacted until after the Lord comes in the Millennium with Israel. To CDs, the kingdom was proclaimed, rejected, and postponed till the millennium.

CDs see the church as a parenthesis in the divine program between Israel's rejection of the kingdom and their national acceptance of God's kingdom program. Furthermore, CDs see Israel as the center of redemptive hope.

To CDs the prophetic clock will start after the removal of the church from the earth before the tribulation period. Christ will appear to Israel after the seven year tribulation period is over as their Messiah whom they have pierced.

The NC will be established with national Israel in the future.

The NC does not include the church (or is at least it is secondary issue).

THE COVENANT POSITION:

Covenant Theologians (CTs) see the first coming of Christ as inaugurated eschatology. Eschatology was being fulfilled at during our Lord's life and ministry. He proclaimed the kingdom of God and those who believe experience eschatological blessings in a first fruits way. Since the church is the product of realized eschatology, the church is an eschatological people—the new Israel.

The NC was established and sealed by the coming and death of Christ.

The NC includes every believer, Jew or Gentile, who compose the New Israel.

God is finished with national Israel as a geo-political, spiritual organization, but any Jew can participate in the blessing of the NC by placing his faith in the risen Christ.

That the church is the locus of fulfilled prophecies—not a future Israel.

What was inaugurated during our Lord's ministry, will be consummated at the *parousia* of our Lord.

What is at stake is this: Either the church is experiencing the NC or it is not. If it is not, many believers are deceived (Covenant Christians). If it is, many are not enjoying covenant blessing now (Dispensational Christians).

(Notes from Blaising & Bock (1993). *Dispensationalism Today*, p. 130ff; Cox, 1966, *Biblical Studies in Last Things*, p. 4ff)

15.1 THE ADAMIC COVENANT

The term “Adamic Covenant” is not found in the Old Testament, but one has to jitterbug around Genesis 2 to avoid the concept. God created a contract with Adam with duties, benefits, and penalties. That Adam and Eve broke the contract stands out like black on white in Genesis three.

15.2 THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT

THE ISSUES

God gave Abraham many wonderful promises. One of these is the land grant promise (Canaan). Covenant theories (CTs) believe the promise has been fulfilled. Classical Dispensationalists (CDs) believe it is still unfulfilled. CTs see that Gentiles become sons of Abraham and enjoy covenant blessings now. Progressive Dispensationalists (PDs) believe Christians are sons of Abraham, but they do not believe the church is the locus of OT promises or the Abrahamic hope. PDs believe God must give Israel its land because the promises of Abraham are unconditional. [Note, however, this presumption is missing in the New Testament]. CTs believe Israel received the land promises during the period of Joshua (23:14-15). Furthermore, CTs believe the promises are conditional and that unbelieving Israel forfeited their right to the promises because of unbelief. PDs believe Abrahamic promises are unconditional. To CTs, the land grant promise was not just for Canaan, but the whole world—a world which believing Jews and believing Gentiles will enjoy and share together on the day of redemption (Romans 4:10ff).

CONTENTS OF THE COVENANT

God will bless Abraham (Genesis 12:2; 22:17). “Jews” are not in mind here. And, certainly the Ashkenazim have no claim upon this promise. The promise is not for the Land of Canaan, but that Abraham and his family of faith would inherit the whole world (Romans 4:13).

The Abrahamic covenant contains a personal clause, a national clause, an international clause, and a spiritual clause (seed).

- Abraham will mediate God’s blessings to other nations (12:2-3, 18:18; 22:18).
- He will mediate God’s curse (12:3).
- Abraham’s name will be great (12:2).
- He will become a great nation (12:2; 18:18).
- God will give to his descendents the land of Canaan (12:7; 13:14-17; 15:7-21; 17:8)
- Abraham will have innumerable descendants (13:16, 15:4-7; 17:4-7; 15-21; 22:17).

- This covenant will be established with Abraham's descendants (Genesis 17:7, 19, 21).
- God will be the God of Abraham and his descendants, and they will be His people (Genesis 17:7-8).

Cox (1966, p. 6): **The covenant was not given to a Jew.** Abraham was not a Jew, nor is his covenant exclusively Jewish. He was a Hebrew. "All nations" were destined for blessing through Abraham, and all nations have the potential to be blessed if they hear and receive the gospel of Christ.

God's promises are, according to Blaising & Bock: (a) holistic: physical, material, social, personal, political, cultural, and religious; and (b) the religious seed promise is the key to others since it was man's separation from God that caused him to forfeit those blessings.

NATURE OF THE COVENANT

(Source: Blaising and Bock, 1993)

No passage contains all the elements of the Abrahamic Covenant. The promises are scattered throughout Genesis 12-24.

It is a **grant covenant** rather than a bilateral contract. As a grant covenant, it is unconditional in nature say the dispensationalists. The manner of reception supports this assertion (Genesis 15). [But, a closer look at Genesis 26:4 reveals that while God's intent was to bless, the Abrahamic promise was conditioned upon Abraham's obedience].

Paul's argument in Galatians 3: God promised; Abraham believed; Abraham was justified; God ratified the covenant apart from the works of Abraham.

Though this was a grant covenant, it had serious obligations (17:1; 18:9): Disobedience or disloyalty are punishable offenses. Disobedience or disloyalty are punishable offenses. The punishment may take away the enjoyment of the grant temporarily (. . .) or permanently (capital punishment) (p. 132). "obedience to God's commandments does function as the means by which he experiences God's blessings on a day to day basis. These commandments function as conditions for Abraham's historical experience of divine blessings as he obeys God, God blesses him more and more" (p. 133). See Genesis 18:18-19, ". . . in order that the Lord may bring upon Abraham what He has spoken about him."

There is, however, an unconditional intention to bless which will resolve the problem of human disobedience in a manner to be revealed. The "final resolution will later be revealed in the promise of a NC." (p. 134).

It is called an "everlasting covenant" (17:7), or perpetual covenant. This covenantal relationship remains in force through the generations, guiding the history of redemption.

The blessings of the covenant are passed on to Isaac and Jacob. Twice to Isaac (26:1-6; 19-26), and three times to Jacob (27:18-29; 28:10-16; 25-6-16). Esau is also blessed because of Abraham, not as an heir to the covenant, but because of a relationship to Abraham.

ABIDING NATURE OF THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT

God acted in history on the basis of this covenant (Exodus 2:24-25; 1 Chronicles 16:15-19)

(God's grace to Israel is based on the Abrahamic covenant 2 Kings 13:22-23).

INCLUSION

It was not exclusively for Jews. Abraham was not Jewish. He was a Hebrew. Neither Isaac or Jacob or Moses were Jews.

Slaves, strangers (Gentiles) could participate (1 Chronicles 6:32, 33).

Ruth, a Gentile, enjoyed Abrahamic blessings.

Cox, (1966) says Israel failed and thus forfeited her right to the Abrahamic covenant since it was conditional (p. 7).

SUMMARY

The covenant clarifies the way in which God will fulfill for humanity the blessing promised to Noah.

The principle of mediation was introduced through Abraham.

It is holistic involving all aspects of life.

The overall aspect of redemption and set forth a foundational structure for the subsequent relationship between God, humanity and life on earth.

15.3 THE MOSAIC COVENANT

Contents (Deuteronomy 5:2-5; 4:36-38) (Bock and Blaising, p. 141)

The blessings of the Mosaic covenant (Leviticus 26; Deuteronomy 6-11) restate the promises of the Abrahamic covenant:

God will bless them (Leviticus 26:4-12; Deuteronomy 7:13-15; 28:3-12).

God will multiply them (Leviticus 26:9; Deuteronomy 6:3; 8:1; 28:11).

Old Testament Theology

God will give them the land (Leviticus 26:5; Deuteronomy 6:3; 8:1; 9:4; 28:11).

God will make them a great nation (Deuteronomy 7:14; 28:1,3).

God will be their God and they will be His people (Leviticus 26:11-12; Deuteronomy 7:6-10; 28:9-10).

God will confirm His covenant with these particular descendants of the patriarchs (Leviticus 26:9).

The only difference is in the way the blessing are stated is the general promise, “I will bless you.” is given more specific content as physical, material, and national prosperity.

Little is said about mediating divine blessing because Israel is poised to enter Canaan to administer divine justice (see Numbers 24:9; Jeremiah 4:1-2).

NATURE OF THE COVENANT

This covenant was not made with the patriarchs (Deuteronomy 5:3).

The two covenants have different forms: The Abrahamic was a grant covenant. The Siniatic was a Suzerain-vassal treaty—a treaty between a king (Suzerain) and his subjects (vassals). It is not a grant, but a bilateral agreement.

TYPICAL SUZERAIN-VASSAL TREATY:

Identity of the the King (Exodus 20:2; Deuteronomy 1:1-6)

Historic relationship between the King and the people (Exodus 20:2; Deuteronomy 1:6-4:29)

Stipulations, the laws of the King (Exodus 20-31; Deuteronomy 5-26)

Blessings and Curses: (Leviticus 26; Deuteronomy 27-30)

Witnesses (Deuteronomy 4:26; 30:19; 31:28)

Ceremonial Meal (Exodus 24:9-11) (maybe bread and salt between us)

Filing of treaty (Exodus 25:16; 40:21; Deuteronomy 31:25-26)

This covenant is conditional and based on the fulfillment of stipulations. Israel must obey to be blessed (Leviticus 26). Abrahamic blessings were promised in an indefinite future. The Mosaic blessings were specific blessing promised for the here and now, and they were based on obedience. Obedience was the means to experience covenant blessings in their personal lives. The Abrahamic covenant is the fundamental relationship. The Mosaic covenant is dependent upon it. Though one generation may fail, another generation has the opportunity to experience the blessings based on obedience (Deuteronomy 4:26-27, 29-31). Note reference to “fathers” (Abrahamic, Isaac, Jacob).

Blessing was dispensed based on overall obedience of Israel as a whole (Josh 24:16-18, 24; 23:1, 14; 1 Samuel 7:4ff; 1 Kings 4:20-21; 24-25). Curses were dispensed on the same basis (Exodus 32:4; 34:6-7; Judges 2:12-15). In the end, the overall commitment to the law of God was so minute, God called Israel, “not my people.”

The presence of a remnant from another principle. God blesses the nation on the principle that the nation possessed true believers, a faithful few (1 Kings. 19:14, 18). To this remnant the blessings of the covenant are promised in an eschatological hope (Malachi 3:2-4; 4:1-2; Isaiah 1:24-26; Ephesians 3:12,13; Micah 2:12; 4:6-8; Isaiah 4; Zechariah 8:11-13).

Blaising and Bock note that the period of the law was a dispensation, utterly different from the patriarchal dispensation, and different from this dispensation.

15.4 THE DAVIDIC COVENANT

(Blaising & Bock, 1993; Ryrie, 1995; Willis and Master, 1994)

Contents: 2 Samuel 7, 1 Chronicles 17, Psalm 89, 110, 132.

The study of the Davidic Covenant is important to dispensationalists because of its premillennial views and its belief that Christ will literally reign on the Davidic Throne during the alleged millennium; that is, dispensationalists do not believe Christ is reigning now, but that those promises are yet to be fulfilled in a future age known as “The Millennium.”

Thus, this section entertains the question, “Were the promises related to David fulfilled at His ascension into heaven, or do those promises relate to a future time?”

PROMISE TO BUILD A HOUSE

Meaning: to establish the kingdom of David’s descendants.

Kingdom and throne are literary emphases.

“forever” is promised 3 times.

PROMISE OF A SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP WITH DAVID

“I will be his father and he will be my son.”

This promise reveals intimacy.

The “son” would build God’s house, the mode of presence.

Building a temple is a priestly act. Pagan priest built temples for their gods; Levitical priests maintained illegal shrines (Judges 18).

The Davidic King is declared a priest. David conquered Jerusalem, Salem, the former capital of Melchizedek. David made Jerusalem the center of worship of the one true God. David led the priest into the city bringing the ark with him as a sort of king-priest. He made plans for the construction of the temple. The word “covenant” first appears in 2 Samuel 23:5--a divine oath (Psalm 110:4). An oath guarantees a relationship.

The Mechizedekian priesthood is an office given to David’s son as part of his inheritance (Psalm 110). The book of Hebrews connects Sonship and Priesthood into one.

NATURE OF THE DAVIDIC COVENANT

2 Samuel 7 and I Chronicles 17 do not use the word “covenant”. 2 Samuel 23:5 David testifies that it is a covenant. Solomon acknowledges the covenant (Psalm 89:3, 28).

It is a grant covenant. It is unconditional. When transferred to Solomon, the covenant is placed in a conditional form, “. . . if he resolutely performs my commandments and My ordinances, as is done now.” (1 Chronicles 28:5-6) See also 1 Kings 2:2-4). The clause “not lacking a man on the throne” is repeated twice by Solomon (1 Kings. 6:12; 8:25; 2 Chronicles 6:16) and is reconfirmed by the Lord (1 Kings 9:4-9; 2 Chronicles 7:17-22; Psalm 132:12). To raise up a descendent is unconditional; a continuous, uninterrupted reign is not (p. 164).

The conditional form of the Davidic covenant given to Solomon parallels the conditional form of the Abrahamic promise. It made possible a historical experience of the Abrahamic blessing in the specific form of Mosaic covenant blessing. God intended to bless on the basis of the Abrahamic covenant, but the enjoyment for a particular generation rested on the terms of the Mosaic covenant.

Disobedience brought various kinds of punishments, yet the Lord maintained the Davidic throne because of the grant covenant made to David.

RELATIONSHIP OF THE DAVIDIC COVENANT WITH OTHER COVENANTS TO THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT:

“I will make you a great name” passed to the Davidic king.

God said to Sarah that she would give birth to princes.

Davidic covenant is part of the Abrahamic covenant.

Davidic covenant is the means by which the Abrahamic covenant will be fulfilled for all descendents.

The blessings will be mediated by the rulership of the one king. See the description of the of Solomon's blessed rule (1 Kings 4:20-21).

The king is the mediator to all (2 Samuel 7:10-11; 1 Chronicles 17:9-10; Psalm 72). Blessings on Israel comes as the people bless the king (v. 15).

“The descendents of Abraham have been restructured politically so that the function of mediating blessings rest chiefly with the king.” (p. 168). “I will bless you. . .” the “you” must be seen in political context with the king at the top, who receives blessing from God and mediates it to the rest of the people. Abraham's blessings must now be seen as passing through a monarchy. Abraham—nation—king—people

RELATIONSHIP TO THE MOSAIC:

The experience of the blessings of the Davidic covenant during the time of the Mosaic dispensation was conditioned by the Mosaic covenant.

The Davidic king is blessed and bring blessing to others precisely in terms of the Mosaic blessings spelled out in Deuteronomy 28.

The Mosaic covenant can also bring a curse as in 1 Kings 9:6-9.

RELATIONSHIP TO THE NEW COVENANT:

The NC was prophesied to replace the Mosaic covenant in order to bring the Abrahamic blessing fully and permanently into the experience of the descendents of Abraham. The NC is by grant and changes the heart.

Like the blessing of the Abrahamic covenant came through a Davidic king in a Mosaic economy, the blessings of the Abrahamic covenant come through the Davidic king in the NC.

The NC fulfills the Abrahamic covenant.

The Davidic covenant will take place in a king who embodies the NC promise of a new heart and immoral life by the indwelling Spirit of God.

The NC will be mediated through the Davidic king.

Isaiah 49:8 the servant will be given “for a covenant of the people to restore the land, to make them inherit the desolate heritages.”

The king will function as God's covenant, bringing the promise to fulfillment.

Isaiah 49:6 “. . . I will make you a light to the nations.” Through the Davidic king, blessing would come to the Gentiles.

15.5 NEW TESTAMENT PERSPECTIVE ON COVENANTS

On Christ Fulfilling The Davidic Covenant (Blaising & Bock, 1995, Ryrie, 1995; Hodge, 1994).

Christos = Anointed One; Hebrew: Mashiach. Christ, of course, is not Jesus last name, but a title He bears. Christ was called King of the Jews (Matthew 2:2, 4), and the King of Israel (Mark 15:32).

THREE ISSUES

Is Christ reigning now as Davidic King or is He ascended as generic humanity?

Has prophecy been fulfilled (Acts 2) or does it apply to some future period – like the alleged millennium?

Is Christ reigning at the right hand an honor enjoyed now, or is He reigning as the Davidic King in fulfillment of the Davidic covenant a future event?

Blaising and Block, revised dispensationalists, have definitely moved closer to the covenant position than Classical Dispensationalists are comfortable with:

DAVIDIC KING OR GENERIC HUMANITY?

Luke 1:32-35: “. . . the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end . . . “

Bock and Blaising see in this verse the transfer of the Davidic covenant to Jesus (p. 175).

Two aspects are seen here: (1) establishment of the Davidic house, kingdom, throne; (2) intimate relationship between God and man.

Zacharias said God “. . . has raised up in the house of David His servant.” Note: this recalls the Davidic covenant in Psalm 89:17, 24; Psalm 132:17.

The baptism: it was the anointing of the Christ, the Davidic king, at the Jordan River, “the Son of God . . . “—the voice of Psalm 2.

REBUTTALS

Luke 1:32-35 “. . . the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end . . . “

Bock (1992) sees in this verse the transfer of the Davidic covenant to Jesus (p. 175).

Hodge (1994) is quick to point out that “the house of Jacob” does not mean “all mankind” (p. 173). He deplores universal dominion interpretation or that Jesus is reigning now as King of Israel.

Hodge's statement: "There is not the slightest shred of evidence that the throne of David ever was conceived as anything other than the earthly seat of authority where David reigned and where only his physical descendants could legitimately reign. The term "throne of David" simply refers to this—nothing else" (p. 174). Note (1) the strategy by restriction used by Hodge—a wrenching down on the literal nut, and (2) the dogmatism of his assertion.

Two aspects are seen here: (1) establishment of the Davidic house, kingdom, throne; (2) intimate relationship between God and man.

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The baptism: it was the anointing of the Christ, the Davidic king, at the Jordan River, "the Son of God . . ."—the voice of Psalm 2.

Blaising and Bock (1993) see this as the inauguration of Jesus as the Davidic King (p. 176).

People acknowledged him as the Davidic King (Matthew 12:23; 21:9). He fulfilled the chastening, "the rod of men", not for Himself but for the whole Davidic line. He was crowned "king of the Jews" at the cross (Matthew 27:29-30).

Peter preached about a greater David, the Christ, who would sit on the throne of David (Acts 2:30). Raising up a descendent (2 Samuel 7:12) and establishing a throne, a kingdom, etc. is similar language.

This is a fundamental premise. **If "descendent," "throne," and "kingdom" are the same, then the Davidic throne is established in the resurrection of Christ.** Peter argues that it is through the resurrection that Jesus is fulfilled the promise (Blaising and Bock, 1993, p. 177). Peter further argues this enthronement has taken place upon the entrance of Jesus into heaven is in keeping with the language of Psalm 110 as follows: "Lord" speaks of an enthroned King; "Christ" of an anointed King by virtue of the fact that He has acted on behalf of the people to bless them.

Major premise: Jesus has acted from a position of enthronement to bless the people. Therefore, He is the enthroned Davidic King.

The Logic: An enthroned Davidic King would arise to bless the people. Jesus is enthroned and blesses the people. Therefore, he is the enthroned Davidic King.

THE COMING OF THE SPIRIT: FULFILLMENT OR ANALOGY?

Acts 2:16-17 But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams:

The present feature of the kingdom has arrived: This is the imagery of a rule, sovereignty, throne, and use of the term “messiah” appear in the passage.

“*touto estivn to eirhmenon*” (this is that) were used in the Qumran to indicate present fulfillment (Bock, 1992, p. 74). Hodge (1994) confirms the *peshet mode of interpretation* by the Qumran community (p. 168).

Bock: Peter changes the phrase from “after these things” (Joel) to “in the last days” (Acts 2). The use of this term indicates a period of fulfillment.

Hodge (1994) interprets this phrase as something analogous: “this is like that”.

The critical element of fulfillment is the coming of the Spirit (v. 17, 38). Bock argues for a partial fulfillment rather than complete fulfillment. “Peter is saying that a promised program is coming to pass and that a key element of what God promised has taken place” (p. 48). This is the beginning of that . . . is what Bock argues. Peter knew his audience. The Spirit’s outpouring is the “first signs of the presence of new-covenant promise” (p. 49). The Eschaton has begun!

Hodge recognizes fulfillment, but refuses to intimate that it is also a baptism of the Spirit. He admits a hiatus (time gap) and confirms the parenthesis theory of the church in dispensational theology (p. 170).

THRONE OF GOD OR THRONE OF DAVID?

Acts 2:30 Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne;

Acts 2:31 He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption.

Acts 2:32 This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses.

Acts 2:33 Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.

Acts 2:34 For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, Until I make thy foes thy footstool.

Acts 2:36 Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.

David (v. 25) is the conscious beneficiary of the oath God made to him. The key term is *kaqisai* (to sit) in verse 30. “Sit” is reintroduced in verse 34 which is a quotation of Psalm 110.

Verse 30 (. . . knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne . . .) is an allusion to Psalm 132:11 (The LORD hath sworn in truth unto David; he will not turn from it; Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne.)

“Being seated on David’s throne is linked to being seated at God’s right hand” (p. 49).

Jesus resurrection-ascension to God’s right hand is put forward by Peter as a fulfillment of the Davidic covenant just as the allusion to Joel fulfills the NC. To limit this to Jesus Messianic resurrection is to miss the point says Darrell Bock. “Jesus sits here as David’s promised Son on David’s promised throne.” Peter is arguing that a program has been set in motion which will conclude with the parousia.

Hodge admits quibbling about the intransitive verb “to sit” technically faults Bock’s accuracy (p. 176). Hodge says no one in Peter’s day would have made the identification between David’s throne and God’s throne. This statement is not convincing!

The question of Hermeneutics: Does the spiritual ascendancy of Christ to God’s right hand deny the geopolitical aspects of the Davidic promise? Bock says it is not a leap, but part of a process of understanding what God was doing through Christ.

Hodge would object saying this is God’s throne, not David’s throne! Bock answers that the “Throne” is a pictorial description for rule. Sitting at the right hand is an allusion to the promise of Psalm 110.

REASONING

Hebrews makes the point that Jesus is already a priest according to the order of the Melchizedek as a result of this seating through exaltation. “Now how can one allow the fulfillment of Melchizedekian priesthood for the present age from Psalm 110 and then deny the present rule of Jesus which is also tied to this psalm?” questions Bock (Bock, p. 51).

Bock reasons that inauguration is present, but consummation is not yet.

Hodge (p. 174) denies any right to make a connection between David’s throne and God’s throne. He correctly reasons that linking is not equivalent to equated (p. 176). He acknowledges the right of Christ to rule, but no fulfillment.

Hodge’s reasoning reminds me of one who aspires to be a governor of the state of Pennsylvania and ends up being President of the United States. It is a denial of the lesser to greater idea of Peter.

Hodge says linking the two thrones is illusory. The real link is the coming of the Spirit.

Ladd says, “If the first stage of the eschatological resurrection has taken place, then the messianic age has begun and the messianic blessing have been given because the Messiah has already begun to reign” (Ladd, 1974, p. 336).

Ladd (1974, p. 336) says Peter transfers the Davidic throne from Jerusalem to God's right hand: He did not become Messiah at His exaltation. Jesus was Messiah in His earthly ministry. His ascension implies that "Jesus has entered in upon a new state of his messianic mission. He has now been enthroned as messianic King."

Acts 13:22,23- "And when he had removed him, he raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfill all my will. Of this man's seed hath God according to his promise raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus:

2 Samuel 7:12- "And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom."

Acts 13:33 "God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee."

God raised up a descendent to David, but more than that, He raised Him from the dead (permanency & termination) a fulfillment of Psalm 16 and Isaiah 55:3. The blessings of David have been established with Him, a position coordinate with His having the title Son of God.

EVIDENCE THE DAVIDIC COVENANT HAS BEEN FULFILLED

Blaising and Bock (1993, p. 177) present the following evidence that Jesus is the enthroned Davidic King. Their view is a departure from classical dispensationalism.

The Davidic King would be the Son of David. Jesus is the Son of David. He would bear a title is the "Son of God", a near reference to the installed King of Psalm 2.

The Davidic King would be enthroned having the right to act on behalf of His people. Jesus is enthroned and He acts on behalf of His people.

The enthroned Davidic King would be called "Lord" (Psalm 110) and "Christ" (Psalm 2). Jesus is enthroned and He carries the title Lord and Christ (Acts 2:36).

The Davidic King, in his enthronement, would act on behalf of His people (Psalm 72). Christ is now blessing Jews and others who bless Him.

Davidic descent is part of the gospel (Romans 1:1-4, 3 Tim. 2:8). Enthronement at the right hand of God is the position promised the Davidic King (Psalm 110). Jesus is now at the right hand of God. Post resurrection proclamation labels Him a "prince" (Acts 5:31).

The Davidic King would mediate blessing to the people. Christ dispensed the blessed Holy Spirit.

The Davidic King would rule; Christ has authorities and powers subjected to Him (Ephesians 2:19ff).

Colossians 3:1- Christ seated at the right hand of God is in context with the Kingdom of God.

Note three features: enthronement, kingdom, and “Son”; we have here sonship, the firstborn of all creation, and the dead.

Note the language of Psalm 89:27, “. . . My firstborn, the highest of the kings of the earth.” (See also Colossians 1:18).

Note: firstborn from the dead, resurrection, sonship, and authority are united which corresponds to Psalm 89:27 and Revelation 5:31.

“. . . highest of the kings. . . ” can easily be applied to Jesus (Acts 2:33; 5:31; Ephesians 1:21).

The Davidic King would have priestly duties. David planned the temple; Solomon built the temple; Christ also builds a temple (Ephesians 2:22).

Apocalyptic dualism: Christ exaltation now guarantees the fulfillment of the political, national aspects to Israel later (Blasing and Bock, 1993, p. 180) and (Acts 1:3, 6; 3:12, 20, 21; 2 Tim. 4:1).

* See Blasing and Bock rebuttals p. 181. The only way to answer the tensions is in the now, not-yet continuum.

MORE EVIDENCE OF FULFILLMENT

Resurrection is an eschatological event, and event in the age to come has occurred in history.

Fulfillment has come. Consummation is yet future (Ladd, 1974). The kingdom of God is an eschatological event; the Holy Spirit is an eschatological event; and both are part of the eschatological *kerigma* (proclamation).

Jesus was proclaimed as “the Christ” (Acts 2:36), but He was always the Christ. Peter emphasized installation, a new stage, now enthronement as Messianic King. Jesus was Messiah in a new sense. Jesus’ enthronements satisfies the “forever” clause of Psalm 132:11.

The Davidic King was promised a “throne”, a rule, a dominion, not a literal, marble office chair. Christ’s enthronement in heaven satisfies this fulfillment, and, in fact, surpasses it.

Enthronement is in Zion (Psalm 110) which is similar to “heavenly Zion” (Hebrews 13) . Ladd (1974, p. 336) says Peter transfers to the Davidic throne from Jerusalem to God’s right hand. If the first stage of the eschatological resurrection has taken place, then the Messianic age has begun.

Kaiser, 1985, p. 91 states the example of Joel’s army. It had a present and a future consummation.

See Kaiser's "all flesh" argument from Joel, p. 96. It is universal in scope and is happening now. Acts 2:38 taps back into Joel's "all flesh" argument, a circumlocution for Gentiles.

Grk: *pa/sin toi/j eivj makra,n,, (pasin tois eis makran)* (2:39) See Kaiser 1985, p. 97.

Moses wished all could have His Spirit (Numbers 11:29).

15.6 THE NEW COVENANT OT PERSPECTIVE

(References: Blaising and Bock, 1992; 1993; p. 151; Cox, 1966; Ladd, 1974; Kaiser, 1991; Ryrie, 1995; Ware 1992 (Blaising & Bock, 1992, pp. 68-97); Zuck and Bock, 1994:)

One might think that after two thousand years theologians would agree on whether the church participates in the New Covenant (NC).

Covenant theologians (CTs) understand that Christ inaugurated the NC at the cross and that believers enjoy the blessings of the NC today.

Classical Dispensationalists (CDs) have generally denied the church participates in the NC saying that it only applies to Israel and Judah. Fulfillment to CDs awaits fulfillment in the supposed millennium. Wanting to keep Israel and the church separate, CDs did not acknowledge the church's participation in the NC. If the CTs are incorrect, they errantly claim the church's participation in the NC; if the CDs are incorrect, they rob the church of covenant blessing.

What is at stake in this debate? The whole system of eschatology and ecclesiology rest in part upon one's understanding of the NC. *If the church participates in the Jewish promises now, what need is there to insist on a reinstated geo-political Israel in the future?*

Dispensationalism is built on one cornerstone, the distinction between Israel and the church! CDs traditionally maintained the church is not the locus of OT promises and covenants; that the NC is for Israel and Israel alone; that the NC will be inaugurated during the Eschaton; that God's main prophetic program involves Israel, not the church. If the church does participate in the NC, it cracks the foundation of the dispensationalism bringing into question dispensationalism's *sine qua non* – *Dispensationalism's wall between Israel and the Church*.

Since $\frac{3}{4}$ of the Bible is about the Old Covenant, and $\frac{1}{3}$ of the Bible is about the NC, it behooves the Christian to know whether he does or does not participate in the NC. While this is an issue for dispensationalists, it is not an issue for Covenant Theologians. All CTs believe Christians participate in the new covenant.

CONTENTS

The purpose of the NC is similar to the Mosaic covenant—that is, to bring the blessings of the Abrahamic covenant back into the experience for generations of Israel. The “new” is more optimistic as compared to the Mosaic covenant. The reason for optimism is a unilateral act of God upon the human heart. Kaiser says there are 16 passages that address the New Covenant (NC) in the OT: Jeremiah 32:40; 50:5; Ezekiel 16:60; 37:26; Isaiah 25:5; 55:3; 61:8; Ezekiel 11:19; 18:31; 36:26; Jeremiah 32:39; 54:10; Ezekiel 34:25, 37:26; Isaiah 49:8; 59:21; Hosea 2:18-20.

IMPORTANCE

This is the only passage in Jeremiah or the OT where God promises a new covenant. It may be the most important announcement in Jeremiah and all the prophets.

NATURE OF THE COVENANT

*Jeremiah 31:31 Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a **new covenant** with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah:*

32 Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: {although...: or, should I have continued an husband unto them?}

33 But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.

34 And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

This passage begins with the word “behold” (hNEh). It marks a sharp contrast to the preceding message. Previously, Israel played the “blame game.” Fathers were blamed for their children’s behavior. But, now God promises to do something totally different.

This is called a “new” covenant. It is not new in time, but new in nature. Under the Old Covenant, God was responsible to judge, “uproot and tear down, and to overthrow” (31:28), because the blessing and cursing was based on Israel’s response. Now He announces a different plan to “watch over them to build and to plant” (31:28).

The phrase “I will” places the responsibility for this new direction squarely on God’s shoulders. Under the Old Covenant, Israel was responsible “to do.” By saying “I will,” “God contrast this covenant with the

Old. “I will” replaces “thou shall not.” The Old Covenant was a covenant of works. This is a covenant of grace.

COMMENTS ON THE NATURE OF THE NC (WARE, P. 73).

Norma J. Thompson says “the covenant concept in Judaism and Christianity a general obligation concerning two parties” (Quoting from Encyclopedia Judaic). McComiskey, author of *The Covenants of Promise*, said the Covenants of Promise are “a relationship involving obligation.” Beckwith sees a covenant as a “solemn league of friendship.”

Progressive dispensationalists (PDs) understand the NC as a grant-type of covenant. This covenant is a means whereby God obligates Himself to complete the fulfillment of this covenant: “I will. . . .” places the onus on God. This covenant is unilateral and asymmetrical in its direction. It is directed by God to His people, and thus is Theocentric, with no corresponding obligation by His people. Israel is the recipient and beneficiary, not the initiator or benefactor (Blaising & Bock, p. 155).

THE MEANS OF BLESSING

The word “covenant” (יְתִירָק, berit) means “to cut.” God promises “to cut” a new deal, a better deal with his people. The means of this new deal is a “berit” –a blood covenant.

THE NEED FOR A NEW COVENANT

The Old Covenant promised blessing to Israel, but it also threatened a curse upon the nation. Blessings were based on the nation’s obedience. Curses followed disobedience. Because of the sinful nature of the people, they experienced the terrors of judgment from YHWH. As the centuries passed, the nation deteriorated, and it became apparent she would never experience the blessing of God based on her allegiance to God’s law. In fact, because of the nation’s continual disobedience, Israel’s destiny was marked for continual judgment. The godly longed for the promised blessing, but how could the nation ever experience the bounty of God? What was needed was a change in man’s nature, and a change in the nature of the covenant. The answer was a new covenant.

Think of it. Torah and all of Israel’s institutions with its kings, priests, prophets, temple, and Levitical system could not produce a righteous people nor prevent God’s righteous judgment on them. Her prophets, priests, and kings could not take the nation to the promises. Only in the NT do we find people experiencing the promises of God.

PARTIES

The NC is between God and the house of Israel—Judah and Israel. The NC was announced before the Babylonian Captivity (586 BC) during the historical breach between the northern kingdom and southern kingdom. The NC reveals the desire of God to reunited Israel and Judah. This covenant was made with

Israel and Judah, not the church. It is not until the time of Christ, we understand how Gentiles partake of this covenant.

Bruce Ware quotes Dumbrell who notes that the unity emphasis, the promise to Judah and Israel, demonstrates that there can only be “one people of God” (p. 70). Somehow unity must transcend geographical differences. Israel’s unfaithfulness to God caused the breach. The NC seeks to heal the breach.

Quoting Beckwith, Ware comments that though the covenant isolates Judah and Israel, it is in Isaiah 55 the covenant is extended to other nations, particularly to the maimed and aliens (Isaiah 56). A host of Gentile participants are in view along with Israel and Judah (p. 72).

FOUR ELEMENTS OF THE NC

(Source: Ware, p. 75)

A new mode: “I will put my law in their minds”

A new result: faithfulness to God, “. . . they will all know me.”

A new basis: full and final forgiveness, “I will forgive their wickedness”

A new scope of inclusion: “. . .from the least of them to the greatest.”

THE NEW MODE

Putting “the law into the heart and minds” defines a new location. Under the Old Covenant, the law was put in the holy of holies, in the Ark of the Covenant, on stone! It was in Israel, but outside the people. The new covenant promises to chisel God’s law into flesh thus changing the nature of covenant keepers. Somehow, doing right will be a normal, natural response that will spring from a new kind of man.

Blaising and Bock (1993) say that the new optimism is a new unilateral work of God which He will render the recipient faithfully devoted to God and obedient to His law. It is the writing of the law on the heart—an act of placing an eternal principle internally says Ware (p. 76,77).

It is an anticipation of God’s command to “circumcise their own hearts (Deuteronomy 10:16; Jeremiah 4:4; 9:25). God would perform the act after the curses had been dispensed (Deuteronomy 30:6). The fear of God would be instilled (Jeremiah 32:39, 40). The theme is picked up in Ezekiel 11:19, 20; 36:26.

Ware says (p. 75) that the difference between the Mosaic covenant and the NC is his internalization of law. It is not written on stone, but upon hearts. Weinfeld calls it the “Metamorphosis of Israel.”

Ezekiel and Jeremiah speak of the same event but differ in the following way:

Jeremiah speaks of a NC and putting the law within them.

Ezekiel speaks of a new heart and a new spirit and putting the spirit with them. Ezekiel's emphasis is a new capacity and a new result: the keeping of God's "decrees and . . . laws" (11:19,20). The law is never denounced! The law is not denounced as defective in either passage.

Ware concludes about the Spirit that His work was selective (prophets, priests, kings, prophets only), task orientated, and temporary. The NC is different emphasis altogether, says Ware. The prophetic vision overturns all three characteristics of the Spirit's work under the old covenant. It will no longer be selective, task orientated, or temporary.

THE NEW RESULT

Israel was a nation of people from the stock of Jacob. Spiritually, it was a nation of believers and unbelievers. Some new the Lord, most did not. It was, therefore, necessary for the prophets to exhort the nation to obey, to get right with YHWH, to repent and do His will. Under the NC, this will no longer be necessary. All members of the NC will know God and have a new heart. They will not be telling each other to know the Lord, however, they may be telling others outside this covenant to "know the Lord."

Furthermore, class distinction will be eliminated. From the "least to the greatest," rich and poor, slave or free, all who are in the covenant will have a personal relationship with God that is not based on social status, wealth, or sex.

Ware states the NC will produce faithfulness to God. He quotes Dumbrell who believed the NC is new, not because of a new law, new conditions, or new promises, but because in that new age, both partners will keep it. They will have a single heart (Jeremiah 32:39-40) and they will fear God (Ezekiel 11:19; 36:22-23) (Ware, p. 79).

