

New Testament Theology

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INTRODUCTION

The study of New Testament Theology will involve three important aspects.

First, Christianity is not merely a product of the first century, but is *conditioned by the religious history of Israel*. A proper understanding of the New Testament presupposes an understanding of the Old Testament. However, Christianity is not merely a continuation of Old Testament religious thought and practices, but it is the fulfilment of God's revelation to Israel. Jesus made this

clear in the Sermon on the Mount: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, and the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil" (Matt 5:17).

Understanding the New Testament requires knowledge of the Old Testament. Jesus cited the Old Testament in the Sermon, and then made explicit that which was implicit in the Old Testament teaching. He fulfilled the original intent of the law and the prophets. We are repeatedly told in the book of Hebrews that the Old Testament ritual, sacrifice, priesthood, and temple worship were all shadows, or types, of New Testament realities. The understanding of these realities is based upon knowledge of the types. The fulfilment has to follow the types.

Secondly, Christianity *is to be understood in the light of the inter-Testamental period*. Jesus and His apostles spoke to a nation, Israel, which was not only versed in the Old Testament, but was also influenced by four centuries of religious history between the Testaments. Malachi was the last prophet of the old dispensation. John the Baptist was the first prophet of the new dispensation.

God was still speaking to hearts during this period, and they were growing and developing religiously. It was during this time that Judaism developed into the legalistic Judaism that was taught by the Pharisees. Jewish sects such as the Pharisees, Sadducees, and the Zealots rose during this period. There was the transition from just going to the temple to worship to teaching in the synagogues. Jesus and Paul did much of their teaching in the synagogues which were everywhere. The Sanhedrin, the Jewish High Court, and the offices of Scribe and Lawyer had their beginnings in this period.

There was the development of doctrines like *gehenna*, the lake of fire, paradise, and the exorcism of demons. Satanology became highly developed in this period. The Jews were familiar with all these doctrines, as well as others, by the time Jesus came on the scene.

Much developed that we need to understand. The doctrines are just there in the New Testament with no explanation of their origin.

Thirdly, *the study of New Testament Theology will not duplicate the study of Biblical Theology*, but will cover the major themes of the New Testament not covered in detail in other studies.

New Testament Theology, therefore, will not be as comprehensive as Biblical Theology. New Testament Theology, like Old Testament Theology, is more exclusive. Biblical Theology is a general theological survey of the whole Bible from a systematic viewpoint. New Testament Theology deals with concepts that are germane to the New Testament.

Occasionally, there will be material that is common to both Testaments and will require touching on things covered in the other theologies.

Revelation and Inspiration in the New Testament

Definition and Terms

Revelation means that God through the Scriptures, His ministers (such as prophets and apostles), through providence, and through the creative order, has unveiled all that man needs to know about Him, His will, and His purposes.

Inspiration is that divine influence of the Holy Spirit upon the writers of Scripture whereby their writings were made verbally infallible (plenary verbal inspiration).

Although these two definitions refer to the Holy Scriptures, we cannot limit revelation and inspiration to just the Bible. The prophets sometimes spoke orally and it wasn't recorded even

though they were inspired. Thus revelation and inspiration applies also to the oral utterances of the prophets and the apostles. Revelation and inspiration are still in the church though not on the level of the prophets and apostles that wrote the Scriptures.

Revelation is when God unveils Himself through vision, dream, miracles, the Scriptures, or by audible voice.

Revelation concerns the giving of truth to man. Inspiration involves man's accurate reception of the revelation. The Scriptures are the inspired record of revelation.

There is a difference between the prophet in the church speaking and the Holy Scriptures. The prophet in the church is to be judged by the others (I Corinthians 14:29). This is never said of the writers of the Scriptures. So while revelation and inspiration are still in the church, it is not to be compared with the Holy Scriptures.

Inspiration

Terms

Hebrew: *neshamah* meaning breath

But there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understandin (Job 32:8).

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for reproof, for correction, for doctrine, for instruction in righteousness (II Timothy 3:16).

Greek: *theopneustos* meaning God-breathed

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

The Greek term used by Paul to define what we call inspiration is expiration. Inspiration is taking something in. Expiration is giving something out. Inspiration, in the general sense, means to put feeling, thought, life, or power into someone. Paul said nothing of God breathing anything into anybody, he said that God breathed out something, namely, His Word. All Scripture is breathed out by God. The term used by the Bible identifies the Scriptures, not with its writers, but with God! This gives a much stronger, deeper meaning than the English word inspired.

Paul didn't say that the *writers* of Scripture were inspired, but he said that the *Scriptures are the very words that God breathed out*. Thus its infallibility follows. Our trust in the Scriptures is not in that its writers were inspired, but that God gave them His Word, and they recorded what God said.

The breath of God in Scripture is equated with His Spirit. His breath created the heavens (Psalm 33:6). The worlds were framed by His Word (Hebrews 11:3). His Spirit is what *expired* the words of Scripture.

God did not endow men with thoughts and then sanctify what they wrote, but He moved on them to write what He breathed out. "Holy men of God spoke as they were borne by the Holy Spirit" (II Peter 1:21). The result: infallible Scripture.

All Scripture is breathed out by God, but the men sometimes were not inspired. God's Word was ways true; man's only when inspired by Him.

Question

What attitude did the New Testament writers have concerning what they wrote or spoke? Did they consider themselves inspired as were the prophets of old? Were they ever aware that they were writing Scriptures?

The question is significant because it becomes the basis of any study of New Testament Theology.

Without question the apostles considered themselves recipients of divine revelation and spokesmen for God. To use Paul as an example, several of his statements show that he laid claim to divine revelation and divine authority on the basis of it.

He claimed direct revelation for his message and boldly pronounced a curse on anyone who preaches anything different (Galatians 1:6 ff). He claimed to have received his revelation directly from Christ (verse 12).

In his teaching on the gifts and on how Christians should conduct themselves in the church services, Paul told the Corinthians that those who were spiritual would recognize that he was speaking from the Lord, and those who didn't, were spiritually ignorant (I Corinthians 14:37-38).

Paul commanded the Thessalonians to exclude from their fellowship anyone who did not follow his instructions to the letter (II Thessalonians 3:14).

He claimed revelation on an equal with that of the prophets (Ephesians 3:1-5). He claimed that he spoke for Christ and had authority to discipline those who did not obey him as an apostle (II Corinthians 13:1-3; cf I Thessalonians 2:13; I Corinthians 7:10 ff).

The other apostles also claimed divine inspiration and authority.

John claimed this in I John 4:6: "We are of God; he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth us not."

Peter, like John, believed that he was inspired of God. He compared his word with that of the prophets of old, claiming a more sure prophecy. He based his truth on what he saw, and admonishes us that we do well if we take heed to it (II Peter 1:16-21).

Peter also claimed inspiration for all those who were speaking in tongues in Acts 2:33. Peter spoke while filled with the Holy Spirit in Acts 4:8.

The apostles classed their writings on a level with the Old Testament Scriptures.

. . . even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; as also in all his epistles speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures unto their own destruction (II Peter 3:15-16).

I charge you by the Lord that this epistle be read unto all the holy brethren (I Thessalonians 5:27).

The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass; and He sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John (Revelation 1:1).

He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches (Revelation 2:7).

In I Timothy 5:18, Paul quoted the Scriptures. The first part of the verse is a quote from the Old Testament: "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn." The second part of the verse is a quote from the New Testament: "The laborer is worthy of his reward" (Luke 10:7).

The apostles could also claim inspiration of their messages because Jesus promised them inspiration (John 14:26; 15:26-27). He promised them that when the Spirit was come He would guide them in truth.

The fact that the apostles were divinely inspired is confirmed by God Himself.

And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following (Mark 16:20).

How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to His own will? (Hebrews 2:3-4)

For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me, to make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed, through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God (Romans 15:18-19)

For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake (I Thessalonians 1:5)

Mode of Revelation and Inspiration in the New Testament

Revelation and inspiration came in various ways in the New Testament. In the Old Testament revelation and inspiration was limited largely to the prophets, but in the New Testament it has the whole body of Christ because of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. Though this is not on the same level as Scripture, nevertheless it is inspired by the same Holy Spirit.

Revelation and inspiration to the body of Christ is a unique experience predicted by Joel. This was first experienced at Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4). When they began all to speak in tongues and were questioned on the meaning of it, Peter informed them that this was what Joel spoke of (verses 14-18).

The first experience at Pentecost continued. The Gentiles spoke in tongues (Acts 10). Paul laid hands on the Ephesians and they spoke in tongues and prophesied (Acts 19). We are to pray in the Spirit (Ephesians 6:18). We pray through the Spirit (Romans 8:26-27). We build up our faith by praying in the Spirit (Jude 20). The gifts of revelation are taught in I Corinthians 12 and 14.

The methods used that are promised by Joel are dreams, vision, prophecy, and according to Peter, included the speaking of tongues. The Church is to receive divine revelation and inspiration, and any charismatic church does. The Lord speaks through prophecy, tongues and interpretations and gives dreams and visions to edify the church. In the Old Testament it was largely the prophet, but now it is everyone in the church.

Another method is direct revelation where the Lord Himself appears and gives it audibly. Paul received his first revelation this way (Galatians 1:11-12). The twelve apostles received their revelation directly from Him while He was on earth. After His resurrection, He spent forty days speaking to them directly concerning the Kingdom of God (Acts 1).

Jesus still appears to people and He speaks to them directly. He still speaks in dreams. He also speaks in audible voice without appearing.

Then there is revelation in the Spirit. This mode of revelation comes to the recipient when he is caught up in the Spirit or in a trance, sometimes out of the body, sometimes in the body (II Corinthians 12:1-4). The Apostle John was in the Spirit when he received the Book of Revelations (Revelation 1:9-11).

People still get caught up in the Spirit occasionally and receive something deep from the Lord. This is not seeing a vision, but it is being in a different dimension. It is being in a trance state where they realize that they are in the spiritual dimension.

The Church of the New Testament has prophets that are set in the body, and revelation comes through them. A revelation or inspiration may come to a prophet who will give immediate utterance of some disclosure of the mind and will of God (I Corinthians 14:29-32). Agabus predicted through prophecy that Paul would be bound at Jerusalem and delivered by the Jews to the Gentiles (Acts 21:10-11).

Another form of revelation and inspiration is through the operation of the gifts in the church. These are word of knowledge, word of wisdom, discerning of spirits. A word of knowledge is the revelation of something the person didn't know until God showed it to him.

Inspiration by the Spirit and revelation is promised by Jesus in John 14 and 16. He said that when the Spirit is come He would guide us in all truth. He will teach us show us things of things to come and about Jesus.

Scope of New Testament Revelation

The Old Testament revelation is limited primarily to the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings. Generally speaking, the Old Testament is to be thought of as type and shadow of better things to come. It laid the foundation for the full disclosure in the New Testament.

Revelation in the New Testament has four parts:

The message of the Gospels which is redemption through faith in Christ

The message of the Book of Acts, the realizing of the redemptive power of Christ through the Holy Spirit.

The message of the Epistles which is an interpretation of the meaning of redemption. They contain the explanation of the principles of Christianity; correction of errors; instructions in the faith; the crucified life; and all of the doctrines and theology of the new dispensation.

The message of the Book of Revelations which is a picture of the future triumph of Christ's redemption; first through judgment, then through the establishment of God's rule on this earth for a thousand years. Then finally the triumph of redemption moves into the eternal state.

There are two extremes concerning the scope of revelation and inspiration: those who add to the revelation, and those who subtract.

Views

Those who add

The Roman Catholic Church.

Rome adds certain books of the Apocrypha; Church tradition; Church dogma; decisions of the Church councils which are held regularly; and then since the Vatican Council in 1870, they add to the Bible the pronouncements of the Pope when he speaks *ex cathedra*, that is, from the Church. Since the council of 1870, they believe the Pope to be infallible when he speaks from Peter's throne.

Rejecting the Bible as their only source of faith and practice, Rome has multiplied many erroneous doctrines, practices, and beliefs. Some of the more prominent are those concerning Mary: Mary worship; the doctrines of the immaculate conception; the

perpetual virginity; the assumption of Mary; and she is called the Mother of God.

The doctrine of purgatory is taken from the Apocrypha. They sacrifice Christ every time they meet through the sacrifice of the mass, while we are told in Hebrews 10:10 that there is one sacrifice, once for all. They have the erroneous doctrine of transubstantiation: that when the priest mumbles his latin over the wafer and wine they are literally changed into the body and blood of Jesus.

They have prayers for the dead, and prayers to the saints; and on, and on, ad infinitum. The Roman Church is probably the most outstanding example of adding to the revelation.

The cults

These are the various religious groups that say that they believe in the Bible, but they add to the Word of God the alleged revelations of their founders or sometimes their followers.

Mormonism: Joseph Smith claimed to have received additional revelations from the angel Moroni (the glorified son of the ancient prophet Mormon) who informed him of the location of certain golden plates on which were written Egyptian hieroglyphics, together with the Urim and Thummin for interpreting them.

Christian Science: Mary Baker Eddy claimed that she had discovered the principles of "Christian Science" when she allegedly recovered from a severe injury almost instantly after reading Matthew 9:1-8. Although she claimed her book to be a revelation from God, it has since been proven to be filled with numerous plagiarisms from other authors including Phineas P. Quimby, a mental healer who was also the influence behind the *Unity* cult and the *New Thought Movement*.

Seventh Day Adventism: Ellen G. White who claimed to have received special visions and revelations from God, became the leader of the followers of William Miller. Her counsels led to the

organization of the Seventh Day Adventist Church which is clearly unbiblical in many of its teachings and beliefs.

Jehovah's Witnesses: Charles T. Russell claimed that he alone had the true revelation and that all churches were "the Devil's organization." His followers were first known as the "Russellites," but later adopted the name "Jehovah's Witnesses" to distinguish them from a smaller group which seceded.

Swedenborgianism (The Church of New Jerusalem): Emmanuel Swedenborg claimed to have received a visit from God (in the form of a man) who commissioned him as a seer and a revelator of the spiritual world. He was in reality a psychic who was clearly under the influence of occult and deceiving spirits.

Spiritualism: Spiritism is the most ancient religious delusion in the world. In modern times, Spiritualism as an organized religion began with Margaret and Kate Fox when they heard rappings in their home, and believing them to be sounds from the unseen spirit world, they devised a method of communication. Spiritualists are involved in many forms of occultism all of which are condemned by the Scriptures.

Both Fox sisters, after being used of Satan to revive Spiritism in modern times, died as alcoholics, cursing God as they died, destined for the hell they had denied.

The New Thought Movement: This developed from the mental healing system taught by a 19th century mesmerist, Phineas Parkhurst Quimby. It has been referred to as well as the "Mind-Cure Movement." New Thought is a form of pantheism which attempts to identify God with everything and everything with God.

The Theosophical Society is a philosophical religious cult founded by Helena P. Blavatsky, a Spiritualist medium. The main teachings of Theosophy are said to be based upon "revelations" given to Madam Blavatsky by the so-called "Masters" or "Adepts" of

Tibet (alleged human beings who have attained perfection, but who choose to remain in contact with this world as Teachers of spiritual wisdom and occult matters).

Note: The preceding notes on the cults have been taken from Every Wind of Doctrine.

The Shepherdship/Covering Cult came into existence by a revelation given to one of the leaders while he was staring out to sea. Now one of the leaders tells us that the Bible is not adequate to speak to the complexities, needs and problems of today. Thus we need (he says) some new or additional revelation in order to deal with contemporary religious needs.

For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book (Revelation 22:18-19).

This is addressing itself to the prophecy of Revelations, but this is a principle that applies to anything that God says.

Through the gifts of the Spirit, God can, and does still speak to His church through revelation and inspiration, but it is always compatible with the Scriptures. The same book that is inspired teaches us that these gifts are set in the church, and God tells us that He is speaking to us through those that He anoints that way. This is an experience that is unique to the New Testament Church. Revelation in the Old Testament came mostly through the prophet, but in the latter days "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."

If the churches really knew the Word of God, we wouldn't need these warnings against false prophecy, false teachers. Some who teach from the Bible cannot discern, but follow after every new revelation and error that crops up because they don't know the Bible well enough to know that it doesn't line up. Either because they can't discern, or because they don't want to rock the boat, they are not warning and alerting the people, so thousands are being ensnared by these deceptions.

The Bible plus anything takes people farther and farther away from God and truth. "If they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them" (Isaiah 8:20). If a person claims a vision or revelation, it has to be compatible with the Word.

Those who subtract

The Modernists repudiate verbal inspiration of the Word of God. They accuse those who believe in verbal inspiration of worshipping a book.

The Modernists subtract from the Word of God anything that doesn't appeal to their educated intellects.

The Liberals tell us that the Bible contains the Word of God but that we are not to equate the Bible with the Word of God.

We can the find Word of God in it if we study enough.

The Liberals, in rejecting the Bible as infallible, are making their own educated intellects infallible. A man can stand back several thousand years later and claim to know what did or did not happen in creation, that it was really evolution; that there was no tower of Babel, that it is just a spiritual parable to teach us not to rebel against God; the flood was local and not universal: how could you get all those animals in "that silly little ark?"

This is substituting educated intellect and making it infallible. When a man denies that a certain passage is inspired, he is claiming inspiration for himself. They claim that evolution is a fact when there is not one shred of proof for any of it. They overlook the flood and ignore the fact that the world before the flood was not the same as it is today (II Peter 3:5-7).

These men are condemned by the very Scriptures they appeal to because the Scriptures warn us that such people will arise in the last days.

The followers of expediency can be found in every type of religious group. .

This includes the multitudes of professing Christians who will follow the Bible everywhere except where it doesn't line up with what they want to do or believe. They either ignore what God's Word has to say altogether, or they will re-interpret it to suit themselves to justify, or to rationalize, what they want to do. Calling the elders, we are told, now means to call the doctors. What Jesus taught on divorce and re-marriage is not to be taken literally, or it is to be considered to be under the blood.

The followers of expediency claim to believe the Bible, so those passages they don't know what to do with they say are not for today. In essence such individuals, even though they don't claim to be liberal are no different from the Liberal who will deny that certain portions of the Scriptures are inspired. These are doing the same thing: that which they don't want to believe, they don't apply to themselves. The Liberal says it is not inspired; the others say that it is not for today; or they will spiritualize it.

Paul said three things about the Scriptures in II Timothy 3: 16-17.

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction,

for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

The Nature of Scripture

All Scripture is breathed out by God - it is God-breathed. The Bible claims to be expired from the mouth of God. This is what makes the Scriptures infallible, because sometimes the writers were inspired, sometimes they were not.

The Scriptures are infallible because it was breathed out by God. Inspiration has to do with the accurate recording of this Word of God.

The Benefits of Scripture

They are profitable for doctrine, for reproof, and for correction.

The Purpose of Scripture.

To equip us to be perfect, mature, complete and thoroughly equip us to perform all our works as good works.

The New Testament Conception of God

The doctrine of God, which deals with the existence of God, the trinity of God, and the attributes of God, is covered in Biblical Theology. The New Testament conception of God is built on this.

Jesus gave no formal or systematic instruction about God. His teachings reflect how God acts, what God feels toward what He created, especially man; what His purposes are for mankind in history, for the universe. "All things work together for good for them that are the called according to His purpose" (Romans 8:28). Thus, it is important that we find out what His purpose is. He saved us to glorify Him. The purpose of His pouring out the Spirit is to be crucified with Christ, to prepare ourselves for God's use and service in this endtime because He is going to usher in the Kingdom when He has a people that are prepared.

Jesus deals with God's purpose: to establish His Kingdom. Before He was crucified, all He taught was the Kingdom of God. After His resurrection, before His ascension, for forty days He talked to His disciples about the Kingdom. The Church is not the Kingdom, but the Church is the people that are in the Kingdom.

Jesus describes God as someone who has so much love for what He created that He gave His most precious treasure to redeem it from bondage, from sin: that is Himself, Jesus. He describes God as a Father. We are to pray to God as our Father.

Again, Jesus describes God, not as a father, but as a righteous judge who will punish those who will reject His love in giving His Son.

Again, Jesus describes God as Spirit who cannot be worshipped with liturgy, ritual, and creeds, but in truth and in spirit. Those who worship God acceptably worship Him in spirit and in truth (John 4:21-24).

God as Love

He that loveth not knoweth not God, for God is love. And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and he in God (1 John 4:8, 16).

When we have pure love for a wife or husband, or for God Himself; when we really know that we are loving someone, then we are expressing as an emotion what God is. In fact, He can't be or do anything that isn't motivated by love. Even His wrath against sin is motivated by love.

Love means devotion, benevolence, kindness, affection; but God is more than all these. To understand God as love, we must see that the greatest conception, or the greatest expression of love is based upon what God does because of what God is: love.

Self-giving love.

God's greatest expression of love is because He gives Himself as love. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten (unique) Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). Because He loved what He created, He gave His best, His Son. But this doesn't tell us that it is self-giving love.

But the Son tells us that He also gives Himself (John 10); and "the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:28). The fullness of God dwells in Jesus (Colossians 2:9). "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself...(II Corinthians 5:19).

This is how we see that the highest expression of God as love is self-giving love. God gave His Son. The Son said He is giving Himself.

The Scriptures say that the fullness of God is in the Son. God was in the Son while the world was being reconciled to God. So we have God giving Himself in His Son because His Son is equal with the Father and the Spirit.

God became flesh so that He could die for us (I John 3:16). God purchased the Church with His own blood (Acts 20:28).

As any perfection of God is to be duplicated in His children, so is self-giving love. His goodness toward all men, His love, even of enemies, is to be our example to follow (Matthew 5:43-48). It is to do love to them, bless them and do good go them, pray for them. Why? So that we may be children of our Father in heaven because He makes His sun to rise, and rain to fall on both the evil and the good.

Failure to imitate our Father in self-giving love, even to our enemies, disqualifies us as one of His children. Love is proof of the new birth (I John 3:10, 14; 4:7). If I can't love, or get rid of all hate and resentment, then I am not born of God. We are to imitate His perfection which is self-giving love.

It isn't just loving and praying. But God takes care of what He made. He has a providential concern. It is God's abiding interest in what He created. We are to care for those we are to love in the same way, by meeting their needs (James 2:14-15). Not to love in deed as well as word is to shut up our bowels of compassion, and the love of God is not in us (I John 3:17). We are to minister as Jesus came to minister (Matthew 20:25-28).

Jesus' giving Himself as God unto persecution for righteousness' sake, without retaliation, is an expression of self-giving love which we are to imitate (I Peter 2:19 ff). Christ gave us the example in whose steps we are to follow, who reviled not again, threatened not, but committed Himself to Him that judges righteously.

As God's love was given on our behalf (I John 4:10), our love is to be given on the behalf of others (I John 4:11).

The Importance of Love in the New Testament

It is one of the fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22). It is the greatest of the Christian virtues (I Corinthians 13).

Love is the fulfilling of the Law. The Law has to be fulfilled for us to be saved, and we do that through faith in Christ. Faith in Christ gives us the new birth and then we can love as God loves with self-giving love (Romans 13:8-10).

What is meant by "God is love"

When John said that God is love, he was telling us what God is by nature. Love with God is not a mere emotion; it is not merely an attribute, but it belongs to the very *nature and essence* of God. He is pure love. There are no degrees of love with God. He is love.

Unlike man, God doesn't have to be taught to love because He can't do anything else. Even His wrath is an expression of love. For example, we are human by nature. We don't have to learn how to be a human or how to act like one. God doesn't have to learn to love His enemies, or His friends. God sends His rain on both the just and the unjust (Matthew 5:45). He cannot do anything that does not express His nature which is love.

Since God is eternal, His love is eternal. Love has been the motive for all that He has done from all eternity. The expression of His eternal love is seen in various ways.

In the work of creation

Creation is seen as an act of love. Why? Because it shows His desire to share Himself and His perfections. God is absolute perfection and the greatest blessing one could receive is to share fellowship with God. He made man in His image and likeness so that He could communicate with what He created and share Himself with man.

In providing a plan of redemption

After the fall, love is expressed in redemption in providing a way that fellowship could be restored (John 3:16).

In God's providence

God's providence, His preservation of all that He created is an expression of His love. He provides for both the evil and the just (Matthew 5:45). Not a kingdom rises, or a sparrow falls without the Father (Psalm 104).

The wrath of God

How are we to view the wrath of God in the view of the fact that He is said to be pure love?

The Bible speaks more of God's wrath than it does of His love.

First of all, God's love is not to be set over against His wrath as if His wrath is some imperfection in His character as the Liberals contend. They deny His wrath because they cannot reconcile the wrath of God with the goodness of God.

In order to understand the wrath of God we need to have an understanding of God's holiness. It is because God is holy that He has wrath against sin. God's holiness, like God's love, are the two most often mentioned perfections in the Bible. Thus, if He did not deal with sin, He would not be true to His perfection of holiness. If God is completely holy He can't allow sin in His universe as if it didn't matter. So God's holiness means that He has to deal with sin.

God's holiness is expressed as wrath against all unholiness and unrighteousness. This is the key to understanding the relationship between God being love and God expressing wrath.

Wrath is the divine expression of God's love for holiness. He is love and loves holiness absolutely. God's love for man isn't just to save him but it is to make him holy (I Peter 1:15-16). God takes His holiness seriously, and any violation of His absolute holiness has to be either purged or punished, or His holiness would not be perfect.

Since God is love, then whatever He loves, He must love absolutely. That is why He can't allow one speck of ink on the white garment.

Holiness is so closely connected with God in Scripture that it became a synonym for the name of God Himself. He is called the Holy One of Israel. The seraphim of Isaiah 6 didn't cry "Yahweh, Yahweh, Yahweh" but "Holy, Holy, Holy" (Isaiah 6:3). His name is Holy (Isaiah 57:15).

God doesn't have holiness, but He *is* holy. He is pure and holy. Therefore; since He is love and He is holy; and because He loves holiness more than He loves people, then His love for holiness is His wrath against sin.

God's concern for His holiness runs through out the New Testament. "Follow after peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord" (Hebrews 12:14). We are to be holy in all our life because He is holy (I Peter 1:15-17). God will pour out the seven vials of His wrath because He is holy (Revelation 15:1,4).

It is tragic that many professing Christians apologize for God's wrath. Most people are moved by their emotions. So these who apologize for His wrath are really afraid of His wrath. They are afraid that if they admit its existence. it might fall on them. So it is easier to deny it in the hope that it won't fall on them.

Others invent theories to modify God's wrath. One is that punishment in hell is remedial (Universalism). God will save everything that He created. Some in charismatic circles teach this er-

ror under the name of ultimate reconciliation based on Colossians 1:20 taken out of context. God's wrath will not last forever is what they teach while they ignore all the other Scriptures.

Another view held by the Seventh Day Adventists is that the wicked will be annihilated. They cite Malachi 4:3 where it is said that the righteous will tread on the ashes of the wicked.

There is another theory that claims that hell is eternal separation from God and heaven, but not eternal punishment.

None of these theories can be found in the Bible, whereas eternal punishment is clearly taught by Jesus, the apostles, and in the Book of Revelations.

Why believe in the wrath of God?

Because the Bible teaches it

The New Testament opens with a warning to flee the wrath that is coming (Matthew 3:7). This wrath is said to be abiding already on those who don't believe (John 3:36). The Book of Revelations itself is a book of the wrath of God.

This is the wrath that awaits those who don't believe, both in and out of the church, because judgment will begin in the house of God.

The Day of the Lord is a day of judgment and it is only the sheep of God that will be delivered out of that judgment. It is a day of wrath.

The New Testament shows us that the wrath of God is not something just for the future, but God has already given us evidence in our own experience in history of the reality of His wrath. Therefore, we can expect it in the future like He predicts. The wrath of God *is being* revealed from heaven (Romans 1:18) against all ungodliness and unrighteousness.

God's wrath was first revealed when He cursed man and the earth in the Garden. God came down from heaven and meted out His judgment (Genesis 3).

His wrath is next revealed when He destroyed mankind in the flood. It was revealed when He rained down fire and brimstone from heaven. It was revealed from heaven when God gave the Law to Moses at Mount Sinai. The system of blood sacrifice where an innocent victim had to be killed in order that the man could live was an expression of God's wrath against sin. Sin is such an abomination in God's universe, His wrath is so great against it, that the only thing that could satisfy that wrath was that He felt it Himself at Calvary, so He stood in our place. No mere sinner could ever satisfy God's wrath against unholiness in His holy universe.

God's wrath from heaven was revealed when He destroyed Israel for her sins because the prophets spoke from heaven the Word of God, and they predicted the wrath of God against sin, against Israel.

The wrath of God is still being revealed in the form of wars, destructions, great natural judgments and calamities like earthquakes, floods, famines, tornados, and pestilences. Satan may cause the wind, but it is God's wrath allowing it.

All of this and much, much more is the Bible's witness to the reality of the wrath of God, that it is being revealed now, and has been from the Garden all the way down through history. History is an expression of God's wrath.

God is not ashamed to declare that He is a God of wrath

There are more references in the Bible to God's wrath than there is to His love. God a God is of wrath, fury, and judgment against sin.

God Himself confirms His wrath by an oath

There are two occasions recorded when God swore by Himself. One time He swore by His holiness: "My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips. Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David" (Psalm 89:34-35). The other time He swore by His wrath: "It is a people that do err in their heart...Unto whom I sware in my wrath that they should not enter into my rest" (Psalm 95:10).

For when God made promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no greater, He sware by Himself (Hebrews 6:13)

There is no contradiction between His wrath and His love

The Gentiles were able to be grafted into the tree because of God's goodness; because Israel was cut off by His wrath because of her unbelief (Romans 11:7-22). In God's wrath toward Israel He expressed His love toward us.

God records His wrath in the Scriptures to motivate us to godly fear and faithful service

If there was no wrath to fear, fallen human nature would take control. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom (Proverbs 9:10). It is good to fear God. "Let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: For our God is a consuming fire" (Hebrews 12:28-29). "The Lord shall judge His people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Hebrews 10:30-31). Both of these passages are addressed to God's people.

Jesus has delivered us who serve Him from the wrath that is to come (I Thessalonians 1:9-10). My personal relationship to Him must please Him. What I do and what I say must be pleasing to Him because I fear Him and I fear His wrath. It takes a healthy, reverent, complete fear of Him to motivate me to serve Him.

The Scriptures have shown us that the wrath of God is as much a perfection of God's nature as His holiness or righteousness.

There is no defect in the divine nature, but there would be if God was indifferent to sin and excused it. Indifference to sin is a moral blemish.

God corrects the notion that there is any defect in Him in Psalms 50:21. Israel thought that because she was following the prescribed rituals and because she had not yet been judged and punished for her sins, God approved of her. They thought that He would overlook sin just as they had done. But God said "I will improve thee, set them in order before thine eyes."

The Divine Initiative.

Because God is love, then He doesn't just deal with us as a righteous judge, but as a loving Father. He doesn't just deal with us as a holy judge, but also as a loving creator.

As holiness, He demands punishment for sin. God is holy. But as love, He punished sin in Himself. That is, He bears the punishment of our guilt and makes an atonement.

In the Old Testament, God is not depicted as taking the initiative in seeking sinners or their salvation. He didn't seek the Gentile's salvation in the Old Testament. There are prophecies that He would one day call a people out from among the Gentiles (Isaiah 19:25; 65:1). But in the Old Testament dispensation, salvation is limited to Israel. Only she had the revelation of salvation. Anyone from among the Gentiles who got saved became a proselyte and identified with the community of Israel and began to serve God.

The reason for this was that there was not a Gospel of redemption to proclaim until after Calvary. Right up to Pentecost, with Jesus on the scene, He was still saying that He was not sent to anyone but Israel. "Go not into the way of the Gentiles...but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matthew 10:5-6). When the Syrophenician woman came to Jesus, He told her it was not "meet to take the children's bread, and cast it unto the dogs" (Mark 7: 26-27).

Jesus had to offer the Kingdom to Israel first, knowing that they would reject it. Then that opened the door for the Gentiles to be saved (Romans 11).

In the New Testament, God as love is brought into focus. The divine initiative of God seeking the lost, Jew and Gentile alike, is seen (John 3:16). The parables of Jesus set forth the truth of God taking the initiative of seeking the lost. Luke 15 contains three such parables: the Lost Sheep, the Lost Coin, and the Loving Father (the Prodigal Son).

God is seen portrayed in a new way, as looking, searching for sinners that are lost, calling them out of sin. The heart of Jesus' ministry was "not to call the righteous, but the sinners to repentance (Mark 2:17).

Paul said that the Lord found him and revealed Himself to him.

God's love is sovereign

Sovereignty with respect to the love of God means that He chooses that one upon which He will bestow His love. Since it is sovereign, then it is His choice.

With respect to God's love, many have the misconception that God is obligated to love them because they have "accepted" Jesus. But on the contrary, the Scriptures turn that around. "We love Him, because He first loved us" (I John 4: 19). "But God commended His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).

No one who will believe is shut out from that love. "And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Revelation 22:17). "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink" (John 7:37). "Ho, everyone that thirsteth, come ye to the waters" (Isaiah 55:1). But to those who are not thirsty, the Bible has absolutely nothing to offer.

According to Scripture, God chooses whom He will, upon whom He wants to bestow His love and it is never because of anything He sees in us. That is why it can be unquestioned sovereignty, because no one deserves His love.

God chose to love Jacob and to hate Esau before they were born or had done either good or evil, that the purpose of election might stand (Romans 9:10-13). There is no other reason given except that it pleased Him to do so.

When Chorazin and Bethsaida didn't repent when they saw the mighty works of Jesus, He thanked the Father because He had hidden those things from the wise and prudent, and revealed it to babes. Why? Because it seemed good in His sight (Matthew 1:20 ff).

God works all things after the counsel of His own will (Ephesians 1:11). He did not choose Israel because of anything good or mighty in her, but because He loved her (Deuteronomy 7:7-8).

God's love is eternal

Since God is love and He is eternal, that means that His love is eternal. There never was a time that He did not love those He loves.

According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love: having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will (Ephesians 1:4-5).

Predestination did not begin with my birth, or with the creation of the world, but was from all eternity. But salvation and calling was according to His own purpose and grace before the world began (II Timothy 1:9-10). God loved Israel with an eternal love because He is eternal (Jeremiah 31:3). Since it is eternal, Israel will be restored. No one will ever be lost that God loves from eternity.

From God's side, He can't love something that is going to be in hell.

Then what about people who make a confession of faith and then backside or apostatize?

God is not confessing them with eternal love or election. Man can have all the marks of salvation for a while but later fall away. If the Father doesn't draw them to Him, they can't be saved (John 6:44 ff). "Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life and few there be that find it" (Matthew 7: 14). There will be those who try to get into the Kingdom by doing many works who won't find the way. It is only those who do the Father's will and are not offended at His Word. Those who are called by Him are not offended at His Word.

From God's Side, He doesn't lose any of His sheep (John 10). But from man's side, he can leave the fold thereby proving that he wasn't one of the elect. He can have all the marks of salvation, and from his side be believing. Hebrews 6 says that he can fall away and never be given the gift of repentance again. There are no elect people in hell. From man's side it is his responsibility. From God's side there can be no salvation without election because no elect person will ever be in hell. ***God will preserve the elect. From man's side the elect will most certainly persevere through faith and never sin unto condemnation.***

God's love is infinite

God's love is great (Ephesians 2:4) and passes all knowledge (Ephesians 3:19).

Whenever we are going through a severe trial and it seems that our prayers aren't being answered soon enough; when the enemy afflicts us and we are tempted to doubt God's love for us; then we need to be encouraged by the fact that He has loved us, He does love us, and He isn't going to change His for us because nothing can separate us from the love of God (Romans 8:38-39).

It should encourage us to know that nothing can separate us from the love of God, not even Job's trials. God loved Job and vindicated him. Job's last estate was much greater than the first. Jesus, God's most beloved, suffered all our trials.

God as Father

Jesus stressed God as Father in His teachings. He not only spoke of God as His own Father, but again and again He encourages us to believe that He is our Father. He wants us to know that He is our Father who sees our needs. He will reward those who pray to Him as Father in secret.

The meaning of Father in the Old Testament

The stress in the Old Testament is more on the Fatherhood of God. The term Father does occur, but only incidentally. Fatherhood describes God's special relation to the Jewish people as a nation. Israel, as a nation, is God's first born son (Exodus 4:22). God is Father of the nation because He created it. He is described as both Father and Creator in Isaiah 64:8 (cf Is 1:1-4). This relationship to Israel was sustained by God by a covenant.

The Fatherhood of Israel also spoke of the special providential care that He had for Israel. God was their King and Ruler. Thus the idea of Father was more formal, and even abstract, than it was in the New Testament.

The concept of God as Father in the New Testament

Jesus personalized this concept in the New Testament and applied it to every person in the Kingdom. Throughout the entire Sermon on the Mount Jesus repeatedly speaks of the Father as our Father (cf Mark 11:25; Luke 12:32).

There is no more unique concept of God than that of Him being our Father. It is not a general designation anymore, but it is to be taken literally. God has actually given us birth, produced us by

the Holy Spirit, and we are literally His children. Jesus encourages us to look on God and approach Him the same way we would a father in the natural sense.

Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not.

Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for His seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God (I John 3:1, 9).

Jesus gives the right to become the sons of God to those that receive Him (I John 1:11-12).

Those who are born of God partake of the divine nature. He begat us with the word of truth (James 1:18), and that seed remains in us. We are to take literally the fact that we partake of the divine nature, that we are born of God, and His seed is in us. It is a mystery that we can't understand. We just know that it happens when we believe. We are literally born again.

Thus we are to take it literally when we say God is our Father. We are new creatures and our fruits identify God as our Father. When this creation is seen in us, then others are seeing the nature of God in us because they are seeing Jesus in us.

Jesus told us to address His Father as our Father

We have the authority of the Word of the Son of God to address God as our Father (Matthew 6:9). It is not a mere theological designation or philosophical concept, but He is our Father.

God has parental concern for His children

God acts like a father towards His children. The Old Testament concept of Him was as Ruler, King over Israel. But the New Testament reveals His parental concern for every aspect of our lives:

physically, mentally, and spiritually. Jesus shows us that God's concern is that of a father when He said to ask Him for our daily food (Matthew 6:11). Our Father will give us every material need that arises if we take no thought for them, but seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness.

Our Father's concern for us extends to the smallest detail, even to the numbering of the hairs of our head (Matthew 10:20-30). He will feed and clothe us even more than the fowls of the air and the grass of the field. He has made provision for our physical healing if or when we get sick.

It is strange how so many professing Christians think that their earthly father has more concern for their food, health, and welfare than their heavenly Father who is a perfect father.

He is not indifferent to our needs because He invites us to bring them to Him and He will meet them.

He not only promises to meet our needs, but also our desires (Mark 11:24). "All things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive" (Matthew 21:22). He will hear anything we ask according to His will and grant the petitions that we desire (I John 5:14-15).

God took the initiative and invited us to ask Him for our needs and desires. He ordained prayer to show that He is concerned for our needs.

The Fatherhood of God is expressed as parental concern in that He does hear and answer the prayers of His children. He has ordained prayer as the means whereby we can go directly to Him. He has provided many promises in the Word and has shown us how to get what we need from Him. If He were not a father-type God, then He could just have created us and told us to shift for ourselves.

