

SERMONS & LECTURES

BOB WINTON



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Acknowledgment and Preface

These various commentaries and other Biblical studies were developed through many years of hard and close study of the Bible. I have had an insatiable appetite to learn all of God's Word possible. I grew up in the Beans Creek Community of Coffee County Tennessee. My family started attending the Lord's church at Beans Creek in 1949, where I was privileged to have sister Ethel Croft as an outstanding Bible class teacher. All seven member of my father's family were baptized into Christ, plus my wife, Marie. Each of our five children also obeyed the gospel.

Sister Croft greatly encouraged me to study the Bible and to become a good worker for the Lord. I tried not to cause her any disappointment. In 1978, after preaching for many years, the brethren at Beans Creek invited me to conduct a gospel meeting. Sister Croft, though she was in advanced years and had to drive a good distance, did not miss any of the services.

Since first becoming acquainted with the gospel more than seventy years ago, I have had the honor to hear some of the greatest gospel preachers of the time. Some of these well-known to most members of the Lord's church, but some of them labored in the shadows, learning and dispensing the truth of God quietly and effectively. Not so many people in the brotherhood today knew such preachers as Luke Gibbs and Henry Simmons. I have learned much and have been profited greatly from many gospel preachers and teachers through these many years. I am fully appreciative also to those many sound brethren who have published books which I have had the privilege to study. I began preaching in July of 1961 in Italy.

A debt of gratitude is owed by many to the instructors of Memphis School of Preaching for the tremendous work they did through the years, patiently teaching their students the wonderful word of life. I am especially grateful to these great men who were serving in this capacity during 1970-72, when I attended the school: Roy Hearn Frank Young, Richard Curry, Charles Pledge, Ray Hawk and E.L. Whitaker.

I claim no originality for all of the material presented in the material included in my books. There is no way to give proper credit to all who have contributed to the information I have learned, but in every case possible, acknowledgment is cited. I have attempted to be as accurate, clear and concise as my finite knowledge allows, but, as with all human productions, there will doubtless be imperfections. Our grasp of the infinite will of God is not absolute, despite the diligence of our efforts; there is always more to learn.

Some have incorrectly thought that my books are merely expansions of the notes I took while studying at MSOP. But those notes were skimpy at best, and were not in my possession when I wrote my material. The notes were put together in connection with Bible classes I have taught over much time. For several years, a hundred or more hours weekly were required as I prepared to teach two different Bible books each week, Sunday morning and Wednesday evening, while at the same time, during full-time work as a gospel preacher. These notes became the "Outlined Bible Commentaries" that have been made available to countless people. "Outlined" does not imply skimpy—these are full-length books.

It has not been my aim to make money through these efforts—indeed, we barely cover our expenses. Many of my books have been given away without charge to the recipients. An uncounted numbers of books and compact discs were ordered and shipped out, for which no payment was ever received. A good many of these non-paying costumers were gospel preachers. I have learned from brethren who operated Bible Bookstores that they have had the same problem. One of these brethren reported that he had to secure his supply of Bibles, in locked cases, to prevent their being stolen by preachers. How sad!

The Bible quotations in my books are from the King James Version, unless noted otherwise. These books were intentionally put on 8.5 by 11 inch pages, to make the outline format easier to view. A normal hardback book contains about 800 words per page; my pages contain twice that number of words. The spiral-bound or wire-bound books are much less expensive to produce. My wife and I have done all the manual labor required to produce the books. The supplies, software and equipment are very costly. Marie helped as much as she could despite the dementia she has had for several years— and her many surgeries and broken bones and heartaches. She moved into eternity on November 25, 2022.

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The Balm in Gilead

A. INTRODUCTION.

1. Jeremiah 8:20-22:

- a. "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved. For the hurt of the daughter of my people am I hurt; I am black; astonishment hath taken hold on me. Is there no balm in Gilead; is there no physician there? why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?"
 - 1) The "balm in Gilead" was an aromatic, medicinal plant. Compare: "And they sat down to eat bread: and they lifted up their eyes and looked, and, behold, a company of Ishmeelites came from Gilead with their camels bearing spicery and balm and myrrh, going to carry it down to Egypt"(Gen. 37:25).
 - 2) The questions the prophet raises are both answered in the affirmative—there was balm in Gilead and there was a physician present. The ailment suffered by Israel was sin and rebellion against God.
 - 3) Both the medicine and the doctor were at hand. Why, then, were they not healed? They did not want *God's* cure. Judah could have avoided the punishment that was in the offing. God had warned them he would send the Babylonians against them, with the awful destruction that would result. Their ruin would not be Heaven's fault; they could only blame themselves.
 - a) God gave them ample warning, opportunity, and motivation; his mercy was readily available; their deliverance could have been easily effected. "
 - b) But when the invaders came, their time of probation would be over; the temple and the city would be laid waste, many citizens would be slain, and thousands would be carried into exile.
 - 4) The Babylonian army assaulted Judah three different times:
 - a) In 606 B.C., they invaded and conquered the land, killing some and carrying many into slavery.
 - b) In 597 B.C., they returned to reconquer the land, killing others and carrying off many.
 - c) In 586 B.C., they returned for the final time, destroying Jerusalem and the temple, killing many, and enslaving another large number.
 - b. These are very sad words, written by the *Weeping Prophet* Jeremiah, concerning the wayward people of ancient Israel. The prophet had earlier recorded this remarkable statement: "Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein" (Jer. 6: 16).
 - c. The religious leaders of Jeremiah's time were teaching error:
 - 1) Jeremiah 5:30-31: "A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land; The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof?"
 - 2) Jeremiah 6:13-14: "For from the least of them even unto the greatest of them every one is given to covetousness; and from the prophet even unto the priest every one dealeth falsely. They have healed also the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace."
 - 3) Their spiritual condition had not improved from the time of Isaiah, many years earlier: "From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment" (Isa. 1 :6).
 - d. At the time of Jeremiah chapter eight, they remained in this rebellious condition.
 - 1) Israel (the nation and the accountable individuals) were in a wounded condition. The troubles which their pagan enemies were bringing upon them, the rebellious state of the nation, and the sinful practices of the people.
 - 2) The secret to the healing of the nation's woes and the curing of the individual's sins were the same—a sincere return to God's word!
- #### 2. Unfortunately, this Same Spiritual Dilemma Has Contaminated Our Modern Society.
- a. Our world needs the spiritual medicine of the Gospel of Christ. Our nation started out on the right foundation—with God and his word as the basis of its existence. The Almighty blessed America greatly when we adhered to the great precepts of his will in our time, we have witnessed the repudiation of God and his word by all three branches of the federal government. State and local

governments have also fallen into this deadly pit. Our nation needs healing!

- b. A greater number of Americans have turned from God's truth. Many have been led astray by the false doctrines of counterfeit "Christian" religions. Multitudes have been deceived by false scientific theories regarding how our world came to be. "Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD... " (Psa. 33:12). How dreadful, therefore, must be the condition of the nation who has rejected the God of Heaven!
- c. The one disease that lies at the heart of a nation and an individual is sin. Sin is transgressing God's word (1 John 3 :4). As more and more citizens received pardon for their personal sins, so the nation is improved. When a nation begins to turn back to the great principles of God's truths, it obtains a healthy standing with the Creator.
 - 1) James 1:13-15: "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But everyman is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."
 - 2) Romans 6:23: "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."
 - 3) Matthew 9:10-13: "And it came to pass, as Jesus sat at meat in the house, behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with him and his disciples. And when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto his disciples, Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners? But when Jesus heard that, he said unto them, They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

B. IT IS HARD TO GET THE AVERAGE PERSON TO ACCEPT AND OBEY GOD'S TRUTH.

1. Our Lord Warned Against This Rebellious Attitude.

- a. Matthew 7:13-14: "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."
- b. Luke 13:24: "Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able." [Why is this so? Partly because many have been prejudiced against the truth; many others will not study; great numbers are worldly-minded].
- c. Luke 9:23-24: "And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it." [Our Lord is very demanding of those who would follow him; the pathway to Heaven is simple, but the dangers, hardships, and evil people are many].
- d. Galatians 6:7-8: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."

2. The Truth Is Not Popular with Many People. but One Can Start a False Religious System Easily.

- a. A person with good looks, a glib tongue, and no scruples could rent a large tent, hire some religious music-makers, advertise widely a "miracle-working" and "Holy-Ghost" crusade, and that they would announce when the Lord will return.
 - 1) During the 1980s, religious racketeers were spreading their false doctrines all over the country, especially over television. Millions were beguiled into accepting their deadly error and duped into sending vast sums of money. Some of these charlatans were exposed and sent to prison; others were caught up in their own sinful conduct.
 - 2) Jim Jones hoodwinked a great number of people. He led nearly a thousand of them to South America, where almost every one of them committed suicide or were otherwise slain. Mr. Jones convinced his followers that he was a great servant of God, but he was serving only the devil.
 - 3) The outgrowth of these evil works was the destruction of multitudes of precious souls by the devil's doctrine they proclaimed, the wasting of money on wicked enterprises, and caused millions of Americans to turn away from true Christianity.
- b. The so-called "miracle-workers," spell-binders, false prophets, and deceivers have done more to hinder the progress of the truth than all of the physical persecution that Satan could arouse. At the same time, and for centuries, the counterfeit sectarian movements [Protestant, Catholic, and cults] have continued their beguiling efforts. Regarding the latter groups, many of these leaders believe

- they are serving God.
- c. How much poison does it take to make a tasty item into a deadly dish? Read the ingredients on a container of rat poison; you will find that only tiny fraction of the contents is poison. How much false doctrine is necessary for a religious system to become deadly to the soul?
 - 1) John 8:32: "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." [Since truth saves, religious error condemns].
 - 2) 2 John 1:9: "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son."
 - 3) James 2:10: "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all."
 - 4) Revelation 22: 18-19: "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."
 - 5) Colossians 3:17: "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him." [We must have the Lord's approval for every one of our religious beliefs and practices].
 - d. Only the Great Physician can heal the sin-sick soul! And his only means of providing this cure is through his inspired Gospel!
 - 1) Romans 1:16-17: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is revealed a righteousness of God from faith unto faith: as it is written, But the righteous shall live by faith."
 - 2) Mark 16: 15-16: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned. "
 - 3) Acts 10:34-35: "And Peter opened his mouth and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to him."
3. Why Do So Many Good People Turn to False Teachers, Fables, and Error?
- a. Ancient Israel did what multitudes are doing today:
 - 1) Isaiah 5:20-21: "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!"
 - 2) Isaiah 30:8-13: "Now go, write it before them in a table, and note it in a book, that it may be for the time to come for ever and ever: That this is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of the LORD: Which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits: Get you out of the way, turn aside out of the path, cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us. Wherefore thus saith the Holy One of Israel, Because ye despise this word, and trust in oppression and perverseness, and stay thereon: Therefore this iniquity shall be to you as a breach ready to fall, swelling out in a high wall, whose breaking cometh suddenly at an instant."
 - 3) Isaiah 58: I: "Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins."
 - b. Our Lord revealed that future generations would fall victim to fables.
 - 1) 2 Timothy 4:1-5: "I charge thee in the sight of God, and of Christ Jesus, who shall judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: preach the word; be urgent in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure the sound doctrine; but, having itching ears, will heap to themselves teachers after their own lusts; and will turn away their ears from the truth, and turn aside unto fables. But be thou sober in all things, suffer hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfil thy ministry."
 - 2) Second Thessalonians 2:1-12: "Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come. Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and
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the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things? And now you know what is restraining, that he may be revealed in his own time. For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way. And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming. The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (NKJV).

- 3) Acts 20:28-32: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. 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. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears. And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified."
- c. Foolish and worldly men think more highly of pleasant falsehoods than of demanding truths. Many want an instant gratification for their fears and wants, but just because a smooth speaker gives them an agreeable response, does not guarantee it is according to God's will.
4. The Very Attitude Our Lord Met During His Public Ministry Is Rampant Today.
 - a. Matthew 13:10-17: "And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables? He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath. Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear. For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them."
 - b. John 8:30-40: "As he spake these words, many believed on him. Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free? Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed. I know that ye are Abraham's seed; but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you. I speak that which I have seen with my Father: and ye do that which ye have seen with your father. They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham. But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham."
 - c. Matthew 7:21-23: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."
 - d. Paul likewise was confronted by this same rebellion: "And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into his lodging; to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from

morning till evening. And some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not. And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers, Saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive: For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it. And when he had said these words, the Jews departed, and had great reasoning among themselves" (Acts 28:23-29).

C. **THE GREAT PHYSICIAN IS ALWAYS IN HIS OFFICE.**

1. Christ is Presented in the New Testament as the Great Physician.

- a. His expertise is with the soul of man:
 - 1) Matthew 9:10-13: "And it came to pass, as Jesus sat at meat in the house, behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with him and his disciples. And when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto his disciples, Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners? But when Jesus heard that, he said unto them, They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."
 - 2) Luke 19:10: "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."
 - 3) 1 Peter 2:24: "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed."
- b. Medical doctors are usually experts at recognizing the problem, knowing the remedy, and are concerned with the welfare of the patient.
- c. Christ knows the problem well of a sinful soul, has the complete and unfailing remedy, and is vitally concerned with each individual patient.

2. The Great Physician's Speciality is the Disease of Sin.

- a. He knows every variety of sin; there is no need for any testing.
- b. This disease is universal:
 - 1) Ecclesiastes 7:20: "For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not."
 - 2) Romans 3:23: "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."
 - 3) John 5: 19: "And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness."
- c. Sin is highly contagious:
 - 1) Eve caught it and led Adam into it.
 - 2) It spread to the descendants of Adam and Eve.
 - 3) It contaminated the whole race of man: "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" (Gen. 6:5).
- d. There is an epidemic of sin in every generation, affecting every accountable individual.
- e. It cannot cure itself: worsens with time.
 - 1) The longer one delays treatment, the more imbedded it becomes.
 - 2) The longer it afflicts a man, the more difficult it is to cure, since patient grows hardened
- f. No human agency can cure it; all of man's knowledge, skill, and power cannot remove the guilt of a single sin.
- g. The Bible exposes our folly if we deny having sinned:
 - 1) We deceive Ourselves—1 John 1:8.
 - 2) We make God a liar—1 John 1:10.
 - 3) The truth is not in us—1 John 1 :8.
 - 4) God's word is not in us—1 John 1:10.
- h. Left untreated, this disease is always fatal:
 - 1) Romans 6:23: "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."
 - 2) James 1:13-15: "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But everyman is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."

3. All Accountable People Who Need His Care Fall Into Different Categories.

- a. Some are like the lost coin of Luke 15:8-10: "Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it? And when she hath found it, she calleth her friends and her neighbours together, saying, Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost. Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth."
 - 1) These are lost but do not know they are lost; they may feel safe; they may deny being lost.
 - 2) John 16:2: "They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service."
 - 3) Acts 23: 1: "And Paul, earnestly beholding the council, said, Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day."
 - 4) his condition describes most lost people; they either do not know they are lost, or do not believe they are lost, or do not care that they are lost.
 - b. Some are like the lost sheep of Luke 15:4-7: "What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost. I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance."
 - 1) These are lost and know they are lost, but do not know the way back home.
 - a) Acts 2:37: "Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?"
 - b) Acts 9:6: "And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do."
 - c) Acts 16:30: "And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"
 - 2) These are confused about religion; they are teachable if we can get to them in time, before they grow hardened or are beguiled by false doctrine.
 - c. Some are like the lost boy of Luke 15:11-24: "And he said, A certain man had two sons: And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living. And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living. And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want. And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him. And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants. And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry."
 - 1) These are lost, they know they are lost, and they know the way back home; they need the proper motivation to return.
 - 2) This describes those who know truth but are impenitent, or who delay, or those who are proud, or those who are deficient in personal faith.
 - d. Some are like the elder brother of Luke 15:25-32: "Now his elder son was in the field: and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard musick and dancing. And he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant. And he said unto him, Thy brother is come; and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound. And he was angry, and would not go in: therefore came his father out, and intreated him. And he answering said to his father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment: and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends: But as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf And he said unto
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him, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine. It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found."

- 1) Such characters exhibit self-righteousness, and are unconcerned about their own salvation or the salvation of others.
 - 2) This is the attitude the man had who took better care of his fine horses than he did of his own precious children.
 - 3) The elder brother was more concerned about the fatted calf than his own brother.
4. Even God's Children Occasionally Stumble into an Act of Sin.
- a. Most often, such sins are private; sometimes they are public: the confession should be as public as the offense.
 - b. We do not daily live in sin, but occasionally stumble through weakness or inattention.
 - c. We know about it in most cases; we know what the proper steps are that we must take.
5. The Great Physician Is Fully Qualified to Heal Spiritual Diseases.
- a. He know the patients:
 - 1) He knows our strengths and weaknesses.
 - 2) John 2:24-25: "But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men, And needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man."
 - b. He knows the disease and its many symptoms: "For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies" (Matt. 15:19).
 - c. He knows that the disease of sin originates inside the individual: "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death" (Jas. 1:13-15).
 - d. The Lord's remedy affects and changes the heart; it uproots the source of the problem.
 - 1) Faith changes our love from sin and the world to the Savior.
 - 2) Repentance changes our practice from serving sin to serving the Savior.
 - 3) Baptism removes the guilt of our sins, and makes us as pure as a little child.
6. He Knows God, the One Who Pardons Our Past Sins
- a. "[God] will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim 2:4-5).
 - b. He has power and authority to offer the cure:
 - 1) Matthew 28:18: "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth."
 - 2) Acts 4: 12: "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."
 - c. He is concerned about all of his patients:
 - 1) Luke 19:41-42: "And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, Saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes."
 - 2) Matthew 23:37: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!"
 - 3) 1 Peter 5:5-6: "Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time."
 - 4) Hebrews 13: 5: "Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."
7. The Great Physician Has the Unfailing Remedy We All Need.
- a. His remedy is his shed blood:
 - 1) Matthew 26:28: "For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."
 - 2) 1 Peter 1:18-19: "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."
 - b. The remedy works only if it is taken according to his directions.
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- 1) Iodine can heal a wound, but only if it is applied directly; it will cause harm if taken internally.
- 2) Aspirin can relieve a headache, but it must be taken internally; it is not designed to help if it is applied directly to the head.
- c. The remedy is applied through the teaching, the learning, the believing and the obeying of the gospel:
 - 1) Mark 16:15-16: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."
 - 2) Acts 2:36-38: "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."
 - 3) Acts 18:8: "And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized."
- d. The directions for reaching and applying the remedy must not be changed:
 - 1) 2 John 1 :9: "Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God: he that abideth in the teaching, the same hath both the Father and the Son."
 - 2) Galatians 1 :8-9: "But though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach unto you any gospel other than that which we preached unto you, let him be anathema. As we have said before, so say I now again, if any man preacheth unto you any gospel other than that which ye received, let him be anathema."
 - 3) 1 Corinthians 4:6: "Now these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes; that in us ye might learn not to go beyond the things which are written; that no one of you be puffed up for the one against the other."
- e. The remedy is always effective if it is properly appropriated:
 - 1) Hebrews 8:12: "For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more."
 - 2) Hebrews 7:25: "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."
 - 3) Acts 22:16: "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."

D. CONCLUSION.

1. Remedy Is Available to Every Alien Sinner.
 - a. Ephesians 2:12: "That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world."
 - b. 1 Corinthians 6:9-11: "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."
 - c. Hebrews 2:9: "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man."
 - d. John 4: 14: "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."
 - e. Revelation 22:17: "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."
 2. Remedy Is Available to His Own People—Saints.
 - a. 1 John 1 :7: "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." [But what are we to do if we should fail to walk in the light?].
 - b. Acts 8:22: "Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee."
 - c. 1 John 1 :9: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."
 - d. James 5: 16: "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."
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- e. This prescription is for erring Christians; it will not work for alien sinners!
3. His Remedy Is Available Right Now:
- a. Ezekiel 18:31-32: "Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord GOD: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye."
 - b. Revelation 3 :20: "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."
 - c. Matthew 11 :28-30: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."
 - d. Second Corinthians 6:2: "For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation."
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The Seven Beatitudes of the Apocalypse

I. INTRODUCTION.

A. Beatitude defined:

1. "The word 'beatitude' is not found in the English Bible, but the Latin *beatitudo*, from which it is derived, occurs in the Vulgate (Jerome's Latin Bible, 390 AD - 405 AD) version of Rom 4:6 where, with reference to Ps 32:1-2, David is said to pronounce the 'beatitude' of the man whose transgressions are forgiven" [International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia, Electronic Database Copyright (c)1996 by Biblesoft].
 - a. Romans 4:6: "Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works."
 - b. Psalms 32:1-2: "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile."
2. A Beatitude is a brief statement of scriptural truth that pronounces a blessing on certain individuals. A condition is stated in the pronouncement with which the person has complied.
3. In the beatitudes, principles are stated the doing of which produces a state of happiness for the individual. Lasting happiness is not to be found in amassing great fortunes or possessions; it is not to be found in beauty, strong drink, or in any sinful pleasure or worldly pursuit. Happiness that endures is to be found in following the principles set forth in the beatitudes. "I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and, behold, all *is* vanity and vexation of spirit" (Eccl. 1:14).

B. We are all familiar with the Beatitudes with which the Sermon on the Mount begins,

1. Matthew 5:3-12: "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled. Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God. Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you."
2. We may not be aware that there are Beatitudes found in the Book of Revelation. Our study is to look at the "Seven Beatitudes of Revelation."

II. DISCUSSION.

A. Revelation 1:3: "Blessed *is* he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time *is* at hand."

1. This is the first of seven beatitudes in Revelation. A state of blessedness [happiness] is pronounced upon the one who reads and those who understand the words of this prophecy, and keeps the things recorded therein.
2. Note the *he* that reads and *they* that hear. This probably refers to the practice of publicly reading the Scriptures. The reader and hearer alike are blessed. "But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth *therein*, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed" (Jas. 1:25).
 - a. Luke 4:16: "And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read."
 - b. Colossians 4:16: "And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the *epistle* from Laodicea."
3. Those who read and hear the *words of prophecy* are blessed. The phrase "words of prophecy" affirms the contents of the book to be inspired. To prophesy is to speak for God, with his approval and under his control. The prophetic message might relate to the past, the present, or future.
 - a. Ephesians 3:5: "Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit."
 - b. 2 Peter 1:20-21: "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake *as they were* moved by the Holy Ghost."
4. The setting of this beatitude in Revelation.
 - a. The time is at hand: the woes, the fears, the battles, and the hopes were all in the near future to the

- time John penned these words.
- b. This is given as strong motivation for heeding the things revealed.
- B. Revelation 14:13: "And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed *are* the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."
1. The preceding messages of this section were delivered by angels; here a voice commands John to write an additional message. The speaker is not identified in the verse.
 - a. The first angel announced the everlasting gospel, called on men to heed its truth, and warned of judgment on those who rejected it.
 - b. The second angel announced as an accomplished fact (because the outcome was so certain) the fall of Babylon (the Roman Empire).
 - c. The third angel described the consequences to befall those who would worship the beast; they might extend their lives a little while, but horrible punishment awaited them.
 2. This verse announces that, though one might lose his life for refusing to worship the beast, there was a glorious, restful life awaiting him in the beyond.
 3. Blessedness (a state of happiness) pertains to those who die in a proper relationship with the Lord. They will be exalted into a heavenly joy. These are those of verse twelve.
 4. The Lord adds an additional word of hope and assurance for future sufferers ("from henceforth"). The assurance includes all faithful saints in future generations. To die in Christ is not to lose one's existence.
 - a. 1 Corinthians 15:20-23: "But now is Christ risen from the dead, *and* become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man *came* death, by man *came* also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming."
 - b. 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18: "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive *and* remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. 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: Then we which are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words."
 - c. Revelation 6:9-11: "And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they *were*, should be fulfilled."
 - d. Revelation 7:9-17: "After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. And all the angels stood round about the throne, and *about* the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, *be* unto our God for ever and ever. Amen. And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."
 5. "Yea, saith the Spirit" identifies the message as coming from the Holy Spirit. The rest promised is from their present labors; the Lord will not forget their good works.
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- a. Matthew 25:34-40: "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: For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed *thee*? or thirsty, and gave *thee* drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took *thee* in? or naked, and clothed *thee*? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done *it* unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done *it* unto me."
 - b. 1 Corinthians 15:58: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."
 - c. 1 Thessalonians 1:3: "Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father."
 - d. Hebrews 6:10: "For God *is* not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have showed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister."
6. "Revelation 14:13 contains several exciting spiritual truths. (1) It negates the false notion of 'soul-sleeping' after death, for these who have died in the Lord are said to be 'blessed.' The Greek word is *makarios*, and it means happy (cf. Acts 26:1; Romans 14:22). The saved dead are happy, and that implies consciousness....(2) Only those who die 'in the Lord' are happy. Connect that phrase with Romans 6:3,4 and Galatians 3:27, which passages show that one enters 'into Christ' at the point of his gospel obedience in baptism. (3) The happy dead are promised rest by the testimony of the Spirit—'yea, says the Spirit'—which indicates that the Spirit is a Person (not a mere force, as suggested by some cultists)....(4) The 'works' of the righteous dead follow them, i.e., such works are acknowledged and rewarded by God....In view of this, how can it be said that 'works' play no role in the divine plan of redemption?....*Works commanded by Christ do not negate grace*" (Wayne Jackson, *Notes From the Margin of My Bible*, pp.182f).
- C. Revelation 16:15: "Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed *is* he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame."
1. "I come as a thief" could only refer to Christ. "In the midst of the scene of the gathering army and decisive battle, there is a parenthetical warning and exhortation to the saints not to be deceived or led astray by what is taking place. At both the beginning and the conclusion of the revelation the Lord said that He was revealing things which 'must shortly come to pass (1:1; 22:6), 'for the time is at 'hand' (1:3; 22:10). Therefore His coming in this instance is not at the end of time" (Hailey, p.335).
 2. Also included is the third of the seven beatitudes of Revelation. The statement cautions the saints to be careful to be prepared lest they be found naked and shamed. This verse seems to place the context at the time of the second coming, however this thought is not out of place when used in connection with a limited judgment.
 3. The saints are admonished to keep their garments—to make sure that they remain undefiled.
 - a. 2 Corinthians 7:1: "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."
 - b. Hebrews 12:14-15: "Follow peace with all *men*, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble *you*, and thereby many be defiled."
 - c. 1 John 3:1-3: "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. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure."
 - d. Matthew 5:8: "Blessed *are* the pure in heart: for they shall see God."
- D. Revelation 19:9: "And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed *are* they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God."
1. The speaker is unidentified in the verse, but probably was an angel. A state of blessedness or happiness is pronounced on those who are called to the wedding feast of the Lamb. The call is extended by the gospel.
 - a. Romans 10:13-16: "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then

- shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?"
- b. 1 Corinthians 1:9: "God *is* faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord."
 - c. 2 Thessalonians 2:14: "Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ."
 - d. Matthew 11:28-30: "Come unto me, all *ye* that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke *is* easy, and my burden is light."
2. Here the feast is spoken of as if it were presently taking place, but the description of it is not given until chapter 21.
 3. Ephesians 5:23-27: "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."
- E. Revelation 20:4-6: "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and *I saw* the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received *his* mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This *is* the first resurrection. Blessed and holy *is* he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years."
1. The devil was bound; the martyrs were victorious. The picture given here would provide much consolation and encouragement to the beleaguered saints to whom John wrote.
 2. In verse 4, John saw thrones and those who sat thereon; the ones on the thrones were those who had been beheaded for the Lord's cause; they had not received the beast's mark and had not worshipped the beast.
 - a. Judgment was given unto them: reference is probably to the vindication and vengeance which came as a result of the confinement of the devil. In Revelation 18:20, judgment was meted out against the harlot which vindicated the saints; in chapter 19, this was also said with reference to the beast and false prophet.
 - b. To those who wish to take this passage as literal, some problems arise: only those who had been beheaded sat on the thrones. And if the 1000 years is literal, then the "reigning" and the "living" are also literal. "They lived AND reigned with Christ a thousand years." Taken literally, when the thousands years are over, they will cease to **reign** and cease to **live**! What proves too much, proves nothing at all!
 - c. Notice that John did not see bodies on the throne, but souls. The ASV indicates that two groups were on the thrones: those souls which had been beheaded and those who had not worshipped the beast; the KJV indicates only one group: "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and *I saw* the souls of them that had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus, and for the word of God, and such as worshipped not the beast, neither his image, and received not the mark upon their forehead and upon their hand; and they lived, and reigned with Christ a thousand years" (Rev. 20:6, ASV). The ASV may simply be describing the same people in two different ways.
 - d. These were reigning **with** Christ. The passage does not tell where the reigning occurred. It does not say that the reign is a literal, earthly reign. **We** are not considered in this passage. However, all faithful Christians "reign in life" by Christ (Rom. 5:17). But John is seeing a vision which shows the martyred (persecuted) saints of that age in a victorious scene; this was to give the saints hope. Since they were victorious, so shall all faithful saints be victorious. To those who overcome (remain faithful even unto death—Rev. 2:10), will Christ "grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my father in his throne" (Rev. 3:21).