THE NEW BASIS

Sin not only needs to be forgiven, it needs to be removed. Otherwise, how could faithfulness be established? Under the Old Covenant, God promised to bless if the people obeyed and to judge them if they disobeyed (Deuteronomy 7:4, 8:19; 11:16; 13:2). If they would not serve Him, he promised not to forgive (Joshua 24:19). "Not to forgive" is another way of saying God was obligated to punish sin. Under the NC, God would act in such a way not only to forgive, but to remove sin so that He could bring his people under the promised blessings.

Forgiveness is not new to OT thinking. However, under the NC, forgiveness reaches a new level extending beyond the Old Covenant says Ware (p. 81), There is no parallel mechanism in the NC for dealing with sin as was found in the Old Testament. McComiskey states: "It is this blotting out of sin that is characteristic of the NC." Not only is sin forgiven and removed, the presence of sin is removed by forgetting it.

THE NEW SCOPE

Internalized knowledge: Every participant will experience an inward, relational reality, a true knowledge of God.

Equality: Jeremiah says God will forgive sin from the “least to the greatest” (Jeremiah 31:34). In the NC, there will be no class distinctions, no age preferences, no gender differences. The concept of “from the least of them to the greatest” is expanded by Joel 2:28,29 to show there will be no gender distinction (“sons and daughters”), nor age division (“your old men will dream dreams”), nor class recognition (“on my servants, both men and women”). This sounds like Galatians 3:28.

Eternal Blessings: Blaising and Bock add the possibility that the NC includes “resurrection and everlasting life” (Ezekiel 37:12; Isaiah 25:6-9; Daniel 12). Jeremiah hints at the possibility the NC will not be broken (Jeremiah 50:5).

Forgiveness: “The NC will be an inclusive covenant in which all God’s people experience the internalization of the law by the Spirit and to know him in utter faithfulness, with sins forgiven and removed forever and ever” (Ware, 1992, p. 81).

RELATIONSHIP TO THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT

The phrase in the Abrahamic covenant, “I will bless you,” is now extended in the NC to include the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and the internalization of the law (Torah) into the human heart. The concept of resurrection is also new along with the concept of forgiveness and the removal of sin. Blessing become an abiding feature of God’s relationship to His people. This is a qualitative advance: sin is removed forever.

DISPENSATION OF THE NC

Blaising & Bock indicate that the dispensation of the Spirit follows the Mosaic Covenant in Pauline theology (p. 158). The coming of the Spirit is precisely an inauguration of the NC. The Abrahamic promise of “I will bless you” is expanded under the NC, not replaced. It was anticipated: “the time is coming (Jeremiah 31:31) and “after that time” (v. 33) (Ware, p. 83).

NEW COVENANT N.T. PERSPECTIVE

The NC is mentioned six times in the NT (Luke 22:20; 1 Corinthians 11:25; 2 Corinthians 3:6; Hebrews 8:8; 9:15; 12:24). NC themes are found in the cross and the coming of the Spirit.

THE NC AND THE CROSS

A new Israel appeared with a heart to obey all the commands of God’s law. Through his obedience, God’s righteousness became a free gift to all who would believe. Christ’s obedience secured Jewish justification; His death secured Jewish forgiveness. Shortly before his death, he announced the meaning of his death, “This cup is the new testament in my blood” (Luke 22:2). His death became “the cutting,”

the *berit* of the NC. The NC was inaugurated by the death of Christ paving the way for “forgiveness of sins”—the basis of the NC.

Ascended to the right hand, he dispensed the Holy Spirit to Jewish believers changing their hearts and minds. His ascension, not his death, became the instrument of regeneration and gifting. With sins forgiven because of the death of Christ, and the Holy Spirit regenerating because of the ascension of Christ, the NC became effective on the Day of Pentecost.

If the NC is marked by full and *final forgiveness* and the *internalization of the law* by the Spirit, then the age of NC arrives in the mission of Jesus say Blaising and Bock, 1992, p. 84.

The NT asserts two facts: (1) The cross removes sin which the NC asserted (Jeremiah 31:31-33); and, (2) the Spirit internalizes the law, thus fulfilling the NC.

The eschatological, Spirit-anointed Messiah comes to offer a ransom for all (Mark 10:45). He inaugurates the NC after his ascension into heaven from which place he sends his Spirit to indwell his followers (Acts 2:33; Galatians 4:6). *This, then, is NC realization.*

Forgiveness is linked to the death of Christ and to the cup during Christ’s Last Supper announcement (Luke 22:20). Quoting Marshall, Ware says that the “NC is brought into being by what it signifies.” Christ removed the necessity of the OT sacrificial system.

Hebrews clearly establish the fact that Jesus’ sacrifice for sin accomplished what the NC required. Sin’s guilt (Hebrews 9:14-15) and its power (2:14), and indeed sin itself (9:26) were put away through Christ’s death (Ware, p. 86).

Remaining, then, for NC fulfillment is the internalization of the law.

THE SPIRIT AND THE NC (WARE)

Ware (p. 86): The disciples knew they did not have the eschatological Spirit that Jesus possessed.

John 7:37-38 In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.

John 7:39 (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)

John 6:39- the Spirit had not yet been given, because Jesus had not yet been glorified. Why? It makes no sense to predict the coming of the Spirit, if the disciples already had the Spirit.

The risen Christ sent the Holy Spirit. Ware (p. 86) concludes the Holy Spirit was not sent until after Christ ascension, and previous to this, the disciples did not have the indwelling Spirit. He suggest it makes no sense for Jesus to predict the coming of the Spirit if they already had the Spirit (John 14:17). I disagree. How else could OT saints be born again? It appears, the disciples were regenerated, but lacked the power and gifts of the Spirit before Pentecost. On the day of Pentecost, they received new abilities and new relationships consistent with Joel's promise.

Thus, the ascension of Christ, not his death, becomes **the basis** for the coming of the Spirit. Ladd says that Jesus was the Lord and Christ before His ascension, but entered into a new aspect of His messianic mission:

“If the first stage of the eschatological resurrection has taken place, then the messianic age has begun and the messianic blessing have been given because the Messiah has already begun to reign.” (Ladd, 1974, p. 336).

Luke's pneumatology stresses vocational, eschatological empowerment. It is for all who believe (Acts 2:38,39); Paul's pneumatological stress is upon the personal indwelling of the Spirit. Superiority of the personal indwelling Spirit is shown in His ability to transform participants into the image of Christ (2 Corinthians 3:18). In the Age of the Spirit—a NC reality, the Spirit replaces flesh as the operative principle (Romans 8:2-4; Galatians 5:16-23). The flesh-Spirit conflict in Galatians is not so much a discussion on internal conflict, but a new gestalt—the attempt to keep the law according to one's personal, limited resources (the flesh) verses the ability to love according to the resources of the Spirit. The “flesh” is a term for *unregenerate Jews* verses the “Spirit”—a term for *regenerated, Spirit-dependent Christians*.

THE NC AND THE CHURCH

Soon after Pentecost, Gentiles started believing in the risen, ascended Messiah. As they believed, the eschatological Spirit dwelled and regenerated Gentiles uniting them with true Israel. Israel was not replaced. Gentiles were added to the believing community partaking of Israel's promises and covenant (Ephesians 2:12ff). This new community, made up of Jews and Gentiles, are called “sons of Abraham” (Galatians 3:4ff) and both share together the inheritance of Abraham based on NC conditions.

However, controversy rages over the nature of this new community. Is this new community a “new Israel,” “replaced Israel,” a “spiritual Israel,” or no Israel at all? Dispensationalists (CDs), in order to keep Israel and the church separate, dispensationalists thought the NT taught two new covenants, one for Israel, and one for the church.

CDs, in order to keep Israel and the church separate, kept the covenant with Israel distinct from the covenant with the church. Ware says two covenants “is really a defenseless position.” Three arguments are advanced by Homer Kent to dispel the notion of two new covenants existing in the NT (Ware, p. 91).

It is abnormal to make two covenants from the word “new.” Though Jewish Christians, Hebrews confirms the activity of the NC. The idea of two covenants existing in Hebrews 12:23-24 where one is applied to Israel and one for the church is not reasonable.

Christ’s use of the NC would certainly have drawn attention to Jeremiah 31.

Paul connected the upper room discourse to the teaching of the church. Paul calls himself and his companions in ministry “ministers of the NC” (2 Corinthians 3).

If the OT NC concept is not the NC that replaces the old covenant belonging to Israel, then what does the “new” replace in reference to the church? If the NC is inaugurated by Christ’s ascension, and the Spirit has been dispensed to Jews and Gentiles without distinction, then Jew and Gentile become part of the same family with the same destiny. This family is spiritual Israel or at least a new Israel. How can a separate prophetic plan be maintained for Israel?

THE NC AND REALIZED ESCHATOLOGY

If the church is the result of kingdom proclamation and enters into kingdom promises based on the shed blood of Christ, we must conclude eschatological fulfillment has occurred. In other words, the NC is not an eschatological promise yet to come, but something that has been fulfilled in history beginning with the death and resurrection of Christ.

Three positions are presently espoused in regard to Israel: (a) Israel and church are totally distinct (Dispensationalism); (b) Israel and the church are the same (Covenant); and, (c) Both are co-participants in the one NC (Renewed, Progressive Dispensationalism).

Dispensational Perspective (Master): CDs maintain Jeremiah 31:31-34 is in an eschatological context: It is! Or, at least it was future to Jeremiah. The NC is future to the church age. The believer has not entered into all the blessing of the covenant since the believer still struggles with sin (Romans 7). The promises are for the “house of Israel”, not the church. The covenant promises “sinlessness.”

It should be noted about Master’s work that he resorts to the *sin qua non* as hermeneutic principle (a theological belief not a hermeneutical principle). His argument that I1 Corinthians 3 is merely a contrastive style rather than a deduction that the NC exists is not convincing. His eschatological scheme doesn’t fit the context (p. 107).

A perspective by progressive dispensationalist, (Ware): Concerning territorial and political aspects: CDs assert that Israel has never received her promised land. CTs assert Israel received the promised land during Joshua’s day. Ware expresses his dispensational belief when he says the following:

“It seems incorrect to disregard these or to say they are fulfilled in some spiritual manner in the church” (Ware, p. 93).

“. . . the New Testament view does not permit the absorption of the literal promises to Israel by the church” (Ware, p. 93)

“Prophecies regarding Zion and Israel do have a spiritual meaning, but this does not mean they have lost their literal meaning. . .” (Ware quotes Taylor, p. 93).

The “already-not yet” eschatology best answers the issues. The “already” aspect allows the church to participate in the fulfillment of the covenant now, and it allows for Israel’s “not yet” promises to be fulfilled later (Ware, p. 94). Only the spiritual aspects of the NC are inaugurated in the this ages. The physical aspects await a later age.

Ware adheres to a unity of Israel and Gentiles by the NC into one peoples of God, but he maintains their geo-political separation.

A PERSPECTIVE BY WILLEM A. VANGEMEREN

VanGemeran is a covenant theologian and former dispensationalists (1992, P. 336ff): VanGemeran partially agrees with Ware, but asks, “how can a distinction between Israel and the church be maintained? Is there still a sin qua non of dispensationalism? (p. 337). Jeremiah confirms continuity between the promises of the covenants—with creation, Abraham, Israel, the priesthood, and David—to those in exile or going into exile. Jeremiah’s audience went into exile because they broke the covenants. They would no longer enjoy the blessing of those covenants because of their sins.

VanGemeran sees Jesus as the Mediator of the NC (covenant of grace) whose benefits extend backwards to the saints under the old covenant, and forward to all the saints under the new. He disagrees with the bifurcation of the NC into two states: the spiritual blessing which are enjoyed now and the territorial and political blessings to be given the Jews in the millennial kingdom (See Ware, p. 94). He concludes the territorial aspects belong to the post exilic community. What is to be gained he asks (p. 339), since the goal of redemptive history lies in the new creation (Jeremiah 30-33) which belongs to Jesus Christ. Abraham is heir to the world, not just Canaan—Romans 4:13. Are not the spiritual and physical aspects of creation united in Christ at the present time in principle, and in reality in the eternal state? Are believers not part of a political kingdom now (Revelation 5:10; Matthew 5:5; Philippians 3:16ff)?

VanGemeran sees the “new mode” offered by Ware, not as something totally new, but a deeper commitment of God to the new community. VanGemeran believes the OT saints experienced a relationship with the Spirit, but the new community experiences a deeper one. Therefore, he has a “grave concern” (p. 338) over Ware’s treatment of the Spirit in the OT.

A PERSPECTIVE FROM KAISER

(Response, Dispensationalism, Israel, and the Church, 1992, p. 360ff).

FIVE VIEWS OF THE COVENANT:

Replacement Covenant: Abraham's spiritual seed has replaced Israel's physical seed since they failed to keep the terms of the covenant.

Major weakness: It fails to recognize continuity between the old and the new. There are Jews who are part of Israel and part of the church.

The Super Covenant: Israel and the church are one and the same. The covenant that unites them is the "covenant of grace" or the "covenant of redemption", neither of which are revealed in Scripture (view of Reformers).

Major weakness: The covenant of grace is not mentioned in Scripture, and the NC was made with Israel, not the church.

The Dual Covenant: Out of forms of anti-Semitism, Rosenzweig (d. 1929), a Jewish philosopher, argued that Jewish people are saved through the promise God left to Abraham. Therefore, the Jews don't need the gospel offered to the Gentiles.

Major weakness: The gospel offered to Abraham is the same one offered today in the church (Galatians 3:6-9); the object of faith is the Lord Jesus Christ.

Separate covenant: Traditional dispensationalism affirms that Israel and the church had separate identities, promises, and destinies.

Major weakness: Dispensationalists make too sharp a distinction between Israel and the church. Thus, the emphasis of a parenthesis denies continuity between Israel and the new humanity.

The Renewed Covenant (Kaiser, p. 367): There is a distinction between Israel and the church, but not a separation into two separate peoples, two separate programs. There is one people of God (with discernible aspects such as Israel and the church) and there is only one program of God.

PERSPECTIVE ON THE NC FROM COX (1966)

The NC replaced the Old Covenant (Hebrews 7:18; 8:6-13; 10:9).

The NC includes both Jews and Gentiles (Galatians 3:28, 29; 1 Peter 1:1, 2:9).

A perspective on Hebrews 8:6-13:

The present tense and past tense indicates the NC is already a reality.

Even in Jeremiah's time (Jeremiah 31:31ff), God termed the Mosaic covenant old.

The quote in Hebrews 8 is from Jeremiah 31 making it clear which covenant is being communicated.

In Hebrews 8:8-13, the author makes it clear that the NC (Jeremiah's covenant) is a present reality, "a new and living way." "The NC is not an afterthought of God, but an unveiling of progressive revelation.

A PERSPECTIVE FROM LADD

Ladd remarks: "Scripture says nothing about the end of the church age and a restoration of the Jewish age" (The Blessed Hope, p. 136).

Ladd: The Hebrew passage (Jeremiah's NC) applies to the church (Blessed Hope, p. 133): "The NC, promised in Jeremiah 31, was made by our Lord with the Church and is now in effect" (Blessed Hope, p. 133; Cox, p. 12).

It is better than the old covenant and the context is that better sacrifice, better offering, better law, etc.

Gentiles are grafted into the same tree along with the believing remnant (Romans 11).

CONCLUSION

Israel could not achieve her promised blessing because she was under a covenant that conditioned receiving those blessing based on her obedience to Torah. Failure, judgment, and misery marked her history. It became obvious Israel would never see the promises based on national obedience. A new means to obtaining the promises was necessary. Jeremiah promised that in the eschatological future, God would act to provide a new covenant—not one based on the people's effort, but one based on God's grace. In this NC, God remove sin and change the heart of man.

Christ proclaimed the kingdom blessings, and through his death secured the basis for NC operation—forgiveness of sins. From his new position at the right hand of God, the Lord Messiah gave the eschatological spirit to believing Jews. The covenant was "cut" by his death, and executed during the initial stages of His highly exalted Messianic reign.

Soon, Gentiles believed and though they were not Jews, they too received the kingdom promises and were added to the Jewish community. This fellowship of men, made up of believing Jews and believing Gentiles, are the sons of Abraham, the true Israel.

IMPLICATIONS

There are not two covenants, one for Israel and one for the church. Both Jew and Gentile share together in Israel's NC.

There are not two peoples of God, Israel and the church. There is one family of God made up of believing Jews and believing Gentiles.

The NC is not now an eschatological promise, but a promise to enjoy now—hence, realized eschatology.

For Israel in the flesh, the NC is now, not future. It must be entered into now by faith if one wants to have a relationship with God and obtain the promised blessings of salvation.

Members of true Israel are covenant people born into existence because of a covenant-keeping God. It behooves every member, to be faithful to the covenant and to live out what God has worked in.

Because the believer is under the NC and free from the Old Covenant, he has no obligations to Israel's institutional laws. This does not mean he is free from moral law. He is simply free from the cultic, institutional laws that once belonged to the nation of Israel.

The church's future is Israel's future—that is, what good plans the Lord had in store for Israel, now applies to the church.

APPLICATIONS

It is an advantage to have a covenant with anyone. Because the Christian is in a covenant relationship with God, he can make demands upon that relationship.

Because one is in a covenant relationship with God, he can rest from his own efforts to establish and maintain that relationship. He is saved by grace, and is maintained by grace.

A covenant relationship demands responsibility. The NC is not a one-way street. Though blessed, the covenant child has responsibilities to obey and be a blessing to God, not for salvation, but because he thankfully desires to live out his salvation for the Glory of God.

15.7 THE EVERLASTING COVENANT

Isaiah 55:1ff

INTRODUCTION

(Farris, Mighty to Save, 1993):

The first word is hoi, a Hebrew word meaning “Hey there”. Like a street vendor hawking his Ware, Jehovah barter His covenant Ware. His customers are unique: they are all thirsty and broke. His buyers are the desolate of earth. This is the only passage that justifies an entrance into the blessing of the NC for Gentiles in the Old Testament.

THREE DESPERATE PARTIES

First is the barren woman, the *ankara lo yaladah*, *hd'l'y" al{ hr'q'* (Isaiah 54:1). Words fail to describe the frustration of a childless Hebrew woman. Sarah became so alarmed she induced Abraham to

embrace Hagar as her surrogate. So distressed was Rachel, that she followed suit demanding of Jacob to give her “children, or I die” (Genesis 30:1). Not only did having children establish bragging rights and guaranteed social intercourse with other women, children were a fulfillment of purpose, a “reward from Him” (Psalm 127:3). Childlessness was not only an embarrassment, but a state signaling disfavor with the Lord. “Have I missed the boat?” (Farris, 1993, p. 256).

Second, is the plight of the widow, the *almnuta-ach*, אִלְמָנוּתָא (Isaiah 54:4). The anxiety of an aged woman who is haunted night after night with loneliness, the most ugly word in any language, is a cruel taskmaster. The Biblical words are “forsaken”, “grieved in spirit”, and “a wife of youth”. Loneliness is the most chronic disease of our time and it spawns a host of illnesses: doubt, fear, despair, depression, and hopelessness.

Third is desolation. Into the picture emerges a vision of a storm tossed vessel whose security has been shaken by floods and storms (54:11). The word “tempest” is the same word used of Jonah’s wave tossed vessel, *sa-arah*, סָאֲרָה (Jonah 1:4). The sense of despair, poverty, and Herculean obstacles invite king depression to rule the throne. The imagery changes to that of a city, “not comforted”, *lo nuhamah*, לֹא נִחַמָּהּ.

THE NAME OF THE COVENANT

Berit olam, בְּרִית אֱלֹהִים:

An expression used towards Noah: The term probably means perpetual or lasting rather than eternal. Possibly, Isaiah 24:5 is a reference to this covenant because of its universal, cosmic scope. Due to Romans 1:20, Harris believes it is a reference to man’s moral constitution.

David reflection on his covenant was a *berit olam* (2 Samuel 23:5; Psalm 89:28,34).

Restored Israel (Jeremiah 32:40) and returning exiles (Jeremiah 50:5; Ezekiel 16:60; 37:26)

Promise made to the patriarchs (Psalm 105:9-10; 1 Chronicles 16:16-17).

Hasde david, חַסְדֵי דָוִד:

David’s name could be associated with the Davidic covenant. The word us used in a special syntactical arrangement called a “construct chain”.

hesed is plural (?). An unusual form, a distributive plural.

Harris says the word refers to “faithfulness” rather than mercies which better suits a covenant contract implying the need of faithfulness to uphold the contract of two parties. Harris suggest the term “covenant love” (p. 262).

The term could refer to covenant loyalty promised to David or it might refer to covenant loyalty demonstrated by David.

COVENANT INVITATION

Hoi: This invitation is in universal terms and expansive language. In imagery is street vendor hawking his Ware. Here the vendor is YHWH Himself. Called are the thirsty, hungry, and dissatisfied (55:2). The *hoi* is directed to all that have a need, and it is free.

COVENANT APPEAL

The verbs include imperatives, jussives, and a solitary but significant cohortative.

The imperative is *lacue*, Wkl.. The word *lacue* is used four times, three times in the first verse. “buy” (rb.v) occurs 2X. The other imperatives are “listen”, “eat”, “give ear”, “seek” (v. 6), and “call”.

Jussives: “in order that your soul may delight”. The jussives should read “let your soul delight...” and “let your soul live.”

Waltke and O’Connor said that when a superior used in the jussive, the volitional force may be a command, exhortation, counsel, or invitation with permission.

COVENANT BLESSINGS

Peace: peace was introduced in 26;3 and 54:10. Peace addresses the “storm tossed” of 54:11. It is like Jonah 1:4. Christ may have intended peace for this purpose (John 14:27).

Satisfaction: promised in chiding “labor on what does not satisfy” and “let you soul delight in fatness” and “delight in richest fare.”

Life: “let your soul live.” Christ promised abundant life.”

Abundant pardon (55:7): when sin increases, grace increases.

Full acceptance: The alien and the maimed which were forbidden in the assembly of Israel (Deuteronomy 23:1-3), but in the NC, God promises full acceptance.

COVENANT AGENT

How does one understand the reference to David? Scholars (Duhm Haller, Skinner, Torrey) understand it as a reference to the Messiah. David was dead for 200 years. Messianic references in Isaiah support this view: Isaiah 9:6-7, 11:1, 49-59, 49:22, 55:3. The David reference is 5th in the series.

Performance: the “I have made him” is a reference back to David. Consequently, he is a witness, commander, and leader.

Problem: verse 5: five pronouns: two are part of the verbal conjugation, and three are pronominal suffixes, masculine singular n form. The antecedent is “him” of verse 4 which is derived from David in verse 3. The final form is feminine, *perarak* (%r'a)p). Farris believes the verb, *perarak*, is a pronominal suffix, a second feminine. It could also be singular referring back to 54:17, the “desolate woman-Jerusalem model.” The verb is “in pause” and could refer to masculine- see page 270: “nations that do not know you will hasten to you, even the Holy One of Israel, because of the Lord your God, for he will endow you with splendor.

COVENANT CONDITIONS:

“SEEK”, “CALL”, “FORSAKE”, “TURN” (Isaiah 55:7, 8):

Response one is negative: forsake and turn; that is, it calls for a response of repentance towards sin.

Response two is positive: that is, the sinner must also seek the Lord and call upon his name.

These response are not either/or, but one in the same; two sides of the same coin. The present Lordship debate seeks a bifurcation of these concepts which can't be justified. One can't turn (faith) to the Lord without turning from sin (repentance). One can't confess Christ as Lord (Lordship—dealing with issues of conscience) without also believing he rose from the dead (dealing with issues of faith): Romans 10:9.

COVENANT ASSURANCE

“So is my word that goes out from my mouth; it will not return to me empty.” (Isaiah 55:10ff)

COVENANT RESPONSIBILITIES

“Maintain justice and do what is right. . . “ (Isaiah 56:1ff); “bind”, “serve”, “love”, “worship”, “keep”, “hold fast” (56:6)

COVENANT INCLUSIONS

“foreigners”, “eunuchs”. The acceptance of all who will covenant with the Lord (Isaiah 56:6).

COVENANT PRIVILEGES

“joy in my house” means offerings “accepted” (Isaiah 56:7)

Conclusion: The everlasting covenant is for all men for all time. It is gospel. The Spirit stands on every street corner like a Holy Hawker crying, “Come.” And, those who are “poor in spirit” come and find wealth in a new relationship with the Creator.

16 GOD AND GOVERNMENT

16.1 THE GENESIS OF GOVERNMENT

The Hebrew word for government is *misrah*. It means rule or dominion.

Genesis is about the beginning of things. In Genesis 9, we have the genesis of human government.

Genesis 9:1-6 And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth. And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moveth upon the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea; into your hand are they delivered. Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things. But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat. And surely your blood of your lives will I require; at the hand of every beast will I require it, and at the hand of man; at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man. Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man.

Noah Webster (1800s) “affirmed that the principles of republican government have their origin in the Scriptures” and he endeavored to build an educational system embodying “a love of virtue, patriotism, and religion.”⁽ⁱ⁾

God ordained **three institutions** for the good of mankind: the family, civil government, and the church of Jesus Christ.

Genesis nine is sometimes called the “Government Chapter.” Notice the phrase, “And God blessed Noah and his sons and said unto them . . .” Part of this blessing is the instruction, “Who sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed.” God gave mankind the right and duty and authority to purge society of murderer through capital punishment. Both the saving of life and the taking of life are a duty of men. God’s law is not a private matter. It is not for Christians to obey and others to ignore. A civil society and the punishment of rebels is binding on all. Both the saving of life and the taking of life is a duty of man.

The command “thou shall not kill” and the prohibition against shedding man’s blood is more than a political reference. It establishes the basis of a police force to defend the godly order and to punish criminals that disregard the ultimate rights of others. Thus, the establishment of police power forms the basis of a civil society—a government among men sort of speak.

We cannot live without government. Good government is essential for quality of life. Good government not only protects innocent life, it requires moral vigor to take the life of those guilty of capital crimes.

16.2 GOOD GOVERNMENT NEEDED

Murder, rape, beatings, theft, plundering, and violence characterized Noah's world. After Noah stepped off the barge, this bitter root was addressed. God instituted the powers of civil government to correct the prediluvian problem of terrorist gangs controlling and plundering societies of men. We simply cannot live without law and order whether it be through self-government, family government, or civil government.

First, notice the ordination of civil government.

The fall of man necessitated forming just powers which could protect good men against evil men who infringe upon the basic rights of others.

In order to deter the prediluvian corruption, God ordained the institution of civil government—a form of police power that came from the bottom up, not from the top down; a government of the people, by the people, and for the people. A civil order based on God's order, God's command, and God's blessing.

This institution was not the product of man's imagination. It is not the product of natural law. It is germane to the mind of God. Since government is an institution sanctioned by God, men should respect and support this institution. Those who think government is not needed simply do not understand the raw sinfulness of man. Furthermore, since God created the institution, He has authority over it. Governments are responsible to the God of the Bible to conduct their affairs and to obey His laws.

“For dominion belongs to the LORD and he rules over the nations” (Psalm 22:28).

He rules forever by his power, his eyes watch the nations— let not the rebellious rise up against him. Selah (Psalm 66:7).

The LORD has established his throne in heaven, and his kingdom rules over all” (Psalm 103:19)

Note, however, that God did not direct a particular system of government such as monarchy, oligarchy, dictatorship, democracy, or a republic. God ordained government! Men built it. Any of these systems are flawed because of the inherent weakness within men, but they would work if officials would surrender to the law of God.

Second, notice the covenant nature of government.

It is a blessing to be in covenant with God. Notice the covenant is made “with you, and with your descendants after you.” Russians, Chinese, Europeans, South Americans, Africans, Indians, and Americans are duty bound to this covenant.

Every government should be Christian using its limited authority under the rule of law to purge evil men from society.

Notice the responsibilities of this binding agreement. God has a responsibility to protect the earth from a global deluge, and man has a responsibility to protect the innocent from a deluge of evil.

This covenant has never been revoked. The killing of the innocent is always wrong; likewise, permissiveness of evil and neglect of duty to punish lawbreakers is more than a great evil. To view death as the ultimate evil is morally wrong. Men are not to make an idol out of life. Respected and protected, yes! Idolized, no! Those guilty of assault, battery, and murder, must face the strong arm of justice.

The positive command, “be fruitful and multiply” became a positive duty of married couples. Thus, abortion is also a capital crime. Abortion is not only murder that must be punished it is an action in direct violation of the command, “be fruitful and multiply.” Quite possibly, the final judgment of fire will be a judgment upon the world because men refuse to obey the Noahic Covenant (2 Peter 3).

Third, notice the most important purpose of government which is the protection of the rights of man, particularly the right to life.

Possibly, the most profound Statement in our political history is found in the Declaration of Independence:

We hold these truths to be self-evident: That all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; that, to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men . . .

In a sinful world where men find it easier to plunder the production of other men, the purpose of government is to protect human rights and to organize themselves for that purpose.

Man’s rights precede human legislation. Bastiat, the French philosopher and economist stated,

“Life, liberty, and property do not exist because men have made laws. On the contrary, it was the fact that life, liberty, and property existed beforehand that caused men to make laws in the first place.”

This Statement is opposed to Legal Positivism, which builds on the false premise held by most members of the United Nations that there is no right or wrong prior to a legislative act of man. But, we must remember: There is ONLY one Lawgiver (James 4:12). Only God has the right to define good and evil. When men define “good,” we end up with abortion, Sodomy, and theft through taxation.

If the purpose of government is to protect human rights, then the purpose of law is to protect the life, liberty, and property of men.

Law is negative. *Its purpose is not to create justice, but to prevent injustice.* Justice is only achieved in the absence of injustice. Every man has a right to defend his life, liberty, and property with lethal force.

Lawful government, therefore, is the collective organization of men united to defend their lives, their freedom, and their property. He gave communities of men the power to organize themselves to punish aberrant behavior that violated the natural rights of men.

Civil authorities have the commission to arrest those who commit homicide, abortion, infanticide, knifing, euthanasia, assassination, terrorism, lynching, torture, and maiming people; that is, to hunt down those who destroy the life, liberty, and property of others and to arrest, try, and kill them.

This order not only forbids **negative acts** like negligent homicide and premeditated murder, **it demands a positive vigorous application** of the death penalty towards criminals. It is clear that **capital punishment** is part of the duty of mankind. It is NOT murder to execute a murderer. ***Both the protecting of life and the taking of a life are religious duties of men.***

That the State is in place for the purpose of preserving life and administering justice is supported by other Biblical texts.

“Thou shall not kill” (The Sixth Commandment).

For (good) rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil (breaking the Ten Commandments), be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil (as God defines evil) (Romans 13:2,4).

Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers (lawbreakers), and for the praise of them that do well (1 Peter 2:14)

These verses clearly inform us that government was set in place to punish evil men (murderers) and to promote the general welfare of society. It has a healthy, but limited purpose: to purge evil men out of society. Our Founding Fathers read the Bible and came to the same conclusion when they stated the purpose of government in the Declaration of Independence that, “to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.”

When the State administers justice, the people enjoy the blessings of liberty. But, when the State advances legislation that plunders its citizens and protects murders, and liars, and thieves, and homosexuals, society

creates a confusion of tongues and commits social suicide. When law and morality are polarized, Citizens face the tough alternative of losing their morals or losing respect for the law.

And surely your blood of your lives will I require; at the hand of every beast will I require it, and at the hand of man; at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man (Genesis 9:5).

Capital punishment was intended to strike fear into the heart of man and to deter crime in society. The means of capital punishment is not specified. But, we know from other Biblical texts that capital punishment was by the sword, by hanging, and by stoning.

Liberals in our day have disputed the claim that capital punishment deters crime. It is true that capital punishment is not effective as it use to be. But, the problem is not with capital punishment per se, but with the system of jurisprudence surrounding the charge and the inordinate amount of **time, money, and man-power it takes to dispense justice**. Today, it may take ten to fifteen years to exhaust legal remedies before putting a criminal to death. If justice were administered quickly, the crime rate would drop like a falling star.

Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil (Ecclesiastes 8:11).

Thus, the problem with the justice system is not one of principle, but the commercial abuse of the system by BAR attorneys who have figured a parasite off the system for years and years.

Fourth, notice the limitations of government.

One purpose of government is to punish killers, kidnappers, and thieves.

Good governments exercise limited authority. Tyrannical states have an unlimited view of government which act as a god—governments that seek to rule over men from cradle to grave—governments that seek to be a savior among men.

The institution of government was put in place for the administration of justice—to “shed blood;” that is, to purge society of its criminal element.

Law cannot save man. It cannot regenerate society. Law was not intended to create a utopia among men. Its purpose is limited in that law is designed to purge society of evil men.

Zillions of laws do not prevent crime; they only make criminals out of every man.

It is the gospel that saves men from sin; it is law that purges society of capital sinners. The opposite of grace, is not law, but permissiveness; the opposite of law is not grace, but lawlessness.

In a secondary sense, the purpose of government is to protect our life, our liberty, and our property.

In an evil world all men have the duty to not only protect themselves but to protect their neighbors from criminals who do not respect the rights of other men. We are only as safe as the strength our neighbor's commitment to the Ten Commandments.

If the purpose of law is the protection of individual rights, then law may not be used to accomplish what individuals have no right to do. *An overreaching State is as dangerous as a lawless man. A State that believes in the total subjection of the total man to total government (like Congress) becomes a tyrant that must be resisted and replaced.*

Proverbs 29:2 When the righteous increase, the people rejoice, but when the wicked rule, the people groan.

Psalms 119:53 Hot indignation seizes me because of the wicked, who forsake (the limitations of) your law.

The modern State presumes that no citizen has a right to control his own land and that every citizen has a right to control his neighbor's property.

The great danger of government is that a certain class of people may use legislation to plunder and control another class of people. The purpose of government is not education, welfare, or even the building of roads. It is the execution of justice upon common-law criminals. ***When a government steps outside its God-given purpose, it abandons its authority. When government abandons its authority, citizens have a right to resist and even take up arms to install a new government (John Knox; Declaration of Independence).***

WE THE PEOPLE, as holders of all political power, granted congress eighteen powers. Other rights were reserved for the States or to the people (Amendment IX, X). When congress stays within these limits, the People are secure; when congress over steps its authority, the People's rights are threatened. Just as a permissive State is a threat to justice, a tyrannical State is a threat to freedom.

Finally, notice the decentralization of government.

The command to scatter on the earth in Genesis 9 infers that each clan, each city, and each nation had a duty to set up a government under the authority of the Noahic covenant.

This secured the purpose of justice in every society. Men have a right to defend themselves individually and to defend themselves collectively by appointing magistrates that will administrate justice among the people.

Furthermore, this prevented a tyrant from perverting justice to his own selfish ends by using the rule of law to manipulate huge populations of humanity.

In conclusion, because of the pre-flood violence, God ordained government. God established the institution of government as a blessing to protect the life, liberty, and property of its people. To resist the

institution of government is to resist the will of God for society. When government performs its purpose, society thrives; when it abandons this purpose or commits *ultra vires* acts, a culture of death creeps over society.

Note: (the whole basis of government is founded upon the Sixth Commandment, “Thou shall not kill.”)

Basis of Government: The Sixth Commandment is the shortest in God’s list of commands (along with the eighth) but is one of the most seminal in regards to law and order. **It is the foundation of civil government and defines the purpose and power of the state.** God’s law is not a private matter demanding something from the Christian but leaving other men to do as they please. The law is valid for the Christian because it is valid for all. God’s law is not only right for Christian people, but for all men, and all of man’s institutions.

Fundamental Premise: Essentially, the law is designed to protect innocent life from unjust violence, but it does **not** proscribe capital punishment, self-defense, or war.

Our Lord in Matthew five included anger in the prohibition against murder. In the train of sins linked with this Command, this law demands application against gossip, slander, anger, aggression, fighting, smiting, recklessness, thoughtlessness, driving while intoxicated, lack of safety procedures, tattooing, bodily mutilation, unhealthy practices, negligent medical practices or the lack medical care, abortion and euthanasia.

The Sixth Commandment makes it clear that **capital punishment** is part of the duty of mankind. It is NOT murder to execute a murderer. ***Both the protecting of life and the taking of a life are religious duties of men.*** This means righteous men must not only avoid injury to life, righteous men must have the moral courage to seek the death penalty for men guilty of homicide—essentially against men who take innocent life. It is unrighteous to commit murder and it is equally unrighteous to protect a murderer either by harboring a fugitive or by legislating against the death penalty. Modern man has turned the law upside down by using the color of law to protect murderers (baby butchers) and to punish those who seek to defend the innocent unborn. In American there is “liberty and justice for all . . . except the unborn.”

In Biblical law, there are no pleas for condition of mind (insanity). God’s people understand that men are responsible for their thoughts of mind as well as actions. To excuse a man’s behavior based on his thoughts is to say that man has no control over his mind; that society is responsible for the thoughts of man. Thus, modern psychiatry shifts responsibility, guilt, and punishment to the group; that is, it is the family that is to blame, not the individual.