What is the significance of God ordaining prayer?

Prayer is a significant thing made available to us that other religions don't have. They will pray to dieties or pray to their idols, but we can pray to a living God who is literally our Father, having produced us by the seed of His Word and by the Holy Spirit.

First of all, then, the fact that He ordained prayer implies His concern as a parent.

However, secondly, the fact that He ordained prayer means that His providential concern is not to be taken for granted, but we have to ask for what we need and desire. "And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive" (Matthew 21:22). "Let us come boldly unto the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in the time of need" (Hebrews 4:16).

We can see that He has ordained a way by which our needs can be met, but that we have to ask for help. His blessings do not come automatically.

Since God is literally our Father, then He, like an earthly parent, will offer to help His children if they will meet His conditions. A good parent always sets conditions that his children have to meet. Because God's relationship to us is that of Father, He will make provisions for our needs, assuming that we will ask Him, believing; assuming that we won't ask Him in disharmony with His revealed will; assuming that we won't fail to meet our responsibilities in believing, acting our faith, and obeying Him and walking in the light that we have.

A good parent never gives the same blessings and privileges to the disobedient child as he does to the obedient child. A Christian can be God's child and still only have the basic blessings that He gives to the unregenerate world. This is the state of most Christians today.

Jesus used the illustration of God feeding the fowls of the air (Matthew 6:25). What He wants us to see is that He will feed us the same way. God doesn't feed the birds by dropping food in

their mouths as they sit with their mouths open. He provides the worms, the bugs, and the insects, and then they have to go out and look for them when they are hungry. If a sparrow just sits on a limb, it will literally starve to death.

God's providence is not diminished at all because He requires something out of us. As our Father, God will provide for us, but we have to meet His requirements. God's concern for us is as a father, not as a permissive parent.

Earthly parents feed and provide for their children after they bring them into existence. They feed their children as long as they can't feed themselves. But the time comes when the children have to do something to merit the favor of their parents. There is no doubt that all of us have missed out on things from our parents when we didn't believe what they said, or when we didn't obey them. God works the same way with His children.

Proof of God's parental concern is seen in His ordaining prayer so that we can receive what we need and desire. But with His promises go certain responsibilities.

First of all, we must determine His will about what He wants to give us, do for us, and how to receive it (I John 5:14-15). This is where many miss it because we either ask something that is not according to God's will as revealed in His Word, or we start asking why the answer hasn't arrived. Questions are always a sign of doubt.

Secondly, we must meet the conditions for the answer. For example, we have to ask believing (Matthew 21:22). Or we must have forgiven anyone we have anything against (Mark 11:25-26).

We must act in accordance with our prayers. Faith must be acted on or it is just words (James 2).

Our Father has ordained prayer to show His parental concern for us, but we are not to take that parental concern for granted. We have to ask, and ask in faith. Most Christians live on the same

level of faith as the world, so they receive about the same level of blessings from their heavenly Father. He will not, and cannot do anything for us as long as we question Him; or are not obeying Him; or not walking in the light we have, or are not meeting the conditions.

To receive the blessings of children from the Father, we have to believe like children, and act like children. What we see in the Word we have to believe and act on it. God expects us to ask in faith, act in faith, and then we will begin to receive His blessings as His children. We are sons and can enter into our inheritance (I Corinthians 3:21-22).

It is to give a witness to the world of His fatherly concern

God provides for all men, saved and unsaved (Matthew 5:45 cf Acts 14:17). That is general providence. But it is through answered prayer that God shows the world His special providence for His children. This was seen in the parting of the Red Sea, for example. It is seen in healings, miracles, etc. This is a means of demonstrating to the world that we have a living God as our Father. That is why it is so disappointing to God when most don't believe Him, but in time of trouble or difficulty, they go to someone else.

For those who are not believing Him in all things, He has provided for them in vain and ordained prayer for them to no avail. But He can bless those that ask Him as a testimony to His special providential care for His children.

What the Fatherhood of God does not mean

Contrary to Liberal thought, the ***Fatherhood of God*** is not taught in the New Testament. Neither is the brotherhood of all men taught. The Liberals teach that God is the Father of all men.

Just as in the Old Testament God was seen as Father of only Israel, Jesus denied the Fatherhood of God of all men. "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lust of your father will ye do"

(John 8:39-44). "In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil" (1 John 3:10). God is not the father of the sinner.

Faith in Jesus Christ is the basis for membership in the family of God. "But as many as received Him, to them gave He the power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name" (John 1: 11-12 cf Ephesians 2: 1-3).

Those who teach Fatherhood of God appeal to Acts 17:28-29 contending that Paul said we were offspring of God, including those that are lost. But actually Paul was quoting their poets. Even at that, the poets didn't say that we are children of God, but are offspring of God, that is, created in His image. Paul's point was that they should not think of God as made of gold and silver and the like because they were not, and they were created in the image of God.

We are all His offspring. But of the offspring of God, only those are His children who are born again by a spiritual birth. He is literally their Father. True born sons of God are born again as children of God and meet the qualifications of children. "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Romans 8:14).

The error of the Fatherhood of God results in unregenerate man praying to our Father and calling Him their Father. But the Scriptures say that God does not hear the prayer of sinners. "And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear" (Isaiah 1:15). "If I regard iniquity in my heart He will not hear me" (Psalm 66:18). "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be an abomination" (Proverbs 28:9). Even the plowing of the wicked is sin.

The refutation of the error of the Fatherhood of God is settled by Jesus in Matthew 11:27 and John 14:6:

All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son. but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him. . I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by Me.

God as Moral Ruler and Judge

Although the New Testament presents God as love and as Father, nevertheless He is also portrayed as a God of wrath against those who reject His offer of love and His offer to become the Father of those who will obey Him. While He is love and Father, He is also wrath to those who reject His love and His Fatherhood.

As love, God's concern is to find the lost and save them. But as a holy God, He must remain true to His righteousness, and therefore He must punish sin and disobedience. This is seen in the parable of the wheat and the tares (Matthew 13:24-30; 36-43); the parable of the talents (Matthew 25:14-30); the parable of the fish net (Matthew 14:47-50).

These two aspects of God, as love and as wrath, are seen throughout the New Testament. It is seen in the ministry of John the Baptist in Matthew 3:1-2.

It is seen throughout the ministry of Jesus. He said that a man can save his life or lose it (Mark 8:34-38). Other references are Matthew 10:32-39; 25: 34, 41; 13:37 ff; 11:20-24; Luke 10:13-15.

It is seen in the apostles' teachings. It is seen in Romans 1 where salvation is offered and has appeared unto men. It is seen in Revelation 4-19. Peter made it clear in II Peter 3:9 ff where he wrote that God is longsuffering and not slack in His promise because He is not willing that any should perish. But the Day of the Lord will come. Alongside the fact that God is longsuffering, not willing that any should perish, is the prediction of certain judgment upon this world.

God as Jesus Christ

Jesus Christ has to be included in any discussion of God because the New Testament tells us that He is the revealer of God. God dwells in a light that no man can approach (I Timothy 6:16). No one has seen God. What we know about God is seen in the face of Jesus Christ. He is the revealer of God.

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.

No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.

Jesus came teaching of His Father. Then He said that when He left He would send the Holy Spirit to teach us about Him. When Philip asked to see the Father, Jesus replied that "he that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (John 14:8-9).

God reveals Himself in many ways:

Through creation

"The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth His handywork" (Psalms 19:1). Romans 1 says that what may be known about God has been revealed to man.

Through our conscience

We have the law written in our hearts, our conscience bearing witness (Romans 2:15).

Through His Word

Timothy was exhorted by Paul to teach the Word because by so doing he could save both himself and others (I Timothy 4:13-16).

Through the gifts of the Holy Spirit

These are the gifts of the Holy Spirit Who cannot be separated from God, Father or Son. So He reveals Himself through the manifestations of the gifts: prophecy, word of knowledge, the discernings of spirits.

Particularly and directly through His Son Jesus Christ

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 (Hebrews 1:1-2)

Anyone who rejects Jesus as God does not have God (John 1).

Why is it necessary for God to reveal Himself?

God has not intentionally hidden Himself because He has revealed Himself in many ways. That is why man is without excuse when he doesn't respond to the light he gets through creation.

Man's sin has obscured his vision of God

God has to reveal Himself because man's sin has obscured his vision of God. The revelation is there, but man's sin has blinded his eyes so that he either rejects the revelation he sees or perverts it. The fool rejects it and the cults pervert it. Because man's eyes are blinded by sin, this revelation can't save him so he needs special revelation.

Natural revelation only confirms God's existence and makes the sinner without excuse in the day of judgment. But while natural revelation tells of God's existence, it cannot tell of eternal life or of redemption. Man must still have special revelation to know God savingly, personally. The only way man can know Him is God in Jesus Christ (no man will ever see the Father). That special revelation comes through Jesus Christ and His Word.

Man can never know what God is until he has a special revelation of Him and partakes of Him through faith in Jesus Christ. That is what He meant when He said that we must eat His flesh and drink His blood (John 6). He didn't mean literally because to eat His flesh would profit nothing. But the words He spoke are spirit and are life. So we partake of His sacrificial offering by faith. He had that perfect offering. He had perfect holiness.

It takes a personal relationship to God, not just knowing about Him, knowing that He exists. It takes special revelation because all the world perishes without the Gospel of redemption of Jesus Christ.

But natural revelation has a purpose. First of all it declares the glory of God and His power. It should cause man to worship Him. Secondly, it is to make the sinner without excuse (Romans 1:20). Because of this revelation, and his conscience within him, most men don't really deny the existence of God. They just want to live as if He didn't exist.

The deity of Christ as God is set forth in many passages (John 1; Philippians 2). He said, "I and my Father are one" (John 10:30). Jesus Christ is so uniquely God that out of all the billions of people now living, not a one of them will ever come into God's presence except through Jesus Christ.

Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh to the Father but by me" (John 14:6). In effect, He was saying that the way to life is through truth. He said that the truth will set us free. He presented the truth. No one ever had the truth, or will have the truth unless they proclaim *His* truth.

What is truth?

Definition: Truth is that which corresponds to the actual facts.

Not all that profess to accept the truth will agree with this definition. If the facts do not harmonize with their religious beliefs and creeds, then they will reject that definition and will stay with their creeds.

So we find in religious circles those who reply to the statement that it is raining outside, "I don't believe in rain." When challenged to go outside and look, they will say, "It makes no difference what I see or what you say, literal rain is not for today. The only rain I believe in is spiritual rain."

That definition, while it is valid and clear, yet many in religion will not accept it when it is applied to their religious beliefs. For to them, truth is not what always corresponds to the facts. Truth must correspond to their system of beliefs or else it isn't truth.

But truth is not man's creeds, man's traditions, or man's beliefs, except when they are in harmony with the actual facts.

The true Christian will take the definition a step farther. He will say: **Truth is that which corresponds to the actual facts as God interprets those facts.**

This qualifying phrase must be added because man is incapable of always interpreting the facts aright. He is incapable because he is fallen, a sinner. That is, in his physical state, he partakes of the declension of Adam.

Thus for the Christian, the test for truth is not merely what we see, *but what God says about what we see*. How can we know when what we judge to be true corresponds to the actual facts as God sees them? God has given us revelation of what truth is: the Holy Scriptures; and an inspiration of how to understand the revelation: the Holy Spirit.

Religious man is a genius at supplying substitutes for the infallible tests of truth: the Word of God and the Holy Spirit.

Substitues for the infallible tests of truth

Feelings

There is the kind that corresponds to the outward sensations, that is literally feeling something with the physical body. What a person feels about a matter is to them fact. Most will confess they are taking a cold if they feel that they have acquired the symptoms. But feelings as outward sensations can be deceptive as often as not.

There is another category of feelings that people substitute for facts in the area of emotions, mental reasonings, and desire. They will "feel led" to do this or to go there. Or they will "feel they are right." Because they desire it to be that way they conclude that it is that way.

If we go by feeling, we will never make it in. We have to go by faith.

Tradition

The Roman Catholic Church is an example of how man can establish his own system of "truth" which is based upon his traditions, his religious beliefs, his creeds. Then they proceed to test everything by the system they have established.

Truth must establish theory or tradition; not tradition or theory truth. Tradition is all right if it is based on truth. Jesus told the Pharisees that they made void the commandments of God by their traditions (Matthew 15:6). But in II Thesssalonians 2:15 and 3:16, Paul appeals to tradition because it is based on the truth. He had reference to a body of oral teachings which had been handed down to them and were to be handed down to others.

The Pentateuch was based on tradition passed down through Noah and his descendants. Matthew 2:23 says, "That it might be fulfilled that which was spoken of the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene." But there is no such statement in the Old Testament. Paul mentioned Jannes and Jambres in their withstanding Moses, yet they are not mentioned in the Old Testament (II Timothy 3:8). Enoch prophesied that the Lord would return with ten thousands of His saints (Jude 14) but there is no record of it in the Old Testament. These had to have come down by reliable Jewish tradition.

While tradition cannot be a substitute for truth, tradition can be valid in the right context. Truth can establish tradition.

Sense Perception

Most people, including the scientific world, consider the five senses infallible, an infallible test of truth. They won't have anything to do with what cannot be validated by the five senses. They are absolutely opposed to faith.

Sense perception isn't to be totally disregarded though it cannot be a test for truth because sense evidence can deceive. The sun appears to rise and set, yet we know for a fact that it does neither.

At best, sense evidence is but one source of truth, not a test for it, because it is too often invalid.

Intuition

Intuition can also be a source of truth, but it cannot be a test for truth. Certainly it is possible to be suddenly aware of some truth intuitively. But there is such a thing as wrong intuition. Substituting intuition for facts in the Word of God can get a person into trouble.

Customs

Like traditions, customs may be good or bad; true or false. Most people will follow what has become popular, or what is accepted as truth. Custom becomes a substitute for truth.

Truth is truth if it lines up with the Word of God. But words taken from the Bible are not necessarily truth unless the intent to use them the way God intended is there. Man's creeds contain many selections from the Bible. They select portions of Scriptures that "prove" their beliefs ignoring that which shows them to be wrong. The Seventh Day Adventists quote Malachi 4 and Isaiah 66:24 to justify their doctrine of annihilationism. Neo-orthodoxy uses terms like Christ, atonement, sin, cross, inspiration, but they don't mean what the Bible means by these terms. The Liberals call Jesus the Son of God, but they mean that He was an adopted son of God. The churches quote I Corinthians 13:8 to prove that tongues are not for today ignoring I Corinthians 14:39 which says forbid not to speak with tongues.

This is the reason that truth is defined as that which corresponds to actual facts as God interprets them. We do not know what a man means by his terms until we find out how he is using those terms. Even though they sound Biblical, they may just be religious.

Truth is not truth just because it is a quotation from the Bible. Truth is truth when we mean what God meant when He inspired those words in the first place. Truth is correspondence not only to the words of the Bible, but with the mind and intent of God when He inspired those words in the Holy Scriptures.

The reason Jesus could say that He was the truth was because His life and His teachings were in exact harmony with the intent of God when He gave Him those words to speak. He was an exact duplicate of the truth that His Father gave Him. To the extent that we can correspond in word and deed to God's truth will we be in His image. We are to be like Christ. That is why the Word is so important. It is only the Word that can bring us into conformity

to the image of God. The Word becomes alive when we believe it and obey it.

We too can come to know the truth when we meet the conditions that He did: doing the Word. If we continue in His Word we will be His disciples (John 8:31-32). Continuing in His Word will give us the truth. We can know the truth if we, like Jesus, obey the Word.

Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to guide us into all truth (John 16:13). God has given us all the truth that we need and He expects us to have all of it. He has given us the anointing to know all things. He has given us the truth because He expects us to obey it. But it will cost us everything to know this truth.

This is not to say that all the truth of the universe is to be found in the Bible. What God means is that He gave us all the truth that we need to know about Him, salvation, redemption, sin, and His promises. The Bible itself says that we don't know it all. We know in part but the time will come when we will know as we are known (I Corinthians 12:13). The wisdom and knowledge of God is beyond our comprehension; His ways are past finding out (Romans 11:35 cf I Corinthians 2:9; II Corinthians 12). We have all eternity to learn.

But, whatever the Bible addresses itself to, it is always accurate.

The relation of truth to faith

To Jesus faith and truth were inseparable

To Jesus faith and truth were inseparable. He taught the truth and constantly called upon man to believe it. He rebuked everyone who did not have faith in His truth.

The Bible doesn't separate faith and truth.

So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God (Romans 10:17).

Therefore faith in what God has said in His Word is limited to our knowledge of the truth. We can only believe in what we know God has said. We can't do His will unless we study His revelation on it. We can not do something in faith unless we know that He wants us to do it. That knowledge on which faith is based comes from His Word.

Too often Christians call something truth, but it is only something out of their creeds or some popular religious idea. They are believing something but it is not true. Faith in creeds generally is a neat device to escape the hard work of finding out for oneself what is true. Because of the large number of denominations there are many different beliefs about the same Scriptures, each one supposed to be the truth. The world seems to know what the Christians apparently do not, that God would not be that confused.

Faith has to be related to knowledge; that is, spiritual knowledge, not sense knowledge. It is related to the knowledge of God's Word. "Truth" that is not based on God's Word is not acceptable to God (Matthew 15:8-9).

The test for genuine faith is the same as for truth: the Word of God.

How can we know that the Word of God is true?

We know it by the nature of faith itself.

Faith is not the ability to reason and deduce something as true. But the very faith to believe the Word of God is in itself the evidence that it is true. Faith comes by the Word, by the very fact that we read and study it. This is not begging the question because something isn't true just because one believes it. But faith that the Bible is truth comes by the truth, the Word of truth. The Word itself produces the faith in our hearts that it is truth.

We know by the inner witness of the Spirit of truth to the truth of God's Word.

Jesus said that He was going to send the Holy Spirit to seal the truth to our hearts (John 16:13). The same Spirit that inspired the Word of truth is going to say amen as we read it. If we listen to the Spirit, then we will know what is true. God's truth will not change.

Jesus said that if we will obey His Word we will know the truth. The truth is not learned in a college or seminary, or even in church. The truth is learned when we do it. Otherwise, it is just words. He that is only a hearer and not a doer of the Word is just deceiving himself (James 1:22). If anyone does His will then he will know the truth (John 8:13-32).

My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself (John 7:16-17).

We know the Bible is true because when we put it into practice it happens.

Jesus said that any man that would do what He says will know the truth.

God as Spirit

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

The meaning of God as Spirit might best be understood in contrasting what God is with what man is. Man *has* a spirit. God is Spirit. Man has a spirit from God.

The Christian can be described as spiritual, but not as spirit. Man is the adjective. God is the noun. Man is spiritual even if he is

unsaved in the sense that he is created in the image of God (James 3:8-9). But especially when a man is born again “spiritual” describes his character and life. Man is both flesh and spirit. God is by nature Spirit.

God as Spirit has two aspects in the New Testament. God's nature, or being, is Spirit. But in one of His eternal manifestations of that nature, He is called the Holy Spirit.

What It Means For God To Be Spirit

By Logical Implication

Since spirit, not finite matter, is the highest form or order of existence that is possible, then the Creator of all things must Himself be of the highest order possible. The highest conception of God is that He is Spirit and not something finite or created; not something limited by time or distance, but pure Spirit. Man, from observation of the created order, can come to the conclusion that there is an invisible Spirit or Creator (Romans 1:20).

All man sees is decay, change, and the death of the whole material universe. And therefore, because all he can see is change, decay, and death, that which is greater than all that would have to be changeless, or spirit.

Again, since man knows intuitively that his own mind, or spirit, is of a higher order than the brain by which he thinks or his mind functions, then he knows that God must be of the highest existence possible, namely Spirit.

From the Declarations of Scripture Itself

God is declared to be Spirit (John 4:24). He is called the Father of spirits (Hebrews 12:9). He is the one that produces spirit. He gives spirit to everything that has life. Jesus Christ, before He became flesh, was invisible Spirit (Philippians 2:5 ff). The apostle states that Jesus' earthly form was not His original, or heavenly

form which was the God-form: invisible Spirit. God declared that He is not like flesh, but He is Spirit (Is 31:3).

From Scriptural Doctrine

He is Eternal

God's eternalness shows that He is Spirit because only spirit is eternal. Anything created is finite, and its finitude consists in the fact that it was created. Anything that has a beginning has to have an ending. Only spirit would have no beginning or ending. Saying that God is eternal as the Bible does (Romans 1:20; I Timothy 1:17), is just another way of saying that God is Spirit because only spirit is eternal. Everything else is in the process of change, decay, and death.

To say that God is eternal is to say that He is Spirit. Or to say that He is Spirit is to say that He is eternal. Man as a personality, unlike God who never had a beginning, has a beginning when spirit and body unite: he becomes soul (Genesis 2:7).

He is Omnipresent

Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: If I make my bed in sheol, 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 (Psalm 139:7-10).

God fills the heavens and the earth (Jeremiah 23: 23-24). Heaven is a big place. Even the created heavens are almost infinite as far as seeing is concerned. There are billions of galaxies bigger than ours. It would take a hundred thousand light years to cross our galaxy. The vastness of space has boggled the minds of astronomers for centuries and they have now come up with a new theory that perhaps space expands and contracts on itself and that there never was any beginning.

Space is big enough for all of these billions of galaxies to be rushing away from each other yet God says He fills all of these heavens and all of the earth.

God is not far from any of us (Acts 17:24-27). He is omnipresent. He is not like man, nor does He need anything like man. Neither is He like anything that can be made.

He is Invisible

God is said to be invisible in Colossians 1:15; I Timothy 1:17; and Hebrews 11:27. Only spirit can be and remain invisible without hiding. Anything material has to counterfeit God's invisibility. The very fact that He is invisible tells us that He is Spirit because only spirit can be invisible without hiding. Man cannot make himself invisible, he can only attempt to duplicate what God is. God who is Spirit has the power to make Himself visible. But man who is visible has no power to make himself invisible because he isn't spirit.

Was Jesus an exception?

Probably God blinding the eyes of His enemies

Was it in Jesus' power to make Himself invisible, or was it God blinding the eyes of His enemies? It was probably the latter because He emptied Himself of His divine prerogatives (Philippians 2:7).

Jesus passed through the midst of His enemies and went His way (Luke 4:28-30). He hid Himself and went through the midst of them (John 8:56-59). In the Greek this is passive and seems to imply that God veiled their eyes so that they couldn't see Him.

What is Spirit?

In reply to this question, a religious teacher once said that spirit has no shape, no size, no color, no weight, and it does not occu-

py space. This is an attempt to define another kind, or dimension, of reality than that we are familiar with.

Spirit is invisible, immaterial, spaceless, and immortal. Since it is immaterial it becomes difficult to find terms to define it with because all we know is material.

Invisible

If it can be seen, it isn't spirit. If a person sees a spirit, one of two things takes place.

When the two dimensions merge, the visible and the invisible, so that a person sees the invisible; if he is conscious and seeing the invisible with his eyes open; it does not mean that he is seeing the invisible with his physical eyes. The invisible makes himself visible to the person. Even in seances, the spirits make themselves visible to those who are not in a trance.

The second way to see the invisible is when a person is in the spirit like John was in Revelation, and Paul in II Corinthians 12. Man's spirit can see spirit because he is in that dimension.

Immaterial

The material body has parts. But the spirit cannot be divided up into parts. There is no element of spirit which is not the whole essence because it is immaterial.

God as Spirit cannot be divided. He eternally manifests Himself as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, but He is one eternal Divine Spirit. That is why Jesus could say that He and the Father are one.

Spaceless

Something that is immaterial does not occupy space. Material objects have to occupy space or they aren't material objects. How could one have something with no place for it to exist? But

spirit, being immaterial, doesn't need space because it doesn't occupy any space.

Anything created requires space. If there was no space, then created objects could not exist. God created space for things He would create. But as immaterial spirit having no parts, having no weight, having no dimension, having no spread, spirit doesn't need space. Space is superfluous to spirit. The only time spirit needs space is when it makes itself visible. Space is emptiness, and emptiness is not necessary for a spirit to exist in.

Light is a demonstration of that which does not occupy space. Demons are spirit and don't occupy space and that is why many can be in the same person.

Immortal

Material objects can be changed in form. Water can be frozen to make ice; boiled to make steam; steam condensed to make water. All created or material objects are in the process of change and decay. But spirit is immortal because it cannot be changed to anything else or reduced to anything else. The reason is that spirit is the basic essence. Spirit remains the whole self all the time.

The relation of immortality to time:

Immortal spirit, unlike matter is not affected by time. It is either alive to God and will thus spend eternity in heaven, or it is dead unto God and will spend eternity in hell. In any case it is immortal.

Why is spirit not affected by time? Because time is measurement of change. Everything created is in the process of change. Time was created when the universe and space were created. As soon as God created an object to put in that space it began to change. Time was necessary to measure and record the changes that take place. It is impossible to have a created order without time.

Terms

The Old Testament

Figuratively

Spirit can describe disposition, attitude or character. The Old Testament speaks of a spirit of anger (disposition). Moses was meek in spirit (character). Perverse spirits are spoken of in Proverbs 16:18-19, for example.

Personality

Spirit can be the person or personality. For example God made His angels spirits (Psalm 104:4). Evil spirits are spoken of as personalities (I Samuel 16:14-16, 23). An evil spirit is identified as a lying spirit (I Samuel 22:19-23).

In Relation to the Body and Soul

The spirit is the principle of conscious life, sometimes equated with the breath (Genesis 2:7). Spirit is the vital principle that animates the body. It is the incorporeal part of man.

Hebrew terms:

ruah Spirit (Genesis 41:8)
Wind (Genesis 8:1)
Breath (Genesis 6:17)

nephesh

Generally *nephesh*, or soul, denotes the individual himself as a person, whereas *ruah*, or spirit, signifies the animating principle, or the vital force within the individual. He is soul, but he has a spirit.

And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living nephesh (Genesis 2:7).

All the souls that came with Jacob...the sons of Joseph...were two souls: all the souls of the house of Jacob...were threescore and ten (Genesis 46:26-27).

But there is a spirit in man (Job 32:8). The spirit within me constrains me (Job 32:18). Therefore is my spirit overwhelmed within me (Psalm 3:4).

Nephesh, or soul, can also signify the seat of the appetites and desires (Deuteronomy 12:20). It is the seat of the emotions (Jeremiah 13:17).

Sometimes *nephesh* signifies life itself (Leviticus 17:11). "And it came to pass as her soul was departing (for she died)..." (Genesis 35:18). But this is simply referring to life in the general sense, not in the sense of spirit being the vital life force.

In the New Testament

Greek term:

Pneuma Spirit (Hebrews 12:23)
Wind (John 3:8)
Breath (II Thessalonians 2:8)

Figuratively

I Peter 3:4 speaks of a meek and quiet spirit (disposition).

Personality

Angels are spirits (Hebrews 1:4-14). Demons are evil spirits (Luke 8:2).

In Relation to the Body and Soul

Spirit is the vital life principle. It is the principle of conscious life. It is the vital force that gives life. It is possible to have soul without spirit, but not life. When Jesus raised Jairus' daughter from the dead, her spirit came again and she came to life (Luke 8:55).

There is a clear distinction between spirit and soul (I Thessalonians 5:23; Hebrews 4:12).

pseuche Soul

The concept of soul in the New Testament is not the Greek concept, but the Hebrew concept of the Old Testament. *Pseuche* is used to refer to the person. Paul speaks of 276 souls on board (Acts 27:37). It refers to person in Mark 3:4 where Jesus asked if it was lawful to save life on the Sabbath.

Matthew 16:26 "What shall a man give in exchange for his soul (himself)?"

In Matthew 10:28, I Peter 2:11, and Revelation 6:9, the context shows that it is the person that is being referred to by the word soul: the incorporeal aspect of the personality.

Pneuma, or spirit, denotes the immaterial part of man's personality which is clearly seen in II 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." Paul was simply saying that we are to cleanse ourselves completely, inside and out.

"For they have refreshed my spirit, and yours" (I Corinthians 16:18). This could easily have been translated "they refreshed you and me." Paul was saying that they refreshed his innermost being. It carries more force to say my spirit than it does to say me.

Thus it is seen that the spirit itself can stand for the person, but in a way that is obvious. It can be a synonym for person.

When the Old and New Testaments address themselves to the deceased, these terms are used almost interchangeably. That is, they can say either of the deceased that he is soul or that he is spirit. For example, in Revelation 6:9, John saw the souls of the martyrs. It should have been translated "he saw the martyrs."

But in Hebrews 12:23, the deceased are called spirits: "...the spirits of just men made perfect." This could have been translated "the saints in heaven."

Spirit and soul can be used interchangeably in the New Testament, but the distinctions have to be kept in mind so that when one reads soul he thinks of it as the person. But when it is translated spirit, then he thinks of the spiritual immaterial part of the person.

The Implications of John 4:24

God is Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

This implies that those who don't worship Him in spirit and truth are not worshipping Him. Clearly Jesus is drawing our attention to the fact that there is a link between God's nature, Spirit, and the nature of our worship.

There is a two-fold implication of John 4:24 for the Christian.

Our concept of the nature of God will also affect the nature of our worship of God.

In spite of the clear teaching of Jesus concerning the nature of God and the nature of our worship of God, man has attempted in every way he can to finitize the infinite God by attempting to depict Him on canvas, carve Him in stone for men to bow down to,

or to portray Him on film by someone trying to impersonate the Son of God, or even God Himself. Or they try to finitize Him through ritual worship.

The context of John 4:24 is the ritual by which the Jews and the Samaritans had been worshipping God. That was the whole significance of the Samaritan temple and the temple at Jerusalem passing away. No longer were they to worship by ritual, but in spirit and in truth.

Jesus wasn't intending to give some new information about God when He said God is Spirit, because both the Jews and the Samaritans knew this. Even the Gentiles knew that God was Spirit before they perverted that revelation and made a creator out of the creature (Romans 1).

But even now they could know that God is Spirit if they cared to reflect a few moments on it because that is going to be the basis of their judgment.

What Jesus was saying in John 4:24:

We have to worship Him in a manner befitting His nature.

Since God is Spirit, we have to worship Him in a manner befitting His nature. Anything less is degrading. He has to be worshipped in spirit, not in some finite way; and not in some ritualistic manner as the Jews and the Samaritans had come to do (and as the Catholics and most Protestants do).

When Jesus said that God is Spirit, He said He is not material, not finite. He is an infinite invisible immaterial Being. Therefore, it is a sin to attempt to either worship or depict the infinite invisible God by a picture of some sinner who posed for it; or by a statue that men bow down to; or by some created thing like a dove that charismatics call the Holy Spirit (Deuteronomy 4:10 ff).

We are to worship the reality

Anything less than the reality is not acceptable to God. To worship Him in spirit does away with all liturgical worship. We are not to worship some substitute: picture, statue, doctrine, or liturgy. Men will invariably transfer their affection to the substitute, to the finite object (Romans 1). Christians are being taught that God will accept the kind of worship that God says He won't accept.

It is degrading to make an image or likeness of God. How can a person take the pure, undefiled, infinite Spirit who fills heaven and earth and localize Him in some piece of clay, or in somebody's paint? The Old Testament forbids it in Exodus 20 and in Deuteronomy 4. The New Testament forbids it in John 4:24 and in Acts 17:28-30.

If a person tries to depict the invisible God on a canvas, invariably it will be some idea of his own imagination, which makes it a lie, or he will conjure up some idea he has seen somewhere. Nowhere is this permitted in either the Old or New Testaments.

God is seeking those who will worship Him in Spirit and in truth

Since God is seeking those to worship Him in spirit and in truth, that makes any other type of worship unacceptable.

There are no descriptions of the Son of God in the Bible to prevent idolatry. All paintings that are supposed to be of Jesus are inaccurate because we know none of His physical features, or most importantly, His facial features. That is why there are so many different pictures claiming to be of Jesus. All come from the imagination of the artist, and that makes them lies. Or they are painted from some sinner impersonating Christ. This is blasphemy and the sin of Antichrist who will soon come and sit in the temple of God claiming that he is God.

Someone once asked, "What if some artist who had never seen you, out of his imagination painted a picture of what he thought you might look like, and then went around telling everyone that this was you?"

What about visions? Most likely Jesus would never appear to anyone who would try to portray Him because it would be idolatrous.

Some contend that pictures, icons, statues, etc., aid in worship. If this is true, why then did Jesus not give us some aids to worship? Why did He forbid aids and tell us we must worship invisible Spirit with our spirits? Why did Peter, James, and John never give one word of description if it aids in worship? The early church was able to convert sinners without Bibles with pictures in it.

People who have visions of Jesus do not agree in their descriptions of Him. One could speculate that He purposely does not appear the same way twice. He has that power in His body because the disciples on the road to Emmaus didn't recognize Him until He revealed Himself to them (Luke 24).

The description in Revelation 1 cannot be of what Christ looks like because that is symbolic.

The New Testament tells us that sinners are going to be converted by preaching, not pictures.

When sinful man in the early church tried to use his vain imagination to paint pictures, true saints protested against that. Eusebius, the 4th century historian writes: "Who can counterfeit by dead and insensible colours, by vain painter's art, the brightness of His glory, whereas His disciples were not able to behold His glory in the mount of transfiguration and fell on their faces?"

The Church Council in 753 A.D. condemned any attempt to paint a picture of Jesus Christ. The Council held that if you try to portray Him in His humanity, you leave out His deity; so let him be accursed. If you try to portray Him in His deity, you leave out His humanity; so let him be accursed. They contended that you cannot make two persons out of Jesus (Nestorianism). He is God-man. He is not two persons. He is two natures, human and di-

vine, in one person. Then they said, thirdly, if you try to paint Him as one person, humanity deified, then you separate Him from the Godhead, so let him be accursed.

He can't be painted in His present glory because we don't know what that looks like. This is implied in I John 3:2. We are going to be like Him when He appears. We don't know what we will be like. If we don't know what we are going to be like, but we are going to be like Him, that means we don't know what He is like, or we would know what we are going to be like. We know only in part but then we shall know as we are known (I Corinthians 13:12). We will have new glorified bodies that are going to be like His (Philippians 3:20-21 cf I Corinthians 15).

God forbids pictures, statues, icons, and impersonations of any kind for the same reason He forbids it in the Old Testament: because it is degrading to Him who is infinite Spirit; and because it is a temptation to idolatry. People still insist on portraying the Holy Spirit as a dove, and Jesus as some sinful man impersonating Him; and the Father as a man with a long white beard.

It is a temptation to idolatry because where ever there is a picture you will find idolatry present, people bowing down before it in their hearts. They will immediately transfer their affections and thoughts to the picture every time they see it, and their hearts will say that is Jesus. Every time they see a dove, they think of it as the Holy Spirit.

Why did God select the dove to symbolize the Holy Spirit to John?

Some connect the dove with Genesis 1:1-3 where the Holy Spirit is described as brooding, hovering as a bird, over His creative work. We are sheltered under His wings (Psalms 91). In Alexandrian Judaism the dove symbolized wisdom.

Perhaps there are several reasons why God chose a dove and not ravens, or eagles, or a lamb. He wouldn't use a lamb to symbolize the Holy Spirit because a lamb, though meek and gentle,

represents sacrifice and you can't sacrifice the Holy Spirit. The lamb was used to depict Jesus who is the Lamb of God.

The raven could not be used though it was often used in Scripture. Ravens eat carrion. God wouldn't have used eagles or hawks because they are birds of prey.

But unlike birds of prey and birds that eat unclean things, the dove is meek and gentle and could well be used to represent the nature of the Spirit of God. The dove is depicted as a symbol of endearment, love, and tenderness (Song of Solomon 1:15; 2:14; Psalm 74:19 ff).

Again, God no doubt used the dove because it was one of the clean birds allowed for food in the Old Testament. The dove was the only bird or fowl that could be classed as a sacrifice on the altar of God.

Lastly, God had to give John some sign so that is the one He chose. This was a sign only to John and never again to anyone else.

It is interesting that charismatics use the dove to symbolize our baptism in the Spirit, but in the Bible, the dove symbolizes Jesus' baptism. Our baptism in the Spirit is symbolized by tongues of fire and by wind.

When Jesus said that God is Spirit He is showing us why He had to assume human nature to redeem us.

Spirit cannot die. He had to put on human form because He was put to death in the flesh. In Hebrews 2:14-18, it is said that He had to be made like unto us in every way. That is why He took upon Himself the nature of Abraham, or flesh, and not of angels.

The Logos was made flesh (John 1:1). His nature after His disciples saw Him was not the nature He had before they saw Him (Philippians 2).

God as Holy Spirit

He is a Personality.

The New Testament makes explicit what was implicit in the Old Testament. The New Testament sets forth the Holy Spirit as a personality, not a mere influence or power as the Liberals and some cults attempt to make Him. They use Scriptures that teach that the Holy Spirit will guide and influence us to limit Him to that. Or they use Acts 1:8 where Jesus said “we will receive power” to say that He is just a power.

But personal pronouns are used of Him (John 16:7-15). If He was only a power or influence neuter pronouns would be used.

He is called the *parakletos* in John 14:16. The same term is used of Jesus, whom we know as a person, in John 2:1.

The Holy Spirit in the New Testament has attributes of personality. Mere power would not be said to have wisdom and knowledge, but the Holy Spirit does (I Corinthians 12:8; Romans 8:26-27). He teaches (John 14:26). He is said to reprove us (John 16:8). He can be grieved (Ephesians 4:30). He is the one who appoints and commissions the Church (Acts 13:2; Acts 20:28). He can speak (Revelation 3:22; Acts 13:2; John 16:13). Compare these with Zechariah 4:6 where it is said that God will do His work by His Spirit, not might and power.

He is part of the God-head.

He is called God in Acts 5:3-4; I Corinthians 3:16; I Corinthians 6:19; Ephesians 2:22.

He is equated with God in the triune passages (Matthew 28:19; II Corinthians 13:14; I Peter 1:2).

Since He can be blasphemed, He must be God. He must be a person, not a power or influence (Matthew 12:21 ff).

The Ministry of the Holy Spirit

In Relation to the Scriptures

He is the One who inspired the Scriptures, both the Old and New Testaments.

In Relation to the Church

He brought the Church into existence. Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to create His Church. He is the agent of regeneration (I Corinthians 12:13 cf John 3). He is the agent of all evangelism, teaching, or ministry because He directs the Church's ministry.

Whatever God does in this world He does in and through the Holy Spirit. It is all in the name of Jesus and for Jesus' glory and ultimately the glory of the Father. But bypassing the Holy Spirit is bypassing the way into the Kingdom.

In Relation to the Christian

He is the agent in regeneration (John 3). He is the One who enables us to make a saving confession (I Corinthians 12:3). It takes the Holy Spirit to be consecrated (II Thessalonians 2:13; I Peter 1:2; I Corinthians 6:18-20; Galatians 5).

The Holy Spirit educates the Christian (John 14:26; John 16:14; I Corinthians 2). Whatever we know spiritually, we know by the Spirit.

The Holy Spirit makes intercession for us (Romans 8:26-27).

It is through the baptism of the Holy Spirit that the Christian is anointed and imparted the gifts of the Spirit (Acts 1, 2; I Corinthians 12, 14; Acts 10:38).

He will be the agent in the resurrection of the body. As He raised up Jesus from the dead, so will He raise us (Romans 8:11).