3. Verses 5-6 speak of the first resurrection. This refers to the reign of the saints in verse 4, for verse six pronounces a blessing on those who take part in the first resurrection and says they shall reign with Christ a thousand years and shall be priests. One view equates this period of time to the Christian Age. This interpretation has many things to commend it. It has been the view that brethren have generally held.
 - a. The time of the thousand year reign is the same as the time when Satan is bound. Those who reign include each faithful Christian who is dead; they reign with Christ in the spirit world in a place called Paradise; they are with Christ there, and will come with him at his second advent (cf. 1 Thess. 4:13-18).
 - b. These reigning saints overcame the trials and temptations of life (Rev. 2:26; 3:21), and have nothing to fear from the second death (which is eternal condemnation—Rev. 20:14; 2:11).
 - c. Near the end of time, Satan will be loosed for a little season, at which time he will again deceive the nations. This period is described in verses 7-11.
 - d. Those who reign are “disembodied souls.” They have died in the faith and now are with their Lord in the spirit world.
 4. In the passage, there are two deaths and two resurrection. The first death is implied, since it speaks of the second death. The second resurrection is implied, since it speaks of a first resurrection.
 - a. The first death [implied] is physical.
 - b. The second death is eternal punishment in *Gehenna*.
 - c. The first resurrection is the New Birth.
 - d. The second resurrection is the general resurrection of all the dead (John 5:28-29; Acts 24:15).
- F. Revelation 22:7: "Behold, I come quickly: blessed *is* he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book."
1. These words are spoken from the viewpoint of Christ: he will come swiftly. The Bible elsewhere describes the coming of Christ as being sudden, unannounced, as a thief in the night.
 - a. Matthew 24:36-39: "But of that day and hour knoweth no *man*, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. But as the days of Noe *were*, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be."
 - b. Matthew 24:42-44: "Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh."
 - c. Mark 13:32-37: "But of that day and *that* hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father. Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is. *For the Son of man is* as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch. Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning: Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch."
 - d. 1 Thessalonians 5:1-6: "But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For 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. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as *do* others; but let us watch and be sober."
 - e. 2 Peter 3:10: "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."
 2. A blessing is announced for those who keep the sayings of this book. Obedience is blessed and disobedience is punished. This is the sixth of the seven beatitudes of Revelation:
 - a. Revelation 1:3: "Blessed *is* he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time *is* at hand."
 - b. Revelation 14:13: "And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed *are* the dead
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- which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."
- c. Revelation 16:15: "Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed *is* he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame."
 - d. Revelation 19:9: "And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed *are* they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God."
 - e. Revelation 20:6: "Blessed and holy *is* he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years."
 - f. Revelation 22:7: "Behold, I come quickly: blessed *is* he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book."
 - g. Revelation 22:14: "Blessed *are* they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."
- G. Revelation 22:14: "Blessed *are* they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."
1. This is the seventh beatitude. The importance of obedience to the gospel is stressed. In Revelation 21:27 we are told that only those who are pure will enter heaven; all have sinned (Rom. 3:23).
 - a. Romans 3:23: "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."
 - b. Revelation 21:27: "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither *whatsoever* worketh abomination, or *maketh* a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."
 2. We are cleansed by the blood of Christ.
 - a. 1 Peter 1:18-19: "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, *as* silver and gold, from your vain conversation *received* by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."
 - b. Revelation 1:5: "And from Jesus Christ, *who is* the faithful witness, *and* the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood."
 3. We reach the blood of Christ when we obey the gospel (Rom. 6:1-18).
 - a. Acts 22:16: "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."
 - b. Romans 6:16-18: "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness."
 - c. 1 Peter 1:22-25: "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, *see that ye* love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. 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: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you."
 - d. Revelation 22:14: "Blessed *are* they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."
 4. In this condition or faithful obedience, we are purified, kept pure (1 John 1:7) and are given the right to enter into heaven and partake of the tree of life!

III. CONCLUSION.

A. The Seven Beatitudes of Revelation:

1. Blessed are those who read and understand and keep that which is written.
2. Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord.
3. Blessed are those who watch and keep their garments.
4. Blessed are they who are called unto the marriage feast of the Lamb.
5. Blessed are those who have part in the first resurrection.
6. Blessed are those who keep the sayings of this book.
7. Blessed are they who do his commandments.

B. Beatitudes are given at the beginning of the Lord's ministry and at the end of the New Testament.

1. The eight beatitudes of Matthew five lay the foundation for Christian living.
 2. The seven beatitudes of Revelation deal with principles that relate directly to our eternal destiny.
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Who Did Not Write the Bible?

I. INTRODUCTION.

- A. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God" (2 Tim. 3:16-17).
1. Skeptics and critics deny that God is the author of the Bible.
 2. Some claim that only "gifted men" wrote the Bible.
- B. God is the author of the Bible!
1. The Bible claims God as the author!
 2. Uninspired men would have written it quite differently.
 3. If the Bible has no higher authority than mortals, it would be filled with error.

II. THE HOLY SCRIPTURES ARE FROM ALMIGHTY GOD.

- A. 2 Timothy 3:15: "And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."
1. Timothy had been properly schooled in the holy scriptures from the time he was a child. His first teachers were his grandmother and mother. "When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also" (2 Tim. 1:5).
 2. The scriptures in which they had instructed him were the Old Testament scriptures. The New Testament had not then been written; it was still in the process of being recorded, with this very letter destined to be a part of it. The Old Testament predicted the first coming of the Messiah; the New Testament reports the details of that coming, and promises that he will come a second time.
 3. The Old Testament was able to provide information which would make one such as Timothy wise unto salvation. It taught that salvation would be provided by and through the Messiah.
 - a. "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he *was* wounded for our transgressions, *he was* bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace *was* upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Isa. 53:4-6).
 - b. "The 'sacred Scriptures' of this verse refers to the writings of the Old Testament. New Testament letters were not written when Timothy was an infant, nor would Lois and Eunice have been Christians then....Such Scriptures Paul describes as '**the**' (note the definite article) ones 'able to make one wise unto salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.' No other writings come into this class....Notice that Paul does not say the Old Testament alone makes wise unto salvation. It is by these Scriptures 'in the light of' the faith which is in Christ Jesus that this is accomplished. The Old Testament is revealed in the New. Timothy had begun as a babe in the Old Testament. But now that he had become a man and now that the gospel had been proclaimed, the full light of God's revelation had dawned" (Roberts, pp.90f).
 4. Salvation is obtained through faith in Christ Jesus.
 - a. The Old Testament, which had been taught to Timothy, had established the fact that the Messiah was coming, but the promise of his advent could not of itself furnish this young man with salvation. It was necessary for the Savior to come and complete his earthly mission before he was enabled to save mankind.
 - b. The New Testament reveals the fact that the Messiah came and fulfilled his work which had been planned from eternity: "...the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Rev. 13:8).
 - c. Timothy had become a Christian, and became a member of Paul's missionary company:
 - 1) "And he came also to Derbe and to Lystra: and behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a Jewess that believed; but his father was a Greek. The same was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium. Him would Paul have to go forth with him; and he took and circumcised him because of the Jews that were in those parts: for they all knew that his father was a Greek" (Acts 16:1-3, ASV).
 - 2) Paul described Timothy as his "own son in the faith" (1 Tim. 1:2), obviously meaning that Paul had been instrumental in the young man's conversion, perhaps during his first passage through Lystra, where the apostle had been stoned and left for dead. In Acts 16, Paul returned to Lystra on the Second Missionary Journey, with Silas as his principal companion. Timothy had grown in the faith and had proved himself to be a dedicated servant of Christ.
 - d. The Old Testament Scriptures had prepared young Timothy to become an obedient believer in Christ, and had received the salvation and other blessings given to those who are in Christ.
 - 1) Ephesians 1:3: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ."
 - 2) John 1:11-12: "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."
 - 3) Penitent believers are commanded to be baptized in the name of Christ: "And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord..." (Acts 10:48).

- B. 2 Timothy 3:16: "All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness."
1. The **scriptures** Paul has reference to specifically is the Old Testament which Timothy had been taught from childhood. All of these scriptures were inspired of God. The same truth also applies to the New Testament scriptures. Plain statements of the New Testament make this undeniable.
 - a. 1 Corinthians 2:9-13: "But as it is written, Things which eye saw not, and ear heard not, And which entered not into the heart of man, Whatsoever things God prepared for them that love him. But unto us God revealed them through the Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For who among men knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of the man, which is in him? even so the things of God none knoweth, save the Spirit of God. But we received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is from God; that we might know the things that were freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth; combining spiritual things with spiritual words" (ASV).
 - b. 1 Corinthians 14:37: "If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord."
 - c. 2 Peter 3:16: "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."
 - d. The word translated *scriptures* is always used in the Bible in reference to God's inspired, written revelation.
 2. All scriptures are **inspired of God**.
 - a. The original word is the Greek *theopneustos*, which literally means "God-breathed." Through a process which exceeds our full comprehension, God was able to communicate his will to those people specially selected to receive and report the message.
 - b. 2 Peter 1:20-21: "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture **is** of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake *as they were* moved by the Holy Ghost."
 3. The scriptures are **profitable**. They are designed for practical usage. They are beneficial.
 - a. Old Testament scriptures are still profitable.
 - 1) Romans 15:4: "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope."
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 10:11: "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come."
 - b. The New Testament scriptures are profitable.
 - 1) Acts 20:32: "And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified."
 - 2) Hebrews 4:12: "For the word of God *is* quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and *is* a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart."
 - 3) James 1:21: "Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls."
 - 4) 1 Peter 1:11-12: "Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into."
 4. The scriptures are profitable for **doctrine**.
 - a. The word "doctrine" means "teaching." *The scriptures* are God's word; his word teaches us all that we need to know in order to know God, to be saved, to live right, to serve him, and to be guided into eternity. Both the Old and New Testaments contain information which enlightens us regarding our responsibilities and privileges.
 - b. Titus 2:11-14: "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."
 - c. The Lord's church has no doctrine of its own invention; it is charged with preaching God's word, his doctrine. There is no such thing as "church of Christ doctrine."
 5. The scriptures are profitable for **reproof**.
 - a. The Bible is capable of convincing an individual of wrong-doing; it can convict him of his guilt. The purpose of reproving a person is to motivate him to do right.
 - b. The word is translated *rebuked* in 2 Peter 2:16: "But was rebuked for his iniquity: the dumb ass speaking
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- with man's voice forbad the madness of the prophet."
6. The scriptures are profitable for **correction**.
 - a. The Bible is able to correct false knowledge and erroneous practices; it exposes that which is wrong and teaches that which is right.
 - b. The Scripture is God's powerful means to reform a sinful man, to remove the guilt of his sins by the cleansing blood of Christ, and translate him into the one body of Christ, which is his church:
 - 1) Acts 2:41: "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls."
 - a) Only those who were added were saved.
 - b) Only those who were baptized were added.
 - c) Therefore, only those who are baptized are saved.
 - 2) Acts 2:47: "...And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."
 - 3) Ephesians 1:22-23: "And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all."
 - c. The alien sinner, one who was separated from God when he began to live in sin from his youth, needs to have his corrupt lifestyle corrected. This is done when he hears, believes and obeys the gospel.
 - d. But the Christian is not totally immune to committing sin (1 Cor. 10:12). If he returns to sin again, either full-time or only in certain instances, he is defiled and needs to be corrected.
 - 1) Such a person is never commanded to be baptized; only can only be scripturally baptized One Time. On that occasion, he is translated into Christ. Since baptism puts the penitent believing alien into Christ, he does not need to re-enter Christ. He is not an alien sinner, but an erring Christian.
 - 2) Simon who became a Christian committed a grievous sin after his conversion. He was rebuked for this transgression, but he was not told to be "re-baptized." There is no such thing in the New Testament about "re-baptism." Simon was told: "Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee" (Acts 8:22).
 - 3) Acts 19:1-7 tells of some men at Ephesus who had received John's baptism. Paul perceived that they had not been scripturally baptized, since the baptism of John ended at the day of Pentecost (Acts 2). Paul baptized these men in the name of the Lord Jesus (19:5). This was not a case of "re-baptism." This was a case of alien sinners being baptized into Christ.
 - 4) The erring Christian is required to:
 - a) Repent and confess sins (Acts 8:22; 1 John 1:8-10).
 - b) Pray for forgiveness (Acts 8:22; James 5:16).
 7. The scriptures are profitable for **instruction in righteousness**.
 - a. Alien sinners usually do not know much if anything about the Scriptures. Our mission is to teach them the Gospel of Christ, beginning at their current state of knowledge. The Philippian jailor had be taught from the ground up (Acts 16:30ff). Many of our students are acquainted with the Lord's gospel and church. But others may know little.
 - 1) Matthew 28:19: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."
 - 2) Mark 16:15-16: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned."
 - b. Those who obey the gospel need to be fully instructed in the gospel.
 - 1) Matthew 28:20: "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you..."
 - 2) Acts 14:21-23: "And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra, and to Iconium, and Antioch, Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God. And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed."
 - 3) Acts 11:23-26: "Who, when [Barnabas] came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord. For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord. Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul: And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch."
 - c. We need to know God's word.
 - 1) Psalms 119:172: "My tongue shall speak of thy word: for all thy commandments *are* righteousness."
 - 2) Matthew 3:15: "And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer *it to be so* now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him."
 - 3) Acts 10:34-35: "Then Peter opened *his* mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him."
 - 4) 1 John 3:7: "Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as

he is righteous."

- 5) Matthew 6:33: "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."
 - 6) Psalms 119:11: "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee."
- C. Verse 17: "That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."
1. The **man of God** applies especially to gospel preachers (in view of the fact that the epistle was written to such a man), but it applies generally to any person who seeks to be a child of God. The Bible is able to make anyone to become what is denoted in the remainder of the verse.
 2. The Bible is able to make the man of God **perfect**.
 - a. This word is from the Greek *artios*, "fitted, complete (from *artos*, a limb, joint)..." (Vine, Vol. 1, p.220).
 - b. "The teachings of Jesus and the apostles, in connection with examples, teachings, and the warnings of the Old Testament Scriptures, are sufficient to make the man of God perfect—perfect him in the knowledge of God's will as revealed through Jesus Christ" (Lipscomb, p.237).
 3. The Bible is able to **thoroughly furnish unto all good works**.
 - a. Whatever good work that God intends each Christian to do, the Scriptures will furnish him with the instruction, guidance and motivation to accomplish that good work.
 - b. There is no deficiency in the Scriptures; God's word will supply us with everything we need to fulfill every requirement Heaven has obligated us to do; the Bible will provide us with everything we need in order to do any and all worthwhile and authorized activity in serving our Savior.
 - c. This statement, taken with verse sixteen, establishes the all-sufficiency of God's word. It is all we need; it furnishes us with everything necessary to present ourselves as approved children of God (cf. 2 Tim. 2:15).
- D. Implications of 2 Timothy 3:15-17.
1. The word of God is all-sufficient.
 - a. The word is perfect: "But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed" (Jas. 1:25).
 - b. The word is powerful:
 - 1) Romans 1:16: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."
 - 2) Hebrews 4:12: "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart."
 - c. The word is complete:
 - 1) 2 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."
 - 2) 2 Peter 1:3: "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue."
 - 3) 1 Peter 4:11: "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."
 - d. The word is enduring:
 - 1) Matthew 24:35: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away."
 - 2) 1 Peter 1:22-25: "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. 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: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you."
 2. We do not need a creedbook, church manual, or some other human production—the Bible is all we need.
 3. Salvation is based on God's word, not in the special delivery skills of an orator, impressive programs of worship, or sensational schemes and theories.
 4. The Holy Spirit does not provide any separate blessings or benefits—beyond the word of God. The providence of the Godhead assists us in our daily affairs—in answering prayers and providing opportunities, but it is by the inspired Scriptures that salvation, sanctification, and every other spiritual blessing are provided.

The Holy Spirit Operates Through the Word

WORK	HOLY SPIRIT	WORD
Instructs, Teaches	Neh. 9:20,30; John 14:26	2 Tim. 3:16-17; Tit. 2:11-12
Begets	John 3:5	1 Cor. 4:15; Jas. 1:18
New Birth	John 3:5	1 Peter 1:22-23
Quickens	John 6:63	Psalm 119:50
Convicts	John 16:8	Titus 1:9
Comforts	Acts 9:31	1 Th. 4:18; Rom. 15:4
Gives Love	Rom. 5:5	1 John 2:5
Saves	1 Cor. 6:11	Acts 4:4; Jas. 1:21
Washes	1 Cor. 6:11	Eph. 5:26
Sanctifies	1 Pet. 1:2	John 17:17
Converts	John 16:7-8	Psalm 19:7
Makes Free	Rom. 8:2	John 8:32; 17:17
Strengthens	Eph. 3:16	Deut. 11:8; Acts 20:32
Indwells Saints	Eph. 5:18-19	Col. 3:16
Leads	Rom. 8:14	Psalm 119:105
Witnesses	Heb. 10:15; 1 John 5:6-8	Heb. 10:15-16; Jer. 31:31-34
Produces Fruit	Gal. 5:22-23	Col. 1:5-6

E. In the light of the foregoing, it is clear that the Spirit operates through the Word.

1. The effects wrought, the emotions stirred, and the changes made (on us) are all produced by the Holy Spirit through the medium of God's word.
2. If a man chops down a tree with an axe, one could attribute the result either to the man or the axe since both are directly involved; but neither could accomplish the feat without the other. So it is with regards to the Spirit and the Word!
3. If we reject the Spirit-given word, what is left? When we reject his word, we also reject God, Christ, and all hope of salvation and heaven! If we accept that Spirit-given word, then all spiritual blessings are opened to us!
 - a. Ephesians 6:17: "And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."
 - b. Hebrews 4:12: "For the word of God *is* quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and *is* a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."
 - c. James 1:21-25: "Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls. But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth *therein*, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed."
 - d. 1 Peter 1:22-25: "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, *see that ye* love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. 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: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you."

How the Holy Spirit Operates Is Seen in Cases of Conversion

CASE	GOSPEL	ACTION	ACTION	ACTION	RESULT
Acts 2	Spoke	Heard	Pricked	Baptized	Added, Saved
Acts 8:1-13	Preached	Heard	Believed	Baptized	Great Joy
Acts 8:26-40	Preached	Heard	Believed	Baptized	Rejoiced
Acts 10 & 11	Spoke	[Heard]	Believed	Baptized	[Saved]
Acts 16:12-15	Spoke	Heart Opened	Attended	Baptized	[Saved]
Acts 16:19-34	Spoke	[Heard]	[Believed]	Baptized	Washed Stripes
Acts 18:1-8	Reasoned	Heard	Believed	Baptized	[Saved]
Acts 9, 22, 26	Spoke	Heard	Believed	Baptized	Sins Washed

F. An examination of the above cases reveals the following:

1. The word of God was presented in every case.
2. Not a word was said to them about looking for a direct operation of the Spirit.
3. In each case the Spirit gave the message which was presented by the preacher. The Lord's command in Mark 16:15-16 was being fulfilled: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."
4. In each case the word was heard, even though a specific statement to that effect is not reported. Not everyone who heard the message believed it, hence were not drawn to Christ by the Father.
 - a. John 8:37: "I know that ye are Abraham's seed; but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you."
 - b. John 8:44-45: "Ye are of *your* father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. And because I tell *you* the truth, ye believe me not."
 - c. Belief is stated or implied in each case of conversion. Without faith in God there is no spiritual blessing (Heb. 11:6); without faith in Christ and his gospel there is no salvation.
 - 1) Mark 16:15-16: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."
 - 2) John 8:24: "I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am *he*, ye shall die in your sins."
 - 3) Romans 1:16-17: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith."
5. Repentance is stated or implied in each case of conversion.
 - a. Luke 13:3: "I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."
 - b. Acts 17:30: "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent."
 - c. Confession of faith is present in each case in stated fact or by implication.
 - 1) Matthew 10:32: "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven."
 - 2) Acts 8:37: "And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."
 - 3) Romans 10:10: "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."
6. Baptism is specifically mentioned in each case of conversion.

G. If the direct operation of the Spirit theory is so, there are some awful consequences.

1. The theory would eliminate the mediatorship of Christ. "For *there is* one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 2:5).
2. It would remove the need for the gospel and would thus mean Christ died in vain.
3. It would erase the purpose and mission of the apostles.
4. It would eliminate the work of evangelism then and now.

5. It denies the need for obedience to the gospel.
 - a. Matthew 7:21-23: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."
 - b. Luke 6:46: "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?"

III. OUR STUDY CONCERNS SOME WHO COULD NOT HAVE WRITTEN THE BIBLE.

A. Universalists.

1. Universalists believe all will be saved, but the Bible declares that:
 - a. The obedient will be saved: "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Heb. 5:8-9).
 - b. The disobedient will be lost: "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 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" (2 Thess. 1:7-9).
2. Universalists would not have written:
 - a. Luke 16:19-31: "There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence. Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead."
 - b. Matthew 25:31-46: "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: 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. 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: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal."

B. Infidels.

1. Infidels deny that God exists.
2. An infidel would not have written: "The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God" (Psa. 14:1).
3. Infidels would have left God out:
 - a. Matthew 3:17: "And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."
 - b. John 17:1-26: "These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. I have glorified thee on the earth: I have

finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was. I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word. Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee. For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me. I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them. And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled. And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves. I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me. Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. And 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.”

4. Infidels would not have recorded divine creation: Genesis 1-2.

C. Modernists.

1. Modernists attempt to destroy true Christianity.

2. Modernists would not have recorded the miracles of the Bible.

a. Matthew 4:23-25: “And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people. And his fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatick, and those that had the palsy; and he healed them. And there followed him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from Judaea, and from beyond Jordan.”

b. John 20:30-31: “And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.”

c. Acts 3:10-11: “And they knew that it was he which sat for alms at the Beautiful gate of the temple: and they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened unto him. And as the lame man which was healed held Peter and John, all the people ran together unto them in the porch that is called Solomon's, greatly wondering.”

d. Acts 4:14: “And beholding the man which was healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it.”

e. Compare Matthew 8-9; John 11.

3. Modernists would not have recorded the Virgin birth.

a. Isaiah 7:14: “Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.”

b. Matthew 1:16-25: “And Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ. So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; and from David until the carrying away into Babylon are fourteen generations; and from the carrying away into Babylon unto Christ are fourteen generations. Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily. But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us. Then Joseph being raised from sleep did

as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife: And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name JESUS.”

4. Modernists would not have recorded Bible inspiration.
 - a. 1 Corinthians 2:12-14: “Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. 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.”
 - b. 2 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, throughly furnished unto all good works.”
 - c. 2 Peter 1:20-21: “Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.”

D. Liberals.

1. Liberals accept almost anything and everything.
2. The Bible rejects many things and accepts only the good.
3. Scriptures:
 - a. Acts 26:22-26: “Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come: That Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles. And as he thus spake for himself, Festus said with a loud voice, Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad. But he said, I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness. For the king knoweth of these things, before whom also I speak freely: for I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him; for this thing was not done in a corner.”
 - b. Psalms 97:10: “Ye that love the LORD, hate evil: he preserveth the souls of his saints; he delivereth them out of the hand of the wicked.”
 - c. 2 John 1:9-11: “Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.”