According to the psychiatric profession the solution is medicine, not moral education. Murder is blamed on (a) some chemical imbalance in the brain or chromosome deficiency, and (b) some childhood trauma like rejection by women or an abusive mother. The criminal is not responsible for his actions, something or someone in society has driven him to desperation. When Sirhan Bishar Sirhan, June 5, 1968 shot and killed Robert F. Kennedy, Mrs. John Conolly of St Paul, Minnesota said, “I think this poor fellow Sirhan is a very sad creature. It’s hard to imagine anyone could be driven to something like this.” (p. 234).

Law and Love

The opposite of law is not grace but lawlessness. The opposite of grace is not law, but permissiveness.

In modern day Christianity, antinomianism pits law against love in favor of love. But, in Biblical thought, love is a fulfillment of the law (Romans 13:8). Where love is not linked to law, love is like a river without banks destroying everything in its path. To modern Christians “love” is the new savior of society. Love becomes the answer to every problem: theft, perversion, criminality, heresy, unity, and every social ill. Love is the cure-all . . . and especially in the modern day church. Even secular books and songs abound advocating “Love is the answer” to all of man’s problems.

But, love is not the answer to all problems. It is part of the answer. Justice is not the total answer, but it is part of the answer. **The answer** is in the godly exercise of justice and love—**justice for the criminal and love for the weak.**

*Psalm 89:11 **Justice** and judgment are the habitation of thy throne: **mercy** and truth shall go before thy face.*

*Psalm 89:10 **Mercy** and **truth** are met together; **righteousness** and **peace** have kissed each other.*

The greatest exhibition of love was at the cross; but, the cross was also the execution of perfect justice (Rom. 3:24ff). God’s answer to man’s ills are the proper execution of love and justice. Man’s political woes are the result of states dispensing death instead of life (against the innocent), and life instead of death (towards the guilty).

Love without law leads to total permissiveness—a denial of good in favor of evil.

Both the saving of life and the taking of life are a duty of man.

War is the authorized use of the death penalty against a nation / population of rebels who refuse to surrender to God’s law order. War is the use of capital punishment to persuade adversaries of righteousness to lay down arms and surrender to God’s Commandments. But, the means is as important as the ends. Even in war, God’s rules must be followed. The Biblical term “wars of the Lord” (Numbers 21:14) imply there is a people surrendered to God’s law that have the moral energy to enforce God’s law order among rebellious nations that violate His law and who must be coerced to pay restitution.

Rule One: Wars must be fought against “enemies” of God’s law and against nations that seek to harm and injure the homeland. Therefore, wars are engaged for the defense of justice and the suppression of evil (as God defines justice and evil); that is, the restoration of God’s law order as carefully laid out in the Ten Commandments. Thus, all wars are wars against the tyranny. Resistance to tyranny (evil) is service to God. He is “called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He (Christ) doth judge and make war”

(Revelation 19:11). Thus, part of soldiering is religious preparation and surrender to the duty of advancing the rule of God through the use of force against those that have abandoned principles of justice and who violate the rights of men.

And, since war is to be waged for a just cause in defense of the homeland, individuals have **the right to conscientious objection**. A man has the right even a duty to refuse to enlist for an ungodly cause and an unjust war.

Rule Two: War must be grounded in service to God and the conviction “the Lord is with you” (Deuteronomy 20:1). Soldiers had to possess a conviction that the war was just, and if it was just, that God would protect them. The census in Israel and the “ransom” or “tax” or “covering was a payment for the protection from the “plague” (gore, defeat, slay, smite) of war that he might not be slain in battle (Exodus 20:12; 30:11-16).

All wars are religious in nature; that is, it is a matter of who’s religious values are going to prevail. The whole idea that war is secular in nature and without a religious perspective is the result of liberal indoctrination that prolongs war to the detriment of both sides of the enigma.

Rule Three: Wars must be fought by mature, competent men. In Israel, only able-bodied men, twenty years and older were eligible to participate in the duty of law enforcement (Numbers 1:2, 3, 18, 20, 45; 26:2, 3). Enlisting in the army was voluntary and volunteers had to decide their own physical and moral fitness for war. Women were not eligible to fight in a war. More than a little evil has been accomplished by enrolling women in the military.

Rule Four: Exemption from war must be rigorously enforced (Deuteronomy 20:1-4):

Those constructing a new home were exempt.

Those constructing a new vineyard were exempt.

Women were dismissed from soldiering.

Those recently married were exempt (Numbers 1:48-49). Zeal for military could not take priority over duty to care for a new wife.

Exemption from war was not a weakness or dereliction of duty, but **a priority matter** (20:2ff). The family has priority over military service. Farming and business related to the sustenance of life has greater priority than politics. If life and family are not the superior priority, there is nothing to fight for.

Rule Five: War requires spiritual and emotional maturity. The fearful were not permitted on the battlefield lest they destroy the morale and character of other soldiers (Deuteronomy 20:5-9). Ancient wars were hand-to-hand combat and took considerable courage. In contrast, modern warfare is often more like playing a live, on stage video game.

Rule Six: War requires clean hands. In O.T. Israel, God used a very earthly practice to illustrate the need for holiness. Israel was commanded to build latrines and to keep a clean camp so the Lord would not be offended by uncovered human excrement (Deuteronomy 23:9-14). This physical instruction provided a spiritual lesson: **Not only must the cause of war be holy, the soldiers must be holy.** God uses just men to fight just causes, but the cause is hindered if the men in uniform compromise and are defiled. When it comes to soldiering, hypocrites, homosexuals, and criminals need not apply. It is impossible morally for a Christian to fight alongside homosexuals in a war. In God's law order, homosexuals must be executed not defended!! Discipline must be maintained: Laws against raping, stealing, pillaging must be strictly enforced lest the wrath of God be turned upon the Lord's army.

Rule Seven: Before declaring war, nations must extend an offer of peace to the enemy; that is, the offended nation must offer conditions upon which war can be averted to the offending nation. This offer involves restitution of some sort. **The offer of peace is not an offer of compromise.** The righteous can never offer peace to the wicked or compromise with evil men. God doesn't (Isaiah 48:22; 57:21). **The just cause must be maintained. Principle cannot be amended.** The enemy must make complete restitution. **Total surrender is demanded.** Nothing else will do.

Rule Eight: War must not be fought for imperialistic purposes; that is, massive armament for offensive wars is strictly forbidden. Israel's kings were not allowed to stockpile horses for blitz-like cavalry attacks in order to threaten and intimidate neighbors (Deuteronomy 17:16).

Rule Nine: War is against people, not the earth; against evil, not the countryside. God allowed Israel to harvest the forest for embattlement purposes, but they were not allowed to cut down fruit trees, to loot villages, and to set fire to country sides (Deuteronomy 20:19). Life must be preserved after war and total devastation of farming and commerce and industry were not permitted by a godly army.

Rule Ten: Wars must be financed by the booty seized; that is, since offending nations would not pay restitution for wrongs done—wrongs that caused war, the army of the Lord had a right to restitution from the assets seized in the pain of war (Numbers 31:21-31, 29, 30, 42). Victors become creditors; and the defeated become debtors.

Rule Eleven: War must be fought to win. A clear and decisive victory is mandatory. War should be swift and vigorous even though there is collateral damage. War, if fought, is waged to overthrow tyranny and to squash evil; that is, nominal wars over petty and superficial political differences while trying to maintain a veneer of political correctness must be condemned. War is an ugly, aggressive attack on the root of evil with the intent to kill people and to destroy things. Israel was called to totally annihilate the Canaanites (Deuteronomy 2:34; 3:6; 20:16-18; Joshua 11:4). Some civilizations and cultures are not worth preserving. Nations that practice human sacrifice, ritual murder, homosexuality, and plundering are justified. In other wars, Israel was called to slay the men and to exempt young women and children from execution (Numbers 31:7; Deuteronomy 1:1, 2, 16; 20:16, 17). The work of restoring God's order must be energetic even though many casualties will occur. The whole idea that war can be fought without

emotion with surgical precision so that civilian casualties never occur is a result of liberal, humanistic idealism that neutralizes engagement.

The Law and Taxation

There were two types of taxation in the Old Testament: the poll tax and the tithe. To eliminate confusion, the reader must understand that the temple served as the civil center of government as well as a religious center for the people. The Sanhedrin conducted their civic duties just south of the Temple proper at the same time the priests were performing their work of reconciliation.

The Poll Tax was levied upon every man twenty old and upward (Exodus 30:11-16) and was payment for God's protection. The head tax was the same for young and old, rich or poor. It was equal and it was paid to civil authorities for the maintenance or covering for the civil order in the nation. It was paid at the temple or in N.T. times to tax collectors who worked for the temple.

The tithe was not equal nor was it paid to the central government. The tithe was collected for the Levites to maintain the temple services and for their work as educators for the nation and for the social order. The tithe was not a tax on the land but upon the increase of the land. Thus, it was a true "income tax" of 10% and no more.

The head tax supported the military while the tithe supported the Levities system. The poll tax had to be paid to civil authorities at the temple complex, but the tithe could be taken to any number of warehouses for that purpose. There was no land tax as the land belonged to the Lord.

There are many lessons that can be gained from this model:

The poll tax was small in order to accommodate the poor and because Israel's civil government was to be small. Big government means big taxes and small liberties.

There was no tax on land because the land belongs to God (Psalm 24:1). A tax on land is a wicked, humanistic invention that creates a culture of economic death.

A tax on the increase of a business or upon the land is Scriptural and constitutional indirect taxes upon corporate gain is fitting with this model. But a tax upon labor or income is not only not Scriptural and unconstitutional, it is slavery. In the name of taxation, the U.S. government has declared war on every American—a war which weakens families and destroys the nation.

Theft in the name of taxation is still theft. Unbiblical taxation injures and destroys. The whole idea of stealing one's man's wealth and redistributing it to the poor under the guise of compassion is theft under the color of law.

16.3 STATISM IN THE BIBLE

NEBUCHADNEZZAR AND STATISM

Daniel 2:44 And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.

Nebuchadnezzar had a dream in which he saw a rock roll down a mountain to crush a strange statue made of gold, silver, bronze, and iron. Daniel interpreted the dream and revealed to the king that the statue represented four monolithic empires that would dominate history. The rock represents Christ and His kingdom that would end the bone-crushing imperialism of these global governments. Clearly, Daniel reveals to the king and to all men that Gentile nations would dominate world history, but *because they are opposed to the kingdom of God, they would be crushed by the coming and power of Christ*. These empires were statist governments controlled by statist kings such as Nebuchadnezzar, Cyrus the Great, Alexander the Great, and the Caesars of Rome. In the end, they will be destroyed. *Until then, Christians must learn to respond to statist regimes in history.*

Whether we are talking about the Department of Justice (DOJ) seizing homes without a court order, or the master scheme of the IRS to defraud the American public of its wealth through the color of law, or the violations of the federal government in the WACO disaster, or the seizure of private property for the development of a new shopping center, or the patriot act that empowers the feds to tap the phone lines of private citizens. Freedoms are disappearing faster than giant pandas and California condors.

Last year a friend of mine was riding his bike home early in the morning when a policemen stopped him and asked him some questions. My friend chose to remain silent and just looked at the officer. Angry, the officer grabbed the man, kicked his bike into a fence, threw the man on the hood of his car, and hand cuffed him. He then read him his Miranda Rights, “You have a right to remain silent . . . “ screamed the “Law Enforcement Officer.” Enduring a lecture by this “public servant,” my friend remained quiet. Gradually, it dawned on the “Law Enforcement Officer” that my 145 pound fifty year old friend was no threat to anyone. Finally, the officer uncuffed him and asked, “Why won’t you answer me?” My friend pointed to his throat and toward a pen and paper. My friend wrote, “I have a right to remain silent” (First Amendment). Realizing his mistake, the policeman, to his credit, apologized profusely and offered my friend a ride home. Though this story is kind of funny, it is not funny when public servants think like Atilla the Hun.

Statism is on the rise in America. We are seeing government seeking to control everything from health care to the number of cars you can have in your driveway. Recently, another friend of mine received a letter from the bank saying they froze his account because of an IRS levy. Without going to court, without due process, without a court order, without a jury of his peers in violation of the 4th, 5th, 9th, and 10th Amendment the bank cowered like a beaten dog toward the unsigned, unverified IRS request, stole my friend’s money and sent it to the U.S. government. To understand the shift in power from the private sector to the public sector, we need to look at the subject of statism in God’s Word.

NIMROD, THE GENESIS OF STATISM (GENESIS 10:8)

And Cush begat Nimrod: he began to be a mighty one in the earth. He was a mighty hunter before the LORD: wherefore it is said, Even as Nimrod the mighty hunter before the LORD. And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar. Out of that land went forth Asshur, and builded Nineveh (Genesis 10:8-11).

The Book of Genesis is about the “beginning” of things. It is a book of “firsts.” We have the first man, the first wedding, the first family, the first murder, the first civilization, the first global judgment, and the first government. God wants us to understand how sin infected the human race. In Genesis nine, we see God establishing a covenant with Noah and his family and blessing this new beginning with the institution of civil authority. In Genesis ten, we see sin at work in a leader called Nimrod who distorted political power for his own ends. He managed to build a kingdom that manipulated and controlled huge populations of people.

The name “Nimrod” means “He rebelled” or “rebellion,” or “one valiant in rebellion.” He lived in the Land of a Shinar. He was a mighty ruler on the earth. He was the first to build a kingdom and to subjugate men under his rule and power. He was the first to unite men under a single government by persuasion and force and coercion. By offering government franchises, protection for loyalty, he enslaved thousands of men in his system. He was the first of the kings, first of the Pharaohs, first of the great monarchs, first of the Stalin’s in history.

Nimrod was a “mighty hunter before the Lord.” The word “*before*” can be translated “against.” He rebelled against the Lord and established a system of government that was against the Lord. Like a defiant two-year old, Nimrod refused to bow to God’s command to scatter on the earth. He was the first in idolatry and the first in tyranny. He carried on rebellion and violence in defiance against God.

The term “hunter” refers to Nimrod’s character. A hunter is the opposite of a shepherd. It means that he used men to fuel his lust for power. He was a beastly man without feelings for the plight of men. A rebel ruler, he enslaved hoards of people. As a “hunter” of men, he was the first tyrant.

Babylon and Nineveh were both birthed from the corruption and violence established by Nimrod. This was a statist society where everything had to be done for the State. Nothing could be against the State. The State was the supreme value and the supreme crime was individualism—i.e., treason against the state.

DEFINITION OF STATISM

From time to time, statist governments arise on the earth where the life, liberty, and property of men are controlled by tyrannical regimes. **Statism is the belief that the State is a god.** Statism is the effort of an elite class of men to gain total jurisdiction over all human affairs. It is fueled by the belief that government knows better how to govern individual lives than individuals know how to govern their own affairs. Statism is a faith that has ultimate confidence in the State. Statists believe government should be

the ultimate authority on earth and that government can create the ideal society through legislation, control, and use of force.

In Statism, the State controls education, religion, morals, law, commerce, and property. Religion becomes a department of the State. Everything is monitored for the benefit of the government. The State sees itself as the source of authority and power of all legitimate functions. It believes government should control everything from taking an aspirin to the color you paint your bathroom. Everything belongs to the State including people, their labor, and their property. Citizens become the fodder that feeds the fat cow. Nothing can be done without permission or a license from the ruler. Service to the State is the highest value and evil is defined in terms of resisting the State. Like ants, individuals exist for the good of the whole colony, and individuals are sacrificed for the interests of political agendas.

Philosophically, statism was developed by Plato who in His work “The Republic” conceived that the ideal government to be controlled by professional wise philosopher-kings who made decisions for the “good” of the people and where the people totally and completely surrendered their individual liberties to their elite. Statism is the belief that the ruling class is the source of ideas, power, ethics, morality, and welfare. The State is as Marx put it, “god on earth.” Statist governments are heavily invested in a system of taxation that plunders the people. Statism is a particular kind of collectivism:

Collectivism is defined as the theory and practice that makes some sort of group rather than the individual the fundamental unit of political, social, and economic concern. In theory, collectivists insist that the claims of groups, associations, or the State must normally supersede the claims of individuals.” — Stephen Grabill and Gregory M. A. Gronbacher.²⁰

PHARAOH AND STATISM

(Genesis 11 & Exodus 1)

“ . . . and the woman was taken into Pharaoh’s house” (Genesis 12:15)

Come on, let us deal wisely with them; lest they multiply, and it come to pass, that, when there falleth out any war, they join also unto our enemies, and fight against us, and so get them up out of the land. Therefore they did set over them taskmasters to afflict them with their burdens. And they built for Pharaoh treasure cities, Pithom and Raamses (Exodus 1:10, 11).

Following Nimrod, **Egypt was clearly the second statist system** exposed in the Word of God. On one occasion, Abraham made a choice to reside in Egypt due to the famine in Canaan. While in Egypt, Pharaoh abducted Sarah into his harem. This monarch believed in the doctrine of eminent domain wherein rulers can expropriate private property for public use by the State without the owner’s consent.

²⁰ “Definitions,” <http://freedomkeys.com/collectivism.htm>.

Pharaoh's compulsory acquisition of Sarah into his harem was severely rebuked by God. Pharaoh paid penalties for pain and suffering to Abram and Sarah for over stepping the State's God-given authority. Abram left Egypt a rich man having received compensation in gold for his injury by Pharaoh.

In the first chapter of Exodus, we read about **another statist Pharaoh** who impounded God's people, their labor, and their property. It happened slowly. At first, Pharaoh enacted laws that stole the people's liberty. Sending bureaucrats (taskmasters) to control production, the sons of Jacob found every aspect of their lives controlled by the State. Through repressive legislation they lost their freedoms and became slaves of the king. According to the Book of Jasher, the Israelites became enslave by a graduate income tax upon the people.²¹

Did you notice that Pharaoh enslaved the Israelites because he was afraid of losing his power?

Things have not changed. Politicians, like Pharaoh, are not concerned about the people's welfare as much as they are about the preservation of their power. Have you ever met a politician that did not want to be re-elected?

Book of Jasher, translated from Hebrew, 1840. ... CHAPTER 66–Pharaoh Decrees that every Male Child born in *Israel* shall be Killed, and still they increase. Jasher 11:11 And they served him twelve years, and they **gave him a yearly tax**

When the growing population of the slaves threatened the State's interests, slaves had to be sacrificed for the good of the State. Pharaoh enacted pogroms to exterminate the infant population of Jacob's tribe. As non-persons, slave babies had no rights. Jewish mothers were property of the State and the king believed that infants had to be sacrificed for the good of public welfare. When Pharaoh issued his executive order to sanction post-birth abortions of innocent Jewish babies, two midwives refused to comply. They clearly understood the king over stepped his God-given authority in an *ultra vires* decree. Infanticide, though sanctioned by a government, it was still murder. Clearly, the defiance of Shiphrah and Puah was treason to the State. And, if caught, they could have paid with their life. However, **their disobedience to Pharaoh was obedience to God** and He rewarded them for it.

BABYLON AND STATISM

And whoso falleth not down and worshipping shall the same hour be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace (Daniel 3:6).

It happened eighteen years after Nebuchadnezzar received his vision of the great statute with himself as the head of the great secular empires to come in history. Over time, pride and arrogance entered the king's heart. In order to commemorate his dream, he ordered a physical statute built in accordance with his vision. It was six cubits wide and sixty cubits high. The dimensions may remind you of the number 666 in

²¹ J.H. Parry, *The Book of Jasher*, online, Google Books.

Revelation 13. As head of State Nebuchadnezzar ordered the construction of a simulacrum of the statue in his dream.

On the day of its dedication, Nebuchadnezzar must have been proud of his statuary. A marvel to behold and a representation of the State's supreme power, the king ordered the multitude to bow in honor of his creation. When the flutes and harps played, the crowd fell to their knees as good little citizens are suppose to do. Three radical patriotic Hebrews remained standing. They stood out like hound dogs on a poodle farm.

Babylon is a great study on statism and in order to understand the courage of the Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, one must understand the religious-political philosophy controlling Nebuchadnezzar's court and the religious-political philosophy controlling the minds of the three Hebrews.

Nebuchadnezzar's order was an effort to enforce uniformity in religion by using the power of the State to compel allegiance. In the mind of the Babylonians, the State was god and the values that controlled the State were the product of religion. So, what was the geo-religio-political philosophy of Babylon?

Babylon believed deeply in multiculturalism and tolerated all religions as long as those religions did not challenge the power of the State. **When Nebuchadnezzar ordered his obsequious citizens to worship the symbol of the State's authority, he was NOT forbidding honor to be shown to other gods in that society.** He was not saying the Jews could not worship YHWH. His executive order included devotion to the State's religion, but it did not ban devotion to others religions. The Jews in the crowd were not being asked to give up their Hebrew faith—for that reason all but three complied with the order.

Ninety-nine percent of those in the crowd saw no conflict with Nebuchadnezzar's order. Honoring the State seemed the right thing to do—after all, good citizens were suppose to obey civil magistrates, weren't they? The idolaters could honor the State without any conflict with their religious beliefs. Their religion was not threatened. They could still be devoted to their gods and preach the gospel of their god. They were not being asked to give up their religion or values or to forsake their religious practices. All they were asked to do was to honor the supreme authority of the State. This was no big deal!

The king's command was an act to unite religions under the State authority howbeit through coercion and intimidation. The law of Babylon was simply this: ***You shall be devoted to the god-State, but you are not required to give up your devotion to other gods.***

However, the law of the Three Hebrews stated, "You shall have NO gods before me." Devotion to YHWH demanded devotees to forsake idols and their laws. He did not desire a prominent place or an important place but the pre-eminent place in the hearts and minds of His people (Colossians 1:18). YHWH demanded: "The graven images of their gods shall ye burn with fire" (Deuteronomy 7:25). YHWH was intolerant of other religions and demanded uncompromising allegiance to Him.

Furthermore, the three Hebrews were not rebelling against the king, **the king was rebelling against the God of Heaven.** The men were not disrespecting the king's position, they disrespecting the king's order.

What are people suppose to do when the government acts like a god? As good subjects of the king, the three Hebrews had a patriotic duty to resist their erring monarch. It is the duty of inferiors to confront wayward superiors. If there is no place to protest a law, then the State has become a god.

Likewise, **Daniel became a victim of statist ideas.**

The royal administrators, prefects, satraps, advisers and governors have all agreed that the king should issue an edict and enforce the decree that anyone who prays to any god or man during the next thirty days, except to you, O king, shall be thrown into the lions' den.

When the wily politicians in Darius's court enacted a statute to trap Daniel and have him removed from office, Darius fell for the legislation hook, line, and sinker. Consider the mindset of Darius and the arrogance of this king. How could he except such a ridiculous statute as forbidding prayer to any god except himself unless he thought of himself as some kind of god? Was he not trying to play the role of a sovereign in accepting prayers from the people? One might think this kind of presumptuous swagger ended with Darius, but it did not. It still goes on today. With rare exceptions, all motions submitted to federal and State courts have this language, "We pray the honorable court . . ."

STATISM AND ROME

"We have no king but Caesar" (John 19:15).

*"The Roman empire presents a classic example of the Messianic man-centered State, of the denial of God's Law, and the implementation of humanistic law."*²²

In Rome, allegiance to the State was the supreme value. And like Islam, it was a great honor to die for the State. "Hail Caesar," was the devoted cry of the gladiators, "today we die for thee." Caesar was seen as a god. Loyalty was rewarded. Perfidy was punished. Not paying taxes was treason.

That Caesar saw himself as a god cannot be denied. The reverses of Roman coins were regularly used as media of propaganda designed to enlarge devotion to the State. After 15 AD all Tiberius denarii were the same type: "PONTIF MAXIM" surrounding a seated female figure. A common expression in the Roman Empire was neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven, except Caesar, whereby men must be saved.

It is this apostolic confession of Jesus as the "Savior...the Messiah the Lord" (Luke 2:11) that would bring the early church into confrontation and conflict with a far-flung imperial regime that claimed Caesar as savior and universal lord. This conflict makes sense only insofar as the church was making this

²² Gary Demar, *God and Government*, Vol. 3, (Atlanta, GA: American Vision, 2001), p. 71.

confession not as just one “religious” option among many but as a witness embracing the whole of life (Todd Granger, MD).²³

The basic problem with Rome was its claim of authority to authorize the people to worship as they pleased. The early Christians, however, refused to acknowledge Rome had any authority over the church or its apostolic faith. When Peter preached, “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men (except Jesus), whereby we must be saved)” (Acts 4:12), *he declared war on Statism.*

Rome tolerated any form of idolatry that would recognize the authority of the religion established by the State, *but it could not tolerate a system which maintained that all religions were wrong—or, that one religion was right.* There were no personal liberties in Rome, but religion could be practiced as long as it was a legitimate franchise of the State. All cults were protected as long as the cult registered with the State and received a license to operate.²⁴ However, early Christians refused to incorporate with Rome. They were called “atheists.” Consequently, the State saw the church as an illegitimate cult—that is, “illicit” or unlicensed. The charge of atheism and refusal to incorporate was equivalent to treason against the imperial cult.

STATISM AND THE BEAST OF REVELATION 13

“All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast . . .” (Revelation 13:8).

In modern times, many Bible expositors view the Beast as something totally futuristic to our time. This view allows the average Christian to escape any application of the passage to his personal life today. If Revelation 13 is always interpreted as something futuristic, there is no need to panic in our day—after all, we do not have a literal 666 stamped on our forehead.

Historically, however, the beast was identified with the Roman Empire. Under Nero, the totalitarian monarch put to death Christians as enemies of the empire. Christians were executed not because they worshipped Jesus, but because they refused to give a pinch of incense to Caesar; that is, they saw Caesar-worship as a form of idolatry.

When Polycarp (155 A.D.), Bishop of the Church at Smyrna and disciple of the Apostle John, was arrested and taken before the civil magistrate, Irenarch Herod and his father Nicetes (both riding in a chariot) approached Polycarp and asked him, “What harm is there in saying Lord Caesar, and in sacrificing, with the other ceremonies observed on such occasions, and so make sure of safety?” At their

²³ Todd Granger, Acts 4:12. Retrieved online, February 8, 2010 from anglicanonline.org/comment/granger030511.html.

²⁴ Peter Kershaw, “Incorporation Problems,” (Internet resource: <http://hushmoney.org/incorporate-problems.htm>).

continual urging, Polycarp finally responded, "I shall not do as you advise me." Polycarp was charged with treason executed for being an atheist.²⁵

In Revelation thirteen, Rome is portrayed as a beast without feelings. The beastly State controlled all of life. Some believe the mark of the beast on the forehead and hand is literal. Others believe it is symbolic; that is, since the forehead is the seat of thought, the State sought to manipulate citizens through propaganda; and, since the hand is a symbol of work and productivity, the State sought to control man's labor. No doubt this is the case in that government controlled buying and selling. Those who demonstrated devotion to the State and acknowledged its power were granted economic privileges. Dissenting Christians were quickly identified, slandered, maligned, charged, and sometimes executed.

And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations (Revelation 13:7).

Whether one interprets this portion of Scripture preteristically or futuristically, **we should perceive when governments become beastly and resist them.**

Interestingly, the social security number acts very much like the mark of the beast. Without a social security number, you can't get a job, rent a car, possess a bank account, vote, drive a car, buy a house, or purchase utilities.

The Beast of Revelation 13 morphs its way through history until the end. It is in the Bible to alert Christians that when the State takes on the character of the tyrant, **they MUST DEVELOP A STRATEGY OF RESISTANCE, NOT OBEDIENCE!**

Cooperation with government is often discretionary, obedience to Christ is always mandatory.

16.4 ISRAEL'S THEOCRACY

"So all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah. They said to him, "You are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways; now appoint a king to lead us, such as all the other nations have." But when they said, "Give us a king to lead us," this displeased Samuel; so he prayed to the LORD" (1 Samuel 8:4-6)

"Government, even in its best State, is but a necessary evil; in its worst State, an intolerable one" (Thomas Paine).

"That government is best which governs least"(Thomas Paine).

²⁵ "Martyrdom of Polycarp," *The Anti-Nicen Fathers*, p. 40.

Israel had the unique privilege of having a **pure** theocracy (1400-1050 BC).

A theocracy refers to a nation that is ruled directly by God as the people's Sovereign and King.

No nation has ever had a pure theocracy except Israel. During the late Bronze Period or the Period of the Judges (1400-1050 B.C.), Israel had no king, no standing army, no governor, no taxes, and no draft. God was their Protector.

Because YHWH is omnipresent and omnipotent, this was a tremendous advantage for the nation. Because the Lord is unseen, the people had to live by faith—a faith in real, living, governing King.

No nation today is called to organize itself under a pure theocracy, but every nation is called to acknowledge His sovereignty and to surrender to His laws. God's law is not only good for Christians, it is good for all men and all of man's institutions.

Surely, it is God's will and an honor for a people to confess the Sovereignty of Christ and the excellence of His moral law (Psalm 9:17; 9:20; 22:17; 22:28; 67:4; 72:11, 17; 82:8; 86:9; Isaiah 2:3).

Are not all the problems we experience today a result of legislators violating the law of the LORD God?

During the Period of the Judges, "every man did what was right in his own eyes." Personal autonomy replaced the Biblical law order. Autonomous man is lawless man.

When the nation rebelled against God's law, He appointed alien kings to rule over His people who in turn demanded tribute from the nation.²⁶ Wealth flowing out of the country to foreign governments impoverished the people and caused them to cry out to God for deliverance (Judges 6:1-6). When the people repented, God raised up a military leader called a "judge." The judge might act alone or raise an army to throw off the yoke of foreign oppression. Barak, Gideon, and Samson were judges of this sort.

Note: Whenever imports exceed exports, or the nation sees its wealth going to alien powers, or it is controlled by foreign rulers, that nation is under the judgment of God.

Instead of repenting of their personal sins and returning to the Rule of God, they saw the nation's problems as institutional rather than a religious departure from truth.

They thought a change in the structure of government would save the nation: "*If we had a centralized government like other nations, we would be secure.*" A king could fight for us. What? The people wanted the government to do their fighting for them?

²⁶ Judges J.H. Parry, The Book of Jasher, online, Google Books. 2:1ff.

By increasing the power of the State, the people thought they could be protected from their surrounding enemies. The people, however, failed to realize that big government results in big bureaucracies, big taxes, and heavy chains.

These people wanted God to give them a human, flawed king that would take from them everything that was precious. We call it insanity. God called it rebellion and rejection of Him.

A pure theocracy had an advantage in that the omnipresent God was the nation's Protector. Day and night, YHWH stood guard over His people.

"He who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep" (Psalm 121:4).

What kings and generals could not do because of their limitations, Yahweh could do simply because He is God. Who would want it any other way?

From a human perspective there was a disadvantage in having God as one's King. He could not be seen with the naked eye. His armies were invisible (2 Kings 6:17).

Other nations had visible kings and standing armies. This gave citizens the illusion of safety.

Thus, under a spirit of deception, the people came to Samuel, Israel's priest and judge, and begged him to establish a monarchy in the nation saying, *"Give us a king to judge us"* (1 Samuel 8:6).

This request displeased Samuel. It displeased Him because he knew the tremendous advantage of having God as the nation's King.

THE BURDEN OF A BAD GOVERNMENT

Neither Samuel nor the Lord were pleased with Israel's request for a monarch. While the Book of Deuteronomy anticipated that Israel would one day have a king, the manner in which this change in government occurred offended God.

This was not merely a request for an earthly ruler, it was a rejection of YHWH and His theocracy; i.e., it abandoned God's government for man's government (1 Samuel 8:7).

Politicking for a monarch was clearly idolatrous (8:8).

Tyranny begins when a nation fails to recognize its true King, the Lord Jesus Christ.

God listened to Israel and sanctioned the monarchy. A new contract was negotiated.

Even though the Lord agreed to the deviation, he ordered Samuel to alert the people about the evils of the state.

Samuel returned and warned the people about the curse of having their nation dependant on a frail, human king. Samuel did not warn the people about the evils of a bad government, but the evils of a good government.

A good government is a burden, and a bad government is a double curse.

THE BURDEN OF A GOOD GOVERNMENT

When a nation rejects God, these curses of government afflict the people.

Notice the word "take": "he will take . . . he will take. Government does NOT give, it takes, and takes, and takes until the rulers are wealthy and the citizens are eatin' bean soup and beggin' for bread.

It is impossible to introduce into society a greater change and a greater evil than this: **the conversion of the law into an instrument of plunder** (Frederic Bastiat).

*"The Government! what is it? where is it? what does it do? what ought it to do? All we know is, that it is a mysterious personage; and, assuredly, it is the most solicited, the most tormented, the most overwhelmed, the most admired, the most accused, the most invoked, and the most provoked of any personage in the world . . . **Government is the great fiction through which everybody endeavors to live at the expense of everybody else.**" (Bastiat).*

See: Twisting of law -Psalm 94:20; and hemlock justice - Amos 5:7; 6:12

Conscription (8:12): The new king would initiate a draft and commandeer the best of Israel's sons to serve in his armed forces. The new government would grow in strength by weakening the family.

Servitude (8:12): The new king would expropriate Israel's work force and place them under marshal law to service his fields and factories of war. The will of the king would trample upon freedom and replace it with a form of slavery to the state.

Civil Service (8:13): The new king would enlist Israel's daughters (steal them) and reduce them to handmaids for the king's business.

Seizure of private property (8:14): The new king would authorize the seizure of private property for public use with minimum compensation. Legislative theft would become state policy.

Taxation of wealth (8:15): The new king would commission tax assessors who would take an additional ten percent of Israel's productivity to support the government—a tithe for God and a tithe for the State.

Induction (8:16): The new king would recruit the best young men and household servants to work for the king and his government. The nation's finest would live and die on the battlefield for insidious reasons and frivolous causes.

Taxation (8:17): The new king would tax (steal) Israel's flocks, impoverish the people, and reduce them to indentured servants. The more despotic the government becomes the more people suffer under the load of heavy taxation and oppression.

Unanswered prayer (8:18): The policies of the new king would distress Israel and in their misery cry out to God for relief. God promised He would not listen to complainers who voluntarily subjected themselves to the monarchy.

This concludes the list of encumbrances of a man-made government. It does not include the abuses of a despotic government such as abuse of power, tyranny, cruelty, oppression, theft, legal plunder, market manipulation, induced inflation, political assassinations, spying, election fraud, deception, misinformation, tolerance of wickedness, nepotism, marshal law, and bone-crushing military might.

It is important to understand that Israel was unique among the nations of the world in that it is the only nation to ever have a *pure theocracy*. What a blessing to have God as your Protector! Israel's government changed from a pure theocracy to a *theocratic monarchy*. It was a huge step below the ideal, but it was still a nation ruled by God. He was still King of Israel, but His blessings were now channeled through a narrow, weak, imperfect monarch. This arrangement would be like trying to push ice cream through a straw.

If there is a problem with good government, it is that the Leviathan must be fed.

16.5 ISRAEL AND TAXATION

Have you ever heard of a poor person taxing himself into prosperity? Well, Congress believes it can tax the nation into economic recovery . . . and Christians fall for the propaganda that taxation is good for America. But, the truth is Americans are being taxed to death. And, there is no taxation without respiration. Our death march into bankruptcy is the result of forsaking the Biblical law and God's restrictions on the state's taxing powers. Consequently, Christians need to return to the Word of God and develop convictions about God's law order on taxation.

One could easily get the false impression the Bible has nothing to say about the subject. But, this is due to the failure of modern Bible teachers to recognize the nature of Israel's tax laws. Tax law is clarified when we understand that the LORD God was King of Israel and ruled from His throne in the Tabernacle. Thus, the Sanctuary was not only the center of Israel's religious order, but also the center of Israel's civil order.

As King, Israel paid taxes to their Sovereign to support the civil administration; as sinners the nation tithed to support the Levites who serviced God's program of reconciliation. Thus, the temple complex served the civil and the religious order of the nation.

16.5.1 THE POLL TAX

“When thou takest the sum of the children of Israel after their number, then shall they give every man a ransom for his soul unto the LORD, when thou numberest them; that there be no plague among them, when thou numberest them.” (Exodus 30:11-16).

The first kind of tax was the poll tax.

The term “sum” refers to a military census. The word “ransom” or “atonement” could be translated “covering.” It is not a religious covering but civil protection for the soldier and the civilian in times of warfare. The term “plague” means “a blow” a “striking” “a fatal attack.” The people placed themselves under YHWH as their King and paid tribute to Him. In return, God protected His people from strikes by foreign armies and biological plagues. God did not need the money, but the people needed to recognize on a yearly basis that their safety was due to the umbrella of protection that God placed over the nation. Thus, this tribute was a military tax of a half-shekel (a weight of silver). Though this tax was called a “temple tax” in the New Testament, it never the less serviced the military, administrative needs of the nation. This tax was for the protection of the soldier and promotion of peace among the people. Holy men engaged in a holy war were invincible under God's plan. Israel fought many just wars where not one single Israelite was killed (See Psalm 91-The Warrior's Psalm). Death was the result of presumptive, unholy wars governed by unsanctified, unsanctioned acts of Israel's kings.