In Relation to Christ

Jesus emptied Himself. He did everything by the Holy Spirit. That is why when He was charged with casting out demons by Beelzebub, they were blaspheming the Holy Spirit who did the works through Him (Matthew 12).

The birth of Christ

The Holy Spirit was the agent of conception. He had no human father. Jesus is called the last Adam and is not related in any way to the first Adam except by lineage and descent with respect to Mary being of David's seed out of whose line He was promised to come. Mary merely carried the baby. The Holy Spirit who created the first man created Jesus in the womb of Mary.

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 (Luke 1: 35).

b) The baptism of Christ

It is implied that at His baptism He was baptized in the Holy Spirit because immediately after His water baptism and the Holy Spirit descending on Him as a dove, the Spirit led Him into the wilderness. He was anointed with the Holy Spirit and with power (Acts 10:38).

John the Baptist is said to have been filled with the Spirit from his mother's womb. It is inconceivable that the same is not true of Jesus. But the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, as it is with us, is a special anointing for ministry.

Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness; returned by the power of the Spirit into Galilee where He said the Spirit of the Lord had anointed Him to preach the gospel to the poor; "he hath

sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord" (Luke 4:18-19).

The temptation of Christ

Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil (Matthew 4:1), but in Mark 1:12 it says that He was driven into the wilderness to be tempted. It is not a contradiction. The leading and anointing of the Spirit was so heavy on Him that there was an energetic compulsion for Him to begin His ministry. Jesus' temptation was the beginning of His ministry.

Because the nature of His Messianic ministry was so important, then the Spirit directed Jesus from the very moment that He descended on Him in the form of a dove.

His temptations were in keeping with His Messianic mission. The temptation to turn stones into bread was the temptation to misuse His power. The temptation to misuse faith was to cast Himself down from the pinnacle of the temple. The temptation to misuse His worship of God and allegiance to God was to worship the devil who would have given Him the world.

It is interesting that His temptations did not cease. The devil departed from Him for a season (Luke 4:13). Jesus referred to the disciples who were with Him through His temptations (Luke 22:28). He learned obedience through the things that He suffered (Hebrews 5:8). He was in all points tempted like us (Hebrews 4:15).

The ministry of Christ.

In His public ministry He returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee (Luke 4). The Holy Spirit anointed Him to preach the gospel.(Luke 14:18).

The Holy Spirit worked through Jesus' ministry all through the Gospels. He cast out demons by the Spirit of God (Matthew 12). He healed by the Spirit of God (Acts 10:38). He ministered by the Spirit. Whenever He taught or preached it was by the Holy Spirit (Luke 4). He was raised from the dead by the Spirit (Romans 8:11).

After His resurrection, He continued His ministry through the Holy Spirit because He sent the Holy Spirit to baptize His followers (Acts 2).

THE KINGDOM OF GOD IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Its Central Significance in Scripture

It was the central theme of John the Baptist, Jesus, and the Apostles

The message of the Kingdom was central in the preaching of John the Baptist who came on the scene first (Matthew 3:1-2). It was the teaching of Jesus (Mark 1:14-15). It is carefully pointed out that the Gospel isn't just salvation and the Church, but we are told from the beginning that the Gospel is the Gospel of the Kingdom of God. Nothing less would be the true Gospel.

It is the message of the apostles (Luke 9:1-2). Jesus sent them to preach the Kingdom of God.

The message of the Kingdom of God includes everything else: the Church; doctrine; death, burial and resurrection, etc.

Many of Jesus' Parables Are of the Kingdom of God

The Kingdom of Heaven is taught repeatedly in Matthew 13, for example. After giving the parable of the sower, He said that "when anyone heareth the word of the Kingdom..." (verse 19); "the Kingdom of Heaven is like unto..." (verses 24, 31, and 33).

Christ's Instructions to His Disciples After His Resurrection Concerned the Kingdom of God

Until the day that He was taken up, Jesus was speaking to His disciples of things pertaining to the Kingdom of God (Acts 1:2-3). The Kingdom was what He came to establish, nothing less.

The Kingdom of God Was the Message of the Early Church.

Philip preached the things concerning the Kingdom of God and those that believed were baptized in the name of Jesus Christ (Acts 8:12). Paul said that we must through much tribulation enter the Kingdom of God (Acts 14:22). Paul spent eight months disputing and persuading the things concerning the Kingdom of God (Acts 19:8). He had been preaching the Kingdom of God (Acts 20:25). He expounded to those who came to him the Kingdom of God (Acts 28:23). He preached the Kingdom of God and taught the things of Jesus Christ for two years in his hired house (Acts 38:31).

The Establishment of the Kingdom of God is the Purpose For Which God Sent Jesus into this World

The angel told Mary that that holy One that would be born of her would sit on the throne of David, and of His Kingdom there would be no end (Luke 1:30-33).

When Jesus began His ministry, He told His disciples that they were to pray for the Kingdom to come (Matthew 6:10). He went on to teach that seeking the Kingdom of God and His righteousness was what we were to put first and only (Matthew 6:33).

The Old Testament Background

Jesus showed us that the Gospel of the Kingdom contains both old and new (Matthew 13:51-52). There were new aspects revealed in the New Testament, but still it was there in the Old.

The New Testament message of the Kingdom has its roots in the Old Testament and there the Kingdom is viewed from two aspects: the Kingdom of Israel, and future and millennial.

The Kingdom of Israel

This was the literal Kingdom of Israel, known as the Theocracy over which God personally ruled as King. His throne was the Ark of the Covenant in the Holy of Holies. "God was king in Jeshurun, when the heads of the people and the tribes of Israel were gathered together" (Deuteronomy 33:5). God called Himself King. "I am the Lord, your Holy One, the creator of Israel, your King" (Isaiah 43:5). This is not universal kingship over the world, but specifically over Israel (cf Psalm 47).

When they later had a king, it was because they had rejected God as King. But God didn't abdicate the throne. The king was only His vice-regent.

The Future Kingdom: the Glorious Age of the Millennium.

As long as Israel had God in her midst and all the system of worship and blessing and protection, there was not really a looking out to the future in the sense that they were looking for the millennial Kingdom to come. But with the fall of Jerusalem and the trials of the Exile, then more and more they began to look to these prophecies concerning a future rule and reign of God on this earth through Messiah who is the Son of God. Their hope became centered in the Messiah on earth.

The establishment of the Kingdom under the Messiah was such a hope that the first thing that the apostles asked Jesus after His resurrection was if He would then restore the Kingdom to Israel (Acts 1:6). They were looking for a restoration, a glorious age when their enemies would be overthrown, Messiah reigning as King.

While Israel knew that the Theocracy was limited to them, they knew the future one would no longer be. Israel would be head of the nations and chief in the Millennium, but it would be a worldwide kingdom. "And the Lord shall be King over all the earth: in

that day shall there be one Lord, and His name one" (Zechariah 14:9).

And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it.

And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

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 (Isaiah 2:2-4).

All people, all nations, all languages in this new Kingdom will serve Him and His Kingdom shall not be destroyed. Obviously, since Jesus didn't establish His Kingdom in its visible aspect at the first advent; since the nations haven't yet beat their swords into plowshares; this is yet future. The apostles thought this Kingdom was to be established then, but Jesus reminded them of the second advent prophecies.

A King and His Kingdom are predicted in the following passages: Genesis 49:10; II Samuel 7; Isaiah 9:6-7; Isaiah 11:1-5; Isaiah 32:1; Daniel 2 and 7; Jeremiah 23:5-6; Micah 5:2. These are just some of the Scriptures that are the background for the Kingdom of God in the New Testament.

The New Testament writers, as well as Jesus Himself, took those prophecies literally and applied them to Jesus. When King Herod asked where the Messiah was to be born, the chief priests

and the scribes quoted to him Micah 5:2 (Matthew 2:1-6). The angel who appeared to Mary applied these prophecies to Jesus before He was born (Luke 1:30-33).

The Kingdom that is described in the Old Testament is not the Church, but the Kingdom is seen to be a literal visible kingdom on this earth (Isaiah 2:1-4; Isaiah 11:1-9; Jeremiah 3:17; Jeremiah 23: 5-6; Ezekiel 40-48; Zechariah, especially chapters 1, 8, and 14). In the New Testament, we are told that overcomers will rule over nations with a rod of iron (Revelation 5:10; Revelation 20).

See: Deeper Life in the Spirit, pp 134-144

The Kingdom of God and Christ's Mission

Note: The notes in this section are taken from Tape 416: Christ's Mission is Our Commission.

Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you (John 20:21).

If we love God and are one of those who have been called according to His purpose (Romans 8:28), then we have been sent by Jesus for the same reason that the Father sent Him. We have been "...predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will" (Ephesians 1:11).

What Christ came to do in this world, God has commissioned us to continue. Our mission is to be a continuation of Christ's. What was Christ's mission? What did Christ come to do? What was His basic purpose for coming into the world?

Some Views of Christ's Mission

Some answer that He came to save sinners; He came to establish the Church; He came to reveal the Father to the world; He came to fulfill the law and the prophets; He came to seek and to save the lost; He came to teach us how to live as we should; He came to give His life a ransom. While it is true that He did do all of these things, these are all but a part of His basic purpose and part of His fulfilling that purpose.

Why We Must Know Christ's Mission

If we don't know what Christ's mission on earth was, we don't know what ours is, and therefore we won't be able to fulfill it. We need to know what the central purpose of Christ's coming to earth was because if our concept of His mission is less than His concept of it, then we can't fulfill our mission because our mission is a continuation of His mission.

We must allow the Holy Spirit to eradicate any ideas we may have on God's purpose and let Him show us why Christ did come into the world; why we have been saved; and what it means to have all things "working together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose." What is His purpose?

If charismatic bodies understood His larger purpose then there would be a unity not only of spirit and love, but a unity of purpose, and thus fulfill the purpose for which He has called us.

What Are the Law and Prophets Jesus Came to Fulfill?

Jesus came into this world to fulfill the law and the prophets (Matthew 5:17-18). To understand how He fulfilled the law and the prophets we must understand the purpose of the law and the prophets. What was God's purpose in calling Abram out of Ur of Chaldees (Genesis 12:3)? What was His purpose in calling Abraham to be the father of a race through which the whole world would be blessed?

What was God's purpose in calling Moses and giving to him the revelation of His will? What was His purpose in taking a group of slaves and coming down and reigning and ruling among them from the mercy seat?

What was God's purpose in promising David that the Messiah would sit upon his throne? What was God saying in Daniel 2 in the vision of the four kingdoms and the stone cut without hands? What did God mean when He said that one day He would come to reign over all the earth (Zechariah 14:9)?

These are the law and the prophets that Jesus came to fulfill.

Christ's Mission: To Establish the Kingdom of God

Jesus revealed the eternal purpose of God. His mission on earth was to establish the Kingdom of God.

The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the Kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it (John 16:16)

The establishment of the Kingdom of God is the only concept large enough to embrace God's eternal purpose and Christ's mission on the earth. Anything less than that does not deal with what His ultimate purpose was in coming.

The reign and rule of God in the hearts of men

The Kingdom of God on earth "as it is in heaven" is God's purpose. That is why He came to save sinners. That is why He established the Church. He has come to establish a kingdom of righteousness and populate it with citizens made righteous by the blood of the Lamb.

The Church is within the Kingdom. The Church is not an end in itself but a doorway into the Kingdom. Jesus died for the Church. He is the head of the Church. He needs the Church. But the

Church is the people of God who have been called to proclaim the Kingdom of God.

He has not sent us to preach the Church. He does send us to teach the Kingdom of God. Any concept of our mission that is less than the establishment of His Kingdom will keep us from fulfilling our mission because our mission is a continuation of His.

The angel announced to Mary that Jesus would be a King ruling over His kingdom on earth. This has not happened yet because the Jews rejected Him. One day He is going to come and establish that Kingdom (Revelation 20).

The wise men of the East knew that the King of the Jews had been born (Matthew 2:2). John the Baptist preached repentance on the basis of the Kingdom of Heaven being at hand (Matthew 3:1-2).

Jesus came preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom of God (Mark 1:14-15). "Blessed are the poor in spirit because theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven" (Matthew 5:3). "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven." Jesus taught who will be the least and the greatest in the Kingdom, and who will not enter the Kingdom in Matthew 5:19-20.

Jesus taught us to seek only the Kingdom of God (Matthew 6:33). In teaching us how to pray, He said to pray for His Kingdom to come. A man cannot enter the Kingdom of God except he be born again (John 3:3).

Jesus mentioned the Kingdom in the Gospels 112 times and the Church only twice. This shows the relation of the Church to the larger purpose and mission of Jesus to establish His Kingdom.

Jesus told His disciples to heal the sick and tell them that the Kingdom of God had come nigh unto them (Luke 10:9). He told His would-be disciple to let the dead bury the dead, but he was to go and preach the Kingdom of God (Luke 9:60).

Jesus spent forty days teaching His disciples the things pertaining to His Kingdom after His resurrection (Acts 1:3). They knew He was speaking of the Kingdom because they asked Him if He was going to restore the Kingdom at that time (vs 16).

Philip, the evangelist, preached the things concerning the Kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ. The Samaritans believed and were baptized (Acts 8:12).

Paul, who was given the revelation of the Church, expounded the Kingdom of God to the Jews, because the Church is included in the Kingdom. Paul spent two years preaching the Kingdom of God. Those who believe the Gospel of the Kingdom are the Church.

The book of Acts opens with Jesus instructing the disciples about the Kingdom before He ascended, and closes with Paul preaching the message of the Kingdom.

Establishing the Church was not Christ's purpose, but the means to fulfilling His purpose. The concept of the Kingdom is the only concept big enough to embrace God's eternal purpose, Christ's mission and our mission. If we don't have a large enough concept of His mission we can't fulfill ours.

We can never fulfill our mission as long as our concept of the Kingdom is limited to that of the Church. The Church was intended to be the doorway into the Kingdom. The Church is supposed to be like a tunnel. Through salvation a person enters the Church thereby entering the Kingdom.

Man's teaching has closed up the entering of the Kingdom and made the Church to be an end to itself.

Every Church thinks that it has the message so the Church is guilty of proclaiming something far less than what Christ came to proclaim: the Kingdom of God. They are proclaiming their doctrines, their creeds, their denominations, their churches.

If we see anything short of the Kingdom of God or if we miss the purpose for which He came into the world, we will miss the whole end-time move, and the whole purpose of the present-day outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

Christ's mission was nothing less than the establishment of the reign and rule of God in the hearts of men; to establish His Kingdom on earth as it is in heaven.

The Nature of the Kingdom

The Kingdom of Heaven and the Kingdom of God Are Equated

It must be understood that the New Testament equates the Kingdom of Heaven and the Kingdom of God. In one Gospel the writer will say the Kingdom of Heaven, and another Gospel in speaking of the identical thing will say Kingdom of God. Compare Matthew 11:11 with Luke 7:29 for an example.

God Is Already King of the Earth

We should recognize the present universal kingship of God. Now while it is true that the Scriptures clearly predict that the time will come for a future, visible manifestation of the Kingdom of God on earth, nevertheless, God is not waiting until then to become king over the earth. He is already that. God was king on the earth with Israel in the Holy of Holies. He is king over the earth (Psalm 47:1-2). His kingdom ruleth over all (Psalm 103:19). Jesus is already Lord and Christ (Acts 2:36).

The Kingdom of God Is Not Something New

The Kingdom of God is not something entirely new, but it is built on Old Testament foundations. The revelation of the Kingdom began with the call of Abraham. It materialized in the call of Moses and in the establishment of the Kingdom of Israel and the Theocracy. God gave Nathan the prophet a revelation about how

David's kingdom is going to be an eternal kingdom, and one of his sons, Messiah, would sit on that throne (II Samuel 7).

The prophets were given abundant revelation about this future Kingdom (Psalm 2; Psalm 110; Isaiah 2, 9, 11; Daniel 2, 7; Zechariah; Micah 5:2; Jeremiah 23, 33; and many others).

The Kingdom of God Is a Mystery

Jesus Himself said that the Kingdom is a mystery and it is understood only by those to whom He chose to reveal it. Even the prophets and the righteous men desired to have seen and heard what Jesus did. But Israel rejected Him. So He began to teach in parables so that they could not understand (Matthew 13:10-17).

In contrast to the Kingdom which in the Gospels and in the New Testament is declared yet to be a mystery in many respects, the Church in the New Testament is said to have been a mystery but is now revealed (Ephesians 3:1-9; Colossians 1:26-27; Romans 16:25-26). The Church is the one thing that was not revealed in the Old Testament. The Church which was a mystery is now revealed; but the nature of the Kingdom, which was not a mystery, is a mystery. The Church is a mystery unveiled. The Kingdom is a mystery not yet fully revealed.

Does the religious world know about the Kingdom? How can it be a mystery when it is openly talked about and when there are books written about it? The world knows about the Kingdom like it knows about God. It knows God, but it doesn't know Him in a personal and saving way. This is how many can take on religion and actually get into the Kingdom, but the Kingdom doesn't get into them. Jesus is going to send forth His angels to separate out of His Kingdom the lost, the unregenerate.

The Mystery of the Kingdom in the Parables and Teaching of Jesus Christ

Jesus intentionally made a mystery out of the nature of the Kingdom, the conditions of the Kingdom, etc., so that they who have

rejected the truth cannot enter. That is their judgment (Matthew 13:10-16).

The Kingdom's Perpetuation

The Kingdom's laws of growth are mysterious. The way it is perpetuated is hidden from the dead institutional church, for example, or from people who just will not worship Him in spirit and in truth. The way the Kingdom perpetuates itself is hidden from those who try by religious organizations, scheming and planning, etc., to expand the Kingdom. This may draw a lot of followers, but that doesn't mean that they are in the Kingdom. No man can do what only God can do.

The Parable of the Seed Growing By Itself (Mark 4:26-27)

The law that governs the growth or perpetuation of the Kingdom of God is supernatural. Jesus does not try to explain how. In fact, He is telling us that there is no way to tell us how it happens, just as there is no way of telling how the new birth happens (John 3).

Man cannot understand how the Kingdom grows, therefore man cannot produce that growth. For it is as the farmer who puts the seed into the ground, and from that point on can do nothing to produce the growth of that seed. God gives life to that seed and all the labor of cultivating, fertilizing, and watering would avail nothing without life in that seed. The farmer can plant the seed that God created. He can water it if God supplies the water. He can cultivate and fertilize it if God gives him strength. But nothing will happen unless God imparts to that seed that mysterious something that we call life. All his knowledge of farming will never tell the farmer the mystery of how that plant grows after he plants the seeds.

This is how it is with the mysterious growth or perpetuation of God's Kingdom. Man can sow the seed, the Word of the Kingdom. Man can receive the Kingdom in his heart by believing the Word and receiving that seed into his heart. Man can labor and

work in the Kingdom of God, but that is all he can do. By all of his effort, by all of his religious folly, with all of his boards and committees and denominational machinery and organization, he cannot produce one single blade in the Kingdom.

Man had ought to stop trying. He should submit himself to the Lord, the Holy Spirit, receive the Baptism, discipline himself in the seed, the Word of God, partake of it himself so that he knows what he is sowing, and then go out and faithfully sow that seed. God has promised to produce the life from that seed.

A man can sow the seed of the Kingdom, receive the Kingdom, walk in the Kingdom, work in the Kingdom, but that is all he can do in the Kingdom with all of his religious effort. The mystery is that man by his religious efforts cannot produce a harvest. This has to be revealed because most Christians will try everything else first.

But there are people who refuse to accept man's way, believing God's ways are better. That is the revelation to the spirit: that the Kingdom does not perpetuate itself through man's efforts but by the Holy Spirit, and by the pure Word of God. This is a revelation only to those who won't compromise the Word.

God has already started to shake things that He didn't establish. Everything that He didn't establish will fall down when He begins to shake heaven and earth again. There will be systems crumbling and falling that will surprise most. Some of the biggest will fall the loudest. God is not in the systems of man, and it is a mystery to them how the true Kingdom grows. They are equating their systems with the Kingdom. Because their systems are growing they think the Kingdom is being perpetuated by their methods.

Jesus said that if we sow the seed, He will take care of the rest. We need the Holy Spirit to sow the seed profitably (Acts 1).

The Kingdom's Universal Expansion

The Parable of the Mustard Seed (Matthew 13:31-32)

The stress of this parable is on the small, insignificant beginning of the Kingdom and its expansion throughout the earth.

This is not teaching, as the post-millennial church used to teach, that the Church will spread as an institution throughout the world through preaching the Gospel until the Kingdom of God has expanded over the earth. But two world wars, and the threat of a third; the terrible moral state; the chaos and confusion; the increase in crime and promiscuity; and the increase in demonic activity, have made that view a little less than popular because the Kingdom of God has not come by that method.

The true Church is still small, comparable to this mustard seed that Jesus speaks of. This is in spite of the expansion of man's system throughout most of the world. Jesus is not speaking of the expansion of man's systems but the growth of God's Kingdom. It starts small but then will expand until it is the largest of all herbs and is like a tree

The true Kingdom, like the true Church, is in the world, but it is in the world at present in a rather insignificant form. As far as its expansion, the true Kingdom has not yet covered the earth by any means. It is a snare to think that because there are church buildings throughout the earth and missionaries sent into all the world that this is to be equated with the Kingdom having expanded throughout the world. The Gospel can't be spread without that mysterious something that only the Spirit can impart, and most of them on the field do not have the Baptism of the Holy Spirit.

One day the Kingdom is going to expand from that insignificant form that is hardly to be seen to a great tree, called in Daniel the great stone that fills the whole earth. That mysterious element of how it grows, and its world-wide expansion, is still a mystery and is hidden from the religious institutional systems.

Both the world and the institutional church equate the Kingdom with their systems, believing that because man's institutional system has expanded to most parts of the earth, that the Kingdom has therefore expanded. Part of the mystery is that not all who are in the Church are in the Kingdom. They are in it temporarily in a visible outward way, but the Kingdom is not in them. Proof of that will be when Jesus casts them out.

The basic meaning of the parable of the mustard seed is in the contrast between its small beginning and its world-wide expansion one day. But its deeper application is a mystery which escapes man's religious systems which equate the Church and the Kingdom.

When is this expansion coming?

When the Kingdom's visible manifestation covers this earth; when Satan and his angels are cast out (Revelation 12:10). Satan is not yet cast out. He is the prince of the power of the air.

Jesus is waiting for the full Gospel to be preached to every nation. The mystery of this parable is that the Kingdom's world-wide expansion hasn't happened yet.

The Kingdom's Mysterious Perpetuation and Its World-wide Expansion

The Parable of the Leaven (Matthew 13:33)

This parable seems to combine the elements of the first two: the Kingdom's mysterious perpetuation and its world-wide expansion.

Jesus said that when one plants a seed it begins to grow, we know not how. That is the same way with leaven. The mustard seed is something small and insignificant, and then it grows to something very large which is the way leaven works. The small

lump mysteriously expands to a lump many times its original size.

The growth and perpetuation of the Kingdom is supernatural by the Holy Spirit, through the Word.

The way yeast causes things to expand is a mystery. But Jesus is also talking about hiding something, tucking it away, and it begins to expand and grow. The Kingdom of God, which is not yet to appear visibly, is now tucked away, hidden in a barely perceptible form with regard to its true nature and its real existence. As to its true nature and true citizens, it is a mystery which will one day blossom forth and cover the earth. The mystery is hidden to the institutional system and for the most part, the charismatic systems. The true Kingdom, like the true saints, is more or less hidden, tucked away, and the world cannot see it.

The Kingdom of God is going to break all the kingdoms of this world and fill the whole earth (Daniel 2:31-35, 44-45). This future aspect is a mystery to most. Its universal, worldwide, visible phase is not yet visible, but it is hidden, as it were, as leaven in the lump of meal. One day it is coming and the Lord will be King over all the earth in that day (Zechariah 14:9). The Son of Man is coming to the Ancient of days and receiving a Kingdom which displaces all other Kingdoms (Daniel 7:13-14). After tribulation and Armageddon, Jesus will establish His millennial Kingdom (Revelation 20).

The parables show the expansion of the invisible aspect of God's Kingdom is the reign and rule of Christ in our hearts at present, but there is coming a time when that which is hidden, tucked away, will expand and cover the whole earth.

The Three Aspects of God's Kingdom

There is the Kingdom as a present possession.

In that sense, it is spiritual within us (Luke 17:20-21). When Jesus came the first time, He did not sit on a throne or establish a visible earthly Kingdom.

It is a future realization

It is a future realization: literal, visible, millennial. This is a visible aspect where the saints will reign and rule with Christ. Revelation 20 clearly teaches a millennial reign. "Thou hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth" (Revelation 5:10). Jesus told His apostles that they would sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel in the kingdom that He is going to appoint them (Luke 22:29-30). As if anticipating that the church would deny a millennial Kingdom, He gave the parable of the talents (Luke 19:11 ff). He had told them that the Kingdom was in them (Luke 17:20-21), but He corrected any idea that would limit the Kingdom to that.

When will the saints inherit the Kingdom? When Jesus returns and sits on His throne of glory (Matthew 25:31 cf 34).

The eternal aspect

Thirdly, there is the eternal aspect of the Kingdom (Revelation 21-22).

The present phase of the Kingdom, which is the invisible stage, is the only stage of the Kingdom that the amillennial church believes in. It is the future aspect of the Kingdom that is a mystery to them. It is not that it is hidden in the Word. It is because they won't receive the plain Word of God, but spiritualize the literal.

The present visible aspect of the Kingdom is not a mystery to institutional religion, but it is a mystery to the world and to Israel because they can't see it; because it is the invisible reign and rule of the true God within us.

The Kingdom's Mystery Concerning Its Citizens

The mystery is that the Kingdom consists of both the good and the bad in its present phase.

The Parable of the Wheat and Tares (Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43)

The Parable of the Net (Matthew 13:47-50)

The obvious meaning of both parables, which He intended to teach the same lesson, is that both true and false disciples are somehow in His Kingdom at present.

Why would God allow both good and bad in His Kingdom in its present phase and allow them to grow together?

In God's wisdom, He planned that there should be a parallel development of both good and bad side by side (Matthew 13:28-30). Evil, like good, must come to maturity before God sends forth His reapers to harvest it. This principle is set forth in Genesis 15:13-16. God had promised Abraham Palestine, but his descendants had to wait four hundred years to enter into it because the wickedness of the Amorites would not be full before then. God could not give Palestine to Israel until He was ready to judge the Amorites and cause them to be destroyed. God does not always judge or punish sins immediately.

"God is longsuffering, not willing that any should perish" (II Peter 3:9). If God judged all sin immediately, no individual or nation would stand. There wouldn't be a world.

God allows both good and bad in His Kingdom at the present time, secondly, so that the true disciple can have his faith tested and proven. This principle is set forth in Judges 2:20-23. God told Israel that He would leave some of her enemies in the land to prove Israel to see if she would be faithful. God leaves the bad in the Kingdom to prove who are the true saints and who are not. Unlike false disciples, the true saints will not compromise the Word of God in time of testing and trial, or when they are perse-

cuted because of their faith and obedience. The wheat will actually be persecuted by the tares. Their faith will be matured through their trials (James 1).

God leaves the tares with the wheat so that the tares can have free sway to go the way they want. The wheat will look at the tares and see that they can't go that way because it doesn't line up with the Word of God. They realize that they must through much tribulation enter into the Kingdom of God. We are called to walk in Jesus' steps. He endured what He suffered (I Peter 2:21-23). Since they persecuted Jesus they will persecute us (John 15:18-20).

For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them (Acts 20:29-30).

Why doesn't God show us who they are and what they will do ahead of time? Because by leaving those false ones in the body it will show who are true disciples: those who will not follow the tares. Satan transforms his messengers into angels of light who will preach a gospel and delude many (II Corinthians 11:13-15). Those who follow deceptions do so because the mystery of the Kingdom has not been revealed to them. Why? Because they don't understand enough about it to understand its mysteries.

The mystery of the Kingdom does not mean that the existence of the Kingdom is a mystery, that it is hidden from men as the mystery of the Church was hidden. The Kingdom is taught throughout the Old Testament as well as the New. The mystery doesn't have to do with its existence, but with its true nature, with its means of perpetuation. It is a mystery in its present invisible stage to the world and to Israel. It is a mystery with respect to its future visible stage to institutional religion.

The Conditions For Entrance Into the Kingdom

Receiving the *Message* of the Kingdom

The parable of the sower (Matthew 13:3-9)

We must receive the message of the Kingdom in the right manner or we won't be able to enter. Jesus shows this clearly in the parable of the sower (Matthew 13:3-9; 18-23). The hard soil is where the Word does not even penetrate. The shallow soil is too thin to allow the Word to take root. Others allow the world to choke out the Word. But good soil produces fruit. There is no such thing as having a renewed heart and sitting in the Kingdom and not producing fruit. It is impossible.

Jesus said in John 3 that you must be born again to see the Kingdom. A person is *in* Kingdom if he receives the full message of the Kingdom.

Jesus set forth God's side of salvation in Matthew 13:10-17 with respect to the message of the Kingdom. He clearly says that it has to be revealed to men. But before He said that He gave the parable of the sower and set forth man's responsibility. Here is the great question of divine sovereignty and human responsibility.

The teaching of the Word won't mean a thing unless God opens our hearts. But we have to open our hearts first and ask Him to reveal to us the mystery. If we don't open our hearts we will never understand the mystery. The mystery is not hidden to those that want to understand it.

The conditions for entering the Kingdom are themselves mysteries. The main thrust of this parable, which sets forth the fact that we must receive the message of the Kingdom in good ground, is teaching that there are four types of people who will respond to the message of the Kingdom of God.

Four Types Of People Who Respond

Those Who Are Hardhearted

There is a group of people who because of the hardness of their hearts will not show enough interest in the message of the Kingdom to seek to have its mystery unveiled. Therefore, the devil snatches away even that which they hear. Jesus will reveal the mysteries of the Kingdom to those that ask Him. The understanding of the nature of the Kingdom, what it requires is what is a mystery to most who claim to be in the Kingdom.

Jesus said that very few will find the way into the Kingdom because the way is narrow and the gate into it is strait.

Those Who Receive the Message Outwardly

These are those who do not fully comprehend the nature of the mystery of the Kingdom. They receive the message of the Kingdom, but they receive it outwardly in a shallow way.

The total faith message is the heart of the message of the Kingdom. If a person doesn't trust God, He won't give him anything else. "Without faith it is impossible to please God" (Hebrews 11:6). "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (Romans 14:23). The stony ground hearers receive this faith message with joy until they have their first real trial. But then they stumble or fall away.

Those Who Respond

This group is made up of those who respond to the message of the Kingdom when they hear it. They respond to that part of the Kingdom message that appeals to them. But they do not treasure it enough to forsake all so that they can fully enter into its mysteries. They allow the cares of this world, the cares of this life, to choke the message of the Kingdom.

They allow their interest in life to choke the Word and its production of fruit in their lives. Therefore they become unfruitful. The dire result of being unfruitful is to be cut off (John 15:1-6).

Those Who Receive the Word and Endure

It is only those in this group who have their hearts in such a condition that they can respond to the message of the Kingdom in such a way that they keep the Word. They produce fruit in their lives, some thirtyfold, some sixtyfold, some a hundredfold. They have no obstacle like a thorn, no hindrance like a stone or a hard heart. They give themselves fully to the message of the Kingdom so that the message of the Kingdom is worked in them. Its mysteries are worked in them, and then its mysteries are worked through them.

The stress of this parable is on fruit-bearing. That is the key to discerning who is and who is not a true citizen of the Kingdom of Heaven. If we are truly members of the Kingdom, one of the mysteries of the Kingdom will be working out through our lives, that is, the growth of the Kingdom. It expands through those that receive the Kingdom through an open heart. We will be bearing thirty, sixty, or hundredfold fruit.

The whole Bible is the message of the Kingdom. Nothing can be left out without neglecting part of the message of the Kingdom. The New Testament pattern of the Church is part of the Kingdom. Making an organization out of an organism is not teaching the message of the Kingdom. Teaching the Sermon on the Mount is teaching the ethical and moral living of the citizens of the Kingdom.

The message of the Kingdom is not John 3:16. That is how we get into the Kingdom. That is the initial phase of it. That is why there is so much emphasis in the New Testament on producing fruit. Fruit-bearing is the test. Jesus said that the mysterious growth of the Kingdom will be worked out through the true citizens because they will prove they are citizens of God's Kingdom

because they produce fruit. Fruit-bearing is the essential test. The whole Christian life, whatever our place in the body, is producing fruit. That is why there is so much emphasis on fruit-bearing. This is the test of whether or not we are in the Kingdom.

We must first learn what the message of the Kingdom includes before we can really know how much of its mystery has been unveiled to us. Many people, when they begin to learn the scope of the full Kingdom message, begin to either reject or oppose the full Kingdom message. They reject certain aspects of the message that don't appeal to them. So they are quite willing to have the message of the Kingdom remain a mystery. This way they can profess to be citizens of the Kingdom of God, but live like citizens of the world, trusting in it and its institutions.

The message of the Kingdom is the total faith message, the crucified life message, and if we are not conforming to it, then we will be overthrown because we are not giving ourselves to it. Where ever the full Gospel is preached, we have to respond to it or the mysteries will not unfold to us. That leads to sure defeat in time of trials and persecution.

People are not able to receive the mysteries of the Kingdom because they don't receive the full message of the Kingdom when it is preached.

The emphasis in the parable is on how people respond to the message of the Kingdom. This does not mean the initial response because some do that with joy. It is on how they endure as they continue to hear the full message of the Kingdom. It is on bearing fruit as they hear. No person can know what it is to bear fruit without giving himself to the full Kingdom message. Then it will be progressively unfolded to each individual how he is to bear fruit in each situation.

It is not that the things like the total faith message, the crucified life message, or the Sermon on the Mount are hidden. The thing that is hidden from people is the fact that these things themselves are the Kingdom message. The person who doesn't want

to believe it has not just rejected someone's opinion, but he proves that he has not had the mystery of the Kingdom revealed to him at that point. The mystery is that the message they reject is the message of the Kingdom.

What a person does with the message of the Kingdom, either accepting it or rejecting it, he is doing to the Kingdom itself. To reject the message is to reject the Kingdom.

Jesus said that His sheep hear His voice and follow Him. His voice is the whole revelation. Those that hear His voice and follow Him bear fruit.

Be Willing to Pay the Cost of the Kingdom

The Parable of the Pearl (Matthew 13:44)

The Parable of the Hidden Treasure (Matthew 13: 45-46)

The mystery is that we have to forsake all, become poor, in order to get rich. The privilege of citizenship in the Kingdom of God must be our most precious possession.

It is possible to leave possessions and family but not give up our affections for them. "Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth" (Colossians 3:2). But citizenship in the Kingdom has to be looked on by us as our most precious possession or we won't enter because it is going to cost all that we have. To be satisfied with less would be to get less, and it wouldn't cost near as much.

Not only will it cost all that we have to enter the Kingdom, but it will cost all that we have to keep the Kingdom. He said that after we have forsaken all and received the Kingdom, then we have to pick up the cross, deny the self-life daily, and follow Him. Many will show interest in obtaining the pearl then won't seem to have enough interest to keep it. These are generally those who equate church membership with membership in the Kingdom of God. But a person can have church membership without membership

in the Kingdom of God. In order to gain the most valuable possession we can have, we must forsake all, become poor, so that we can gain everything in the Kingdom.

The Relation Between the Kingdom and the Church

Is the Kingdom of God To Be Equated With the Church?

Scriptural Evidences That Show the Church Is Not To Be Equated With the Kingdom

The New Testament distinguishes between the Church and the Kingdom.

Jesus and the Apostles preached the Kingdom of God and not merely the Church. Jesus came to establish His Church, but the Church cannot be confused with the Kingdom. The bigger concept is the Kingdom of God and the Church is within it. The entire Book of Acts speaks of the Apostles preaching the message of the Kingdom, not the Church. When people believe the message of the Kingdom, they are the Church. Every one who believes the message of the Kingdom becomes the Church, because the Church is an assembly of believers, the called out ones.

Jesus came preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom of God (Mark 1:14-15). John the Baptist came preaching the Kingdom of God (Matthew 3). Jesus sent the apostles forth to preach the Kingdom of God. After His resurrection, Jesus taught the apostles for forty days concerning the Kingdom of God. The Gospel is the message of the Kingdom.

The Church Is an Organism

Since the Church in the New Testament is not an organization, but an organism, no where does the New Testament equate believers with the Kingdom. Believers are equated with the Church. The Kingdom is the reign and rule of God in the hearts of men. The Church are those who are ruled over by God. The Church consists of the citizens of the Kingdom of God. The preaching of the Kingdom creates a community of believers which Jesus called His assembly.

The Universal Visible Church Theory

The identification of the Church with the Kingdom began with Augustine in the fourth century A.D. The Roman Catholic Church, when it was established around the sixth century, picked up Augustine's theory. That error gave rise to another error: the Universal Visible Church theory of Rome. As extensive as the Church is, so is the Kingdom; as extensive as the Kingdom is, so is the Church.

On the basis of this error, Rome teaches that since the Kingdom is universal, that is worldwide; since there is no salvation outside the Roman Catholic Church; then quite logically the Kingdom is to be identified with the universal visible Roman Catholic Church. Since the Kingdom and the Church are the same, then the Roman Catholic Church becomes the only doorway into the Kingdom.

The Universal Invisible Church Theory

The Protestant reformers who came out of Rome had a problem. When they gave up Roman Catholicism, they were no longer in the Universal Roman Catholic Church which was the doorway into the Kingdom. Quite logically, they had to invent their own Kingdom/Church theory.

They reasoned this way: Since the Kingdom is universal, spiritual and invisible; since the Church itself is visible; then it is reasonable to deduce that there must be, side-by-side with the local visible churches, a universal church which is spiritual and invisible

which they termed the Mystical Body of Christ. The true Church to which all believers belong, both living and dead, is really invisible.

This is the introduction into the Church's theology of some Platonic Idealism. Idealism is the theory that the world we see, the world and all the created objects are not the real thing. Behind these there is an invisible spiritual idea that is the reality. We only see the shadows, and the real is in the spiritual. The idea is with the gods.

This is not to be confused with the fact that the temple, the tabernacle, the altar, priesthood, and the sacrifices were patterns of the spiritual realities in the heavens (Hebrews 9). Paul was saying that there are spiritual realities in heaven concerning redemption after which God told Moses to pattern the tabernacle. These patterns are limited to redemption whereas idealism applies to the whole created order.

Many who will deny equating the Kingdom with the Church, nevertheless, in actual fact do so with the universal invisible Church idea, the Mystical Body of Christ.

The Kingdom and the Church are never equated in the New Testament. Every born again believer is a member of the Kingdom. He is in the Kingdom (Colossians 1:13). But by no means has every believer or member of that Kingdom been the member of a true New Testament church. Conversely, there have been many who are members of local churches who are not in the Kingdom because they have not received the message of the Kingdom. They are not born again.

The Kingdom of God is a More Comprehensive Concept Than the Church

The Kingdom of God is universal, invisible and spiritual. The Church is local, tangible, and quite visible. "The Kingdom of God cometh not with observation...the Kingdom of God is within you"

(Luke 17: 20-:2-1) . We have been "translated into the Kingdom of his dear son" (Colossians 1:13).