E. Sectarians.

1. Acts 5:17: “Then the high priest rose up, and all they that were with him, (which is the sect of the Sadducees,) and were filled with indignation.”
2. Sectarianism and denominationalism would not have written:
 - a. Necessity of church membership:
 - 1) Acts 2:47: “Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.”
 - 2) Acts 4:12: “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”
 - 3) 1 Corinthians 12:13: “For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.”
 - 4) Ephesians 1:22-23: “And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.”
 - b. One church:
 - 1) Matthew 16:18: “And I say also 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.”
 - 2) Ephesians 1:22-23: “And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.”
 - 3) Ephesians 5:23: “For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.”
 - 4) Acts 20:28: “Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.”
 - c. Unity in Christ:
 - 1) John 15:1-7: “I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is

- withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.”
- 2) 1 Corinthians 1:10: “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.”
- d. Salvation by faith + works.
- 1) James 2:14-26: “What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works. Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way? For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.”
 - 2) Galatians 5:6: “For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.”
- e. Salvation is not by grace only.
- 1) Ephesians 2:8-10: “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. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”
 - 2) Titus 2:11-14: “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.”
- f. Vocal music in Christian worship.
- 1) Ephesians 5:19: “Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.”
 - 2) Colossians 3:16: “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.”
 - 3) Hebrews 2:12: “Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee.”

F. Romanists.

1. These folks teach that the apostle Peter was never married.
 - a. But he had a mother-in-law: “And when Jesus was come into Peter's house, he saw his wife's mother laid, and sick of a fever. And he touched her hand, and the fever left her: and she arose, and ministered unto them” (Matt. 8:14-15).
 - b. His wife accompanied him on his preaching trips: “Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas?” (1 Cor. 9:5).
 - c. Peter was an elder.
 - 1) 1 Peter 5:1: “The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed.”
 - 2) An elder [aka bishop, pastor] is required to be married and to have believing children:
 - a) 1 Timothy 3:1-2: “This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach.”
 - b) Titus 1:5-7: “For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that were wanting, and appoint elders in every city, as I gave thee charge; if any man is blameless, the husband of one wife, having children that believe, who are not accused of riot or unruly. For the bishop must be blameless, as God's steward; not self-willed, not soon angry, no brawler, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre” (ASV).
 - d. These folks teach that Mary had no other children than Jesus.
 - 1) Jesus was her “firstborn” child, clearly implying that she later had one or more other children: “Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife: And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name JESUS” (Matt.

- 1:24-25).
- 2) Matthew 12:46: "While he yet talked to the people, behold, his mother and his brethren stood without, desiring to speak with him."
 - 3) Matthew 13:55-57: "Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas? And his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this man all these things? And they were offended in him. But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house."
 - 4) John 7:1-10: "After these things Jesus walked in Galilee; for He did not want to walk in Judea, because the Jews sought to kill Him. Now the Jews' Feast of Tabernacles was at hand. His brothers therefore said to Him, "Depart from here and go into Judea, that Your disciples also may see the works that You are doing. For no one does anything in secret while he himself seeks to be known openly. If You do these things, show Yourself to the world." For even His brothers did not believe in Him. Then Jesus said to them, "My time has not yet come, but your time is always ready. The world cannot hate you, but it hates Me because I testify of it that its works are evil. You go up to this feast. I am not yet going up to this feast, for My time has not yet fully come." When He had said these things to them, He remained in Galilee. But when His brothers had gone up, then He also went up to the feast, not openly, but as it were in secret" (NKJV).
 - 5) The inspired authors of James and Jude were half-brothers of Jesus; they all had the same mother, but different fathers. Our Lord's half-brothers and sisters had Joseph as their father, but the body of Jesus was miraculously produced without any man being involved.
2. Knowing that these basic truths of the Gospel contradict their false doctrines, the Romanists would not have written the Bible.

G. Innovators.

1. Innovators add to, subtract from, and substitute for, God's word. No changes of any kind are allowed.
 - a. Deuteronomy 4:2: "Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you."
 - b. Revelation 22:18-19: "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."
 - c. Galatians 1:6-9: "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed."
2. Anyone who intended to make changes to a production of his own would not have inculcated such warnings in his production.

H. Moralists

1. Moralists are those who attempt to be saved and go to heaven on morals alone.
 - a. But by what standard would one decide whether something is moral or immoral? A common standard is necessary. If each individual may establish his one moral code, but not require others to follow it, then there is no standard at all!
 - b. From what would one be saved? If there is no law to violate, there could be no sin.
 - 1) Romans 4:15: "Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression."
 - 2) Romans 5:13: "For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law."
2. No one who was a firm believer in salvation by morals only would have written what is said about Cornelius, one of the greatest moral standing:
 - a. Acts 10:2: "A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway."
 - b. Acts 10:22: "And they said, Cornelius the centurion, a just man, and one that feareth God, and of good report among all the nation of the Jews, was warned from God by an holy angel to send for thee into his house, and to hear words of thee."
 - c. Acts 10:34-35: "Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him."
3. One who believed in salvation by morality alone would not have written about the necessity of being saved in Christ:
 - a. Acts 4:12: "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."
 - b. Galatians 3:26-27: "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ."

I. The Ungodly.

1. The ungodly do not seek to be like God.
2. The ungodly would not have written condemning themselves.
 - a. Psalms 1:6: "For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish."
 - b. 2 Peter 3:7: "But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men."
 - c. Jude 1:15: "To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him."

J. Translators.

1. Some translators give their own commentaries, rather than translate the original correctly.
 - a. Some of them inserted their views of such passages as Isaiah 7:14: "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." Isaiah was speaking of an actual virgin, not merely some young woman, which the RSV mistakenly rendered the word.
 - b. Compare: "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come" (John 16:13). All truth has been revealed; we do not need some "translator" sneaking his commentary into the inspired text.
2. Some translators deny heaven, hell, the virgin birth, miracles, etc. They sometimes twist the text to reflect their false doctrines.

K. Uninspired Christians.

1. Some Christians think it is not necessary to follow all the word.
 - a. When only half the members show up at the evening services, thinking that one-hour a week is more than sufficient, they would not have written Hebrews 10:23-31: "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: 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, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."
 - b. Weak, ignorant members in unscriptural marriages would not have written:
 - 1) Matthew 5:31-32: "It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement: But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery."
 - 2) Matthew 19:9: "And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marieth her which is put away doth commit adultery."
2. Some Christians see no harm in loosing what the Lord has bound and binding what the Lord did not bind.
3. Many Christians would not have written:
 - a. Revelation 3:15-16: "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth."
 - b. 1 Corinthians 16:1-2: "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come."
 - c. Titus 2:11-14: "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."
 - d. John 13:34-35: "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."

IV. CONCLUSION.

A. No uninspired man wrote the Bible!

1. 2 Peter 1:20-21: "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

2. 2 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, throughly furnished unto all good works.”

B. Why would anyone want to change anything in the Bible?

How Does Calvinism Influence the Religious World Today?

I. INTRODUCTION.

A. Subject defined:

1. Calvinism is a commonly-heard term, but it is not commonly understood. Calvinism is a system of religious beliefs formulated by John Calvin, one of the leaders of a rebellion against the Roman Catholic Church. This movement is known as the Protestant Reformation, and began more than five hundred years ago. It was intended to correct the errors of the Roman church, thus to *reform* the religious system that then predominated.
2. Calvinism has affected the beliefs and practices of virtually all Protestant groups, and some of its tenets have long been held by Catholicism.
3. Among sectarian churches, the features of Calvinism most usually seen are these:
 - a. Salvation by faith only.
 - b. Faith is a direct gift from God.
 - c. Direct operation of the Holy Spirit in the conviction and conversion of sinners.
 - d. Impossibility of a child of God falling from grace.
 - e. The doctrine of inherited sin.

B. Who was John Calvin

1. John Calvin (1509-1564). He was *converted* in 1533, and began to promote the Protestant Reformation in Geneva, Switzerland. In a short time, he became the dictator of the city, and ruled with an iron hand. He had a man named Servetus arrested and burned at the stake (1553).
2. In 1536, he completed the first version of his Institutes of the Christian Religion, which he planned to be a short presentations of Protestant doctrines. This was based on the precept that the Bible was the only source of authority in religious affairs. He settled in Geneva, Switzerland, where he obtained a large following and was elected preacher by the city magistrates. He compiled a confession of faith of 21 articles which the citizens were required to accept under oath.
3. When he was forced to leave Geneva in 1538, he settled in France. Meanwhile in Geneva, trouble arose, and he was persuaded to return in 1541. Calvin revised the laws of the city, organizing a theocratic form of government which regulated both civil and religious affairs. It was under Calvin's control that Servetus was burned at the stake.
4. His strict views caused many of his disciples in Geneva to oppose him. Among his enemies were the Libertines who forced him to leave the city in 1555. His influence in the Reformation increased; he formulated a religious system which affected the rest of the Reformation groups.

C. Many of the fundamental concepts of Calvinism existed before John Calvin.

1. The fundamental tenet of *total hereditary depravity* was not original to Calvin. The Roman Catholic philosopher Augustine taught it in the fifth century A.D. *Encarta* electronic encyclopedia offers the following about Augustine:
 - a. "He became bishop of Hippo (now Annaba, Algeria) in 395, an office he held until his death. It was a period of political and theological unrest, for while the barbarians pressed in upon the empire, even sacking Rome itself in 410, schism and heresy also threatened the church. Augustine threw himself wholeheartedly into the theological battle. Besides combating the Manichaeism heresy, Augustine engaged in two great theological conflicts. One was with the Donatists, a sect that held the sacraments invalid unless administered by sinless ecclesiastics. The other conflict was with the Pelagians, followers of a contemporary British monk who denied the doctrine of original sin. In the course of this conflict, which was long and bitter, Augustine developed his doctrines of original sin and divine grace, divine sovereignty, and predestination. The Roman Catholic church has found special satisfaction in the institutional or ecclesiastical aspects of the doctrines of St. Augustine; Roman Catholic and Protestant theology alike are largely based on their more purely theological aspects. John Calvin and Martin Luther, leaders of the Reformation, were both close students of Augustine.
 - b. "Augustine's doctrine stood between the extremes of Pelagianism and Manichaeism. Against Pelagian doctrine, he held that human spiritual disobedience had resulted in a state of sin that human nature was powerless to change. In his theology, men and women are saved by the gift of divine grace; against Manichaeism he vigorously defended the place of free will in cooperation with grace. Augustine died at Hippo, August 28, 430."
2. The Reformation had already begun when Calvin entered his work; the leading reformers taught

doctrines similar to those of Calvin. Martin Luther was the first great reformer. The greatest error in his teachings was justification by "faith only." This doctrine alleges that men are saved at the point of faith in Christ without further acts of obedience. This doctrine stands as one of the basic tenets of Calvinism.

II. THE CENTRAL TENET OF CALVINISM IS THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD.

A. Calvin focused on this precept and ignored other Biblical truths.

1. He thought this was the greatest principle. All of the five points of Calvinism flow from this basic premise. If God is the absolute sovereign (the Alpha and Omega), Calvin reasoned that salvation therefore depends entirely on him, and nothing is required of man.
2. This notion is affirmed in the Westminster Confession of Faith [completed in 1649]. This creed is the foundation of the Presbyterian Church.
 - a. "God from all eternity did by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass" (*Westminster Confession of Faith*, Chapter III).
 - b. "By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestined unto everlasting life, and others fore-ordained to everlasting death, are particularly and unchangeably designed; and their number is so certain and definite that it cannot be either increased or diminished" (*ibid.*).
3. Calvin developed the system of religion which bears his name today—Calvinism. It included the belief that the Bible is the infallible guide in religion, but Calvin thought it could only be interpreted by the elect.
4. An outgrowth of Calvin's work was the establishment of the Presbyterian Churches, but his views have influenced nearly all the sectarian churches.
5. Calvinism has five basic points which define their religious system:
 - a. Total hereditary depravity—every human being enters this world with a load of sin.
 - b. Unconditional election—God decided before time began the eternal destiny of every individual.
 - c. Limited atonement—only those who were elected to eternal salvation will go to Heaven.
 - d. Irresistible grace—the elect will be saved regardless of their personal wishes.
 - e. Perseverance of the saints—the elect cannot lose their salvation.

III. TOTAL HEREDITY DEPRAVITY.

A. This doctrine is also known as the doctrine of original sin.

1. The doctrine of Total Hereditary Depravity [*original sin*] is taught by a large number of denominations. They think that every infant enters the world guilty of the sins of his ancestors, and that there is nothing good about him [he has inherited a depraved condition which completely alienates him from God].
2. Plain statements from direct Calvinist sources:
 - a. Calvinist website: "Because of the fall, man is unable of himself to savingly believe the gospel. The sinner is dead, blind, and deaf to the things of God; his heart is deceitful and desperately corrupt. His will is not free, it is in bondage to his evil nature, therefore, he will not—indeed he cannot—choose good over evil in the spiritual realm. Consequently, it takes much more than the Spirit's assistance to bring a sinner to Christ—it takes regeneration by which the Spirit makes the sinner alive and gives him a new nature. Faith is not something man contributes to salvation but is itself a part of God's gift of salvation—it is God's gift to the sinner, not the sinner's gift to God."
 - b. The Westminster Confession of Faith: "I. Our first parents, begin seduced by the subtlety and temptations of Satan, sinned in eating the forbidden fruit. This their sin God was pleased, according to his wise and holy counsel, to permit, having purposed to order it to his own glory. II. By this sin they fell from their original righteousness and communion with God, and so became dead in sin, and wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body. III. They being the root of mankind, the guilt of this sin was imputed, and the same death in sin and corrupted nature conveyed to all their posterity, descending from them by original generation. IV. From this original corruption, whereby we are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil, do proceed all actual transgressions. V. This corruption of nature, during this life, doth remain in those that are regenerated; and although it be through Christ pardoned and mortified, yet both itself, and all the motions thereof, are truly and properly sin. VI. Every sin, both original and actual, being a transgression of the righteous law of God, and contrary thereunto, doth, in its own nature, bring guilt upon the sinner, whereby he is bound over to the wrath of God, and curse of the law, and so made subject to death, with all miseries spiritual,

- temporal, and eternal” (Chapter VI).
- c. The Philadelphia Confession of Faith, adopted by the Baptist churches in the United States:
 - 1) “Although God created man upright and perfect, and gave him a righteous law, which had been unto life had he kept it, and threatened death upon the breach thereof, yet he did not long abide in this honour; Satan using the subtlety of the serpent to subdue Eve, then by her seducing Adam, who, without any compulsion, did willfully transgress the law of their creation, and the command given unto them, in eating the forbidden fruit, which God was pleased, according to his wise and holy counsel to permit, having purposed to order it to his own glory. (Gen. 2:16, 17; Gen. 3:12,13; 2 Cor. 11:3).
 - 2) “Our first parents, by this sin, fell from their original righteousness and communion with God, and we in them whereby death came upon all: all becoming dead in sin, and wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body. (Rom. 3:23; Rom 5:12,etc; Tit. 1:15; Gen. 6:5; Jer. 17:9; Rom. 3:10-19).
 - 3) “They being the root, and by God's appointment, standing in the room and stead of all mankind, the guilt of the sin was imputed, and corrupted nature conveyed, to all their posterity descending from them by ordinary generation, being now conceived in sin, and by nature children of wrath, the servants of sin, the subjects of death, and all other miseries, spiritual, temporal, and eternal, unless the Lord Jesus set them free. (Rom. 5:12-19; 1 Cor. 15:21, 22, 45, 49; Ps. 51:5; Job 14:4; Eph. 2:3; Rom. 6:, 5:12; Heb. 2:14, 15; 1 Thess. 1:10).
 - 4) “From this original corruption, whereby we are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil, do proceed all actual transgressions. (Rom. 8:7; Col. 1:21; James 1:14, 15; Matt. 15:19).” [Chapter 6, 1742].
 - d. The Augsburg Confession of Faith [the basic creed of the Lutheran Church]: Article II: Of Original Sin. 1] [S]ince the fall of Adam all men begotten in the natural way are born with sin, that is, without the fear of God, without trust in God, and with 2] concupiscence; and that this disease, or vice of origin, is truly sin, even now condemning and bringing eternal death upon those not born again through Baptism and the Holy Ghost.3] They condemn the Pelagians and others who deny that original depravity is sin, and who, to obscure the glory of Christ's merit and benefits, argue that man can be justified before God by his own strength and reason.”
 - e. John Wesley of Methodist fame: "We are condemned before we have done good or evil, under the curse before we know what it is." (*Sermons on Original Sin*, p.340).
- B. Scriptures abused by Calvinist advocates to support their doctrine of original sin:
1. Genesis 6:5: “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.”
 - a. They allege that the description given of that generation is the same condition of every other individual of all generations. But the same chapter affirms that Noah “...was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God” (6:9).
 - b. The chapter also declares that the wicked individuals “had corrupted their way on the earth” (6:12). They were not born corrupt, but became corrupt when they rebelled against God.
 - c. Genesis 8:21: “And the LORD smelled a sweet savour; and the LORD said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done.” Notice that God said that individuals become evil during their youthful years; they are not born in that condition.
 2. Psalms 51:1-5: “Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest. Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.”
 - a. The claim is made that David was born already guilty of iniquity. There is nothing in the verse to suggest such a conclusion.
 - b. In the passage, David asks God to forgive his sin, not his mother's sin. The sins of which David was guilty were those which he had personally done.
 - c. David's mother and father were typical parents—they lived in a sin-filled world and they themselves had in one or more ways committed acts of sin. “Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law” (1 John 3:4).
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- d. Ezekiel 18:20: “The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.”
 3. Psalms 58:3: “The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies.”
 - a. Calvinists gleefully proclaim that this verse proves their doctrine of original sin! But the psalmist affirms they “go astray” after their entry into this world. It does not say that they are born into this world already guilty of sin; it does not say that babies speak lies from the moment of their birth.
 - b. The psalmist is not even speaking of babies in the verse; he is describing individuals who are mature enough to be held responsible for their actions and words. The subjects of the statement are old enough to speak lies, to stop their ears (58:4-5), and to have teeth (58:6).
- C. Consequences of the Doctrine of Total Hereditary Depravity.
1. The theory says that no unregenerate person can do good. But Cornelius was not a saved person, yet he is praised for doing good:
 - a. Acts 10:2: “A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway.”
 - b. Acts 10:22: “And they said, Cornelius the centurion, a just man, and one that feareth God, and of good report among all the nation of the Jews, was warned from God by an holy angel to send for thee into his house, and to hear words of thee.”
 - c. He was not saved until he obeyed the gospel: “And he shewed us how he had seen an angel in his house, which stood and said unto him, Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter; Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved” (Acts 11:13-14).
 2. The theory alleges that every act of an alien is sinful. Even if a non-Christian saves lives, helps the poor, takes in the homeless, he is still sinful in what he does, for they assert that he is acting from the wrong motivation—but that is judging motives, which we are forbidden to do.
 3. The theory claims that an individual’s salvation is entirely up to God, that there is nothing the sinner can do toward being saved; that God must take direct miraculous action to save a person’s soul. The false doctrine of the direct operation of the Holy Spirit in the conviction and conversion of the sinner develops from the untrue doctrine of total hereditary depravity.
- D. Total Hereditary Depravity exposed.
1. Exodus 32:31-33: “And Moses returned unto the LORD, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin--; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written. And the LORD said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book.” [Those who sin will have their names removed from God’s book of life; it is not because of the sins of their parents or anyone else].
 2. Ecclesiastes 7:29: “Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions.” [Each one of us enters this world completely free from the guilt of sin; we were created in a spiritually pure condition].
 3. Ezekiel 18:20: “The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.”
 - a. The one who will be separated from God (die), is the one who commits sin. The sin of his parent does not attach itself to the child.
 - b. Since an infant cannot be contaminated by the parent’s sin, from whom does he obtain that guilt? Certainly not from God! As the passage declares, the individual is guilty of sin only when he personally commits sin.
 - c. James 1:13-15: “Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.”
 4. Ezekiel 28:15: “Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee.” [This is another plain declaration that we enter this world free from any sin; God cannot make anything that is polluted with sin].
 5. Isaiah 59:1-2: “Behold, the LORD’S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.” [It is the sins of the individual that separate him from

the Almighty; not the sins of his parents].

6. Matthew 18:1-5: "At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me."
 - a. Since we are to become as little children, then it follows that little children are not infected with sin. The picture our Lord draws of little children bears no resemblance to the view that Calvinism has of them.
 - b. Matthew 19:14: "But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven."
 - c. 1 Corinthians 14:20: "Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men."

IV. UNCONDITIONAL ELECTION.

- A. This doctrine alleges that man is so depraved that he cannot participate in the salvation process.
 1. It teaches that people cannot choose for themselves to obey or disobey God—that God had to choose for mankind.
 - a. Unconditional Election states that God chose some to go to Heaven and some to go to Hell. It is their notion that God, without consulting the individual, made an unalterable choice where each human being would spend eternity.
 - b. This doctrine is also called the doctrine of predestination—that God programmed every action that should ever be done on earth.
 2. Plain statements from direct Calvinist sources:
 - a. Calvinist website: "God's choice of certain individuals unto salvation before the foundation of the world rested solely in His own sovereign will. His choice of particular sinners was not based on any foreseen response of obedience on their part, such as faith, repentance, etc. On the contrary, God gives faith and repentance to each individual whom He selected. These acts are the result, not the cause of God's choice. Election therefore was not determined by or conditioned upon any virtuous quality or act foreseen in man. Those whom God sovereignly elected He brings through the power of the Spirit to a willing acceptance of Christ. Thus God's choice of the sinner, not the sinner's choice of Christ, is the ultimate cause of salvation."
 - b. The Westminster Confession of Faith: "III. By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life, and others foreordained to everlasting death. IV. These angels and men, thus predestinated and foreordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed; and their number is so certain and definite that it can not be either increased or diminished. V. Those of mankind that are predestinated unto life, God, before the foundation of the world was laid, according to his eternal and immutable purpose, and the secret counsel and good pleasure of his will, hath chosen in Christ, unto everlasting glory, out of his free grace and love alone, without any foresight of faith or good works, or perseverance in either of them, or any other thing in the creature, as conditions, or causes moving him thereunto; and all to the praise of his glorious grace. VI. As God hath appointed the elect unto glory, so hath he, by the eternal and most free purpose of his will, foreordained all the means thereunto. Wherefore they who are elected being fallen in Adam are redeemed by Christ, are effectually called unto faith in Christ by his Spirit working in due season; are justified, adopted, sanctified, and kept by his power through faith unto salvation. Neither are any other redeemed by Christ, effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved, but the elect only. VII. The rest of mankind, God was pleased, according to the unsearchable counsel of his own will, whereby he extendeth or withholdeth mercy as he pleaseth, for the glory of his sovereign power over his creatures, to pass by, and to ordain them to dishonor and wrath for their sin, to the praise of his glorious justice." [Website under "Westminster Confession of Faith, Chapter III).
 - c. The Confession of Faith of the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. "God from all eternity did by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass ... By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestined unto life, and others foreordained to everlasting death. These angels and men, thus predestinated and foreordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed; and their number is so certain and

- definite it cannot be either increased or diminished." (Chap. III)
- d. The Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689: "Those of mankind who are predestinated unto Life, God, before the foundation of the world was laid, according to His eternal and immutable Purpose, and the secret counsel and good pleasure of His will, hath chosen in Christ to everlasting glory, out of His mere free grace and love, without any other thing in the creature as a condition or cause moving Him thereunto."
- B. Scriptures abused by Calvinist advocates to support their doctrine of predestination.
1. Acts 4:28: "For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done."
 - a. Calvinist argue that God programmed all things before the foundation of the world. God planned from eternity to send his Son into the world to die for mankind. Part of that plan involved the hatred and antagonism to be directed against the Redeemer. But the Lord's enemies freely chose to do what they did; God did not force them to do so.
 - b. Their antagonism toward the Lord was according to God's prearranged plan. God can ordain for certain things to be accomplished by men and still allow those men involved to be entirely responsible for their own actions. He knows what kind of characters are necessary for the required acts; he knows how these individuals will react to a given situation; he guides the affairs of the world by his providence to bring the right characters into the right positions at the right time. Therefore, when the time was ripe for Jesus to be crucified, God had allowed the right evil men to obtain their positions in Israel (as well as the Roman authorities who controlled the land), and guided and shaped the events so that when Jesus finished his public ministry, they were set to arrest him and put him to death.
 - c. The unbelieving Jews did not perceive that they were taking part in God's plan. They were not forced to hate, arrest, or execute the Lord. They are entirely responsible for their own sinful actions.
 - C. Acts 13:48: "And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed."
 1. Calvin argued: "All are not created on equal terms, but some are preordained to eternal life, others to eternal damnation; and, accordingly, as each has been created for one or other of these ends, we say that he has been predestinated to life or to death."
 2. But there are certain problems with this interpretation.
 - a. If God foreordained some individuals to eternal life, then the rest are also foreordained—to eternal death (separation from God); but that would make God a respecter of persons, which is denied by the Bible (Acts 10:34-35; Rom. 2:11). The verse does not say "foreordained," but "ordained" (*tasso*), a term better translated as "appointed."
 - b. The truth is, God foreknew a plan to which if a man submitted he would be ordained to eternal life. A certain type of person obtains eternal life: the one who will be sincerely submissive to God's will. Those who do not obey that plan, are ordained to doom. It is not the individual who is ordained, but the type of individual; the system, not the person. Only "as many as" are ordained, believed. Only "as many as" are baptized into Christ, put on Christ (Gal. 3:27).
 - c. That the Calvinistic contentions based on this verse are false is seen by the following considerations:
 - 1) The Jews of verses 45-46 were (1) filled with envy; (2) they contradicted and blasphemed those things spoken by Paul; and (3) they judged themselves unworthy of everlasting life.
 - 2) The Gentiles of verse 48 believed: (1) they were glad when they heard the things Paul said; (2) they glorified the word of God; and (3) they were ordained (i.e., disposed to, were determined to obtain) eternal life.
 - 3) By a comparison of the two attitudes it is learned that the unbelieving Jews decided their own eternal destiny (condemnation) by their envious, unbelieving attitude; but those Gentiles who believed decided their own destiny (eternal life) by their believing, happy attitude. The difference between the attitudes lies in the reception or rejection of the word of God.
 - d. School teachers commonly tell their students at the beginning of the course what they will be expected to know for the final test. Those who meet the standard will pass; those who fail to meet the standard will fail the course. The teacher predestinated [appointed] the outcome before class got underway, but that did not mean that the instructor decided which students would pass or fail; the teacher set the standard, but it was up to the individual students to meet the standard. God set the standards that each person is to meet; he has appointed that those who meet the standards will

be invited into Heaven and those who fail to meet the standards will be consigned to *Gehenna*. God appointed [predestinated] that the faithful in Christ would be in Heaven; he did not pick out the individuals who would be saved.