The poll tax was placed on the head of every male twenty years of age or older and was collected under civil authority; that is, the tax was laid on every man eligible for the military draft. A rule of uniformity prevailed. The rich man and the poor man were required to pay the same amount; that is, it was a “fair tax” in that the “rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less” (Exodus 30:15). The poll tax was equal for all men, and it was small so as not to unduly burden the poor man. Taxation was severely limited! The tax was necessary, but it did not unduly burden the family. Thus, discriminatory, progressive taxation was forbidden. Women and children, priests and Levites were exempt. The tax was paid to civil authority to the temple for the maintenance of (or atonement) of the civil order.

This was the tax of which the collectors asked Peter regarding whether or not his Master, Jesus, was willing to pay. When queried, Peter pledged his Lord's willingness to discharge the traditional poll tax (Matthew 17:24ff). Jesus' reference to “the kings of the earth” shed light on the fact that this was a poll tax or a military tax consistent with Israel's civil order. Jesus, being the Lord Protector of the nation, of course was exempt—a lesson Jesus drove home to his impetuous disciple.

16.5.2 THE TITHE

The second type of tax was the tithe (Leviticus 27:32). This tax was not discharged to the temple but was collected in storehouses around the nation (Malachi 3:10). It was used for the support of the Levites and priests; that is, to serve the ecclesiastical functions of the temple. The danger in Israel was not so much from enemies without as from enemies within. Defense against the aggression of an alien power was achieved by the military—thus, the poll tax. But, how could the nation be delivered from an offended God? God is holy and the Israelites sinners.

What could protect the sinful nation from a jealous God injured by the disobedience of His people? No military can protect a nation against the justice of the Almighty. Thus, the Levitical system was designed to protect the people from the just judgment of YHWH through a system designed to facilitate propitiation, reconciliation, and restoration of the people to the favor of their Savior God. Thus, this is great lesson King David discovered in 2 Samuel 24—a million-man army was not sufficient to stop the plague initiated by an offended God against the pride of the nation. The Levitical system was fundamental for protecting the nation. Thus, the temple had to be the center of the nation's affections. The Levites were not soldiers but teachers, priests, and servants of the temple. The tithe went to support their important work.

Both forms of tax were mandatory in Israel; the first to support the civil order or the state, the second to support the religious order and the temple services. The difference between the two is that there was no choice on the head tax and where it had to be paid. Mature men paid the temple authorities for the maintenance of Israel's civil order.

The tithe, however, could be distributed to any warehouse in Israel. Further, the tither could bring more, but not less. All other tithes were voluntary and considered an act of worship. Thus, the head tax and tithe and voluntary offerings amounted to no more than 17% of a person's income for the year.

16.5.3 INSIGHTS FOR OUR TIMES

TAXES ARE NECESSARY TO SUPPORT THE CIVIL AND RELIGIOUS ORDER OF ANATION.

The head tax supported the military, the state, and the courts. Use of the military was strictly defensive. The state had authority to collect a tax to maintain the civil order. In Israel this tax amounted to a half shekel or about two or three day's wages for a working man. Every man paid the same, rich or poor. And, this had to be paid to the temple—to Israel's King and the center of Israel's legislative body

The tithe supported the social, religious, and educational order which amounted to ten percent of a person's annual wage. Each man's tithe was different because each man's crop or produce from the land was different. The tithe was taken to one of Israel's storehouses scattered around the nation.

The state controlled the use of the head tax; the tither controlled the use of the tithe tax. The poll tax supported the military and the civil order while the tithe was used to support social functions like

education, welfare, and the Levitical system. Taxation falls under the Sixth, Eight, and Tenth Commandment. There was no tax on land, but there was a tax on the increase of the land—a true income tax. A Biblical tax, therefore, will protect and prosper a social order while an ungodly tax destroys the weak while promoting the agenda of the powerful.

TAXES WERE LIMITED.

There was a limit on what the state could tax, but there was no limit on what a family could earn. Both the poll tax for the civil order and the tithe for support of the religious order was set by God. The state could not arbitrarily raise the tax to support its agenda without impunity. The state had a budget and worked within its natural restrictions.

TAXATION IS A RELIGIOUS ISSUE

Because God’s Word addresses the civil order, government and taxation are deeply religious matters. Christians, therefore, need to develop convictions about tax law just as they develop beliefs about salvation and marriage. God’s law is for all men and all of man’s institutions. Not only are Christians responsible to surrender to God’s law, Christians are to pray “Thy kingdom come” and insist that their government surrender to the authority of Christ the King; that is, governments become evil and tyrannical when they arrogate to themselves powers not granted to them by the Creator.

AMERICA BUILT ON BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS

In early America, the Founders understood God’s limited taxing laws and applied them to support the civil, religious, and educational needs of the young republic. Taxation was necessary but limited. The Founders believed in strong families and an ethical, limited government. Unlimited taxation threatens God’s law order and permits government to expand beyond Biblical limits.

PURPOSE OF GOVERNMENT: THE PROTECTION OF RIGHTS

In the Biblical system, government was charged with protecting the people—not to provide charity; to protect people’s property, not to pirate people’s property. The half-shekel poll tax serviced the administrative needs of the state, but kept the government small. The limited tax did not injure the family or prevent it from prospering. Rich and poor paid the same. Both deserved equal protection by the state.

In the Declaration of Independence, the only purpose of government was to protect human rights. Providing welfare, education, and health care are outside the purpose of government. Education is the concern of the family. Grace is the concern of the church. When the government engages education and charity, it seeks to be parent and priest to the People.

RESULTS OF ABANDONING BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS

A Biblical tax system maintains social order and protects the society from social chaos. Increasingly, the present system of taxation of property and wages is nothing more than wealth confiscation under the color

of law. Power to tax anything and everything is power to destroy. The present system with its coercive tax policies is no longer limited to protecting rights, but is used to advance the political agendas of CONgress; that is, to produce a social revolution in favor of humanism to the detriment of the Biblical law-order.

When Christians are ignorant of God's rules for limited taxation, Christians end up promoting the government's presumption of its unlimited taxing power. The belief the government can righteously tax as much as it wants is a product of more than a little evil. Wealth is transferred from the family to the god-State. Families cannot afford basic necessities, save for the future, or create wealth. Mothers are forced into the work place to satisfy the elephantine appetite of Congress—the result of abandoning God's law. This forfeiture of Biblical law created an opportunity for the state to become a superpower while diminishing the financial strength of the average family.

Thus, the abandonment of God's law is nothing more than an exchange of the true God for the false god of big government; a forsaking of the law of God for the laws of men (legislative bodies); the surrender of dependence on God to a dependence on the nanny state; the eroding of true freedom for the false comfort of the illusion of freedom.

The abandonment of God's law increases man's dependence on the prerogatives of the state and decreases man's dependence on his need for God. After all, the state promises to take care of us from cradle to grave, from the womb to the tomb. Security becomes more important than freedom. Everything must be taxed to supply the appetite of Big Government . . . and CONgress must find new, hidden, creative ways to feed its lust for power. Unlimited taxation enables the state to play god and build its kingdom on earth: welfare, education, social security, Medicare, Medicaid, and Health Care. The result is a Superpower State parasitically sucking the life out of its slave families.

The average American family paid 54% of its income in taxes in 2005²⁷. This does not hidden taxes to support the government²⁸. In Sweden, accumulate taxes have been as high as 90%. If all the taxes imposed by the Italian government were collected, it would result in more than 110% of a family's income. Every Italian must lie or die!

HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE

In God's system, the family is the institution of education; the state the institution of justice; and the church the institution of grace. The modern state sees itself as parent, priest, and police. In early America,

²⁷ NowandtheFutre.com/taxes.html retrieved 4.1.2012. Approximate tax paid: Federal-18%; State and Local-10%; Sales tax- 9.7%; Federal Corporate Income tax-3%; Property tax- 2.5%.

²⁸ Hidden taxes: gasoline tax, heating and cooling taxes, phone taxes, interest on loans, water and sewer taxes, etc. The Edison Electric Institute (EEI) says taxes are hidden from consumers and calculates utilities pay a total of \$25.8 billion in taxes of all kinds (Institute for Policy Innovation).

every child was homeschooled and there were few non-readers in the nation²⁹. Churches ran charities and hospitals. But, because power has been transferred to the state, families are up sided; churches nullified; and the state glorified as the savior of mankind.

ELIMINATION OF POVERTY

When God is honored in a nation “there shall be no more poor among you”. When godless men rule, wealth is transferred to the rulers. When the state seeks to eliminate poverty and create jobs and enters the market place and legislates individuals purchase certain products like health insurance, it increases poverty (Deuteronomy 15:4; Isaiah 3:15).

TAX EXEMPT CHURCHES

Biblically, the government could not tax the priesthood or tax churches or its ministers. Levites were exempt. Religious institutions did not fall under the jurisdiction of any government. Exemption is not a privilege granted by the state, but an acknowledgement of the Biblical order--the limitation of government and the sovereignty of God over family and church.

The government owes churches nothing but their protection—the common protection provided all citizens. King Artaxerxes of Persia banned a tax on the temple lest “there be wrath against the realm of the king” (Ezra 7:23-24). In the Roman Empire, the church fought to keep Caesar’s foot off the neck of the church. When the state orders the church to abandon the headship of Christ and to surrender itself to the head of State (IRS), the state promotes apostasy. To force a church to be a 501 c 3 organization, a dead corpus of the state instead of the living corpus of Christ, is to have the heel of the government on the neck on the non-prophet church³⁰.

TAXATION IS FORM OF THEFT IN VIOLATION OF THE EIGHTY AND TENTH COMMANDMENT

The difference between the 8th Commandment and the 10th Commandment is the difference between petty theft and a clever, legal, sophisticated commercial scheme by people of power to redistribute wealth into the hands of the ruling elite.

²⁹ There was practically universal adult male literacy in New England by 1790 (Early American Literacy, Tammy Drennan). The U.S. Department of Education reported that roughly 40% of Americans in 2008 were below satisfactory levels of adult reading proficiency. *Adult Literacy in America, Third Edition*, National Center for Educational Statistics, April 2002, retrieved 2011-01-12.

³⁰ Most churches in America have organized as "501c3 tax-exempt religious organizations." This is a fairly recent trend that has only been going on for about fifty years. Churches were only added to section 501c3 of the tax code in 1954. We can thank Sen. Lyndon B. Johnson for that. Johnson was no ally of the church (<http://hushmoney.org/501c3-facts.htm>).

When the Scripture says, “Thou shall not steal” it applies to all men and all of man’s institutions. More money is stolen in the name of taxation than any other name. The greatest heists of history are not by bank robbers but by tax collectors. The purpose of the command, “Thou shall not steal” is to proscribe various forms of legalized robbery—the transfer of wealth from one group to another. When the state exempts a part of a man’s income from taxation the state is basically saying that “it owns the man and all he has; that by the grace of all-merciful, all-wise Wizard of Oz a man is allowed to keep a portion of his earnings. Such a presumption is pure arrogance and an attack on God’s law-order. And, because it is against God’s law-order it must be resisted and replaced.

Setting forth his renowned dictum that "the power to tax involves the power to destroy," (Daniel Webster) Chief Justice Marshall said: “That the power of taxing it [the bank] by the states may be exercised so as to destroy it, is too obvious to be denied” (p. 427), and “That the power to tax involves the power to destroy ... [is] not to be denied” (p. 431). (McCulloch v. Maryland, 1918). Since Congress claims the power to tax the family and church, it has the power to destroy them.

TAXATION AND INTEREST IS A VIOLATION OF THE TENTH COMMANDMENT

Exodus 20:17 Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.

The locus of law is not in the will of the People but in the Word of God. There is only one Lawgiver—only one (Isaiah 33:22; James 4:12). Scripture condemns fraud, but modern legislators are constantly creating new ways to transfer wealth to Washington D.C..

When Scripture says “thou shall not covet thy neighbor’s house” he was not addressing “desire” but clever, fraudulent, sophisticated revenue schemes by the powerful over the powerless. Theft under “color of law” is nevertheless theft.

Notice that the first in the list of coveted things is not a “wife” but a “house.” Any banking loan (home mortgage) lasting over seven years is a fraud in violation of God’s law (Deuteronomy 15). Modern man enslaves a man for life to pay for his house.

Any government plan that demands tax payments to the state but risks a man’s house by liens and seizures is a vicious scheme in violation of the 10th Commandment.

Just because CONgress passes a revenue bill to increase taxes does not means it is lawful. Redistribution of wealth, taking from the rich to give to the poor, is a form of theft. Social engineers that justify redistributing wealth are thieves, plain and simple! Tax exemptions and tax incentives prejudice the free market and affect commerce. The government turns justice inside out when it taxes savings (interest earned) and rewards debt by providing deductions on mortgages and interest paid.

The average American in the year 2005 lives a fragile existence, in a struggle for survival that can be ended by missing a few paychecks. The carrot at the end of the stick which was formerly known as "the American dream" has been replaced by a whip that can best be described as the American nightmare of homelessness, and slow, early death.(rense.com-The New American Slavery).

It doesn't matter if you're a "white collar" or "blue collar" employee. If you're an American, you're too highly paid. There are billions of people who want your job, and your government is doing all they can to see that you lose it to them. You see, we're not really Americans anymore. Now we're just anonymous faces in the "global village," because our government has sold our nation to foreigners and international bankers, and the new bankruptcy law has doomed the American citizen to a life of debt slavery. .(rense.com-The New American Slavery).

PROGRESSIVE TAXATION

The Bible condemns progressive taxation³¹: “the rich are not to give more than a half shekel and the poor are not to give less”(Exodus 30:15). But, the modern state collects income taxes before a man even sees a dollar. For the state to claim more than 10% of anything is to claim that the state is more important than God.

To put in place a system where the state is paid first before tithes can be given to the LORD is a claim by the state that it is higher priority than God.

Thus, the present tax system is not only arrogant, but an enemy of the Biblical law-order. Indoctrinating the people that the rich should “pay their fair share” is nothing more than propaganda—a form of class warfare that pits the poor against the rich—seeds of envy which “rots the bones” on American soil (Prov. 14:30).

HIDDEN TAXES

God requires equal weights and measures to insure integrity in business. But, the modern state has developed clever schemes to transfer wealth from the family to the state (Proverbs 16:11; 20:10, 23: Micah 6:11). With the enactment of the 16th Amendment and the establishment of the Federal Reserve, corrupt administrators have been able to devalue the dollar, tax Americans through inflation, and interest on loans. When Frankly D. Roosevelt made it a crime to pay debts in silver and gold (June 5, 1933), he transferred the power to create wealth to a private banking cartel—an act of treason. FRNs are not backed

³¹ **Progressive taxation alleges to protect the low-income group from high taxes by putting the onus on the high income earners (Progressive taxation system: A brief study on its pros and cons).**

by gold or silver but by public confidence. The government now taxes everything from soup to sardines. And, these hidden taxes keep the family feeble and the government muscular. The powerful now rule over the powerless.

Federal income taxes represent only 42 percent of the total tax burden of U.S. taxpayers. The remainder is hidden, distorting taxpayers' awareness of their real tax burden and of the true cost of government. Only fundamental tax reform with an emphasis on visibility can ensure a fair tax code that allows taxpayers to evaluate whether they are getting their money's worth from government (Riley; Schlecht; Berthoud. Institute for Policy Innovation, IPI Center for Tax Analysis, "Hidden Taxes: How Much Do You Really Pay?"

Proverbs 22:7 The rich ruleth over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender.

Inflation is taxation without legislation- Milton Friedman

PRIVACY

Privacy is a basic human right (4th and 5th Amendment). But, modern governments strive to capture information about private citizens utilizing every means possible to do so. In filing information returns, the state knows where you live, the names of your family members, and in which banks you deposit money. It knows your employer, your salary, your credit card purchases, and your investment portfolio. When the state strives to be omniscient, privacy is lost.

Isaiah 45:15 "Truly you are a God who hides himself, O God and Savior of Israel."

Matthew 6:3,4 "But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you."

"But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you." Matt 6:6

PROPERTY TAX

In Biblical law there is no such thing as a tax on land. "The earth *and everything in it* belongs to the Lord," (Psalm 24:1); but modern governments claim land belongs to the state . . . and therefore requires families to pay rent (property tax) for use of land. No man, government, county, or state has a right to tax land or property.

If the earth belongs to the Lord, what belongs to Caesar? The answer is closer to nothing than something.

When the Bible says, "Thou shall not steal," the command applies not only to individuals but to the state which seizes land under color of law after a man cannot pay his alleged debt to the State or bank. Thus,

the modern state has rebelled against God's law. A tax on property is an affront to God's law-order as it destroys the family.

Acts 5:4 "Didn't it belong to you before it was sold? And after it was sold, wasn't the money at your disposal?"

But, God did tax the produce or the increase from the land! This was a true income tax. But, it is an income tax set at 10% and no more. What a man gave beyond that was a free will offering. A proper interpretation of the constitutional tax system would lead me to conclude that the constitution tax system is Biblical; that is, the tax on "gain" or "corporate profit" would be aligned with the Biblical system. A wage is merely an exchange of labor, and labor was never taxed in Israel. The present system wherein public policy taxes a man's wages is not only unconstitutional, but a violation of God's law-order. It not only injures but destroys.

INHERITANCE TAX

Biblical law requires inheritances to be passed on to sons. In contrast, the modern State requires that wealth be transferred to the state. An inheritance tax, a Marxist initiative, is a violation of Biblical law and assertion by the state that the "earth and everything in it" belongs to government—an assertion that the state is more important than the family.

God's law on inheritance can be found in Numbers 27:8-11; Deuteronomy 21:15-17, and 2 Corinthians 12:14. God gave the earth to families, not the government. To tax the land is rebellion against God's law order because it attacks the strength of the family.

*Ezekiel 46:18 Moreover **the prince shall not take of the people's inheritance** by oppression, to thrust them out of their possession; but he shall give his sons inheritance out of his own possession: that my people be not scattered every man from his possession.*

APPLICATION

We need a radical return to kingdom proclamation (Acts 17:6, 7). Jesus is King and God calls all presidents and congressmen to repent and confess His authority (Acts 17:30). Only when rulers acknowledge the risen, ascended, glorified Christ will governments exercise restraint.

Each family needs to develop a strategy for wealth creation. The governments of the world have declared war against the family. Families are impoverished in the taxation madness of our age. War is the art of deception and the government has established constructive fraud to enrich the State. Therefore, each man must engage the conflict being as "wise as a serpent."

Flee idolatry (1 John 5:21). Government is not God! Americans need to insist on limited government and stop looking to the state for all its needs. There is one Lawgiver. If the First Commandment means

anything, it means man is to have no Lawgiver or law source other than the LORD God. While the gospel does not contain salvation by law, it does contain law.

Every command is a law. Law cannot regenerate society, but limited law can purge out evil in society.

We must pray more earnestly, “Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done ON EARTH as it is in heaven”. Consequently, Christians must begin to resist man-made laws designed to regenerate society by enslaving man. Christians must resist all taxation inconsistent with the Constitution—taxation that impoverishes the family while increasing the wealth and power of the Herculean State.

16.6 BIBLICAL QUALIFICATIONS FOR PUBLIC OFFICE

Exodus 18:21 Moreover thou shalt provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them, to be rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens:

2 Chronicles 19:6 and said to the judges, "Consider what you do, for you judge not for man but for the LORD. He is with you in giving judgment. Now then, let the fear of the LORD be upon you. Be careful what you do, for there is no injustice with the LORD our God, or partiality or taking bribes."

In a social order, the judge / leader is one of the most important positions. It was the first institution in Israel's law order. Much of the Torah was written for Judges and public officials (John 10:31-16)

FIVE QUALIFICATIONS FOR PUBLIC OFFICE

The First Biblical qualification for public office is that the candidate had to be a man.

Notice the phrase "able men" in the text. Just as men were to lead their families, men were to lead the nation. No women³² ever held a civil office in Israel. No, God is not against women! They have their own roles and duties before God. But, leading the nation is not one of them. While this is not politically correct in our pajama boy, cuddle bunny, feminist culture, it is the Biblical standard. And, the Word of God, I remind you, is perfect (Psalm 19:7).

Also notice that the candidate had to be real person, not a fictitious person. He could not wear a mask . . . or a robe . . . or hide behind a title.

The Second qualification for office was the man had to be competent.

³² What about Deborah? Deborah was a prophetess, but there is no evidence she held the power of the sword as a Biblical judge.

The candidate had to be a competent man; that is, he had to be a reasonable, successful man in the community. Competence as a family man, in business, law, and general decision making was to be studied and approved.

The Third qualification for office was spiritual; that is, the man had to possess the fear of God.

The candidate had to fear God; that is, He had to be a man of conscience, with good character, and who exhibited evidence of obedience to the law of the Lord God.

The prestige of a judge / official is not the critical issue, **but his faith and character**. If all judges were men who feared God, then numerous people could be qualified to serve. As it is, degenerate men rise to power under the electoral process. Relativism and pragmatism prevails. See Jethro and the rule of tens (Exodus 18). If a judge represents a class or political party, perversion of justice is introduced into the life of a nation. He represents a faction, another value system, another religion.

The Fourth qualification for office was that he had to be a man of truth.

The candidate had to be an honest man; a reliable man; a man in pursuit of truth and not lies and deceitful schemes designed to defraud men. Political leaders are famous for their propaganda and spinning the truth. A Biblical candidate for office had to love the truth and hate lies. King David could say,

Psalm 119:163 I hate and abhor falsehood, but I love your law.

A candidate who would tell Americans the truth instead of manipulating the public through “spin” doctoring would do much to restore people’s confidence in government. Truth about taxation, the IMF, and the corporate character of the State might be a good place to start.

The Fifth qualification for office was that the man had to hate bribes.

Payoffs, blackmail, gifts, gratuities, compensation, and kickbacks are synonyms for a bribe. It was crime for a judge / official to receive a kickback, but it was not a crime to offer the judge / official a bribe—even a man will offer a dog a steak to get a free pass. *The crime is for the judge or politician to receive the bribe.*

Imagine having politicians that didn’t love money and who were not seeking personal gain while in Congress; who worked for the people and not the government corporation; who seek the welfare of the people and not private profit. We wouldn’t recognize Washington D.C.! All the corruption and pay offs and electoral process might shut down. Wouldn’t this be refreshing?

Steven Wayne Pattison has posted. Most all wars were started by the banklords.

Joe Sobran: Why does corruption in government always surprise us? Why do we expect anything else from it? Government is organized force. It takes our wealth and makes war. And we think honest men would do that work?

As it is, money buys votes and loyalties. But, if Americans insisted on Biblical qualifications for a candidate, they would be served well, and the shadow government would die a natural death.

But, since Americans have abandoned Christianity and have so little esteem for the Word of God, we get what we deserve: lying, cheating, fornicating politicians that practice deception, payoff fraud, debt, tyranny, and much more.

A solution, of course, is to repent of our lethargy and to return to the political language of our ancestors: Puritans through the Founding Fathers.

16.7 THE FIRST PENTECOST

There are two Pentecosts in the Old Testament.

It might surprise you to know that the gift of the Holy Spirit is not only for the church but for officers working in the institution of government.

The first Pentecost is in Numbers 11:16-30 wherein the Spirit fell upon the seventy newly-ordained civil rulers.

The Holy Spirit came upon the seventy elders as a sign from God that He approved of civil authority, that civil authority was dependent upon Him, and accountable to Him.

Not only does the church have a duty to surrender to Christ as Head of the Church, civil rulers have a duty to acknowledge Christ as King and surrender to His authority.

Being filled with the Spirit not only a duty for churchmen, but a duty for government men serving their nation.

The second Pentecost happened in the days of Samuel, when the Spirit came upon King Saul. The Holy Spirit came upon the first king as symbol of God's approval of the monarchy, and as a statement that the monarchy needed the agency of God's Spirit to conduct their service to the nation (1 Samuel 11).

The Spirit of God came upon Saul and enabled him to raise an army, and to strike the Ammonites with the edge of the sword.

Notice that the purpose of government is not to save souls or multiply mercy, but to purge evil from society and to defend the people against lawless gangs who did not respect the property rights of Israelite citizens. In this case, the Spirit empowered Saul to pick up the sword and to kill the Ammonite bandits.

Further, notice that when God is at work in civil rulers, they are filled with vigor and righteous indignation over injustices, and that they are bold, organized, and unified in waging war against evil men.

The sword of justice is not the answer to all things, but when it is the answer, it is the only answer. God requires us to love mercy and justice (Micah 6:8); that is, the appropriate application of law toward lawbreakers.

Government is not the solution for all things, but it is the solution for some things. It is limited in its purposes, and when the State stays within its limited purpose, justice and freedom are held in balance.

Biblical civil authority blesses the people by vigorously purging evil from society . . .but, when it strays from that purpose and tries to control the people or be a god to the people, it become a curse to society.

The third Pentecost happened to the Apostles and early church as a sign that God was establishing a new Israel, a kingdom of priests, and as a statement that the gospel ministry was dependent on God's power for its success (Acts 2).

In giving His Spirit to civil rulers, the LORD declared the necessity of having Spirit-filled men in public office. Spirit-controlled leaders was necessary because "rabble was among them" that had "greedy desires" (11:4).

God's law order cannot be advanced by pagan, humanistic, uncircumcised hearts. God's law order can only be advanced by godly, Spirit-controlled rulers who have not surrendered this institution to the enemy.

Pursuing evil men and bringing them to justice takes spiritual resources. It takes energy, knowledge of God's law, love of justice, reasonableness, and physical athleticism advance justice among thieves, liars, cheats, rioters, and murderers.

The whole idea that the Holy Spirit is for ecclesiastical authority and not civil authority is the product of more than a little evil. *When the People replace God as lord and sovereign, then the civil Pentecost gives away to Babel and to the confusion of tongues* (Rushdoony).

Does multiculturalism and bathroom politics ring a bell?

Not only should a Christian obey God's law, but the state has a duty to obey God's law. Not only should Christians be filled with the Spirit to conduct gospel ministry; ***Christian men need the Spirit to perform the duties of public office.***

God established civil government and placed not only His stamp of approval upon civil authority, but his mark of ownership upon it by ordaining the seventy elders of Israel, the commonwealth, and giving them His Spirit (Numbers 11:16-17), and by placing His Spirit up Saul, the representative of the monarchy (1 Samuel 10:1-7).

Theses two OT Pentecosts teach us the necessity of having Spirit filled rulers; that is, God created civil authority, approved of its existence, and made it accountable to Him.

So important was this truth that early Christian's leaders in the church insisted their kings and queens be (A) surrendered to God's law order, and (B) use their civil power, the sword, to protect the church, promote the gospel, and defend the state against enemies hostile to God's law-order.

The Coronation of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II in the Abbey Church of St. Peter, Westminster, on Tuesday, the second day of June, 1953, illustrates this Biblical truth.

Archbishop: Will you to the utmost of your power maintain the Laws of God and the true profession of the Gospel? Will you to the utmost of your power maintain in the United Kingdom the Protestant Reformed Religion established by law? Will you maintain and preserve inviolably the settlement of the Church of England, and the doctrine, worship, discipline, and government thereof, as by law established in England? And will you preserve unto the Bishops and Clergy of England, and to the Churches there committed to their charge, all such rights and privileges, as by law do or shall appertain to them or any of them

Queen: All this I promise to do.

When the Queen is again seated, the Archbishop shall go to her Chair; and the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, receiving the Bible from the Dean of Westminster, shall bring it to the Queen and present it to her, the Archbishop saying these words:

Our gracious Queen: to keep your Majesty ever mindful of the law and the Gospel of God as the Rule for the whole life and government of Christian Princes, we present you with this Book, the most valuable thing that this world affords.

Here is Wisdom; This is the royal Law; These are the lively Oracles of God.

Then the Lord who carries the Sword of State, delivering to the Lord Chamberlain the said Sword (which is thereupon deposited in Saint Edward's Chapel) shall receive from the Lord Chamberlain, in lieu thereof, another Sword in a scabbard which he shall deliver to the Archbishop: and the Archbishop shall lay it on the Altar and say:

Hear our prayers, O Lord, we beseech thee,
and so direct and support thy servant
Queen ELIZABETH,
that she may not bear the Sword in vain;
but may use it as the minister of God
for the terror and punishment of evildoers,
and for the protection and encouragement of those that do well, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Then shall the Archbishop take the Sword from off the Altar, and (the Archbishop of York and the Bishops of London and Winchester assisting and going along with him) shall deliver it into the Queen's hands; and, the Queen holding it, the Archbishop shall say:

Receive this kingly Sword,
brought now from the Altar of God,
and delivered to you by the hands of us
the Bishops and servants of God, though unworthy.
With this sword do justice,
stop the growth of iniquity,
protect the holy Church of God,
help and defend widows and orphans,
restore the things that are gone to decay,
maintain the things that are restored,
punish and reform what is amiss,
and confirm what is in good order:
that doing these things you may be glorious in all virtue;
and so faithfully serve our Lord Jesus Christ in this life,
that you may reign for ever with him
in the life which is to come. Amen.

This rite echoes the precept that the civil order is directly under God and established to execute justice under the law of God as part of His kingdom. For the state to renounce its position under Christ is to renounce its office and surrender to apostasy

Would to God that Americans would reflect on the First Pentecost and insist their rulers be Christian men filled with the Spirit instead of proud flesh!

17 MISHPHAT ON THE NATIONS

*Psalm 82:8 Arise, O God, **judge** (*shapat*) the earth: for thou shalt inherit all **nations**.*

*Isaiah 9:7 Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with **judgment** (*mishpat*) and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.*

*Isaiah 61:8 For I the LORD love justice (*mishpat*); I hate robbery and wrong (*olah - burnt offerings*);(ESV)*

17.1 HOW GOD JUDGES NATIONS

Isaiah 19

We have a glimpse into God's judgment of the nations. Unlike individuals which can be judged in eternity, national sins must be judged in time. In Isaiah 19, we see how God judged this nation in time.

He judged them religiously (19:1) by impoverishing their spirit and weakening their moral character, courage, and spiritual resolve.

He judged them socially (19:2) by sending social disorder, division, multiculturalism, civil war, anarchy, legal and spiritual pluralism.

He judged them politically (19:4) by turning the people over to alien, foreign rulers who controlled them politically and economically.

He judged them environmentally (19:5) using natural disasters: floods, storms, drought, tornadoes, hurricanes, and the like.

He judged them economically (19:8) by destroying industries and making the nation dependent on international trade.

He judged them governmentally (19:11) by giving them stupid, foolish, ignorant, deluded, deceived, pompous, incompetent leaders to lead Egypt astray from conservative principles (19:14).

17.2 SIGNS OF JUDGMENT UPON A NATION

Many ask, "Is God judging America?"

How do we know if God is judging a nation? What saith the Scripture?

In Isaiah 3, **the LORD declares His judgment upon Judah.**"

When we see the following trends happening within our nation, we should understand that our country is under the judgment of God (3:13).

(1) Economic deprivation: scarcity, inflation, deflation, unemployment, underemployment, low wages, high prices

1 For, behold, the Lord, the LORD of hosts, doth take away from Jerusalem and from Judah the stay and the staff, the whole stay of bread, and the whole stay of water,

2 The mighty man, and the man of war, the judge, and the prophet, and the prudent, and the ancient,

3 The captain of fifty, and the honourable man, and the counsellor, and the cunning artificer, and the eloquent orator.

(2) Young, zealous, inexperienced, immature, childish, emotional government officials

4 And I will give children (youth) to be their princes, and babes (combative, complaining youth) shall rule over them.

(3) Oppression, arrogant youth, and disrespect for seniors

5 And the people shall be oppressed (tyranny), every one by another, and every one by his neighbour (division): the child (youth) shall behave himself proudly against the ancient, and the base against the honourable.

See Freshmen “Renegades Storm Congress.”

(4) Reliance on the rich and famous as experts on religion, politics, and government

6 When a man shall take hold of his brother of the house of his father, saying, Thou hast clothing, be thou our ruler, and let this ruin be under thy hand:

7 In that day shall he swear, saying, I will not be an healer; for in my house is neither bread nor clothing: make me not a ruler of the people.

(5) Open hostility against the LORD God and His law-order

8 For Jerusalem is ruined, and Judah is fallen: because their tongue and their doings are against the LORD, to provoke the eyes of his glory.

(6) Shameless promotion of Sodomy and lawlessness

9 The shew of their countenance doth witness against them; and they declare their sin as Sodom, they hide it not. Woe unto their soul! for they have rewarded evil unto themselves.

10 Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him: for they shall eat the fruit of their doings.

11 Woe unto the wicked! it shall be ill with him: for the reward of his hands shall be given him.

(7) The monstrous promotion of women to leadership roles

12 As for my people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them. O my people, they which lead thee cause thee to err, and destroy the way of thy paths.

13 The LORD standeth up to plead, and standeth to judge the people.

(8) Corrupt government officials that plunder the people through financial schemes

14 The LORD will enter into judgment with the ancients of his people, and the princes thereof: for ye have eaten up the vineyard; the spoil of the poor is in your houses.

(9) Injustice and oppression: i.e., using the courts to crush the poor man lacking resources to defend himself against government prosecutors with deep pockets

15 What mean ye that ye beat my people to pieces, and grind the faces of the poor? saith the Lord GOD of hosts.

(10) Feminism: An inordinate, accession of arrogant, covetous, deceptive, wealthy women that seek attention, authority, and power over men

16 Moreover the LORD saith, Because the daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with stretched forth necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go, and making a tinkling with their feet:

Because the aggrandizement of women is against God's law-order, the LORD promises to humble these insolent feminists

17 Therefore the Lord will smite with a scab the crown of the head of the daughters of Zion, and the LORD will discover their secret parts.

18 In that day the Lord will take away the bravery of their tinkling ornaments about their feet, and their cauls, and their round tires like the moon,

19 The chains, and the bracelets, and the mufflers,

20 The bonnets, and the ornaments of the legs, and the headbands, and the tablets, and the earrings,

21 The rings, and nose jewels,

22 The changeable suits of apparel, and the mantles, and the wimples, and the crisping pins,

23 The glasses, and the fine linen, and the hoods, and the veils.

24 And it shall come to pass, that instead of sweet smell there shall be stink; and instead of a girdle a rent; and instead of well set hair baldness; and instead of a stomacher a girding of sackcloth; and burning instead of beauty.

Invasion of an alien army and military defeat within the borders of the nation

25 Thy men shall fall by the sword, and thy mighty in the war.

(11) National Decline: Grief, depression, and humiliation because of the nation's fall from power.

26 And her gates (Jerusalem) shall lament and mourn; and she being desolate shall sit upon the ground.

17.3 TEN MARKS OF A DYING SOCIETY

The Terminus Ad Quem of a Jewish Remnant

Jeremiah 44

Jeremiah 44 is the last message of Jeremiah gave to the remnant who fled Jerusalem to Egypt hoping to find protection from the Babylonian invasion of the Levant.

This chapter shows us the *terminus ad quem* of a society.

The Latin phrase *terminus ad quem* refers to the end of a matter or the end of an era.

Because our society appears to be in a frenzy of self-destruction, we must ask the question, what does the end of a civilization look like? What are the characteristics of a society on the way towards total collapse?

Because God's Word is true and is given to us to gain perspective, this brief investigates the *disposition* of the remnant of God's people by looking at the marks of a dying society in Jeremiah 44.

Shortly before the destruction of Jerusalem in 589-586 BC, a core group of influential Jews escaped the Babylonian invasion by migrating to Egypt. Capturing Jeremiah the prophet, an aggregate of Jews forced Jeremiah to escape with them at "Migdol, and at Tahpanhes, and at Noph (Cairo), and in the country of Pathros (upper Egypt)" (44:1).

Jeremiah interrupted an annual religious cult ceremony to address their idolatrous practice and to warn them that they would not escape Nebuchadnezzar's sword even in Egypt.

The people remained stiff necked and rejected the prophet's message. From this interaction, **we learn the following about the *terminus ad quem* of a society:**

(1) The *terminus ad quem* of a society is marked by the judgment of God.

Jeremiah 44:2 "Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: You have seen all the disaster that I brought upon Jerusalem and upon all the cities of Judah. Behold, this day they are a desolation, and no one dwells in them . . .

Some catastrophes are not caused by an act of man, but an act of God.

Deuteronomy 32:39 – See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god with me: I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal: neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand.

(2) The *terminus ad quem* of a society is marked by a fanatical devotion to the principles contained in pagan religions.

Jeremiah 44:3 because of the evil that they committed, provoking me to anger, in that they went to make offerings and serve other gods that they knew not, neither they, nor you, nor your fathers.

The term “evil” is the opposite of “good” and refers to criminal behaviors that injure other human beings or their property; that is, violations of the Ten Commandments: dishonor to parents, lying, fraud, breach of contracts, murder, idolatry, and the unmooring of sexual restraint.