In Revelation, John was told to write to the angel of the Church of Ephesus (2:1); the Church in Smyrna (2:8); the Church in Pergamus (2:12); to the Church in Thyatira (2:18); the Church in Sardis (3:1); the Church in Philadelphia (3:7); and the Church of the Laodiceans (3:14). These were all local, visible assemblies.

The epistle where the metaphor of the body of Christ appears (I Corinthians 12:13, 27) is addressed to the Church at Corinth (I Corinthians 1: 2). Galatians is addressed to the Churches of Galatia (Galatians 1:2). The body of Christ is a metaphor showing relationship. He is the head. We are His body on earth.

In the New Testament, the local Church is not a part of a universal mystical body. The local Church is the Church in its local expression.

The Church Is the Agent Commissioned to Proclaim the Kingdom

The Church isn't the Kingdom. The Church has been called to proclaim the Kingdom. In Jesus' commission, He always commissioned to go preach the Kingdom. This is seen in the sending forth of the twelve in Matthew 10: 7: "And as ye go, preach, saying, the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." When He sent forth the seventy, He told them to preach the Kingdom (Luke 10:9). Jesus Himself preached the Gospel which is the message of the Kingdom. After His resurrection, He spoke to His disciples for forty days concerning the Kingdom of God. His disciples asked Him if He was going to establish His Kingdom then and did not question Him about the Church. All through the Book of Acts, the Gospel that the apostles preached was the message of the Kingdom.

Through the proclamation of the Gospel which is the message of the Kingdom, and through the signs of the Kingdom (the miracles, raising the dead, casting out demons, healing the sick,

speaking in new tongues), the Church in the New Testament is seen to be an instrument of the Kingdom, not the Kingdom itself.

The Church Is the Key to the Kingdom

This does not mean, as the Roman Catholics teach, that you have to be in a particular church to be in the Kingdom. It is possible to be in the Kingdom and not be in a Church. The thief on the cross is a good example.

The "Keys" to the Kingdom

Text: Matthew 16:15-19

He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

And I say unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

And I will give unto thee the keys of the Kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. (King James Version)

He said to them, "Who do you yourselves say that I am?" Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Then Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon, son of Jonah, for it is not man that made this known to you, but my Father in heaven. And I, yes I, tell you, your name from now on is to be Peter, Rock, and

on a massive rock like this I will build my church, and the powers of the underworld shall never overthrow it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you forbid on earth must be what is already forbidden in heaven, and whatever you permit on earth must be what is already permitted in heaven." (Williams)

Views

The Roman Catholic View

The Roman Catholic Church contends that on the basis of Matthew 16:13-19 that Peter is made the chief apostle by Jesus. "Upon this rock I will build my church" refers to Peter, thus making him the first Pope. They claim that Peter established the Church at Rome though there isn't a shred of historical evidence of Peter ever having been at Rome. Through apostolic succession, all the Popes derive their authority from Peter symbolized in the keys that Jesus said He would give him.

The Roman Catholics contend that the keys given to Peter is the authority to bind and loose people from their sins in the confessional which binds or looses them from the Kingdom of God.

The Non-catholic View

Non-catholics generally agree that Peter's *confession* of Jesus of Nazareth as the Divine Son of God is the rock that He would build His Church on. Everyone who makes that confession becomes His Church. Peter's name means rock and Jesus was making a play on words.

The keys have not been bestowed exclusively on Peter, but on all the apostles. They were then passed on to the Church because the Church is built on the foundation of the apostles (Ephesians 2:20). The keys consist of the Gospel which points sinners to the doorway into the Kingdom. The Word of God is called the key of knowledge (Luke 11:52). That is, the correct

understanding of the Scriptures is the key which unlocks the way to true salvation, or the way into the Kingdom.

Extensions of These Views

Prophecy

Prophecy is a key to understanding the yet unrevealed will of God which comes by revelation through the prophets (I Corinthians 14:29-30). Prophecy opens our understanding to what God's will is, and we have to do His will to get into the Kingdom.

The Anointing or Baptism of the Holy Spirit and the Manifestations of the Supernatural Gifts

The keys are extended to include these in the sense that it is through the anointed teaching and preaching and through the operation of the gifts that God said sinners will be converted to Him (Mark 16:15-18). God went with them, *working with them*, confirming the Word with signs following. The anointed Word becomes the key into the Kingdom. The signs confirm the Word that the person speaks under the anointing. God will confirm the Word preached by those who are faithful to His Word. As the people see the signs they believe the Word and come into the Kingdom.

Governmental and Administrative Authority

As keys signify authority in the secular world, so in the spiritual realm, in both modern and ancient cultures, keys signify governmental or administrative authority.

This view is based on Isaiah 22:15-22. Shebna was the administrator over the house of David and had tremendous authority. God was dismissing him for his unfaithfulness and was replacing him with faithful Eliakim. "... And I will commit thy government into his hand...and the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; so he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open."

On this analogy, then this view holds that the keys of the Kingdom symbolize apostolic authority. God gave Eliakim the keys to the earthly Kingdom of David. When He gave the spiritual keys to Peter, he gave apostolic or ministerial authority in the Church to the five-fold ministry called to leadership.

The Spiritual Power of Binding and Loosing

After giving Peter the keys to the Kingdom, Jesus told him that "whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

What is binding and loosing?

The power to admit or disbar a person

It means that the Church has the power to admit or disbar a person from membership in the Church (I Corinthians 5).

It is equated with a word of faith

It is equated with the same power given in Matthew 18:18-19. Here Jesus is speaking of the Church. This would include the binding and loosing of anything which we speak a word of faith of if it is in harmony with the will of God. This could be binding spirits so that they cannot hinder or harm; or loosing an oppressed person from an evil spirit. Or it could be agreeing together to receive something needed through a binding agreement, or an agreement to loose a situation.

The power to grant or withhold absolution (Roman Catholic)

The Roman Catholics say that this power to bind or loose is to grant or withhold absolution from sin based on John 20:23: "whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained." The Catholics take this verse with the keys to the Kingdom and the power to

bind and loose to say that the power to bind and loose given to Peter is also the power to remit sins or cause a person to retain them under certain circumstances.

What is the true meaning of John 20:23?

This authority, whatever it means, was given to all the apostles, not just to Peter as Rome teaches. That means that it was given to the Church since the Church is built on the foundation of the apostles (Ephesians 2:20).

There is no instance in the New Testament where any of the apostles to whom Jesus gave this authority ever had sinners confess their sins to them and then absolved them of their sins as the priests do (or don't). They always pointed to Jesus as the one they had to deal with about their sins.

In the larger context of the whole New Testament, John 20 would doubtless have reference to a sinner's response to the Gospel of the Kingdom or his rejection of that Gospel. The sinner's response to the Gospel or his rejection of it binds him or looses him. When a sinner believes our word of the Kingdom, we can say to him on the authority of John 20:23 "thy sins, which were many, are now forgiven." If he refuses to believe the message of the Kingdom, we can stand on the Word of God and warn him that he is yet in his sins and will perish in hell.

It is the sinner's response to the Gospel that determines whether or not we bind or loose him from his sins. We the agents of this. The same Word that is life to some is death to others.

For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: To the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things?

Just to take them the Word ministers death to some.

When we take them that Word it is the response of the person that hears that determines whether we can say to him that his sins are forgiven or that they are still in their sins. "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" (John 12:48). It is the Word that binds or looses.

The whole context of Matthew 18 is dealing with forgiveness. If a brother remains unrepentant he is to be put out from the Church. What he does in response to the efforts at reconciliation determines the action of the Church.

The principle in Matthew 18 shows that we have this authority: "And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet...He that receives you receives me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me." The principle is that it is the reception or rejection of our message that is what binds or looses from sin.

What Are Keys Used For?

Keys are used to either unlock or to lock. They are instruments to open and close things. They are used to keep people out of things or to open things for yourself.

Because of this, keys are used in various ways to symbolize things both in the secular world and in the Scriptures. Symbolically, keys from ancient times have been emblems of authority because of what they do. They also symbolize special position as a leader or administrator.

Or they can symbolize recognition as when a mayor will present the keys of the city to a hero or some dignitary. The city is opening its doors to this person. In some cities the mayor or the official of the city will wear a key on a chain around his neck. It symbolizes the authority that the law gives him.

In Isaiah 22 God said that He was going to place the key of the house of David on Eliakim's shoulder when He made him administrator. In some ancient, as well as modern, cultures officials wear a key as an emblem on their shoulders. It signifies the same thing as the key worn around the neck: the authority given them by the law.

Scriptural Use of Keys

Jesus Owns the Keys to the Kingdom

Isaiah 22:22 is a Messianic prophecy that moves beyond Eliakim to Jesus Christ the Messiah. "The key of the house of David will I lay on his shoulder; so he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open."

Revelation 3:7 is a quote of this prophecy in connection with Jesus. What the keys meant to Eliakim mean the same in reference to Jesus except in a greater sense. In other words, as God appointed faithful Eliakim over the kingdom of David (the Kingdom of God), so He has appointed His Son over David's Kingdom. The keys signify His authority over everything in the Kingdom of God.

The Kingdom of God and the kingdom of David are brought together in II Samuel 7: 12-13: "... I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever." The angel told Mary that God would give Jesus the throne of His father David. "And he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end" (Luke 1:30-33).

I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him.

And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed (Daniel 7:13-14).

The Key of Knowledge (Luke 11:52)

Those who teach and preach the Word, who are charged with the responsibility of propagating the Word, they have the keys into the Kingdom: the Word of God. The key of knowledge must be the keys that were given to Peter and to the apostles.

The lawyers of Israel had obscured the Word of the Kingdom by their traditions and interpretation. This blinded the eyes of the people to the true way into the Kingdom.

The key of knowledge and the keys mentioned in Matthew 16 concerning Peter became the basis for the fantasy of Saint Peter sitting at the gates of heaven using the keys that Jesus gave him to admit or not admit on the basis of the books he is keeping. But Peter would have been the last to usurp the office that the Father gave to His Son alone. Jesus is the only one that can let people in because He is the door (John 10).

The Keys to Death and Hades

Revelation 1:18 speaks of Jesus' own triumph over the realm of departed spirits and His triumph over death itself by virtue of His resurrection. "I am He that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death." Because He has the keys to open death and the realm of the dead, then by this He proves that He can open these doors for His people. Hades cannot prevail against the Church because He holds the keys to Hades (cf Matthew 16:18).

Believing the Gospel is the key into the Kingdom. Once we have entered the Kingdom, then keys to death and hades are made

available to us. That is why those who are not in the Kingdom never leave that realm in the sense of deliverance from it, and death forever encompasses them. This doesn't mean that saints won't go into the realm of departed spirits, but death will not be the final answer for them.

What Are the Keys of Matthew 16?

The keys signify the Gospel of Jesus Christ and Peter's confession is its essence: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." When a person believes, these keys open the doors of the dead.

It is probable that because of Peter's confession (he was the first) that he was given the privilege to use those keys first on the Day of Pentecost. He preached to all the Jews gathered at Jerusalem that Jesus is the Son of God, Messiah, and Saviour. He used the keys to open the door into the Kingdom and 3000 Jews walked through that door that day.

Peter used the keys to lock as well as to open. He used his authority in Acts 5, and Ananias and Sapphira dropped dead at his feet at his word. He locked the door for them when they lied to the Holy Spirit.

Peter was the first to use the keys, but he was not the only one. Philip preached Jesus to the eunuch. He gave him the key of knowledge of the Scriptures (Acts 8:26-38). On the basis of this the eunuch believed on Jesus: "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."

Peter opened the door into the Kingdom for the Gentiles in Acts 10 when Cornelius and his household believed the Gospel.

These keys were also used to shut the door into the Kingdom. Simon the sorcerer confessed Christ, then tried to buy the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:9-24). Peter declared that he had no part in this matter thus withholding the keys from him until he would repent.

When Elymas the sorcerer resisted the truth, Paul blinded him for a season with the word of authority given him by God (Acts 13:6-12). He took the keys from him so that the ruler could receive the keys and enter the Kingdom. This is the power of Elijah sometimes seen in the New Testament. This power and authority is going to be restored to the Church, to those who have prepared themselves and showed themselves capable of handling it. Their word will either open or shut the door, but no one will take that authority on himself. These things will only be done under the anointing.

Paul declared his authority to discipline the Church "according to the power which the Lord hath given me to edification, and not to destruction" (II Corinthians 13:1-2, 10). He set forth his apostolic authority in I Corinthians 4:18-21. Paul was going to test those who were charging him with a test of power to prove who was right.

Were the Keys Only Given to Peter?

Jesus gave that same authority to all his disciples (Matthew 18:18-20). He gave them the power to retain or remit sins (John 20:23). Paul told the Church at Corinth to exercise this power with the fornicator and deliver him to Satan for the destruction of the flesh so the spirit could be saved (I Corinthians 5:15). They, as the Church, had the authority to shut the door. Paul then told them to use these keys to let him back in (II Corinthians 2:5-10).

Jesus told His disciples that they were to shake off the dust of their feet in whatever house or city that would not hear them, and to let their peace return from whatever house was not worthy of it (Matthew 10:13-14). He that receives us receives Him (verse 40). Those who do not receive the Church's message of the Kingdom cannot enter into the Kingdom.

Jesus gave His Church the keys into the Kingdom of God. This is the only way men can come (Romans 10:14). In this sense the

Church becomes the key to the Kingdom. That is, its message makes one a citizen of the Kingdom of God when he believes it.

The key into the Kingdom of God is used only on behalf of those who believe our message. Those who receive us, receive Him.

Possessing the Kingdom

The Prophecy of Daniel 7:13-18

...one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom...his dominion is an everlasting dominion ...But the saints of the most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever.

In the Old Testament the term “saints” refers to the Israelites because they didn't have a revelation on the Church, the body of Christ. Daniel's prophecies concern the latter days (12:8-9). That Kingdom is to be manifested on earth in its visible expression in the end of the age.

The apostles who were Israelites asked Jesus: "Wilt thou at this time restore again the Kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6) They had not given up their hope of the Kingdom. The Church today teaches that if a Jew comes into the Kingdom he has to come through the Church. But the Church was a mystery not revealed to them (Ephesians 3: 1-10). Therefore the prophecies of the Old Testament apply to Israel.

But in the New Testament, a Christian is also called a saint and the Kingdom spoken of in Daniel 7 is the same Kingdom spoken of all through the New Testament. The message of that Kingdom is the Gospel. The Kingdom of the Old Testament was the Kingdom that was going to come through Israel and the term “saints” applies to Israelites. In the New Testament, we are called saints

and the Kingdom message is the message of the same Kingdom. Both the Old and New Testament saints are going to possess this Kingdom. So while Daniel's prophecies are speaking to Israel, they are also speaking to us.

There are not going to be two kingdoms, Israel's kingdom and the Kingdom of God. What the Church's relationship is to Israel in the millennial Kingdom, as well as in the eternal Kingdom, is not clearly set forth in the Bible. Israel is going to have a particular place and function, but there is some sense in which she is going to have a peculiar and particular aspect of the Kingdom restored to her. She will have a special place in it, but it is the same Kingdom. All the saints are going to possess it.

Conditions For Possessing the Kingdom

- Receive the Message of the Kingdom
- Be Willing to Pay the Cost of the Kingdom
- Obey the Teachings of the Kingdom

Familiarity breeds contempt. Familiarity with what Jesus said in Matthew 7:21-22 can cause us to overlook the fact of its absolute importance to enter His Kingdom. Only he that does the will of the Father will enter into the Kingdom of heaven. He said this in the midst of His teachings that reveal the will of the Father. Not too many people like to hear that.

Many people are like Israel in their rejection of the requirements to possess the Kingdom. They pick that part of the message they want to believe.

There are two streams of prophecy in the Old Testament concerning Messiah. One stream of prophecy spoke of Him as a suffering servant who was going to suffer and die on behalf of His people. The other stream spoke of His coming to reign. Messiah would establish a Kingdom, become King, and overcome Israel's enemies.

Israel liked the prophecies concerning Messiah's reigning and Israel ruling over the Gentiles with peace and prosperity on the earth. But she rejected the prophecies concerning Messiah's suffering and death. She rejected the prophecies that Israel herself would be under domination before she could possess that eternal Kingdom. So they cast aside whatever they did not want to hear and tried to hold on to that which they did want. In casting aside the unpleasant aspects she cast aside both the Messiah and the Kingdom. Jesus said that the Kingdom of God was taken away from them. This is only a temporary setting aside of Israel as a nation. One day, according to 144 prophecies, she will be restored.

There are multitudes of people today who are so caught up by the idea of the rapture they fail to see what is required to be in the rapture. They actually oppose those who present them with the requirements of being in the rapture: "...and his wife hath made *herself* ready" (Revelation 19:7). Paul said that everything that is recorded about Israel, including her missing the Kingdom and why she did, is written down for our admonition so that we won't make the same mistakes.

Great numbers of people are making the same mistake of setting aside that which they don't like to hear, putting aside those that don't say what they want to hear. They are lulling themselves into that sleep of thinking that because they can quote certain proof texts on the rapture, about being crucified with Christ, or about salvation, that they are placing it all in the right context. People have the habit of quoting proof texts to prove things that are not true in their lives. But we can't quote certain texts to prove things are true in our lives when we may be placing them in the wrong context. It is much easier to speak of a general rapture of believers because this would not require overcoming, walking in total faith, trusting God for everything, living the crucified life, or preparing ourselves for whatever God has saved us to do.

Paul refers to this age in II Timothy 4:1-4: "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own

lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables." This is a picture of the contemporary Church, charismatic and non-charismatic alike, who choose those teachers and ministers who say what they want to hear. Those who have a message from God have never been, and never are, ever chosen by the people. The only prophets Israel ever chose were false ones. The teachers the Church has chosen are only those who say what they want to hear.

The reason God never gives a man a choice of who will be his teacher is because God never gives the teacher a choice of what he is going to say to those who He is going to send him to.

But when people and ministers get together they agree on the salary, benefits, etc. They agree to this because they want the minister to come and minister for them and to them. That is precisely what they do for their people. Woe to that minister that doesn't say what they want to hear with their itching ears. He won't last.

The leaders know that if they stay with the Word they are going to have to practice it, and for a lot of them, their bread and butter is ministering to anything and everybody, just closing their eyes to inconsistencies, errors, and heresies. They try to excuse themselves with Paul's phrase "all things to all men." But this is not what Paul meant. He never compromised. Even with charismatics who ought to know better, they are still bargaining with the people. They end up pleasing the people, tickling their ears. They know if they don't they will lose their meal tickets.

It is certain that those who possess the Kingdom will not be those that the people call. It will not be those who oppose the ones that God sends. Nor will they oppose the message of the Kingdom that God has given them. To quarrel with the ministry is to disqualify a person.

The saints of the most High will possess the Kingdom (Daniel 7:18), but they must first go through considerable purging and persecution.

I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom (Daniel 7:21-22).

Before Israel can possess the Kingdom she is going to have to be purged, she will go through persecution; Antichrist will prevail against her, and he will wear them out.

Translating that to the saints of the New Testament and the message of the Kingdom, Jesus said over and over we will be persecuted. Some will be killed. People will think that they are doing God a favour. Our enemies will be they of our own households. The love of many will wax cold.

While we won't be prevailed against and we won't be overcome, nevertheless we will have the persecutions and the purgings before we possess the Kingdom. Some of our preparation is painful.

What Will Keep Us Out of the Kingdom?

Paul points out many things in Galatians 5 that will keep us out of the Kingdom. These are works of the flesh found in the Church, things that will disqualify us from possessing the Kingdom. People get involved in adultery, fornication, idolatry, uncleanness, lasciviousness, and sodomy and look at it as something that is wrong but really nothing to get upset about or concerned about. But God is so concerned over these that those that do them will not enter His Kingdom.

There are all types of idolatry. Paul calls covetousness idolatry twice. Putting all of our attention and efforts into making money

is covetousness. Roman Catholics still bow before their idols even though they claim to have the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. They still pray to the saints and worship Mary. The Protestants have their things they worship. Religious holidays have become gods to almost everyone.

Any form of occultism is sorcery. Most people have had some form of occult participation. Wrath, strife, and seditions are promoted by Church leaders against government leaders. They are involved in protests, petitions, and even in striking against the government.

"Heresies" can be translated as factions or sects within the body. A promoter of heresy will not enter the Kingdom.

The competition between churches and charismatic leaders is envy. They compete to see who is going to have the most radio and television stations, the biggest evangelistic association, the largest charismatic schools, etc.

Drunkenness will disqualify one from the Kingdom of God. People get upset when they hear that homosexuals are an abomination to God, yet a far less sin like drunkenness will keep a person out. We need to open our eyes to what is required to enter the Kingdom because people are making excuses for the alcoholic, the homosexual, the weak in the Church as well as other forms of sin. The Bible clearly says that the Kingdom is going to be possessed by saints, not sinners.

The messengers that God sends will stay with the Word. That is the way to find out who is going into the Kingdom and who we can follow. They are on the road. His is the message of the Kingdom. If a person's message encourages us to stay in the same state we are in, or condones sin in us; if the message doesn't crucify the flesh and the carnal mind; then God didn't send him. The ones that God sends have a message of total faith in God for everything, the message of the crucified life, the message of preparation.

God does not send any man with a part of His message. If he has a part of the message, then he has a part that is right and a part that is wrong, and God is not going to send a man if part of his message is wrong. If a man has a part of the message it is because he ran out before he got the full message because he did not want to pay the cost of sitting under somebody else and learning. They always preach that part that is popular, that pleases the people that give them an audience, an outreach. To preach that which is popular is easier, less costly, but in the end it will cost more, it will cost everything.

JESUS CHRIST IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

The New Testament Doctrine of the Messiah

Terms

Old Testament: mashiyach

New Testament: Christos

Both terms mean *anointed*.

Old Testament Usage

There is a close connection in the Old Testament between the term anointed and consecration, meaning to set apart. The purpose of anointing was to set apart for the service to God. Aaron was anointed and consecrated to the High Priesthood (Leviticus 8, Exodus 29). King Saul was anointed and set apart to be King of Israel (I Samuel 10). Elisha was anointed by Elijah and set apart to the office of prophet (I Kings 19). This anointing, then the setting apart of someone or something to the service of God is seen throughout the whole Old Testament.

The term anointed became a title for the Son of God.

This is seen by implication in Psalm 2:1-2: "Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against His anointed" (literally His Messiah). We know that this refers to the Son of God because verse 7 says: "I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, thou art my Son."

The term is a definite title in Daniel 9:25-26. "...to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince...And after three-score and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for him-

self..." This is no longer an abstract term but is a definite title. This is referring to Jesus' crucifixion.

New Testament Usage

The term Messiah as a title moves on to become a personal designation, a proper name for Jesus.

It was still a title early in the Gospels. The disciples saw Jesus as the Messiah who was to come and they called Him that (John 1:36). When Peter made His great confession he used the term as a title: "Thou art the Christ (Messiah), the son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16).

But by the time of the epistles, His title had become His personal name. Paul called himself "an apostle of Jesus Christ" (I Corinthians 1:1). Paul uses Jesus Christ interchangeably with Christ Jesus, and sometimes just Christ. Christ, the anointed One, is now His name, Anointed One.

Aaron was called the anointed one in the Old Testament. Elisha was an anointed prophet of the Lord. The apostles and prophets are anointed ones of the Holy Spirit. But nowhere in either the Old or the New Testament is the title Messiah or Christ ever given to a man as a title or a name. It simply designates what God has done to him. He has anointed him. Only the Son of God has that designation: Messiah, or the Messiah.

The Mission of the Messiah

There are two streams of Messianic prophecy in the Old Testament. One stream showed the Messiah who would come as a Davidic King, sitting on the throne of David, reigning and ruling, overthrowing the enemies of Israel, ruling the world. The other stream of prophecy speaks of the Messiah coming as a meek and humble servant who would suffer and die (Zechariah 9:9). He fulfilled this at the first advent (see also Zechariah 13:7; Isaiah 53; and Daniel 9:25-26).

Israel rejected the suffering servant, persecution passages and held to the reigning and ruling passages. By the time Jesus arrived on the scene, all they could see concerning Messiah and His mission was that He was going to come as a political person and rule like a king over a political empire, namely Israel.

This political expectation for the Messiah is seen in Herod's reaction at His birth. When the wise men who had seen Jesus' star in the East came to inquire of Him they asked: "Where is He that is born King of the Jews?" (Matthew 2:2). Herod immediately interpreted this as a threat to his political rule and to his throne. As a result he sought to have Jesus put to death, killing "all the children that were in Bethelhem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years and under" (Matthew 2:16).

When Jesus multiplied the loaves and fishes, they attempted to compel Him to become King of Israel (John 6:15). They were going Him to take by force and make Him their ruler.

When Jesus raised Lazarus, it raised such an interest on the part of the Jews that the religious leaders sought to have Him put to death because they interpreted raising him from the dead as a sign that Jesus was the Messiah (John 11). They saw it as a political threat to their own control over Israel. Moreover, they feared that Rome would interpret it as a threat to her rule over Palestine.

Because of this Jewish tendency to misinterpret His mission in political terms, Jesus rarely ever called Himself the Messiah. What He called Himself was Son of Man. In fact, after Peter's great confession, "then he charged his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ (the Messiah)" (Matthew 16:20). Then He began to teach them how He had to suffer and die because they were looking at His reigning and ruling Messiahship which will come at His second advent. Even Peter rebuked Jesus when He spoke of His suffering and death because he, like the rest of Israel, was interpreting His mission in political terms. After His resurrection, the first thought on their

minds was "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore the Kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6). They saw His two-fold mission, but having seen the suffering servant aspect, they were ready to get on with the Davidic King aspect.

The Messianic teachings of Jesus, in marked contrast to the popular beliefs, was to open a way for the whole world to come under His Messiahship and be called by His name: Christians, the anointed ones. They will make up the citizenship of His Kingdom at the second advent. The reason for two advents is so that there can be a citizenry to populate the Kingdom. There will be a time when Jesus will say close the door, the last Gentile has just been saved (Romans 11:25). Then He will turn back to Israel.

Jesus Christ as the Son of Man

On rare occasions Jesus called Himself Messiah, and on rare occasions He called Himself the Son of God. There is no question that He believed Himself to be the Son of God. But almost always He called Himself Son of Man. He came on the scene calling Himself Son of Man, and when He returns as King, it will be as Son of Man.

What does this title mean? Why does He use it so often of Himself? Is He the only one in Scripture that is called son of man? What did the term mean to the contemporaries of Jesus? What did they think it meant? What meaning was Jesus trying to convey? Or was He trying to hide something? Was He purposely being obscure?

Views

The term is a substitute for the personal pronoun.

Jesus used the term Son of Man as a substitute for the first person pronoun. It just means "I." Luke 6:22 is cited as an example: "...for the Son of Man's sake."

The obvious objection to this explanation is that it tells us nothing as to why Jesus used the term. Besides, Jesus never avoided the use of the personal pronoun. In the same passage He said: "But I say unto you..." (verse 27). He used the personal pronoun more than he used Son of Man.

The term refers to Jesus' humanity.

The church fathers understood the term to refer to Jesus' humanity. Jesus is the God-man. He is Son of God, Son of Man. The Son of God, by incarnation, became man. He identified Himself with man. This view holds that Jesus used this phrase over and over to stress His humanity.

The term simply means man.

The Old Testament usage of this phrase simply means man. "God is not a man, neither the son of man..." (Numbers 23:19). "What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?" (Psalm 8:4). Jesus simply used the phrase with no deeper significance attached.

But in replying to this view, it must be asked why wasn't this phrase carried over into the New Testament? It is found in the plural in Mark 3:28: "...All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men..." But it is not used popularly in the New Testament except when Jesus used it of Himself.

It can't mean man with respect to Jesus because in Numbers 23:19 and Psalms 8:4 the phrase is used in a way to contrast God and His purity, holiness, strength, faithfulness, against man's weakness, sinfulness, and frailty.

The background of the phrase is the Prophet Ezekiel.

It is a very common term in the book of Ezekiel where it occurs between 80 and 90 times and is used of Ezekiel himself. This view holds that the term is equivalent to prophet, that Jesus was

calling Himself a prophet. Jesus, the prophet of God, used the phrase that is so common to the book of Ezekiel.

But this doesn't explain the meaning of the phrase Son of Man. Nor does it explain why Jesus kept applying it to Himself. God could have been addressing Ezekiel in the same sense as in Numbers 23:19. Or He might have been addressing Ezekiel as son of man as His representative to man.

The term was a common Messianic title currently used in Jesus' day.

The question must be raised: was it so understood by the Jewish nation? It occurs in the Old Testament as a Messianic title only once, in Daniel 7:13-14.

Would the Jewish nation connect this one obscure passage with the Messiah? Probably not. The Jews did make a connection, but not in the right sense (John 12:32-34). They could understand Messiah, Son of Man, living; but they could not understand Messiah, Son of Man, dead. They were making connections in Matthew 16: 13-17, but they were all wrong.

Peter made the right connection, but he got it by revelation. Jesus then charged His disciples to tell no man. He carefully avoided any public announcement of His Messiahship until the close of His ministry.

But conversely, He applied Son of Man repeatedly to Himself from the very beginning. If He was trying to get people to see that tHis meant Messiah as tHis view holds, then why did He use it and not connect it with Messiah unless He had another purpose besides an open revelation of Himself as Messiah? He purposely chose Son of Man which is connected with Messiah in Old Testament, but He used it like He used parables: to hide the fact, not to reveal it.

Son of Man refers to the first advent.

When Jesus called Himself Son of Man, He had reference to the Old Testament prophecies concerning the Messiah being a suffering servant who would suffer and die on behalf of His people. This is based upon the fact that there are two streams of prophecy in the Old Testament. One designated the Messiah a suffering servant and referred to the first advent. The other stream of prophecy taught that the Messiah would be a king and establish a Kingdom, and that refers to the second advent.

This view holds that when Jesus called Himself Son of Man He was identifying Himself with Isaiah 53, the suffering servant and the first advent. Son of Man refers to the first advent prophecies as well as the second advent.

But in Matthew 25:31-34, He says that the Son of Man will come in His glory and sit on His throne as King, referring to the second advent.

Son of Man is related to the Kingdom prophecies.

By this designation, Jesus conceives of Himself as the founder of the Kingdom of God. This view holds that many times when He called Himself Son of Man, He was calling attention to how He was saying something about the Kingdom.

This is true in many of the parables. When He explained the meaning of the parable of the sower, He said that the sower is the Son of Man (Matthew 13). When the two disciples wanted to sit at His left and right hand in the Kingdom, He said that He, the Son of Man, had come to serve.

Jesus' return as King will be as the Son of Man (Matthew 25:31; 24:30).

While this connection is clear, yet this view does not explain *why* He used this title.

The title signifies that Jesus is the ideal man.

Jesus represented what all of us should be, so He called Himself the Son of Man in the sense of being the ideal, the One we should look to.

The Significance of Jesus' Use of Son of Man

In Jesus' use of the title Son of Man He laid claim to the Messianic title of Daniel 7:13-14:

I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.

For Jesus, the title Son of Man meant Messiah based on this prophecy. Every time He used it, this is precisely what He had in mind.

Would this have revealed His Messiahship?

Would this not have circumvented His purpose of forbidding His disciples to tell that He was the Messiah or the Son of God? Would it not hinder His purpose in trying to keep it hidden until the close of His ministry? The answer “no” for the following reasons:

The Jews had only one prophecy that spoke of the Son of Man.

The Jews had only one prophecy in the Old Testament that speaks of the Son of Man in connection with the Divine Person or personality. They didn't make this connection. Had He called

Himself Son of God or Messiah, they would have, but all through the Gospels they kept asking Him if He was the Messiah.

Son of Man is a title unique to Jesus.

Son of Man is a unique title inasmuch that no man ever used it of himself. No man called Jesus Son of Man except Himself. He used it only of Himself.

The term occurs only once after Jesus' resurrection on the lips of somebody besides Jesus. Stephen, just before he was stoned, saw the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God (Acts 15:54-56). He was inspired by the Holy Spirit to call the One they had crucified by the title He used every day. The Jews knew immediately that he was referring to Jesus.

Jesus' use of Son of Man is intentionally enigmatic.

This intentional enigmatic use of Son of Man is in keeping with Jesus' other teachings concerning the mystery surrounding Himself and the mysteries of the Kingdom. He purposely taught in parables so they couldn't understand and the disciples didn't understand until He interpreted them.

Jesus used this title that is in a Kingdom, second advent prophecy when He had come to fulfil the first advent prophecies. He did this so that the religious leaders would not put it together. When He openly said that He was the Messiah, they immediately crucified Him. If He had openly identified Himself as Messiah, Son of God, that would have hastened His death and He would have missed His ministry which had to come first.

The Jews could have known who He was. For example, He claimed to have the authority to forgive sins as the Son of Man. They were correct in their conclusions that nobody but God or the Son of God can forgive sins. "But that ye may know that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins (he saith to the sick of the palsy,) I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house" (Mark 2:10-11).

They could have put it together because He had given them a clue that was two-fold. The expression "But that ye may know that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins..." is meaningless except He was intentionally contrasting His authority on earth to forgive sins with His authority as the Son of Man in the Daniel 7 vision to forgive sins, or His authority before He became incarnate as Son of God. He was contrasting His authority on earth with the fact that He had come from heaven.

The other clue is in verses 23-28: "The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath: therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath" (verses 27-28). What He said is that the Son of Man is God.

Jesus spoke of His death as the Son of Man.

Jesus repeatedly spoke of His death as the Son of Man, not Son of God, or as the Messiah. A scholar of the Old Testament in Jesus' day who was perceptive could have seen that the Son of Man, Daniel 7, and suffering servant, Isaiah 53, were one and the same. This wasn't as apparent to them then as it is to us now with our hindsight, because immediately after Peter identified Him, the Son of Man, as the Messiah, he rebuked Jesus for saying He had to die. Peter didn't make that connection because there is no suffering and dying in Daniel 7. After His resurrection He told them that they should have known that He had to suffer and die before He could reign as King (Luke 24).

Jesus claimed as the Son of Man to be the Saviour of the lost.

"For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19: 10). Obviously no mere son of man could save the lost and forgive sins. They should have put it together by implication.

Jesus' future Kingship will be as Son of Man.

Jesus repeatedly referred to the future Kingdom and Himself as King and that it would be as the Son of Man.

...of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed when he cometh in the glory of His Father with the holy angels (Mark 8:38).

Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed? And Jesus said, I am: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power and coming in the clouds of heaven (Mark 14:61-62).

...That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of His glory... (Matthew 19:28).

For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be (Matthew 24:27).

See also Matthew 24: 37, 44, 30-31; Matthew 25: 31.

Jesus did not openly lay claim to His Messiahship.

While Jesus did not openly lay claim to His Messiahship, He did lay claim to that title. He knew that His mission at the first advent was diametrically opposite to what all the Jews, including His apostles, thought it was. They would not have received it if He had told them that there was a first and second advent.

In John 6, when Jesus fed the multitude, they saw that He was the Messiah, and tried by force to take Him to make Him their King. But when He told them that He was the bread of life and they had to eat of Him and drink His blood they were offended. They went from miracle, Messiah, Kingship, to message, murmuring, killing. They would have nothing to do with His Messiahship if it meant suffering and death, or if it meant they still had to be persecuted by the Romans for a while.

To have openly said that the Son of Man, the heavenly figure in Daniel 7, was He Himself, would have prevented the fulfilment of the 1s series of prophecies which had to come first. But by speaking of Himself as the Son of Man, He designated Himself as Messiah, but used the uncommon Messianic title rather than the term Messiah. This indicates that He was intentionally using the Messianic concept in a way different from the popular conception. In this way He could lay claim to the Messianic office, but could go about conducting His ministry the way He wanted to without being sidetracked by the people. His purpose would have been circumvented because there would have been enough who were zealous enough to make Him King.

God, in His wisdom, sent His Son into the world at the first advent in a unique and unexpected manner. God sent His Son to come announcing that He was the expected Messiah, but He would do it in a way that no one would see it. Only Peter got it, and he got it by revelation. He would designate Himself by the Messianic title but it would be a title from a second advent prophecy, not a first, so that He could suffer and die. Isaiah 53 would still be there. He spoke of Isaiah 53 repeatedly when He said that He must suffer and die and be resurrected. Nor did He really hide Daniel's prophecy because He repeatedly referred to the Son of Man as the King who would establish a Kingdom. Jesus kept referring to Isaiah 53, suffering servant, and kept tying them together: Son of Man, Daniel 7, must suffer and die, Isaiah 53. The Son of Man is the King who will establish His Kingdom. He had two advents in all of His teaching, but they knew of only one, the one they were witnessing, and they rejected that.

His Messiahship was revealed, and that made them responsible. And yet it was hidden and not unveiled until after the resurrection.

Jesus Christ as the Son of God

The most frequent title Jesus used was Son of Man but He did use Messiah and Son of God, especially to His disciples. He publicly referred to the fact that God was His Father: "I and my Father are one" (John 10:30). He wasn't hiding any of this, even the Son of God designation. But He had to complete the first advent ministry of redemption. The reason He didn't make a constant reference to His deity and Messiahship is that He would have antagonized prematurely the religious leaders. When He finally said at His arrest that He was Son of God, it was only hours until His crucifixion.

The Jews tried to stone Him whenever He spoke of His deity. He kept His deity low key. He forbade the demons to speak of Him as the Holy One of God because they knew who He was (Mark 1:34; 3:11-12). When Peter made His confession, He forbade His "disciples to tell anyone that He was Messiah (Matthew 16:20). Many times after His great miracles, He charged the people not to tell anyone. He did not want to stress the fact that He was the miracle-worker Son of God. No mere son of man can work miracles.

After His transfiguration where Peter, James, and John saw Him as Son of God, He told them to tell no man what they had seen until after His resurrection (Matthew 17:9).

Since believers in both the Old and New Testaments are called sons of God, then in what sense is Jesus the Son of God?

The Liberals tell us that we are all sons of God. Jesus being Son of God was not different in kind, but only in degree. Because, we are told, Jesus Himself taught that God, His Father, is our Father.

Old Testament Usage.

Angels

Angels are called sons of God. "Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them" (Job 1:6). "Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord..." (Job 2: 1). The Hebrews have always held that these are angels. Some of the versions of the Septuagint translate "sons of God" with "angels of God." "When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy" (Job 38:7).

"The sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair, and they took them wives of all which they chose" (Genesis 6:2). These apparently were angels who cohabited with the daughters of men (Jude 6 and 7).

Israelites

"Ye are the children of the Lord your God...for thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God, and the Lord hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto Himself" (Deuteronomy 14:1-2). "...there it shall be said unto them, ye are the sons of the living God" (Hosea 1:10). "Israel is my son, even my firstborn" (Exodus 4:22).

Adam

In the son of genealogy of Luke 3, Adam is called the God. He was not son of God like Jesus is the Son of God, but he was a son in the sense that he had no Father. He was a son of God in the sense that God created Him.

The Messiah

"I will be His father, and he shall be my son" (II Samuel 7:14). "Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee" (Psalm 2:7).