D. Scriptural arguments against the theory of unconditional election.

1. God gave man freedom to choose.
 - a. Adam and Eve had that choice but made the wrong decision.
 - 1) Genesis 2:16-17: "And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."
 - 2) Genesis 3:6: "And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat."
 - b. Every responsible person has the choice to obey or disobey:
 - 1) James 1:13-15: "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."
 - 2) Revelation 22:17: "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."
 - 3) Joshua 24:15: "And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."
 - 4) Ezekiel 18:31-32: "Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord GOD: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye."
2. God is impartial.
 - a. He is not a respecter of persons.
 - 1) Acts 10:34-35: "Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him."
 - 2) Romans 2:11: "For there is no respect of persons with God."
 - 3) 1 Peter 1:17: "And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear."
 - 4) Romans 11:22: "Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off."
 - b. But if the theory of Unconditional Election is true, Jehovah coldly condemned the non-elect to spend eternity in *Gehenna* without giving them any choice in the matter; at the same time, he will bestow eternal bliss in Heaven to the elect without giving them any obligations to meet. This would be rank partiality! Such is completely alien to the nature of our Heavenly Father!
 - c. Calvinism tries to explain this away under the guise of the sovereignty of God, that God has the right to save or condemn according to his own will. But this puts God at odds with himself; he affirms many times in the Bible that he is not a respecter of persons. The Almighty could not be true to his own word or nature while showing the worst kind of partiality.
3. God does not want anyone to be lost; he wants everyone to be saved.
 - a. 1 Timothy 2:4: "Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth."
 - b. 2 Peter 3:9: "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."
 - c. God initiated the plan by which to effect man's salvation, but his plan places some responsibilities on the individual needing salvation.
 - 1) John 3:16: "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."

- 2) Mark 16:15-16: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."
 - 3) Matthew 11:28-30: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."
 - 4) Philippians 2:12: "Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling."
 - 5) Romans 10:13-18: "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world."
 - 6) Acts 10:34-35: "Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him."
4. It undermines the Great Commission.
 - a. Matthew 28:18-20: "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen."
 - b. Mark 16:15-16: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."
 - c. Luke 24:47: "And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."
 - d. Why did Christ command the Great Commission if God had already determined who would be saved and who would be lost? There would be no need to expend the money and the effort if the eternal destiny of every person had already been arbitrarily set.
 5. Man bears some responsibility in the salvation process. God did what man could not do, but he requires certain items from man.
 - a. God prepared the gospel and made it available to man, but man must obey it in order to obtain the blessings it offers.
 - b. 1 Corinthians 2:7-13: "But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual."
 - c. 2 Timothy 1:9-10: "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, But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel."
 - d. Hebrews 5:8-9: "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him."
 - e. Matthew 7:21: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."
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6. God appointed that all the saved would be in Christ and must remain faithful to the Savior.
 - a. Galatians 3:26-27: "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ."
 - b. Ephesians 1:3: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ."
 - c. John 15:6: "If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned."
 - d. Hebrews 5:8-9: "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him."
 - e. Revelation 2:10: "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."
 - f. Revelation 22:14: "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."
7. The theory of Unconditional Election repudiates and makes meaningless the universal invitation of Christ.
 - a. Matthew 11:28-30: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."
 - b. Revelation 22:17: "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."
 - c. There would be no logical reason to offer the gospel invitation if the elect did not need to respond and the non-elect could not respond.
 - d. The Judgment of the last day will be based on how individuals reacted to the word of God—did they obey or disobey? God will not arbitrarily accept some and reject others.
 - 1) John 12:48: "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."
 - 2) Romans 2:3-11: "And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God? Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; Who will render to every man according to his deeds: To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life: But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile: For there is no respect of persons with God."
 - 3) Revelation 20:12-15: "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."
 - 4) Matthew 7:21-23: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

V. LIMITED ATONEMENT.

- A. This doctrine asserts that Christ died only for the ones God had unconditionally chosen to save.
 1. This part of the system grows out of the false doctrine of Unconditional Election, and is based on a perverted view of God's sovereignty.
 - a. Calvinism alleges that God chose the saved (the elect) one-by-one, individually; they cannot do anything to make their salvation more certain and they cannot do anything to endanger their

- salvation.
- b. They further allege that the non-elect have arbitrarily been chosen to be sent to torment, and that there is nothing they can do to prevent it, and that they did nothing to deserve it.
2. They conclude that Christ only died for the elect.
- B. Plain statements from direct Calvinist sources:
1. From a Calvinist website: "Particular Redemption or Limited Atonement: Christ's redeeming work was intended to save the elect only and actually secured salvation for them. His death was substitutionary endurance of the penalty of sin in the place of certain specified sinners. In addition to putting away the sins of His people, Christ's redemption secured everything necessary for their salvation, including faith which unites them to Him. The gift of faith is infallibly applied by the Spirit to all for whom Christ died, therefore guaranteeing their salvation."
 2. "I. All those whom God hath predestinated unto life, and those only, he is pleased, in his appointed and accepted time, effectually to call, by his Word and Spirit, out of that state of sin and death in which they are by nature, to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ: enlightening their minds, spiritually and savingly, to understand the things of God, taking away their heart of stone, and giving unto them an heart of flesh; renewing their wills, and by his almighty power determining them to that which is good; and effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ; yet so as they come most freely, being made willing by his grace. II. This effectual call is of God's free and special grace alone, not from any thing at all foreseen in man, who is altogether passive therein, until, being quickened and renewed by the Holy Spirit, he is thereby enabled to answer this call, and to embrace the grace offered and conveyed in it. III. Elect infants, dying in infancy, are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit, who worketh when, and where, and how he pleaseth. So also are all other elect persons who are incapable of being outwardly called by the ministry of the Word. IV. Others, not elected, although they may be called by the ministry of the Word, and may have some common operations of the Spirit, yet they never truly come to Christ, and therefore can not be saved: much less can men, not professing the Christian religion, be saved in any other way whatsoever, be they never so diligent to frame their lives according to the light of nature, and the law of that religion they do profess; and to assert and maintain that they may is without warrant of the Word of God" [ibid., Chapter X].
 3. David N. Steele and Curtis C. Thomas. "Christ's redeeming work was intended to save the elect only and actually secured salvation for them. His death was a substitutionary sacrifice of the penalty of sin in the place of certain specified sinners. In addition to putting away the sins of His people, Christ's redemption secured everything necessary for their salvation, including faith, which united them to Him. The gift of faith is infallibly applied by the Spirit to all for whom Christ died, thereby guaranteeing their salvation." (*The Five Points of Calvinism, Defined, Defended, Documented*, p. 17).
 4. The Westminster Shorter Catechism [Website].
 - a. Q. 17. *Into what estate did the fall bring mankind?* A. The fall brought mankind into an estate of sin and misery forbidden to be done by the commandments of the LORD; though he wist it not, yet is he guilty, and shall bear his iniquity.
 - b. Q. 18. *Wherein consists the sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell?* A. The sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell, consists in the guilt of Adam's first sin, the want of original righteousness, and the corruption of his whole nature, which is commonly called original sin; together with all actual transgressions which proceed from it.
 - c. Q. 19. *What is the misery of that estate whereinto man fell?* A. All mankind by their fall lost communion with God, are under his wrath and curse, and so made liable to all the miseries of this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell forever.
 - d. Q. 20. *Did God leave all mankind to perish in the estate of sin and misery?* A. God, having out of his mere good pleasure, from all eternity, elected some to everlasting life, did enter into a covenant of grace....[To] deliver them out of the estate of sin and misery, and to bring them into an estate of salvation by a Redeemer.
 - e. Q. 21. *Who is the Redeemer of God's elect?* A. The only Redeemer of God's elect is the Lord Jesus Christ, who, being the eternal Son of God, became man, and so was....and continueth to be, God and man in two distinct natures, and one person, forever.
- C. Scriptures which are abused to support the Limited Atonement theory:
1. John 10:15: "As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep."
 - a. Calvinists spin the verse to mean that our Lord died only for those they call "the elect." But the

- benefits of Christ's blood pertains only to those who take advantage of it; as we shall see, he shed his blood for everyone, but not everyone will avail themselves of its blessings.
- b. Calvinists make a loud point about the impossibility of a goat being turned into a sheep (cf. Matt. 25:31-46). The illustration of goats and sheep was used by the Lord to identify the redeemed and the unredeemed.
 - c. It is possible for a lost person to become a saved person, for an unredeemed one to become redeemed, as the following cases show:
 - 1) Saul of Tarsus:
 - a) Acts 23:9-11: "And there arose a great cry: and the scribes that were of the Pharisees' part arose, and strove, saying, We find no evil in this man: but if a spirit or an angel hath spoken to him, let us not fight against God. And when there arose a great dissension, the chief captain, fearing lest Paul should have been pulled in pieces of them, commanded the soldiers to go down, and to take him by force from among them, and to bring him into the castle. And the night following the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome."
 - b) 1 Timothy 1:13-15: "Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief."
 - 2) The Corinthians:
 - a) 1 Corinthians 6:9-11: "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."
 - b) 1 Corinthians 1:1-2: "Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother, Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours."
 2. Romans 9:12-13: "It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated."
 - a. This message was given to Rebecca, and was immediately defined as being said in reference to the two nations who would descend from the twins then in her womb. The heavenly message Rebecca received stated that the elder of the twins should serve the younger. This was never true of the two men, Jacob and Esau; it was true with their descendants, for Israel (the progeny of Jacob) did subjugate Edom (the descendants of Esau).
 - 1) 2 Kings 8:20: "In his days Edom revolted from under the hand of Judah, and made a king over themselves."
 - 2) 2 Kings 14:7: "He slew of Edom in the valley of salt ten thousand, and took Selah by war, and called the name of it Joktheel unto this day."
 - 3) 2 Kings 14:22: "He built Elath, and restored it to Judah, after that the king slept with his fathers."
 - 4) 1 Chronicles 18:12-13: "Moreover Abishai the son of Zeruah slew of the Edomites in the valley of salt eighteen thousand. And he put garrisons in Edom; and all the Edomites became David's servants. Thus the LORD preserved David whithersoever he went."
 - b. In this same connection, Paul cites a statement recorded in the Old Testament: "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated." This was not part of the message given to the mother of these two men. It was recorded in Malachi 1:1-3, and was issued about 1400 years after these two men were dead. The statement must be understood in the light of other statements made in the Bible regarding love and hate. Frank Young spoke of a sectarian preacher who once wrote on a blackboard, "John 3:16," and blatantly affirmed that he knew one man God did not love. He proceeded to cite our current text as "proof."
 - c. It is clear that God does not hate any man, in the sense of having an active ill-will against a human being. The Bible says that Jacob hated Leah, but defines it as his having more love for Rachel than

for Leah (Gen. 29:30-31). In the parallel passages of Matthew 10:37 and Luke 14:26, we learn that to hate one's parents, as required by the Lord, is simply to love them less than we love God. It is impossible for God to hate any person, and it is certain that he would not require us to hate anyone. Indeed, he issued many warnings against our allowing any degree of hatred to reside within our hearts or to be expressed in our words or lives.

- 1) Matthew 5:43-48: "Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more *than others*? do not even the publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."
- 2) Mark 12:29-31: "And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments *is*, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this *is* the first commandment. And the second *is* like, *namely* this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these."
- 3) Galatians 5:19-21: "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are *these*; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told *you* in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."
- 4) 1 John 4:20-21: "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also."
- d. God did not hate Esau; he expressed greater love for Jacob in choosing him to be the one through whom Israel was developed. Furthermore, the statement of Malachi 1:2-3, and cited by Paul in our text, did not have application to Jacob and Esau as individuals; it was stated in reference to their respective descendants: Israel and Edom. God did not hate Edom; he showed more love for Israel in that he chose them to be the special nation through which the Redeemer would come.
- e. God never decided the eternal fate of any man separate from that man's free choice. To do otherwise would place him in direct violation of his own word: "Then Peter opened *his* mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him" (Acts 10:34-35).

D. Scriptural Objections to Limited Atonement.

1. "If God, before the foundation of the world, unconditionally ordained just who and how many should be saved, and who and how many lost, then of course the atonement made by Christ could not reach those who were fore-ordained to dishonor and wrath, and therefore they could not have any interest in his death. Indeed it is difficult, according to the theory, to see the benefits of Christ's death at all; for the atonement could not make the salvation of the elect any more secure, nor could it possibly change the condition or chances of the reprobate" (T.W. Brents, *The Gospel Plan of Salvation*, p.34).
2. "In his first letter to Timothy, Paul urges that prayer be made on behalf of all men—particularly rulers—to the end that we may have a peaceful existence conducive to the Christian life. The apostle contends that this is acceptable in God's sight, 'who would have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth' (1 Tim. 2:4). There are several very important matters to be considered in this passage. First, the term for "men" is *anthropos*. It denotes humankind—both male and female. Reference that. Second, the KJV 'will have all men to be saved' could be construed to imply that everyone will be saved, but that is not the case. The ASV 'would' is better. The Greek word is *thelei*, a present tense form, which describes the abiding wish or desire of God. He continuously wants all to be saved. This, of course, is in contrast to the dogma of Calvinism, which asserts that God predestined some to damnation. Mark the "would" and note its present tense emphasis. Also circle 'all'" and marginally note: *Salvation available to all* (Wayne Jackson, *Christian Courier* website).
3. Jesus died for every accountable person.
 - a. John 3:16-17: "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. For God sent not his Son into the

- world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.”
- b. Luke 19:10: “For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.”
 - c. John 12:32: “And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.”
 - d. Romans 5:18: “Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.”
 - e. 2 Corinthians 5:14-15: “For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again. 1 Timothy 2:5-6 For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.”
 - f. Hebrews 2:9: “But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.”
 - g. Our Lord tasted death for every man, but not every man will avail himself of the benefits provided by his death. Matthew 26:28 states that he would shed his blood “for many.” It was shed for all, but he knew that not all would desire the blessings enough to accept the terms.
 - 1) John 1:29: “The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.”
 - 2) 1 John 2:1-2: "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for *the sins of* the whole world."
 - 3) Romans 10:16: "But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?"
 - 4) Hebrews 5:8-9: "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him."
- E. The false doctrine of Limited Atonement stands in opposition to the loving Gospel of Christ.
1. God’s plan for the gospel from eternity was to establish a plan by which fallen humanity would have the privilege of returning to the full fellowship of the Creator.
 2. Christ mission to the earth was for that same express purpose (Luke 19:10).
 3. The sacrificial death of Jesus on the cross was to obtain that very end (John 12:31-32; Rom. 5:5-9).
 4. It is the will of God that every accountable person to receive salvation (1 Tim. 2:4).
 5. But alas, only a relative few will make the right choice:
 - a. “Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it” (Matt. 7:13-14).
 - b. “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).

VI. IRRESISTIBLE GRACE.

A. The doctrine is affirmed in the following words by authoritative sources:

1. The Westminster Confession of Faith: “I. All those whom God hath predestinated unto life, and those only, he is pleased, in his appointed and accepted time, effectually to call, by his Word and Spirit, out of that state of sin and death in which they are by nature, to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ: enlightening their minds, spiritually and savingly, to understand the things of God, taking away their heart of stone, and giving unto them an heart of flesh; renewing their wills, and by his almighty power determining them to that which is good; and effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ; yet so as they come most freely, being made willing by his grace. II. This effectual call is of God's free and special grace alone, not from any thing at all foreseen in man, who is altogether passive therein, until, being quickened and renewed by the Holy Spirit, he is thereby enabled to answer this call, and to embrace the grace offered and conveyed in it. III. Elect infants, dying in infancy, are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit, who worketh when, and where, and how he pleaseth. So also are all other elect persons who are incapable of being outwardly called by the ministry of the Word. IV. Others, not elected, although they may be called by the ministry of the Word, and may have some common operations of the Spirit, yet they never truly come to Christ, and therefore can not be saved: much less can men, not professing the Christian religion, be saved in any other way whatsoever, be they never so diligent to frame their lives according to the light of nature, and the law of that religion they do

profess; and to assert and maintain that they may is without warrant of the Word of God” [Taken directly from Westminster Confession of Faith website, chapter X].

2. From another Calvinist website: “Irresistible Grace. In addition to the outward general call to salvation which is made to everyone who hears the gospel, the Holy Spirit extends to the elect a special inward call that inevitably brings them to salvation. The internal call (which is made only to the elect) cannot be rejected; it always results in conversion. By means of this special call the Spirit irresistibly draws sinners to Christ. He is not limited in His work of applying salvation by man's will, nor is He dependent upon man's cooperation for success. The Spirit graciously causes the elect sinner to cooperate, to believe, to repent, to come freely and willingly to Christ. God's grace, therefore, is invincible; it never fails to result in the salvation of those to whom it is extended.”
3. *The Five Points of Calvinism, Defined, Defended, Documented*, published by the Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company: “Although the general outward call of the gospel can be, and often is, rejected, the special inward call of the Spirit never fails to result in the conversion of those to whom it is made. This special call is not made to all sinners but is issued to the elect only! The Spirit is in no way dependent upon their help or cooperation for success in His work of bringing them to Christ. It is for this reason that Calvinists speak of the Spirit's call and of God's grace in saving sinners as being ‘efficacious,’ ‘invincible,’ or ‘irresistible,’ for the grace which the Holy Spirit extends to the elect cannot be thwarted or refused, it never fails to bring them to true faith in Christ. (p.49). [Quoted from an article by Garland Robinson].

B. Scriptures that are abused to support the theory of Irresistible Grace.

1. Acts 16:14-15: “And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Theodora, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul. And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us.”
 - a. Lydia heard the message Paul presented at the riverside gathering. This is the heart of the salvation process: the gospel is implanted into the minds and hearts of people who then can make an intelligent and sincere decision to obey the will of Christ (Mark 16:15-16; Matt. 28:19-20; Luke 24:47; Rom. 10:17; Acts 15:7,9). Lydia's heart was ready for the pure seed of the kingdom (Luke 8:11,15).
 - b. The Lord opened her heart. The creeds have taught for centuries that man's heart is so calloused and dead in sin that it is utterly incapable of discerning the truth of the gospel, and that God must miraculously open the minds of alien sinners to make it possible for them to be saved; they twist Ephesians 2:1-9 to support their view.
 - c. If this is so, then all who die in their alien sins cannot be blamed for their lost condition. God would be responsible for their eternal condemnation for he failed to "open their hearts" that they might be saved. However, God is no respecter of persons (Rom. 2:11; Acts 10:34-35). His divine nature of infinite justice and goodness requires him to be impartial. If he directly opens one man's heart, which provides him with salvation, God would be obligated to open the heart of every sinner.
 - d. Why did her heart need opening since she was a devout worshipper of God? We have no evidence that her worship was insincere; her piety and goodness are unquestioned; but she was practicing a religion that had been replaced by Christianity (Col. 2:14; Acts 19:1-7).
 - e. The process by which the Lord opened her heart is outlined in the text: Paul spoke the gospel to her; she heard; her heart was opened; she attended to the things that were spoken. The apostle presented a discourse on the gospel, which includes God's love and grace, the death of Jesus, the promise of forgiveness, the conditions of salvation, and the hope of heaven. This message appealed to the heart of Lydia; she accepted its tender truths. God opened her heart by providing the means—the gospel. As a rosebud opens when brought under the influence of the dew and sunshine, so Lydia's heart was opened by the beautiful story of the Savior.
 - f. Paul's mission was to open the eyes and hearts of men through the preaching of the glorious gospel: "Delivering thee from the people, and *from* the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, To open their eyes, *and* to turn *them* from darkness to light, and *from* the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me" (Acts 26:17-18).
2. Romans 8:7-8: “Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.” The American Standard

Version [ASV] translates this verse as, "Because the mind of the flesh is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can it be."

- a. If one minds the sinful appetites of the flesh, he places himself in opposition to God. The disposition to gratify fleshly concerns is opposite to what God wants, and if we maintain this frame of mind, we will be at enmity with God. "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God" (Jas. 4:4).
- b. The disposition of minding the flesh is not subject to the law of God, but is in direct conflict with God's law, and as long as that disposition is maintained, the individual cannot be in concord with his law. However, if the person changes his disposition (through faith and repentance), and obeys the law, he will be saved.
- c. If one continues to display the attitude of verse seven, he cannot please God. This statement does not mean that a person, while he is alive on earth, cannot please him. But the verse clearly shows that one cannot live as he pleases and have the approval of God.
- d. It will be remembered that chapter six developed in detail the truth that, just because we are under the grace of God, does not mean that we have the right to live in sin. God's law requires us to live godly, holy, and pure lives. God sets the standard! "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world" (Titus 2:11-12).
- e. The passage offers no support to the theory that man is so depraved that he cannot do what is right; it does not teach the theory that a direct operation of the Holy Spirit is necessary in order for one to be saved; it does not uphold the theory of Total Hereditary Depravity.

C. Scriptures that expose the fallacy of the theory of Irresistible Grace.

1. According to the Calvinist system, a man enters this world guilty of sin; as he lives here, he adds to his depravity; he is beyond saving—there is no hope for this reprobate person. But the elect are given a way out of this predicament; the Holy Spirit will operate on him directly at some unknown time, cleansing his heart and filling him with faith; one moment he was in an unregenerated state, the next he is a new creature.
 - a. A proponent of the theory alleges: "A man is not saved because he believes in Christ; he believes in Christ because he is saved" (Loraine Boettner, *The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination*).
 - b. They claim the non-elect person cannot get the direct operation of the Holy Spirit, but the elect cannot refuse it. This makes a man a mere machine which can operate only in accordance with the program God has infused in him. No human has the power of choice, in the view of Calvinism.
2. If it can be shown that man does indeed have the power of choice, then the Calvin's house of cards comes fluttering down. The following passages firmly establish the fact that we have the power of choice.
 - a. Joshua 24:15: "And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."
 - b. Jeremiah 6:16: "Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein."
 - c. Acts 13:46: "Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles."
 - d. Romans 6:16-18: "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness."
 - e. John 12:48: "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."
 - f. Acts 2:36-41: "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard this, they were

pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.”

- g. John 6:66-69: “From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.”
- h. John 8:24: “I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.”
- i. Acts 17:30-31: “And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.”
- j. Matthew 10:32-33: “Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.”
- k. Mark 16:15-16: “And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”
- l. Deuteronomy 11:26-28: “Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse; A blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you this day: And a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day, to go after other gods, which ye have not known.”
- m. Ecclesiastes 12:13-14: “Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.”

D. The theory of Irresistible Grace is a human doctrine.

- 1. “It, along with those who propagate and follow it will crumble in eternal destruction. It is a great enemy of truth and righteousness. It is now lifting its ugly head among our brethren. Will you fight it or let it run its deadly course? Observe what Solomon wrote in the long ago, “*Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding*” (Prov. 23:23)” (Robinson).
- 2. Titus 2:11-14: “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.”

VII. PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS.

A. The doctrine is affirmed in the following words by authoritative sources:

- 1. The Westminster Confession of Faith—Chapter XVII:
 - a. “I. They whom God hath accepted in his Beloved, effectually called and sanctified by his Spirit, can neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace; but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved.
 - b. “II. This perseverance of the saints depends, not upon their own free-will, but upon the immutability of the decree of election, flowing from the free and unchangeable love of God the Father; upon the efficacy of the merit and intercession of Jesus Christ; the abiding of the Spirit and of the seed of God within them; and the nature of the covenant of grace; from all which ariseth also the certainty and infallibility thereof.
 - c. “III. Nevertheless they may, through the temptations of Satan and of the world, the prevalency of corruption remaining in them, and the neglect of the means of their perseverance, fall into grievous sins; and for a time continue therein: whereby they incur God's displeasure, and grieve his Holy Spirit; come to be deprived of some measure of their graces and comforts; have their hearts hardened, and their consciences wounded; hurt and prevalency others, and bring temporal

judgments upon themselves.”