The source of values adopted by a society comes from the gods it worships. Gods are the source of law, the source of meaning, the source of purpose that energizes a nation whether that god be Allah, Shiva, Moloch, Self, or the Queen of Heaven (44:19).

St. Paul observed decaying societies “exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles” (Romans 1:23). St. Stephen said the Jews were attached to **Remphan** as “the star of your god whose images you made to worship” in Acts 7:43.

Our society seems to be entranced with sports stars, tattoo stars, Hollywood stars, porn stars, the science of stars, and aliens from beyond the stars. Very few seem to be attracted to the star of Bethlehem and the birth of God’s Son.

In a dying society, pagan principles rebound and the elite develop a fanatical devotion to Eastern goddesses and the principles of Asherah worship.

(3) The *terminus ad quem* of a society is marked by a rejection of God’s law-order.

Jeremiah 44:5 But they did not listen or incline their ear, to turn from their evil and make no offerings to other gods.

Jeremiah 44:6 Therefore my wrath and my anger were poured out and kindled in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem, and they became a waste and a desolation, as at this day.

Jeremiah 44:10 They have not humbled themselves even to this day, nor have they feared, nor walked in my law and my statutes that I set before you and before your fathers.

Jeremiah 3:21 A voice on the bare heights is heard, the weeping and pleading of Israel’s sons because they have perverted their way; they have forgotten the LORD their God: stubbornness (44:5);

The LORD God is the Source of law, and the law is a product of His sovereignty and love. It was given to them for their good to produce a virtuous people and an orderly society. The keeping of the Ten Commandments is the essence of sanity, and the breaking of them is the marrow of mental illness. To reject His law is to reject the LORD God and to trade good for evil and virtue for vice.

Instead of walking straight and tall, these people became perverted, twisted, and bent. Acceptance of the Ten Commandments is the essence of mental health; and, the rejection of law causes the undesirable growth of stubbornness (44:5), fear and insecurity (44:8), wickedness and forgetfulness (44:9), arrogance (44:9) which leads to being “a horror, a curse, and a taunt,” to other people (44:12).

And, what shall we say about America. There was a time when plaques of the Ten Commandments hung proudly in classrooms, and we enjoyed Rockwell's America. Now that memorials to the Ten Commandments have been banned in public places we have the proliferation of pornography, fornicating teens, unwed mothers, abortions, school shootings, gender bender policies, burnings of the American flag, cursing, blasphemy, and an over taxed society.

(4) The *terminus ad quem* of a society is marked by self-destructive behavior.

Jeremiah 44:7 And now thus says the Lord GOD of hosts, the God of Israel: Why do you commit this great evil against yourselves, to cut off from you man and woman, infant and child, from the midst of Judah, leaving you no remnant?

The self-destructive evil in this text is a reference to their idolatrous fixation and violations of law that invited the judgment of God — acts of provocation that resulted in the destruction of Jerusalem, exile from their homeland, and the remnant's struggle for survival in Egypt.

And, what shall we say about self-destructive behaviors of Americans?

(5) The *terminus ad quem* of a society is marked by a denial of evil.

Jeremiah 44:9 Have you forgotten the evil of your fathers, the evil of the kings of Judah, the evil of their wives, your own evil, and the evil of your wives, which they committed in the land of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem?

Jeremiah asks a question, "Have you forgotten the evil of your fathers . . . kings . . . their wives . . . your own evil . . . the evil of your own wives . . . ?"

Had these people learned anything from their history? Solomon's wives, Jezebel, Athaliah, the cows of Bashan (Amos 4:1)?

The great tragedy of life is not that bad things happen, but that people fail to learn from their failures. But, it is worse than this! As the ashes burn out from the fires of a dying society, people call evil good, and good evil (Isaiah 5:20).

Sigmund Freud viewed religion as a human psychological distortion. "Religion is comparable to a childhood neurosis," he said. Viewing the world in terms of good and evil is a childlike quality, and the concept of evil is a childlike understanding of the world.

According to neuroscientists there is now no such thing as sin or evil. There is only bad genes, poor diets, malfunctions or malformations in the brain, and bad parenting.

According to the British Professor of Psychopathology, Simon Baron-Cohen, author of [The Science of Evil](#), suggest the remedy to the problem of evil is to change its name. "My main goal," says Baron-Cohen, "is replacing the *unscientific* term 'evil' with the *scientific* term 'empathy.'" What he means is

that instead of calling someone evil we should say they have no empathy. Single-mindedness, says Baron, is the inability to “recognize and respond” to the feelings of others. A healthy empathy circuit allows us to feel others’ pain and transcend single-minded focus on our own. Hummm? Isn’t this the description of a liberal? The problems in the world are not due to sin or bad habits or rebellion against God’s law, but a lack of compassion . . . of the female kind.

Wives are mentioned twice as it seems the women were the principal patrons of pagan practices going back to the time of Solomon (1 Kings 11:1-6), and who were passionately involved in offering incense to Ashtar, the Queen of Heaven (44:17).

As to America where good is evil and evil is good? In George Orwell’s dystopian novel “1984,” the policy of the ruling party was “war is peace,” “ignorance is strength,” and “slavery is freedom.” Since 1949, Americans have added to the list: murder is life, pornography is art, Sodomy ain’t naughty, queer is cute, profanity is piety, vice is virtue, masculinity is malignancy, feminism is favorable, gender is a choice, white is wrong, tax is terrific, and debt is duty.

(6) The *terminus ad quem* of a society is marked by inordinate trust in government to protect them.

Jeremiah 44:12 I will take the remnant of Judah who have set their faces to come to the land of Egypt to live, and they shall all be consumed. In the land of Egypt they shall fall; by the sword and by famine they shall be consumed. From the least to the greatest, they shall die by the sword and by famine, and they shall become a horror, a curse, and a taunt.

The remnant fled Jerusalem seeking protection under Pharaoh Hophra King of Egypt. Their trust was vain. Within a few months, Babylon conquered Egypt and the majority of Jewish refugees were killed.

Good government is necessary, but even then, the Scripture exhorts men not to put their trust in princes (Psalm 118:8, 9).

With the rise of the welfare state, women divorce their husbands knowing the government will take care of them. Fornicating black women know that if they get pregnant, the government will pay their bills — because they are black, a woman, and have a child.

Even though the government will put one out seven men in jail and steals around 50 percent of a man’s working wage, America’s faith in the State is nothing short of amazing. Americans definitely believe in a big “Do More Government.”

A January, 2018 NBC/WSJ poll found 58 percent of Americans agreed with the statement, “Government should do more to solve problems and help meet the needs of people.” In the same poll,” more than two-thirds of women said the government should “do more” along with majorities among all age groups measured, all races, ethnicities, and education levels and among independents voters.” Democratic Candidate Bernie Sanders proposed the government should give jobs to every person that did not have one. The Washington Post published an article, “Hating Government Does not Solve Problems” as if

loving more government solves all problems (June 28, 2017). President Ronald Reagan got it right: “Government is not the solution to our problem, it is the problem.”

Francis Bacon observed, “We see the *government* of God over the world is hidden,” which Bacon thought a good *model* for earthly rule. “Obscure and *invisible*” was how Bacon thought *government* worked best.”

Thomas Jefferson believed, “That government is best which governs least . . .”

We would be better off to trust God for everything and depend on government for nothing.

At the end of this chapter we learn that the Egyptian government under which the Jews trusted was crushed by Babylon.

Jeremiah 44:30 Thus says the LORD, behold, I will give Pharaoh Hophra king of Egypt into the hand of his enemies and into the hand of those who seek his life, as I gave Zedekiah king of Judah into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, who was his enemy and sought his life.

Psalms 118:9 It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in princes.

“If you trust government, you obviously failed history class” – Don Freeman.

Because God’s Word is true and is given to us to gain perspective, we are investigating the *terminus ad quem* of a society by looking at Jeremiah 44.

(7) The *terminus ad quem* of a society is marked by mobs of women marching in public demonstrations.

Jeremiah 44:8 Why do you provoke me to anger with the works of your hands, making offerings to other gods in the land of Egypt

Jeremiah 44:15 Then all the men who knew that their wives had made offerings to other gods, and **all the women who stood by, a great assembly**, all the people who lived in Pathros in the land of Egypt, answered Jeremiah: ‘As for the word that you have spoken to us in the name of the LORD, we will not listen to you.’

Apparently, Jeremiah disrupted a candle light parade in honor of the Queen of Heaven composed of pilgrims from all over Egypt, but waited to confront the assemblage until all the men were present so he could address his message to the agents of authority.

These women were not passive followers of a dead cult, but well-organized, religious activists.

Christians instinctively know something is wrong when women are out of the home and marching in the streets, away from their private duties in a parade promoting public programs.

(8) The *terminus ad quem* of a society is marked by weak, permissive men and weak assertive women.

Jeremiah 44:15-16 Then **all the men who knew** that **their wives** had made offerings to other gods, and all the women who stood by, **a great assembly**, all the people who lived in Pathros in the land of Egypt, answered Jeremiah: ‘As for the word that you have spoken to us in the name of the LORD, we will not listen to you.’

Jeremiah 44:16 “As for the word that you have spoken to us in the name of the LORD, we will not listen to *you*.”

The term “women” is mentioned three times in this section, “wives” four times, and the pronoun “her” seven times. The noun “men” is mentioned four times.

It was the wives who were the primary patrons of the goddess, and it was the wives who led the worship services. Strong in vice, they were weak in virtue.

The men knew their wives were involved in cultic rituals, but did nothing to stop them. The women led the idolatrous rites and their weak, permissive husbands were complicit with their sin.

We hear much about permissive parenting, but we have in this chapter permissive husbands who can’t or won’t control their wives. Surrendering leadership of the family, the men rejected the admonition of Jeremiah: “We will not listen to you.”

The first principle of God’s law order is found in Genesis 3:16 wherein men are given authority to rule their home. Eve usurped authority over Adam and God sanctioned her for it. What God condemns early in history, He condemns throughout history. A sick and dying society has women leaving the home and leading marches in the streets: “My people—infants are their oppressors, and women rule over them” (Isaiah 3:12).

This role reversal marked the end times of the remnant in Egypt. thus, Jeremiah 44 leads us to conclude that a dying is a matriarchal society.

(9) The *terminus ad quem* of a society is marked by a focus on the feminine mystique.

Jeremiah 44:17 But we will do everything that we have vowed, make offerings to the queen of heaven and pour out drink offerings to her, as we did, both we and our fathers, our kings and our officials, in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem. For then we had plenty of food, and prospered, and saw no disaster.

Jeremiah 44:19 And the women said, “When we made offerings to the queen of heaven and poured out drink offerings to her, was it without our husbands’ approval that we made cakes for her bearing her image and poured out drink offerings to her?”

The Queen of Heaven refers to a goddess titled *Inanna, Anat, Isis, Astarte, Hera, and Asherah*. Among Roman Catholics, Mary is honored as “the Queen of Heaven.”

Being the primary patrons of the goddess, it was the wives who burned incense and offered moon cakes to the female deity (See Ezekiel 8:14; Jeremiah 7:18). The offerings here are “cakes” shaped in the form of a moon or crescent in honor of the moon god, the wife of Baal or Asherah.

This was a fertility cult that worshiped the womb. Egypt was a cult center that accentuated vaginas and penises. The ankh (/æŋk, ɑːŋk/; Egyptian ʿnh) also known as “crux ansata” (the Latin for “cross with a handle”) is Egypt’s most famous fertility symbol. While looking like a circle on top of a cross,” its meaning is attached to the uterus and penis, the moon god and the shaft of Baal.

In India, the gods are often portrayed with a feminine face and a masculine body, Shiva for example. Women are seen as slightly superior to men in that they give birth to new life. Thus, the perfect person is one that acquires the characteristics of both males and females.

In America, the push to normalize transvestism, bathroom politics, and gender choice is no accident.

The nadir of Western Civilization appears to be upon us: The World Government under the auspices of the UN published their communist utopian Agenda 2030.

One of the goals includes the empowerment of women and the promotion of feminism.

“Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels.”

“Realizing gender equality [radical feminism] and the empowerment of women and girls will make a crucial contribution to progress across all the Goals and targets”

In this agenda statement, the term “boy” is mentioned 6 times, “men” 18 times, girls 13 times, and “women” is mentioned 33 times in this agenda. It is clearly pro-estrogen and anti-testosterone.

The phrase “promotion of gender equality” and “empowerment” is code for stripping men of power and financing radical feminism to take over human institutions.

Sweden boasts of having “The first feminist government in the world” (BBC News, February 2017).

In Sweden, the feminist movement conquered the country resulting in gender neutral sociology, sexual playground equipment, romper room simulated sex, transvestite training, women at work and men pushing baby buggies through the streets, The feminism of the culture has led to a soft, weak, passive estrogen-led society. Hordes of unruly Muslim male immigrants prowl through the streets looking for blonds to rape.

In England, there are so many women getting divorces and living in apartment complexes where some high rises are called “female deserts.”

In America you can see little girls and big ones wearing T-shirts with the words,

Girls can do anything boys can do.

50% of America. 100% nasty.

A woman’s place is in the house and in the senate.

What boys can do, girls can do better.

I’m a feminist. What’s your superpower?

Hear me roar!

Fight like a girl!

Women are here to #slay.

Thus, Jeremiah 44 leads us to conclude that a dying society is led by women that roar and men that are as meek as a mouse.

(10) The *terminus ad quem* of a society is marked by deception led by women who have fallen into the sin of Eve.

Jeremiah 44:18 But since we left off making offerings to the queen of heaven and pouring out drink offerings to her, we have lacked everything and have been consumed by the sword and by famine.”

While men are prone to neglect their duty to God, women are prone to deception and the usurpation of leadership. St. Paul states a truth, “and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor” (1 Timothy 2:14). His commands to men and women were designed to prevent the repeat of the sin of Eve in the church. No, this is not a misogynistic statement. It is an inspired text energized by the Spirit of God for our edification (2 Timothy 3:16).

In the garden, it was Eve who was deceived, not Adam. And, the wretched thing about deception is that the deceived does not know they are deceived. And, “No!” Women do not have a monopoly on deceit. Men can be deceived also. But, in order to prevent a repeat of Eve’s sin in the new creation, a high probability, the apostle forbid women to lead public prayers or to teach men in the church (1 Timothy 2:8-15). (See author’s commentary on Male and Female Roles in the Church, <https://nikeinsights.fanguardian.org/forums/topic/the-danger-of-female-pastors/>)

Here in Jeremiah 44, the sin of Eve is repeated. Women rebelled against God's law order, and the men approved.

The women speak, and they offer a reason for their cultic practices stating some facts but arriving at the wrong conclusion — that their suffering in exile was due to a failure of devotion to the moon goddess. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Jeremiah corrected them!

Jeremiah 44:21 *“As for the offerings that you offered in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem, you and your fathers, your kings and your officials, and the people of the land, did not the LORD remember them? Did it not come into his mind?*

Jeremiah 44:22 **The LORD could no longer bear your evil deeds and the abominations that you committed. Therefore**, your land has become a desolation and a waste and a curse, without inhabitant, as it is this day.

Jeremiah 44:23 **It is because you made offerings and because you sinned against the LORD and did not obey the voice of the LORD or walk in his law and in his statutes and in his testimonies that this disaster has happened to you, as at this day.”**

The women committed a logical fallacy assuming that Ashtar really existed and had power to bless and curse. The truth is that the LORD IS and He alone is God with the power to bless or curse. It was not a lack of devotion to the moon goddess that caused their pain, but transgression against the laws of the LORD God that was the cause of their suffering.

THE REMEDY

Jeremiah 44:24 Jeremiah said to all the people and all the women, **“Hear the word of the LORD**, all you of Judah who are in the land of Egypt.

The message is addressed to all the people and to “all the women.” Deep sins call for deep repentance. Having their ears plugged to the Word of God, these people acted like liberals open to all the myths of the fertility cult. Jeremiah called the people to shut up and to put “their ears on;” to reverse their course; to change channels; to leave their liberal “think tank;” and, to listen anew to the Word of God.

If they did not heed His Word, judgment would come up on them like a storm . . . and it did (44:27)

17.4 THE GREAT GOLD HEIST

A Spiritual Reason Behind a Nation's Financial Losses (Debt)

2 Chronicles 12

The original Goldfinger with the midas touch was Shishak king of Egypt, the first king of the twenty-second dynasty (927 BC).

With his gang of 3,000 charioteers and 60,000 warriors mounted on horses, he reeked havoc by invading Jerusalem to plunder the gold in the temple complex and in the king's treasury. He even confiscated Solomon's gold-tinted shields (2 Chronicles 12).

2 Chronicles 12:9 So Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem, and took away the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king's house; he took all: he carried away also the shields of gold which Solomon had made.

If you have ever had your house broken into and your precious treasures stolen, you understand the horrible sense of being violated. Anger, fear, and the horrors of loss storm the heart.

THE SPIRITUAL REASON FOR THE NATION'S NET FINANCIAL LOSS

We are **not** told the political reason for the raid, but Scripture informs us of the spiritual reason for the gold seizure.

2 Chronicles 12:1 And it came to pass, when Rehoboam had established the kingdom, and had strengthened himself, he forsook the law of the LORD, and all Israel with him.

2 Chronicles 12:2 And it came to pass, that in the fifth year of king Rehoboam Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem, because they had transgressed against the LORD.

2 Chronicles 12:5 Then came Shemaiah the prophet to Rehoboam, and to the princes of Judah, that were gathered together to Jerusalem because of Shishak, and said unto them, Thus saith the LORD, Ye have forsaken me, and therefore have I also left you in the hand of Shishak.

Shishak's gold heist and ripping off the nation's treasures was a judgment of God upon the people for abandoning "the law of the Lord." It is also expressed in verse five as "forsaking the Lord."

There are lessons for Christians in this chapter. Every word from God is "profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness . . . that the man of God may be perfect" (2 Timothy 3:16).

What a terrible thing it must be to forsake the law of the Lord God (12:1).

Let's take a look at what it means "to forsake the law of the Lord"?

COMPONENTS OF LEGAL APOSTASY

First, to forsake the law of the Lord means to depreciate the Ten Commandments.

The stones on which the Ten Commandments were written were placed into the “Tabernacle of Testimony,” inside the “Ark of Testimony” and the stones were called “The Testimony” (Exodus 25:16; 25:21; 40:20; Numbers 9:15)

That is, the Ten Commandments (The Testimony) were a “witness” to the character of God and were the central, cardinal focus of the nation. When an Israelite went to worship God, he went to ponder, consider, and ruminate on the words of Ten Commandments and how they reflected the character of God. Because God is eternal, His law is absolute. One absolute, unchanging God means one absolute, unchanging law (Psalm 119:137, 138, 142, 144).

During this period of history the nation abdicated their duty to God’s law, and relinquished the paramount importance of devotion to His written Word.

Second, to forsake the law of the Lord means to practice idolatry.

When devotion to God’s law-order cooled down, the nation became enraptured with trendy, liberal idolatrous practices of the international community.

In a parallel passage, I Kings 14:22-24, the holy text informs us that “Judah did evil in the sight of the LORD, and they provoked him to jealousy with their sins which they had committed.”

Solomon introduced idolatry to the nation by erecting shrines to the gods of his foreign wives. The people tolerated the idolatrous practices introduced in the preceding reign, and Rehoboam was unable to repress its growth. It was his misfortune to have to reap the bitter fruits of his father’s unfaithfulness.”

In Rehoboam’s time, the kingdom was split. The northern ten tribes erected golden calves at Dan and Bethel, and the spirit of idolatry infected the capital city of Jerusalem provoking the Lord to anger.

The people were swept up in a resurgence of Baalism and Ashtoreth worship. The text calls it doing “evil” –a departure from the Ten Commandments to do what is perverted, and immoral. Good became evil, and evil was promoted as good.

The phrase “provoked him to jealousy” infers a shift in devotion from the one true God and His absolute law to different gods with different laws.

Modern man does not think in terms of idolatry. He thinks in terms of “a new outlook on life,” “an attitude adjustment,” “new horizons,” “total change,” “expanding one’s perspective,” “undergoing a transformation,” and the like.

Anything but a Christ-centered focus is idolatry in the making.

Moreover, modern man does not see idolatry as serious. Pluralism, multiculturalism, diversity, and tolerance of diversity is pounded into youth during their public school training. We would do well,

therefore, to consider the seriousness of God’s charge of forsaking His law in this account to pursue multiculturalism which is idolatry.

Third, the nation forsook the law of the Lord by tolerating the growth of cultic religions in the nation:

“For they also built them high places, and images, and groves, on every high hill, and under every green tree.”

The Canaanites erected pillars, which were also statues or images, to their god, Baal. We read of the “image” (מַצֵּבָה) of Baal (2 Kings 3:2; 2 Kings 10:26, 27; cf. 18:4; 23. 14). Further, we find such images frequently mentioned side by side with the so-called “groves,” i.e., the “Asherahs”

It is a modern error to think that all religions are the same or that all religions deserve the same protection as Christianity. In cannibalistic religions, people eat their enemies; in Christianity, one is taught to love their enemies. In Islam, they kill the infidel; in Christianity preachers seek to persuade the infidel. Enough of this nonsense that all religions are good . . . or equal!

A change in gods infers a change in laws. When a nation changes its gods, it changes its laws. A change in law indicates a nation has changed religion. In this account, the nations shifted away from the dogmatic ethics of the Ten Commandments to adopt the permissive values of false religions—values that embraced sexual perversions, fraud, and theft in the name of imminent domain. Americans call it “diversity training.”

Fourth, the nation forsook the law of the Lord by tolerating homosexuality:

“And there were also sodomites in the land: and they did according to all the abominations of the nations which the LORD cast out before the children of Israel.”

It is clear from Deuteronomy 23:18 that male prostitutes are here spoken of (kadeshi), the name of the female being (kadesha, קַדְשָׁה). The kadeshi (male pimps) are described in verse 19 as a dog, the latter (kadesha) as a whore in the land [1 Kings 15:12]; i.e., unlike female prostitutes, the Sodomites weren’t even considered members of the human race. In God’s eye, they behaved more like beasts than humans. It is highly probable that these infamous persons were of Canaanite or Phoenician origin as Israel did according to all the abominations of the nations which the Lord cast out before the children of Israel (Leviticus 18:20; Deuteronomy 18:9-12].

*“Here we see a reason for God’s command, requiring the extirpation of the Canaanites”
(Wordsworth).*

Leviticus 20:13 presented a rule to civil authorities that homosexuals “are to be put to death.” Some sexual acts are not to be tolerated because they threaten the physical and mental health of society.

Before Europe plunged into WWII, Berlin was called the “Red Whore of Babylon” “where teenagers turned tricks and papa was a pimp.” See “Where was God in All the Suffering of WWII.”

Modern American Christianity is antinomian and therefore tolerant of sexual perversions.

Psalm 119:142 Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and thy law is the truth.

James Maidson got it correct:

“It is the duty of every man to render to the Creator such homage, and such only, as he believes to be acceptable to him. This duty is precedent both in order of time and degree of obligation, to the claims of Civil Society. Before any man can be considered as a member of Civil Society, he must be considered as a subject of the Governor of the Universe ...”

Furthermore, the opposite of law is not grace but lawlessness. Grace confirms the validity of God’s law. It does not nullify it. One absolute God means one absolute law-order. Because He is eternal, His moral law is absolute and binding on all men. His law was not only good for Israel, but for all men and all of man’s institutions. In fact, one cannot love without the law because love is a fulfillment of the law (1 John 5:1-3; Romans 13:8).

Moreover, if God’s law is not the standard for the civil order in Western Civilization, then what is? Humanism? Feminism? Islam? A democratic, majority vote, the law of “the infidel, the atheist, or the adherent of a non-Christian faith such as Islam or Judaism.”) (quoting *Wallace v. Jaffree*, 472 U.S. 38, 52, 105 S. Ct. 2479, 2487, 86 L. Ed. 2d 29 (1985))?

Fifth, to forsake the law of the Lord is closely related to forsaking God.

2 Chronicles 12:5 . . . Thus saith the LORD, Ye have forsaken me, and therefore have I also left you in the hand of Shishak.

Ellicott : “Literally, Ye have forsaken me, and I also have forsaken you, in (into) the hand of Shishak. The phrase “to leave into the hand” of a foe occurs Nehemiah 9:28.”

You can’t genuinely claim to know God and not obey His law, or claim to know God and be given over to lawlessness, anarchy, and the Western doctrines of absolute freedom.

Thus, forsaking the law of the LORD and adopting policies of pluralism is no small matter. It is the cause of the rise and fall of empires (Deuteronomy 31:17; Joshua 24:20; 1 Chronicles 28:9; 2 Chronicles 7:19; 2 Chronicles 15:2; Isaiah 65:11-12; Jeremiah 23:33)

Ezra 8:22 . . . but his power and his wrath is against all them that forsake him.”

Isaiah 1:28 But rebels and sinners shall be broken together, and those who forsake the LORD shall be consumed.

The good news is that God is slow to anger and merciful: He is more prone to correct and discipline than to forsake and destroy.

Nehemiah 9:31 Nevertheless, in your great mercies you did not make an end of them or forsake them, for you are a gracious and merciful God.

Consequences of Forsaking the Law of the Lord

One result of rebellion against God's law-order is economic deprivation: debt, inflation, depression, recession, natural disasters, and war.

Because the nation rebelled against the LORD, he brought Shishak, King of Egypt, to plunder the nation's wealth. Though Rehoboam had fortified the nation, Shishak seems to move toward the capital city with relative ease—even plundering the gold from the temple and the king's treasury without resistance.

When a nation plunges into idolatry, God has many weapons in His arsenal to discipline His rebellious people: war, recession, depression, inflation, 28% taxation on income, bankruptcy, a debt-based economy, a twenty-trillion + dollar national debt, and the like.

Moreover, Shishak (Goldfinger) even looted Solomon's gold shields—shields used for pageantry and not war. What a sight it must have been to see the king on the throne with 300 soldiers marching in step in a military formation with beams of sunlight flashing off the gold tinted shields!

Because Rehoboam refused to give God his praise, God took away the praises (gold shields) of the king.

Because the nation refused to honor God's law, God took away their emblems of honor.

What a terrible thing it must be to forsake the law of the LORD God!

It ought to give Americans pause to consider President Roosevelt's confiscation of America's gold in 1933 . . . and, the fact that the FRN is simply a worthless piece of paper backed only by the "full faith and credit" of the U.S. Government . . . whatever that means. Selah!

There is a positive in this chapter. Good came out of evil. Rehoboam and the civil rulers humbled themselves and repented saying, "The Lord is righteous" (2 Chronicles 12:6).

With Jerusalem plundered, the nation realized that God had judged them for their sin of abandoning His law. Their repentance was simple. No excuses! They simply acknowledged that the LORD was right, and that his justice was fair. God honored their repentance, and restrained Shishak from doing further damage (12:7).

Psalm 76:10 Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain.

17.5 HEMLOCK IN THE COURTS

*Amos 6:12 Shall horses run upon the rock? will one plow there with oxen? for ye have turned judgment into gall, and the fruit of righteousness into **hemlock**:*

*Hosea 10:4 They have spoken words, swearing falsely in making a covenant: thus judgment springeth up as **hemlock** in the furrows of the field.*

*Isaiah 5:22-23 Woe unto them that are mighty to drink **wine**, and men of strength to mingle strong drink: Which justify the wicked for reward, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him!*

What is hemlock? Hemlock is a poisonous plant with an obnoxious, irritating smell that kills bacteria in the intestines and if taken in high concentrations can kill an animal and human being. When taken in less than a lethal dose, hemlock causes delirium, vomiting, and vertigo. It has been called the “Devil’s Bread” and the “Devil’s Porridge” because it has been used as a toxin to poison enemies.

What is hemlock justice? Isaiah, Amos, and Hosea refer to hemlock justice. The Biblical authors are describing court decisions issued by corrupt judges that followed alien law; that condemned the innocent and acquitted the guilty; that punished the righteous and rewarded the wicked; that stole from the poor and gave to the rich; or stole from the rich to give to the poor. Israel in its decline had the best courts money could buy. Hemlock justice poisoned the judicial system in such a way that men lost their confidence in the judicial system—a system executed in the city gates (5:10, 12, 15). Judgments handed down from these corrupt judges sent upright people reeling; stunned innocent litigants; shocked the community, and made men angry and disgusted at the judicial system. Sound familiar? I saw a bumper sticker today that read, “I love my country, but I don’t trust my government.”

A Look at Hemlock Justice in Amos 5 & 6

Amos’ entrance into the ministry is described in chapter seven. Amos was a farmer and not a professional prophet. Growing up and working in southern Judah, God called him to minister in the northern kingdom to the corrupt and idolatrous government of Amaziah and the compliant people he ruled. His reference to hemlock justice is part of Amos’ third sermon which begins in 5:1 and concludes in 6:14. He addresses his message to “the house of Israel” (5:1; 5:4) a.k.a. “the house of Joseph” (5:6). Keep in mind that the twelve tribes were divided into the north and the south; Samaria and Jerusalem, the northern kingdom called *Israel* and the southern kingdom called *Judah*.

5:1-3 The sermon is called a *dirge* because of the grief it contained due to the fall and decline of Israel. Called as a virgin devoted to the Lord God only, the tribes of Joseph deteriorated into a worn-out whore offering her services to the highest bidder--called a "bribe" in 5:12.

5:4-7 Amos commanded the nation to seek the Lord three times (5:4, 5:6; 5:14). He was not asking the nation to be more religious, but to wake up to the fact they had departed from the purity of devotion to the Lord and His Law-word and been seduced by idols at Bethel and Gilgal. Bethel was the cult center of the northern kingdom where Jeroboam placed a golden calf. Jeroboam was a statist politician who introduced idolatry to Israel to (a) prevent the pilgrimages of his people to Jerusalem, and (b) to satisfy the nation's spiritual inclinations, (c) to prevent money earned in the north to be spent in south from pilgrimages made to the temple, and (d) to unite the nation politically and religiously around his new government. Gilgal, on the other hand was the location of the school of prophets—a southern seminary near Jericho—a school that was liberalized and corrupted so that its graduates no longer served the old laws of YHWH, but the law of the new world order—the laws of Bethel, the cult center of the nation.

When a nation changes its gods, it changes its laws. A change in law indicates a nation has changed its gods. When Israel changed its gods, it changed the rules of justice—from a judicial system designed to protect the innocent and to punish the guilty into a justice system that "called evil good and good evil" (Isaiah 5:20-23). Amos did not just address the nation generally, but specifically; that is, he confronted the politicians in power. Amos ordered the rulers and judges who turneded "justice into hemlock" (5:7) to give up their fictions and "to seek the Lord." This was no small demand. This order came from the Commander and Chief of the Nation—the LORD God. He wasn't asking the judges to hold hands and sing, "Cum ba ya my Lord!" but to junk their legal fictions and return to the Law of the Lord. The nation had changed its religion and hemlock justice abounded. The antidote? "Seek the Lord." Be fully devoted to Him. Protect your source of law. Eliminate commercial interest and bribery from the legal system at the city gates.

5:8-9 It appears these judges could no longer distinguish between the God of Israel and the gods of chaos. Amos, therefore, reminds them who the Lord is: He is the Creator that engineered the stars and the constellations; turns the earth on its axis; controls the weather and it processes: evaporation, evaporation, condensation, and rain. Further, Amos reminds his listeners that the LORD uses weather and earthquakes with all its "natural" catastrophes to tumble man's fortresses—a reminder that God can destroy their prosperity just by withholding rain upon the drought prone regions of Israel. Of all the seven wonders of the ancient world, only the pyramids remain . . . and the Colossus of Rhodes, the Temple of Dianna, and the rest crumbled to the ground after small earthquakes.

5:10-13 Amos describes hemlock justice in detail.

- Hemlock justice is dished out by judges who had no stomach for correction and rebuke. These judges despised honest men who protested corruption at the town hall (gates); that is, those who opposed corruption in court must somehow be charged with crimes and turned into perverts (5:10).

- Hemlock justice imposes heavy fines, fees, taxes, and tribute on the poor to enlarge the coffers of the rich government agents so they can retire in large, comfortable homes (5:11).
- Hemlock justice distresses the righteous and mistreats the poor (5:12).
- Hemlock justice is dispensed by corrupt public officials who are on the lamb (5:12). The text says their sins are many (numerous) and great (deep and serious); that is, Amos is not talking about minor errors in judgment but treason to the LORD God.
- Hemlock justice is institutional corruption and constructive fraud (5:13); i.e., the righteous had to shut their mouth and disappear underground to avoid the politics of personal destruction.

5:14-15 A third time the judges are admonished to seek the Lord and to take an oath in His name to uphold justice; but, this admonition is more practical, "Seek good." Remember, however, Amos is not ordering the judges to define good in human terms, but to be committed to Biblical ethics as God defined it. Good is defined in God's law. Only God has the authority to define right and wrong. When man defines good, he comes up with abortion, same-sex marriages, and heavy taxation. Furthermore, Amos demanded the judges define evil in terms of God's law and hate bribes, injustice, oppression of the poor, rewards to the lawbreaker, and the nation's false, pseudo-religious system at Dan and Bethel.

5:16-27 In this section, we have judgment decreed: wailing and mourning because of the day of the Lord's judgment which will be darkness and not light; and like a man being chased by a lion met by a bear; like snake bite. God searches for justice, not religious exercises (5:23).

6:1-7 God addresses the nation's ruler and judges and pronounces a "Woe" on them because they are at ease. Their opulence is identified: beds of ivory, couches, lamb chops, sirloin steak, harps, music, wine, perfumes and oils. One vital, spiritual virtue was lacking. These rulers seemed incapable of identifying the nation's cultural decline and grieve over it. These rulers were out of touch with the common man and his plight. They sought pleasure not pain; happiness, not grief; parties not dirges; happy people not sad people. Consequently, the nation was bound to exile.

6:8-14 Judgment was assured. God declared an oath that the proud, arrogant, self-sufficient, self-guided, self-made, wealthy government rulers and their huge, sculptured citadels would be smashed and demolished by alien invaders. Why? Because of hemlock justice. Just assured as a horseman who drives his horse over boulders will break its leg, judges who dish out hemlock justice and who boast in their police state will be invaded by foreign armies and broken.

Application

Hemlock justice comes to us in the form of "social justice" - a handy, *code term its proponents can't define and its opponent don't dare oppose*. "Social justice" is anything its protagonist wants it to mean: universal healthcare, child welfare, income equality, gay rights, right to housing, women's rights, etc.

Friederich Hayek, an economist and philosopher and Nobel Prize winner observed the term was most employed by political opportunist and the intellectually lazy.

Behind the code phrase was a philosophy: *freedom must be sacrificed in order to (re)distribute income*; that is, "social justice" is about the government increasing its power to levy more taxes for the State's good causes. This is a doctrine where "the Haves have too much and the Have Nots never have enough;" where the State must develop strong and coherent "compassionate (re)distribution of the fruits of economic growth;" where proponents do not demand "equal opportunity" but "equal pay" for unequal production; where "compassion" (social justice) is the State taking your money and giving it to someone else, and "greed" is when you want to keep it. a convenient term used to indict a free society; to develop another government program to address any perceived economic unfairness or economic want or economic suffering; that the right people (the liberals) can provide "social justice" by building a government program; that the State must and can provide a remedy for all perceived wrongs; that anyone who does not favor redistribution of wealth to remedy perceived wrongs in an enemy of mankind and must be coerced through force to accept government initiatives. Beware, *social justice* is what the Bible calls *hemlock justice*. It is the doctrine of the radical left, socialist, communist, Zionist, and social engineers (Source: Prager University; What is social justice?).

Are we now living in a nation that has changed its gods? A nation in the midst of a legal revolution where good is evil and evil is good.

[1] ["Plato, Euthyphro, Apology, Crito, Phaedo"](#). Retrieved 2012-07-06.

[2] Plato, Phaedo 117e–118a. trans. Loeb Classical Library (1990 ed.). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. pp. 401–3.

17.6 SHOULD CHRISTIAN PRAY FOR POLITICIANS?

An Old Testament Perspective

*"Therefore **pray not** thou for this people, **neither lift up cry nor prayer for them, neither make intercession to me** (for their welfare): **for I will not hear thee**" (Jeremiah 7:16).*

Should Christians pray for their country? Consider carefully!

Preachers usually say "Yes" and then quote 2 Chronicles 7:14 or 2 Timothy 2:1-4. (See Lifetime Theology)

There was a day in the history of Israel that God commanded Jeremiah to **STOP PRAYING FOR POLITICIANS** and to **CONFRONT THE REBELS**.

Politicians need confrontation when they . . .

(1) Practice deception (7:8): "*Behold, ye trust in lying words, that cannot profit.*"

Consider how modern politicians practice the politics of deception which include lies, slander, defamation, sophistication, utopianism, betrayal, falsehood, and fraud.