New Testament Usage

The peacemakers shall be called the sons of God (Matthew 5:19). Loving our enemies is evidence that we are the sons of God (Matthew 5:44-45).

Distinctions between our sonship and Christ's

But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.

Wherefore thou are no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ (Galatians 4:4-7).

This passage gives the distinctions between our sonship and that of Christ's. We become sons *by adoption* whereas Jesus Christ is the Son *by nature*. He is one essence with God. He does not attain to sonship, He possesses it inherently (Hebrews 1:3). "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1). Our sonship is a legal relationship; His is personal from the beginning. When we believe, we are adopted as sons.

Jesus' unique sonship is stressed in John 3:16 in the use of the term *monogenes*. This term is mistranslated as only begotten. Begotten suggests origin, derivation, beginning. It should be translated God's unique Son, the only one of His kind. "But thou Bethlehem Ephratah...out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from old, from everlasting" (Micah 5:2). Jesus had no beginning. He is the eternal Son of God.

The same term is used in Hebrews 11:17 speaking of Isaac being Abraham's only begotten son. Isaac wasn't Abraham's only son so obviously it should not have been translated only begotten. Isaac was Abraham's unique son, in his case, through a miraculous birth.

The Logos

The term.

Greek term: logos

The apostle John was the only one to use the concept of Logos. It is found in all of His writings. "In the beginning was the *Logos*, and the *Logos* was with God, and the *Logos* was God" (John 1: 1). "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the *Logos* of life" (I John 1:1). "And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and His name is called the *Logos* of God" (Revelation 19:13).

The meaning of the term logos can basically be translated "word" or reason as in the sense of thought. Reason speaks of the mental processes of thinking, meditating, reasoning, discerning.

Logos doesn't mean word in the grammatical sense like a printed word on a page. It is word in the sense of language which embodies a conception or idea as language in a sermon, or language in conversations. "And he said unto them, what manner of communications (logos) are these that ye have one to another..." (Luke 24: 17).

The two ideas of word and thought, or reason, go together for every word we speak implies a thought. What logos expresses is thought expressed as speech. Jesus is the Word in the sense of what God has to say to this world, the revelation of God, because words reveal the thoughts, the will, and identity of a person.

Jesus is the revelation of God's will, knowledge, and wisdom among many other things.

The background of John's use of the Logos concept

What did not influence John

Greek Philosophy

The Liberals claim that Philo, or Greek philosophy as such influenced John's use of the logos concept. The Greek philosophers did use the term in a sense that means reason and thought.

Some philosophies hold logos to mean divine reason. They mean reason as an abstraction, the reason of the universe, and man has a spark of that reason in him. Reason is what created everything. Some try to see John's concept from Greek philosophy in the sense that Jesus is God's wisdom, reason, and He is the creator.

Philo (20 B.C. to 50 A.D.)

Philo was an Alexandrian Jew who combined the Jewish religion with Greek philosophy. He was a believer in dualism. Dualism in philosophy means that physical matter and God are coeternal. Because they are coeternal, God is completely other than created matter, totally transcendent, separated from the world of matter. In order to deal with creation He has to have an intermediary between Himself and the world, and according to Philo, that was the Logos. There are many spirit emanations going out from God and the highest spirit from God is the Logos. He was intermediate between God and the world. He is the creator and the one through whom God deals.

But John's Logos is not some emanation from God, He is God (John 1:1). This Logos, who is God, became incarnate in flesh, a concept totally foreign to Philo and Greek philosophy because God could never become flesh in their philosophy.

Old Testament background for the Logos concept

There are Old Testament implications that lay the basis for the appearance of the Logos in flesh as God's Son coming out of a context of monotheism. Though the Old Testament taught monotheism exclusively, there are implications that lay the basis for someone coming forth who is God and God's Son at the same time.

The plurality of the Godhead in the Old Testament

Several passages in the Old Testament indicate that there are distinctions in the monotheistic concept of God. "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness..." (Genesis 1:26). "Let us go down, and there confound their language..." (Genesis 11: 7).

More than one individual is referred to as God. "The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou at my right hand..." (Psalm 110:1). "There the Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven" (Genesis 19:24).

A Son Is ascribed to God

"I will be His father, and he shall be my son..." (II Samuel 7:14). "Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee" (Psalm 2:7) .

The triune nature of the Godhead is suggested in Isaiah 48:16:

Come ye near unto me, hear ye this; I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; from the time that it was, there am I: and now the Lord God, and His Spirit hath sent me.

Theophanies

These are Old Testament appearances of the Angel of the Lord who called Himself God and received divine worship. He accepted the worship He said that He, the is due only God.

And the angel of the Lord said unto her [Hagar]...And she called the name of the Lord that

spake unto her, Thou God seest me... (Genesis 16:9, 13).

And the angel of God spake unto me in a dream...I am the God of Bethel ... (Genesis 31: 11, 13).

And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush...God called unto him out of the bush... (Exodus 3:1-5).

And it came to pass...that the angel of the Lord ascended in the flame of the altar...And Manoah said unto His wife, We shall surely die, because we have seen God (Judges 13:20-22).

The Messianic prophecies

The Messianic prophecies show that Messiah is God and God's Son. "The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against His anointed" (Psalm 2:2).

Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee (Psalm 2:6-7).

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 (Psalm 2:12).

I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days...and there was given him dominion...His dominion is an everlast-

ing kingdom...and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed (Daniel 7: 13-14).

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, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6).

Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel (Isaiah 7:14).

The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool (Psalm 110:1).

Cf Psalms 45:6-7; Micah 5:2; Zechariah 12:10; and Zechariah 13:7.

The Word of the Lord

The Word of the Lord in the Old Testament is akin to the Greek term *logos* in the New Testament.

The Hebrew term: dabar

The Word of the Lord is the means by which God revealed Himself to man; by which He created the world (Psalm 33:6; Genesis 1 cf Hebrews 11:3); and it is the Word of the Lord that gives life to man (Genesis 1:20, 24).

This is precisely what is said of the *Logos* in John 1. The *Logos* created all things (verse 1 cf Colossians 1:16-17). Jesus gives light and life to everyone who comes into this world (verses 8-9). Jesus revealed God (verses 14 and 18).

The Word of the Lord healed and sustained life (Psalm 107:20).

The personification of Wisdom (Proverbs 8:22-31)

The Hebrew term: chokmoh

Wisdom of God is seen here not as a mere endowment like human wisdom; not a mere attribute of God like His omniscience; but seems to attain almost to the concept of the divine personality.

Master workman of creation

Wisdom is described as the master workman of creation which is precisely what is said of Logos in John 1:3: "All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made" (cf Colossians 1:16-17).

One in whom God delights

Wisdom personified is the one in whom God delights (verse 30), which is what is said of Christ, the Messiah: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:17).

Wisdom between the testaments

In the literature between the testaments the Wisdom concept became highly developed and prepared the way for the New Testament concept of wisdom as in chapters 7 through 9 of the Wisdom of Solomon. By the time of Christ it was a highly developed concept.

Wisdom personified compared to Christ

As Wisdom is personified in Proverbs 8, so is Christ personified as Wisdom in I Corinthians 1:23-24: "But we preach Christ crucified...Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God." Christ is the *chokmoh* of Proverbs 8: "In whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Colossians 2:3). "But of him are

ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom..." (I Corinthians 1:30).

In the Old Testament, wisdom is the Creator. In the New Testament, Jesus is called both the Creator of God and the Wisdom of God. Although God has wisdom and omniscience, Wisdom Is not a mere attribute of God, *but an extension of Himself personified*. In the New Testament, it is the Logos. He is called the Wisdom of God.

John's Logos doctrine

John's Logos doctrine is unique. The Logos, preexistent, is God, the Creator of all things:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made (John 1:1-3).

Words based upon thought

Logos speaks of word based upon thought. Words are how we communicate our thoughts, our ideas, our wills, and ourselves. So the Son of God can be designated in this sense because He is the revelation of God Himself. He is communicating Himself as God. He is communicating who God is and God's will to this world. The Word of the Lord came through the prophets in the Old Testament, but the Word of the Lord came in person as the Logos in the New Testament when the Word became flesh and spoke to us directly (Hebrews 1:1-3).

Logos speaks of Christ's spiritual preexistence

The term Logos denotes God's personality as *Son who was Spirit*. It speaks of His spiritual preexistence (John 1:1, 14, 18). When He became flesh, from that time on they called Him Jesus Christ. Logos as Spirit is designated by Paul by the phrase "form

of God" in Philippians 2:6: "Who, being in the form (essence) of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God."

Logos is seen as God and a distinct manifestation of God

The Logos of John 1:1 is seen both as God and yet a distinct manifestation of God. "The Word was with God" - that is His distinction. "The Word was God" - that is His unity. He is said to be in the bosom of the Father (verse 18).

The Old Testament background suggests that Logos is the Son of God, Creator, Wisdom of God. When the New Testament Logos became incarnate, He is said to be the Son of God, Creator, Wisdom of God.

Jesus Christ as Mediator

Christ as mediator is the central theme of the Bible in that He offered Himself as a substitute for us in order that reconciliation could be made between God and man.

Definitions and terms.

Definitions

Mediator: One who tries to bring together on mutual agreement of terms; one who brings peace out of chaos, friendship where there is alienation. A mediator is one who intervenes between two parties for the purpose of reconciling them.

Theologically, mediation has reference to the method by which God and man are reconciled. This is through the atoning death of Christ. This is seen in Romans 4:25 through 5:2. "Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification" (verse 25). We have peace with God through Him (verse 1). He mediated peace between God and man. The substitutionary death of Christ opened the door of access between God and man (verse 2).

Much more then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement [reconciliation] (Romans 5: 9-11).

By His death, Jesus reconciled us to God when we were enemies with God.

Terms

Old Testament

The term does not occur in the Old Testament. In the Greek translation of the Old Testament, the Septuagint uses the term *yakach* to translate "daysman" in Job 9:33. "Neither is there any daysman betwixt us, that might lay His hand upon us both."

New Testament

Moses was mediator between God and Israel (Galatians 3:19-20). He received the revelation of the Law on behalf of Israel. He stood between them.

I stood between the Lord and you at that time, to shew you the word of the Lord: for you were afraid by reason of the fire, and went not up into the mount (Deuteronomy 5:5).

Christ is called the mediator of a better covenant (Hebrews 8:6). He is the mediator of a new covenant (Hebrews 9:15; 12:24). "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (I Timothy 2:5).

Old Testament background for mediation.

Although the term mediation does not occur in the Old Testament, there is a background where certain individuals acted as mediators between men and God.

Patriarchal Mediation

In the patriarchal period before the giving of the law, before the ordination of sacrifices and an ordained priesthood who would offer sacrifices, the mediatory sacrifices were offered by the head of the family or the tribe.

Job sanctified His sons and daughters, and offered burnt offerings on their behalf (Job 1 :5). He acted as priest for all His family. He offered sacrifices as a mediator to keep them reconciled to God. Noah offered burnt offerings on behalf of His family (Genesis 8:20).

Intercessory mediation through prayer

Mediation wasn't always sacrifice, but mediation which kept man reconciled to God was also through prayers offered by someone acting as a mediator.

Moses interceded for Israel. God was going to destroy them, but he stood in the gap through His prayer (Exodus 32:31 ff cf De 9:7 ff).

"Samuel cried unto the Lord for Israel; and the Lord heard him" (1 Samuel 7:9). The prophets interceded on behalf of Israel. Job interceded on behalf of His friends (Job 42:8-10). Abraham interceded on behalf of Sodom (Genesis 18:22-33).

This type of mediation was not a substitutionary sacrifice, but where a mediator stood between God and man through His intercession.

Priestly mediation

The high priest was a type of Christ in His mediation on the day of atonement. The law of sacrifice and the institution of the priesthood were given through Moses whereby through their ministry, the ordained priesthood made reconciliation on behalf of the people.

That the high priest was a mediator and represented the people on behalf of God is seen in the breastplate that he wore. It had twelve precious stones on it, each of which had engraved on it the name of one of the tribes of Israel. When the high priest went into the Holy of Holies, he wore it as a remembrance before the Lord. This signified that the priest was remembering, and re-

calling it to God's remembrance. He was bearing the tribes on His own person before the Lord and making atonement for them.

Messianic mediation predicted

Isaiah 53 contains the connecting link between the Old Testament type and the fulfilment in Christ. The Messiah is depicted as giving Himself in substitution on behalf of His people. In the New Testament He is called mediator between God and man by His death (Romans 5).

The need of a mediator.

The need of a mediator is seen in the fact that man is a sinner, alienated from God. Sin in the Garden interrupted the fellowship between God and man. There could no longer be any relationship unless there was some form of reconciliation made. Sacrifice was instituted immediately after Adam and Eve were put out of the Garden. Animals had to be killed to make coats of skin to clothe them (Genesis 3: 21). Abel's sacrifice of a lamb was an offering the Lord had respect for, and He had respect for Abel because of it (Genesis 4:4 cf Hebrews 11:4).

The Scriptures teach a mutual alienation. Not only is God alienated from man, but man is alienated from God, and both by choice; except God has made a way to those who will repent and be reconciled again.

For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life (Romans 5:10).

Because the carnal mind is enmity against God:for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be (Romans 8:7).

And you, that were sometimes alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled (Colossians 1:21).

From man's side, the Scriptures declare that man, the sinner, is in a state of enmity. Even His mind is at enmity with God. From God's side, His attitude is one of righteous wrath against the sinner.

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness (Romans 1:18).

...we shall be saved from His wrath through him (Romans 5: 9).

...for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience (Ephesians 5:6).

For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience (Colossians 3:6).

See also II Peter 3:9 ff.

The qualifications of a mediator.

Because of the mutual alienation between God and man, the only solution will be that God will take it upon Himself. He will take the initiative to find an acceptable mediator, one that He will accept, to effect reconciliation. Since reconciliation cannot be based upon mere arbitrary whim or a divine fiat, He must find one who is qualified.

The qualifications of a mediator are twofold:

He must have an intimate relation to both parties in the dispute.

There is only One in all of the universe who could fulfill this, that is the Logos.

His relationship to God: "In the beginning was the Logos, and the Logos was with God, and the Logos was God" (John 1:1). "And the Logos became flesh and dwelt among us..." (John 1: 14); and that relates Him to man.

Thus He was the only personality in the universe who could be acceptable. He has a concern for us and a concern for the Father's righteousness. So God Himself came in the person of His Son with all of His holy righteous wrath against sin. But since God is love, He took upon Himself humanity so He could identify Himself with the human race except at the point of sin (Hebrews 4:15). God became man, and as man, represented the human race.

He must be innocent of all guilt of that which he is going to mediate.

He must be absolutely impartial, and without a taint. As God, He will be impartial. As man, He will be sinless and guiltless. Therefore He can be impartial.

The purpose and necessity of the incarnation.

Why did Logos have to take on flesh? Why could not Logos redeem us without taking on flesh? Why couldn't God adopt the best moral teacher of the day and let him die as an example? The real purpose of the incarnation is no longer understood and taught, or it is being sidetracked by stressing the baby Jesus.

It was necessary for redemption.

It was impossible for all the animals that were sacrificed in the Old Testament to take away sins though they were types of what the Logos would do in His incarnation. Animal sacrifice was a

type, but it was not sufficient to redeem human nature (Hebrews 10:1-4). While God granted forgiveness, it was on the basis of what He was going to do in Jesus Christ. "Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, but a body hast thou prepared me" (Hebrews 10:5). God prepared a body for Logos so that He could offer that human body on the altar.

It is obvious that no animal could redeem man because it would have to be one of like kind. "Forasmuch then as children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil" (Hebrews 2:14).

Only another human personality could act as an adequate substitute. But it had to be God Himself because it had to be a sinless substitute.

The Son of God as eternal Spirit could not suffer and die, or even be tempted.

Jesus the Logos, as God-man, could experience suffering and death, and He could be tempted and overcome temptation.

The divine Logos could not die, but the divine Logos united in an inseparable union with humanity in a body of flesh could suffer and experience death. Therefore it can be said that God purchased the Church with His own blood (Acts 20:28).

Logos emptied Himself of the form of God and took on the form of man (Philippians 2:6-8). He didn't empty Himself of deity, but of the form of deity which is Spirit. When He clothed Himself with flesh then they could behold the glory of the Son of God (John 1:14). Then being found in the likeness of man, He could offer Himself, even unto death on the cross.

He will always be the divine Son of God. He will always be Jesus of Nazareth in His humanity. He is sitting at the right hand of God as the Son of Man.

By analogy, a king can set aside His rule for a time and step down from His throne, but he doesn't cease to have royal blood flowing in His veins or cease to be of royal lineage because he is no longer acknowledged king. Jesus was totally human, but He didn't cease to be God. He still had the divine Logos Spirit. That is why He of all humanity is both complete man and complete God. He never ceased to be Logos, Son of God, a full divine personality. But He became a human being, and He could be put to death and redeem humanity.

THE NEW TESTAMENT CONCEPTION OF MAN

The New Testament View of Man Is Simplistic

The New Testament shows that man is either in Christ or in Adam: in Christ and redeemed, or out of Christ and lost. "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (I Corinthians 15: 22). "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous" (Romans 5:19).

Adam and Christ are actually two heads of humanity. One is the natural head and the other is the spiritual head. Jesus regarded all men as in Adam and lost. As children of Adam we must be born again to become God's children and enter His Kingdom.

What It Means to Be "In Christ" or "In Adam"

In Christ

The Term: Greek: en Christos

The phrase "in Christ" or its equivalent occurs 164 times in Paul's writings alone. This is perhaps Paul's most characteristic expression.

Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creation: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new (II Corinthians 5:17).

For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive (I Corinthians 15:22).

Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus (Romans 3:24).

We are alive unto God through Christ (Romans 6: 11). There is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus (Romans

8:1). We are made alive in Christ (I Corinthians 15:22). We are new creations in Christ (II Corinthians 5:17). We are crucified with Christ and He lives in us (Galatians 2:20). We are baptized into Christ (Galatians 3:27). We are created in Christ Jesus unto good works (Ephesians 2: 10). Christ dwells in our hearts by faith (Ephesians 3: 17). Our faith is in Christ Jesus (Colossians 1:4).

Figurative Expressions

The vine and the branch (John 15:1-6)

The marriage relationship between husband and wife (Ephesians 5:22-23)

The building and the foundation analogy (Ephesians 2:20-22)

The head and the body relationship (Ephesians 1:22-23; I Corinthians 23)

The Significance Of Being In Christ

- The believer is said to be in Christ (Romans 16:7).
- Christ is in the believer (Romans 8:10; Colossians 1:27).
- Christ is in us and we are in Him (John 17:20-21; II Peter 1:14 by implication).

The Benefits of Being In Christ

All the curses are in Adam. The consequences of being in Adam are sin, sickness, suffering, ultimate death, both physically and spiritually, but all the blessings of God's Word result from being in Christ.

That the communication of thy faith may become effectual by the acknowledging of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus (Philemon 6).

- Liberty - Galatians 2:4

- Comfort - Phillipians 2: 1
- Grace and peace - Ephesians 6:1-2
- Forgiveness - Ephesians 4:32
- The blessings of Abraham - Galatians 3:14
- Life - I Corinthians 15:22
- Fellowship with one another because we are all in Christ together - Romans 12:5
- New creations in Christ - II Corinthians 5:17
- We are saints (consecrated, set apart unto God to Himself) - I Corinthians 1:2
- Sanctified - I Corinthians 1:2
- Completed - Colossians 2:10

The Scope of Being In Christ

Being in Christ is not to be limited to an individual, but the phrase has also a corporate sense.

For as we have many members in one body; and all members have not the same office: So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and everyone members one of another (Romans 12:4-5).

We are in Christ and are members one of another. This statement goes beyond the individual believer's personal relationship to Christ and expresses our unity with one another in Christ. The Church, the body of Christ, is also said to be in Christ. We are in Christ as individuals, but we are in Christ with one another together. We are each somebody else's eye, arm, foot, etc., in our function in the body.

The fact that the Church is in Christ is stated in Romans 12 and I Corinthians 12. But the term itself is used in the epistles. "... unto the churches of Judaea which were in Christ" (Galatians 1:22). "... unto the church of the Thessalonians which is in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ..." (I Thessalonians 1:1). "For ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God which in

Judrea are in Christ Jesus..." (I Thessalonians 2:14). "...to all the saints in Christ Jesus..." (Phillippians 1:1).

We must understand the corporate nature of the phrase "in Christ" to understand the unity in Christ. While it is true spiritually that we are all in Christ together, the New Testament exhorts us to realize that in the natural or visible realm this is the local assembly. God never intended that any man should be a Christian all by himself. He is a Christian and a member of Christ's body, the Christian community in its local expression, at the same time.

By analogy, if a finger or hand is hurt the entire body feels it. When one member suffers, the whole body suffers with it. That is the meaning of compassion: to suffer with. Jesus had compassion on the multitudes. He suffered with them. He groaned in the spirit when He came to Lazarus' tomb.

On the other hand, when one member of the body is blessed, then the whole body rejoices.

The corporate idea is also expressed in our relationship to the Father. We are called the sons of God: "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Romans 8:14). We are called the children of God: "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the children (sons in KJV) of God" (John 1:12). We are called brothers and sisters. These terms express family relationship, the family of God.

The Distinctions and Differences In Christ

Distinctions In Growth

Both the mature and immature are said to be in Christ

Some Christians are simply more mature than others. They are more mature in the Word. Either they have disciplined themselves, or they have been longer in Christ, and therefore have been longer in the Word. They are more mature in faith and spiritually. But regardless of their growth, both the mature and the

immature are said to be in Christ so there is no difference in their positions: they both are in Christ.

The New Testament speaks of those who are babes in Christ (Hebrews 5:13); carnal Christians in Christ (I Corinthians 3: 1, 3). Rufus is said to be chosen in the Lord (Romans 16:13). This does not speak of chosen in the sense of election, but of him as a choice brother. Apelles was approved in Christ (Romans 16:10). He had approved himself by His service and faithfulness.

Distinctions In Function

While we have a choice with respect to the status of our growth, we have no choice about our function (I Corinthians 12; Romans 12; Ephesians 4:7-16). These passages speak of differences in Christ in the gifts, in the operation of gifts, and in the administration of ministries.

There is also a difference in the body of Christ between the operation of gifts and the ministry of gifts. One may have the gift of prophecy and not be a prophet.

These are functional differences, but in all cases there is no difference in position in Christ, but only in function or maturity.

The Rite of Circumcision

Although there were a lot of things carried over into Christendom from the Old Testament, circumcision was not one of them.

Circumcision was a religious rite as well as a racial distinction. It was the sign of being in the Lord's covenant. It separated them from the Gentile races, but as a religious distinction, it had to pass away in Christ. "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love" (Galatians 5:6). Romans 4 shows that the religious distinction no longer prevails in Christ.

Responsibilities of Being In Christ

There are certain responsibilities carried over from the Old Testament that are not to be dispensed with because a person is in Christ.

Family Responsibilities

Being in Christ does not change the roles of husbands, wives, or the children. These remain the same whether a person remains in Adam or is in Christ.

Children are admonished in the New Testament to obey their parents in the Lord (Ephesians 6:1; Colossians 3:20). Wives are to be in submission to their husbands because it is proper in the Lord (Colossians 3:18; Ephesians 5:22).

However, with regards to the husband, there is a change. It is a change in stress. There is a stress in the New Testament that if he is in Christ, the husband is to love His wife (Ephesians 5:25). He is to honour her as the weaker vessel, treat her as a joint-heir with him in Christ (I Peter 3:7), and not consider her as a mere addition or extension of His own personality. The wife is to submit to the husband because she came from Adam. But now they both need each other because the man comes from the woman (I Corinthians 11).

Nor, being in Christ, does the gender make any difference in our approach to the Lord or our relationship to the Lord (Galatians 3:28).

Concerning Marriage

A Christian can't just marry anyone he wants in Christ. Marriage brings another into that relationship that he sustains to Him. There is no way for that person, if he is unregenerate, to be in Christ until he is converted. "Be ye not unequally yoked with unbelievers; for what fellowship hath righteousness with unright-

eousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?" (II Corinthians 6:14).

Oneness In Mind

Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment (I Corinthians 1:10).

The New Testament requires discipline of those who are not like-minded, those who don't walk according to the doctrine that Paul taught. Those that criticize the disciplinary actions of the church have the same spirit as those who are being disciplined. God will not put up with a rebellious critical spirit. If we are in Christ, we are to be of one mind in the Lord (Philippians 4; Philippians 2: I Corinthians 1:9-10). We are to have a heart to be in agreement with one another. Whatever the Bible teaches on, we must all be of one mind.

The Nature of Our Union In Christ

It is a Vital Union

Life is imparted to the believer as a result of His union in Christ. "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (I Corinthians 15:22). The branch, being in the vine, gets its sustaining life from the vine (John 15: 1-6).

It is a Spiritual Union

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creation" (II Corinthians 5:17). It isn't the body that is recreated when we are born again. That will come at the resurrection. Obviously this refers to the spirit. "Old things are passed away; behold all things are become new." We have become new spiritual persons.

This union is so inseparably related to Christ that our bodies are His (I Corinthians 6:15-20). "But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit" (verse 17). That is why we cannot join our bodies, which are His, with a harlot. Sin in the body affects our spiritual relationship with Jesus. The believer is inseparably related to Christ: body, mind, soul, and spirit.

It is an Eternal Union

This is an inseparable eternal union because even if we die and our bodies are in the grave, we are still in Christ. "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him...and the dead in Christ shall rise first" (I Thessalonians 4: 14, 16). This is a closer union than the body and soul, and that is so close that if they are separated, it is called death. But even though the believer dies and His body is put in the grave, he is still in Christ and is never separated from Him. He is so much in Christ that when He returns, the dead will rise first. This is the hope of the Gospel (I Thessalonians 4; I Corinthians 2).

It is a Corporate Union

Not only is the individual said to be in Christ but he is in Christ with the other members of the body of Christ (John 17:21-23; Romans 12:5).

It is a Perceptible Union

It is an union that will be seen by others who live and work with us. It will be seen in many ways. It is through our commitment to discipleship that others will see this union.

In the ties of discipleship.

In Matthew 10, Luke 9, and Luke 14, Jesus stresses the strong ties that have to exist between those in Him, His disciples, and Himself. They will be stronger than the bonds of marriage and family. When people see this union, their enemies will be those of our own households. We won't go bury our fathers, but go

preach the Gospel. We won't go home first to say goodbye. We will hate our mother, father, brothers, sisters and our friends.

In the disciples' love for one another

"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:35). Those who say they are in Christ and don't love one another are liars (I John 4: 20).

In our lives

We are the salt of the earth, the light of the world. If we don't hide our lights, we cannot help but be seen (Matthew 5:13-16). "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (verse 16). "That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world" (Philippians 2:15).

By our status as His representatives

When people despise us, or reject us, it is Him that they are coming against. "He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me" (Luke 10:16) . "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God" (II Corinthians 5:20).

In our suffering for Him.

It is given unto us to suffer for His sake (Philippians 1:29). "...if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together" (Romans 8:17). We are called to suffer wrongfully because Christ suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow His steps (I Peter 2:19 ff). What we suffer now is what Christ would suffer if He was still on earth.

It will finally be seen in the Day of Judgment.

Jesus Himself will separate those who are in Adam from those who are in Christ. "...and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth His sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left" (Matthew 5:25:31 ff).

"Being in Christ" is Synonymous With "Christian"

"Salute them that be of the household of Narcissus, which are in the Lord" (Romans 16:11). This is the same as saying "salute those that are Christians in the household of Narcissus."

...Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, shall make known to you all things (Ephesians 6:21).

In Adam

"For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (I Corinthians 15:22). All are in Adam, so all men die. All who are in Christ are made alive.

The Parallel of Being in Adam and In Christ

This parallel is set forth in I Corinthians 15:45-49 and in Romans 5:12-19.

And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual.

The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly.

As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly (Corinthians 15:45-49).

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 (Romans 5:12).

Though sin was in this world from the time of Adam until the giving of the law, sin was not imputed to them. "Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses." They could not be charged with violating the law as long as there was no law to violate. Then why did they die? Because they were sinners.

As death came to many through one man, then many through faith in Christ have life (verse 15). By one man's offence death reigned by just one sin. That isn't like the gift of life in that many sins are forgiven which result in life. One sin brought death, but life and forgiveness is of many sins (verses 16-17). "For as by one man's disobedience many were made (constituted as) sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made (accounted as) righteous" (verse 19). It is not that Adam's sin made us sinners, but with a sinful nature. Because of His transgression, God counted all men unrighteous. By faith in Christ, then He will count all who believe as righteous.

The Consequence of Adam's Sin (Romans 5:12)

Romans 5:12 contains the key to why all men die. It is either because they are in Adam, or it is because they have sinned.

The Reformed View (Original Sin)

The reformers said that because of the solidarity of the human race Adam's sin and death became our sin and death; the sin and death of the human race, since the entire race is one with Adam. This is called the doctrine of original sin. Adam's original sin was our sin. We sinned because we were in him.

The Armenian View (Personal Sin)

The Armenian view holds that man doesn't inherit a sinful nature from Adam, but a tendency to sin. They say that grammatically this verse can be translated "all die because all men have personally sinned." The reformers reply that "for as by one man's disobedience many were made (constituted as) sinners" (verse 19).

Reply:

Certainly, as the Armenians say, all men have sinned (Romans 3:23). But to say that is why they die overlooks why infants die who do not personally, consciously, sin. Some who are whole personalities die while they are still in the womb. There can be no explanation except that it is because they are in Adam and death reigns in Adam.

Death reigned from the time of Adam's fall until this present hour. That death, because of Adam's sin, passed to all of us. Inasmuch as the Scriptures say that all have sinned; "there is none righteous, no not one" (Romans 3:10); in Adam all die; then they all end up in the same place in spite of the Armenian view, that is, in the grave.

Man dies, not simply because he chooses to sin, but he dies because he is in Adam. He dies because he has a sinful, alienated nature from the moment he is birthed into this world, from the moment of conception, because Adam could not produce anything that God would accept, anything better than himself. God gave procreative powers to man and man produces the whole personality. Therefore, when Adam produced a child, he transmitted a person that was alienated from the womb. "The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they are born, speaking lies" (Psalm 58:3). Man inherits a sinful nature from His first parents.

The Federal Theology View

Augustine, and the reformers after him, formulated the doctrine of Federal Theology. Federal Theology means that Adam is the federal head of the race. He represented us. God entered into a relationship with Adam stating which tree he could not eat of. When He entered into this relationship with Adam, He entered into it with the whole human race. When he sinned, God said "you die." He doesn't have to speak that to each of us because none of us can enter into that relationship with Him.

Federal Theology has as its central aspect the doctrine of original sin, but what they really mean by original sin is that we sinned in Adam. When he sinned, we sinned. The race sinned when he sinned because we were all in him, and that is why we all die.

Reply:

The stress should be placed on man being a sinner by nature, and that is why he chooses to sin. The race didn't sin when Adam sinned, but the race being in Adam suffers the consequences of sin which is death. In Adam all die. Man dies because he is a sinner, but he sins because he is in Adam. He has inherited His nature.

The Scriptural View

A Christian is not righteous because he performs righteous works. He is counted as righteous because he is in Christ. Likewise, a sinner is not just a sinner because he does sinful deeds. He is a sinner because he is in Adam. Men are by nature the children of wrath (Ephesians 2:3).

Adam is the head of the human race. As the head of the human race, in a real sense he acted as our representative because we were in His loins. Therefore the consequence of His sin, the original sin, is charged against the whole human race. God dealt with the race in Adam. "By one man sin entered into the world,

and death by sin." As a result death has passed upon all men. In this sense, the original sin view is the Scriptural viewpoint.

The Scriptures do show that Adam is our representative head because when God spoke to him He spoke to all of us. For instance, when He told Adam to be fruitful and multiply (Genesis 1:28), He was telling that to all of us, or the human race would not have survived.

The Theological Problem of the Entrance of Sin into God's Good World

The Nature of the Problem

Either God wanted to prevent evil from entering the world and lacked the omnipotent power to prevent it; or He could have prevented it, but for His own good reasons did not do so.

Since the Scriptures show that God is sovereign and infinite in power and goodness, then He must have had an ultimate good purpose for letting sin enter His world, invade His universe, and allowing it to continue down to the present hour.

The view that God could not prevent evil in His universe does not harmonize with His sovereignty, His omnipotence, and with His absolute goodness. "O Lord God of our fathers, art not thou God in heaven? and rulest not thou over all the kingdoms of the heaven? and in thine hand is there not power and might, so that none is able to withstand thee?" (II Chronicles 20:6). "...and none can stay His hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?" (Daniel 4:35). "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" (Ephesians 1: 11) .

Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth (Romans 9: 19).

No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day (John 6:44).

The Nature of Evil in the Universe

Basically there are two types of evil: natural and moral. Natural evils are things such as destructive earthquakes, fires, floods, blizzards, economic depression, drought, sickness, and death.

Moral evils are things brought about, not by natural or economic forces, but by man himself: murders, wars, crime, fornication, lying, deceit, skepticism, atheism, cultism, etc.

The Nature of the Solution

Views

Evil is really an illusion (Christian Science).

Sin, pain, death, and evil itself are held to have no reality. They are illusions of the mind. What constitutes sin is believing in sin; believing in evil; believing in death, pain or sickness.

Reply:

The problem with that is that the illusion of pain is just as real to the sufferer as the pain. Christian Science did not eliminate the problem, but changed terminology. If evil is an illusion, then Christian Science has admitted the presence and reality of evil, the illusion itself.

God is finite (Dualism)

This view holds that we have to give up either the absolute sovereignty of God or His absolute goodness. We can't hold to both because if He is absolutely sovereign He wouldn't allow evil.

But they contend that He is absolutely good. Therefore He must not be able to overcome evil.

Dualism holds that both good and evil are eternal realities which are in a cosmic eternal struggle which can never be ultimately reconciled. Good and evil have always been at odds.

Reply:

The doctrine of a finite God could not assure us of ultimate deliverance because He just may at the end lack the power to deliver us from evil.

Revelations 20 shows that He does have power over the devil, the source of evil, and He will bind him one day preparatory to fulfilling Revelation 21 and 22. "And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever" (verse 10). Jesus is now reigning over this universe "till he hath put all enemies under His feet" (I Corinthians 15:24 ff). God will put down all evil.

The Scriptural view

God permitted the entrance of evil in the universe to fulfill His sovereign purposes. This means, of course, that God was not taken by surprise when His anointed cherub rebelled and carried away many angels with him. He was not taken by surprise when Adam transgressed and plunged the whole world into ruin and chaos.

Does this make God the author of sin as some foolishly charge? No, it makes God the author of the author of sin, Satan. God created Satan, and sin was found in him after he was created.

Scriptural Reasons

God will ultimately be glorified.

God will ultimately be glorified by overcoming evil. If there wasn't any to overcome, He would get no glory for overcoming it. But He will be glorified when He overcomes it and eradicates it from His universe at the culmination of history.

God is not responsible for the evil.

Although God allowed evil to enter His universe, Satan and man are responsible for the evil, not God. In the end God will bring Satan and all men into account and judge them. He will purge evil out of His universe by judgment.

The grace of God is fully appreciated only through man's deliverance.

It is only through man's deliverance from eternal punishment and death that the grace of God is fully appreciated. God's grace could not be magnified without evil being present.

And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins...that in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus (Ephesians 2:1, 7).

According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world...having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace... (Ephesians 1:4-6).

Through man's deliverance God's grace will be for all eternity fully appreciated.

The evil intentions of sinful men magnify the goodness of God by contrast (Romans 9).

God raised up Pharaoh for the very purpose of putting him down. God didn't make him evil, but He hardened His heart so that His mercy and goodness toward Israel would be magnified.

When Joseph's brethren sold him into Egypt because of jealousy (Genesis 50:19-20), they were charged with the evil intent, but God meant it for good.

Temptations to do evil help prove Christian character.

The temptations to evil help prove our Christian character and develop our character in a manner that nothing else could. "...we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God" (Acts 14: 22). "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him" (James 1:12).

Within the context of this study we can say that without the evil, without the temptations, without the allurements of sin, there could be no stimulation for us to do what is right and to overcome. An overcomer has to have something to overcome. God has made seven promises to overcomers in Revelations 2 and 3.

Moral struggle unites the believer with God's warfare against evil.

We are warring against evil with God. He has called us to be in His army. He is warring with the kingdom of darkness. When we resist temptation and choose a holy thought instead of an evil one, when we overcome, we are engaged in warfare against evil side-by-side with the holy God in His war against evil. It is not so much that He needs our help, but He has ordained that we war with Him.

Satan, who defeated man, is going to be defeated by man. He was defeated by the man Jesus Christ at Calvary, and he is defeated every time we overcome some temptation to sin.

God has decreed that the believer work with Him in overcoming evil. That is the significance of Mark 16:17-18: "And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover."

The Nature of Man in the New Testament

The Psychological View

The psychological view simply means man from the standpoint of His nature.

Dichotomy

The dichotomous view is that man consists of body and soul.

Trichotomy

The trichotomous view is that man consists of body, soul, and spirit. This is the Scriptural view. "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Thessalonians 5:23). Since the three elements appear in the one verse, obviously they can't be the same.

The Whole Man

This is a recent view that man is to be viewed as a whole; that he is not to be thought of as three parts, but body, soul, and spirit are simply different ways of looking at man as a whole.

To be sure, the Scriptures do not divide man up into three parts, but man consists of body, soul, and spirit. But the three can't be confused as this view does. This view is an over simplification because body, soul, and spirit are actually three different aspects

of man. They are entities in themselves. But it takes the whole to make man. "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into His nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul" (Genesis 2:7). Man doesn't have the soul, he is the soul. The same word translated "soul" is often translated "person" in both the Old and the New Testament.

Man is not mere flesh, as the naturalists teach, whose existence ceases with death. But neither is the spirit as some teach, living in a body with a soul. Man is a soul who has a spirit from God. The body plus spirit equals the soul, or the person.

"Soul" is used this way in Romans 13:1: "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers."

Terms

Greek: *psuche*

Hebrew: *nepesh*

The Ethical View

Introduction

"Flesh" and "spirit" are used not only in a literal sense, but again and again they are used in a moral and ethical sense. "For I know that in me (that is in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing" (Romans 7: 18). Paul was not speaking of the cells of the body, but of the fleshly appetites, our worldly carnal appetites. Our bodies can be used as instruments of sin as well as righteousness.

The flesh stands for the man himself as a sinner. In this context we know it is not referring to the body of flesh, but flesh is being used in the ethical sense. The flesh wars against the spirit (Galatians 5). Paul did not mean the body of flesh, but in a moral and ethical sense, the appetites and attitudes.

The flesh is personified in the New Testament as the old man. He is flesh in contrast to the new man that is spirit. But we are not spirits, we are spiritual. Though the flesh tries to control the spirit, the spirit is to rule over the flesh.

The flesh is personified as a power that is warring with the spirit almost as an entity. The flesh depicts man as finite, mortal, creaturely; not infinite like God who is spirit, not with life like God. "For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away" (1 Peter 1:24). "But the word of the Lord endureth for ever" (verse 25). Here is the contrast in the ethical and moral sense of flesh with the Word of God that is spirit. This doesn't mean the printed word, but what will happen when we believe, or don't believe, that Word. "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life" (John 6:63).