2. Calvinist website: “Perseverance of the Saints: All who are chosen by God, redeemed by Christ, and given faith by the Spirit are eternally saved. They are kept in faith by the power of Almighty God and thus persevere to the end.”
 3. Charles Spurgeon: “I do not know how some people, who believe that a Christian can fall from grace, manage to be happy. It must be a very commendable thing in them to be able to get through a day without despair. If I did not believe the doctrine of the final perseverance of the saints, I think I should be of all men the most miserable, because I should lack any ground of comfort. I could not say, whatever state of heart I came into, that I should be like a well-spring of water, whose stream fails not; I should rather have to take the comparison of an intermittent spring, that might stop on a sudden, or a reservoir, which I had no reason to expect would always be full. I believe that the happiest of Christians and the truest of Christians are those who never dare to doubt God, but who take His Word simply as it stands, and believe it, and ask no questions, just feeling assured that if God has said it, it will be so. I bear my willing testimony that I have no reason, nor even the shadow of a reason, to doubt my Lord, and I challenge Heaven, and earth, and hell, to bring any proof that God is untrue. From the depths of hell I call the fiends, and from this earth I call the tried and afflicted believers, and to Heaven I appeal, and challenge the long experience of the blood-washed host, and there is not to be found in the three realms a single person who can bear witness to one fact which can disprove the faithfulness of God, or weaken His claim to be trusted by His servants” (Website). [Spurgeon offers only empty claims and rhetoric, but to proof].
 4. Sam Morris, a Baptist preacher. “We take the position that a Christian’s sins do not damn his soul. The way a Christian lives, what he says, his character, conduct, or his attitude toward other people have nothing whatever to do with the salvation of his soul...All the prayers a man may pray, all the Bibles he may read, all the churches he may belong to, all the services he may attend, all the sermons he may practice, all the debts he may pay, all the ordinances he may observe, all the laws he may keep, all the benevolent acts he may perform will not make his soul one whit safer; and all the sins he may commit from idolatry to murder will not make his soul in any more danger....The way a man lives has nothing whatsoever to do with the salvation of his soul” (Sam Morris, as quoted by Guy N. Woods, Commentary on 1 John, p.225).
- B. Scriptures that are abused to support the theory of the theory of the Perseverance of the Saints.
1. John 5:24: “Verily, verily, I say unto you, 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.”
 - a. They argue that since a Christian has everlasting life (presently), and since everlasting life is unending, thus a Christian can never fall from grace and be lost.
 - 1) If that is the case, what would be the purpose of the Judgment?
 - 2) And in what sense does he have eternal life?
 - b. Faithful Christians have eternal life in promise: “And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life” (1 John 2:25).
 - c. Faithful Christians have eternal life in hope: “Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness; In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began; But hath in due times manifested his word through preaching, which is committed unto me according to the commandment of God our Saviour” (Tit. 1:1-3; cf. Rom. 8:24-25).
 - d. Eternal life will be given in Heaven:
 - 1) Mark 10:30 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.”
 - 2) 1 Peter 1:3-9: “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and

- full of glory: Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.”
2. John 10:27-29: “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 man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.”
 - a. They argue that since no one can snatch one of the Lord's sheep from his hand, that it is impossible for one of his sheep to be lost.
 - b. But there are conditions plainly stated in the passage: If his sheep will keep on hearing the voice of the Shepherd and keep on following him, then no one can force them away from him. What happens if the sheep decides that he does not want to keep hearing or following the Lord? He will fall away.
 - c. One places himself into the hand of the Lord when he obeys the gospel; he can take himself from the Lord's hand by going into sin.
 3. Romans 8:35-39: “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”
 - a. The assumption is made by Calvinists that since nothing can separate a Christian from the Love of Christ, therefore a Christian can never be lost. [Some scholars think that the love of this passage has reference to the love which faithful saints have for Christ].
 - b. But God and Christ love every member of the human family—the saint and the sinner! “Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect” (Matt. 5:43-48).
 - c. If their argument is true, then every human being will be saved! Their argument is false, for God's love for a sinner does not obligate him to save that rebel and take him to Heaven despite the load of sin that person has acquired. In fact, only the pure and holy will be allowed into Heaven:
 - 1) Matthew 5:8: “Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.”
 - 2) Hebrews 12:14-15: “Follow after peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no man shall see the Lord: looking carefully lest there be any man that falleth short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby the many be defiled” (ASV).
 - 3) Revelation 21:27: “And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.”
 4. 1 John 3:6-9: “Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him. Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. 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.”
 - a. Our Calvinist friends assert that one who has been born again cannot commit sin, that it is impossible for him to ever become guilty of sin. Some of them argue that acts of sin may be done by the Christian, but that no guilt is attached to the individual.
 - b. An inspired writer cannot contradict himself; neither can he write something that is false. Earlier, John affirmed that a Christian can commit sin:
 - 1) “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not

- in us” (1 John 1:8-10). Notice that we can commit sin and thus we stand in need of pardon; if we confess our sins, we receive forgiveness. What if we do not confess?
- 2) 1 John 2:1-2: “My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.” The information John penned was to aid the saints in avoiding sin; but if they did sin, the previous passage shows what they must do.
- c. The reference is to faithful children of God. One who walks in the light of the gospel will not live a life of sin; the two items [living by the gospel and living in sin] are incompatible with each other. They cannot be done at the same time.
 - 1) Matthew 6:24: “No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.”
 - 2) Matthew 12:30: “He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad.”
 - 3) 2 Corinthians 6:14-18: “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.”
 - d. John teaches here that one who is begotten of God *doth not commit sin*—[*doeth no sin*, ASV]. This phrase in the Greek is present active indicative, and means does not keep on doing sin. The reason assigned by the apostle as to why a Christian will not live a life of sin is *because God’s seed remains in a child of God*. God’s seed is his word:
 - 1) Luke 8:11: “Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God.”
 - 2) Colossians 3:16: “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.”
 - 3) James 1:18: “Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.”
 - 4) James 1:21: “Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.”
 - 5) 2 Timothy 3:15-17: “And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. 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, throughly furnished unto all good works.”
 - 6) Psalms 119:11: “Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.”
 - 7) 1 John 2:1: “My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.”
 - e. If a sincere child of God studies the Bible, applies its truths to his life, and endeavors to do right, he will not live in sin. A Christian will stumble occasionally and commit some act of sin, but sin is not characteristic of his life. In our daily prayers, we regularly ask for God’s pardon, for obligations left undone (cf. Jas. 4:17), misuse of the tongue (Jas. 3:1ff), or some positive act of disobedience.
 - f. The rule of our life is to follow Christ as perfectly as we can (John 10:27-29).
- C. Scriptures that expose the fallacy of the theory of the Perseverance of the Saints.
1. James 5:19-20: “Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.”
 - a. James addresses these remarks to “brethren” (Christians). He shows that it is possible for one of them to err from the truth and stand in need of being converted from that error.
 - b. One who brings that erring saint back into the fold of safety has saved a soul from death. This is
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not speaking of physical death, for even the most faithful saint will die; rather, he is speaking of the separation that exists between a person and God; one who lives in sin in this life is separated from God (has no fellowship with the Father); one who dies in that disobedience will eternally be separated from God in the next world.

- c. When an erring Christian has been converted, his sins are now hidden—taken away, forgiven.
2. John 15:1-6: “I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.”
3. 2 Peter 2:20-22: “For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.”
4. 1 Corinthians 8:8-13: “But meat commendeth us not to God: for neither, if we eat, are we the better; neither, if we eat not, are we the worse. But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to them that are weak. For if any man see thee which hast knowledge sit at meat in the idol's temple, shall not the conscience of him which is weak be emboldened to eat those things which are offered to idols; And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died? But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ. Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend.”
5. Romans 11:22: “Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.”
6. 1 Corinthians 9:27: “But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.”
7. Hebrews 6:4-6: “For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.”
8. New Testament examples of Christians who fell away disprove the once-saved, always-saved theory.
 - a. Simon, who formerly had been a sorcerer: “Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity. Then answered Simon, and said, Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me” (Acts 8:21-24).
 - b. Hymenaeus and Alexander: “Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck: Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme” (1 Tim. 1:19-20).
 - c. Some of the Galatians: “Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace” (Gal. 5:1-4).

VIII. THE INFLUENCE OF CALVINISM ON THE RELIGIOUS WORLD.

A. Sectarianism: Many of these churches have accepted the following doctrines:

1. Doctrine of original sin, also called Total Hereditary Depravity.
2. Direct operation of the Holy Spirit in the conviction and conversion of sinners.
3. Salvation by grace only.
4. Salvation by faith only.
5. Obedience to God has no part in being saved.
6. Once saved, always saved.

7. Salvation is only for certain hand-picked individuals.
 8. The Elect will receive the grace of God even if they do not want it.
- B. The influence of Calvinism on some in the Lord's church.
1. Some in the church are teaching that salvation is by grace only and even the Calvinistic doctrine of Irresistible Grace. These false teachers believe men are wholly sinners, born that way from their mother's womb. They can neither understand nor obey the commandments of God in their unregenerate state.
 - a. For one to be saved he must first have the direct operation of the Holy Spirit upon his heart by which [it is claimed] that God's grace is bestowed on the individual.
 - b. This grace cannot be resisted. It will enable him to understand God's word and respond favorably to it. The point of this doctrine is that it is entirely done by God and that the individual has no part in it. This has been prearranged in God's so-called plan of predestination. Thus, every person must wait on God to send his Spirit and thereby receive his working miracle of grace.
 - c. The doctrines of salvation by grace alone and irresistible grace are unscriptural, anti-scriptural, and irrational. The Bible teaches that salvation is by grace, but it does not teach that we are saved by *grace alone*. God's grace can be refused and rejected; God does not force anyone to be saved.
 - 1) Ephesians 2:8-9: "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."
 - 2) Acts 10:34-35: "Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him."
 - 3) 2 Corinthians 5:10-11: "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences."
 - 4) Acts 2:40-41: "And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls."
 - 5) Acts 13:44-46: "And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God. But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming. Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles."
 - 6) Acts 24:25: "And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee."
 - 7) Acts 26:24-29: "And as he thus spake for himself, Festus said with a loud voice, Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad. But he said, I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness. For the king knoweth of these things, before whom also I speak freely: for I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him; for this thing was not done in a corner. King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest. Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian. And Paul said, I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds."
 - d. The Biblical understanding of grace presents a beautiful picture for all. It is extended to every man and woman, not just a select few as Calvinism teaches. "*For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men*" (Titus 2:11). The Calvinist system perverts the Biblical concept of the awesome grace of God.
 - e. The following is from an excellent article by Garland Robinson which identifies cases where Calvinism has contaminated some in the Lord's church:
 - 1) In a publication called *The Persuader*, Arnold Hardin (Scyene Road Church of Christ, Dallas, Texas) wrote an article entitled "100% Grace" which was published on August 6, 1989. In this article he said,
 - 2) Recently a preacher among us addressed a group of preachers and exclaimed that salvation is 100% by grace! I can imagine the religious consternation of most of those brethren. But bless

their hearts -- how else can it be? There is absolutely nothing more plainly taught than the fact that our salvation is by grace—100%!

- 3) Also, in the December, 1991, issue of *IMAGE*, **Denny Boultinghouse** published an article entitled "100% Grace." Some of the excerpts from this article reads: Are we saved 100% by the grace of God? Yes, we are saved 100% by the cross of Christ. Before you panic, please hear me out. May cool heads prevail." ... "To even ask the question: 'Are we saved 100% by the grace of God?' demonstrates an inadequate understanding of man and of the Cross of Christ." ... "...So, yes, we are saved 100% by the death of Christ. Our salvation is completely paid for by Christ's death, it is completely by grace. We contribute nothing to our salvation." ... "As one brother correctly stated recently, 'It is a scandalous and outrageous lie to teach that salvation arises from human activity. We do not contribute one whit to our salvation.' He is exactly right." This is Calvinism! If salvation is by grace, 100%, then no one can do anything to be saved. Faith, repentance, confession and water baptism would not matter. To love God and Christ would be of none effect. 100% leaves no room for anything else. If a vessel is 100% full, there is room for no more.
- 4) On October 31, 1990, **Rubel Shelly** wrote in "*Love Lines*" (p.3), the church bulletin of Woodmont Hills in Nashville, Tennessee, "*It is a scandalous and outrageous lie to teach that salvation arises from human activity. We do not contribute one whit to our salvation.*"
- 5) Also, in a speech at the Nashville Jubilee in July, 1991, Rubel said (quote taken from the tape), "Our salvation arises entirely and only from grace. ...It is entirely of grace through faith. ...My salvation is on grace alone, not by anything I've added to that. ...No, I'm not going to debate anybody on the theory that salvation is by grace and grace alone. Because the Bible just makes that too plain." If it is the case that we do not "contribute one whit to our salvation," then the gospel plan of salvation means nothing. If it is true, then Peter lied on Pentecost when he said, "*repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost...And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation*" (Acts 2:38,40). These words mean nothing because he says that absolutely no human activity is involved!
- 6) In October, 1989, **Randy Mayeux**, (then serving as preacher for the Preston Road Church of Christ in Dallas) presented a lesson at the 21st Annual Youth Minister's Seminar, sponsored by Lubbock Christian University, on the subject of "Unity." In this lesson he says, "I think it would have been just virtually unthinkable 15 years ago that we would have people, and I'm not about to give you names, and for the record, just so you will know, and I really hesitate to do this on tape. Turn the tape off. I have preached and believed, I believe deeply that the New Testament teaches that salvation is a free gift of God period. You are saved by grace alone."
 - a) If there is anything the Bible teaches more clearly, it is the fact that there is no ONE THING, by itself, by which men are saved. There are many things that save: both on God's part and man's part. Faith, love, grace, blood, repentance, baptism, works of obedience, etc., etc., all have a significant role in attaining one's salvation. But not one of these alone, or by itself, is all there is in the justification of a sinner. They each work together. Each one is essential, or there is no salvation.
 - b) God has a part (grace, blood, mercy, forgiveness, etc.) in man's salvation. Man has a part (faith, repentance, confession, water baptism, faithfulness, works of obedience, etc.) in his own salvation. God's grace cannot save one who refuses to be baptized any more than he can save one who fails to have faith -- both are essential (Mark 16:16; Heb. 11:6). If, therefore, salvation were by "grace alone -- 100% grace," without man contributing "one whit to his salvation," then all men would be saved for Titus 2:11 says, "*For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men.*" Man must respond to God's offer of salvation by works of obedience or there is no salvation at all. And, if man must respond, then he contributes to his own salvation. I am not at all ashamed to say that both God and man have a part to play in salvation. To leave out either side does not bring salvation. [End of quote].
- f. Many verses prove that man has a part in salvation.
 - 1) Hebrews 5:8-9: "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him."

- 2) Matthew 7:21: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."
 - 3) Revelation 2:10: "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."
 - 4) James 2:24-26: "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way? For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also."
 - 5) Matthew 12:50: "For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother."
 - 6) Romans 1:5: "By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name."
 - 7) Romans 16:17-18: "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple."
 - 8) 2 Thessalonians 1:8: "In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." [*Garland M. Robinson*].
2. Salvation by faith only has been voiced by some in the Lord's church.
 - a. Some weak members use unreliable versions of the Bible which place sectarian doctrines in the text. Some of these "Bibles" teach salvation is by faith only.
 - 1) NIV—Romans 1:16-17: "I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of every-one who believes first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last...."
 - 2) RSV—Romans 11:20: "Watch out! Remember that those branches, the Jews, were broken off because they didn't believe God, and you are there only because you do..."
 - 3) TEV: Romans 1:17: "For I have complete confidence in the gospel: it is God's power to save all who believe, first the Jews and also the Gentiles. For the gospel reveals how God puts men right with himself: it is through faith alone, from beginning to end...." (1966 Edition; **alone** dropped in later editions).
 - b. It appears that we have some members who believe in gaining Heaven by faith only. They know that becoming a Christian requires obedience to the gospel, but they do little or nothing after being baptized into Christ.
 3. Some have spoken against the need to be baptized in order to be saved.
 - a. I met a couple who had outwardly obeyed the gospel some years earlier, but had started attending a sectarian church. They had been improperly taught. I asked them if a person had to be baptized to be saved; they both said No. I read for them Mark 16:16. They were shocked. They had not idea that this verse was in the Bible.
 - b. Some in the church are ignorant of the Bible and thus think that baptism is not essential. But there are others, contaminated by Calvinism and other sectarian views, who openly deny the need for baptism.
 4. Some think that the Holy Spirit works directly on Christians to strengthen and aid them.
 - a. James Frele, who preached for the Westlake congregation in Indianapolis, wrote the following about twenty years ago [quoted from *The Informer*, bulletin of Shelbyville Road church]:
 - 1) "Sometimes I worry about us in this day of history. Too many of us are sputtering, limping, and at moments seem lifeless. In our search to stimulate the heartbeat we go to Acts for pattern. We built the pattern (outer shell) thinking we will be like them. Form without Spirit is lifeless...."
 - 2) "The life and power of this church will not be in organizational, ministry and program structure, preacher, etc. It must be the indwelling Spirit of God in us...."
 - 3) "We must avoid the danger of trying to stimulate activity, life and power by simply imitating a pattern. This is no more than human effort, form without life and we will find it bankrupt."
 - 4) "More and more my preaching will not be calling you to try and imitate or do something for God. Rather it will be calling for you to behold the power of God working for you and in you."
 - 5) "I shall stay faithful in prayer....I believe when this really, really happens, then the themes of

Acts 4:31-36 will result. Our fruitfulness will be like never before. The incredible transformation that takes place in us will be an overpowering message of what Jehovah God has done in the hearts of His people at Westlake.”

- b. Mr. Frele has been contaminated by Calvinism and Pentecostalism. He does not know, or does not understand, or does not believe the New Testament. The truth is:
 - 1) The Holy Spirit operates through the inspired word (Eph. 5:18-19; Col. 3:16; 2 Tim. 3:15-17).
 - 2) We are to follow the pattern established in the New Testament.
 - a) 2 Timothy 1:13: “Hold the pattern of sound words which thou hast heard from me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus” (ASV).
 - b) Philippians 3:16: “Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.”
 - c) 1 Corinthians 4:6: “Now these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes; that in us ye might learn not to go beyond the things which are written; that no one of you be puffed up for the one against the other.” (ASV).
 - d) 2 John 1:9: “Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God: he that abideth in the teaching, the same hath both the Father and the Son” (ASV).

IX. THE INFLUENCE OF CALVINISM ON MANY INDIVIDUALS.

A. Fatalism—What will be, will be.

1. The Calvinistic concept of predestination has afflicted the minds of some. It asserts that God mapped everything that happens on earth right down to the simplest of details; that all these were programmed to happen and that man cannot change any of these items.
 - a. But if that idea is true, then there is no such thing as right or wrong! Murderers are guiltless; they merely carried out the program God had mandated for them. All wars were likewise decreed by the Almighty. Furthermore, every sin that anyone commits was appointed by God to be done.
 - b. We have this puzzling situation: God commanded Adam and Eve not to eat the forbidden fruit; but he had already ordained that they eat it; and then God punished them for doing the very thing that he predestined them to do!
 - c. When an innocent little baby suffers and dies, some think that God was the cause of this. Or when a tragic accident takes place and lives are lost and bodies are maimed, some may quickly affirm that this terrible calamity was God’s will.
 - d. We live in an imperfect world that suffers the evil effects of many sinful generations. There are many evils that occur on earth which are caused by men making the wrong choices. We have the power to choose, but we do not always make good choices. Often our decisions bring grief to ourselves or to others. God is not to be blamed.
2. Some think that God has so predestined a man’s life that the very day, hour, and moment of his death has already been set. A misunderstanding of Hebrews 9:27 has led to this false view: “It is appointed unto man once to die....” This states the truth that we all shall die; it does not say that the time of our death is fixed.

B. Superstition—that God reveals to someone that he is of the elect by some special sign.

1. One fellow fell off the back of his mule as he headed home from the field. He was convinced that the Holy Spirit “knocked him off the mule” as a sign that he was saved.
2. Another fellow was sitting on his tall front porch waiting for his wife to get his lunch on the table. He fell asleep and dreamed of seeing the devil; in his sleep, he fell off the porch and hit the ground. He was convinced that that was God’s way of telling him he was saved.
3. The religion of the Bible is not based on superstition, but revelation. We are not told to go into all the world and tell people what God has done for us or to us; we are to preach and teach the soul-saving Gospel of Christ!

C. Despair—If not of the elect, no possible hope.

1. Many stories could be told of unfortunate people who have been deceived by Calvinistic doctrines. Laboring under the misconception that only the elect (hand-picked before time began) will be saved, and greatly wondering whether they are of the elect, many have made themselves miserable, not knowing their spiritual status.
2. If they did not get something they could perceive as a sign of their call, they would be depressed and in despair.
3. What such a person needs to do is arise and be baptized! Saul of Tarsus had come to believe in Christ; his repentance was obvious; he had already stated his faith in the Lord. At Damascus, he fasted and

prayed for three days, until an inspired preacher told him what he needed to do (Acts 9; 22; 26).

D. Error—False plans of salvation.

1. Calvinism and their soul-mates have developed unscriptural plans of salvation. One who has accepted a man-made scheme is convinced that he is saved; he has no reason to question his status. When someone from the Lord's church tries to point out the truth to him, oftentimes he gets angry and defensive.
2. Many times, these unfortunate souls are misled when they were children; all they have known is what they were taught during their tender years. It is difficult to teach such a person the way of the Lord more perfectly.
3. One who is convinced that he is all right will have a good conscience; he may be very sincere and honest in his religious views; but he is grave peril if his religion is not according to the truth of God's word.

E. False Security—Live as you please for you cannot fall away and be lost.

1. If one is been convinced that Calvinism is true, and that he is of the elect, he is fully persuaded that he is headed for Heaven and that he cannot lose his reward.
2. Such a person is not likely interested in the truth; he thinks he already has the truth. He is confident in his condition.
3. If that person is consistent with his beliefs, then he could live a life of crime, of immorality, of violence, or rebellion—and still die in his false hope!

F. No Personal Responsibility—Making salvation dependent only on God.

1. If one is persuaded that Calvinism is true, then he believes that he has no obligation to God, that he cannot save himself, that he cannot contribute to his own salvation, and that everything is up to the Almighty.
2. If he is born as part of the elect, he cannot do anything to lose his standing.
3. As we have seen, Calvinism is a gross doctrine that can only have Satan as its author.

G. Salvation by Dead Faith—Making salvation require only faith in Christ.

1. James 2:14-26: "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works. Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way? For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also."
2. Faith is produced by God's word (Rom. 10:17). As we learn the Bible, seeing its truths and authority, faith is generated in our minds; if our faith is strong enough, we will do what the Bible tells us to do. If we believe only, our faith is dead; if our faith acts, it is a living faith that produces salvation.
3. Calvinism says that faith is a direct gift from God; that God must take direct action to implant faith in our hearts. If that is so, then whose fault is it if we die without faith? If the theory is true, the fault would lie entirely with God. But the theory is false.
4. Acts 15:7: "And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe."

H. False Hope—Giving false hope to those who are still alien sinners.

1. One who firmly believes in a false system lives with a false hope. One who has been convinced that he is of the elect, and has persuaded himself that God has given him a sign to that effect, feels safe in his convictions. But his hope is faulty.
2. We are saved by truth, not by error. How much poison does it take to be deadly? Read the label on the rat poison *D-Con*. Nearly all the contents of the box is good food (for rats); only a tiny part is poison. How much error is required to condemn a soul?

- a. John 8:32: "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."
- b. John 17:17: "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth."
- c. Hebrews 4:12: "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."
- d. James 2:10: "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all."
- e. 2 Timothy 3:15-17: "And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. 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, throughly furnished unto all good works."

I. Rejection of the Gospel—Undermines the power of the Gospel to save.

1. If one believes in Calvinism, he will have little interest in learning the gospel plan of salvation. He has been convinced that he is saved directly and unconditionally by God through an operation on his heart by the Holy Spirit.
2. God's spoken word brought the universe, the earth, and all earthly life into being. His written word is no less powerful.
 - a. Psalms 33:6-9: "By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth. He gathereth the waters of the sea together as an heap: he layeth up the depth in storehouses. Let all the earth fear the LORD: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him. For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast."
 - b. Hebrews 4:12: "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."
 - c. Romans 1:16-17: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith."
 - d. James 1:18: "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures."
 - e. James 1:21: "Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls."
3. But to the Calvinist, the gospel is not all-sufficient, is not all-authoritative, is not sufficiently powerful to save anyone.

J. Miraculous Conversion—Affirming that one must have a direct operation of the Holy Spirit to be saved.

1. The Bible teaches that the age of miracles is over (1 Cor. 13:8-13; Eph. 4:11-16). The purpose of supernatural works has been completed (Heb. 2:1-4; Mark 16:15-20).
2. Now that the final revelation of God's will has been unfolded, confirmed, and recorded, we no longer need any miraculous powers. God has never saved a soul from the guilt of sin by the direct use of his supernatural power.
3. But Calvinism maintains that the conversion process requires a direct, miraculous act on the part of the Holy Spirit. That direct operation implants faith in the individual, saves his soul, and reveals to him that he is of the elect. This theory is false.

X. **CONCLUSION.**

A. We have examined the five points of Calvinism and exposed the fallacy of each.

1. T—Total Hereditary Depravity.
2. U—Unconditional Election.
3. L—Limited Atonement.
4. I—Irresistible Grace.
5. P—Perseverance of the Saints.

B. We have identified some of the influences this false doctrine has had on the religious world.

1. On sectarianism.
 2. On the Lord's church.
 3. On various individuals.
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IS ONE CHURCH AS GOOD AS ANOTHER?

I. INTRODUCTION.

A. The title of this study is a timely question.

1. The average person in society believes that one church is as good as any other church, as far as the benefits offered to the soul are concerned.
2. The average preacher in the religious community of our nation is not afraid to affirm that one church is as good as another, as far as the benefits offered to the soul are concerned.
3. There are a good many honest souls who are puzzled over the confusion of churches that meets him as he drives down the road, reads the newspapers, and listens to religious programs.
 - a. Some of these are aware that there is only one church presented in the New Testament, and thus has difficulty in under-standing why the great abundance of differing religious institutions exist, all claiming to be following the Lord Jesus.
 - b. This honest individual wants to know whether the Lord founded each of the churches, which now number in the hundreds.
4. There are others who, seeing the mass of confusion that predominates in the religious world, rejects all of these churches, classifying them all as misguided and self-serving.

B. This study is designed to investigate the subject

1. As with any investigation, the student must lay aside all preconceived ideas and prejudices he may already have formed. If one is looking for verification of his own beliefs, when he searches the Bible, he is apt to find it—even though those tenets may not be taught by the Bible. Without an open mind, we are not likely to find the truth.
2. It is only to the Bible that we may go to find the reliable answer we seek to the question. Books that have been composed by mere men are apt to be tainted by their personal views. But the Bible is always right about every subject it addresses.
3. We must be honest within our own hearts and with the truth. One who is unwilling to face the obvious truth is not honest with himself. If one tries to explain away some precept of truth, he is not honest with the truth.
4. We must not array one Bible passage against another, to try to justify some theory we have already accepted. Truth always runs in parallel lines; there is no contradiction between two truths.
5. We are taught in God's word that the Bible is his word, and is fully authoritative and accurate.
 - a. Isaiah 8:20: "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, *it is* because *there is* no light in them."
 - b. 2 Timothy 3:15-17: "And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. 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."
 - c. 2 Peter 1:3: "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that *pertain* unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue."
 - d. 2 Peter 1:16-21: "For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount. We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake *as they were* moved by the Holy Ghost."
 - e. Luke 10:26: "...What is written in the law? how readest thou?"

II. DISCUSSION.

A. There is a great difference between God's ways and man's ways.

1. What man may accept and hold as a profound truth, may in fact be a great error in God's sight.
 - a. Proverbs 16:25: "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof *are* the ways of death."
 - b. Isaiah 55:8-9: "For my thoughts *are* not your thoughts, neither *are* your ways my ways, saith the

LORD. For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."

- c. Jeremiah 10:23: "O LORD, I know that the way of man *is* not in himself: *it is* not in man that walketh to direct his steps."
2. We must learn what **God** says about a matter before we decide what is correct on that subject.
3. We can be wrong, but God and his word are always right!
4. God speaks to us only through the written word. The only information that have of what God has ever said or thought is in the Bible! We cannot, apart from the Bible, ever discover a single word or idea God has ever expressed.
5. There are preachers who have the fanciful notion that God has given them a direct revelation. They try to get people to believe their claims, although they have absolutely no way to prove that what they say has come from God.
 - a. God has given his completed revelation; there is not a single piece of information that needs to be added; it is the "perfect law of liberty" (Jas. 1:25). To add anything to that which is perfect it to make it imperfect.
 - b. Christ promised the apostles that the Holy Spirit would guide them into all truth (John 16:13). If some new "truth" is revealed in our time, then the Lord's promise to the apostles was in error. "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, *that* shall he speak: and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show *it* unto you" (John 16:12-14).
 - c. Nothing new is to be added to the revealed word; the entirety of God's word has already been revealed. The following passages are from the American Standard Version, an accurate translation of the Bible:
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 4:6: "Now these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes; that in us ye might learn not *to go* beyond the things which are written; that no one of you be puffed up for the one against the other."
 - 2) Galatians 1:9-10: "As we have said before, so say I now again, if any man preacheth unto you any gospel other than that which ye received, let him be anathema. For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? or am I striving to please men? if I were still pleasing men, I should not be a servant of Christ."
 - 3) 2 John 9-11: "Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God: he that abideth in the teaching, the same hath both the Father and the Son. If any one cometh unto you, and bringeth not this teaching, receive him not into *your* house, and give him no greeting: for he that giveth him greeting partaketh in his evil works."
 - 4) Jude 3: "Beloved, while I was giving all diligence to write unto you of our common salvation, I was constrained to write unto you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints."