(2) Practice theft (7:9): "*. . . you steal . . .*"

Consider how modern politicians steal, take bribes, and lay on the people a burdensome system of taxation for sordid gain that transfers wealth from the people to the State.

(3) Practice murder (7:9): "*. . . murder . . .*"

Politicians often practice the politics of destruction. The weapon of choice among them is slander and defamation.

Consider how modern politicians are involved in murder, abortion, infanticide, assassinations, legislation for "assisted suicide," and slander of opponents with the intent of destroying their opponents reputation, business, and even their life.

(4) Practice sexual immorality(7:9): "*. . . and commit adultery.*"

Consider how politicians engage in fornication, adultery, sexual promiscuity, Sodomy, lesbianism, and other forms of sexual immorality.

(5) Practice oath breaking (7:10): "*. . . and swear falsely, . . .*"

Consider how modern politicians can no longer be trusted to keep their word, promises, or oaths of office. Many seem more devoted to aliens, foreigners, and internationalists than to America and its limited constitutional powers.

(6) Practice of idolatry (7:10): "*. . . and burn incense unto Baal, and walk after other gods whom ye know not.*"

Idolatry involves the adoption an alien law order; to have another Source of law rather than the LORD God; that is, the adoption of permissive statutes of pagan nations that pulls society down to gutters of hell.

Consider how modern politicians practice idolatry, paganism, nature-based spirituality, polytheism, multiculturalism, statist-Baalism, utopianism, and the practices of mother-goddess worship, Islam, and eastern mysticism opposed to law of the LORD God.

(7) Practice of fraud (7:11): ". . . a den of robbers."

Consider how modern politician rob the people through taxation, wealth redistribution, inflation, printing of paper money, and usury. Many become rich practicing bribocracy and taking hush money, reimbursements, graft, gratuities, kickbacks, and perks, in some "pay to play" scheme.

(8) Practicing usurpation feminism (7:18): "The children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead *their* dough, to make cakes to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto other gods, that they may provoke me to anger."

Consider how women have moved out of the home into the work place and politics; how feminazis play the victim; how the nations have exalted women to the status of deity.

There is an on going feminist takeover of society. Politicians everywhere are bowing to feminine weaknesses, emotionalism, and deception.

What a contrast to the Proverbs 31 woman!

These proud, self-reliant political practices arouse the ire of the Lord God (7:19): ". . . they provoke me to anger?"

Should Christians pray for their country?

Preachers usually say "Yes" and then quote 2 Chronicles 7:14.

But, this promise was given early in the history of Israel during the reign of Solomon following the completion of the temple. It is a general promise applicable to a nation building its foundation on obedience to God's law.

But, a lot of history happened between Solomon and Jeremiah.

In Solomon's time, the nation was young and eager to obey; in Jeremiah's time the nation was mature in its rebellion.

In Solomon's time it was perfectly appropriate to pray for the general welfare of the young nation; in Jeremiah's time, it was completely inappropriate to pray for welfare of the morally bankrupt nation.

There comes a time in the course of politics when government becomes so iniquitous **that politicians forfeit the right to honor and respect**, the blessing of the prayers of God's people, and the support of the people through taxation.

When society degenerates into a pagan hellhole because of the maddening policies of liberal politicians, the God of the Bible says, **STOP PRAYING for the welfare of politicians** (7:16): "Therefore pray not

thou for this people, neither lift up cry nor prayer for them, neither make intercession to me (for their welfare): **for I will not hear thee"**

NO MORE PRAYER BREAKFASTS FOR LIBERAL, HOMOSEXUAL, COMMUNIST POLITICAL LEADERS!!

STOP SAYING, "GOD BLESS AMERICA! " God is **not** going to bless a nation given to war, lies, abortion, feminism, Sodomy, lesbianism, transvestitism, asset forfeiture, justice for the rich, gotcha journalism, deep state corruption, redacted history, theft through foreclosures and oppressive taxation of the People.

"This is a nation that obeyeth not the voice of the LORD their God, nor receiveth correction: truth is perished, and is cut off from their mouth . . . for the LORD hath rejected and forsaken the generation of his wrath" -Jeremiah 7:28, 29.

Is it God's will that a proud, Christ-rejecting, Sodomy-promoting nation succeed?

You may **CONFRONT THEM, REBUKE THEM, AND CALL UPON GOD TO CURSE THEM**, but you, dear Christian, are **not permitted to pray for God's blessing upon them** (7:2): "Stand in the gate of the LORD'S house, and proclaim there this word, and say, Hear the word of the LORD . . . "

". . . If anyone has no love for the Lord, let him be accursed. Our Lord, come!" (1 Corinthians 16:22) . . .

"If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed" (Galatians 1:9).

"Imprecations are appeals to the Judge of the earth to play the part of Judge" (Peter Leithart)

Moreover, in America, the Founding Fathers knew the nation would have difficulties being a virtuous republic and declared the People have a DUTY to overthrow nefarious political leaders by ANY MEANS NECESSARY:

*" all experience hath shewn, that **mankind are more disposed to suffer**, while evils are sufferable, **than to right themselves by abolishing the forms** to which they are accustomed. **But when a long train of abuses and usurpations**, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, **it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security.**" (Declaration of Independence).*

In 605-586 B.C., the Babylonians invaded Israel, killed a third of the people, and deported the surviving remnant (33%) to Babylon. At the end of their judgment, God healed the nation and never again did they

plunge into idolatry. Given a second chance, they returned to rebuild a new nation 70 years later (535 B.C.).

In America, God's judgment looks more like an invasion of millions of unarmed, uneducated illegal aliens into the country not to deport us, but to deplete and deprive America of its wealth.

The Old Testament can be used to address today's political problems . . . if we apply it correctly.

Moreover, there is a Psalm for Politicians to pray for themselves, see Psalm 101.

17.7 STONING REVOLUTIONARIES

*Deuteronomy 13:1-4 If there arise among you a prophet (political leaders), or a dreamer of dreams (liberal philosopher), . . . saying, Let us go after other gods (law-order), which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; . . . that dreamer of dreams, **shall be put to death . . . stone him to death (v. 10);***

Some Politicians deserve to be treated with the charms of Cindy Lou Who, but with the skull-cracking craft of a capable Samson.

Some politicians deserve to be stoned?

"Whatever the left touches, it ruins" stated Dennis Praeger.

The Book of Deuteronomy is part of the Constitution of Old Testament Israel. To keep Torah was life, to depart from Torah was death.

Eventually, liberal kings abandoned God's law-order and adopted the permissive legal system of surrounding nations.

At the nadir of Israel's history, Ezekiel shows us priests scratching pornography on the temple walls, and feminists baking moon-cakes to the feminist's mother-god of Babylon (Ezekiel 8-10).

In God's judgment, a third of the nation died of starvation, a third from disease, and a third deported to Babylon (Ezekiel, Jeremiah).

The fundamental reason for the disintegration was the people permitted an attack on the nation's legal system. This tolerance paved the way for liberals of their day to create a social, legal, and spiritual revolution -- a revolution that plunged the nation into shameful idolatry and multiculturalism much like we see in our time.

God's law commanded the death penalty for revolutionaries without mercy because of the destructive impact of their ideology.

A Study on Deuteronomy 13

Liberal, revolutionary leaders deserve to be stoned because they led the nation into idolatry.

Look at the remedy for apostasy from while remembering that not only is God's law-order (Deuteronomy 13) good for the ancients, but good for modern nations.

Definition of a Liberal: One who advocates revolution and a different law order than the LORD's law-order because he serves a different god than the Biblical God.

Definition of Revolutionary: One who seeks to subvert the Biblical law-order because he is in rebellion to Christ, God's true Prophet, Priest, and King (Deuteronomy 18:15-20).

(1) This passage deals with three types of revolutionaries: (a) the false prophet (**liberal leaders**) that leads a rebellion against the Biblical law-order (Deuteronomy 13:1-5); (b) an **individual** rebel within a family that seeks to convert the family to an alien law-order (Deuteronomy 13:6-11); and, (c) **a liberal city** that seeks to subvert the nation to follow a different religion than the religion of Christ (Deuteronomy 13:12-18).

When you think of a "prophet" or "dreamer" in verse one, think of the source of radicalization in our time: men in blue suits, progressive talk-show feminists, communists, politicians, outspoken Hollywood actresses, and the radical, liberal press.

The "dreamer" in verse one is a spiritual revolutionary calling for death of God's law order, and for the installation of a totally different religious-legal system within the nation. "gods" are the source of law in all nation. If you want to know the god of any society, discover its source of law. The source of law in China it is the communist party; in Muslim countries the source of law is the Koran or Sharia law; among internationalists it is the UN; in the United States it is "we the people;" in ancient Israel, and early America, the Source of law was the LORD God (Exodus 20:1-2).

(2) In Deuteronomy, the penalty for subversion in all three cases was DEATH . . . after due process (13:14).

God ordered the nation "to purge out evil" from society in verse five. Evil is not in the atmosphere or air ducts of a home. It is in men. God did not call exorcists to cast out evil in the man (impossible), but to purge evil by killing the evil man (necessary).

To the modern mind, the death penalty seems severe! If the sin of idolatry is unimportant to men, then the penalty for it seems outrageous (Rushdoony).

But, it does not seem severe to call for the death penalty for treason against the State, for the State is more important than allegiance God in the minds of statist.

[Note: the "you" in this chapter is plural -- a reference to whole judicial apparatus of the nation. Vigilantism is not encouraged. Moreover, the death penalty could only be applied after due process (13:14). Judicial process is required in all cases.]

(3) Those influential people in the government apparatus hiding behind the aggregate of democracy who seek to convert the nation to liberalism and overturn God's law-order deserve to be stoned (13:10).

Every society has its concept of treason. Biblically speaking, idolatry is treason to the LORD God. The death penalty for idolatry seems outrageous to the unbeliever because treason to God is unimportant to him.

But, to statists, applying the death penalty to those who commit treason against God's law seems quite unreasonable because loyalty to the God's law is unimportant to them.

(4) Biblically speaking, there is one God and one absolute law order.

No society can survive that permits an attack on its religious and legal foundations!

A society that tolerates a strike on itself under the principle of free speech commits social suicide. Such is a decaying, dying society.

(5) Not all liberal politicians deserve to die! The death penalty did not apply to individual beliefs. Nor did it apply to doubters or heretics. It applied only to those revolutionaries or spokeswomen who assaulted the religious-legal foundation of the nation in order to create a new social order. Feminism, Sodomy, lesbianism, transvestitism, internationalism, Islam, the green gospel, Marxism and a nation without borders comes to mind.

(6) The death penalty is required because rebellion against God's law-order is similar to an outbreak of anthrax that threatens the health of society.

That marriage embraces the union of two men; that there are three genders; that young people can choose their sex based on feelings; that boys can have periods; that masculinity is toxic; that women should rule the world, that private property should be abolished is a subversion reasonable people can not tolerate. In order for the utopian ideals of liberals to succeed, Christianity must be crushed by the power of government . . . of Congress . . . of the courts.

Revolution is a declaration of war by the minority on the majority, and war means death. Christianity must die that liberalism might live . . . or liberalism must die that Christianity might live.

In God's order social engineers deserve death without mercy under the Biblical mandate of Deuteronomy 13.

(7) This does not apply to a pagan nation that is anti-Christ to begin with. Such a condition calls for conversion, not legal action.

(8) There are two ways to improve the health of society: (1) by conversion of the lost to Christ (the role of the church); and (2) by punishment of anarchists that subvert the social order (the role of government).

We might ask, "Why is God allowing radical views to surface in our time?"

The Biblical answer is that "the LORD God is testing you to find out if you (Christians) love the LORD your God with all your heart and all your soul."

While Deuteronomy 13 required the application of the death penalty toward social radicals, we have no such authority in the church . . . or in the laws of the state to apply the death penalty toward social rebels. Because we have moved away from Biblical standards, our society is extremely permissive. We are commanded to tolerate the intolerable. Nevertheless, this passage teaches us that good men need to create a storm of thundering resistance to the lobotomized left.

(9) Notice in this passage that pity and mercy is a human weakness: "your eye shall not pity" stoning an anarchist (13:8).

In Deuteronomy 13, God declared war on Hebrew liberals who sought to subvert the nation.

In a battle to death, mercy is a vice. As Israel was to execute revolutionaries without mercy, good Americans must exercise zero tolerance towards these destroyers.

Don't hear what is not being said. We are not suggesting violence of any kind against goats, tares, or liberals. God will deal with them in his own time.

"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." (John 3:36).

But, we are suggesting an application of Deuteronomy 13 that involves confrontation and vigorous debate.

Love is not the answer to all things! Swift rebuke is a remedy for swells of crecive evil.

"Jesus did not call us to be nice. Niceness is not necessary next to holiness" (Relevant Magazine).

Tenderness toward liberal revolutionaries seeking to subvert the nation into idolatry is a spurious course of action! Bone-crushing resistance, not Boo Boo Bear syrup, is the need of the hour.

We are at war. There is no offer of peace to revolutionaries. One army and their pack of ideas has to die . . . and its not going to be the Faith of Samson (Hebrews 11:32-38)!

17.8 HOW TO ACT DURING GOD'S MISPHAT

Zephaniah 1:7, 2:3 Be silent before the Lord GOD! For the day of the LORD is near; the LORD has prepared a sacrifice and consecrated his guests . . . and, perhaps you will be hidden.”

“Misphat” is the Hebrew word for judgment.

This passage is instructive to the Christ-seeking heart because it answers the question, “How should a person respond when he hears the thunderclaps of God’s judgment rumbling through the land?”

Our text was penned by Zephaniah who ministered to apostate Israel during the days of Josiah, the revival king (640-609 BC). Josiah’s grandfather, Hezekiah was a godly man, but his father, Manasseh was perhaps the most vile and wicked man to ever sit upon the throne of David.

So dark were those days that only one copy of the Torah survived (2 Kings 22:1-12). When Josiah heard the words of the Book, he torn his clothes, repented, and launched the greatest civil reform in the history of mankind. The only problem was the reforms came from top down instead of from the bottom up; that is, the reforms were forced on an unrepentant people and failed to take root in the nation. Shortly after Josiah’s death, the Chaldeans invaded Judah and the nation became a vassal of the Babylonians.

Zephaniah ministered to the people sometime during the reign of Josiah circa 635-625 BC. From the tone of his book, there is no hint about the reform of Josiah. Thus, we conclude Zephaniah ministered before Josiah’s civil, top-down revival.

Zephaniah’s message is one of impending judgment. Seven times in verses 2-9, God announces the ominous, dark punishment to come upon the apostate nation: “I will remove all things . . . remove man and beast . . . remove the birds of the sky . . . cut off man from the earth . . . stretch out my hand against Judah . . . and the idolatrous priests, et al. . . . cut off those devoted to Baal . . . punish the princes et al.

Since the judgment is described in absolute, terminal terms, we would do well to heed the commands---commands that instruct us on how to respond to God’s judgment.

“BE SILENT BEFORE THE LORD” (1:7)

Zephaniah 1:7 Hold thy peace at the presence of the Lord GOD: for the day of the LORD *is* at hand: for the LORD hath prepared a sacrifice, he hath bid his guests.

The text informs us “the day of the Lord is near.” It is compared to a feast where Israel would be the fatted calf, the slaughtered sacrifice on the altar of justice. Kings of royal blood who dressed in luxury

from fabric imports³³ from foreign countries, and priests³⁴ that callously violated God law would be on the menu. The guests who were invited to the feast was the Babylonians.

When a judge walks in a courtroom, “all rise” . . . and every mouth is sealed shut. Serious things are happening. In the Supreme Court of Heaven, the judge is all holy, all knowing, and all powerful. Such a solemn, terrifying judgment required “silence;” i.e., shut up and be quiet. Hold your peace. Tremble! Be humble! Take time to read His Word and to consider your sins in light of His law-order. Listen with the intent to obey!

MOURN AND GRIEVE (1:11)

Zephaniah 1:11 Howl, ye inhabitants of Maktesh, for all the merchant people are cut down; all they that bear silver are cut off.

The word “howl” can be translated “wail.” Judgment demands grief, weeping, and even bawling.

It is addressed to “Mortar,” a wealthy district in Jerusalem—a people “sitting on their lees,”—an expression for stagnancy, apathy, dullness, disinterest, and lethargy (1:12).

The reasons for the call to grieve are listed in verse 15-18: inevitable, irreversible wrath, trouble, distress, destruction, desolation, darkness, gloom, clouds, thick darkness, battle cry, distress on men, staggering trauma because men have “sinned against the Lord.”

Personal sin is always a reason to wail. Oh, that we feared sin more!

ASSEMBLE YOURSELVES TOGETHER FOR PRAYER (2:1)

“Zephaniah 2:1 Gather³⁵ yourselves together, yea, gather together, O nation not desired;

The word “gather” means “to assemble” and come together for national repentance; to repent, pray, and plead with God to avert the disaster (2:2). God called Judah “a nation not desired” or “not lovely” or “hated because of its sin.” A nation governed by humanists, statist, abortionists, internationalists,

³³ Clarke thinks those “who clothe themselves with foreign garments” does not refer to royal clothing, but to the adoption of politically correct alien law and statist policies of the international community. He has a point! In 2 Kings, God listed the reason Israel went into captivity and at the top of the list was adopting “the customs of the nations” (17:8). Benson and others think that the clothing refers to garments worn by the priests of Baal and women’s clothing. It is difficult to say. Possibly, the metaphor includes all these deviations.

³⁴ The priests “jumping over the threshold” is also difficult to interpret. Benson thinks it refers to the adoption of Philistine laws; that is, assimilating heathen practices into the worship at the Lord’s temple. Newcome seems to think it refers to the covetous artifices’ of deceit and oppression, as well as open violence. Violence can refer to physical harm and injury (Jeremiah 22:17). It may also refer to violation of God’s law.

³⁵ “Gather.” Clarke sees this as a command to separate the chaff from the wheat. Jamieson-Gausset-Brown see this as a call to prayer.

homosexuals, feminists, and perverts is like ugly on an ape. Such a state in the eyes of the court demands one's best pleadings. Honesty, humility, confession, and prayers to the court were the order of the hour.

This text reminds us of 2 Chronicles 7:14 which tally four traits of effective prayer: (1) humility, (2) pleas to the Court, (3) seeking the true God, and (4) turning from their wicked, unbiblical, lawless, malignant, sensual, callous, God-neglecting, lawless, tolerant, unholy, cream puff, cowardly, cowering, fainthearted, gutless, effeminate, pusillanimous, timid, sugar- sweet, candy-cane, totally-compliant-to-government ways.

SEEK THE LORD

Zephaniah 2:3 Seek ye the LORD, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought his judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the LORD'S anger.

When the Israelites heard the rumblings of God's judgment, they were told to seek the LORD.

The word "seek" means "to pursue, to require, to request, to demand."

The command was given to "the meek of the earth;" that is, to the poor and humble who were obedient to the LORD God. It was not issued to the proud, self-reliant, autonomous, lawless man.

The call to "seek ye the LORD" was in juxtaposition to those who sought the Baals (1:4; statism). He was not calling the people to seek religion or to perform sanctimonious rituals or to follow the god of their own creations. He was not calling them to vote or prey to their secular, statist kings. This is a call to pray to the living God Who created heaven and earth.

To seek God is to surrender to the rule of God and His purpose for men. It is equivalent to the NT concept of "Seek first the kingdom of God" in Matthew 6:33. Seek to live under His law-order, His values, His ethics, His commands. It is the opposite of being malleable to the world with its lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and the pride of life (1 John 2:5-17).

"Judgment must begin at the House of God" (1 Peter 4:17), and discerning, imprecatory prayers are in order. Don't ask God to bless wicked rulers. Pray, "May his days be few; may another take his office!" (Psalm 109:8).

The application is straight as an arrow. The remedy for judgment is seeking the Lord Jesus Christ and not America's many gods and many religions.

SEEK RIGHTEOUSNESS

Zephaniah 2:3 Seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the LORD'S anger.

The fifth way to respond to the thunderclaps of God's judgment is to seek righteousness.

Only God has the right to define righteousness. When man defines righteousness, he comes up with same-sex marriages, baby killing, franchises for statist, and transgender equality. Righteousness is an attribute of the LORD (Psalm 119:137), and that righteousness is expressed (a) objectively in His law (the Ten Commandments, and its relevant case law), and (b) subjectively in the Living Torah, the Lord Jesus Christ.

The command to seek righteousness is a call to not only obey God's law, but a plea to call neighbors and friends to restructure their lives under the authority of God's law-order. No man is safe when neighbors are not committed to the Ten Commandments. God's law is not only good for me, it is good for all men and all of man's institutions. Humility and simple obedience would reach the heart of God, and avert judgment where "perhaps you will be hidden" (2:3).

In summary, Zephaniah announced the terrifying storm of God's judgment that was about to pummel the nation. It was not too late. Judgment could be averted if the humble would (1) be silent, (2) weep and mourn over their own sins and the sins of the nation, (3) gather together for prayer, (4) seek the LORD and not the Baals and their statist regimes, (5) and restructure their lives under the authority of God's law.

We hear the rumbles of thunder. America is before the bar of Heaven. Disaster can be averted, but God's people will need to be silent with Bible in hand, to mourn and weep over their personal sin, to come together to pray and seek the LORD, and to re-order their beliefs and habits under the authority of God's law-order. Then, perhaps, maybe, possibly, hopefully America will be great again (Zephaniah 3:14-17).

17.9 IMPLICATION OF JUDGMENT WHEN THINGS ARE SO WRONG

Judgment calls for discernment now.

1 Corinthians 2:15 But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man.

Judgment calls for accurate living.

*Ephesians 5:15 See then that ye walk **circumspectly**, not as fools, but as wise,*

Judgment calls us to refrain judging others unjustly.

*Matthew 7:1- **Judge not**, that ye be **not** judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.*

Judgment calls us to live in light of our appearance before His throne.

1 Corinthians 4:3-5 But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self. For I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord. {know: or, I am not conscious of any fault}Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God.

Judgment means that we can ask God to expose our sins now for us to judge.

Psalms 139:23-24 Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

Judgment means we must judge sins inside the church.

1 Corinthians 5:7, 9, 12 Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us . . . I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators: For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within?

Judgment means the church should form its own court and judicial system to solve disputes in the church.

1 Corinthians 6:1 Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints?

2 Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters?

Judgment gives us authority to go to Court now before the Judge with imprecatory prayers.

Psalms 35:22-28 . . . keep not silent . . . Judge me, O Lord, my God . . . let them not rejoice over me.

Judgment means we should not trust atheists in secular courts.

Atheists have no conscience; no belief in an afterlife or a day of accountability. Men who do not believe in a Judgment Day are totally motivated by self-interest now. For this reason, atheists were not allowed to testify in public trials because they would not or could not honor an oath to tell the truth.

Tennessee Constitution of 1796 included the language of the Article VI test ban; however, the same constitution states that "no person who denies the being of God, or a future state of rewards and punishments, shall hold any office in the civil department of this State."

Adopting a standard definition of oaths, the Kentucky Constitution of 1792, which omitted an express religious test but prescribed a basic oath of office, stated that required oaths and affirmations "shall be esteemed by the legislature (as) the most solemn appeal to God." - Wallbuilders

THAT IS, WE HAVE AUTHORITY TO ENTER A COMPLAINT TO THE SUPREME COURT AND ASK FOR INJUNCTIVE RELIEF NOW FOR OUR CAUSE IN TIME.

17.10

17.11 IS THERE HOPE IN GODLY CAUSES?

Everything is going wrong, just right!

“The wrath of man will praise Thee, and the remainder of wrath shall he restrain,”
(Psalm 76:10).

Romans 15:13 Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.

Everyone needs hope, and everyone has hope of some kind . . . even though it be a false hope that shall perish (Job 8:13; 27:8). But, only Christians have true hope that will eventually be realized.

If there was ever a time we needed hope, it is in our time and our age. Maniacs rule the nations. Christianity is criticized, condemned, and castigated. Slanderers prevail in political battles. The gospel is assaulted, assailed, and attacked. Biblical morals are doubted, despised, and denounced. Hollyweird creates stars out of Sodomites, lesbians, and transvestites. History is being revised, rewritten, and reshaped into the way the new world order wants us to think about the past.

If you want to be depressed, discouraged, and downhearted, you don't have to look long or far. Just read the news, and your hope will be beat with an ugly stick.

But, all hope is not lost, and the wicked will not always triumph. Truth is not always on the scaffold while lies sit upon the throne. God is still sovereign. He reigns in the heavens though earthly princes prat around in palaces. He rules the nations.

“The wrath of man will praise Thee, and the remainder of wrath shall he restrain,”
(Psalm 76:10).

How much wickedness do we have to endure? Just enough!

Everything is going wrong, just right.

Let's look at three examples:

Abraham: It appeared that all hope was lost for having a son. Abraham was 100 years old; and, Sarah was 90 years old. The age of child bearing for both had passed. The energies of youth faded day-by-day under the weight of time. But, *everything was going wrong just right*. Abraham believed against hope that

God was able to do what He promised, and the LORD infused the chosen couple with life-producing power. Abraham became the father of Isaac, Jacob, David, and then the Lord Jesus Christ.

Ahab, the ugly toad that sat on the throne of Israel, and his hissing wife Jezebel, the painted, slithering viper from Phoenicia, ruled over the northern ten tribes. They initiated a violent pogrom against God's prophets and replaced them with profane, statist priests.

In 1 Kings 22, there was only one man left in Israel who was a true prophet of the Lord (Micaiah), and King Ahab hated him (22:8). Earlier, Ahab had slandered Naboth, murdered the man, and then seized his vineyard for his own pleasure (1 Kings 21). Three years passed and Ahab's throne seemed secure. *But, everything was going wrong, just right.*

Ahab went to war against the Syrians to regain Ramoth-gilead. It should have been an easy victory. The king even disguised himself in battle. But, a random arrow from an unknown archer waffled aimlessly through the air to land perfectly between the seam of Ahab's armor piercing his vitals. He bled out as Elijah predicted with dogs licking the blood dripping from his chariot hearse. The wicked will not always triumph nor will the wayward always win.

Hezekiah, the godly king of Judah, and little Jerusalem faced the mightiest army on earth – a powerful Assyrian military strike force that had smashed Syria, Phoenicia, Egypt and all the nations of the Levant (Isaiah 37-39). Who could overcome the bloody spears of the Assyrians? Jerusalem seemed destined to experiencing the same crushing force that had tumbled the nations around them. The reports of the siege and the hopelessness that shrouds a doomed people gripped hearts in the capital city. Hezekiah, however, ordered the people to be silent. *Everything was going wrong, just right.*

The next morning on the first day of battle, Israel's watchmen observed no activity in the camp of the Assyrians. After sending out a reconnaissance team to investigate the abnormality, the city filled with refugees discovered 186,000 dead Assyrian soldiers. God's death angel descended at night and slaughtered the entire army leaving Israel to the spoils of war. Who could have imagined such a change in political circumstances? God acted and the wicked were crushed under his power in the nick of time. The wicked will not always triumph nor will the wayward always win.

Likewise, we live in a day when liberals laugh and the righteous grieve. *But, everything is going wrong, just right.* In His time. God will expose the corruption, smash these citadels of depravity, and exalt righteousness in the nation.

When you feel like things are falling apart, they may be falling into place.

There is hope for America and godly principles, but that hope is in Christ.

Let us remember that Christ is the light of the world. We can curse the darkness or we can light a candle of Christian hope. Let us never retract, never retreat, never retire from the battle for truth and justice. The liberal, politically-correct insanity promoted by the media and dominating politics will not always prevail.

Godly principles do not die and they do not have funerals. Righteousness cannot fit into a casket, never rides in a hearse, and pall bearers can't carry it to the grave. Christ lives! King Jesus rules! He reigns! Righteousness will be exalted in His time for His glory. In Him hope never ends, because In Him is endless hope.

18 THE MALKUWTH OF GOD

The kingdom of God (Heb: *malkuwth*; Grk: *basileia*) was the major message of John the Baptist, Jesus, Philip, Paul, and Peter. Therefore, it behooves us to understand the Old Testament presentment of the kingdom.

The Hebrew word for kingdom or rule is *malkuwth*, and the Greek word for kingdom is *basileia*.

The kingdom of God (*basileia*), though not expressed in that term in the Old Testament, stands out as a foundational concept in Old Testament Theology.

*Psalm 103:19 The LORD hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his **kingdom** (malkuwth) ruleth over all.*

Psalm 72:7 In his days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth.

*Matthew 4:17 17 From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the **kingdom** of heaven (*basileia, h` basilei, a tw/n ouvrnw/n*-) is at hand.*

18.1 INTRODUCTION TO KINGDOM THEOLOGY

Ladd said it like this: We live at a marvelous and fearful time in history. It is marvelous because of the technological advancements of science. These advances cause us to live in comforts undreamed of a millennium ago. Electric lights empower our homes. Microwave ovens cook our food in minutes. Giant missiles launch sensitive telecommunication satellites into outer space which are capable of transmitting radio signals from continent to continent. Every working day large computers process millions of financial transactions in seconds to places around the earth. Polio, heart disease, and forms of cancer have tumbled under the advancements of medical science. In times past, a man was fortunate if he could live past forty. Today, life expectancy is around seventy-five. Politically, we have seen the collapse of communism in 1989 in Eastern Europe, followed by the destruction of the Berlin wall. It is indeed a marvelous age!

A FEARFUL AGE

Ladd observed that we live in a fearful age plagued with problems. Our delicate economy is tied into global networks so that world events affect prices in our hometowns. Radical third world powers headed by madmen are rushing to develop nuclear weapons capable of destroying major cities. Mass starvation

threatens large populations in Africa and India. Islamic immigration threatens all of what remains of a Christian Civilization. The incurable HIV virus (AIDS) is sucking the life out of millions of men and women around the world. The "New World Order" seeks to usurp the sovereignty of the superpowers and bring them under the control of a one world government. Pollution threatens the skies and lakes and soils and water supplies needed by every family on earth. It is a fearful age indeed!

What does it all mean? Where is this world headed? Does history have an end, a goal, a destiny?

MAN'S DREAM

Since ancient times men have dreamed of an ideal age. The Greeks pictured an ideal "politeo" based on philosophical principles. Marx envisioned an ideal age based on economic equality. Freud viewed utopia as unrestrained sexual fulfillment. Hitler tried to create the perfect race by eliminating the "unwants" from society. Perhaps John Lennon's song expresses what many dream today: a world with "no countries", "no religion", "no heaven", "no hell", "no possessions," and everyone "living for today", and with the world as one.

Plato: An ideal political state run by philosophical principles

Freud: A society which put no restraints on sexual drives

Marx: Redistribution of wealth: Rich.....to the poor.

Hitler: Dominance of the blond, blue-eyed, white race.

Huxley: No hope . . . escape into the mystical ideal through drugs.

THE BIBLICAL HOPE

The Hebrew Christian faith expresses its hope of an ideal age in terms of the Kingdom of God. The prophets of Israel preached about a day when God's rule would intervene in human history, disrupt all society, and usher in the dynamic, cataclysmic reign of a Messiah (Daniel 2). This age would begin with a powerful, global judgment, a separation of the wicked from the righteous (Isaiah 24; Matthew 3:12).

It would then spawn an era unmatched in history: an age of peace (Isaiah 2:4), of righteousness and justice (Isaiah 9:6), of environmental transformation (Isaiah 11), of healing (Isaiah 35:3-7), and of unparalleled, universal blessing and prosperity (Isaiah 25:6-9). This is a Biblical hope and for this reason Christians throughout time have prayed, "Father, Thy Kingdom come." But is this hope only a dream?

IMPORTANCE OF THE KINGDOM

The Revelation of the Kingdom of God was the main burden of Israel's prophets after 1000 B.C. Isaiah, Ezekiel, Zechariah, Daniel, Malachi, Jeremiah and others looked with anticipation towards this event.

Even as early as David the Kingdom was understood (Psalm 72). Since it was the major message of the prophets and apostles, it behooves the Christian to understand it.

UNDERSTANDING JOHN'S MESSAGE DEPENDS ON IT

Matthew 3:2 And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

UNDERSTANDING CHRIST'S MESSAGE DEPENDS ON IT

Kingdom proclamation was the major message of John the Baptist, the major message of Jesus, and the major message of Christianity's greatest missionary.

Matthew 4:17 From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

UNDERSTANDING PHILIP'S MESSAGE DEPENDS ON IT

Acts 8:12 But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.

UNDERSTANDING PAUL'S MESSAGE DEPENDS ON IT.

Acts 19:8 And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God.

Acts 20:25 And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more.

Acts 28:23 And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into his lodging; to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from morning till evening.

Acts 28:31 Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him.

UNDERSTANDING SALVATION DEPENDS ON IT.

The Kingdom must be received:

"I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the Kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it" (Mark 10:15).

What is received: the church? Heaven? a place? One must receive the kingdom (God's rule) to enter into it.

UNDERSTANDING DISCIPLESHIP DEPENDS ON IT.

The Kingdom must be placed first: "Seek first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness" (Matthew 6:33).

What are believers to seek first? Heaven? the church? a place? Seeking first the Kingdom means to come under its power, its authority, and its commandments; that is, to seek to live under and be influenced by the Kingdom now.

Understanding effective prayer depends on it.

We are taught to pray, "Our Father, who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name; thy *basileia* come..." (Matthew 6:9).

18.2 PERPLEXITY SURROUNDING THE KINGDOM OF GOD

JOHN THE BAPTIST'S PERPLEXITY

John understood that when the LORD comes to set up His rule and authority on Earth through his appointed Messiah, Jesus Christ He would destroy His enemies (the wicked); bring salvation to the righteous

Matthew 3:2 And saying, Repent ye: for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand- (John).

Matthew 3:11 I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost (salvation), and with fire (judgment).

To John, the kingdom of God was the dynamic, irresistible, cataclysmic, disruptive, universal, obtrusive entrance of the rule of God into history that would destroy the wicked (Baptism of Fire), and to bless God's people (Israel) with life and salvation through the power of the Holy Spirit in a renewed creation (Baptism of the Holy Ghost).

This hope is found in Psalm 72, Isaiah 2, 9, 11, 66, Malachi 4, and Matthew 2.

But, when Christ came, John saw acts of salvation. Christ appeared to be the "One Who should come," but John did not see the dynamic crushing of God's enemies, and therefore doubted whether Jesus was the Promised One (Matthew 11). Did John not understand the Old Testament kingdom theology?

Matthew 11:1 And it came to pass, when Jesus had made an end of commanding his twelve disciples, he departed thence to teach and to preach in their cities.

Matthew 11:2 Now when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples,

Matthew 11:3 And said unto him, Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?

Matthew 11:4 Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and show John again those things which ye do hear and see:

Matthew 11:5 The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them.

Matthew 11:6 And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me.

John was asking: “Where is the dynamic, powerful, cataclysmic, irresistible entrance of the rule of God into history?”

Christ, however, recognized this complexity and added, “blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me.”

In order to understand John’s perplexity, we must grasp OT kingdom theology.

18.3 PERPLEXITY OF MODERN SCHOLARS ABOUT THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Augustine identified the Kingdom as the church, and the church's mission is to transform the world into the Kingdom of God.

Johannes Weiss (1892) published a little booklet called “The Preaching of Jesus about the Kingdom of God” and views Jesus’ kingdom proclamation as something altogether future, something to appear when Jesus returns.

Albert Schweitzer took an apocalyptic approach (1911). He related the kingdom totally to an act apocalyptic of God at the end of history where a new heavenly order would take place. In his eyes, it was in no sense operational today. To Schweitzer, Jesus was deceived about the kingdom coming in his day.

Adolf Von Harnack took the subjective approach (old liberal view). He related the kingdom to the human spirit and its relationship to God, the inner power of the soul.

C. H. Dodd disagreed with Schweitzer and saw the kingdom as "the 'wholly other' which has entered into time and space in the person of Jesus of Nazareth." To Dodd, the KOG was a present in the ministry of Christ.

Albrecht Ritschl: The Kingdom of God "is the unity of humanity organized according to love" (Grenz & Olson, p. 55).

Sin, therefore, is the opposite of the Kingdom. Salvation is the full fruition of the Kingdom of God on earth.

Others have identified the Kingdom as synonymous with heaven . . . or the realm of human heart . . . or the salvation experience . . . or the pattern for an ideal society . . . or heaven.

Classical dispensationalists identify the Kingdom as a form of the Davidic Kingdom. That is, John and Jesus proclaimed a geo-political Kingdom that was offered, rejected, then postponed. Walvoord retains this view (Bock, 1993, p. 42).

Classical dispensationalism expressed the kingdom in a central dualism: the kingdom of heaven (the Davidic, earthly rule), and the kingdom of God (the heavenly rule). (Bock, 93).

Scotfield saw the Kingdom today as a mystery (a form of corrupted Christendom).

Walvoord (Bock, 1993) speaks of the kingdom today as a "mystery form" (the rule of Christ in the church today). He used Scotfield's terminology, but defined it differently.