Biblical Usage of the Term Flesh

Terms

sarki - flesh

soma - body

The Body of Flesh

The term flesh became something that is ethical and moral for Paul. To understand His use of the term, as well as the whole New Testament's, we have to understand the concept of *soma* because there is much use of the phrase "body of flesh" and the term body in a moral and ethical sense as well as their literal usage.

Literal usage

The term *soma*, like *basar* in the Old Testament, speaks of man's physical nature, made out of dust which returns to dust.

Usage in the ethical sense

Equated with the person

The *soma* is used in the ethical sense in that it is equated with the person himself. "present your bodies a living sacrifice..." (Romans 12:1). We are being called to surrender ourselves totally to God. ". . .and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing" (I Corinthians 13:3). What would it profit to give ourselves, our very lives, is what Paul is asking.

The somatic existence

The importance of the body in New Testament thought can't be over emphasized because the emphasis in the New Testament is on what is called in theology *somatic existence*. That is, existence in a body both now and in the future. Those who have died are very incomplete and are awaiting the resurrection to get a new body.

While Paul's stress is on the crucifixion of the flesh, yet he is the same one that teaches that resurrection is what we are hoping for and looking forward to.

Our bodies are precious to God

The bodies we have now are precious to God:

What? 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 (I Corinthians 6:19-20).

What does God want with the corrupt body? When God redeemed us at Calvary, He redeemed the whole man including

the body (Isaiah 53). The healing of the body is in the atonement because God is not glorified in sickness anymore than in sin.

Out of the very body that is planted at death will come the new body. "So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power; It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body" (I Corinthians 15:42-44).

"For no man ever yet hated His own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church" (Ephesians 5:29). Though we are told to hate our life in this world, hate the lusts of the flesh, wrong appetites of the flesh, Paul is making a true point here. There is nothing wrong with our bodies if we use it for God's glory, and believe for healing and health. The Holy Spirit has come out of the temple of Israel and now dwells in the temple of our bodies.

Bodily resurrection is the Gospel

The importance of the body in the New Testament is that it is a somatic existence that we experience now and forever. There is only a temporary interruption for the saints who die. They will get their bodies back, except that they will be better bodies.

Bodily resurrection is the Gospel (I Corinthians 15). Without the resurrection there would be no Gospel preached because there would be no hope. With respect to resurrection, that is our future hope. Our future glorified existence is going to be a somatic existence.

And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body (Romans 8:23).

For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the saviour, the Lord Jesus

Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself (Phillippians 3:20-21).

The body can be an instrument of sin

Although the body is important with respect to man's existence, nevertheless the body of flesh is corruptible, finite, and mortal. Therefore it can become an instrument of sin and unrighteousness. The body is subject to those things that would bring us to ruin. In this sense Paul speaks of the body as a body of death.

O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of tHis death (Romans 7:24).

The members of the body can be used as instruments of sin and unrighteousness. The tongue can be used for criticism, gossip, lies, half-truths, error, deception. The hands can be used to steal; to manufacture instruments of death; to dishonour God; to serve drinks in a bar. Feet can be swift to destruction.

The body of sin that Paul speaks of is not the physical body, but the uses it is put to. So it is amoral and ethical use when he speaks of the body of death or the body of sin.

Biblical use of the term flesh

Non-ethical usage

Flesh is equated with the body

"Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body... that the life of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh" (II Corinthians 4: 10-11). "What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh" (I Corinthians 6:16). "But God giveth it a body as it hath

pleased him, and to every seed His own body. All flesh is not the same flesh..." (I Corinthians 15:38-39).

Flesh refers to one's physical relationship to His ancestors

"For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh" (Romans 9:3). Paul speaks of Jesus' humanity, His origin according to flesh, being from David: "Concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh" (Romans 1:3). He speaks of Israel after the flesh when referring to the nation of Israel (I Corinthians 10:18).

Usage that can be either non-ethical or ethical in its meaning

Flesh is sometimes used in a way that could be either non-ethical or moral and ethical in its meaning or intention.

Flesh is used of human ability or station. When Paul gave reference at much length to His Jewish ancestry, he said that he had no confidence in the flesh, His station in life as a Pharisee (Philippians 3:3 ff). Though the moral and ethical implications are clear in this passage, yet he is referring to His literal Jewish relationship to the nation. So this usage of the term can be called either ethical or non-ethical.

When the Judaizers came in teaching that faith in Christ had to include circumcision in the flesh and keeping of the law (Galatians 6:12-14), Paul said of them that they were trying to make a show in the flesh. What he is referring to is their pride in the rite of circumcision. They were taking pride in the fact that Jews were circumcised. Again this use could be either ethical or non-ethical in its intent.

Ethical usage

Old Testament background

Generally in the Old Testament flesh means the physical body, but sometimes it is used morally and ethically so Paul had a basis for doing the same thing.

Term: basar

Basar becomes a synonym for man in contrast to God who is Spirit. "In God I will praise His word, in God I have put my trust; I will not fear what flesh can do unto me" (Psalm 56:4). "Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh His arm... Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is" (Jeremiah 17:5, 7).

Flesh describes man as weak, mortal, frail, and finite just as in the New Testament. Flesh is what describes man as other than God: weak, mortal, creaturely. "All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field...surely the people is grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever" (Isaiah 40:6-8). "But he, being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity, and destroyed them not...For he remembered that they were but flesh; a wind that passeth away, and cometh not again" (Psalm 78:38-39).

Flesh describes man's inner nature as corrupt, sinful, and unregenerate in the Old Testament. "My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh...the earth was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence...for all flesh had corrupted the earth. This is not referring to physical bodies, but people, and they are called flesh.

Flesh in the Old Testament contrasts man or beast with God who is spirit. Flesh is what shows that God is other than what man or anything He created is. "Now the Egyptians are men, and not God; and their horses flesh, and not spirit" (Isaiah 31:3).

Walking In the Spirit and Walking In the Flesh

The Doctrine of Two Natures

There is a dualism in Paul's writings between flesh and spirit. Again and again this dualism comes through His theology. In order to understand what it means to walk in the spirit, or conversely, to walk in the flesh, we have to see what Paul means by the flesh and the spirit.

What Paul did not mean was what is called the doctrine of two natures. Refer to *Deeper Life In The Spirit*, pp 88 through 99; tapes 717 and 718 from *Studies in Romans*.

The doctrine of two natures briefly summarized:

When a person is born again he receives a new nature, but he keeps the old sinful nature so he has two natures. When he misses it or sins, he can blame it on the old sinful nature of Adam. It is an error that encourages people to go on sinning.

But man has one nature which is either regenerate or unregenerate. "Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of the flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others" (Ephesians 2:3). By nature we were, past tense, sinners. Conversely, we are not now by nature sinners, but saints. Our natures are renewed, regenerated. The two-natures doctrine finds no support in the Bible. It is an invention of the theologians to explain why so many Christians live such miserable, weak, carnal, defeated lives.

This erroneous doctrine gives the Christian a basis to excuse His sins and mistakes. He just blames it on His old nature. Secondly, the average Christian resigns himself to living just a mediocre spiritual life. He resigns himself to half-hearted consecration, believing that the perfection that Jesus demands in Matthew 5:48 and that Peter records in I Peter 1:16 can't really mean perfection. The two-natures doctrine encourages defeat and sin.

From an advertisement for a book: "It is a fact that sin is a part of the Christian's daily life. Why? Because we have two natures. God uses our sins for good. Why would God have us keep the

old nature once we are saved? Because it is the only way that Christian growth is possible. If He removed the old nature when we were saved, there'd be no struggle to live godly, and it's the struggle and stress that makes the soul grow in the likeness of Christ. Often we learn our best lessons through sins and failures. Obviously some men are going to yield to the old nature more than others.

"But doesn't God hate sin? Absolutely, but He loves the sinner. Remember that God has set things up so that it is all but guaranteed that His children will sin. We are guaranteed sinners, as well as saints. But He has also provided, even though we sin, that sin cannot keep us out of heaven. But nothing can keep you out of heaven, even if you sin, as long as you believe on Jesus of course. How cruel it would be of God to let us keep the old sinful nature, which guarantees you will sin, and then disqualify us when we happen to sin. God hates sin, but He knows that it is a necessary part of growing in the likeness of Christ."

There is absolutely no basis for this doctrine anywhere in the Bible. The Scriptures teach that man in His unregenerate condition doesn't merely have a sinful nature, but that the *man himself is sinful*. His nature is not some abstract thing or something that is an entity in itself that can be lifted out of him. But His nature is the person himself, either regenerate or unregenerate. When Paul said that we were by nature sinners, he was simply saying we were sinners. That was our whole life, physically, mentally, and spiritually. In every way we were subject to the wrath of God because we gave ourselves to the lusts of this world and the flesh.

Man has one nature: human. Man has one nature which is fallen, sinful, corrupt, and unregenerate, which at conversion becomes regenerate and cleansed. If a Christian has two natures, what happens to the old sinful nature at death? Does the old nature go to hell and punishment and the new nature go to heaven? The Bible shows, on the contrary, that it is man himself who is changed when he is born again. "Therefore if any man be in

Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new" (II Corinthians 5:17).

Paul makes flesh and spirit to be synonyms for the old and the new man which are figures of speech. The duality of Paul is not of two natures, but of flesh and spirit.

Paul's Use of Flesh

The Unregenerate State of Man

For Paul, flesh again and again signifies the unregenerate state of man. To say that one is walking in the flesh is saying that he is either an unregenerate or a Christian living like one.

"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Romans 8:1, 4). "For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh..." (verse 5). "So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God" (verse 8). "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit..." (verse 9). "For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die..." (verse 13). Paul lists the works of the flesh which are seen in the unregenerate man in Galatians 5:19-21. Compare these with what Peter says in II Peter 2:9-10.

Religious Works Based upon Human Efforts

Flesh speaks of religious works based on human efforts or upon man's teachings in contrast to works of faith and the ministry of the Holy Spirit through us (Galatians 3:1-3). Paul wrote this epistle to the Galatians to warn them and rebuke them against faith plus works teachings. The Judaizers had come in teaching them that they had to keep the law. These were professing Christians who were Jews who followed Paul saying that they had to have faith in Christ, but also had to keep the works of the law and be circumcised (6:12-13).

The Judaizers wanted the Gentiles converted to Judaism. It ministered to their pride in being Jews to have the Gentiles circumcised and start keeping the law as well as believing in Christ.

The Physical Body with Its Appetites and Desires

Flesh signifies the physical body with its appetites and desires which, although God-given, can become an instrument for sin unless ruled over by the spirit of the Christian. These appetites and desires can become lusts. "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God" (Romans 6:12-13).

Religious Error

Flesh, for Paul, speaks of religious error. A person who has error is described as a person with a fleshly mind (Colossians 2:18). Literally in the Greek it is a "mind of flesh."

Human Ability, Intellectualism, Status in Life

Paul equates flesh with that which causes pride. Confidence in the flesh for Paul had reference to His Jewish ancestry, His religious offices, His achievements, His zeal for the law: things that gendered pride (Philippians 3:3 ff).

The Judaizers wanted to make a show in the flesh (Galatians 6:12-14). This speaks of their Jewish pride which was gendered by their getting Gentiles to be circumcised, by making them Jewish Christians.

"For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called" (1 Corinthians 1:26). This speaks of the pride that goes with intellectualism. God calls the base, the foolish, to bring to nought the things that seem to be something so "that no flesh should glory

in His presence" (verse 29). The flesh won't glory, but that intellectual mind that is wise after the flesh will.

Contrasts the Methods of the Human Realm with the Methods of the Spiritual

Flesh is used to contrast the methods of the human realm with the methods of the spiritual realm. There were some in Corinth that said that Paul was nothing, that even His speech was contemptible. They acted like he, like they, walked in the flesh (I Corinthians 10: 1-5). "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh" (verse 3). Although we live in the world nevertheless we don't use the principles of the world, the methods of the world, or the resources of the world in our warfare against the powers of darkness. We use spiritual weapons that are "mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds."

The New Testament Meaning

One's Life is a Walk

The Bible speaks of one's life as a walk. It is a figure of speech. Enoch walked with God (Genesis 5:21-24). His righteous life is described as a walk. To walk in the Spirit is to walk with God.

In a negative context, the Pharisees challenged Jesus regarding His disciples: "Why walk not the disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashed hands?" (Mark 7:5). Here the way one lives religiously, His practice, His religious life, is described as a walk.

Walking in the Flesh is Yielding Control to the Spirit of This World

To walk in the flesh means to yield one's mind and life to the influence and control of the spirit of this world.

In most of his writings, the use of "flesh" that Paul stresses is where it signifies the physical body with its appetites and desires

which can become an instrument of sin unless it is controlled. According to Paul, in regard to a believer, it is not an old sinful nature, but it is the flesh which is something that remains with the Christian after His conversion. Where there was no conflict, the Christian experiences a warfare between flesh and spirit. Where before we more or less allowed the appetites, the desires, and lusts to go unchecked in our unregenerate state, now we discover the flesh is still there. But we don't want to do what the flesh wants to do. The flesh wants to be ministered to the way we used to. But the spiritual man will not give in to the flesh.

Unlike Greek philosophy, this is not to say that there is something wrong with our bodies. On the contrary, the Christian can glorify God in His body of flesh (I Corinthians 6:19-20). "For no man ever yet hated His own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church" (Ephesians 5:29). The body is the temple of the Holy Spirit (I Corinthians 6:19). God Himself dwells in the Christian. There is nothing wrong with the body when it is properly used. The body is said to be a part of Christ Himself and therefore must be kept clean and pure (I Corinthians 6:15 ff).

God thinks so much of the body that He redeemed it. He bought both the spirit and the body. They belong to Him. He thinks so much of the body that He is going to give us resurrection bodies when Jesus comes (I Corinthians 15). The new body comes from the old one that is planted.

For Paul, just like Christ, sin does not reside in the flesh or the body, and not in the God-given appetites and desires. Abnormal denial of these normal appetites that God gives us is powerless to promote holiness or spirituality (Colossians 2). Flesh is not inherently evil. It is the use it is put to: the flesh belongs to God. "For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (I Corinthians 6:20). Our bodies can be offered as holy sacrifices (Romans 12:1).

God gave us appetites for food and drink. There is nothing wrong in fulfilling these. We have to in order to maintain health,

strength, and life itself. The relationship between man and woman is normal in marriage, but it can be misused just as the desire for food and drink. The flesh and the physical body is God's and is holy to Him, but it can be an instrument used for sin and therefore can become unholy. Sin is in the heart and not in the flesh.

The flesh for Paul becomes a synonym for unregenerate man or a figure for unchristian behaviour in the life of a Christian.

In the unregenerate man the flesh principle rules His life. This principle motivates, directs, influences his every thought and action. Unregenerate man is a slave to His appetites and desires, and he willingly fills that role of a slave because he willingly yields His mind and His whole central nervous system to the spirit of this age, the spirit of this world. Every feeling is indulged in, either in the mind, in fantasy, or literally. He can't control His mind and central nervous system because he is flesh and flesh demands to be satisfied.

Walking in the Spirit is Yielding Control to the Holy Spirit

To walk in the Spirit is to yield one's life to the Holy Spirit and to live under His influence and direction as well as to obey the promptings and leadings of his own renewed, regenerated spirit .

The life of the Christian is guided by the Spirit principle. When the Christian has an appetite or desire, if it is normal and needs to be satisfied, he satisfies them, but he cuts off even the normal appetites at the right point. When a temptation arises that he would have given in to in his unregenerate state, he controls his flesh and rebukes the flesh. The Christian possesses a body that belongs to God, and a mind that is being transformed and renewed (Romans 12:1-2). "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof" (Romans 6:12).

The Christian still has a body of flesh that has appetites and desires. Therefore it is subject to misuse. It is subject to temptations, to the allurements and attractions of this world. But being

ruled by the Spirit principle, all the God-given appetites are kept under control, and all those that are not God-given are never indulged in. Because the Christian keeps his body in subjection to His new spirit, then it can be said of him that he walks in the Spirit. He walks spiritually. He lives a holy, righteous life. That is the way he walks daily.

REDEMPTION IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Redemption and the *Kosmos*

Terms

Greek: *kosmos*

Hebrew: *erets*

olam

cheled

New Testament Usage

The Literal Physical Earth

"For we brought nothing into this world..." (I Timothy 6:7). "Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world..." (I Corinthians 3:22). "For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world..." (Romans 4: 13)." ...among whom ye shine as lights in the world" (Phillippians 2:15) . "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen..." (Romans 1:20).

Signifies the Whole Created Universe

"According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world (universe)." (Ephesians 1:4). When the Scriptures speak of the foundation of the world, this small speck of sand in this almost infinite universe is not what the writers had in mind. They are speaking of the creation of the universe.

Signifies the Inhabitants of this Earth

Kosmos is a synonym for mankind. "Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world (human-

ity) may be guilty before God" (Romans 3: 19 cf verse 6). "To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself..." (II Corinthians 5: 19). "Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? behold, the world is gone after him" (John 12:19).

"For God so loved the world, that he gave His only begotten Son..." (John 3: 16). The world is equated with people who can believe.

Designates the Sinful World Order

Kosmos designates the sinful world order which is under the control of Satan. "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (I John 5:15). Here it is not loving the physical earth, but the things of the world. "Ye are from beneath, I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world" (John 8:23).

The whole *kosmos* is under the influence and control of Satan. "And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness" (I John 5: 19). "... by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Galatians 6:14).

Old Testament Usage

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth (*erets*)" (Genesis 1:1). *Erets* is the Hebrew equivalent of *kosmos*.

"Behold, these are the ungodly, who prosper in the world..." (Psalm 73:12). This is the term *olam* which means age, eternity, or world. "I said, I shall not see the Lord, even the Lord, in the land of the living: I shall behold man no more with the inhabitants of the world" (Isaiah 38:11). The word translated world is *cheled*.

"The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted His way upon the earth" (Genesis 6: 11-12).

The New Testament View of the Kosmos

The Biblical View is Three-Fold

Both the Old and New Testaments view the world from three aspects: the world as it was; the world as it is at present; and the world as it shall be in the future.

The World as It Was

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good (Genesis 1:1, 31).

Jesus Christ is the Creator of the world. "All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made" (John 1:3). "For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible..." (Colossians 1:16). This is not speaking about the created order in any moral or spiritual sense. All that is being set forth is the fact that the Creator is Jesus Christ.

The entire world was changed in the flood, and the world that now is, is not the world that was before the flood (II Peter 3:5-6).

The World as It Is

Both the Old and New Testaments speak of the *kosmos* in its present evil state. As it was, it was very good, but now it is very evil.

The depth of the moral decline, and not too long after the creation, is seen in Genesis 6:5-7: "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of His heart was only evil continually..." Isaiah in chapters 24 through 27 portrays how wicked the world is and predicts judgment which is yet to come. God is going to turn the world upside down (Zephaniah 1).

In Matthew 24, Jesus speaks of the evil in the end-time and what is going to happen because of it. There will be many false christs (verses 5 and 24); there will be wars and rumors of wars (verses 6-7); famines, pestilences, and earthquakes (verse 7); persecution of His disciples (verse 9); many are offended and betray others (verse 10); false prophets (verse 11); iniquity shall abound and the love of many become cold (verse 12); false prophets with signs and wonders that deceive many (verse 24); eating and drinking and giving in marriage (verse 38).

Paul speaks of the evil world and God's judgment that is coming:

And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not our God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power (II Thessalonians 1:7-9).

Jude speaks of it in his epistle, and John in most of the book of Revelation.

The World as It Will Be

Both the Old and New Testaments speak of a future glorious age to come, the Millennium. And then after that age ends, a new heaven and a new earth which will be the third heaven and earth.

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 (II Peter 3:7).

But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt

with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up (II Peter 3:10).

Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness (II Peter 3:10).

God didn't create this world to be eternal. The new world will be eternal and spiritual. The new heavens and the new earth will be like the new Jerusalem, to be inhabited by spiritual beings who are in their resurrected, spiritual bodies.

But there will be an age intervening, which we call the Millennium, when God Himself will come and sit on His throne: "And the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and His name one" (Zechariah 14: 9).

God will realize all of His intended purposes through the first Adam, through the last Adam, Jesus Christ. This will be God's millennial reign through Jesus Christ and His saints with Him. This earth will be restored to pre-fall conditions. "... one like the Son of man came to the Ancient of days...and there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom...His dominion is an everlasting dominion..." (Daniel 7: 13-14). "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed..." (Daniel 2:44-45).

The Old Testament also speaks of new heavens and a new earth. "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" (Isaiah 66:22). "For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind" (Isaiah 65:17).

In the New Testament, II Peter 3: 11-13 and Revelation 20 speak of the millennial period on the earth. Revelation 2 and 3 speak of the saints reigning with Christ over the nations. There will be no seasons, no thorns, and no pestilences. "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither

sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away" (Revelation 21:4).

In the new heaven and earth, not only will there be no seasons, but there will be no night there. "And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there" (Revelation 21:25).

What the Biblical View is Not

Greek Dualism

The Biblical view of the *kosmos* is not that of Greek dualism which looks upon the created world of matter as intrinsically evil, and that the ideal world to God is the spiritual world. The soul in the body, which is made up of matter, is trying to escape this evil house that it is in, and is trying to go into the heavens.

The present world is evil and is under God's curse. Even nature suffers the curse of God because of man's sin (Romans 8). But man's flesh is not the seat or source of sin. God redeems our body of flesh. It is His. The redeemed body is holy and should be used for holy purposes. The Bible knows nothing of the flesh, the dirt, or the trees being evil in themselves, though trees die of disease and animals kill one another.

Cosmological Dualism

The *kosmos* is not the cosmological dualism seen in some of the early church extremists like the gnostics. They taught that the world and all created things are opposed to God. They are both eternal. That is, there is an eternal evil and an eternal good in an eternal struggle. So all matter, all created things are evil.

Contemporary Geological View

The contemporary geologists believe in a world which evolved out of nothing as a result of an explosion, and it is slowly evolving back into nothing again.

The Doctrine of Two Worlds

The Cosmology of the New Testament consists of the doctrine of two worlds: the world above and the world beneath. This is not to be confused with the *kosmos* viewed horizontally: the world that was before sin (Genesis 1); the world as it is in its present evil sin (Genesis 3:1); and the world as it shall be which is the new heaven and the new earth (II Peter 3).

But viewing the *kosmos* vertically, the New Testament speaks of the doctrine of two worlds: the world above and the world beneath. "Ye are from beneath; I am from above; ye are of this world; I am not of this world" (John 8:23).

Wherefore he saith, When he ascended 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) (Ephesians 4:8-10).

The New Testament View of the Two Worlds

This World is Wicked

This world is wicked, totally corrupt, and in the control of the god of this world, Satan, in contrast with the other world wherein dwells righteousness already. "...the whole world lieth in wickedness" (I John 5:19). Jesus called the devil the "prince of this world" (John 16:11). Paul called him the "god of this world" (II Corinthians 4:4).

The Wisdom of this World is Foolishness

The wisdom of this world is foolishness when compared to the divine wisdom emanating from the other world (Romans 1). "Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men" (I Corinthians 1 :25). That

which men hold in contempt (the foolishness of the Gospel) is wiser than all of man's wisdom put together (cf Colossians 2:8, 20).

Spiritual Authority is from the Other World

Jesus' authority

Jesus said concerning His authority: "My kingdom is not of this world...but now is my kingdom not from hence" (John 18:16).

The Church's authority

The authority of the Church is from above. When the religious authorities commanded Peter and John "not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus" (Acts 4:8), they answered, "whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye" (verse 19). They obeyed the religious leaders up to the point of disobeying God. They declined to disobey God, but submitted to the punishment when they couldn't escape it. "Did not we straitly command ye that ye should not teach in this name? Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than man" (Acts 5:28-29).

The believer's authority

Our authority is from above. That is why we have to know the Word. Some of those who will judge us or rebuke us know enough of the Bible to challenge us. When we are called before the authorities the Holy Spirit will give us the words to speak (Matthew 10:19-20). "...and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" (I Peter 3:15).

This World Will Be Replaced

This world will be replaced by another world wherein dwelleth righteousness, patterned after the world above (II Peter 3:13). "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more

sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven..." (Revelation 21:1-2). "For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind" (Isaiah 65:17).

This World is Not Our Permanent Home

This world is not the place of our permanent citizenship. It is not the permanent home of the believer, nor was it the permanent home of Jesus. Jesus was sent into this world on a mission. When He finished that mission, He went back to the other world (John 3:12). "For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven and giveth life unto the world" (John 6:33).

"For I came down from heaven..." (verse 38). "What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?" (verse 62). "Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God" (John 20:17).

We are pilgrims passing through this world (Hebrews 11). "But we are citizens of the republic in heaven, from which we are eagerly waiting for our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ" (Philippians 3:20 *Williams translation*).

Man's Highest Good Cannot Be Realized in this World

Man's highest good, Jesus said, cannot be realized in this present world. What would it profit a person to gain this whole world and then didn't gain access to the other world and lost himself for eternity (Mark 8:36)?

The Christian's Attitude Toward the Kosmos

But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world (Galatians 6:14).

If we are dead, then the *kosmos* has no more attraction for us. We are to seek the Kingdom of God, not the things of this world (Matthew 6:19-33). We cannot serve the God of that world and the god of this world at the same time. "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth" (Colossians 3:1-2).

The New Testament View of the *Kosmos* as an Object of God's Love and Grace

Jesus' Attitude Toward the Kosmos as Humanity

While the *kosmos* at present is under God's curse, and it is very soon going to become the object of God's judgment, nevertheless the *kosmos* as humanity is an object of His grace, love and mercy. That includes not only human beings, but the *kosmos* as creation.

For God so loved the world (the kosmos), that he gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved (John 3:16-17).

All the passages of judgment are true, and the world is under His curse; but yet God didn't send His Son into the world to fulfil that curse. He sent Him so that the *kosmos* through Him might be saved. God's first concern is not judgment to weed out the rebels, but redemption to save all who will believe.

When Jesus said He came into the world to save the *kosmos*, He didn't mean the physical world, but humanity. "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29).

But Jesus also intends to redeem the *kosmos* as the created order: nature and the physical world. God, who created this world which is presently under His curse, will one day redeem it when the sons of God are manifested (Romans 8:18-22). God didn't make the tree to die or the animals to devour one another. Prior to the flood they were herbivorous, not carnivorous.

Jesus' Attitude Toward the Kosmos as the Created Order

Jesus regarded God's creation, not as something to be despised, but as something temporarily under the control of Satan who usurped it, but God's nevertheless. "... such as was not from the beginning of creation which God created unto this time" (Mark 13:19). Jesus called His Father the Lord of heaven and earth (Luke 10:21). Paul said that Jesus Himself created the world and He controls it and holds it together (Colossians 1:16-20).

God did not discard the physical created order because Adam allowed sin into it to pollute it and corrupt it. Even nature partakes of this corruption (Romans 8). Jesus of Nazareth, the God-man, constantly drew upon the creation to illustrate His teachings: the parable of the sower (Matthew 13); the vine and the branches (John 15); the shepherd and the sheep (John 10). He said that good trees bring forth good fruit (Luke 6:43). He used the mustard seed to illustrate faith (Matthew 17:20).

Jesus taught that God not only created this world, but that He is interested enough in it to sustain it even in its present corrupt condition. He feeds the ravens and clothes the lilies and the grass of the fields (Luke 12:22 ff). Not a sparrow falls to the ground without the Father seeing it (Matthew 10:29; Luke 12: 4-7). Not a single leaf falls to the ground; not a single wave comes in; not a single grain of sand or pebble on the beach shifts that the heavenly Father doesn't know it. Nothing escapes His eye.

God is concerned enough for the physical care of this world that He provides both for the just and the unjust. "...for he maketh the sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the

just and on the unjust" (Matthew 5:45 cf Acts 14:15-17). God provides for all creation (Psalms 104).

The Christian's Attitude Toward the Kosmos with Respect to Redemption

The Kosmos as Humanity

Our attitude is to be that of Jesus (John 3:16-17) . "... as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you" (John 20:21). "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15). We are ambassadors for Christ (II Corinthians 5:19-20).

The Kosmos as the Created Order

The created order is to be a cause of our praise of God. "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth His handywork" (Psalm 19:1). "O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens. When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; What is man, that thou art mindful of him?" (Psalm 8:1, 3-4).

Jesus' Two-fold Attitude Toward the Kosmos as Humanity

Sinful

By sinful, we mean absolutely lost and undone, alienated from God; sinful in the sense that man is beyond hope, yet not beyond redemption. Unlike the Liberals and the religious humanists, Jesus believed that all men are sinful by nature and by choice.

By Nature

"Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). Men have to be born again. Man is so utterly corrupt that it is impossible to enter the Kingdom of God the way we are, as we are birthed into this world by nature. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is

spirit" (verse 6). "Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin" (John 8:34). A corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit (Matthew 7:16-18). "...for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things" (Matthew 12:34-35).

By Choice

Man is not only a sinner by nature, but he chooses to sin: "And ye will not come (ye will not to come) to me, that ye might have life" (John 5:40). The world will not come to Him that they might have life (John 3:16-20). They love darkness rather than light.

The reason a man commits specific acts of sin is because he is a sinner. Although Jesus speaks of specific acts of sin, nevertheless He views sin not merely as the sum total of specific acts of sin. But He looks upon sin as a state, a condition. "Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin" (John 8:34). Whosoever commits sin (that is his choice) does so because he is a slave to sin: that is His nature. He is bound by nature to sin.

Sin is a matter of the heart. The specific acts come out of the nature, or out of the heart (Matthew 7:18; 12:34-35).

Jesus views sin as universal.

All have sinned. He said He was sending the Holy Spirit to condemn the whole world of sin (John 16:7-11). Jesus said that He came to save the world (John 3:17). "I am come a light unto the world...for I come not to judge the world, but to save the world" (John 12:46-47). If the salvation He provides is for the *kosmos*, then it must mean that the world is lost and needs saving.

Paul gave a picture of how God sees humanity in Romans 3: "There is none righteous, no not one" (verse 10). "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (verse 23). God declares the whole world guilty, though the world does not believe that it is sinful and under condemnation. "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" (Romans 5:12).

Evidences of the Universality of Sin

The clear statement of the Scriptures themselves.

And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of His heart was only evil continually (Genesis 6:5).

...the imagination of man's heart is evil from His youth... (Genesis 8: 21).

The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies (Psalm 58:3).

Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me (Psalm 51:5).

They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good...they are all gone aside, they are altogether become filthy: There is none that doeth good, no, not one (Psalm 14:1-3 cf Romans 3:1012).

We were dead in sin and by nature children of God's wrath (Ephesians 2:1 cf I Corinthians 15:22).

The history of mankind itself

By reading history and by simple observation we come to the conclusion that there is something wrong with this world. From Cain's murder of Abel, history shows one continuous cycle of nothing but war, bloodshed, hate, resentment, crime, pollution, exploitation, lying, cheating, unrighteousness, and unholiness.

Paul recorded this history in Romans 1:28-32:

And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient;

Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful:

Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.

The whole mental attitude and nervous system of unregenerate man is geared toward the sensual, the sinful, the unrighteousness, the unholy. He can't do anything but respond in a sinful way.

A second verification from history is to be found in the fact that every culture in every race down through history has had some form of priesthood and sacrifice to appease an angry deity. The religious writings of all cultures speak of this need of dealing with violated law and unrighteousness.

The archaeological discoveries prove that sin is universal and has been from the beginning. Because in the most ancient cultures yet uncovered, the archaeologists have found codes of law against sin, stealing, murder, adultery, lying, cheating, etc., and punishment for violating those laws.

By implication in Bible doctrine.

The Bible doctrines themselves prove that man is universally sinful: atonement, justification, repentance, judgment. The whole system of Old Testament sacrifice, which deals with the atonement, indicates that the world is sinful and needs to have forgiveness. "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29).

Regeneration: Jesus said in John 3 that every one must be born again. *Repentance:* God commands all men every where to repent (Acts 17:30). *Judgment:* "Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation..." (Romans 5:18).

These doctrines deal with redemption and the need for it, thus showing that man is sinful.

The existence of the church itself.

The existence of the church itself indicates that the world is universally sinful. The church is a light on a hill that shines on the wickedness of the world and the community round about, and reveals that man is sinful.

By its very existence, the church declares to the world that here are people, righteous and holy, separate from it, gathered out of the world into a group by themselves, under the blessing, anointing, and protection of God. We are different (John 15). To be identified with Jesus is to be hated by the world.

The testimony of the church to the world is that the world is lost, under God's judgment and wrath.

Redeemable

Both humanity and the *kosmos* itself will be redeemed (Romans 8). All nature will participate.

Jesus viewed humanity as an object of redemption. God gave His Son to provide life for the *kosmos* (John 3:16). God was in

Christ on the cross, reconciling the *kosmos* to Himself (II Corinthians 5:19). Jesus said that if He was lifted up He would draw humanity to Himself (John 12:23). He came to call sinners to repentance (Luke 5:31-32). Jesus gave the parables of the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the prodigal son, all of them teaching His belief that the world is lost, but is redeemable (Luke 15).

Redemption and the Nature of the Atonement

The Term

The term atonement occurs only once in the New Testament: "...by whom we have now received the atonement" (Romans 5:11). The word occurs repeatedly in the Old Testament, but atonement is an English word that doesn't appear in either Hebrew or Greek.

Old Testament: *kaphar*

It means to cover over with the blood and hide the sins from the sight of God.

New Testament: *katallage*

It means reconciliation; the coming together of two parties and being in harmony once more. Thus it means to be restored to favour with God.

It has been suggested that atonement means at-one-ment, but no one really knows what it means. It is all right to use the term when we mean by it the substitutionary death of Christ on our behalf. Through faith in Christ we are no longer alienated (Ephesians 2:11-16).

The Nature of the Atonement

The atonement is by nature redemptive, propitiatory, sacrificial, and substitutionary.

Redemptive

Greek term: *lutron*

lutron means ransom, the price of redemption.

"Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to give His life a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:28). Ransom is the price paid to redeem another from a state of bondage. In Jesus' case, it was His life's blood.

This term *lutron* was used in the *koine*, the common Greek of New Testament times, to refer to the price paid to redeem something. It was not uncommon to pay a price to redeem a slave or a prisoner of war. When something was put up for collateral it would be redeemed back again. Jesus came to give His life, the price of our ransom (Mark 10:45). The redemptive price is the blood of Jesus.

Another form of the term is found in Romans 3:24 and translated redemption: "Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption (*apolutrosis*) that is in Christ Jesus." The same term is found in Ephesians 1:7 : "In whom we have redemption through His blood..." It is used in its verbal form in Titus 2:14: "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity..."

Why did Jesus come to pay a ransom for us? The redemptive price is a ransom in the sense that the ransom He paid was to purchase us out of the sin we were in. He paid the price to get us out of the prison of sin. Man is a slave to sin and cannot redeem himself. Redemption involves the intervention of someone who is guiltless; who is outside that bondage; and who has the wherewithal, the price of redemption, and pays it.

God demands absolute satisfaction to His violated holiness and law. Of course no one could pay it so He paid it Himself. His life is the ransom price.

Propitiatory

Redemption Looks Two Ways

Redemption in the Bible looks two ways: manward and Godward. This fact is summed up in the Greek term *hilasterion* which means to appease; to conciliate. Since it has various shades of

meaning, then generally Bible students and theologians use the term propitiation.

The death of Christ not only redeems us by payment of a ransom, but it is also an appeasement of God's wrath. Both of those things have to be accomplished on our behalf. The ransom looks toward us, and the propitiation looks toward God. We have to somehow satisfy His wrath against sin. An absolutely holy God can express nothing but wrath toward disobedience and sin.

God bestows His mercy and love, and man rebels against it. So God has to have His wrath satisfied. It has to be propitiated, or appeased. "Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood..." (Romans 3:24-26). "And he is the propitiation for our sins... ." (I John 2:2). "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent His son to be the propitiation for our sins" (I John 4:10) .

Expiation

The Liberal View

The Liberals and most seminaries don't stress the wrath of God because they dislike the thought of an angry God. So without any basis they translate propitiation as expiation which means to cleanse from sin. All their emphasis is that the atonement cleanses from sin. But the term doesn't mean to cleanse, it means to appease.

Reply:

The Bible speaks of the wrath of God.

The Bible speaks of the wrath of God from cover to cover. Adam's death penalty was imposed by God Himself, personally. The destruction of the world through the flood is evidence of God's wrath against sin. The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah shows that man can go only so far before God will destroy him in judgment. Israel's destruction in the wilderness shows

God's anger toward them for their sin. Israel's present rejection is a result of her sin. The whole Book of Revelation tells of what the world will experience as a result of God's wrath being poured out.

It isn't realistic to deny the wrath of God because the Bible is filled with it.

The term hilasterion means to appease.

When the term *hilasterion* appears in non-biblical usage it always means to appease an offended party.

The Septuagint translators chose *hilasterion* to translate the Hebrew to appease God's anger.

The context of Romans requires propitiation.

The context of Romans requires *propitiation*, not *expiation*. In other words, it requires the appeasing of God's wrath, not cleansing from sin.

The whole idea of Romans from 1:18 and following is the wrath of God and how that it is propitiated by the blood atonement of Jesus.

Sacrificial

Christ's death is viewed as a sacrifice on the analogy of the Old Testament types. This is seen in the New Testament from two considerations:

His Death is Called a Sacrifice

"And walk in love as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour" (Ephesians 5:2). He is called the peace offering in I Corinthians 5:7. His death is spoken of as a sacrifice in Hebrews 10:11-12. When John the Baptist saw Jesus He said, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). His hearers knew that he had reference to sacrifice.

The New Testament References to the Shedding of Blood

The shedding of blood is a direct allusion to the animal sacrifices and the sprinkling of blood upon the altar. The shed blood of Christ is a direct reference to the nature of His death: it was a sacrifice.

"In whom we have redemption through His blood ..." (Ephesians 1:7). "Whom God hath set forth to be a propiation through faith in His blood..." (Romans 5:9). "And having made peace through the blood of His cross..." (Colossians 1:20). His blood gives us power over the devil (Revelation 12:11).

Hebrews chapters 9 and 10 have several references to the shedding of His blood and what it does.

"... but by His own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us (9:12).

How much more shall the blood of Christ...purge your conscience from dead works to serve a living God? (verse 14).

...and without the shedding of blood is no remission (verse 22).

Having therefore, brethren, a boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus (10:19).

Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing...(verse 29).

Substitutionary

The atonement is sometimes referred to as the "vicarious atonement" of Jesus Christ. Vicarious means to take the place of another.

There is a preposition that occurs over and over in reference to the blood atonement which means on behalf of: *huper*. Over and over the New Testament stresses that His death was not a death for Himself. He did not die for a truth as a martyr, but based on Old Testament type, His death was for someone else. All men die for themselves, but He could not have died a natural death or been put to death except that He laid it down for Himself (John 10:17-18). His death was totally unnatural. This fact is made plain by the preposition *huper*. He didn't die for Himself; He didn't die for any other reason except for others.