B. Man's way excuses division.

1. There are many who try to justify the existence of many churches.
 - a. Their idea is, the greater number of churches there are, the greater our choice; and thus the greater likelihood of our finding a church that fits our wants and ideas.
 - b. Little is said about what God wants in the matter! What does God say about the concept of many churches?
 - 1) Psalms 127:1: "A Song of degrees for Solomon. Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh *but* in vain."
 - 2) Matthew 15:13-15: "But he answered and said, Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up. Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch."
 - c. God's plan was for one church, one kingdom, one body of Christ, one family: each of these is the same institution; the different descriptions are given to help us to comprehend the nature of God's arrangement. God did not plan for more than one church than he planned for Christ to have more than one spiritual body, or for him to have more than one family, or more than one spiritual temple.
 - 1) Matthew 16:18: "And I say also 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."
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 3:16-17: "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and *that* the Spirit of God

- dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which *temple* ye are."
- 3) Ephesians 1:22-23: "And hath put all *things* under his feet, and gave him *to be* the head over all *things* to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all."
 - 4) Ephesians 2:16: "And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby."
 - 5) Ephesians 2:19-22: "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner *stone*; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit."
 - 6) Ephesians 4:4-6: "*There is* one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who *is* above all, and through all, and in you all."
 - 7) Ephesians 5:25-27: "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."
 - 8) 1 Timothy 3:15: "But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth."
2. Man's sincerity does not obligate God to change his law to fit man's conception of how things ought to be. Sincerity is essential to pleasing God, but God's truth is also part of the equation.
 - a. If a man sincerely thought that the telephone number he was dialing was correct, would he reach the desired party if he dialed a different number than the one assigned to the party? The correct number is the truth assigned to that telephone.
 - b. Will sincerity make an erroneous number sequence one uses open the combination lock? That lock will open only if the exact set of numbers are selected in the proper order. The correct combination is the truth assigned to that lock.
 3. God's truth is also definite and is within limits.
 - a. James 2:10: "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one *point*, he is guilty of all."
 - b. John 8:32: "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."
 - c. John 17:17: "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth."
 - d. 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12: "And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."
 4. It is the exception, not the rule, when two people agree on an important matter.
 - a. General Montgomery and General Patton often disagreed with what the proper battle plan was after the Normandy invasion in 1944.
 - b. God knew the tendency of men to disagree, therefore it was necessary for him to give instructions which all are required to follow.
 - 1) Psalms 133: "Behold, how good and how pleasant *it is* for brethren to dwell together in unity! *It is* like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, *even* Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments; As the dew of Hermon, *and as the dew* that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the LORD commanded the blessing, *even* life for evermore."
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 1:10: "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."
 - 3) Philippians 1:27: "Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel."
 - 4) Philippians 3:16: "Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing."
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5. Men have tried to justify religious division by misapplying John 15:1-6.
 - a. They allege that the different branches in the story of the vine and the branches (John 15) are the various denominations.
 - b. This was not the Lord's point; rather, the branches are the individual members of his church. "I am the vine, **ye** are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If **a man** abide not in me, **he** is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast *them* into the fire, and they are burned" (John 15:5-6).
 6. They argue that the "other sheep" of John 10:16 are the various denominations that appeared later in history. The Lord's point has reference to the Jews and Gentiles; the first followers were Jews; but the Gentiles are also offered membership in his church.
 - a. John 10:16: "And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, *and* one shepherd." Notice that there would only be one fold (which is the Lord's church).
 - b. Galatians 3:26-29: "For ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ. There can be neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither bond nor free, there can be no male and female; for ye all are one *man* in Christ Jesus. And if ye are Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, heirs according to promise" (ASV).
 - c. Ephesians 3:6: "That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel."
 - d. Ephesians 2:14-16: "For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition *between us*; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, *even* the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, *so* making peace; And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby."
 - e. Acts 10-11 gives the detailed report of how the first Gentiles were converted. Some miraculous activities were necessary in order to convince the Jewish Christians that the Gentiles had the right to obey the gospel.
- C. What does the Bible about the Lord's church?
1. In the prophecies regarding the church, only **one** was intended.
 - a. Isaiah 2:2-3: "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." [The "House of God" is identified in 1 Timothy 3:15 as "the Church"].
 - b. Daniel 2:44: "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, *but* it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever." [The kingdom is identical to the church; the Lord used the terms *kingdom* and *church* interchangeably in Matthew 16:18-19].
 - c. Zechariah 1:16: "Therefore thus saith the LORD; I am returned to Jerusalem with mercies: my house shall be built in it, saith the LORD of hosts, and a line shall be stretched forth upon Jerusalem." [Again, the *house* is the church (1 Tim. 3:15); notice that only one was predicted].
 2. The Lord promised to establish only one church—His church. "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 also 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" (Matt. 16:16-19).
 3. In the fulfillment of the prophecy and the promise, Christ established only one church.
 - a. Acts 2:47: "Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."
 - b. Ephesians 5:23-27: "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so *let* the wives *be* to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing
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- of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."
- c. In those cases, such as Romans 16:16 where the plural term *churches* is used, the reference is to several congregations of the Lord's people; it is not speaking of various denominations.
4. The Lord's church is also identified as the body of Christ, the kingdom, the temple, the house or household (family), and
 - a. There is only one of these and they are identical; these are only different ways of denoting the same institution. How many kingdoms does the Lord have? One. How many bodies does He have? One. How many temples does he have? One. How many families does he have? One.
 - b. Ephesians 4:4-5: "*There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism.*"
 - c. Colossians 1:18: "And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all *things* he might have the preeminence."
- D. Is one church as good as another?
1. One church is not as good as another if it is important for a person to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.
 - a. Some modernistic denominations do not believe he is the Son of God.
 - b. But the Bible requires this faith: "Then said Jesus again unto them, I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come....I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am *he*, ye shall die in your sins" (John 8:21,24).
 - c. Those churches which do not acknowledge that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, the Son of God, and man's only redeemer, are not as good as the Lord's church, which happily believes him to be the one he claimed to be!
 2. One church is not as good as another if the founder of the church is important.
 - a. The founder of every denomination was some man or group of men. Their motives may have been good, but no person has the right to establish a religious organization and God be obligated to adopt it as his own.
 - b. Psalms 127:1: "Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh *but* in vain."
 - c. Matthew 15:13-14: "But he answered and said, Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up. Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch."
 - d. Matthew 16:18: "And I say also 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."
 3. One church is not as good as another if the blood of Christ is essential to our salvation.
 - a. Some modern denominations downplay or utterly reject the concept of salvation being dependent on the Lord's shed blood. One prominent denomination removed from their hymnals all those songs that emphasized the blood of Christ.
 - b. Acts 20:28: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood."
 - c. Ephesians 1:7: "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace."
 - d. 1 Peter 1:18-19: "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, *as* silver and gold, from your vain conversation *received* by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."
 4. One church is not as good as another if the Head of the church is important.
 - a. Ephesians 1:22-23: "And hath put all *things* under his feet, and gave him *to be* the head over all *things* to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all."
 - b. Ephesians 5:23: "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body."
 - c. Colossians 1:18: "And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all *things* he might have the preeminence."
 5. One church is not as good as another if the foundation is important.
 - a. 1 Corinthians 3:11: "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."
 - b. Matthew 16:16-18: "And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living
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- 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 also 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."
- c. Ephesians 2:20: "And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner *stone*."
6. One church is not as good as another if how we worship is important.
 - a. Matthew 15:9: "But in vain they do worship me, teaching *for* doctrines the commandments of men."
 - b. John 4:23-24: "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God *is* a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth."
 - c. Colossians 3:16-17: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him."
 - d. Almost all of the sectarian churches use instrument music in their "worship," a practice for which there is no authority (Col. 3:17; 2 John 9); their "worship" is geared to entertain and draw crowds, and is not concerned with having Bible authority for it or whether it pleases God.
 7. One church is not as good as another if having doctrinal truth is essential.
 - a. John 14:15: "If ye love me, keep my commandments."
 - b. John 14:21: "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him."
 - c. John 15:14: "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you."
 - d. Galatians 1:6-12: "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any *man* preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed. For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ. But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught *it*, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ."
 - e. 2 John 9-11: "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into *your* house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds."
 8. One church is not as good as another if the Lord's way is important.
 - a. Matthew 7:13-14: "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide *is* the gate, and broad *is* the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait *is* the gate, and narrow *is* the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."
 - b. Matthew 7:21-23: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."
 - c. John 10:1: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber."
 9. One church is not as good as another if the one baptism is essential.
 - a. Ephesians 4:4-5: "*There is* one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism."
 - b. Matthew 28:19: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."
 - c. Mark 16:16: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."
 - d. Acts 22:16: "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling
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on the name of the Lord."

10. One church is not as good as another if the name is important.
 - a. Acts 11:16: "Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost."
 - b. Romans 16:16: "Salute one another with an holy kiss. The churches of Christ salute you."
 - c. James 2:7: "Do not they blaspheme that worthy name by the which ye are called?"
 - d. 1 Peter 4:16: "Yet if *any man suffer* as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf."

E. Common sense teaches the truth on the question.

1. If you want to fly from Chicago to Los Angeles, does it matter which of the scores of planes, which are preparing for departure, that you board? If you want to go to Los Angeles it does, for the others are all going somewhere else.
2. If you are seriously ill, will just any doctor serve you purpose? Would you go to a veterinarian? Would you go to a doctor of philosophy?
3. If you have a prescription for a medicine to treat an infection, will just any medicine on the shelf serve your need?
4. If you want to call a dear friend or close relative, will just any phone number get the person you want?
5. If you want to take a trip with a spouse, will just anybody's spouse do?
6. If you go to pick up your child at school, can you pick up just any child?

F. The Lord's Church.

1. Christ established it (Matt. 16:18).
2. He is its only head (Col. 1:18).
3. It is found in the New Testament.
4. Its name honors him and shows that he owns it (Rom. 16:16).
5. Its place of beginning is Jerusalem (Acts 2).
6. Its time of beginning is 33 A.D.
7. Its organization is only on the local elders, having elders, deacons, and members (Phil. 1:1).
8. Its worship includes only:
 - a. Singing (Col. 3:16).
 - b. Praying (Acts 2:42).
 - c. Giving (1 Cor. 16:1-2).
 - d. Lord's Supper (1 Cor. 11:20-30; Acts 20:7).
 - e. Studying God's word (Acts 2:42; 20:7; 2 Tim. 4:2).
9. Its doctrine is the gospel of Christ (Matt. 7:28-29; 2 John 9).

III. **CONCLUSION.**

A. If you are in the Lord's church:

1. Serve him faithfully.
2. Support it with you time, talent, money, and influence.

B. If you are now in a man-made church:

1. Get out! How? Quit!
2. Obey the gospel of Christ!
 - a. The Lord will add you to his church (Acts 2:47)..
 - b. He will give you all the spiritual blessings available to mankind (Eph. 1:3).

Are There Degrees of Reward and Punishment in Eternity?

I. INTRODUCTION.

A. An old song was titled, "Just Give Me a Cabin in the Corner of Gloryland."

1. This suggests that the individual was not looking for a mansion in Heaven, but would be satisfied to live in a lowly cabin, situated in an out-of-the way location in the corner.
2. The song implies that there will be varying degrees of reward and honor for the citizens of Heaven.

B. This raises the question about the reward in Heaven and the punishment in Gehenna.

1. Are there to be differing degrees of reward in Heaven?
2. Will there be different degrees of punishment in that place prepared for Satan and his angels?

II. Some Background Information about God Is Important to this Study.

A. God is Holy.

1. Isaiah 6:3: "And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, *is* the LORD of hosts: the whole earth *is* full of his glory."
2. Isaiah 6:5: "Then said I, Woe *is* me! for I am undone; because I *am* a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts."
3. Revelation 4:8: "And the four beasts had each of them six wings about *him*; and *they were* full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come."

B. God is Good.

1. Psalms 145:9: "The LORD *is* good to all: and his tender mercies *are* over all his works."
2. Psalms 25:8: "Good and upright is the LORD: therefore will he teach sinners in the way."
3. Psalms 100:5: "For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations."
4. He always acts for the greatest good of his creation. Sometimes this requires punishment. Even human parents recognize the need for the chastisement of their disobedient children

C. God is Righteous (He Operates Justly).

1. There is no respect of person with God; he deals with all people with justice.
 - a. Psalms 89:14: "Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before thy face."
 - b. Genesis 18:25: "That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked: and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee: Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"
 - c. Romans 3:25-26: "Whom God hath set forth *to be* a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, *I say*, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."
 - d. Romans 5:8-9: "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him."
 - e. Hebrews 2:9: "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man."
2. The wages of sin is eternal separation from God.
 - a. Matthew 25:41: "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."
 - b. 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9: "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 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."
 - c. Romans 6:23: "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."
 - d. Revelation 20:14-15: "And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."

D. Every accountable person can obtain salvation only through Christ.

1. The gospel is God's power to save.
 - a. Romans 1:16-17: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith."
 - b. Acts 4:10-12: "Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole. This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."
 - c. Hebrews 9:15-17: "And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth."
 - d. Those who obey the gospel of Christ are delivered from the guilt of their past sins.
2. Those who refuse or neglect obedience to the gospel, retain the guilt of their sins
 - a. Hebrews 2:1-4: "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward; 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 with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?"
 - b. Romans 5:8-9: "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him."
 - c. Romans 2:6-11: "Who will render to every man according to his deeds: To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life: But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile: For there is no respect of persons with God."

III. There Will Be a Day of Judgment.

A. Biblical Facts Regarding the Judgment of the Last Day.

1. It is certain
 - a. Acts 17:30-31: "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead."
 - b. Hebrews 9:27-28: "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation." The Judgment is as certain as death.
 2. It will occur at the Second Coming of Christ.
 - a. Matthew 25:31-32: "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats."
 - b. Matthew 16:27: "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works."
 3. Every accountable person will be judged.
 - a. 2 Corinthians 5:10: "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."
 - b. Ecclesiastes 12:13-14: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil."
 4. The judgment will be personal and individual.
 - a. Romans 14:10-12: "But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy
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brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.”

- b. Revelation 20:11-15: “And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.”
5. The verdict will be based on our works and words.
 - a. Revelation 20:12: “And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.”
 - b. Matthew 12:36-37: “But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.”
- B. There Will Only Be Two Verdicts Reached in the Judgment.
 1. Matthew 25:34: “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.”
 2. Matthew 25:41: “Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.”
 3. Matthew 25:46: “And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.”
 4. 2 Thessalonians 1:6-10: “Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; 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 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; When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day.”

IV. Will There Be Differing Degrees of Punishment in Gehenna?

A. Consider Hebrews 10:23-29:

1. “Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: 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, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?”
2. These inspired truths are directed to members of the Lord's church. They are told to hold fast to their great profession of faith; they are told to provoke each other to greater love and good works; they are warned not to forsake meeting with the saints; they are strongly advised that, if they sin wilfully after having become followers of Christ, there is no other means of salvation. If one gives up the gospel, there is no hope! Those in this dreadful condition face the prospect of going into the Judgment unprepared, thus can only anticipate the fiery wrath that shall fall upon God's enemies.
3. Sin is the transgression of God's word (1 John 3:4). More is involved in committing the willful sin of this passage than a single transgression of some precept of God's word. To be guilty of the willful sin envisioned by the apostle is to turn from the faith. If a single act of willful sin condemns an individual without hope of redemption, then no one could be saved, for everyone has sinned with the prior knowledge that the act was sinful. Because one misses one assembly of the saints does not make him guilty of **this willful sin**.
4. We are here dealing with the case of apostate Christians. The worse possible condition one can have

in this world is to be one who has known the way of righteousness but has turned his back on the Lord. Israelites who rebelled against God and would not repent were to be disciplined by faithful authority figures under the Law of Moses. When the guilt of the individuals was established, they were executed for their repudiation of God. Examples of this may be found in the record of the Old Testament.

5. Having laid this foundation, the apostle raises the rhetorical question, "Of how much sorer punishment" shall await the apostate Christian? As bad as the case is with the unbelieving alien, it is even worse for the apostate.
 - a. They have **trodden under foot the Son of God.**
 - 1) The term expresses an apathetic or hateful disposition toward God's Son. Christ forfeited his position in heaven, suffered evil at the hands of ungrateful men, willingly endured the cross, was rejected and despised by the majority of his own nation, and has been vilified by millions through the centuries.
 - 2) Christians who turn away from him treat him with contempt, depicted as treading him under their feet. When his followers ignore his word, fail to assemble and worship, refuse to eat the Lord's Supper, they are treading him underfoot. But consider these thoughts: "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich....Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift" (2 Cor. 8:9; 9:15).
 - 3) The rich man of Luke 16 was not consigned to torment because he assaulted Lazarus or was immoral; it was due to his unwillingness to obey God. The one-talent man of Matthew 25 was not cast into outer darkness on account of criminality, but because he did not obey. Wayward members of the church will be lost, if they fail to remain obedient.
 - b. They have **counted the blood of the covenant an unholy thing.**
 - 1) The reference is to the gospel (the New Testament). A failure to appreciate the blood Christ shed in order to establish the New Covenant will cause one to be lost in eternity. One does not have to become a drunkard or a criminal to lose his soul. All a Christian needs to do to be lost is to be indifferent about his responsibilities toward Christ.
 - 2) To count the Lord's blood as unholy, is to make it common, treat it as though it has no spiritual worth. "How does one make the blood of Jesus common? By his indifference to it, by responding to it not at all, or half-heartedly, by neglecting to enter by means of the access provided through it, or, in short, either by non-Christian or anti-Christian conduct" (Coffman, p.242).
 - 3) Those addressed had been sanctified by the blood of the New Covenant. They were genuine New Testament Christians, but had turned against the Savior, not necessarily by taking a hostile stance toward him, but by failing to remain faithful. The inspired statement is an impossible barrier to those religionists who deny that a child of God can be lost. Can a sanctified person retain his salvation (holiness) while counting the blood of Christ as unholy? Some have resorted to denying its inspiration in an effort to avoid the plain import of the passage.
 - 4) Weak members offer lame excuses for not serving and worshiping as they are commanded; but being too busy, too tired, not having enough time, will not justify disobedience. Departure from Christ is usually a gradual movement; one service is missed; then another; finally the individual has quit. His heart has hardened by degrees, until at last he has little or no pang of conscience.
 - 5) The condition is not merely a weakness; it is sin; it is trampling Christ underfoot; it leads to eternal condemnation.
 - c. They have **done despite unto the Spirit of grace.**
 - 1) The Holy Spirit was directly involved in the ministry of Christ.
 - 2) The Holy Spirit was directly involved in the work of the apostles, providing them with the very revelation of the mind of God (1 Cor. 2:9-14; John 16:13-14; Acts 2:1-4), and confirmed that revelation by miraculous signs (2 Cor. 12:11-13; Mark 16:20; Heb. 2:1-4). One cannot shun the inspired gospel without showing despite to the Holy Spirit.
 - 3) To reject the Spirit-revealed gospel is to blaspheme the Holy Spirit. This is true of the hardhearted alien sinner and the impenitent apostate.
 - a) Matthew 12:32: "And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be

forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the *world* to come."

- b) Acts 13:44-46,50-51: "And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God. But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming. Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles....But the Jews stirred up the devout and honourable women, and the chief men of the city, and raised persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them out of their coasts. But they shook off the dust of their feet against them, and came unto Iconium."

B. Consider 2 Peter 2:20-22:

1. "For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire."
2. The pollutions (*miasma*) means *defilements*—"the vices of the ungodly which contaminate a person in his intercourse with the world" [Vine's Expository Dictionary]. Concerning this Greek term, Macknight said that, being part of "the language of the ancient physicians, signified the infection of the plague. It is used here to denote sin in general; but more especially the sin of lasciviousness, on account of its infectious nature and destructive consequences" (p.556). The defilements of the world includes sin—of any kind; sin defiles the soul.
3. The defiled ones Peter discusses had escaped from the pollutions that had contaminated their souls; they had obeyed the gospel (cf. Acts 22:16; Rom. 10:16; Rev. 1:5). But these had become entangled again with sin, and overcome.
 - a. "From this we learn that it is possible for one who has escaped from the defilement of the world through the knowledge of Jesus Christ, to become entangled in worldly things to the extent that he is overcome by them. There are those who believe in the impossibility of apostasy, saying that the child of God can never so sin as to be finally lost. But in this passage Peter teaches that one who has escaped the defilements of the world, or has been cleansed by the blood of Jesus Christ, can become entangled in the world's defilements again and be overcome by them" (ALC, 1956, pp.325f).
 - b. As a fish can become entangled in a fisherman's net, so unwary Christians can become entangled in the devil's snare. The people the apostle has been discussing in the context were false teachers who alleged that one could live licentious lives and still enjoy liberty. Those who teach that a Christian cannot fall from grace, despite his conduct, teach the same faulty doctrine. Sin taints the soul, whether the individual is an alien sinner or a Christian. The deceivers became ensnared by the same bait with which they enticed others.
4. The apostles reports that their latter condition was worse than their former state (before they obeyed the gospel).
 - a. "Such is the condition characteristic of those who have been delivered from the corruption of the world only to return to its defilements. The last state for all such is worse than the first: (a) apostates are usually more abandoned in sin than those who have never walked in righteousness; (b) such a state involves more guilt because of the greater knowledge such a one possesses; © such individuals are far more difficult to influence for good than those who have never known the way of righteousness" (Woods, p.177).
 - b. A Christian who willfully returns to a life of sin does so despite knowing the truth; he cannot claim ignorance; he knows the truth and still goes into sin.
 - c. Having repudiated the truth by his willful disobedience, he has turned his back on the only means of his salvation; if he does not love and respect the truth, the truth will have no appeal to his heart.
 - d. Consider these awesome passages:
 - 1) Hebrews 6:4-6: "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto

- repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.”
- 2) Ephesians 4:18-19: “Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.”
- e. When a man has shown his preference for sin over righteousness, God does not block his way; he gives him up to do those things which are unseemly.
 - 1) Romans 1:24: “Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves.”
 - 2) Romans 1:26-28: “For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet. 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.”
 - 3) As examples of this process, consider the cases of Balaam (Num. 22-24), Judas (Matt. 26:14-16), rebellious Israel (Jer. 6:15-16), and the Gentiles of ancient days (Rom. 1:18-32).
5. They would have been better off if they had never known the way of truth than to have turned from the holy commandment. Here is a plain statement of our premise; here is a case plainly declaring that there are degrees of punishment in Gehenna!
 - a. “Since this fallen, apostate state is worse than the first it is obviously better for them not to have known the way of righteousness than after knowing it to turn back from the holy commandments delivered to them....To know the way of righteousness means to have saving knowledge of God and to walk in the ways that are right according to God’s standards” (ALC, 1956, p.326).
 - b. In this verse we have strong evidence that a saved person can return to sin and be lost. The doctrine of the impossibility of apostasy is false. “Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.” An examination of this passage shows that inspiration is speaking of a child of God who has erred from the truth; if another saint converts that wayward member, he has brought back a sinner (an erring saint) from the error of his way, and has delivered that precious soul from death (spiritual death in the present world and from the second death in the next world)” (Jas. 5:19-20).
- C. Consider Luke 12:47-48:
1. “And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.”
 - a. This passage evidently addresses the subject of degrees of punishment. In the eternal scheme of things, even a “light” beating is still awful; the culprit would still be separated from God, from heaven, from glory, from rest, from light, from the redeemed, and from eternal life.
 - b. The stripes that were to be delivered were to be only on those who are lost. The redeemed would receive no stripes at all. This punishment will be administered in eternity, in proportion to the guilt which pertain to the person’s soul. Their guilt is to be determined by the opportunities they had in their life on earth.
 - c. It is clear that individuals have different levels of intelligence, of ability, of opportunity, and comprehension. Some are well-blessed in these and other matters. We have observed a grand old adage which says, “Ability plus opportunity equals responsibility.” One who is severely retarded in the mind, is not punished when he does some criminal act. Society does what is necessary to protect itself from this irresponsible person. We do not hold such a one criminally responsible; God would not do so either.
 - d. “It is unmistakably taught by our Lord in the foregoing instance, that (1) there are different levels of knowledge possessed by people; (2) there are different degrees of preparation; (3) there are variations in the amount of service rendered; and (4) these differences will be the determining factor in the administration of punishment. The parable of the talents clearly establishes the fact that not as much was expected of the one-talent man as was expected of the five-talent men, but,
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the one-talent man was expected to perform the full measure of service of which he was capable; and, he was condemned, not because he did not do as much as the five-talent man, but because he did not measure to the standard of achievement of which he was capable (Matt. 25:14-30). Some will suffer a much sorer punishment than others (Heb. 10:29); there is, then, a sorer punishment, and there is a sorer punishment the comparative adjective indicating punishment greater than what would be described as sore. The Bible abounds with evidence of truth of the principle herein set forth" (Guy N. Woods).