Walvoord insisted on a distinction between the millennium and the eternal state. To Walvoord, all OT promises relate to the earthly millennium. Walvoord saw different kingdoms, while PDs see one eschatological kingdom with different aspects.

Revised dispensationalists sought a way to speak of a spiritual kingdom in this dispensation. McClain didn't believe in a mediatorial kingdom today. Ryrie dropped Scotfield's terminology and spoke of the Davidic Kingdom.

Dwight Pentecost saw 10 successive stages of the Kingdom from creation to the millennium. He understood there to be a presence of God's Theocratic Kingdom today and that the church is an aspect of the theocratic Kingdom.

Progressives see one kingdom with both spiritual and political aspects. Ryrie (1995), however, chides PDs for not defining the kingdom and for blurring various kingdom in the Bible. PDs see the kingdom as inaugurated with Christ's ascension. CD's do not. (See Ladd, 1959; Bock, 1993; Pentecost, 1995).

THE KINGDOM AND ITS NEW TESTAMENT PRESENTATION

The KOG was near to John the Baptist: "Repent for the Kingdom of God is at hand." (Matthew 3:2) When John was preaching it appeared to be in the future, but imminent.

The KOG was present in Jesus' reign and ministry: "...the Kingdom of God does not come visibly...because the Kingdom of God is within you" (Luke 17:20, 21). And yet Jesus said to Pilate, "My Kingdom is not of this world" (John 18:36).

Luke 11:20 But if I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the Kingdom of God is come upon you.

The KOG is a present reality today: "For the Kingdom of God is not eating and drinking but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" (Romans 14:17). The KOG is like a tiny seed which will become a big tree..

The KOG is a present realm, something believers have already entered: "delivered us from the dominion of darkness and transferred us to the Kingdom of his beloved Son" (Colossians 1:13; Ephesians 5:5; Revelation 11:15; Luke 16:16).

The KOG is a future inheritance: Peter discusses a future day when there "will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 1:11). See also: (Matthew 25:34; and 8:11). Man will come from the east and west and sit at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. The future Kingdom will come with great glory (Matthew 13:41,42), on the other hand, it cannot be observed, "The Kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed nor will they say, 'Lo, here it is!' or, 'There!' for behold the kingdom of God is in the midst of you" (Luke 17:20-21).

The KOG appears to be an inward reality: "Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the Kingdom of God is within you.(Luke 17:21).

The Kingdom is spiritual for Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world" (John 18:36).

The Kingdom is a slow gradual process, like leaven, in a lump of dough. It works in a hidden, unseen way. It was small in Jesus' day, but works its way through society conquering hearts (Matthew 13).

The teaching on the Kingdom can be confusing. Jesus preached that the Kingdom was near (Matthew 4:17), then He said it was here (Matthew 12:). On one hand, it is future (1 Peter 1:5ff), on the other it is a present reality (Matthew 12:28). It appears to be an experience as well as realm (Matthew 12:21), an inner, spiritual reality as well as a material, political reality (Revelation 11:15).

The question remains: "**What is the Kingdom of God?**"

THE OT VIEW OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

One of the problems of defining the Kingdom is its use as a western idiom. The dictionary (Random House, p. 738) says a Kingdom is “a state or monarchy the head of which is a king; dominion; realm.” The word Kingdom means different things to different people. Kingdom of Great Britain refers to the citizens over whom the Queen exercises her rule, the subjects of her Kingdom. Here it is a dominion, a realm, citizenry. We think of it as a place, often synonymous with heaven. But these ideas are an incorrect representation of the KOG.

In order to understand the meaning of the Kingdom, the Bible student must consult the Old Testament. One will never determine the meaning of the Kingdom from the New Testament. When John, Christ, and Paul preached the good news of the Kingdom, they were speaking to a generation who understood the Old Testament concept of Kingdom.

The Hebrew word for Kingdom is "malkuth" (tk,l,m.m). According to Daniel chapter two, Gentile Kingdoms would rule the world until the climatic intervention of the Kingdom of God into history. Daniel's Kingdom was eschatological, dynamic, catastrophic, universal, and terminal.

The idea of authority, rule, and reign is present:

2 Chronicles 12:1 And it came to pass, when Rehoboam had established the Kingdom (rule), and had strengthened himself, he forsook the law of the LORD, and all Israel with him.

Daniel 2:37-"You, O king, the king of kings, to whom the God of heaven has given the Kingdom, the power, the might, and the glory."

Note the synonyms for kingdom: power, might, glory all are symbols of authority.

Daniel 5:26- of Belshazzar, God says: "God has numbered the days of your Kingdom and brought it to an end"

The authority, not the realm, or the people, or the state was destroyed. Rather, a transfer of authority was passed to another.

Daniel 8:23 And in the latter time of their Kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up.

Psalms 103:19 The LORD hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his Kingdom (malkuth) ruleth over all

Psalms 145:11 They shall speak of the glory of thy Kingdom, and tell of thy power.

Note this parallelism: Kingdom and power are the same. The realm of God's rule is heaven and earth, but there is no reference to realm here, only to power.

Psalm 145: 13 Thy Kingdom is an everlasting Kingdom, and thy dominion endures throughout all generations."

Ezra 8:1 speaks of the "kingdom of Araexerses."

In Summary, the Old Testament understanding of kingdom is that of authority, power, dominion, or rule.

From Genesis to Malachi, history is presented as the unfolding plan of redemption by God to restore what was lost in the fall of man. Paradise Lost is Paradise Restored in the minds of Israel's prophets. History is not circular. It is headed in a linear direction towards the Kingdom of God.

How the OT writers develop the kingdom of God theme:

By the hope of a **coming redeemer** who will destroy the wicked and deliver God's people from their enemies (Genesis 3:15; Isaiah 9:6; Isaiah 11; Isaiah 42:1ff).

By the use of the word "**kingdom.**" (**Wkl.m**, malkuw). Though the word "kingdom of God" is not used in the OT, the concept of God's rule among men is expressed in the term "kingdom." (Psalm 84:3, 145:1; Isaiah 43:1, 15).

By **coming of God** to his people. Again and again, whether directly or apocalyptically, God is seen riding on the clouds to come and deliver his people. The great hope of the OT was "Immanuel," God with his people (Isaiah 7:14; Exodus 19).

By the **restoration of Israel** themes (Hosea 3; Joel 3:1; Ezekiel 37; Micah 4:1-5; Jeremiah 23:3; 30:17; Amos 9:11ff). After the divided kingdom (931 BC), the hope of a united nation never ceased to be a theme of the prophets (Ezekiel 37:15-17).

By the outpouring of **the Holy Spirit** upon God's people and upon the environment (Joel 2; Isaiah 32:15).

By the **new covenant** (Jeremiah 31:33ff). Unable to obtain the blessings under the old covenant because of the general disobedience of God's people, God promised a day when God's people would enjoy salvic blessing based on a new kind of covenant.

By the term "**day of the Lord.**" The "day of the Lord" was a day when God would deliver his people and judge his enemies. There appears to be an eschatological element in the term (Isaiah 2:12, 17; 13:9-11; Joel 2; Amos 5:18; Zephaniah 1:14-15).

OT PASSAGES RELATED TO THE KINGDOM

Genesis 3:15- The mother promise.

Deuteronomy 18:15- The greater prophet than Moses.

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2 Samuel 7:12-13- Establishment of David's kingdom.

Psalms 72- The final prayer of David after he saw the Eschaton.

Isaiah 2:1-5, 12-17- The last days.

Isaiah 7:14- Immanuel with us.

Isaiah 9:6- The Agent who will establish the kingdom.

Isaiah 11:1- The branch, his sevenfold wisdom, and the new order.

Isaiah 25:6- God's banquet for all people.

Isaiah 32:1- Isaiah sees the ruler of the Eschaton.

Isaiah 35:3-10- Announcement of the great day when God comes to destroy and save.

Isaiah 40:1-5- Comfort for the people of God.

Isaiah 42:1ff- God's Servant establishes justice.

Isaiah 49:5-13- Accomplishments of God's Servant.

Isaiah 55:1- The covenant invitation.

Isaiah 61:1-4- Christ's first sermon.

Isaiah 62:1-12- The glory of Jerusalem.

Isaiah 65:17-25- Description of the new heaven and new earth.

Isaiah 66:22- Regeneration of the new heaven and new earth.

Ezekiel 38, 39- A description of the final battle.

Ezekiel 40- A description of the ultimate temple.

Daniel 2:1ff- Entrance of the kingdom into world history.

Daniel 7- The Son of Man, redeemer and king.

Hosea 3- Restoration of Israel, a questionable eschatological passage

Joel 2:28ff- Regeneration of the people of God by the Holy Spirit

Joel 3:1 The fortunes of Israel, an apocalyptic description of restoration.

Old Testament Theology

Amos 5:18 The day of the Lord

Amos 9:11-15 Restoration of Israel, a questionable eschatological passage

Micah 4:1-5- A vision of the Eschaton.

Zechariah 9:9ff- A prophecy of the coming King.

Zechariah 12-14- A vision of the final battle.

Malachi 4:1ff- Unfolding of the eschatological drama.

ASPECTS OF THE KINGDOM

A NEW KING

Isaiah 11:1 And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots:

Isaiah 11:2 And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD;

Isaiah 11:3 And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears:

Isaiah 9:6 For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

Isaiah 9:7 Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his Kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.

Isaiah 2:4 And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

A NEW ISRAEL

Jeremiah 23:3 And I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all countries whither I have driven them, and will bring them again to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase.

Jeremiah 23:4 And I will set up shepherds over them which shall feed them: and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall they be lacking, saith the LORD.

Jeremiah 23:5 Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth.

Jeremiah 23:6 In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

Jeremiah 23:7 Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that they shall no more say, The LORD liveth, which brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt;

Jeremiah 23:8 But, The LORD liveth, which brought up and which led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country, and from all countries whither I had driven them; and they shall dwell in their own land.

A NEW JUDGMENT

Isaiah 40:3 The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

Isaiah 40:4 Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain:

Isaiah 40:5 And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.

Malachi 4:1 For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.

Malachi 4:2 But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall.

Malachi 4:3 And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the LORD of hosts.

A NEW SALVATION

Isaiah 35:3 Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees.

Isaiah 35:4 Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompense; he will come and save you.

Isaiah 35:5 Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped.

Isaiah 35:6 Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert.

Isaiah 35:7 And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass with reeds and rushes.

Isaiah 25:6 And in this mountain shall the LORD of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined.

Isaiah 25:7 And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations.

Isaiah 25:8 He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the LORD hath spoken it.

Isaiah 25:9 And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the LORD; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.

A NEW RELATIONSHIP

Jeremiah 31:31 Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah:

Jeremiah 31:32 Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD:

Jeremiah 31:33 But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.

Jeremiah 31:34 And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

A NEW SPIRITUALITY

Joel 2:27 And ye shall know that I am in the midst of Israel, and that I am the LORD your God, and none else: and my people shall never be ashamed.

Joel 2:28 And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions:

Joel 2:29 And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit.

A NEW CREATION

Isaiah 65:17 For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind.

Isaiah 66:22 For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the LORD, so shall your seed and your name remain.

THE NEW TESTAMENT OPENS UP WITH JOHN'S MINISTRY

Matthew 3:2 "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

Matthew 3:3 For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah when he said, "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare¹ the way of the Lord; make his paths straight."

Matthew 3:12 His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into the barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."

Matthew 11:2-3 Now when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples, And said unto him, Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?

Was John wrong in his understanding of the OT kingdom? Albert Schweitzer thought so.

If not, why did John question Jesus if He was "He that should come" Matthew 11?

Now you are ready for a study of New Testament Theology which is based on the Foundation Stones of Old Testament Theology.

19 APPENDIX ON KINGDOM STUDIES

19.1 DANIEL 2: THE FOUR EMPIRES

Daniel 2:36-46

(Source: Stockton, Towards Exegetical Eschatology)

Before us is the unveiling of four kingdoms that will dominate history of the world in Herculean imagery. The statue of gold, silver, bronze and iron represent four empires that will arise in history to dominate the landscape of politics. When these federations have run their course, Messiah will appear in dynamic, catastrophic fashion to disrupt history, to smash man's institutions, and to establish His eternal kingdom. The dream informed Israel that they would be under the dominion of Gentiles until God sends his Rock to smash man's governments. Then the saints would receive the kingdom.

In chapters seven and eight, and eleven through twelve, Daniel records three more of his own visions that take the reader deeper into the world empires and their character until the appearance of the Messianic kingdom. His answer to prayer in Daniel nine stands alone. Daniel's revelations act like a kaleidoscope providing more information about these dominions as one moves through the book. The unveiling of Nebuchadnezzar's vision and the interpretation proved to his contemporaries that Daniel is an interpreter of dreams and a man of unquestionable integrity. In chapter seven and eight, he has his own dreams. His character having been established Daniel 2, the validity of Daniels revelations in later chapters is not in question. We must believe and trust the vision in the second half of the book. However, to the modern reader, the interpretation of these dreams and their application to our times remains a challenge.

Furthermore, the reader would do well to keep in mind the critical question of God's people in Babylon at the time of Daniel's revelations. Since they were judged by God and taken to Babylon under the jurisdiction of the Babylonians, these people wanted to know how long the kingdom of God would suffer at the hands of foreign powers? The answer is provided in Isaiah 2:44, 7:18, 7:27; 12:1-13. Four alien empires would arise in history and run their course. At the end of the fourth empire, one like the "son of man" would appear and usher in the Rule of God.

Daniel 2:36 This is the dream; and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king.

Having finished telling Nebuchadnezzar his dream, Daniel now announces his intention of giving the interpretation. But, who is the "we"? Possibly, Daniel includes his three friends or the whole of the Jewish Remnant in Babylon as the source of Divine secrets and illumination.

37-38 Thou, O king, art a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory. And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the

fowls of the heaven hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou art this head of gold.

The title “king” and *shar-sharani* (king of kings) is ascribed to Nebuchadnezzar (cf. Ezekiel 26:7). He was normally referred to as *sharru-rabbu* (“great king”), but here the technical term is applied to him. We are not left in doubt as to what is meant by the first of the four empires. The head of gold is the Babylonian Empire, of which Nebuchadnezzar was in every sense the representative head, being the actual founder of it, and its chief executive during his long reign of forty-three years. The Greek word for kingdom is *basilea*, which refers to authority of a ruler over a realm. His appointment and the acumen to preserve his dominion and the glories of it was not due to his own political prowess, but is announced as a gift of the God of Heaven.

The four parts of the image symbolize four kingdoms; but Nebuchadnezzar, both in reality and in the memory of posterity, so eclipsed prior monarchs of the first dynasty, that he is identified as possessing all the power and glory of it.

39 And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee, and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth.

After Babylon, three more great empires are announced. The second kingdom with the silver torso follows Babylon. In all probability, it represents Media and Persia. The home of the Medes was in the mountainous country north to northeast of Babylon we now call Iran. The Medes are often mentioned in the Assyrian inscriptions beginning with the 8th century B.C. They were first consolidated into an important power by Cyaxares around 624–584 B.C., during whose reign (607), they were the main military power bringing about the destruction of Nineveh. Cyaxares was succeeded by Astyages, whose soldiers deserted en masse to Cyrus circa 549 B.C. Consequently, the empire of the Medes came under the jurisdiction of the Persians. Their name was memorialized by the Greeks for they regularly referenced the Persians as Medes (cf. Daniel 5:28, 6:8; 6:12, 15). However, Daniel is brief and careful not to tell Nebuchadnezzar that the second kingdom would destroy the Babylonian Empire.

The third kingdom is identified by Biblical scholars as Greece. It is universally known that Alexander the Great subdued the Medes and Persians. This prince is said, by the author of the first book of Maccabeus, “to be the first that reigned over Greece, after having smitten Darius the king of the Persians and Medes; to have made many wars, won many strong holds, and slain the kings of the earth; also to have gone through to the ends of the earth, and taken the spoils of many nations.” It is reported this mighty general “built more than seventy cities, twelve of which, or, as Curtius intimates, eighteen, he named Alexandria; that his soldiers, though unarmed, were never afraid, while he was with them, of any armed forces. He engaged no enemy which he did not defeat, besieged no city which he did not take, and made attacks on no nation which he did not entirely subdue.”

Alexander himself ordered his own appellation, “The king of the entire world.” Though he did not really conquer the whole world, Alexander did control the region around the Mediterranean, Europe, Asia, and

Africa. He is the leopard in Daniel 7 with four wings that conquered Asia, Palestine, Syrian, Egypt and Persia in only ten years. Following Alexander's short life, his successors Hellenized the Levant creating the cultural conflicts that existed during the Maccabean Era.

40 And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all *things*: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise.

Iron is less valuable than gold, silver, and bronze, but more abundant. Further, its utilitarian usages and strength far surpasses the precious metals. The image of iron conveys power, force, and invincibility. And this is its usage here. Iron yields to nothing. It is indomitable, overwhelming, and obstinate. Much more is said about the fourth kingdom than all the others. The word “break” (*deqaq*) means “to shatter into pieces.” The word “subdueth” (*chashal*) is a Piel verb meaning “to crush violently.” Daniel describes this kingdom as iron, and then compares it to iron that “breaketh” all the former kingdoms. Again, he uses a Piel verb to emphasize the terrifying crushing, shattering power of this kingdom.

The four metals signify four different nations. As the gold signified the Babylonians, the silver the Persians, and the brass the Greeks, so the iron must necessarily denote some other nation. Of the second and third empires, each borrowed something from that which preceded it. The fourth empire introduces a powerful new system, and a new dominating civilization. Without a doubt, this is the indomitable Roman Empire with its democratic form and all its iron-fisted military Caesars.

41-43 And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters' clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay. And as the toes of the feet *were* part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken. And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay.

The emphasis upon the feet and toes made of iron and clay communicate several realities:

A powerful but imperfect confederation of states.

Political power and conflict.

Diversity, multiculturalism, and multiracialism.

Divisions, fractures, subdivisions, sectional solidarity.

Use of the word “iron” speaks of unyielding political power. Clay speaks about weakness and an inability to assimilate and unite. This is a kingdom that resists replacement, but has difficulty with solidarity.

Rome was a powerful centralized government that crushed its opponents with raw police power. A government of consolidated states that maintained a certain unity around language, religion, and ethnicity, the empire was subject to hegemony and political discontent. The expression “seed of men” indicates

conquest, immigration, and a mixing of the different races. The phrase “partly strong” and “partly broken” communicates political strength as well as political strife, civil war, and internal discord. Regimes attempt political unity, but solidarity will NOT be complete or lasting. conjunction of the Romans with the conquered nations, and afterward with the Goths, Vandals, and other barbarians, who subverted the empire, seems to be here intended. Multiculturalism is not a strength, but a weakness to overcome.

Before going further, one would do well to reflect on the history of the west. Europe, Great Britain, the Baltic States, Australia, South America, Canada, and the United States are products of the Roman Empire.

44-45 And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, *but* it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever. Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream *is* certain, and the interpretation thereof sure.

This is the first mention of kings in the vision, and it is plural. Each toe must represent a different jurisdiction over which some monarch reigns. The fourth kingdom contains many jurisdictions. While this fourth kingdom still contrives to exist in some modified form, and while its component parts are in a state of war and turmoil, the kingdom of God burst on the scene to crush man’s empires and to set up His eternal kingdom.

The mountain was not mentioned as a detail in Daniel 2:34 but is now brought into focus. In the language of prophecy, it refers to the archetype of Mount Zion, which appears in other passages to be closely connected with the Messiah and His kingdom (cf. Psalm 1:2; Isaiah 2:2; Hebrews 12:22).

The entrance of the kingdom into history is not gradual and progressive, but dynamic, powerful, cataclysmic, and irresistible. The image before us is that of a huge monolithic stone that tumbles off Mount Zion to crush the image and terminate the kingdoms of men. The dream reveals a day when God’s rule would intervene in human history, disrupt all society, and usher in the dynamic, cataclysmic reign of a Messiah (Daniel 2). This age would begin with a powerful, global judgment--a separation of the wicked from the righteous (Isaiah 24; Malachi 4:1-4; Matthew 3:12).

46-47 Then the king Nebuchadnezzar fell upon his face, and worshipped Daniel, and commanded that they should offer an oblation and sweet odours unto him.

The king answered unto Daniel, and said, Of a truth *it is*, that your God *is* a God of gods, and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, seeing thou couldest reveal this secret.

With the dream disclosed and its basic interpretation explained, King Nebuchadnezzar, in state of awe and wonder, does what any man in his position ought to do. He falls in humble adoration before Daniel to honor Him and announce his new Revelation about Daniel’s God. Of a truth, your *God is a God of gods*

not only because there is no other, but because He is above all gods in ability; over all gods in rank and authority. As *Lord of kings* all rulers derive their power from Him and are accountable Him. Daniel's God is the supreme Governor of the world and Ruler of all the kings and kingdoms in it (cf. Revelation 1:5). As a Revealer of secrets, He determines the narrative of history and brings to light its hidden secrets. The fact that Daniel could reveal the matter was proof of claim to Nebuchadnezzar that God had taken Daniel into his counsels. Subsequently, the king made Daniel a great man; that is, he honored and magnified his name. While accepted by Daniel, there was little the king could do to improve his favored status seeing that God had already made Daniel great by conferring on Him the gifts of revelator.

Modern civil rulers would do well to reflect on the lesson that Nebuchadnezzar learned, that Daniel's God is the God of gods and the King of kings. Not all religions are the same nor do all deserve the same protection.

Furthermore, just as Jesus is Head of the Church, He is King of the kings of the earth. Accountable to Him, they ought to conduct their administration under His law and for His purposes; that just as the citizens should surrender to the authority of a responsible regime, every regime is responsible to obey the law of the Lord God. History is headed toward the kingdom of God and the governments of this world are destined to be crushed by the Stone from Mount Zion. Furthermore, all would do well to remember that the Stone from God's Holy Mountain entered history quietly in advance of the terminal, cataclysmic judgment of these kingdoms to save men and bring men under the first fruit-blessings of his eternal Kingdom.

This was John's understanding of the kingdom of God. Can you understand his perplexity (Matthew 11)?

19.2 DANIEL 9: THE SEVENTY WEEKS

(Source: Stockton, Towards Exegetical Eschatology)

Daniel 9:24-27 is important because it is a prophecy that deals with time frames and events of the Messiah and the destruction of Jerusalem in 70AD. It is so specific, it provides evidence of Divine foreknowledge regarding the Messiah.

However, this passage has been called the "Swamp of Old Testament Criticism" and rightly so. It is perhaps the most difficult passage in the Bible to interpret correctly. While all agree it is a reference to Christ and His work in history, not all are agreed on how the passage should be interpreted.

An accurate interpretation of Daniel 9 requires a competent knowledge of Biblical literature, of Biblical languages, particularly Hebrew, the details of Hebrew grammar, a competent knowledge of the post-exilic writings, a thorough and adequate knowledge of the entire Book of Daniel, a knowledge of history, and conservative systematic theology. Further, getting the interpretation correct requires radical curiosity, tons of patience and humility, and the honesty of a mirror.

There is a T.V. series called the "Myth Busters" and at the end of each show they warn the audience, "Don't try this at home." The same is true in this passage. Don't try and interpret this passage in between coffee breaks at home. In other words, it takes a sack of PHDs to work through the difficulties in this passage.

Further, if the interpreter approaches this passage with an end-time agenda and wants to use this passage to prove his treasure chest of eschatological insights, he will find it here; that is, you can prove almost any end-time scheme you want from this passage. Such an approach takes no scholarship and no integrity. This passage is filled with bear traps and it should not be wise to use this as pillar for an end-time theory. Rather, the interpreter needs to be humble and do his best to work through the difficulties of the passage and limitations of his own scholarly capacities. Though most Biblical scholars are honest and are doing their best to interpret the passage, all have linguistic and literary limitations that make it difficult to shuffle the cards and to come up with a full house in this passage. Having said this, I highly recommend the reader get hold of Peter Gentry's work on this passage, Southern Baptist Seminary, as he deals with the issues with scholarly integrity in a comprehensive way.

DANIEL'S INTERPREATION

24 Seventy weeks (~y(iøb.vi ~y(i'buvi) are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.

This message is a direct, Divine answer to Daniel's prayer about the end of Jewish captivity in Babylon (Daniel 9:1-23). In Daniel's mind, as he studied Jeremiah writings, the seventy years of exile that Jeremiah announced had a completion date.³⁶ Since Babylon had fallen (539 BC), and Darius the Mede ruled in the land, Daniel thought the *terminus ad quem* of Israel's seventy years of punishment was imminent. Israel had broken God's covenant (Exodus 19-24), and He exiled them to Babylon. But, God appeared to have a plan for restoration (Deuteronomy 30:10-11). And, since Isaiah **referenced both a physical return and spiritual return**, Daniel prayed for insight and understanding as to his times and the destiny of the people with whom his soul was bound (Jeremiah 25:1-15; 29:1-23; 1 Kings 8:33-34; Lamentations 2:2-5; Deuteronomy 28:15-68).

³⁶ Jeremiah 25:11-12 "And this whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years. 12 And it shall come to pass, when seventy years are accomplished, that I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, saith the LORD, for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans, and will make it perpetual desolations." Jeremiah 29:10 "For thus saith the LORD, That after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place."

Before us is a two-stage return. (A) a return to the land by a remnant that occurred during the reign of Cyrus (537-535 BC) (Isaiah 45; Ezra 1-6), and (B) a return to covenant blessings which included forgiveness and reconciliation under a Leader called "the Messiah" by the angel Gabriel (9:25) and "the Servant of the Lord" by the Prophet Isaiah. This Servant, a.k.a. the "arm of the Lord," would lead a new exodus out of transgression leading to reconciliation with God and a restoration of God's righteous law-order. But, between the first physical return (537 BC) and the spiritual second return or the new exodus there would be a longer period of time of seventy weeks (Isaiah 42:18-43; 43:22-44:23; 51:1- 53: 12).

The word "weeks" is *shabu'im*, and the word "seventy" is *shab'im*. The "seven" or "weeks" are periods of seven years measuring a sabbatical period of seven years. Hence, the "seventy sevens" reference ten jubilees ($10 \times 7 = 70$), the last of which would be the ultimate jubilee, the establishment of the kingdom of God on a renewed earth (Daniel 7:18, 27; Isaiah 11:1-9; Isaiah 65:17-25).

Daniel was expecting the seventy years of exile to end and for Israel to be wholly restored. But, God announces to Daniel that the complete restoration is going to take seventy-sevens or 490 years. This date, if calculated correctly, brings us to the death of Christ between 30-33 AD. The death of Christ is the ultimate jubilee because His work frees men from the dominion of sin and their debt to God.

"to finish the transgression" ~ The word "finish" means "to restrain" unrighteousness. It is a reference to the rebellion and transgression of law by Israel that caused God to judge the nation with the exile and that continued to work among them. The idea here is to keep lawlessness from spreading. Transgression will be throttled. Thus, God gave His people 70×7 years to repent or 490 years. Jesus may have been referring to this in his discourse to Peter on forgiveness, forgive "until seventy times seven" (Matthew 18:21).

"to make an end of sins" ~ a reference to ending the Levitical sacrificial system because the death of Christ is the final solution to man's sin problem.

"to make reconciliation for iniquity" ~ a reference to the work of Christ on the cross that reconciles men to God (cf. 2 Corinthians 5:18-19).

"to bring in everlasting righteousness" ~ either a reference to Christ the righteous One, or to justification, or to the restoration of God's law-order among men, or a reference to the righteousness of God's reign among men.

"to seal up the vision and prophecy" ~ Narrowly, it could refer to a completion of Jeremiah's 70 years of judgment, or more broadly a reference to the completion of the age of prophecy in the Christ, the fulfillment of all prophecy, or even and possibly a reference to the termination of prophecy altogether in the NT era.

"to anoint the most Holy" ~ "Messiah, the most holy" (Elliot). If this be the case, this is a reference to Christ as the true Temple of God, the Holy of Holies, which is parallel to "Messiah the Prince" in 9:25.

Who cannot help but stand back and admire such the disposals of Providence and the wisdom of him who has *determined the times before appointed*. The difficulties that arise about these seventy weeks for the Bible student are the *terminus a quo* and the *terminus ad quem* regarding the times appointed in this section.

25 Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah (x;yviam') the Prince ((dyglän") shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.

Daniel is concerned about time of restoration. When will Israel be restored? The first return was commission by Cyrus and in effect between 537-535 BC. But, the commission by Cyrus had several amendments attached to it by his successors including the command by Darius in 519 to finish the temple proper, and the commission by Artaxerxes to complete God's legal requirements for temple services issued to Ezra in 457 BC (Ezra 7:13)³⁷.

Thus, the *terminus a quo* for 69 weeks works out well with **457 BC**. Furthermore, 457 BC is the *terminus a quo* of the Seventy Weeks. **Allowing for all the chronological uncertainties**³⁸, the completion of the 69 weeks time frame would direct our minds safely to the beginning of the ministry of Christ sometime around 27-29 AD.³⁹ The completion of the 70 weeks would be somewhere around 34-36 AD. It was during the middle of the 70th week that Christ was crucified (Daniel 9:27) which occurred sometime between 31-33 AD.

Who is "Messiah the Prince?" The English term "Messiah" is the Hebrew word "meshiyack" or "anointed one." The title "the Prince" comes from the Hebrew word *nagid* which can be translated "ruler." Here the *meshiyack* and *nagid* refer to the same person. Due to numerous considerations, a reasonable conclusion is that this is the Messiah, **the Lord Jesus Christ** and not Antiochus or the High Priest Onias III active during the Maccabean Period (167 BC) or some alleged super antichrist at the end of history. Thus, the title *Messiah* and *Ruler* belong to Jesus.

³⁷ Ezra 7:13 I make a decree, that all they of the people of Israel, and of his priests and Levites, in my realm, which are minded of their own freewill to go up to Jerusalem, go with thee.

³⁸ John the Baptist began his ministry in the 15th year of Tiberius (Luke 3:1). Tiberius became Caesar on August 19, 14AD. The inauguration of Tiberius is one of the most documented certain dates in history. Nevertheless, there is some dispute as to whether Tiberius was co-regent with Caesar Augustus earlier than this (12-14 BC). If we take the late date of 14 AD date, John began his ministry sometime around 29 AD. And, Christ began his ministry in the fall of 29 AD. If we take the early date for the beginning of Tiberius's reign, John's ministry could be dated as early as 27 AD. If Jesus was born in 4 BC near the death of Herod (4 BC), and then he was baptized in 27 AD at the age of 30.

³⁹ Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible, LL.D., F.S.A., (1715-1832): "Mark 1:15 The time is fulfilled - That is, the time appointed for sending the Messiah; and particularly the time specified by Daniel, Daniel 9:24-27."

There is a problematic lexical and syntactical issue in this passage that only a competent Hebrew scholar can unravel.⁴⁰ There is a clause division between the "seven weeks" and the "sixty-two weeks;" that is, there is a 49 year work of rebuilding the wall and Jerusalem that takes place roughly between 457 and 407 AD, and a period of 62 weeks or 434 years where nothing significant happens that begins in 407 BC and terminates around 27- 30 AD.

Further, we must keep in mind that the Hebrews did not think linearly like the Greeks. And, this is seen in verses 25 and 26 where it appears we have a recursive, parallel literary structure as follows:

26a- a reference to the meritorious work of Christ,

26b- a reference to ruination of Jerusalem by the Jewish people.

27a- A reference to the meritorious accomplishments of Christ

27b- A reference to Jewish abominations resulting in the destruction of the city.

26 And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.

Note the word "after." After the "seven weeks" of completing the reconstruction of Jerusalem (457-407 AD), there would be "sixty-two weeks" or 434 years till the Messiah would be cut off. This takes our minds to the ministry of Christ (27-34 AD). The expression "be cut off" is a reference to the death of Messiah. This is a reference to Jesus' crucifixion. He would die after the 69th week (27 AD) and in the middle of the seventieth week between (27-35 AD). The end of the 70th Week takes us to 34-35 AD which is usually associated with the martyrdom of Stephen and his admonition for the nation to repent (Acts 7:54-60). "Not for himself" means that he did not die a criminal. Rather, his death was vicarious--a reference to his six works mentioned in verse 24.

Part B of verse 26 is a reference to the destruction of Jerusalem. The "Prince" is Christ. "The people of the prince" is a reference to the Jewish people. It is the Jewish people who were the cause of Jerusalem's downfall. The rebels in Jerusalem during 70 AD taunting the Romans were the cause of its ruin and destruction. The "sanctuary" is a reference to the Jewish temple and Jerusalem which was destroyed by John, Simon, and Eleazar, leaders of the Jewish Revolt in 70 AD (Josephus).

The "end" and "flood" and "war" and "desolations" are terms of catastrophe and termination. The Jewish people continued their revolt against God until restored Jerusalem was leveled and burned by their radical apostate leaders in 70 AD.

⁴⁰ See Peter Gentry's discussion on the two clauses, p. 30.

27 And he shall confirm the covenant (~yBiPr;!' tyrl±B. ryBiûg>hiw>))with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease⁴¹, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make *it* desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.

There is no basis for interpreting the "he" as some illusive future antichrist. The "he" in verse 27 is a reference to Christ, the Prince, the Messiah. Though not without difficulties, the expression "confirm the covenant" describes the formation of a covenant. This appears to be a reference to Christ inaugurating the "new covenant" by his blood spilt at Golgotha.

"With many for one week" appears to be a reference to the seventieth week and our Lord's death after three and one half years of ministry.

The expression "he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease" is a reference to Christ ending the Levitical sacrificial system making the system no longer necessary because of His death as the Lamb of God on Calvary.

The phrase "overspreading of abominations" is translated "wing of abominations" in the ESV. This appears to be a reference to Christ ending the extent of abomination being produced in Jerusalem by apostates controlling the temple. "The consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate" is a reference to the Jewish revolt which became the *terminus ad quem* of the desolations; that is, the rebellion of the protagonist of anti-Logos reached its climax during the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD. Thus, the fall of Jerusalem terminated the abominations wrought by the desolators ruining their capital city.

AN INTERPRETIVE TRANSLATION

24 Seventy weeks (ten jubilees or 490 years) are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city (Jerusalem), to finish the transgression (to end the rebellion), and to make an end of sins (bring an end to the sacrificial system by the death of Christ), and to make reconciliation for iniquity (Christ's death is the reconciliation), and to bring in everlasting righteousness (Christ and His Law-order), and to seal up the vision and prophecy (to fulfill all Messianic prophecy in Christ), and to anoint the most Holy (Christ as the Holy One).

25 Know therefore and understand, *that* from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem (an eighty-year period from Cyrus's decree (537 BC) to Artaxerxes decree in (457 BC)) unto

⁴¹ When Jesus, the Lamb of God, died on the cross, He became our one and final perfect sacrifice and nullified the need for the Levitical temple system. This was signified by the temple curtain been ripped from top to bottom. Matthew 27:51 "And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent;"

the Messiah the Prince (Christ) *shall be* seven weeks (49 years), and threescore and two weeks (434 years): the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times (457-407 BC).

26 And after (after not during) threescore and two weeks (after 27 AD) shall Messiah (Christ) be cut off (killed), but not for himself (a vicarious death): and the people (Jewish rebels leading the revolt in 70 A.D.) of the prince (Christ is the Ruler) that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary (Jewish people are the cause of Jerusalem's destruction); and the end thereof *shall be* with a flood (restored Jerusalem to be devastated), and unto the end of the war desolations are determined (a reference to the Jewish Revolt culminating in the destruction of restored Jerusalem in 70 AD by Vespasian / Titus).

27 And he (Christ) shall confirm the covenant (make a strong, new covenant) with many for one week and in the midst of the week (circa 27-34 AD): he (Christ) shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease (By virtue of His death), and for the overspreading (wings or extremes) of abominations (the rejection of Christ and the sacrilege by John, Simon, and Eleazar for control of Jerusalem in 70 AD) he (Christ) shall make *it* desolate (destruction of Jerusalem), even until the consummation (70 AD), and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate (Jewish rebels leading the revolt in 70 AD).

NOTES ON DANIEL 9:24-27

Important Dates: (Remember, there are different calendar systems used by ancient Israelites and their neighboring countries).

605- 606 BC ~ Beginning of Israel's 70 year captivity (Jeremiah 25). Battle of Carchemish. Daniel taken captive after this

596-597 BC ~ Second Deportation

589 BC ~ Beginning of Israel's devastations

586 BC ~ Destruction of Jerusalem

539 BC ~ Persian conquest of Babylon by Cyrus the Great

***536 BC** ~ Cyrus decree to allow the Jews to return home to reconstruct the temple (Ezra 1:1-4). The work ceased in 534-535 because of false allegations (Ezra 4:6-17). This decree would have amendments attached to it by Cyrus' successors.