"For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us..." (I Thessalonians 5:9-10). "...while we were yet sinners, Christ died for (*huper*) us" (Romans 5:8). "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered him up for (*huper*) us all..." (Romans 8:32). "...and hath given himself for (*huper*) us an offering..." (Ephesians 5:2). "For the Son of man came...to give His life a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45).

"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for (*huper*) us..." (Galatians 3:13). This can mean nothing but substitution in the strictest sense.

Some of the passages that teach substitution: Isaiah 53; Galatians 3:13; Romans 3:24-25; Ephesians 5:1-2; I Timothy 2:5-6; Romans 5:8-9; Hebrews 9:26-28; Hebrews 10:10-14; II Corinthians 5:19, 21; I John 2:1-2; Ephesians 1:7; Titus 2:14; Galatians 1:4; Galatians 4:4-5; and Romans 5:19.

Redemption and the New Testament View of Law and Grace

Jesus Did Not Introduce a New Religion

Jesus did not introduce a new religion when He said: "Ye have heard that it hath been said ... but I say unto you..." (Matthew 5). Because He had already said: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled" (verses 17-18).

The importance of not violating the law is shown in verse 19: "Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven."

We are informed here that this new teaching of Jesus is replacing the old teaching, not by destruction, but by fulfilment. It is not that we violate the commandments because we are not obligated to keep them as a means of salvation; but that they have been fulfilled in our faith in Jesus Christ. "That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Romans 8:4). We have been set free, though not free to sin. If anyone adds anything to His faith then Christ died in vain for him. Some things we don't do because they are morally wrong. Other things are not expedient for us to do even though we are free to.

Jesus said that His teaching is to replace the old teaching, not by destroying it, but by fulfilling it because the New Testament is built right on the Old. The law had its place, and the New Testament is its fulfilment. Jesus fulfilled the law and the prophets (Matthew 5:17). He didn't ignore it or destroy it.

The teaching of Paul didn't destroy the law. "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law"

(Romans 3:31). In what sense did he establish the law? It is the righteousness of the law that is fulfilled in us by our faith (Romans 8:4). We have to fulfil the law, the righteousness that God demands, but it is now done by faith in Christ.

Fulfilment of the Law Involved Its Passing Away

In the process of Jesus fulfilling the law, it involved the passing away of the law, or the whole Old Testament system. How? In the same way that a blossom must pass away if the fruit is to be produced. As the shadow of the blossom remains on the fruit, so the shadow of the Old remains in the New. The fruit doesn't destroy the blossom, but the blossom has to give way to produce fruit. The blossom is the basis for the fruit.

This is the significance of His teaching that you can't put new wine into old wineskins, or a patch on old garments (Matthew 9:16-17). In that sense, the New Testament is not merely a patch on the old Judaistic system. It replaced the old system.

Jesus fulfilled the law in such a way that it passed away. He nailed the old covenant to the cross (Colossians 2:14). When He died the law died.

The Law Was Transient by Design

The transient nature of the law was purposely designed by divine intention in the law itself. God placed within the old system its own mechanism for it to pass away. "For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect" (Hebrews 10:1). Animal sacrifices, priesthood, temple rituals, ritual cleansings, observance of holy days and holy seasons were simply shadows of better things. Jesus fulfilled all the types of sacrifice by being a sacrifice Himself. He is High Priest fulfilling that office. Israel's kingship had to pass away because the Messiah will come again as the King. He was the prophet of Deuteronomy 18.

The Error of Christians Holding to the Law

While the law has been done away with for the Christian, nevertheless there are people teaching that certain aspects of the law have not passed away. They insist that the civil and ceremonial aspects have passed away, but the moral law is eternal. Therefore Christians, like the Israelites, are under the so-called moral law.

Others would not even deliver the Christian from the civil and ceremonial aspects because they go to the Old Testament to find regulations concerning marriage, divorce, and remarriage (the civil aspect); or they will go to the Old Testament to justify why they don't eat certain foods (the ceremonial aspect). Some insist that the law of tithing is still binding. Others speak of a Christian Sabbath which is a contradiction in terms: Christian and Sabbath speak of two different dispensations.

In all of these as well as other things where people try to bind others to the law dispensation, they carefully avoid explaining why they choose only certain aspects of the law. They ignore the clear teaching of the New Testament that if a person places himself under any aspect of the law, then he places himself under its curse. "For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is everyone that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them" (Galatians 3:10). Keeping one aspect of the law requires him to keep all its aspects. "For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law" (Galatians 5:3).

All Christians believe that they are under grace, and yet most of them believe that they are somehow bound to some aspect of the law, especially the so-called moral law. While they insist that they are not under the penalties of the law, yet they say they are obligated to keep the law.

If a person under the law violated it and did not offer a sacrifice, then the penalty was death. But under grace, the once-for-all suf-

ficient sacrifice of Jesus Christ can be appealed to; whereas being under the law makes one a debtor to do the whole law, and that puts him under its curse.

Why We Are Not Under the Law in Any Sense

The Law Cannot Be Divided Up

The Ten Commandments are never called the "Moral Law" in the Bible. That is man's terminology. There was one law in the Old Testament dispensation consisting of civil, ceremonial, and moral aspects. The law cannot be divided up.

Paul quoted from the ten commandments and said he was quoting from the law: "...for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet" (Romans 7:7).

Being Under Any Part of the Law Puts Us Under Its Curse

Galatians 3:10 shows that if we are under any part of the law in any sense then we are under its curse. The curse of the law is death. Yet there are Christians who will not let God set them free from bondage. Not free to sin, but freedom to serve Him absolutely, utterly, completely, in love, without any fear or feeling of obligation to do it.

Paul said that if you are under the law you are under its curse. Why? Because the law without penalty would only be good advice. As no one can keep any law perfectly, then there are penalties imposed. There is no such thing as being under the obligation to keep the ten commandments but not being under its curse.

The Law Was Abolished at the Cross

The law with its penalties was abolished at the cross (Colossians 2:13-23). "... blotting out the handwriting of ordinances... and nailing it to His cross" (verse 13). "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... ." (verses 16-17). "Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances...after the commandments and doctrines of men?" (verses 20-22).

Law and Grace Are Two Different Dispensations

"For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (John 1:17). Paul, all through His epistles, contrasted the two different dispensations.

The reason the law was abolished is that the law was a covenant that only pertained to Israel. When God set her aside for awhile, then He set aside the law with it. The law was a covenant between God and Israel alone. No other nation in the world had that covenant, and most certainly the church didn't.

What Does It Mean To Be Under the Law?

To be under the law means to be under its jurisdiction, its precepts, its commands, and its penalties.

God, in the law, was showing what He demanded; and He was also, by giving the law, showing how impossible it was for a fallen child of Adam to even begin to keep it. He is bankrupt before he starts or tries. He is born into the world a child of wrath by nature.

The New Testament repeatedly states that the Christian is not under the law, but Israel was.

Up to the giving of the law at Sinai, every person did what he thought was right.

What Was God's Purpose in Giving the Law?

It was either going to be the means for the Israelite to obtain His salvation; or it was to be a system of rules and precepts to guide His life and His moral and ethical conduct.

It is clear in the New Testament that no man could be saved by being under the law. "Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin" (Romans 3:19-20).

The Law Was a Teacher

The law was given as a system of moral and ethical, and sometimes civil and ceremonial, rules to guide Israel's life and conduct until the dispensation of faith in Jesus. They had to have faith in the law and in making the sacrifices. They were to believe that if they did what God said, and that when they failed and offered a sacrifice for sin, that He would forgive them of sin. Ours is the dispensation of faith, but it took faith in the Old Testament.

The purpose of the law is given in Galatians 3: "Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator" (verse 19). "Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster" (verse 24-25).

The law was to keep Israel in line and to keep her from straying away. The priests and the prophets were teachers of the law. The law and those precepts and commandments were cherished by the pious Jews.

The Law Gave a Knowledge of Sin

The law was given to give us a knowledge of the nature of sin. "Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to

them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin" (Romans 3:19-20).

The Law is a Revelation of God's Requirements for Righteousness

The law is a revelation of the basic requirements of God for righteousness; and therefore it has to be fulfilled, either by us, or by faith in Christ. "That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Romans 8:4). We have to offer God the righteousness of the law. That is His demand, and no man can do it.

Thus the purpose of the law is to show the need of a substitute to offer God the righteousness of the law. By our faith in Him, God accepts it as if we had kept the law. Jesus kept the law perfectly, and then He offered Himself as the Lamb on our behalf because we couldn't keep the law.

The Relationship Between Law and Grace

A Shadow in Relation to an Image

For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect (Hebrews 10:1).

The relationship, or contrast, between the old and new covenants is designated as that relationship that exists between shadow (*skia*) and image (*elkon*). *Elkon* means the reality. Jesus used the term in Matthew 22:20-21: "Whose is this image (*elkon*) and superscription?" *Elkon* is not an image in the sense of a reflection, but an exact likeness.

The law is the *skia*; the Gospel is the *elkon*: the exact replica of things in the heavenlies, the reality. *Skia* is a shadow as a man would cast upon a wall. *Elkon* is an exact image or likeness.

The contrast between law and grace is between the old system, imperfectly portrayed in shadow and in type, contrasted with the new covenant which is the exact image of what God intended for us all along. All the Old Testament types were but shadows. A lamb, pure and spotless, was a shadow of the Lamb of God; the priesthood a shadow of Jesus as our High Priest.

The kingship: Jesus is our king. The prophetic institution: He is the prophet of Deuteronomy 18.

The Divine and Human Aspects in Redemption

From the divine side, redemption is the sovereign provision instituted by God on man's behalf. But for redemption to be applied, it requires a response from man. Both these aspects are seen in John 3:16: "For God so loved the world, that he gave His only begotten Son..." That is His sovereign provision. But we must respond: "...that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

The Divine Aspect of Redemption

Redemption Involves the Entire Godhead

The *plan* of redemption is the work of the Father (John 3:16). The *work* of redemption was wrought by the Son (John 10:15, 17-18). The *application* of redemption is accomplished by the Holy Spirit (John 3:3-8).

The Initiative in Redemption is All God's

That the initiative in redemption is God's is seen in the provision for redemption:

In the Institution of the Old Testament System of Sacrifices

The whole meaning of the Old Testament sacrificial system is redemption through blood sacrifice.

In the New Testament

"But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life" (verse 10). God loved the world so He gave His Son (John 3:16).

In His Elective Choice

"Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you..." (John 15:16). Jesus preached the Gospel, but when they would turn away, He told them they couldn't come unless they were drawn by the Father (John 6:44).

"For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified" (Romans 8:29-30). God foreknew them and predestinated them to receive salvation.

The Effectual Call

There is an effectual call. Those who respond effectually to that call are designated the called ones. "But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God" (I Corinthians 1:23-24). "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose" (Romans 8:28).

God Gives the Necessary Means To Be Saved

God gives the gifts of faith and repentance. They are gifts. There is nothing we can do to believe. There is nothing we can do to repent. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast: (Ephesians 2:8-9) . "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" (Acts 5:31). "When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life" (Acts 11:18).

The Divine Motivation in Redemption

God's Nature, Which is Love

He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him (I John 4:8, 16).

God's love is seen in His providential care

That God is love toward all humanity is to be seen in His providential care for all mankind. He cares and provides for the wicked as well as the righteous.

...for he maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust (Matthew 5:45).

Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness (Acts 14: 17).

The Lord is good to all: and His tender mercies are over all His works (Psalm 145:9).

God's love is seen in His longsuffering and patience

God's love is seen in His longsuffering and patience with humanity. God withholds judgment because he is longsuffering and not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (II Peter 3:9 cf Romans 2:1-3).

God's love is seen in His Fatherly correction of His children.

For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? (Hebrews 12:6-7).

God's love is seen in His provisions and promises

God's love is seen in His many provisions and promises made to His church: healing; protection; deliverance; prosperity; joy; peace; empowering to pull down Satan's strongholds, to overcome every work of the enemy. . The newest, weakest Christian has been given the power to overcome the strongest demon.

God's love is seen in His declaration that He is love.

Jesus said that He did not come to destroy the world, but to save it. This is seen in the parables of the lost coin, the lost sheep, and the prodigal son.

Man's Lack

As it is God's nature to love, it is man's nature to lack. Then His lack is in every area of His being. Because he is under the curse, man needs redemption.

Physical health.

Mankind is nothing more than a diseased, dying organism. From the moment he is born, he begins to die. This is why God provided healing for our bodies as well as our souls in the atonement.

Life.

Man lacks true life. Spiritually he isn't dying progressively like he is physically. He is already dead spiritually. He is born dead (Ephesians 2:1-5).

Proper understanding.

Mentally, man lacks the ability to understand true reality and true values until he is born again and His mind renewed. "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (II Corinthians 2: 14). Man spends years in educating His mind in temporal matters, seeking to make himself intellectually sophisticated. He searches for the answers to his needs in science, philosophy, and every other realm; answers that can only be found in the Christian faith. That is why he never finds them.

Security.

Man spends most of His time seeking security by accumulating possessions and savings and sufficient insurance. Instead of security, all he gets is ulcers, coronaries, nervous breakdowns, and high blood pressure. The more he acquires, the less certain he becomes that he has enough to see him through old age or hard times.

Mental peace, joy, happiness.

Man lacks mental peace, joy, and happiness because fear and anxiety rule him like a tyrant. Yet God has provided for all things in the atonement to provide for man's lack. God loves him and wants to bless him, to heal him, to give him prosperity, peace, and joy.

The Saints' Responsive Love Back to God

God's love provides a redemption of such magnitude whereby literally condemned sinners are plucked from the jaws of an eternal hell and translated into a kingdom of nothing but bliss and blessing. That is going to result in an eternal blessing Godward. The saints will spend eternity praising God as an expression of their gratitude and love.

According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved (Ephesians 1:4-6).

That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus (Ephesians 2:7)

God will have a people, a vast host that can't be numbered, who will for all eternity praise Him. Not only will they praise Him for redemption, but for all the blessings He has provided for them. Jesus said that who He forgives the most love Him the most. Those who now show their love the most will develop the capacity for more praise and more blessing on the other side.

Human Likeness

"And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.. ." (Genesis 1:26). The total man is made in the image of God. When Logos, who was Spirit who had no form or shape, came into the world, He took on humanity.

Man is the crown of creation. "What is man, 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" (Psalm 8:4-6). Man is the master of creation.

Man represents God. God wants to redeem what He made like Himself. We are in His likeness, in His image. When God decided to make a creature that would head up creation, He made one like He would appear for all eternity. Since Logos took on humanity, He remains God-man for all eternity.

God's Eternal Purpose

Redemption fulfils God's purpose. "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" (Ephesians 1:11).

God's side

God's purpose, from His side, is sovereign election. From our side, we call it the application of redemption.

Sovereign Election

That it is sovereign election is to be seen in that He chose us in Christ before the world was created (Ephesians 1:4). "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began" (II Timothy 1:9).

The popular belief today is that God saw what we would do; He saw the ones that would believe; so He predestinated them. But this would have man electing God.

Foreknowledge is not cooperation where man cooperates with God's grace. If it is cooperation, then it is works, and that would have God owing us something. But we were given the grace, which includes the faith to believe, before the foundation of the world. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9).

Our salvation was predestinated before the world began. "Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand, Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matthew 25:34).

We were elected, chosen before the foundation of the world. But we prove we were elected because we heard the Gospel and

believed. No one will say he wasn't saved because he wasn't elected. If he heard the Gospel, he chose not to believe because he didn't want to. There is nothing prohibiting a sinner from saying: "I am a sinner, lost! God have mercy on me!" When he does that in supplication, the gifts of faith and repentance drop in His heart. He has to respond; those who don't will not to come to Him (John 5:40).

Man's side

The application of redemption

From our side we are responsible. From God's side, He makes the choice that was made from all eternity.

The basis of election

What is the basis of election?

It is not merit because sinners have no merit.

They have not one single thing that God sees as good. All of our righteousness is like filthy rags.

It is not faith and repentance

It is not faith and repentance because they are both gifts of God (Ephesians 2:8-9). "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" (Acts 5:31). "When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life" (Acts 11:18). "Or despisest thou the riches of His goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?" (Romans 2:4). Jesus is the author and finisher of our faith (Hebrews 12:2).

It is not based on foreknowledge

Election is not based on foreknowledge of our obedience because our election is unto obedience (I Peter 1: 2). It is not based on the foreknowledge of our good works because we are elected unto good works (Ephesians 2:10). It is not based on the foreknowledge of our holiness because the Scriptures say that we are elected unto holiness (Ephesians 1:4).

God's motivation for redemption is His eternal purpose to save a people who will glorify His name.

The Human Aspect of Redemption

Essential Aspects

Conversion

What is called regeneration from God's side is called conversion from the human side. Conversion is regeneration viewed from man's side. While God regenerates, we are the ones who are regenerated, or converted. A converted person is one who has been completely turned around in everything.

The Greek term to be converted, *epistrepho*, means to turn, or to turn one's self. Jesus used that term in Matthew 18:3: "Except ye be converted (*strepho*)..."

Repentance

Repentance and conversion always go together in the New Testament. "Repent ye therefore, and be converted (*epistrepho*)..." (Acts 3:19). Repentance also means to turn, but means to turn your mind. The Greek term, *metanoia*, means to change one's mind. When a person is converted, he is turned around, and His mind is changed on everything. "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (II Corinthians 5:17).

Views Concerning Redemption and Conversion

Liberalism

Liberalism denies the need of conversion. It teaches that we are all God's children. The divine dwells in all of us. Man doesn't need to be converted or born again. What man needs is to be educated religiously.

Reformed Churches

The reformed churches, such as the Lutherans, who came out of the reformation do not deny the need of the new birth, conversion, or regeneration. But they substitute a doctrine of justification by faith. Reformation theology tends to place faith in the foreground. The need of conversion kind of tags on behind. Preaching the need of being born again is not as acceptable as doctrine and creed.

Justification by faith is a doctrine. When we are born again, a legal transaction takes place between the Father and the Son. The Father accepts the Son's atoning blood on our behalf because we can't pay the price. Proof that He accepts that blood is that the Father raised Him up from the dead. "Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification" (Romans 4:25). This is a true, blessed doctrine. But Reformation theologians emphasize the doctrine instead of the experience. It is possible to be totally correct in theology and still not be born again.

Regeneration Viewed as an Outward Act

The Church of Christ, the Roman Catholics, and others that don't have any names, teach baptismal regeneration. They think they are literally regenerated under water. According to this teaching, saving grace is bestowed through an outward act. Redemption is received through a sacrament. For the Roman Catholics, redemption is kept through the celebration of the mass.

Since they believe that there is no salvation apart from water baptism, then logically they must baptize infants. Because of the

inconvenience of immersing babies, they started sprinkling. The Roman Catholics believe so strongly in baptismal regeneration that if there is any suspicion that a baby may not be born alive, it is baptized in the womb. Those who are not baptized and die are consigned to limbo.

Water baptism cannot regenerate because it is an outward sign of an already accomplished inward change. "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), by the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 3:2). Water baptism is evidence of what has already happened inside: we have come to a good conscience toward God because we believed Christ. Titus 3:4-7 speaks of "the washing of regeneration," not the washing of water. It is not of works, and that would include water baptism.

Benefits of Redemption in the New Testament

Faith

Faith is a gift of God. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9).

Repentance

"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" (Acts 5: 13). "... Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life" (Acts 11: 18) . "Or despisest thou the riches of His goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?" (Romans 2:4).

Justification from Sin

"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:1).

Forgiveness of Sins

"In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace" (Ephesians 1: 7).

New Birth, or Regeneration

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (II Corinthians 5:17). "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Ephesians 2:10).

Union with Christ

"Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of His Spirit" (1 John 4:13). "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us...I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one...I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them" (John 17:21-26). "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (I Corinthians 15:22).

Adoption

"...but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father" (Romans 8: 15). "To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons" (Galatians 4:5).

Joint-heirs with Christ

"And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together" (Romans 8:17).

Children of God

"He came unto His own, and His own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name" (John 1:11-12). God, our Father, loves us with a love that we can only talk about. He puts up with a lot more than we would. His love is self-giving. The way God saw Israel (Ezekiel 16) is the way He saw us. He took us, cleaned us up, and clothed us in the best.

Resurrection

Resurrection is the Gospel. "But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain... But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept" (I Corinthians 15:13-20).

Healing

"When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with His word, and healed all that were sick: That it might be fulfilled by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses" (Matthew 8:15-17 cf Isaiah 53).

The world can't have this healing. We hear of sinners getting healed, but a ministry where everyone can get healed is suspect since the devil can also heal. Healing is for the children of God. God does not hear the prayer of sinners. He only hears the prayer that is in Christ.

Preservation

"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose... Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth" (Romans 8: 28, 33). Nothing can separate us from the love of Christ (verses 35-39).

The Goal of Redemption

Eternal Life

"For God so loved the world, that he gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3: 16). It is the gift of eternal life around which all other benefits center because eternal life is the goal of redemption. This is the central theme of the New Testament message.

These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life I and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God (I John 5:13).

The eternal life taught by Jesus and the apostles is not limited like that taught today. Eternal life has two dimensions: a present and a future. The popular view is that all the benefits of redemption as a joint-heir with Christ will be gotten over there, sometime in the future.

The blessings of redemption start when we start believing we have them.

Terms

aionios: ***eternal or everlasting***

zoe ***life***

Aionios basically means that which is without beginning or end.

Usage: aionios

- Everlasting fire (Matthew 18:8)
- Eternal damnation (Mark 3:29).
- Everlasting habitation for the righteous (Luke 16:9)
- Eternal salvation (Hebrews 5:9)
- Eternal Redemption (Hebrews 9:12)
- Eternal God (Romans 16:26)
- Eternal Spirit (Hebrews 9:14)
- Eternal life and everlasting punishment (Tit 1:2; Matthew 25:46).

Matthew 25: 46 is a key verse refuting the annihilationism of Seventh Day Adventism and those who teach that the wicked are annihilated and will not be punished forever.

Aspects of Eternal Life

The New Age to Come After the Resurrection

Eternal life refers basically to the new age to come after the resurrection. "But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life" (Mark 10:30). Jesus contrasted the present life with the life to come.

When the Son of man shall come in His glory, He will separate the sheep from the goats (Matthew 5:31-33). "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: But the righteous unto life eternal" (verse 46).

He that loveth His life shall lose it; and he that hateth His life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal (John 12:25).

And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation (John 5:29).

Eternal Life in the Present

Although most Christians would say that they have eternal life now, they don't enter into it in any meaningful way.

But there is eternal life now. "... He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life" (John 5: 24). We get eternal life when we believe on Him. If we endure to the end we prove that we had it. We won't even come into the judgment of the sinners but have already passed into life.

Jesus told the woman at the well: "Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting

life: (John 4:13-14). When we drink of His water, there is a well opened within that produces eternal life.

My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and nothing is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand (John 10:27-29).

Although the Christian will die physically, he will never die spiritually. "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die..." (John 11:25-26). There is no dying for the Christian although His body may cease to function.

Jesus contrasted the spiritually dead who will hear His voice and come out of their spiritual graves with those who are dead physically (John 5:24-29). He is contrasting those who are in the grave with those who will *now*, if they hear His voice, come out of the grave. When we hear His voice we will have eternal life.

His purpose in promising us eternal life was not merely to give us a future hope, but to give us a present experience and foretaste of eternal life. "The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10). "For all things are yours: Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours" (1 Corinthians 3:21-22).

We can believe for all things now since they are ours for the present. The world is the Christian's. Though Satan has usurped it, this is God's world. Man and sin have corrupted it, but God is going to restore it during the millennium. After that He will make a spiritual world to go with our spiritual bodies.

Those Who Deny Eternal Life

Liberals

The Liberals are not sure of the literal resurrection of the body. Most would admit to some form of existence after death, but many in the churches are not even sure if there is an after-life. At least they are not sure of any meaningful after-life.

That is why the New Testament stresses the resurrection of the body. We will go on in an existence just like this one but free of pain, weeping, tears, problems, etc. It will be a body like Jesus' that can walk through walls though we won't need to because the walls will be spiritual too, in the new age.

Materialists

The materialist denies the after-life. Man is merely a biological organism. What we call soul is the brain functioning. When the brain goes back to dust, there is no soul or spirit that survives. They say that at death the atoms of the physical body simply go into another form.

Atheists

Though he may not claim to be a materialist, the atheist believes the same thing.

Agnostics

The agnostic doesn't deny that there is a God or an after-life. He thinks he will get by because if he discovers that there is an after-life and God, God will forgive him because he didn't say there was none.

The agnostic contends that immortality, like God, cannot be proven or verified to our experience. We cannot demonstrate immortality logically and by argument.

It is true that one can't prove an after-life by argument. We are saved by faith. People cannot be argued into the faith. The person who engages in rational, logical debates with those who don't believe is really demeaning himself as a Christian. The Bible doesn't try to prove the existence of God. It assumes His existence. "In the beginning God..." (Genesis 1:1). "The fool hath said in His heart, There is no God..." (Psalms 14:1).

Eastern Religions

To the eastern religions, God is just a world soul. He is called the All; the Ultimate Reality. Sometimes He is called the Christ-mind which is the soul of the universe. The universe is just an emanation of God. It is His nature to create. So man, like the rest of the universe, is really a part of the one great world soul. There is no personal immortality. When man dies, there is no personal existence. He goes back into the world soul. He ceases to exist as a personality.

Communists

To the communist, the state, not man, is the only thing that is immortal. Thus the welfare of the state is the goal toward which all men must strive because the state is the only thing that will survive.

If these theories are true, then man is just a biological and evolutionary accident. We would have effect (man's existence) without a cause.

Then why man at all if this life ends it all? Man is an intelligent as well as religious being who is capable of tremendous achievements. Yet after spending about fifty or sixty years developing His mind and inventing and devising these tremendous accomplishments, he just passes off the scene.

Man is quite an accomplishment of God and life is too short for such a gem of all creation. If man exists only for the time he lives, then the communists are right because the state lasts for

hundreds of years. Thus the state would be greater than man. The communist will give His life unhesitatingly for the state because His name will live on in the state.

Biblical References to Immortality

Both the Old and New Testaments teach immortality and life after death. The Gospel is a gospel of immortality. That is its central theme: resurrection and eternal life.

Believers will never perish (John 3:16). They have already passed from death into this eternal life (John 5:24). They will be resurrected (John 11: 25-26). He is right now preparing a place for us in that other dimension (John 14:2-3).

Jesus certainly taught immortality in the teaching concerning the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16: 19 ff). He taught that the soul is indestructible. "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee..." (Luke 12:20). John saw the souls under the altar (Rev 6:9). "... and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus. " (Revelation 20:4).

"But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul" (Hebrews 10:39). "...receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls" (James 1:21). "For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality" (I Corinthians 15:53). There is no separation from Christ in death for the Christian (II Corinthians 5: 8). "For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life...shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:38-39).

Other references are I Peter 1:3-6; I John 2:17, 24-25; Jude 20-21.

Immortality is the Gospel. The central idea in the teaching of the resurrection is immortality.

THE CONSUMMATION OF ALL THINGS

The Second Advent

Definition and Term

Definition

The Second Advent means that Jesus Christ will put in an appearance the second time upon this earth.

When Jesus was here the first time, not everyone got to see Him. But when He returns the second time, every eye shall see Him.

The nature of the Second Advent will be a literal, personal, bodily, return to this planet. His First Advent was an incarnation. His Second Advent will be a manifestation of Him as King and Lord of the universe. Only a few recognized that He was to be King at the First Advent.

Term

Greek: *parousia*

Parousia means advent or arrival; presence. It can be used of anything, but when speaking of the Second Advent, it becomes a technical term in the New Testament to refer to Christ's second appearance on this planet.

New Testament Texts

The subject of the Second Advent occupies eight times more space in the New Testament than the First Advent: 318 verses. It is mentioned in almost every book of the New Testament.

Jesus

Jesus taught on His Second Advent repeatedly.

For example, Matthew 24:29 ff: "...and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" (verse 30) . He taught it in the parable of the ten pounds (Luke 19). And in John 14:3: "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."

The Apostles

Paul

"So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ:(I Corinthians 1:7). The whole chapter of II Thessalonians 2 teaches the return of Christ. "For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: And the dead in Christ shall rise first" (I Thessalonians 4:16).

James

"Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of our Lord draweth nigh" (James 5:7-8).

John

The whole Book of Revelation.

Angels

Both the First and Second Advents were announced by angels. "And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven" (Acts 1:10-11).

The Time of His Return

According to the Scriptures, the time of Jesus' return is unknown, but this hasn't prevented men from speculation, or from inventing theories.

Even though we have many of the signs of His soon return that other generations didn't have, yet each generation had its signs so each generation would be alert. Paul expected Him to return while he was living. "Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds..." (I Thessalonians 4:17). He included himself even though he knew there were still things that had to be fulfilled.

*But of that day and hour knoweth no man (one),
no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only
(Matthew 24:36).*

Though we don't know the hour, there are things that have happened in our generation that have never happened before. Israel has returned to her land as a sovereign nation. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit in fulfillment of Joel 2 is in the latter days.

Theories

Jehovah's Witnesses

"Christ has already returned, according to the Jehovah's Witnesses. He came invisibly in 1874. The beginning of World War I in 1914 marked the time of the beginning of the end of the world (it ended "the times of the Gentiles," Luke 21:24), when nation rose against nation according to Jesus' prophecy in Matthew 24. At this time Satan was expelled from Heaven, and Christ was enthroned. He is now in the process of overthrowing Satan's kingdom on earth (Revelation 11:15). Then in 1918 Christ came to His temple (Malachi 3:1), which signified His coming to the Jehovah's Witnesses to indwell them as the "temple of the Holy Spirit" (I Corinthians 6:19; 2 Corinthians 6:16)" (Every Wind of Doctrine, Dr. Hobart E. Freeman: page 93).

To the Jehovah's Witnesses, Christ has already returned and is indwelling them as temples.

Seventh Day Adventists

"The Adventists derive their name from the erroneous Second Advent prophecies of William Miller, and from their emphasis upon observance of the Jewish Sabbath (Saturday) as a memorial of God's creation.

"Miller, a farmer, was born in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, in 1782. He had predicted (on the basis of erroneous interpretations of certain passages in Daniel) that Christ would return by March 21, 1843, in spite of Jesus' declaration that no man could know the time of His return (Matthew 24:36). On the basis of his predictions many Millerites (as his followers were called) gave up their occupations, farmers left their crops in the fields, while others fled the cities to await the Judgment Day. When the Great Day passed uneventfully many were disillusioned. However, at Exeter, New Hampshire, during a camp meeting it was again predicted by another Adventist that Christ would return on October 22, 1844.

After the second disappointment, Miller admitted that he himself had been in error. Nevertheless, some of his followers remained undaunted in spite of these false prophecies. A solution was soon found to their disappointment. Hiram Edson, an Adventist, claimed to have received a vision of Christ entering the heavenly sanctuary (cf. Heb. 8-9). This was interpreted as signifying that the Millerite prophecies had not been wrong, but simply misunderstood. Christ had not returned to earth in 1844, but had entered into the heavenly sanctuary to complete His atoning work in preparation for His Second Advent on earth. Thus, the Adventists solved their dilemma by stating that Miller had been right as to the time, but wrong as to the place of Christ's appearance" (Every Wind of Doctrine, Dr. Hobart E. Freeman: pp 127-128).

Equated with Pentecost

The second coming is to be equated with the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. Since God is one, then He was the Father in the Old Testament, Jesus in the Gospels, and now is the Holy Spirit.

Equated With Conversion

The Second Advent is to be equated with the conversion experience. He comes and dwells in our hearts when we are saved.

Occurs at Death

Christ is said to come to receive the individual Christian at death.

Some Great Event in History

The Second Advent is to be equated with some great event in history such as the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. which Christ predicted in Luke 21. There He is said to have returned in judgment.

Equated With the Spread of the Gospel

The Second Advent is to be equated with the spread of the Gospel throughout the world. Christ is the Word. When the Word is preached, then Christ is present.

In the Manifested Sons

Christ will appear in the matured sons of God. That is His Second Advent. According to this theory, He will not literally return visibly, but He will appear in the matured sons of God. Christ will be seen in them.

The Signs of His Return

Although the time is unknown, yet there are several passages in the Scriptures that show us that the general period can be known.

Though each generation could have seen the fulfilment of some things, yet there are certain things that could only happen one time. Jesus said that Israel would be scattered "and Jerusalem shall be trodden down by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled" (Luke 21:24). This was fulfilled in 1967. The generation that saw this happen is the generation that will see His return although Ezekiel 38 and 39 still have to be fulfilled.

Jesus listed some things in Matthew 24 that are indications of His soon return.

False messiahs will arise (verse 5). Although there are those on the scene at present claiming to be the Messiah, Jesus had special reference to those who would claim to be the Jewish Messiah.

There will be an increase in wars, floods, earthquakes, and pestilences (vss 6-8). That is all we hear of today. But there were periods in history when all of Europe was in conflict. There were times when pestilences wiped out millions of people. Each of these generations could have said that this was a sign of the end.

There will be an increase in persecutions (vss 9-10). Not many today have been killed, but it has happened all through church history until fairly recent times. All nations are going to rise up against the Christian message per se. Many will stumble, and those who have embraced us will hate us.

False prophets will increase (verse 11).

The Gospel of the Kingdom will be preached in all of the world (verse 14). This could already be fulfilled because there is no place on earth where it has not been preached. There may be some remote tribe or village unknown to us that has yet to hear

the Gospel, but we can assume that the Gospel has been heard in all of the world.

The abomination of desolation will stand in the holy place (verse 15 cf Daniel 9). This presupposes the rebuilding of the temple because there is no holy place without a temple. There is a temple yet to be built for the unbelieving Jews before Christ returns.

Some believe that this abomination of desolation took place when Jerusalem was destroyed in 70 A.D. The Jews thought Daniel's prophecy was fulfilled when Antiochus Epiphanes sacrificed a pig on the altar.

The great tribulation (verses 21-29). "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be...And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven...and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" (verses 21 and 30).

Few will be expecting His return (verses 36-39). "But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. But yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape" (I Thessalonians 5:1-3).

Unusual signs (verse 29 cf Luke 21:25-32).

Antichrist will be on the scene (II Thessalonians 2:1-12). Antichrist will rise slowly; and by his educated intellect and by his gifts and powers given him by Satan, he will bring the world down to its knees. He will declare peace and there will be peace for a while. He will solve all the money problems because no one will be able to buy or sell without his mark. He will be the world's messiah, even to the Jews, for a while.

A great apostasy of the Church (II Thessalonians 2:3). All through the Dark and Middle Ages there was hardly any light except for little persecuted groups like the Waldenses. They could have thought that this sign was fulfilled then, and it was. But Antichrist was not yet on the scene though they thought that the pope was Antichrist.

The gathering of God's people, Israel, to the Promised Land (Luke 21: 20-24; Romans 11; Zechariah 14).

The Nature of the Second Advent

Views

The Spiritualized Views

The Spiritual Presence Theory.

Advocates of this theory contend that the promises concerning the Second Advent are not to be taken literally; that we are not to think of a literal bodily, visible return of Jesus Christ to this earth. But the promise of His return was fulfilled in the sending of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

According to this view, Christ is on earth in the sense that He is present in the Church. His Spirit is here. The Second Advent is not one single event in history, but includes all of the events of the Church Age accomplished by the Spirit of Christ, or the Holy Spirit.

The Manifested Sons Theory.

Romans 8 clearly teaches that God one day will manifest His sons to the created order, to all of creation, to the world.

The Manifested Sons theory contains some truth, but goes beyond the revelation of God's Word and gets into unscriptural speculation. They contend that Christ will not literally, visibly, bodily, return to this earth. As the sons of God mature, Christ will more and more manifest Himself in them. Eventually, when one has spiritually matured, then Christ will be fully manifested in

such a Christian. That is the return of Christ. He is returning in His sons. Since He will not literally return, then He will overthrow Satan and his kingdom through those He is appearing in: the matured sons. He will reign and rule on this earth through them. His coming and sitting on a throne is all spiritualized.

Moreover, they teach that there will be no bodily resurrection because we are being resurrected now by the Spirit: resurrected from death to life; or from immaturity to spiritual maturity.

Where Jesus said that He will appear in the clouds, we are supposed to be the clouds that He will appear in because Hebrews 12:1 speaks of a great cloud of witnesses.

The Manifested Sons groups spiritualize and allegorize most of the Bible. For example, in Revelation 21 John speaks of the New Jerusalem as being prepared as a bride adorned for her husband (verse 2). Since in the New Testament the Church is spoken of as a bride, then they spiritualize New Jerusalem to be the bride of Christ.

In reply to this, New Jerusalem is adorned as a bride. The whole chapter is speaking of the rich adornment of this city. The idea is that on her wedding day, the bride is adorned as she never will be again (verses 18 ff).

Secondly, if this is not a literal city, it would have the people inhabiting themselves. "And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth..." (verse 27). The nations would be entering into us (verse 24).

The spiritualizing method is not the way to interpret the Bible. We should always interpret by taking the obvious meaning first. That is not always the literal meaning. When John said that the seven candlesticks represents the seven churches of Asia that is what they were. The stars in His hand were the messengers, or angels, of the seven churches.

Another principle of interpretation is that the thing described is at least as bad (or good) or worse than the description. The spiritual dimension is the reality. What we participate in is temporal. Spiritual realities have to be described in terms that we can understand. The Bible describes things in human terms so that we can understand them.

The Bible uses anthropomorphic terms about God. For example: "And the Lord brought us forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm..." (Deuteronomy 26:8) . "Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear" (Isaiah 58:1). We understand that what is meant is that He is not limited in any way. He doesn't literally have a hand, an arm or eyes.

But the reality of the description is more than the description itself. The Book of Revelation will be at least what it says.

The Amillennial View

Augustine (354 - 430) was the father of the amillennial view. The Roman Catholics and most of the denominational churches hold to this view.

According to the amillennialists, there is to be no literal earthly millennial reign of Christ with His saints on earth. Revelation 20 which speaks of the millennium is referring to the present Church Age. We are in the millennium now. Where verses 1 and 2 speak of Satan being bound for a thousand years, they say that Satan was bound at the First Advent using Luke 10:18 as their proof text: "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven." They have Christ reigning from His throne in heaven whereas all the prophecies in both the Old and New Testaments have Him reigning on earth (Isaiah 2.; Zechariah 14; Revelation 20; Matthew 24).

Moreover, we are told that the first resurrection of Revelation 20:6 is the new birth and we are now reigning with Christ. Most of the prophecies concerning Israel and the millennium are now

being spiritually fulfilled through the Church because the Church is spiritual Israel.

Amillennialism teaches a general resurrection and a general judgment. But Revelation 20:6 speaks of the first resurrection which means there will have to be at least one other. Jesus spoke of the resurrection of life and the resurrection of damnation: "And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation" (John 5:29). "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt" (Daniel 12:2). Revelation 20:11-15 speaks only of the wicked dead being judged before the great white throne. Therefore there will not be a general resurrection as amillennialism teaches.

Only the wicked dead will be judged after the millennium because the nations will be judged before the millennium (Matthew 25). The saints will be judged (II Corinthians 5:10; Romans 14:10). There are at least five judgments and at least two resurrections mentioned in the Scriptures.