- e. There are question on this which lie far beyond human perception.
 - 1) What about those who were born into a jungle tribe where savagery, brutality, slavery, murder, and false religion are commonly practiced? Our Lord's statement says, "Those who do not know will receive few stripes."
 - 2) What about the teenage girl who is enclosed in an arab's harem? She is bound for life to an adulterous master who does with her as he wills. The same principle evidently would apply.
 - 3) What about the people who were born into a heathen society, where the Bible is unknown? The same principle would apply.
 - f. The Gospel of Christ is still the only means of our souls' salvation (Rom. 1:16). Our obligation is to use every means possible to spread the knowledge of the gospel to every person on earth. Our brethren in the first century were able to extend that information to all lands.
 - 1) Colossians 1:6: "Which is come unto you, as it is in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you, since the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth."
 - 2) Colossians 1:23: "If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister."
 - g. Those who know God's will and do not do it, will receive "many stripes." They will be punished with a greater penalty that those who live and die in ignorance.
 - h. To whom much is given, much is required.
- D. Consider James 3:1:
1. "My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation." "Be not many of you teachers, my brethren, knowing that we shall receive heavier judgment" (ASV).
 2. A heavy responsibility rests upon those who would teach God's word. James cautions the would-be teacher to give careful attention to this highly responsible activity. The teacher and preacher must practice what they teach and preach! This fits the prominent theme of the epistle: we must be doers of the word and not merely hearers; we must act as well as believe; we must live up to what we teach. Our Lord set the perfect example: "The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to **do and teach**" (Acts 1:1).
 3. Where the KJV gives "greater condemnation," the ASV gives "heavier judgment." "The word translated judgment here, almost always means condemnation. The word thus translated (*krima*), is from *krino*, to separate, distinguish. Thus, at the great judgment day, the Lord *will separate* those who have been teachers of his word, from those who have not, and will then pass on them by far stricter standards than those applicable to non-teachers. The consequences involved in teaching that which is false are fatal; and those who have not properly prepared themselves for such work, and who thus mislead those whom they affect to teach, must answer under 'a heavier judgment,' than those not thus engaged....The lesson for us is that leadership involves responsibility; and the greater the area of leadership the greater the responsibility....But, if the responsibility is greater, and the judgment heavier for those who misuse or do not properly use the occasion, the reward is greater for those who do properly teach and edify others" (Woods, pp.157f).
 4. The Lord spoke of others who would receive this greater condemnation: "Which devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers: these shall receive greater damnation" (Mark 12:40; cf. Luke 20:47).
 5. John 19:11: "Jesus answered him, Thou wouldest have no power against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath greater sin" (ASV). The greater the sin, the greater the punishment.
- E. Consider Matthew 11:20-24:
1. "Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not: Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth

and ashes. But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you. And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee.”

2. Tyre and Sidon were Phoenician cities, situated on the Mediterranean coast. They were noted for their idolatry, wealth, commerce, luxury and sin (cf. Isa. 23:7-18; Ezek. 26:14; 27:1ff; 28:1ff). These heathen cities were not privileged to see and hear what these Jewish cities had seen and heard. If they had had those privileges, Jesus said those people would have quickly repented in sackcloth and ashes (cf. Jonah 3:5). It is possible to become hardened against the gospel. If we hear it so often, and take it for granted, its power and appeal may be lost on us. That the wages of sin is death, that Jesus died for our sins, that we will all face him in Judgment to be judged according to our works, may become unimportant and unimpressive to us.
 3. "Jesus here assumes that miracles, when rightly regarded, lead to repentance. Their power is not inherent, but depends on the proposition demonstrated by them. As Jesus preached repentance, his miracles demonstrated his divine authority to demand it, and the impenitence of his hearers proved them to be perverse and obdurate. High privilege abused render men more and more obdurate. The Galileans had abused their former privileges, and now they were not so susceptible to good influences as their Gentile neighbors, who had never known the will of God. The same difference is still seen between communities, and between individuals of the same community. When the proper time came for evangelizing the Gentiles, Tyre and Sidon both received the gospel, and verified the words of the text. (See Acts 21:3-6; 27:3)" (McGarvey, pp.100f).
 4. The Lord said it would be more tolerable for those foreign cities (cf. Luke 12:47-48). Their penalty will be more easily borne, however their penalty will still be severe. To be beaten with few stripes stills involves a beating. This apparently teaches the idea of degrees of punishment in hell.
 5. "Jesus, near the beginning of his public ministry, left his home in Nazareth and 'came and dwelt in Capernaum.' (Matt. 4:13.) This accounts for the figure of Capernaum's being exalted unto heaven, that is, the city's opportunities were greater because of the presence and miracles of Jesus. But the exaltation, if it is disregarded, must have a corresponding degradation, hence, 'thou shalt go down unto Hades.' This, of course, is also a figurative expression, used to indicate the plight of lost opportunities. The city has long since been in a state of complete ruins" (ALC, 1959, p.126).
 6. McGarvey's comment agrees with the above statement: "The expressions, 'exalted to heaven,' and 'brought down to hades,' are both used figuratively; the former to denote the high privileges which Capernaum had enjoyed, and the latter, the ruin which awaited her. The prediction has long since been fulfilled, and the traveler now searches among the rank weeds on the lake shore to find, in the fragments of stone which lie there, uncertain vestiges of the once populous and well built city" (p.101). The exaltation to heaven here does not refer to their salvation, and being brought down to hades does not speak of eternal condemnation (although they all are lost if they did not repent); rather they would lose the privileges and blessings they had been given.
 7. Again, the Lord brings up wicked Old Testament people, and states that if those people back then had had the opportunities and privileges the citizenry of Capernaum had been given, they would have repented, and their city (Sodom) would have continued in history. God is under no obligation to sinful man to give him any chance whatsoever to rectify his wicked conduct. Condemnation is the proper penalty, and physical death could be immediately dispensed and God would be just in so doing. But in his love for fallen man, God is often longsuffering (Rom. 2:4; 2 Pet. 3:9).
 8. The Lord knew full well what the reaction of Sodom would have been if it had been given the opportunity to receive the truth. Why did not God send them a warning? He was not obligated to do so: they had more than earned their punishment. Further, the rest of mankind needed a demonstration of God's wrath against sin to encourage righteousness in the future. It is not our privilege to know all the deep things of God. "The secret *things belong* unto the LORD our God: but those *things which are revealed belong* unto us and to our children for ever, that *we* may do all the words of this law" (Deut. 29:29).
- F. Consider Ezekiel 3:17-19.
1. Ezekiel 3:17-19: "Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me. When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way,

to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul.”

2. The prophet was to tell the wicked that God’s pronouncement against them was that they shall surely die; if he did not deliver that warning, which could save the life of the wicked man, that wicked man would die in his sin, but his blood would be required at the hands of Ezekiel.
 - a. One who is ignorantly living in sin cannot escape the penalty of sin because of his ignorance. In some cases, ignorance may be blissful to some who live in the world, but not so in matters where God’s word has been transgressed.
 - 1) 1 John 3:4: "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law."
 - 2) Luke 12:47-48: "And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not *himself*, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many *stripes*. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few *stripes*. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more."
 - b. Those who know the truth are obligated to spread the truth. To withhold the saving truth of the gospel from the lost, is to allow them to die in their sins and be lost eternally; one who could have told them of their tragic situation, but did not do so, must partake of the evil of his own dereliction of duty.
 - c. On the other hand, if Ezekiel issues the warning of the lost condition of the wicked, and the wicked man does not take heed, that lawless man will die in his sin, but the prophet will have delivered his own soul.
 - d. It is in the individual’s own best personal interest to help others to see the truth. Unless we tell others the truth, we are partly responsible for their continuing in their lost condition. To tell them the truth to the saving of their souls is to remove responsibility from our own shoulders.
 - e. Those preachers, elders, teachers, and others who know God’s word, but who will not teach it in its purity, are causing souls to die lost that might otherwise be saved; and in their unfaithfulness they are condemning their own souls.
3. The statements of this passage are part of the Old Testament law, but the principle is still in effect in the New Testament age. Notice the following plain statements:
 - a. Acts 18:6: "And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook *his* raiment, and said unto them, Your blood *be* upon your own heads; I *am* clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles."
 - b. Acts 20:20-21,26-27: "*And* how I kept back nothing that was profitable *unto you*, but have showed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house, Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ... Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I *am* pure from the blood of all *men*. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God."
 - c. It is a mark of friendship to wake up a family at midnight to warn them that their house is on fire. Paul presented the truth to Felix. He did not do it to make the governor tremble, but to get him to obey the gospel! "And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee" (Acts 24:25). Felix can blame only himself for remaining in sin.

V. Will There Be Differing Degrees of Reward to be Given to the Righteous in Heaven?

A. Consider Matthew 20:1-16:

1. “For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard. And when he had agreed with the labourers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard. And he went out about the third hour, and saw others standing idle in the marketplace, And said unto them; Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right I will give you. And they went their way. Again he went out about the sixth and ninth hour, and did likewise. And about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others standing idle, and saith unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle? They say unto him, Because no man hath hired us. He saith unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard; and whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive. So when even was come, the lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, Call the labourers, and give them their hire, beginning from the last unto the first. And when they came that were hired about the eleventh hour,

they received every man a penny. But when the first came, they supposed that they should have received more; and they likewise received every man a penny. And when they had received it, they murmured against the goodman of the house, Saying, These last have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day. But he answered one of them, and said, Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst not thou agree with me for a penny? Take that thine is, and go thy way: I will give unto this last, even as unto thee. Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good? So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen.”

2. It is commonly believed that the pay offered in this parable represents eternal life, something that is offered to all faithful Christians. “And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together ” (John 4:36). The length of one's service to the Lord does not determine the reward received.
3. This parable may have something else in mind than denoting our heavenly reward. “It is far from certain, however, that this parable deals with the future life. It is possible, indeed probable, in the minds of many scholars that it was delivered to show that the Gentiles, who came in at the eleventh hour, would enjoy the kingdom (soon to be established when these words were uttered), the same privileges as the Jews who had been the favored and chosen people of the Lord for many centuries. Though last in point of invitation, they were to become first through their acceptance of, and dedication to, the gospel; whereas, the Jews, through their rebellion and disbelief, would be cut off. Dr. Watts, an eminent earlier writer expressed this view in these words: It is not the design of this parable to represent the final rewards of the saints at the day of judgment, but to show that the nation of the Jews, who had been called to be the people of God above a thousand years before, and had born the burden and heat of the day, i.e., the toil and bondage of many ceremonies, should have no preference in the esteem of God above the Gentiles, who were called at the last hour, or at the end of the Jewish dispensation. This was the view of Adam Clarke, H. Leo Boles, B.W. Johnson and many others. I believe it to be the correct one” (Guy N. Woods).
4. Also, other passages also must be considered. In the parable of the talents (Luke 19:12-27), servants were given a set amount of funds to invest while the master was gone. One was able to take one talent and produced ten more from it. He was told, “...Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities” (Luke 19:17). Another servant produced five more talents and was told, “...Be thou also over five cities” (Luke 19:19). Evidently, then, while all faithful followers are given eternal life as a reward, in that eternal life we will have differing roles, or positions based on our service to the Lord in this life. It is an application of a principle stated earlier by the Lord, “He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much” (Luke 16:10).
 - a. If one willfully violates one principle of truth, in some matter that appears to be insignificant, that same person demonstrates his willingness to break another law that is deemed greater. Thus, one who will pilfer an inexpensive item from a store, would steal another item of far greater worth, if he has the opportunity and can generate enough boldness. Being honest in small matters shows that we can be trusted in regards to greater matters. It is likely that we are daily tested in this.
 - b. Helping others may seem to be of small significance, but our Lord deems it as great. “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: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me” (Matt. 25:34-40).
 - c. Matthew 16:27: “For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.”
 - 1) "The fact here declared furnishes proof of the preceding remarks concerning the loss and gain of life. If men are to be finally rewarded according to their works, all the preceding remarks must be true. That the final coming of Christ is the coming here mentioned is evident from the three facts, that it is a coming 'in the glory of his Father;' it is to be 'with his holy angels;'

and he is then to 'reward every man according to his works'" (McGarvey, p.148).

- 2) No mere man could have accurately made the statement of the text. This is a prophecy encompassing his coming, the general resurrection of the dead, and the final Judgment.
 - 3) The basis of the Judgment will be the word of Christ (John 12:48) and the works of men. Our lives will be measured by the inspired word of the Lord (Rev. 20:12).
- d. 2 John 1:7-8: "For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist. Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward."
- 1) The apostles counsels his readers to look to themselves; that is, we are to honestly and sincerely examine our own hearts, to see whether we are ready to defend our souls against the attacks these false teachers are to bring upon us. The possibility of apostasy is clearly indicated, therefore, we must regularly examine our preparedness.
 - 2) The consequences of losing that which was wrought by the apostles was to forfeit their reward. If they remained steadfast with the truth, they would receive the full reward. Faithfulness to the end is required (Matt. 10:22). A worker who quits before the day is over forfeits the full reward of the day's labor; the worker who resigns before putting in the mandatory number of years loses his retirement benefits. "Let us fear therefore, lest haply, a promise being left of entering into his rest, any one of you should seem to have come short of it. For indeed we have had good tidings preached unto us, even as also they: but the word of hearing did not profit them, because it was not united by faith with them that heard" (Heb. 4:1-2, ASV).
 - 3) John's reference to receiving a "full reward" implies that might be something less than their full reward. If that is the case, there must be degrees of reward. "That they lose not their reward, none of it, no portion of that honour, or praise, or glory that they once stood fair for. That we (or you, as in some copies) receive a full reward. Secure you as full a reward as will be given to any in the church of God; if there are degrees of glory, lose none of that grace (that light, or love, or peace) which is to prepare you for the higher elevation in glory" (Matthew Henry).

B. 1 Corinthians 3:12-15:

1. 1 Corinthians 3:12-15: "Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire."
2. "The work of preachers will be tried, as by fire. (I Cor. 3:15.) Many converts will, like wood, hay or stubble, perish from apostasy, with corresponding loss, *in reward*, to the preacher; others, comparable to gold, silver and precious stones, will endure, to his credit. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire. Suffer loss of what? Not his salvation, because the text says He himself shall be saved. The loss is in reward, not salvation. Our Lord promised that he that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward. (Matt. 10:41.) There is a prophet's reward, and there is a righteous man's reward, and they differ, not only from each other, but from all other rewards. If such distinction does not exist, the passage is without significance. But, what about the parable of the laborers in the vineyard? (Matt. 20:1-16.) Did not those who came in the eleventh hour receive exactly the same amount of wages as those who came in at the first hour? Yes. Does not this refute any theory which alleges that there will be any difference in the degree of enjoyment experienced by the saints in the sweet by and by? No. If it be admitted that this parable deals with the life to come, it does not oppose the principle hereinbefore defended. All shall receive the same wages heaven. But, as there was a vast difference in the way each laborer *enjoyed the blessings* obtained by the wages, so there will be a similar disparity in the enjoyment which shall characterize those of different attainment levels in the holy city." (Guy N. Woods).
3. The **work** of a gospel teacher, that Paul contemplates here, refers to those who are taught by him so as to become Christians. Paul's work, in the light of this verse, included the Christians at Corinth who learned the gospel by his preaching (1 Cor. 9:1d). What happened when certain ones of his converts fell away and died in a lost condition?
 - a. If his converts remained loyal, Paul would have a reward; if some of his converts fell away and

- were lost, Paul would still be saved, although he would suffer loss.
- b. Does a gospel preacher's eternal salvation depend on the faithfulness of his converts? If so, why would any man want to become a preacher? It is clear that any Christian's eternal salvation does not depend on the faithfulness of anyone else. The Lord taught that the individual who endures to the end would be saved (Matt. 10:22); he based our eternal salvation upon our own faithfulness, not that of another person.
 - 1) 1 Peter 1:9: "Receiving the end of your faith, *even* the salvation of *your* souls."
 - 2) 2 Peter 1:5-11: "And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make *you that ye shall* neither *be* barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."
 - 3) Revelation 2:10: "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast *some* of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."
 - c. Paul plainly stated, however, that a gospel preacher would suffer loss if one or more of his converts does not endure. Does this mean that the preacher, who has done everything within his power to encourage his converts to remain faithful, loses a portion of his heavenly reward if he cannot get that person to remain loyal? It seems greatly unfair to a man who has dedicated his life to the proclamation of the gospel, having foregone many advantages he could have had by following a secular work, who has suffered many things at the hands of an uncaring world and indifferent brethren, to miss out on certain blessings of heaven solely on account of some weak, undedicated member of the church who fell away!
 - d. If this is not the case, then, what did Paul mean when he said the gospel preacher would suffer loss? It is certainly true that a faithful preacher will suffer loss when he learns that some person he has taught and baptized has fallen away; he is even more critically hurt if that fallen saint dies in that sinful state.
- C. What Happens in the Process of the Resurrection?
1. The remains of the physical body are raised and changed into a spiritual body; the spirit of the one resurrected enters into this new spiritual body. The spirit now dwells in a new body, one that is fitted for eternity. But the spirit has not been changed! The moral condition it had when it departed from the physical body will still obtain to it.
 - a. Revelation 22:11-12: "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be."
 - b. The speaker of verse ten continues. Society is divided into two groups: the holy and the unholy; the righteous and the unrighteous; the saved and the lost. In John 3, these distinctions are placed on the two divisions of humanity: believers and unbelievers (vs. 18); those who love light or darkness (vs. 19); those who do truth and those who do evil (verses 20-21). Each individual chooses the group to which he belongs. His actions grow out of the basic character he develops; the type character one develops is determined by the information he learns and believes. There is no standing still in spiritual status.
 - 1) Proverbs 4:23: "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it *are* the issues of life."
 - 2) Proverbs 23:7: "For as he thinketh in his heart, so *is* he: Eat and drink, saith he to thee; but his heart *is* not with thee."
 - 3) Matthew 12:34-35: "O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? 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."
 - 4) Matthew 13:15: "For this people's heart is waxed gross, and *their* ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with *their* eyes and hear with *their*
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- ears, and should understand with *their* heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them."
- c. In eternity, the kind of character one possesses will be the same kind of character which he had developed in this life. "They that have done good" will be raised up to eternal life in Heaven—where no evil taints the scene. "They that have done evil" will be raised up to eternal condemnation.
 - 1) John 5:28-29: "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, 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."
 - 2) Galatians 6:7-8: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."
 - d. The practice of spiritual crimes will not be done in eternity, but the guilt acquired in our lives here will carry over into eternity—unless it is removed by the blood of Christ prior to our departure from this world. "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him" (Rom. 5:8-9).
 - e. But outside the gates of glory will be the dogs, sorcerers, whoremongers, murderers, idolaters, and deceivers: "For without *are* dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie" (Rev. 22:15). Such they were while in this life, and such will they ever be in eternity! Those found to be filthy in the Judgment, were filthy in this life, and will remain filthy throughout eternity. He that is found righteous and holy in the Judgment, was such in life, and will remain thus in eternity. The kind of person we each become here on earth, will be our true status in eternity. Only the pure in heart will ever see God in peace.
 - 1) Matthew 5:8: "Blessed *are* the pure in heart: for they shall see God."
 - 2) Hebrews 12:14: "Follow peace with all *men*, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord."
 - 3) 2 Peter 1:3-11: "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that *pertain* unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make *you that ye shall* neither *be* barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."
2. The spirit returns to God's keeping when the person dies.
 - a. Ecclesiastes 12:7: "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it." Compare the story of the Rich Man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31).
 - b. Other studies show that all departed spirits enter the intermediate state of the Hadean Realm. One part of this location is called Paradise, to which all righteous and redeemed souls are in comfort; the other part of this spiritual location is called Tartarus, in which the lost are kept, even then already in torment.
 - c. At the resurrection, all of these will be brought forth from Hades, to enter the newly formed spiritual body, prepared for each one.
 - d. It is easily perceived that the eternal fate of each soul is already determined at the time of death, for the spirit goes either into Paradise or Tartarus; that destiny cannot be changed.
- D. Human Beings Have Different Capacities for Appreciating and Enjoyment.
1. A lady listened to a record of banjo and fiddle music; she thought each tune the musicians played all sounded alike. She took no pleasure from the music. People who grew up in the south enjoyed that music greatly. Two people might attend a classical music concert. One might be delighted and the other bored.
 2. Gentiles had been brought up in the Grecian culture; their measurement of a good public speaker was
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that the speaker that be handsome, robust, could use human wisdom well, and was very eloquent in his speech-making.

- a. They despised the presentations given by the apostle Paul: “For, His letters, they say, are weighty and strong; but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech of no account” (2 Cor. 10:10, ASV).
- b. The power of salvation is not in the eloquent speech-making of the preacher, but in the truth he presents.
 - 1) Romans 1:16-17: “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.”
 - 2) Hebrews 4:12: “For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”
 - 3) James 1:21: “Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.”
3. A infant who dies will be in Heaven; he is as sinless and innocent as were Adam and Eve when God first made them. But one who has served Christ through many years of hardship and faithfulness will have learned the joys of his service; he has walked with the Lord daily; he perceives the providence of Jehovah in his behalf as he toils in the kingdom. Through his study of the Bible, in his experiences, and in worshiping God properly, this person has grown into a mature man of God. Such a one will be able to appreciate the joys and glories of Heaven, better than the innocent one dies in infancy. Think of the case of Paul:
 - a. 2 Timothy 1:12: “For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.”
 - b. 2 Timothy 4:6-8: “For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.”
 - c. Consider the case of a ninety-year-old saint who has served Christ through seventy-five years of faithful stewardship; compare this one to a ninety-year-old person who lived his life in paganism, and only became a Christian a few months before his death. Manifestly, the former would be in a better condition to appreciate and enjoy Heaven better than the latter.
 - d. “All who go to heaven will enjoy it to the fullest extent of their ability. The *extent*, however, will be determined by their preparation here. Realization of this fact should spur us all to greater activity in the cause of our Lord here” (Guy N. Woods).
 - e. “It will be admitted that there exists vast differences in the degree of attainment here—differences which must continue to increase up to death. Some, like the incomparable apostle to the Gentiles, die in the triumph of great faith, in full assurance that it is very far better, to depart, and to be with Christ” (Phil. 1:23); others, of infinitely less spiritual development, will be saved, notwithstanding the fact that their achievements are far fewer than Paul’s. To assume that individuals of great disparity will enter heaven on exactly the same attainment level requires us to accept the conclusion that those like Paul must be *moved backward* or else those of the latter classification must be *arbitrarily moved forward* to compensate for the difference. Either conclusion is repugnant to our sense of justice, opposed to the analogy everywhere observable in God’s dealings with men, and—as we shall show—opposed to the plainest teaching of the scriptures” (Woods).
4. Heaven is a prepared place.
 - a. Matthew 25:34: “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.”
 - 1) From the very beginning, God intended for those who would be righteous to obtain a place in heaven for eternity. This is part of the mystery "which God ordained before the world unto our glory" (1 Cor. 2:7; cf. Eph. 1:3-4). Jesus went to prepare this place (John 14:1-3). The kingdom was not fully prepared from the foundation of the world since Jesus said he was going to heaven to prepare it. "The meaning is, that it had been *in course of preparation* from the foundation of the world" (McGarvey, p.220).
 - 2) By the time that these events being described actually occur, that place will have been

prepared fully. "It had been prepared for just such faithful servants of God as are represented here by the sheep. It was no new plan, no secret decree, no arbitrary election, but the one constant covenant condition of mercy that had extended from the creation of man to the judgment of God at the last day" (Boles, p.488).

- 3) John 14:1-3: "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 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."
- b. "It is equally clear in teaching, both explicitly and implicitly, that the righteous will enjoy heaven proportionate to the preparation and spiritual attainment which they make here. Daniel tells us that they that turn many to righteousness, shall shine as the stars for ever. (Dan. 12:3). These words were obviously penned for the purpose of stimulating men in soul-winning. Will those who turn only a few, or none at all, to righteousness, *shine just as brilliantly?* If so, why was the promise made? At the end of the age, the Lord will render unto every man *according to his works*, margin, (Greek, doing.) Will the doing of all men be exactly the same in that day, so that all will receive precisely the same reward? If a group of a dozen men are paid according to their *doing*, is it likely that checks in the same amount will be issued to all? What if the number is in the multiplied millions, as will be the case at the judgment? (Matt. 16:27; Rom. 2:6; 14:12; II Cor. 5:10; Eph. 5:8; Rev. 2:33; I Cor. 3:13; Rev. 14:13 and many, many others) (Woods, *ibid.*).
5. Heaven is prepared for people who have been prepared to go there.
 - a. First we must be purged from the guilt of our old sins: "But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins" (2 Pet. 1:9).
 - 1) Purged means cleansed.
 - a) Isaiah 59:2: "But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear."
 - b) Hebrews 12:14: "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord."
 - c) Revelation 21:27: "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."
 - d) Matthew 5:8 Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God."
 - 2) Cleansed by Christ's blood.
 - a) Hebrews 9:22: "And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission."
 - b) 1 Peter 1:18-19: "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."
 - 3) Applied by Gospel, which is the faith: Acts 15:9 And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith" (Acts 15:9)—How?
 - 4) Though our obedience.
 - a) 1 Peter 1:22-23: "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever."
 - b) Romans 6:17-18: "But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness."
 - 5) What are we to obey?
 - a) Mark 16:15-16: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."
 - b) Acts 17:30: "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent."
 - c) Romans 10:10: "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

- d) Acts 2:38: "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."
- e) Romans 6:3-4: "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."
- 6) At this point our souls are cleansed, we are added to the Lord's church, we enter the kingdom of Christ, we begin to serve our Lord, and we commence our full transformation.
- a) Acts 2:47: "Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."
- b) Colossians 1:13-14: "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins."
- c) 1 Corinthians 15:58: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."
- d) Romans 12:1-2: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."
- b. Having Been Cleansed From Sin, We Must Add the Christian graces: "And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity" (2 Pet 1:5-7).
- 1) Faith is the foundation; saving faith leads to cleansing.
- 2) Virtue: courage, determination to be faithful, resolved to stand for the truth. We need courage to live right in the face of opposition and ridicule, to teach others and to defend the truth.
- a) 1 Peter 4:4: "Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you." Compare: "All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Caesar's household" (Phil. 4:22).
- b) Acts 4:18-20: "And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard."
- c) Jude 1:3: "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints."
- d) 2 Timothy 4:2: "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine."
- 3) Knowledge: possession of facts and information in Bible.
- a) Christianity is built on revealed knowledge: "No man can come to me, except the Father that sent me draw him: and I will raise him up in the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall all be taught of God. Every one that hath heard from the Father, and hath learned, cometh unto me" (John 6:44-45, ASV).
- b) Without knowledge we cannot worship, serve, or obey God acceptably: "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat" (Heb. 5:12; cf. John 4:24; Rom. 12:1-2).
- c) We need to knowledge of the truth to recognize error and sin: "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (1 John 4:1; cf. Ps. 119:11).
- 4) Temperance: self control: "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway" (1 Cor. 9:27).
- a) Literally, temperance means to hold self in, to practice self-discipline.
- b) This means total abstinence from things wrong and moderation in all other matters.