520 BC ~ Reconstruction of the temple was renewed under Darius (Ezra 6:8-12). Post Exilic prophets motivate the Jews to complete the temple project.

516 BC ~ The initial phase of temple reconstruction complete.

***457 BC** ~ Artaxerxes orders Ezra to complete the temple services according to Biblical law. This is an amendment to Cyrus' decree and the *terminus a pro* of the 70 years of Daniel as well as the *terminus a pro* of the 69 weeks.

457-407 BC ~ The reconstruction of Jerusalem is completed during this period. This is the "7 weeks" or 49 years of reconstruction mentioned in Daniel 9:25: "the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times."

445 BC ~ Artaxerxes grants permission to Nehemiah to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem (Nehemiah 1).

***407-408 BC** ~ Basic restoration of Jerusalem complete. Malachi completes his ministry. The "Silent Years" begin. Daniel's 62 weeks begin.

2-4 BC ~ Christ was born before the death of Herod.

There is no "0" BC or AD. Dating goes from 1 BC to 1 AD.

12-14 AD ~ Tiberius becomes a Caesar.

27-29 AD ~ John the Baptist begins his ministry (Luke 3:1).

***27-29 AD** ~ Jesus begins his ministry. The 69 weeks of Daniel end with the beginning of the ministry of Christ. The seventieth week of Daniel starts with the commencement of Christ's ministry.

30-32 AD ~ Christ dies in the middle of the seventieth week.

34-35 Stephen stoned.

48-49 AD Paul begins his ministry.

48-69 All books of the New Testament are written.

***70 AD** the Destruction of Jerusalem

Abuses of Daniel 9:24-27 include modernism which denies the prophetic aspects of Daniel leading them to conclude this passage is about Antiochus Epiphanies and his abominations in 167 BC.

The second abuse of this passage is the dispensational view that Daniel's 70th week is a reference to an Antichrist, a renewed contract with Jews in a modern Israel, and a third destruction of Jerusalem future to our time.

The passage is difficult enough without inserting a two-thousand year gap between verse 26 and verse 27 and auguring for a 3rd temple, a renewed Levitical system, and a future invasion of a rebuilt Jerusalem. Dispensationalism has an eschatological agenda and commit radical eisegesis by reading into this passage an end-time scheme that is just not in the text.

Daniel 9:24-27 has proved difficult, not only for the average reader, but for scholars as well. A proper interpretation of this text needs to consider the (A) the historical setting, (B) the linguistic and textual data, (C) the literary structure of the text, (D) comparison of prophetic portions of Prophets, and (E) theological considerations (See Peter Gentry

19.3 EZEKIEL 38-39: THE DEFEAT OF GOG AND MAGOG

Ezekiel 38-39 was penned around 572 BC to the exiles scattered throughout Babylon to encourage the exiles and instill hope to a defeated people.

However, because of the eschatological nature of this passage, it has been a subject of debate (38:8). Futurists have attempted to use this passage to support an elaborate literal end-time battle against restored Israel. Since Israel became a nation in 1948, these interpreters predict that Gog & Magog is modern Russia; that at some time in the future (soon), Russia will invade Israel. Using other passages, these interpreters predict China, Egypt, and a 10 nation confederation from Europe will all seek to eliminate Israel as the source of conflict in the Middle East. There, the nations of the world will witness the greatest military defeat in history.

Since this passage does not seem to have an historical corollary, the futurist's doomsday view seems to trump all others.

PROBLEMS WITH THE LITERAL VIEW

Futurists tend to be literalists, i.e., they seek to use the literal method of hermeneutic consistently. And, normally, this is the method that we should use unless the text demands another approach. There is much to be said for the literal interpretation of this passage:

- Real names are used: Gog, Meshech, Tubal, Cush, Put, Togarmah.
- The use of "after many days" is an eschatological sign.
- A narrative style is used. It reads like a prophetic documentary.
- The geographical location of the battle is in Palestine, a real place.
- Israel is a passive, but real political entity.

But, there are some problems with the literal approach. First, the passage does employ a certain amount of apocalyptic imagery (38:20-22; 39:9-19); Second, if this battle is future to our time, and one insists on applying the literal hermeneutic consistently, then this battle is not one with guns, planes, and tanks but one with bows, arrows, shields, spears, horses, and cavalry (39:3, 10). The wooden weapons are used for fuel for seven years. It is difficult to understand how modern military equipment could be in view here.

Third, if this passage is the final act of history as we know it, then, the first task in the new millennium will be spent burying bodies. The next seven years will be spent and burning guns, tanks, and military equipment as fuel for homes, which, by the way were all destroyed by the great earthquake (38:20).

However, there could be another approach to this passage. This passage could be interpreted symbolically as a mythological battle that seeks to convey a literal truth about Israel's future. This is the approach of this paper.

OUTLINE OF CHAPTER 38

Description of Gog and her Confederacy (38:2-9)

Motivation of Gog (38:10-13)

Military Operation of Gog (38:14-16)

Divine Intervention against Gog (38:17-22)

Interpretation (38:23)

OUTLINE OF CHAPTER 39

The Slaughter of Gog (39:1-8)

The Spoiling of Gog (39:9-10)

The Burial of Gog (39:11-16)

The Complete Devouring of Gog (39:17-20)

The Restoration of Israel from Babylon (39:21-29)

EVIDENCE FOR A MYTHOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION

First, we must consider the historical facts about Gog & Magog. While many worthy scholars have done their best to identify Gog and Magog on the map, no one has been completely successful in locating a population group or geographical location called *Gog or Magog*. The title *Gog* or *Magog* is generally assigned to regions north of Israel (Scythians). Israel knew nothing of Russia or the Baltic states. Using modern political tension to interpret Gog as Russia is not sound hermeneutics and can lead the interpreter astray.

Another approach is to consider Gog & Magog as a symbol of Israel's ancient enemies. Since Israel's traditional enemies during the Iron Age invaded Israel from the north, Gog and Magog could be a general title representing Israel's foes—*a symbolic representation of all those nations that Israel feared*.

Second, we must consider the purpose of the prophecy. The prophecy about Gog and Magog was given to surviving exiles deported into Babylon from Canaan. Judah was defeated; Babylon was victorious. The Jews were slaves; the Babylonians were masters. Israel's defeat was fresh, vivid, and real. For what purpose would God be telling them about a massive, military invasion into their country 2500+ years removed from their time? What relevance would this have to these people and why should they even care? This view appears to make God some kind of sadistic ogre. The message of Gog is teleological and applies through all of time because *it shows the reader an ultimate truth: the wicked will perish, and the righteous will live.*

It appears that the purpose of this prophecy was motivated by compassion to inform Israel that they were going to return from captivity (39:25) and *to encourage them that God was going to reverse their destiny.* In the past they were defeated by their northern enemies, but in the future, God was going to defend Israel and to defeat her enemies in such a way that cleansing the land of dead bodies would consume the nation's agenda. This is the purpose.

What would motivate Israel to return to the land of Israel anyway since they were enjoying a relatively peaceful lifestyle in Babylon. Canaan was a war zone. Lusty generals understood the importance of this land bridge between Africa, Mesopotamia, and Anatolia. Israel was used as fodder in these wars. Why would they even consider a return unless they had confidence that the God who severely judged their nation in 586 BC would vigorously defend them and defeat enemies in the future? The Battle of Gog and Magog communicated one truth: God will defend Israel and He will destroy her enemies. *This fact would inspire courage among the captives to reinvest their lives in the promises of God.*

Third, we need to consider Gog and Magog in light of Kingdom theology (Matthew 3). When John the Baptist began to preach his Kingdom message, he announced two possibilities: the baptism of fire and the baptism of the Holy Spirit. John's interpretation of the Kingdom was twofold: (a) when the Kingdom appeared, God was going to judge His enemies (**the baptism of fire**), and (b) God was going to bring salvation to His people (**the baptism of the Spirit**).

In looking at Ezekiel 38 and 39, we see both of these truths presented mightily: God was going to severely destroy Israel's enemies (39:1-6), and he was going to bless his people with salvic blessings, namely the Holy Spirit (39:29). Ezekiel's Gog and Magog message is consistent with Kingdom truth which reveals judgment on Israel's enemies and salvation for God's people (Isaiah 2, 11, 25, 35, 65, 66; Zechariah 14; Malachi 4).

Fourth, we need to explore the apocalyptic imagery presented in the prophecy of Gog and Magog. Some interpreters reject an apocalyptic interpretation of this passage. But, the apocalyptic is used in these two chapters. The use of apocalyptic language with mythological proportions suggest that this battle is not to be taken literally, but to be taken symbolically. That is, it is not an historical prediction, but a mythological battle using apocalyptic language to convey a powerful, spiritual truth—*that though Israel was defeated by Babylon, Israel will one day witness the utter destruction of her enemies.*

Note the use of **apocalyptic language**, hyperbole, and dramatic presentation:

38:9 Like a storm, like a cloud (simile)

38:19 A great earthquake that rattles fish, birds, animals, and every creature, and every person on the face of the earth.

38:20 Mountains are overturned, cliffs crumble, and every wall tumbles to the ground.

38:22 Plagues and bloodshed are ordained.

38:22 Torrents of rain, hailstones, and burning suffer reminiscent of the destruction of Sodom are declared.

39:6 Fire falls even on those in distant lands.

39:9 Weapons used as fuel for seven years.

39:12 The burial takes 7 months.

39:14 The burial takes longer than seven months.

39:17 Vivid imagery of scavengers gorging themselves on human flesh.

The key section in these chapters has to be the imagery of a massive death and destruction. The seven-month burial campaign and daily occupation with locating dead bodies does not appear to be a literal battlefield with literal dead bodies scattered on a literal country side. But, could this imagery be literal? Yes, it could. Could God literally destroy nations in this way? Yes, He could.

While the description of this devastating defeat of Gog could be literal, we must ask, is a literal Gog with a literal army being defeated in literal Israel with Sodom-like destruction 3 millenniums in the future what God intended the exiles living in Babylon in 572 to understand? Or, is Gog and Magog a mystery designed to instruct the exiles (and us) that even though God's elect suffered a temporary setback in the Babylonian exile, in the end all of God's enemies will suffer permanent defeat and all of God's people will be safe?

The prophecy of Gog & Magog could also be a figurative account powerfully presented using military jargon to communicate in vivid terms the complete demolition of Israel's foes. A seven-month campaign to cleanse the land of corpses seems unusually long for a modern people. Even Hitler could dispose of corpses faster than is suggested in this campaign. In terms ancient Israel understood, God is seeking to impress upon His elect the massive defeat of Israel's enemies not unlike 1 Thessalonians 5.

Why would God employ the apocalyptic in this section? Possibly this: God is seeking to stir the imagination and to impress on the human mind that when God defends his people he works dynamically for them. In other words, when God goes to work, "He rolls up his sleeves and punches their lights out."

Note that rolling up “sleeves” and “punching lights out” is a metaphor for intense work and sobering conquest not unlike what God intended to communicate when Ezekiel spoke his prophetic message. It appears that God wants his people to understand one powerful truth: ***In the end, God’s people will be victors who witness the total defeat of their enemies.***

This mythological battle conveys several literal, important lessons:

Israel is so protected, that God must hook and pull Israel’s enemies against her.

Those who intend to harm his people arouse God’s anger (38:18).

When God acts to defend his people the effects are cataclysmic, catastrophic, and complete.

Israel’s enemies will be totally destroyed and Israel will be totally saved under God’s work for them.

The spoils of war teach us that God’s people will “inherit the earth.” God’s people will not be plundered, but they shall enjoy the fruits of God’s salvation.

The burial imagery and the carrion feast conveys the truth that defeat of Israel’s enemies will be thorough and final.

Finally, this passage teaches that God is for Israel and God is against her enemies.

The use of the term *Israel* is prominent. There is no doubt that Ezekiel is addressing, historic, geo-political Israel. The landscape is also Palestine. While God could have used a different landscape to convey the same thoughts, God used the landscape familiar to Israel to assure them of His personal superintendence over the affairs of His people. In other words, a literal Israel in a literal Palestine in a literal war is not necessary to convey the truth that God’s enemies will be defeated and God’s people will be victorious.

But, familiarity would give hope that God cared for these ancient people and their purpose in the divine plan. The fact that this interplay of Gog with Israel does not substantiate the existence of a future Israel which is to be involved in a future war.

We must remember that God is addressing the OT mind and conveying truth to the exiles in terms they could understand. God’s promises, however, is for believing Israel, the true vine, the true people of God. YHWY wants His people to know they are safe under his guidance. Historic Israel is addressed to convey this universal truth for all to enjoy.

Even if this passage is to be taken literally, the “return section” (39:25) employs the word “now” implying that this return refers to the return of 536 BC and not the supposed return of 1948.

In conclusion, the Battle of God and Magog appears to be a mythological story of grand proportions designed to impress the mind with God’s ability to judge Israel’s enemies and to save His people. God

uses the imagery of a military battle combined with apocalyptic language as the vehicle to communicate this truth. The battle of Gog & Magog is not a detailed account of a future battle, but an account, which conveys a central truth. *God loves Israel and in the end, Israel will be safe. In the end, God's anger will fall upon Israel's enemies and they will be utterly destroyed.* With this comfort, ancient Israel could return to the land clinging to the promises. With this comfort, God's people today have the assurance that no enemy will prevail against the church. God will be there to protect his people. *There will be conflict till the end, but in the end, God's people will be safe and secure.*

No battle imagery or apocalyptic war could prepare people for what God did to save His people and to defeat their enemies through Christ. When God sent His Son to die on a literal cross, he rolled up his sleeves and went to work to destroy our enemies: sin, death, and Satan. So defeated are our enemies and so victorious are we that Paul declares, "we are more than conquerors through him that loved us" (Romans 8:37). Like Israel is this account, we passively behold the work of Another. The Defeat of Gog and Magog is a reminder of how God destroys our adversaries, and how we can enjoy the spoils of the war that took place on Calvary. In Christ, believers are more than conquerors. Out of Christ, there will be utter destruction.

19.4 ZECHARIAH 14: THE FINAL BATTLE:

THE INTERPRETIVE PROBLEM

A struggle for the Bible interpreter, Zechariah 14 has been the subject of debate between several schools of thought. The literalists interpret it as a depiction of an end-time conflict and deliverance. The historicist seeks to interpret the passage in light of some historical battle in Israel. Others interpret the passage symbolically.

KEYS TO THE INTERPRETIVE PROCESS

First, the normal rule for interpreting Scripture is advanced by the literal method of interpretation. This rule should be followed unless the context demands variation from it. The fact that Zechariah uses red horses, craftsmen, a wall of fire, the divestiture of Joshua, two olive trees, a woman in a basket taken back to Babylon, days without nights, and immovable rocks demands the interpreter consider this passage symbolically in juxtaposition to the apocalyptic literary style which Zechariah employs as a vehicle to convey truth. C.H. Dodd affirms this view:

The second half of the Book of Zechariah, chapters ix-xiv, has the character of an apocalypse, and while its component visions (like those of many apocalypses) are not easy to bring into consistent scheme, it can be understood as setting forth a whole eschatological program (Dodd, C.H. 1965. According to the Scriptures. *The Sub-structure of the New Testament Theology*. London: William Collins Sons, p. 64).

Zechariah is presenting new truth to encourage his people, but new truth can upset people. To avoid shock, Zechariah employs references with which his audience was familiar: Jerusalem, Mount of Olives, Benjamin Gate, Feast of Tabernacles, Temple pots, Egyptians and Canaanites. These familiar places are not to be taken literally. They are merely tools to convey ultimate realities.

Second, Zechariah ministers around 520 BC during the post exilic period, 15 years after the return, and four years before the completion of the second temple. His congregation is small, defeated, greatly discouraged, and struggling to survive seventy years of devastation. The need of these people, their struggles, their fears, and their limitations must be considered in interpreting this passage.

Third, the interpreter should avoid putting on eschatological glasses that have been grind in a laboratories noted for their elaborate end-time schemes. Zechariah does not appear to be drawing a roadmap to the future as much as he is pointing out ultimate realities. Visions of Armageddon, an Antichrist, and an invasion by Russia seem totally inappropriate. The use of this text to prove an invasion by an antichrist, a ten nation coalition, the slaughter of thousands by an atomic bomb, the splitting of the Mount of Olives, a gushing artesian well that travels in two directions, the literal leveling of mountains around Jerusalem, a rebuilt temple, airplane shuttle buses, punishment by drought, and destruction by atomic bombs has more to do with pesharim interpretation than Biblical exegesis.

Zechariah's audience was recovering from a war and a crippling 70 year exile. Back in the land, they were struggling for reasons why they should defy the Persians and rebuild a temple structure that was inferior to Solomon's. A discussion about some proposed end-time invasion of literal Jerusalem would have completely defeated these people. Zechariah's message was designed to give hope about the future and inspire courage to initiate the completion of the temple. He did this by letting the workmen know that their effort to build the second temple, as feeble as it was, was part of a plan that would culminate in a Theo centric, new world order.

A SYMBOLIC APPROACH

This passage does not have a correlation in history. It should not be applied to 70 AD in or to any other battle. Nor should this passage be treated as a prophecy about some supposed end-time battle. It is a message of hope using the apocalyptic, narrative style to convey truth about the in-breaking of the Messianic age. It applies through all of time because it shows the reader an ultimate teleological truth: the wicked will perish, and the righteous will live.

This passage appears to be connected with the "burden" (א'מ, massa) in chapter 12, and the refinement of God's people in chapter 13. A burden is something difficult to carry. This can be true for bad news as well as good news. Zechariah's message was a heavy burden for the anti-God forces. He compared it to trying to remove a giant boulder from a farmer's field. For the people of God, Zechariah's message was a burden because it appeared "to be too good to be true." For people living in a dark cave, the noon day Sun is too bright. Zechariah's vision allows for this weakness and therefore delimits his message.

THE PERPETUAL CONFLICT OF GOD'S PEOPLE

Zechariah 14:1 Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee.

The word “behold” (hNEh, heneh) means “to stop and look.” “The day of the Lord” (hw"hy|; aB'~Ay, yom ba layavah) should be translated, “a day comes to the Lord.” It is not the “day of the Lord” (hw"hy>~A, yom yavah) as found in other passages such as Zephaniah 1:14.

The conclusion is stated first, “thy spoil shall be divided.” Before us is the truth that God’s people are always under attack and are viewed as *spoil* by the ungodly. Men bartered even for our Lord’s garments when they cast lots for his only possession. In modern times, we notice that God’s people are still the object of criticism and verbal assault. No doubt, hostility against God’s people will continue to the end of this evil age. Short of the ideal, this picture would be accepted by the Zechariah’s audience made up of Hebrew realists.

THE WAR ON GOD'S PEOPLE

2 For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city.

Before us is the imagery of an invasion. The nations are the hostile populations of the earth. The detail impresses upon us the seriousness and severity of the siege. The attack **sets the stage** for the next act where we see God’s marvelous deliverance of his people. Two observations need to be made: (a) God’s rule is so absolute and God’s people so protected that they cannot be attacked unless God allows it; (b) hostile efforts will sometimes be successful as suggested by the fact that half of the city is defeated. The numbers here are not literal because in chapter 13:8, the remnant is declared to be 1/3 of the population. If the author intended literalness, only 1/6 of the remnant would remain. This defeat, however, is for the glory of God because the next verse reveals God’s mighty deliverance of His people.

THE SALVATION OF GOD'S PEOPLE

3 Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle.

This is not Armageddon, nor is it a literal military campaign conducted against Israel in the last days. The image brought before us uses the language of a military invasion as a vehicle to convey the truth that God’s people are always under attack. But, it is not an actual, historical attack that Zechariah envisions.

God’s people have many enemies and are always under siege. Zechariah comforts his people by letting them know that the LORD sees their conflicts, knows about them, and takes action and takes action by

coming from his dwelling (Micah 1:3), to go forth (**ac'y"w**, yatsa), to save his people. He does this by preparing a highway of deliverance for them.

Use of the waw consecutive may add a linguistic touch that just as the waw reverses the tense, so God reverses the predicaments of his people. This statement (“the day of battle”) presents to us the eternal truth that God will fight for his people today as he fought for his people in times past. The future of God’s people is glorious because God will save them. Though his methods may vary, his concerns and attentions to his people do not.

4 And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south.

This passage is not a description of our Lord’s ascension nor of Christ’s second coming though it may extend to the day our Lord comes in history to take His people up in the air to be with himself for ever. *This passage depicts a general truth in very specific terms.* In anthropomorphic language, Zechariah presents a coming of God to provide the means of deliverance for his people. The apocalyptic language adds interest and shows us God’s dynamic salvation. If necessary, God will split seas and mountains to provide a way of escape and to bring his people into the promised land⁴².

Historically, the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem, was the place generals set up their command center to plan the destruction of Jerusalem. Furthermore, Many of Israel’s enemies came from the east (Syria, Assyria, Babylon, Persia). Zechariah directs his people to look over the wall to the east. What do they see? Invading armies? No, they do not see armies ready to destroy them, they see God present to deliver them.

With apocalyptic imagery, God’s coming is described as splitting the mountain in two to form a highway of escape. The way of escape is called “my mountain valley” (**yr;h'-ayG**, verse 5).The imagery reminds us of YHWH’s deliverance at the Red Sea when Israel escaped from Pharaoh’s armies.

⁴² Dale Allison draws a strong parallel between Mark 14 and Zechariah 13:7-14:4. In Zechariah, the prophet predicted the shepherd would be smitten (13:7), the sheep scattered (13:7), a time of great testing (13:9) and fleeing would come (14:4), the Lord would arrive on the Mt. of Olives (14:4; Mark 14:26) and there would be a resurrection (an old interpretation of Dodd: 14:4, 5). In Mark, Jesus arrived on the Mt. of Olives (14:26), he was struck (14:27), the sheep scattered (14:27, 50), testing arrived, men fled (14:50-52), he rose from the dead (14:28; 16:1-8). Consequently, Mark’s presentation challenges not only to interpret Zechariah apocalyptically, but Christologically (Allison, D.C. 1985. The end of the ages has come. Fortress Press.)

The splitting of the mountain from east to west and then north to south is merely to define which direction the valley runs, a marvelous sign, the mode of God's deliverance, His extreme measures used to save His people.

5 And ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal: yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah: and the LORD my God shall come, and all the saints with thee.

“And you shall flee to my mountain valley” means that God's people shall find safety by utilizing his means of escape. The word “Azal” (lc;a'-la) is difficult to translate and may simply mean “in reference to” or “by the side of.” That is, the escape route is in reference to God's mountain valley. Apparently, people's mad dash to safety from tumbling houses in the day of Uzziah's earthquake left such an impression, Zechariah uses it to describe the character of the flight of God's people during this pictorial calamity. So terrible is this hostile invasion, that God's people sprint into the valley to escape the horrors of this threat.

Angels do not perform this deliverance. God himself acts to save His people. What a sight! Instead of seeing armies surround Jerusalem, the people look up and see God's armies prepared to fight for Israel's deliverance. Zechariah is so proud of God's performance and the privilege of being under His command, Zechariah calls him, “The LORD my God” (yh;l{a/ hw"hy).

Again, Zechariah is not presenting to us a literal battle, a literal earthquake, or a literal highway. Apocalyptic language is employed to stimulate the imagination and the wonder of God's salvation for his people. Local considerations (Jerusalem, Mount of Olives, the Mediterranean Sea) do not predict a restored Israel sometime in the future; rather, local color is used to add a touch of familiarity to assure personal, dynamic deliverance. Familiarity makes God's salvation tangible and immanent rather than distant and transcendent.

Zechariah may be using the metaphor of the highway pointing us to the cross as God's means of salvation and way of entrance into the Kingdom of God. No amount of apocalyptic imagery can compare with the reality of God incarnate dying for the sins of humanity.

GLORIES TO COME FOR GOD'S PEOPLE

6-7 And it shall come to pass in that day, that the light shall not be clear, nor dark: But it shall be one day which shall be known to the LORD, not day, nor night: but it shall come to pass, that at evening time it shall be light.

Use of the phrase “that day” (~AYB, ba yom) directs us to a new state of affairs, a new world order, the Messianic age of salvation, the Kingdom of God. Use of the word “light” (rAa, ore) suggests the replacement of natural phenomenon by the phenomenon of the new heavens and the new earth. Heat by

day and cold by night will not exist in the new age. The apocalyptic imagery of failing luminaries (Joel 4:15; Isaiah 13:10; Matthew 24:29) suggest the new creation has arrived in history. The result is shown first. The reason for the new order is shown second--a day “known to the Lord.”

8 And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea: in summer and in winter shall it be.

Switching from light to water, Zechariah builds upon Ezekiel 40-48’s presentation of flowing waters but with much less detail. Light and water are necessary to sustain life. The rivers of water flowing east and west are not a description of a natural phenomenon, but a description of a spiritual phenomenon—eternal life flowing from the wells of salvation. This is an ideal water system not limited to weather conditions, and it highlights at least two truths: (a) God’s salvation is universal (running east to west), and (b) its magic it never ends.

In John’s revelation, the final scene is water flowing from the throne of God in the celestial city (Revelation 22). This is John’s way of saying eternal life will dominate existence in the age to come. Ezekiel, Zechariah, and John use the image of flowing water to present the conquest of life over death.

Again, gross literalism detracts from the lesson.

9 And the LORD shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one LORD, and his name one.

Salvation is now expanded from Jerusalem to all the earth. The hope given to Abraham is fully realized (Romans 4:13). God’s purpose is universal and global rather than specific and esoteric.

The LORD has always been king, but now, there is universal acknowledgement of this fact. What Moses taught about the oneness of God is now universal knowledge (Deuteronomy 6:4).

10 All the land shall be turned as a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem: and it shall be lifted up, and inhabited in her place, from Benjamin's gate unto the place of the first gate, unto the corner gate, and from the tower of Hananeel unto the king's winepresses.

Geba was the northern boundary of Judah and Rimmon was the southern boundary of the state. The Benjamin gate was in the middle of the northern wall. The “first” gate was apparently in the northeast corner of the northern wall. The “tower of Hannel” was at the northeast corner. The “kings wine press” was located at the southeast corner of the city. Zechariah’s measurements communicate to the people of his day Jerusalem’s total restoration to its former glory. It would be as looming and glorious as it ever was.

The leveling of the mountains and the geological exaltation of Jerusalem is not literal anymore than the city of Jerusalem is literally implied. Leveling of the mountains is apocalyptic imagery painted for emphasis. Before us are spiritual realities rather than geographic transformation. This imagery suggests

the removal of hostile forces and their idolatrous systems that compete with the truth of one God and His way of salvation. Jerusalem, the dwelling place of Israel's God, the interest of God's people, the home of the righteous, will be the center of attention in the new age.

11 And men shall dwell in it, and there shall be no more utter destruction; but Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited.

Again, it is the new Jerusalem of the new order, not the Jerusalem of the old order that is in view here. Zechariah wants his readers to know that the city of God will one day be inhabited by men (eschatologically) and that it will endure all attacks. The eschatological Jerusalem will be a place of safety and rest and joy for God's people.

This would be of great encouragement to the people of Zechariah's day. Erecting a new city out of that pile of rubble must have seemed hopeless and without purpose at times during the reconstruction phase in the post exilic period. Just knowing that their tedious assignment contributed to the ultimate purpose of God in the messianic age must have inspired them with hope. In the end, Jerusalem stands. Likewise, every Sunday school teacher, church janitor, and weary pastor who performs even the most mundane tasks of church work for the glory of God today contributes to the glory of new Jerusalem.

GOD'S JUDGMENT ON THE ANTI-GOD FORCES

12-15 And this shall be the plague wherewith the LORD will smite all the people that have fought against Jerusalem; Their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth. 13 And it shall come to pass in that day, that a great tumult from the LORD shall be among them; and they shall lay hold everyone on the hand of his neighbor, and his hand shall rise up against the hand of his neighbor. And Judah also shall fight at Jerusalem; and the wealth of all the heathen round about shall be gathered together, gold, and silver, and apparel, in great abundance. And so shall be the plague of the horse, of the mule, of the camel, and of the ass, and of all the beasts that shall be in these tents, as this plague.

Having shown the reader the marvelous end for God's people, a question arises about the end of the anti-God forces: "What will happen to those who oppose God's people and God's purpose throughout history?" Employing the apocalyptic, Zechariah paints a ghastly picture describing the end of the wicked.

Zechariah is not predicting dates or describing events to come. He presents a general truth and uses the detail to enhance his message. Those who resist God's people and God's purpose on earth inherit a horrible fate. The plague is not literal anymore than the feet and hands are literal. This rotting away of flesh is a graphic presentation designed to stimulate the mind. Though this description of the death of the wicked is not intended as a prophetic statement, a literal destruction and greater agony than any apocalyptic vision can describe is planned for those who resist God.

“Everyman seizing his neighbor” is imagery describing the confusion that comes during military campaigns. Many will fall by friendly fire.

Judah is foreseen as coming to the aid of Jerusalem. By this, Zechariah shows the unity of God’s people.

The gathering of the spoils of war (gold and silver) highlight another truth that the “meek shall inherit the earth.” Those who amass wealth will leave it for God’s people to enjoy. In the end, God’s people will enjoy the riches of the earth.

The plague upon horses and mules shows how thoroughly God’s judgment comes on the sinner and all that he has.

ABSOLUTE UNITY IN THE NEW WORLD ORDER

16-19 And it shall come to pass, *that* every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles. And it shall be, *that* whoso will not come up of *all* the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain. And if the family of Egypt go not up, and come not, *that have no rain*; there shall be the plague, wherewith the LORD will smite the heathen that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles. This shall be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all nations that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles.

This section is not literal and should not be used to support an elaborate millennial schemes. Rather, it describes the ultimate realities in terms understood by the OT mind.

What Israelite living in 520 BC could imagine and age where every person and every nation would rejoice over Jerusalem and acknowledge the truth of God? What Israelite could even imagine an age where there were no hostilities? They could not. God, therefore, recognizing the limitation in the minds of his people delimited the glories of the coming age to fit the boundaries of Israel’s imagination.

The Feast of Tabernacles shadowed the glorious Messianic Age where men would know God and enjoy him forever. Zechariah’s description presents one glorious truth: From among the nations of the world, God’s enemies have been converted from foes to friends. A waw conversive is employed in verse 16 and the phrase “shall even go up” should be translated “these shall go up” year to year to worship the king.

The punishment of the nations that do not worship is not intended to depict an age where there would be actual resistance to YHWH. Quite the opposite. Verse 9 already proclaimed the fruit of victory--universal acknowledgement of the LORD. To come out and say “the whole world will be bonded together in universal worship of YHWH” was too bold a statement and too bright a light to those having come out of the cave divine chastisement. It was impossible for them to see in the mind’s eye a world where everyman would worship YHWH. Zechariah claims this “dumbing down” of the universal acceptance of YHWH in

the coming age. He allows for his people's limitations and concedes that if there were any that did not worship Him, YHWH would be in such control that He would set matters straight.

Egypt, Israel's historic enemy, is singled out to demonstrate that God's grace will be so effective that even Israel's former enemies will be among those who acknowledge the LORD and worship Him. Again, the argument of striking the Egyptian people with a plague does not appear to be literal or consistent with the context, but rather, follows the argument of 16 & 17 that delimit God's presentation of this marvelous age to fit the narrow understanding of his people. It was simply too bold of a promise to make to these people recovering exile. The bold truth of the matter is, however, that in the age to come all men will love YHWH.

Reading elaborate millennial schemes into this passage fail to consider the OT mind, its limitation, and God's condescension to the weakness of His people. The idea of shuffling billions of people by airplanes and shuttle buses into a proposed millennial Jerusalem to visit a gigantic temple is not what Zechariah is teaching.

HOLINESS IN THE COMING AGE

20-21 In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD; and the pots in the LORD'S house shall be like the bowls before the altar. Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness unto the LORD of hosts: and all they that sacrifice shall come and take of them, and seethe therein: and in that day there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the LORD of hosts.

This section presents the glorious conclusion of God's salvation history. Holiness is a beautiful word, a term of beauty and virtue. A holy thing was rare and therefore valuable to the one pursuing God. However, in OT terms, only instruments connected with the tabernacle that were dipped in blood were deemed holy. In the coming age, ordinary pots and pans in the temple will be holy. Even minutiae, like bells on horses will be consecrated to the Lord. To emphasize this further, Zechariah presses the truth that all the pots and pans in Jerusalem and Judah will be holy. Everything in the lives of God's people will one day be dedicated to Him.

The last statement concludes the divine revelation. In that age, no Canaanite will be present. This is not an ethnic statement. Canaanites were deemed people of gross iniquity. At one time Israel's leaders were declared to be of Canaanite stock (Isaiah 1:10). Moral pigs, Canaanites and sodomites and the like, will not be present in the Eschaton. The age to come is an age prepared for God's people.

In conclusion, this passage teaches a truth that history is an assault on God's people. More rough times are ahead, but God will be there and He will prepared a way of salvation. In the end, God's enemies will be destroyed, and God's people will be safe and secure in a new creation.

19.5 MALACHI 4: THE TERRIBLE DAY OF THE LORD

Source: Stockton, Towards Exegetical Eschatology

Malachi 4:1 For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.

“The day” is identified in verse five as the “great and dreadful day of the Lord.” It comprises two great events, the destruction of the wicked (4:1), and the salvation of the righteous (4:2). Pride and arrogance mark the unregenerate man. The *zed* (*proud*) who seemed so well off are now as bad off as they can be (3:15). They are compared to kindling (“stubble”) made for the fire. “Neither root nor branch” expresses total ruin of apostates.

2 But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall.

The righteous are identified as those that “fear my name.” The Messianic Savior takes the title “Sun of Righteousness” because He alone has the light of life (cf. John 1:2-3). The age of salvation arrives at the appearing of the Sun of righteousness who will have “healing in his wings.” The “wings” are sunbeams warming the earth. The image before us is the ultimate sunrise that dispels darkness spreading its rays of life. The age of darkness and death (this age) yields to the age of light and life (the age to come) (cf. Luke 20:34). “Going forth” as “calves of the stall” is a reference to physical resurrection. The resurrection of the righteous is compared to the romping and jumping of frisky calves released from their stall (John 5:29).

3 And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do *this*, saith the LORD of hosts.

The “you” is a reference to the Messiah, the Sun of Righteousness, who will usher in the Day of the Lord. On Judgment Day God will crush the wicked. Earlier in the Book of Malachi, things were upside down. The wicked were prospering, and the righteous were suffering (3:15). Now, the wicked are called “ashes” under His feet. Judgment is typified as fire wherein the wicked are burned to ash. “Saith the LORD of hosts” assures the reader that the destruction of the wicked is as certain as the Promises of God. “LORD of hosts” is a reference to the armies of heaven and His arsenal of destruction. On that day, the God of Wrath will unleash His bloody weapons of war to crush proud, lawless man.

4 Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, *with* the statutes and judgments.

“Remember” (*zakar*) is a command from the LORD of Hosts. It is not an option. It is a order from the Commander of the Armies of Heaven. The great sin of God’s people is the neglect of God’s law. He does not ask them to remember grace, but law. The kingdom of God is about the restoration of law and it

should be the main concern of the faithful. Further, the opposite of law is not grace, but lawlessness. Grace empowers men to obey the law, and it is law-keeping that marks the people of God. In fact, the fear of God is obedience to God. If Christ met with Congress today, he would say, "Remember the Law of Moses." (cf. Romans 8:4; 13:8; 1 John 5:1-3; Deuteronomy 13:4).

Little did the nation know that Malachi was the last prophet and that all they would have over the next few centuries was the scrolls which contained the precious Word of God. There were no more revelators in Israel's history until the arrival of the Messiah.

5-6 Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.

When will the Day of the Lord come? Not until Elijah appears in history to "Prepare the way of the Lord; make his paths straight." (cf. 3:1; Matthew 3:3). His ministry is described as confronting neglectful fathers and disobedient sons; that is, he restores the original order of the family. "Honoring mother and fathers" by adult children is the mark of a godly home. Obedience to law is the ultimate act of love. Attention to law is the key mark of a Christian father; and, honoring parents by adult children is the most outstanding feature in a Christian home. And, neglect of parents by adult children is a grievous sin in the eyes of the LORD.

The Old Testament ends, not with a blessing, but a curse (cherem). The term "curse" is the last word in the OT. Unwilling to obey, the Book of Malachi ends with a dark cloud hanging over the nation of Israel. The first word in the Sermon on the Mount is "blessed;" that is, the Sun of Righteousness appeared in the middle of history, not to judge men, but to secure the salvation of the elect and to bring them the blessings of the age to come in advance of the terrible Day of the Lord. The last verse in the New Testament is a benediction of grace to those that have placed their faith in the Sun of Righteousness.

Four hundred years later the Messiah appears with His glorious message: Repent for the kingdom of God is at hand.

(See Stockton: Five Pillars of the Gospel: and Stockton: The Gospel of the Kingdom of God. Stockton; Towards Exegetical Eschatology;

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