Not all amillennialists follow Augustine's view that the Church and the Kingdom are to be equated. But the Roman Catholics hold to this and that is why they say a person has to be in their church to be saved. Since Augustine lived in the first millennium after Christ, then he could safely say that the millennium started with the establishment of the Church and would last a literal thousand years after which Christ would come.

The weakness of the spiritualized views is obvious. They invariably take literally all the First Advent prophecies and invariably spiritualize all the Second Advent prophecies.

The post-millennial View

The failure of Augustine amillennialism to fit the facts of history led to the rise of postmillennialism. The term means that Christ will return after the millennium.

The post-millennial view was adopted by the theologians of the post-reformation period due to the failure and nonfulfilment of Augustine's theories. They claimed that there would be a literal millennium on this earth, but they spoke of it as a golden age on this earth. The Gospel of the Kingdom would be preached and spread throughout the world. As a result of this great spread of the Gospel to the four corners of the earth, the Church would have such an influence on this world as light and salt that evil would be put down. Wars would cease. This coupled with man's increasing knowledge, his technological and scientific improvements; the fact that the world would eventually become educated, literate; all this would result in a golden age in which there would be literally (or non-literally) a thousand year period when the world would be at peace and there would be prosperity.

The World Wars and the other wars have resulted in the downfall of this system of theology. They discovered that man isn't getting better. The world isn't and will not, become christianized.

As a result, amillennialism became popular again. Why? It is so all inclusive. It is embraced by Liberals and Conservatives alike. Secondly, it appeals to the desire of most people to spiritualize the Bible. They don't have to take literally anything that doesn't appeal to them; or is too strong; or what they don't want to obey.

Basically, amillennialism denies a literal, earthly, thousand year period when Christ will reign and rule on earth with His saints. The present Church Age, secondly, is the millennium. Thirdly, the promises made to Israel are all being fulfilled in the Church. They let Israel keep the curses because the Jews crucified Christ.

The premillennial View

The early Church was *chiliastic*, i.e. premillennial. Anyone who takes the Bible literally will be premillennial. Even amillennial advocates admit this.

The major tenets of premillennialism:

World conditions will get worse just prior to Christ's return.

Antichrist will literally appear on the world scene as the world's messiah. He will be a great religio-political leader who will bring peace and solve the economical problems for a while (II Thessalonians 2:3-4). Anyone who thinks otherwise is already deluded by the devil.

A great falling away of the Church will occur (II Thessalonians 2:1-3; II Timothy 3:1 ff; I Timothy 4:1).

Overcomers will be raptured just prior to the great tribulation which will fall upon the whole earth, ending with the Battle of Armageddon (Revelation 4-19). It is after the tribulation that Christ will return to earth and institute His visible Kingdom on earth (Matthew 24:29; Matthew 25:31-34).

When Christ returns there will be a preliminary judgment of the nations (Matthew 25:31 ff).

The saints will be judged for their works (II Corinthians 5:10; Romans 14:10). We don't know when this will occur, but it will be somewhere in between their catching away and the beginning of the millennium.

Satan will be bound for a millennium (Revelation 20).

Israel will be restored and saved and the covenant promises fulfilled. This will be sometime after the time Antichrist breaks His covenant with Israel. Then sometime during her great tribulation and affliction she will turn to the Lord (Zechariah 12:10 ff; Romans 11:26).

After the millennium, Satan will be loosed for a short rebellion which will occur worldwide (Revelation 20).

After this there will be the resurrection, judgment, and punishment of the wicked dead (Revelation 20; Daniel 12:2) . This is not to be

confused with the judgment of the nations at the beginning of the millennium because those will be living nations that are judged. Here it will be the wicked dead that will be raised for the great white throne judgment. (Post-millennialism and premillennialism both teach and believe in a general resurrection, general judgment, and a general rapture.)

The Kingdom will be given by the Son to the Father at which time it will merge into the Father's eternal Kingdom (I Corinthians 15:24; Revelation 21-22). This is not suggesting that the Son is inferior to the Father because all the fullness of the Godhead dwells in the Son bodily. But there is only one headship.

The Millennium

The Term: Greek *chiliastic*

Millennium comes from the Latin *mille* (1000), and *annum* (year). It is based on the Greek *chilias*, from which comes the term *chiliastic*.

Description

The millennium is going to be a time when peace, prosperity, and righteousness will rule and reign upon this earth. Why? Because Satan will be cast into the pit and bound for the period of the millennium.

Israel's Covenants and Promises Fulfilled

All of the unconditional promises made to Israel and the covenants made with her will be fulfilled.

The Covenant with Abraham

The land of Palestine was given to Abraham and his descendants as an eternal possession (Genesis 13:14-16; 15:1-21; 17:1-9). There are over one hundred and forty promises in the Word of God that Israel will be restored to her land because it is her

eternal possession. "I will bring again the captivity of my people of Israel...and I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the Lord thy God" (Amos 9:14-15). (See also Psalm 105:8-11 and Ezekiel 36; Deeper Life in the Spirit, pp 142 ff).

The Promises Made to David

The promises made to David concerning his throne and his kingdom will be fulfilled. "... I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom... I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever... and thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established forever" (II Samuel 7:12-16). "And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus...and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end" (Luke 1:31-33).

The Promise of Israel's Salvation

During tribulation, God will pour out the spirit of grace upon Israel (Zechariah 12: 10-11), and they will turn to the Lord (Romans 11:25-29).

The Restoration of Israel's Temple and Worship

Ezekiel chapters 40 through 48.

Ideal Conditions Will Prevail

It will be a time when ideal conditions prevail upon the whole earth.

It will Be a Time of Peace

" . .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" (Isaiah 2: 4 cf Micah 4:1-4) . "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 Father of Eternity, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom...from henceforth even for ever..." (Isaiah 9:6-7).

The Effects of the Curse Will Be Lifted

"The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them...for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Isaiah 11:6-9 cf Romans 8:17-23).

Sickness and Infirmary Will Be Removed

"Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. 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 35:5-6). Then there will be a tree of life "and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations" (Revelation 22:2 cf Ezekiel 47:12).

There will Be Longevity

If a person were to die at a hundred years old he would be considered a child (Isaiah 65:20). Those who go into the millennium who had not taken the mark of the beast will live and reign with Christ a thousand years (Revelation 20:4).

Prosperity Will Be Restored

Then shall he give the rain of thy seed, that thou shalt sow the ground withal; and bread of the increase of the earth, and it shall be fat and plentiful: in that day shall thy cattle feed in large pastures (Isaiah 30:23).

Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed; and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt...and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them, and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them (Amos 9:13-14 cf Joel 3:18).

There Will Be No More Weeping

Joy will be substituted for weeping. "But be glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy...and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying" (Isaiah 65:18-19). "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away" (Revelation 21:4).

Holiness will Characterize the New Age

"And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The Way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein" (Isaiah 35:8). "In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD... every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness unto the Lord of hosts..." (Zechariah 14:20-21). "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Isaiah 11:9).

The Eternal State

Preliminary Events

The Release of Satan

Satan will be bound "till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season" (Revelation 20:1-3). While Satan is bound, the nations can't be deceived. After the millennium he must be loosed for a short period and he will deceive the nations again (verses 7-9).

The amillennialists contend that the "little season" that Satan will be loosed is the present Church Age. But verse 7 establishes the time context: after the thousand years have expired. So we know that it is after the Second Advent and after the millennium that he goes forth to deceive again.

The question is sometimes raised as to how Satan can deceive nations of people who will have gone through the glorious millennium with the Lord Jesus Christ: where will he find people who will want to be deceived or could be deceived? The nations will be judged before the millennium (Matthew 25), and only the righteous will go into the millennium.

Satan himself will lead this rebellion. He will probably appear as an angel of light as he does now. As people are deceived by an angel of light now, so will they be deceived then. He will get his followers from the same place he gets them now: from among the believers. There are more people in this present end-time following delusions than are following the clear truth. Satan will have been bound for a thousand years so that he could not deceive anyone, but he will be loosed so that he will deceive them.

It is during the millennium that the overcomers will be ruling. While saved nations go into the millennium, life goes on because this is not the heavenly eternal state. Then those that are born during this thousand years will be born just as unregenerate as they are now. Those born then will still have to be born again

and receive Christ as their Lord and Savior. By nature, those who will be born during the millennium will be children of Adam, not children of God.

Because Satan will be bound, sin will be held in check during the millennium. The Old Testament depicts the millennium and suggests the possibility of sin entering though it would be dealt with immediately. Isaiah 65:19-20 suggests a warning against sin during the millennium: "... but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed" (verse 20). Zechariah 14:16-20 describes the judgment on those who would disobey in the millennium. The Lord will withhold rain (verses 17-18). They will be smitten with the plague (verse 18).

During the millennial period Jesus the King will be ruling from Zion, not with a golden scepter, but with a rod of iron (Revelation 2:26-27 cf Luke 19:16-19). This implies that the people be held in subjection. This doesn't mean that that they will be trying to rebel because the tempter will be in the pit.

Because Satan will not be present to deceive, and because the unregenerate born during the millennium will be under the righteous rule of Christ, then they will not be as wicked as they are in the present age. All the overcomers, the righteous nations, and the resurrected saints will have influence on them as salt and light. Their sin will be held in check by the righteous rule of Christ and the presence of the righteous saints.

The present situation which occurs within the Church illustrates this. There will be people in the Church that don't outwardly appear as tares. Outwardly, those who will yet fall away still conform to what all the marks of a true Christian should be because they are under the influence of the saints in the church of which they consider themselves a member. Yet they will still fall away. It will be the same after the millennium. When the tempter and deceiver is let loose again, then their true nature will come forth. God does the same now by letting Satan loose for a time in our church to separate the wheat from the chaff.

Where will Satan get his followers after the millennium? The same place he gets them now: he will get those who conform outwardly while under righteous restraints and righteous influences, but are never born again. And we can assume that some will apostasize and follow an angel of light because people do it now.

Gog and Magog

Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle...(Revelation 20:7-8).

The problem of the origin of the armies of God and Magog is solved by the suggested explanation above as to where Satan will get his followers.

Views

Equated with the Gog and Magog of Ezekiel 38 and 39.

The rebellion after the millennium is equated in two views with the Gog and Magog of Ezekiel 38 and 39.

The first view holds that the Gog and Magog of Ezekiel refers to the battle of Armageddon described in Revelation 16 and 19. This view holds that Armageddon takes place at the close of tribulation and before the millennium.

The second view equates the Gog and Magog of Ezekiel with the Gog and Magog of Revelation 20:8. This places Ezekiel's battle at the close of the millennium.

Though the terminology is similar, there is no relationship between the Gog and Magog of Ezekiel and that of Book of Revelation. The time element of both views is out of harmony with Scripture and will take a person's eyes off what will happen. God is going to deal on behalf of Israel against a northern confederacy.

cy which appears to be Russia and her allies right on the mountains of Israel. This should not be confused with the battle of Armageddon before the millennium, or with the battle of Revelation 20:8 after the millennium.

The correct translation of Ezekiel 38:2 is: "...Gog of the land of Magog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal..." *Rosh* in Hebrew means head, beginning, chief, or prince. That is why the King James Version translated it as the *chief prince of Meshech and Tubal*.

Gog is the leader of a northern confederacy of nations, and Magog is his land which consists of Rosh (Russia), Meshech (Moscow), and Tubal (Tobolsk). Moscow represents European Russia, and Tobolsk is Asiatic Russia. Some of the nations that will be in confederacy with her are Persia (Iran), Ethiopia, Lybia, Gomer (East Germany), and Togarmeh (Turkey).

The northern confederacy of Ezekiel 38 and 39 is not a description of the Battle of Armageddon, but it is the prediction of an invasion of Palestine in the latter days (38:8, 16). Israel will have already been restored to Palestine as predicted in chapter 37, and will be living in rest and peace. Then in the middle of the seventieth week of Daniel, Gog, the king of the north, will invade Israel. "...and the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over" (Daniel 11:40).

It is in the middle of the seventieth week that Antichrist will turn against Israel (Daniel 9:27). Antichrist, the beast of Revelation 13, will be in a covenant of peace with Israel at the time that Gog will invade Israel. Antichrist will oppose Gog and his invasion, and Gog will be defeated (Ezekiel 39 cf Daniel 11:44). This is not Armageddon, but the initial stage of the events that lead up to Armageddon which will occur at the close of Daniel's seventy weeks.

Reply to the first view:

The Gog of Ezekiel 38 and 39 cannot be equated with the Battle of Armageddon for the following reasons:

(1) Gog is the head of the armies described in the invasion of Ezekiel 38 and 39. But in the Battle of Armageddon, it is clearly the beast Antichrist who will lead the invasion. "And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army" (Revelation 19:19).

(2) In the invasion by Gog, definite allies are mentioned with him (38:5-6), whereas at Armageddon, *all nations* will be gathered against Israel. "For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle..." (Zechariah 14:2). The unclean spirits will go forth to all the kings of the earth to gather them to battle at Armageddon (Revelation 16:13-16). "I will gather all nations..." (Joel 3:2). ". . . for my determination is to gather all nations..." (Zephaniah 3: 8) . "And in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people: all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it" (Zechariah 12:3).

(3) In Ezekiel, Gog comes from the north (38:6, 15; 39: 2, Joel 2), whereas at Armageddon, the nations will come from the whole world.

(4) It will be a time when Israel will be dwelling in peace and safety in her land (Ezekiel 38:11-16). "And thou shalt say, I will go up to the land of unwalled villages; I will go to them that dwell safely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates" (verse 11). But at Armageddon, which will occur at the close of the great tribulation (Revelation 19), Israel will have been suffering persecution at the hands of the beast Antichrist for three and a half years. Antichrist will break his covenant with Israel in the middle of the week (Daniel 9:27).

(5) Gog will come specifically to spoil the land because of Israel's great resources (Ezekiel 38:11-13). Although the nations at Armageddon will take spoil, they will gather against Israel basically to destroy her and the armies of the Lord (Zechariah 14:1-3; Joel 3:2; Revelation 19:19).

(6) Antichrist will be destroyed at the close of Armageddon and cast into the lake of fire (Revelation 19:20), whereas in Ezekiel, it is Gog that is destroyed on the mountains of Israel. Antichrist will oppose Gog when he invades Palestine because Antichrist will be in covenant with Israel until the middle of Daniel's seventieth week (Daniel 11:40-45).

Reply to the second view:

While the first theory placed the time of Gog's invasion at the close of tribulation, this view places it at the close of the millennium.

The Gog of Ezekiel 38 and 39 cannot be equated with the Gog of Revelation 20:8 for the following reasons:

(1) Ezekiel states only a northern confederacy invading Palestine under Gog whereas all nations will be gathered at the close of the millennium in Revelation 20:8.

(2) There is no mention of binding Satan prior to the invasion and rebellion in Ezekiel like in Revelation 20:7.

(3) The invasion of Israel in chapters 38 and 39 of Ezekiel will occur between the restoration of Israel to her land (Ezekiel 37), and the millennium which will come after the invasion (Ezekiel 40-48). Contrasted to that, in Revelation Gog's destruction will be followed by the new heavens and the new earth (Revelation 21-22).

(4) After the battle of Ezekiel, it will take seven months to bury the dead lying about the land (39:12), but in Revelation, they are actually devoured supernaturally by a heavenly fire (20:9).

Gog of Ezekiel refers to some known enemy of the past.

This view holds that the invasion of Gog refers to some known enemy of the past like Babylon, Assyria, or Egypt, and in figurative language, spoke of God destroying them.

But there is no invasion of the past that fits the description of Ezekiel 38 and 39: seven years consumed in disposing of the debris (39:9-10); seven months in burying, the dead (39:12-14).

We know of no invasion of the past where the enemies of Israel were destroyed on the mountains of Israel. This is said of Gog; but invaders like Assyria, Babylon, or Egypt were destroyed in their own lands by other enemies that God sent against them. He sent Persia. Then, finally, this destruction will occur in the latter days (38:8, 16).

There is no relationship between Ezekiel's Gog and Armageddon or Revelation 20:8.

Gog and his confederates will invade Israel in the middle of Daniel's seventieth week. It will be at a time when Israel will be dwelling in peace securely in her land (Ezekiel 38:11). This can't be said of Israel at the close of the great tribulation because her land and city will be devastated, and her people will be scattered (Zechariah 13:8-9; 14:1-3).

Since Antichrist will make his covenant with Israel at the beginning of the tribulation period (Daniel's 70th week), and then will break it in the middle of the week, then it is likewise unlikely that the invasion by Gog could be at the beginning of tribulation. "And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate" (Daniel 9:27).

At the time the king of the north will come into Palestine (Daniel 11:40), Antichrist will still be in covenant with Israel because he will go against Gog for invading the one he is in covenant with. Since he will break that covenant in the middle of the period, then obviously the invasion by Gog has to be right in that time context (Daniel 11:36 ff), because after he breaks the covenant, he will devastate Israel himself.

In Revelation 7:9-17, John had a vision of a great innumerable multitude of Jews and Gentiles being saved out of the great tribulation. It has been suggested that one of the things that will move the multitudes to repentance and salvation will be the destruction of Gog and the allies in the middle of the seventieth week, just before Antichrist will turn against Israel. Why? Three times the destruction of God is called a sign: twice to the Gentiles (Ezekiel 38:23; 39:21), and once to Israel (39:22).

This doesn't mean that at the moment of Gog's destruction all Israel will be saved because that will come as the result of Armageddon, but this sign in the middle of tribulation could be the beginning of what will motivate her to turn to Jesus Christ and be saved. The actual salvation of Israel as a nation is seen in Zechariah 10:10 ff; 14:1 ff; and Romans 11:26. God will weed out the rebels, and the rest of Israel will be saved.

The destruction of Gog has to come some time after the middle of the seventieth week when Antichrist will break his covenant, and before the end of the tribulation period.

In Revelation 13:7 ff, the beast Antichrist will be supreme during his rule. He will have worldwide authority and power. He will have absolute sovereignty (Revelation 13:7-8). If Gog and the northern confederacy were still in existence at this time, then Antichrist would not be supreme.

There is no mention of destruction the northern confederacy in the Battle of Armageddon, only Antichrist, the false prophet, and the nations who will follow Antichrist. So we can assume that Gog and his allies will have been dealt with already. Although

this would not prove Gog's destruction at mid-tribulation, it would certainly disprove his destruction at the end of tribulation.

This view that Ezekiel 38 and 39 will take place some time subsequent to the middle of the tribulation period follows the chronology in the book of Joel: the invasion by the northern kingdom and his utter destruction on the mountains of Israel (2:20). Then there is a clear description of the Battle of Armageddon (3:1-16). Following that is the description of the millennium (3:17-21).

Summary

Israel will make a covenant with the beast Antichrist who will permit her to dwell securely in her land (Ezekiel 38:8; Daniel 9:27).

The king of the north, Gog, and his allies will invade Palestine to gain Israel's riches and natural resources (Ezekiel 38:10-13; Joel 2:121).

Antichrist will go against Gog and his allies, and Gog and his allies will be destroyed on the mountains of Israel (Ezekiel 39:1-4).

Then Antichrist will break his covenant with Israel and move into the land of Palestine and set up his seat of rule there (Daniel 11:44-45).

Doubtless it is at this time that the great coalition of nations will take place with a world government which the U.N. seems to be the beginning of (Revelation 13:7-8; Psalm 2:1-3).

The Battle of Armageddon - When all the nations are gathered to destroy Palestine and Jerusalem, then the Lord will return and fight for Israel. This is the Battle of Armageddon (Revelation 19).

The nations will be overcome, and the nations will be judged.

The seventy-five days between the end of tribulation and the beginning of the millennium which must be a necessary period for God to do all the things that have to be done between the close of the tribulation and the start of the millennium: the judgment of nations; the judgment of the saints; the topographical changes, etc.

Then the millennium will begin with Christ and His saints ruling over the nations with a rod of iron (Zechariah 14; Revelation 2:26-27, chapters 19 and 20).

The White Throne Judgment

Those that were resurrected to life in the first resurrection came forth before the thousand years (Revelation 20:1-6). Those that will be resurrected at the close of the millennium will come forth to judgment at the Great White Throne Judgment (Revelation 20:11-15). "And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death" (verse 14). As far as we know, this is the final event that will take place before the new heavens and new earth described in chapters 21 and 22.

The Destiny of the Lost

It is spoken of as a place of outer darkness where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth (Matthew 8:12; 25:30). Just what that means in connection with the lake of fire is not clear because we would think that fire would give some kind of light.

Jesus speaks of it as everlasting fire (Matthew 25:41).

It is spoken of as eternal destruction and punishment (II Thessalonians 1:9; Matthew 25:46).

It is called gehenna, a place of unquenchable fire (Mark 9:43 ff).

It is the lake of fire (Revelation 20:14; 19:20).

It is a place of torment with fire and brimstone (Revelation 14:9-11).

It is called a furnace of fire (Matthew 13:42).

It is called the second death (Revelation 20: 6, 14; 21:8).

It is described as abiding under the wrath of God (John 3:36; Revelation 14:10; 2:5).

It is seen to be an eternal, unchangeable state (Luke 16:26; Revelation 2:10-12; Matthew 25:41, 46; II Thessalonians 1:9; Mark 9:48; Revelation 14:11; 20:10).

All of these texts indicate that hell, or *gehenna*, or the lake of fire, is not a mere state or condition as some teach, but is an actual place where the wicked are cast, because these descriptions are by the Son of God Himself. A view that is popular among Liberals and some others is that this is a state where the lost suffer remorse. They burn for ever with the lust and desire that is unfulfilled. That is their punishment. They thirst for their old sinful habits.

But all the Biblical texts are quite literal. We have to settle on the fact that if there is a heaven, there is a hell. The same Bible teaches both: "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal" (Matthew 25:46 cf Luke 16:23 if).

These passages disprove annihilationism and restorationism.

Annihilationism

The annihilationists fall into three categories:

Those who believe that the wicked will be annihilated at death. Death is the cessation of existence.

Those that believe that they will be annihilated at judgment. They will be resurrected as shown in Revelation 20 and then cast into the lake of fire and burned up. This is the view held by the Seventh Day Adventists.

Those that believe that they will be annihilated at some future time after suffering in the lake of fire, being punished, for a very long time. Their reasoning is that since only God is eternal, then there can't be anything created that is eternal. Since the lake of fire was created by God for the devil and his angels and for the wicked, therefore it can't be eternal. Therefore the wicked must be annihilated after millions of years.

Restorationism

Universalism.

"Universalism teaches that God, whose nature is love, will ultimately triumph in the salvation of all men. Salvation of only a part of the human race, or eternal punishment of the wicked would constitute a triumph of evil and failure on God's behalf. Therefore, judgment and punishment are remedial and will ultimately lead all to repentance, and the final harmony of all souls with God" (Every Wind of Doctrine, Dr. Hobart E. Freeman: page 148).

Ultimate reconciliation.

This theory holds that the fires of hell will bring sinners to repentance. They will be restored ultimately, or else God's love would be a failure at the cross if He doesn't save everything He created. They mean by that, that not only will the wicked be saved, but the devil and demons, everything that God created will one day be reconciled and restored ultimately (Every Wind of Doctrine, Dr. Hobart E. Freeman: page 149-151).

New Heavens, New Earth, and New Jerusalem

New Heavens and New Earth

We are told in four different places that there will be created new heavens and a new earth.

For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind (Isaiah 65:17).

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 (Isaiah 66:22).

...the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up...Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness (II Peter 3:10-13).

And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea (Revelation 21:1).

Just as God created the present heavens and earth, then by a direct act of creation, we are promised that another heaven and earth will be created. When that happens, our faith in Genesis will be vindicated because all of the evolutionary theories will be seen to be empty, vain, erroneous, and intellectual theories of men who by their own rebellious hearts could not receive the plain teachings of the Word of God. If He can create the new heavens and new earth by an act of creation, then He would have been able to create the present world.

The theology of most that would have us spending eternity in heaven will be corrected. We will be inhabiting New Jerusalem

that is coming down, and the new earth will be for us to go about in as we please.

We will be with the Lord. Where ever He will be is where we will be. New Jerusalem will be His seat of power. Even the Father will have His throne in New Jerusalem (Revelation 22:3). Jesus is preparing our place in New Jerusalem now (John 14:3).

Jesus said in John 14:3 that where He is we will be. He said He will come again which means He is returning. New Jerusalem will be coming down. Jesus will be dwelling in New Jerusalem (Revelation 21:3). We are looking for a new heavens and a new earth (II Peter 3:13). Putting it all together, the eternal abode of the saints will be on the new earth in the city New Jerusalem which will come down from heaven. It will be a new spiritual city. It will be spiritual, but real even as our new bodies will be spiritual.

New Jerusalem

Views As to the Nature of New Jerusalem

It is a mystical city.

This is the view of those who spiritualize everything possible in the Word of God.

This is the view of most of the denominations. It is based on Revelation 21:2, 9-10. Because John saw New Jerusalem coming down as a bride adorned for her husband (verse 2); and because verse 9 says: "I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife," they conclude that New Jerusalem is not a literal city, but it is the Church, the bride. New Jerusalem signifies the glorified Church, not a literal city. The literal, or heavenly, city is in heaven (Hebrews 12:22-23), and there is where it will stay.

Reply:

- (1) The advocates of the mystical view encounter the same problems with Revelation 21 and 22 as they do with Ezekiel

40 through 48 which speaks of the millennial Jerusalem. The descriptions of the cities with the multitude of minute details are senseless if they are not to be taken literally; i.e. if it doesn't speak of literal cities in both cases.

- (2) It is stated in Revelation 22:3 that the throne of God and the throne of the Lamb are in New Jerusalem. If we are the city, that would make no sense, although they say that the throne of God is in the believer's heart.
- (3) The statement that there is no temple in New Jerusalem (Revelation 21:22) rules out the millennial city as well as a mystical city. One wouldn't expect a temple in a mystical city.
- (4) The saints are represented again and again as distinct from the city. The city being prepared as a bride makes it plain that it isn't the bride (22:2).

"...and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God...II (3: 12). The city which will come down out of heaven is distinguished from those who will receive its name on their foreheads.

- (5) Pronouns are used which show distinction between the city and the people (22:2-5). Abraham was looking for the city (Hebrews 11:9-10). He would not have been looking for himself. "But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels..." (Hebrews 12:22-23).
- (6) If the saints are the city, then how can they be said to reign in the city (Revelation 22:5)? How can the nations be said to enter into this city if the people are the city (21:24-27)?

- (7) If New Jerusalem is a mystical city, or really the Church, why the names of the twelve tribes of Israel on its gates (21: 12)? Since their names are on the gates, and the names of the twelve apostles are on the foundations, it simply means that Israel is part of New Jerusalem as is the Church.

It is a parable.

This view holds that New Jerusalem is not a literal city, but a parable describing the invisible spirit world. The Pulpit Commentary says: "The city as described in Revelation 21:22 never existed, and according to the laws of architecture and gravity, never can. It is simply a pictorial illustration of heaven, and describes it as a city, or commonwealth, of good."

It is true, of course, that this would be impossible according to the laws of architecture and gravity, but New Jerusalem is a spiritual city, literal and real, but not subject to the natural laws.

It is the millennial city of Zion.

New Jerusalem is a literal city, but it is the literal city of Zion during the millennium. Advocates of this theory tell us that John, after he described the eternal state in 21:1-8, redescribes the millennial age in more detail.

Their reasons:

Because the healing of the nations is mentioned in Revelation 22:2, then it must be referring back to the millennial time. Since in the eternal state, "there shall be no more death, neither shall there be any more pain" (Revelation 21:4), then how could there be the need of healing? Because Ezekiel 47 also speaks of a tree during the millennium whose leaves are used for healing, they say that Revelation 22 must also be referring to the millennium.

Reply:

The presence of a tree in the eternal state is not out of order any more than the presence of a tree in the millennium, or the presence of a tree that gave life in the Garden of Eden. There can be conditions that obtain in certain contexts where trees could heal or sustain life, or give knowledge. We cannot try to explain it since we haven't experienced it. Since we haven't experienced eating of the fruit of these trees, we cannot explain what it really is.

To say that because the tree has healing leaves it has to be before the eternal state is no argument at all. There were trees in the Garden before sin entered, and they are promised in the millennium. There was no sickness in the Garden, and there won't be any during the millennium.

As the tree that gave life in the Garden is called the tree of life (Genesis 3:22), this tree is called the tree of life: "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God" (Revelation 2:7).

They say that because of the presence of the nations this cannot refer to the eternal state (21:24-27). While there will be no nations in the eternal state, there will be in the millennium. In the eternal state God will deal with all men as individuals. There will be no earthly kingdoms of nations, we are told.

Reply:

- (1) Israel's national identification will be maintained in the new heavens and the new earth. "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" (Isaiah 66:22).
- (2) They are trying to read too much out of Revelation 21:24-27. All that is being said is that the nations and kings will bring their glory and honor into New Jerusalem. Whatever glory and honor the nations had during the millennium will now be given over to the total oneness of the glory of

the New Jerusalem. In other words, there will be no glory outside New Jerusalem. The nations and the kings will have to bring whatever glory God bestowed on them into the city.

The same is true of the saints. We will have glory, but our glory will just be another light in New Jerusalem.

It has its beginnings in the millennium.

Revelation 2:19 ff describes the eternal city and the eternal state of the Church, but this eternal state will have its beginning in the millennium.

When the Church is joined in marriage to the bridegroom (Revelation 19), she will then receive her prepared place (John 14), and she will never move out of it. The Church will enter into her eternal state of rapture.

This view holds that it is at this time that New Jerusalem will descend from heaven (21:9-10) . New Jerusalem will descend from heaven and the Church will descend from heaven. This is why John saw both the city and the bride, because he saw them both descending just before the millennium at the marriage supper of the Lamb. The earth will not yet be in its eternal state, but the Church will be.

Problems:

- (1) The prophecies of the millennium in both the Old and New Testaments again and again show Christ ruling from Mount Zion on the earth, not from New Jerusalem (Zechariah 14; Micah 4).
- (2) To follow their logical sequence in chapter 21, the descent of New Jerusalem is said to come after the creation of the new heavens and the new earth (verses 2, 9-10). Those that hold to this view postulate two descents of New Jerusalem. The descent in verse 2 is at the

commencement of the eternal state, and verse 10 is at the beginning of the millennium. The city that will come down at the beginning of the millennium will have to be temporarily withdrawn until the judgment of the present heavens and earth is over so that it won't be destroyed with them. Then New Jerusalem will come down again.

- (3) According to this view, New Jerusalem will be suspended above the earth. All the nations that will go into the millennium, and all those born during the millennium, will have physical bodies. How will these be able to get up into the city?
- (4) When Jesus returns at the Second Advent, His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives (Acts 1:11-12). When His feet touch the mount it will actually split in two (Zechariah 4:4).

Revelation 21 and 22 describe the eternal state.

Revelation 20 describes the millennium; chapters 21 and 22 clearly state that it will all be new. The use of the term new suggests that this speaks of the eternal state.

We are told specifically of three things that will be created new: new heavens, a new earth; and a new Jerusalem. Not only that, but everything will be new (verse 5).

We are told that during the millennium there will be some topographical changes (Zechariah 14:4, 10; Isaiah 35; Ezekiel 40-48). We are told in the New Testament that the earth will be restored; that creation itself will participate in its deliverance from its bondage of corruption when the matured sons of God are manifested. But there is nothing said of anything being created new in these passages, only restoration.

Since New Jerusalem is related to the new heavens and new earth (21:1-2), then we would expect verse 10 to be speaking of the same eternal state.

The characteristics of the city are eternal, not millennial. This can be seen by making by making some comparisons:

- (1) New Jerusalem will have no temple (21:22), while the heart of the millennial teaching is around the temple in Jerusalem (Ezekiel 40-48).
- (2) There will be no night in New Jerusalem (22:5), but it is implied that there will be during the millennium. Years are made up of months, weeks, and days. Days are divided by the sun rising and setting.
- (3) All will be saved in New Jerusalem (21:7). That will not be true in the millennium. Isaiah 65 speaks of a sinner. Zechariah 14 speaks of Egypt's punishment if she is disobedient. The rebels at the close of the millennium will come from the unregenerate during the millennium (Revelation 20:7).
- (4) There will be no death in New Jerusalem (21:4), but the possibility of death during the millennium is suggested in Is 65:20.
- (5) The earthly description of Ezekiel's city is not to be compared with the other-worldly description of New Jerusalem during the eternal state.
- (6) The length of the saints life and reign is to be for ever (22:5), whereas in the millennium we will reign for a thousand years.
- (7) The throne of God and Christ will be in the New Jerusalem (22:3), but all the millennial passages speak only of Christ reigning in the millennium.

Life In the Eternal State

Characteristics

What will Not Be There

The seas (21:1).

The seas set the boundaries of nations and keep them separated. Without the seas separating the nations, there would be much more war and conquest. But then there will be no more separation because there will be no more separation in our hearts.

God uses the sea as judgment in typhoons, hurricanes, tidal waves, etc.

Death (21:4).

Death reigns at present (Romans 5:14). When Adam sinned, death passed upon all men. The last event of life for all men is death. John 3:16 promises eternal life to those who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. In order to give us eternal life, then death has to be abolished.

Sorrow, crying, and pain (21:4).

Sorrow is mental or emotional suffering which is caused by loss, trouble, or disappointment, etc. Crying is the result of sorrow and grief. When the cause of what makes us sorry is removed, we can neither be sorrowful nor cry, because there would be nothing to cry about. God will wipe away all tears from our eyes.

Pain will be gone. Even though we know that pain has no right on us, we still have to rebuke some pain. But then it won't even be there. There will be nothing that can hurt us or cause us pain.

Darkness (21:25; 22:5).

There will be no darkness because "the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is light there" (21:23). God is light (I John 1 :5). Jesus is called the light of the world, and He gives light to everyone who enters the world.

But light spoken of here is not a figure of speech. It is light for the spiritual dimension. It is not created light as we know it. This is light of another order beyond our comprehension or understanding. God is not a material substance. God is Spirit which is light, pure light; light that no one can approach to. No evil can ever penetrate this light (I Timothy 6:16).

God is called the Father of lights (James 1:17). John the Baptist, when he said he was not the Messiah, also said that he was not that light, but Jesus is the true light (John 1:9).

Paul, on the road to Damascus at his conversion, saw a great light, brighter than the noon day sun (Acts 9). Christians in the New Testament are called children of the light which is the same thing as saying they are children of God who is Light.

Satan counterfeits this light by appearing as an angel of light (II Corinthians 11:14). But he is really not light, but darkness because we are told that he has rule over the powers of darkness. Among other reasons God gives us the contrast of light and darkness, night and day, to show us that there is such a difference that they are opposite. He has drawn spiritual lessons all through the Bible from these two realities that we experience.

Jesus came into the world that He created, and His own received Him not (John 1:11) because men loved darkness rather than light (3:19). They didn't want to come to the light because their deeds were evil. Jesus said of Satan and to the religious leaders that came to arrest Him: "This is your hour, and the powers of darkness" (Luke 22:53).

Night, or darkness, in the Bible speaks of spiritual ignorance. "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light:

They that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined" (Isaiah 9:2 cf Matthew 4:16). "To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house" (Is 42:7).

It is at night, or in darkness, that people sin sins they wouldn't commit in the light. Chains of darkness imprison sinning angels (Jude 6, II Peter 2:4). Darkness describes the life of sinners: "The way of the wicked is as darkness" (Proverbs 4:19). Darkness describes the day of the Lord as judgment for sinners: "A day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness" (Joel 2: 2). The unregenerate abide in darkness and hate the light (John 3:19-21).

Sin (21:27).

Only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life will be there. There will be no sinners there. Here sin is everywhere, even in the church. The new heavens and new earth will be righteous (II Peter 3:13). This will be better than conditions in the Garden before the fall because the tempter was still around then, but in the eternal state, he will be cast in the lake of fire for eternity.

This will be an eternity without temptation or sin of any kind.

No more curse (22:3).

The awful curses of Deuteronomy 28 will not be there because the throne of God and the Lamb will be there.

What will Be There

Fellowship with Jesus Christ.

It will be an eternity in fellowship with Jesus Christ. Some have seen Him in vision or dream. The apostles had the blessing of three years with Him. But we will be in fellowship with Him for eternity. "I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:3). "Father, I will that

they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am" (17:24 cf I Corinthians 13:12; II Corinthians 5:6-8; Revelation 2:26-27; 3:21; 21:3; 22:3-5).

A time of entrance into full knowledge.

"For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known" (I Corinthians 13: 12). This does not imply that we will know everything because only God knows everything; nor will we know everything we will know all at once. But we will have an eternity of acquiring wisdom. But we will come into the fullness of knowledge. Now we have to be satisfied with studying and learning.

An eternity of glory for us.

"For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (II Corinthians 4:17). We will be glorified (Colossians 3:4). If we suffer with Him we will be glorified with Him (Romans 8:17-18).

There is more to being glorified than simply having resurrection bodies. The glory we will enter into is the glory that God enables us to share with Himself. The person who is equipped with the gifts; who is used greatly by God in this life; who believes all of the Word of God and walks in faith, and receives tremendous answers to prayer; he is in a real sense participating in some of the glory that he will bask in and walk in for eternity. These are aspects of participating in the things that come from God.

God is the manifestation of glory. When John wrote of the Messiah (John 1: 14-18), he spoke of beholding His glory. What they saw was a carpenter, Jesus of Nazareth. But John was speaking of seeing Him in His demonstration of heavenly powers, of the wisdom of God, of the knowledge of God, of truth, etc. They beheld His glory in His life and in all His works.

So there is more to glory than just being glorified in the sense of a resurrected body.

An eternity of service to the Lord;

We will be occupied in an eternity of glorious service to the Lord. "...the throne of God and the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him" (Revelation 22:3). This is not referring to the cherubim or seraphim and angels. We are His servants. There will be positions that involve authority. While in the millennium rulership is implied, we don't know what it is in the eternal state. There will be no place for the lazy, the lukewarm, the indifferent. There will be new challenges, new things to learn. Perhaps overcomers will rule whole galaxies. The universe is so vast that the only thing greater is God's invisible heaven.

Some think that there will be those, perhaps the ones that didn't overcome, who will inhabit the earth, but not New Jerusalem. A person can only endure the glory that he has the capacity to endure. The capacity for those great rewards and glory has to be developed before the eternal state. The Scriptures state that some will be saved as if by fire.

The Bible doesn't say anything about burning up the universe, only the heavens and earth as we know it. It didn't participate in the fall as far as we know. All the universe glorifies God. David magnified God when he saw the heavens (Psalm 8), and we are told to magnify God when we look at the heavens (Romans 1).

Satan's domain is in the atmosphere, but that is only a small part of the universe when compared to the rest of it. All the rest of the universe is pure and untainted.

Overcomers will probably have supernatural authority and occupations that we can't even dream of.

An eternity filled with unspeakable joy.

This will be a time of eternal, unspeakable joy (21:4). Here we have joy occasionally because a lot of things enter in to mar one's joy. We can enter into the experience of joy now, but it is only partial, a small foretaste of what we will have. But there it is going to be true joy, the joy of the Lord. We can walk in that joy even if we don't always feel it until we confess it.

But over there it will just be there because there will nothing allowed there to mar our joy.