- c) Heaven too good to miss by self-indulgence.
- 5) Patience: steadfastness and endurance.
 - a) 1 Timothy 4:16: "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee."
 - b) Galatians 6:9-10: "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith."
 - c) James 1:2-4: "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing."
 - d) Galatians 5:7: "Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?"
 - e) Hebrews 12:3-4: "For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin."
- 6) Godliness.
 - a) Reverence and devotion to God; devout; spiritual; pious; sincerely try to please God.
 - b) Hebrews 12:28-29: "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: For our God is a consuming fire."
 - c) Titus 2:11-12: "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world."
- 7) Brotherly kindness.
 - a) *Philadelphia*: kindness toward brethren.
 - b) We are part of God's spiritual family.
 - c) Matthew 23:8-9: "But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven."
 - d) Ephesians 4:32: "And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."
 - e) 1 John 5:1: "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him."
- 8) Love—this is the Crowning Grace.
 - a) 1 Corinthians 13:13: "And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity."
 - b) 1 Corinthians 13:1-3: "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing."
 - c) Colossians 3:14: "And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness."
 - d) 1 John 3:18: "My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth."
 - e) Romans 13:10: "Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law." Instead of doing evil toward others, we do good to all others; we do nothing harmful to anybody.
 - f) Matthew 7:12: "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets."
 - g) Love permeates soul; it shapes and beautifies every word and deed.
- c. Once purged, our past sins are never brought up against us again: "For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more" (Heb. 8:12).
 - 1) We can put our sinful past from our minds; we have a clean slate; our record is now spotless.
 - 2) We can look to the future with confidence, inward assurance, and hope.
 - 3) Being cleansed and continuing to build up the Christian graces, the door into Heaven is open:

“For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (2 Pet. 1:11).

- d. The sure way, the only way, to Heaven: “And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (2 Pet. 1:5-11).
 - e. The human body grows weaker with age, but our spirit grows stronger and stronger: “For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing” (2 Tim. 4:6-8).
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WE NEED PREACHERS LIKE ELIJAH

INTRODUCTION

Elijah was one of the great men of the Old Testament. He was an outstanding prophet. As a child of God, he was a superb. As a preacher, he was a great example. Elijah was a man of immense courage. He fearlessly could face hundreds of false prophets in a direct and tense confrontation, and win a nation-changing victory.

Elijah possessed the same sorrows, joys, and fears which characterize people of our generation; he was subject to the same human tendencies and had the same kinds of weaknesses that are so common among us all. James states specifically that he was subject to "like passions as we are" (Jam. 5:17, KJV). He had to struggle against the human weaknesses that assail us, despite the fact that he was a prophet of God. When wicked queen Jezebel vowed to kill the prophet within twenty-four hours (1 Kin. 19:1-2), he fled away (1 Kin. 19:3) and fell into a period of despondency.

WHO WAS ELIJAH?

The name "Elijah" means "Jehovah is my God." The whole of his recorded background in the Bible is given in 1 Kings 17:1: "And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead." He was one of the most respected men of the Old Testament, yet his early life is shrouded in mystery. This wonder-working prophet is introduced to us like another Melchizedek (Gen. 14:18-20; Heb. 7:1-3), without any mention of his father or mother, or of the beginning of his days. We know much about the early lives of Moses, Samuel, and David; but of the one of this study, we know nothing of his parents, of his young life, or of his experiences before his bold declaration to King Ahab:

And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the LORD God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word (1 Kin. 17:1).

Elijah was from among the inhabitants of Gilead, about which place Smith noted:

A mountainous region bounded on the west by the Jordan, on the north by Bashan, on the east by the Arabian plateau, and on the south by Moab and Ammon. Gen 31:21; 3:12-17. It is sometimes called "Mount Gilead," Gen. 31:25, sometimes "the land of Gilead," Num 32:1 . . . The name Gilead, as is usual in Palestine, describes the physical aspect of the country: it signifies "a hard rocky region." The mountains of Gilead, including Pisgah, Abarim and Peor, have a real elevation of from 2000 to 3000 feet . . . Gilead was specially noted for its balm collected from "balm of Gilead" trees, and worth twice its weight in silver (Smith's Bible Dictionary).

As Gilead was rugged, we should not be surprised to find this trait also characterizing those who lived there. The Apaches of the American Southwest were known for their ability to thrive in a harsh environment. Young men who grew up in the Appalachian Mountains were known by military leaders for their great soldierly aptitudes. The character of the people of Gilead was fierce and warlike.

Elijah is called "the Tishbite" because he came from the city of Tishbeh (or Tishbe), located somewhere in Gilead. Elijah was a striking figure in his clothing and general appearance:

And they answered him, He was an hairy man, and girt with a girdle of leather about his loins. And he said, It is Elijah the Tishbite (2 Kin. 1:8).

Either in allusion to his shaggy cloak of untanned skin; or, more probably, an expression descriptive of the prophet's person, of his long flowing locks, abundant beard, and general profusion of hair. His costume was that of a thorough ascetic. Generally the Jews wore girdles of linen or cotton stuff, soft and comfortable. Under the girdle they wore one or two long linen gowns or shirts, and over these they had sometimes a large shawl. Elijah had only his leather girdle and his sheepskin cape or mantle (Barnes' Notes, Electronic Database).

They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword:

they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented (Heb. 11:37).

Elijah and John the Immerser had much in common:

Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD (Mal. 4:5).

In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. And the same John had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey. Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judaea, and all the region round about Jordan (Mat. 3:1-4).

And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord (Luke 1:17).

Elijah lived at a dark and critical period of Israel's history. The prosperous and powerful kingdom of King Solomon had been torn asunder following his death, with the ten northern tribes taking Jeroboam as their king, and the two southern tribes giving their allegiance to King Rehoboam, son of Solomon. The religious condition of the people was also divided. The Northern Kingdom (Israel) worshiped at Dan and Bethel, following a religion invented by their wicked king (1 Kin. 12:25-33). The Southern Kingdom (Judah) still followed the Law given through Moses. Both of these kingdoms subsequently went into idolatry, although Judah was guided back toward Jehovah temporarily by certain godly kings. By the time of Ahab's reign over the Northern Kingdom, that nation had been subjugated to the false gods Queen Jezebel stoutly promoted. Elijah was the right man to address the current ungodly state of Israel.

Elijah suddenly appeared on the scene to stymie the evil influences of Ahab and Jezebel. He first spoke to Ahab, evidently in a face-to-face confrontation. He tersely stated to the king that there would be neither dew nor rain for a period of years.

THE GREAT DROUGHT

The announcement Elijah made to King Ahab was one of a dire nature:

And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the LORD God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word (1 Kin. 17:1).

Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit (Jam. 5:17-18).

Many of us are familiar with the harsh effects of a drought that persists for only a few months, but we can only imagine the grievous hardships, sufferings and death that would follow a drought of forty-two months! We are told (1 Kin. 18:3) that a sore famine struck Samaria. The text does not relate the effect of the drought on the Southern Kingdom. Possibly some grain had been imported from Egypt to stave off utter starvation.

God already had a plan to take care of the prophet during this harsh time. He was told to hide out at the Brook Cherith (1 Kin. 17:3). McGarvey visited this place in 1878, and gave the following description:

About half way to Jericho the road crosses the saddle of a high ridge in passing from one wady to another, and here is the traditional site of the parable of the Good Samaritan After crossing the ridge just mentioned the road descends more rapidly,

but the hills descend more rapidly still. All is wild and desolate . . . Within about three miles of the Jordan Valley you see Wady Kelt, a deep, wild gorge, a short distance to the left; and when within about a quarter of a mile of the valley you pass along the edge of the precipice which forms the southern side of the chasm. It is the darkest and most desolate looking gorge in all Palestine. On either side is a perpendicular wall of dark-brown rock, having a rotten and crumbling appearance, and the narrow bottom of the chasm lies more than 2000 below the road. A noisy stream dashes along its rock bed, distinctly heard on the road above, and narrow line of verdure marks its course. On one occasion the author entered this gorge at its mouth, where it breaks out into the plain, and ascended it about a mile, partly on horseback and partly on foot. It is scarcely possible to conceive the wild and desolate grandeur of the place. Its brown walls are only about 20 yards apart, and they rise so high and steep as to shut out all the sky, except a narrow strip overhead. There is no reason to doubt that it is the "brook Cherith," in which Elijah was hidden and fed by ravens until the brook ran dry. It is the only brook "before Jordan" suitable for such concealment (McGarvey, *Lands of the Bible*, pp.233f).

God caused ravens to bring food to Elijah as long as the brook still had water. The word for raven is the name of a family of birds, which includes the rook (not an unclean bird, by Mosaic standards). It is unimportant for us to know the details of the arrangements God made, by which he supplied food to Elijah through the agency of the birds; whatever the details, God's providence (miraculous or otherwise) was directly involved. God is also able to take care of his people today: He is the Saviour of all men, especially of those who believe (1 Tim. 4:10). This refers to providing physical sustenance to mankind.

ELIJAH AND THE WIDOW ZAREPHATH

When the brook ran dry, Elijah was instructed by the Lord to go to Zarephath, a city which pertained to Sidon. Christ made mention of this.

But I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land; But unto none of them was Elias sent, save unto Sarepta, *a city* of Sidon, unto a woman *that was* a widow (Luke 4:25-26).

As Elijah approached the city, he met this widow. The providence of God was doubtless involved in bringing the two together in such an expeditious and timely manner. The woman was gathering sticks when she was approached by the prophet; he asked that she bring him a drink of water. As she went to get the water, he asked also for a morsel of bread. The widow replied that she only had a handful of meal in a barrel and a little oil in a jar; she added that she had been gathering sticks which she intended to use in preparing a meal for herself and her son, "that we may eat it, and die." They had no other food.

The prophet told the woman to prepare food from the little ingredients she had, that neither the oil nor the meal would run out until the Lord had sent rain upon the earth again (1 Kin. 17:8-16).

Another notable miracle was wrought through Elijah during his stay with the widow. Her son died. God, through the prophet, raised the lad to life (1 Kin. 17:17-24).

THE GREAT CONFRONTATION ON MOUNT CARMEL

Elijah was told to present himself to King Ahab (1 Kin. 18:1-2), that He was ready to end the drought. As the prophet made his way to see Ahab, he first met Obadiah, an important official in the king's house. This man had been instrumental in saving a hundred of God's prophets from Jezebel's murderous intentions (1 Kin. 18:3-16).

Those in rebellion to Jehovah often think one who exposes their errors is the troublemaker. Ahab's first words to Elijah was to accuse the prophet of being the cause of Israel's severe distress. But the prophet correctly placed the blame for these hardships where it belonged, on Ahab and his father's house (1 Kin. 18:16-18).

To bring the issue to a head, the king was told to bring the nation of Israel, along with the four-hundred and fifty prophets of Baal, plus the four-hundred prophets of the groves, to Mount Carmel. Notice that Jezebel fed these four-hundred prophets of the groves, although many in Israel were on the verge of starvation (1 Kin. 18:18). Errorists among the sectarians, and false teachers among us, usually are well-paid for their evil services!

When that vast assemblage had gathered, Elijah challenged Israel to make their final choice between Jehovah and Baal (1 Kin. 18:20-21). The people answered not a word.

Elijah's God-given plan was for two bullocks to be slain; the carcass of each was to be placed on an altar, with sufficient wood underneath to burn a sacrifice. No fire was to be started. The prophets of Baal were to call on their "god" to send fire to ignite the wood and burn the sacrifice. Elijah would make his appeal to Jehovah for the same result. "If the Lord be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him" (1 Kin. 18:21).

Their preparations being made, the false prophets began their futile cries for Baal to send fire upon their altar. Nothing happened. Elijah urged them to cry louder. They continued their strident appeals, even cutting themselves so that blood spurted out upon their bodies (1 Kin. 18:22-29). Lifeless Baal remained silent!

Elijah called on the people to gather around him. He repaired the altar he was to use, setting in place twelve stones representing the twelve tribes of Israel. He dug a trench around the altar, cut up and placed the body of the bullock on the altar, and asked the people to fill four containers with water and pour it upon the sacrifice, the altar, and the trench. This was done three times, so that the bullock, the altar, and the wood were soaked, and the trench was filled with water. Igniting such a sacrifice would not be easy for humans.

The time of the evening sacrifice had come. Daily gatherings at the temple took place at the third hour (Acts 2:15), the sixth hour, the ninth hour, and at evening (6 p.m.). The priests would be inside the temple performing their duties, and the people would be praying outside in the court (Luke 1:8-10; cf. Psa. 55:17). The site of this great contest was at a considerable distance from the temple at Jerusalem, but the timing of Elijah's sacrifice coincided with one of the daily gatherings at the temple by the faithful.

Notice the difference between the loud and raucous outcries of the false prophets and the simple, humble prayer of Elijah and its result:

And it came to pass at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near, and said, LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word. Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the LORD God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again (1 Kin. 18:36-37).

Then the fire of the LORD fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, The LORD, he is the God; the LORD, he is the God. And Elijah said unto them, Take the prophets of Baal; let not one of them escape. And they took them: and Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon, and slew them there (1 Kin. 18:38-40).

A great rain fell after Elijah's fervently prayed for it (1 Kin. 18:41-46).

Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit (Jam. 5:17-18).

ELIJAH AVOIDS JEZEBEL'S WRATH

Jezebel had worked long and hard to contaminate Israel with Baal worship, with a large measure of success, but now Elijah had dealt her schemes a major blow. She and her corrupt prophets could not withstand the awesome power of God, but she thought her merchants of death could destroy Elijah:

And Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and withal how he had slain all the prophets with the sword. Then Jezebel sent a messenger unto Elijah, saying, So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by to morrow about this time. And when he saw that, he arose, and went for his life, and came to Beersheba, which belongeth to Judah, and left his servant there (1 Kin. 19:1-3).

The prophet left his servant at Beersheba and went a day's journey further into the wilderness. He appears to be despondent, thinking that he would not be able to do any further work among his people in the Northern

Kingdom because of the danger posed by Jezebel. He requested that God take his life. This does not sound like the courageous man on Mount Carmel, but he ought not to be charged with cowardice! He could have been reasonably safe most anywhere in the Kingdom of Judah, where it would have been more difficult for vicious Jezebel to reach him. It might be that he was seeking a place of solitude where he could commune with Jehovah, and perhaps end his great work. But there was much for Elijah yet to do!

EXPERIENCES AT MOUNT HOREB

After asking God to take his life, he fell asleep under a Juniper tree. An angel touched him later and told him to arise and eat the angel-made meal ready at hand. He ate and went back to sleep. Again the angel roused him up and told him to eat again. He went on the strength of that food for the next forty days and nights, and came in his travels to Horeb, the mount of God (1 Kin. 19:4-8).

He had taken up residence in a cave when the word of the Lord came to him, asking what he was doing there. The prophet described the condition of rebellious Israel and the harsh treatment he had received as he tried to serve God.

God called on Elijah to stand on the mount in the presence of the Lord. God then passed by him and a great and strong wind tore at the mountains, breaking the rocks in pieces. But God was not to be seen in this great wind. He is Spirit (John 4:24; Luke 24:39), not some visible or audible feature of the creation. An earthquake then occurred, but again God was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake, a fire was manifested to the prophet, but God was not in the fire. Finally, Elijah heard a small, still voice, but that voice was of God. The first three manifestations were not God, but were agents of God. The purpose of these demonstrations was to impress on Elijah that it is not God's intention to destroy people or to force their obedience, but to convince them of the truth of His word, thus to persuade them to renounce idolatry and all false religion and embrace God's true religion. The small still voice aroused within the prophet a lasting reverence for the Almighty, which he first showed by covering his face behind his garment.

We might entertain the foolish thought that God ought to send some ferocious destructive power upon the citadels of error, wiping out these vestiges of the devil's work. But it is God's plan that his people try to teach the adherents to leave these false ways and accept God's truth. We are taught to hate every false way, but that does not mean that we are to destroy those who are deceived or to burn down their edifices. That would do much harm and no good!

The prophet thought that he was the only faithful one in all of Israel, but God told he that there were still seven thousand who had not bowed their knees to Baal (1 Kin. 19:18). God's roll book is the only official and accurate list of the faithful. Through the long period of the Dark Ages, when truth seems to have vanished from the earth, there were most likely a significant number of faithful saints, although their records are not found in human history. The same is true of many other places and times.

ELIJAH ANNOUNCES THE DOOM OF AHAB AND JEZEBEL

Ahab coveted a vineyard which belonged to Naboth, and was situated near to the king's palace. Ahab offered to buy the parcel of land, but since the property had been given to Naboth's ancestors, in the original division of Canaan, it was unlawful for him to sell it (1 Kin. 21:1-4). Ahab told Jezebel about the problem, and the queen told him in effect, "Honey, take a nap and I'll take care of this matter" (cf. 1 Kin. 21:5-7). She arranged for the elders and other leaders to proclaim a feast and put Naboth in the principal seat (2 Kin. 21:8-12). She also moved these elders to have two "sons of belial" make a false charge against Naboth (2 Kin. 21:13-16), and have him slain for blasphemy. Ahab then took possession of the vineyard.

Providentially, God brought Elijah on the scene at the very time Ahab came to take over the vineyard. We can well imagine the fear that must have flooded the heart of the king when he saw Elijah:

And Ahab said to Elijah, Hast thou found me, O mine enemy? And he answered, I have found thee, because thou hast sold thyself to do that which is evil in the sight of Jehovah. Behold, I will bring evil upon thee, and will utterly sweep thee away and will cut off from Ahab every man-child, and him that is shut up and him that is left at large in Israel: and I will make thy house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha the son of Ahijah for the provocation wherewith thou hast provoked me to anger, and hast made Israel to sin. And of Jezebel also spake Jehovah, saying, The dogs shall eat Jezebel by the rampart of Jezreel (1 Kin. 21:20-23, ASV).

Ahab was fearful and humble when he heard this dreaded pronouncement. He rent his clothes, put on

sackcloth, fasted and *went softly* (1 Kin. 21:27-29). For a time, the punishment of the king was postponed. But three years later, Ahab convinced Jehoshaphat (king of Judah) to join him in a war against Syria, to take back Ramoth in Gilead (1 Kin. 22:1-28).

As the battle approached, Ahab disguised himself so the Syrians could not identify him in the fight; he asked Jehoshaphat to keep on his regal garments. The king of Syria directed certain prominent men in his army to search out Ahab and kill him; they were not to fight against anyone else (1 Kin. 22:29-33). God did not need the assistance of these warriors.

And a certain man drew a bow at a venture, and smote the king of Israel between the joints of the harness: wherefore he said unto the driver of his chariot, Turn thine hand, and carry me out of the host; for I am wounded" (1 Kin. 22:34).

Can we not see clearly the providential hand of God guiding the arrow? It struck the right man; it hit him at the very point that was not protected by the armor; it delivered a mortal injury. Ahab was held up in his chariot for a time, but died later that day. His body was brought to Samaria, where it was buried. Someone washed the blood from the chariot, fulfilling Elijah's earlier prediction:

And one washed the chariot in the pool of Samaria; and the dogs licked up his blood; and they washed his armour; according unto the word of the LORD which he spake (1 Kin. 22:38).

What was the end of Jezebel? When and how was the prophecy fulfilled about her?

And when Jehu [the new king in Israel] was come to Jezreel, Jezebel heard of it; and she painted her face, and tired her head, and looked out at a window. And as Jehu entered in at the gate, she said, Had Zimri peace, who slew his master? And he lifted up his face to the window, and said, Who is on my side? who? And there looked out to him two or three eunuchs. And he said, Throw her down. So they threw her down: and some of her blood was sprinkled on the wall, and on the horses: and he trode her under foot. And when he was come in, he did eat and drink, and said, Go, see now this cursed woman, and bury her: for she is a king's daughter. And they went to bury her: but they found no more of her than the skull, and the feet, and the palms of her hands. Wherefore they came again, and told him. And he said, This is the word of the LORD, which he spake by his servant Elijah the Tishbite, saying, In the portion of Jezreel shall dogs eat the flesh of Jezebel (2 Kin. 9:30-36).

ELIJAH AND KING AHAZIAH

Following the death of Ahab, his son Ahaziah mounted the throne in the Northern Kingdom. He was determined to follow his father's unholy practices. He ruled only for two years. This new king was injured in a fall from which he would not recover:

And Ahaziah fell down through a lattice in his upper chamber that was in Samaria, and was sick: and he sent messengers, and said unto them, Go, inquire of Baalzebub the god of Ekron whether I shall recover of this disease. But the angel of the LORD said to Elijah the Tishbite, Arise, go up to meet the messengers of the king of Samaria, and say unto them, Is it not because there is not a God in Israel, that ye go to inquire of Baalzebub the god of Ekron? Now therefore thus saith the LORD, Thou shalt not come down from that bed on which thou art gone up, but shalt surely die. And Elijah departed (2 Kin. 1:2-4).

Elijah sent Ahaziah's messengers back to the king with the fearful news that the king would not survive his ailment. He asked his servants to describe the prophet who met them. From the description his messengers gave of the man who sent them back, Ahaziah recognized him to be Elijah: "He was an hairy man, and girt with a girdle of leather about his loins. And he said, It is Elijah the Tishbite" (2 Kin. 1:8).

ELIJAH AND THE SCHOOL OF THE PROPHETS

An inspired prophet, such as Isaiah or Jeremiah, had no need to go to school to learn how to fulfill their prophetic office. If one was inspired, the message was given to him by revelation and he could present it without error. One did not need to join a school of prophets to learn how to become a prophet. A prophet of God had inspired truth revealed to him; a band of these prophets would have God-given truths. The reception of those truths was not merely for their own spiritual good, but to be passed on to others who did not know those truths. We may assume that as a band of prophets traveled in Israel, they would find occasion to instruct the citizens in God's Word. They may have done many other important good works.

After his anointment to become king in Israel, Saul found himself for a time in the midst of a band of prophets. The Spirit of God came upon him as He had upon these other prophets. Together, they *prophesied*. A prophet spoke from God; the message might relate to the past, to the present or to the future. In this case, these prophets were extolling the name of God. The scene must not be viewed as similar to the so-called "prophesying" or "testifying" done by modern sects. Saul's gift of prophecy came through the power of the Holy Spirit (1 Sam. 10:10). This gift made him a different man; whereas before he was not a prophet, during this episode he had the prophetic office. A few chapters later, when the Philistines invaded Israel, Saul inquired of the Lord, but he received no reply whatsoever (1 Sam. 28:5-6). He no longer had the prophetic gift himself, and none of the sons of the prophets would aid him in this great crisis.

A band of prophets is mentioned in 1 Samuel 19; these were connected with Samuel. We are not told of the subject of their prophecies. Elijah, with Elisha traveling with him, met a band of prophets from Bethel; these men told Elisha that Elijah would be taken away that day (2 Kin. 2:1-3). Another group of prophets from Jericho gave the same message to Elisha. At Jordan, they met a third group of prophets (2 Kin. 2:5-7). After Elijah was caught up from the earth, Elisha allowed fifty prophets to search for Elijah, a fruitless effort.

A group of prophets is found in 2 Kings 4. A great pot of food had been prepared, but there was "death" in the pot. Elisha cured the food. It appears that this band of prophets was living together in a community of prophets.

Edward J. Young offers the following information regarding the "sons of the prophets."

After the death of Samuel the prophetic bodies seem to have died out, not to reappear until the time of Elijah and Elisha At the times of Elijah and Elisha they appear only in the ten northern tribes and not at all in the southern kingdom We first learn of a group of prophets during the reign of Ahab. At this time, the worship of the Tyrian Baal had been introduced by Jezebel, and there was a great need for the nation to be called back to repentance and to the true God. Only a stern figure such as Elijah could make a sinful people hearken, and in connection with his ministry we find the prophets. Jezebel herself had recognized the power of these groups, for we are told that she had cut off the prophets of the Lord (1 Kin. 18:4). Obadiah had taken one hundred of the prophets and had hid them in groups of fifty each (Edward J. Young, p.92).

ELIJAH AND THE FIRE FROM HEAVEN

It will be remembered that Elijah told the wicked king Ahaziah that he would not recover from the injury he received when he suffered a fall (2 Kin. 1:1-8). The king sent a band of soldiers to find and arrest Elijah. The captain found Elijah sitting on top of a hill. He ordered the prophet to come down. It is clear that an implied threat was included in this order, if Elijah did not comply. Elijah stated that if he were a true prophet, a fire would come from heaven and consume the captain and his men. This miraculous event quickly came to pass. The action taken was not done by Elijah's power; he had no more power to cause such an event than any other man. The fire was of divine origin; it was not sent on the whim of the prophet, but as a sober act of punishment on the culprits. God had used fire from heaven to punish other miscreants in the past (cf. Lev. 10:1-2).

The apostles James and John, known at the time as "the sons of thunder," once asked the Lord whether they should ask for fire from heaven to destroy a certain Samaritan village which had refused the Lord hospitality:

And when his disciples James and John saw *this*, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did? But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save *them*. And they went to another village (Luke 9:54-56).

The second band of soldiers suffered the same penalty as the first. But when the third group came, the captain knew what had happened to the ones who went before him. This captain, knowing the fate of his two predecessors, was humbled by their experiences. He did not want to be burned to death as they had been; he had enough respect for God's power to know he could not hope to stand against the prophet. Thus this humble soldier fell on his knees before Elijah, and besought the prophet to spare him and his company. He asked that their lives "be precious thy sight" (2 Kin. 1:13).

The angel of the Lord directed Elijah to go down to the man, and accompany him to the king. Being assured by the angel, the prophet knew there was nothing to fear. He did as he was told. Coming before the king, Elijah told Ahaziah that because he had sent to make inquiry of a false god, as if the living God were not accessible, he would not recover from his afflictions; he would die (2 Kin. 1:14-16).

ELIJAH'S MIRACULOUS DEPARTURE FROM THE EARTH

As Elijah and Elisha continued their journey, a chariot of fire drawn by horses of fire parted the two men, and Elijah went up in a whirlwind into heaven. Neither Elisha nor the prophets had seen anything like this tremendous event (2 Kin. 2:8-11). In the Bible, no one before Elijah, except Enoch, had been translated from earth to heaven, without experiencing death. No description is given in the Scriptures of Enoch's translation. The fiery horses and chariot in Elijah's case were not literal, but were a miraculous phenomenon.

The tempest was an earthly substratum for the theophany, the fiery chariot and fiery horses the symbolical form in which the translation of his master to heaven presented itself to the eye of Elisha, who was left behind (Keil, C.F. & Delitzsch, F., *Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament, Kings*, p.294).

That Elisha was properly and profoundly impressed is apparent from the expression that burst forth from his lips: "My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof" (2 Kin. 2:12). The precise point his statement expressed is difficult to grasp, but the utterance very clearly verbalizes the deep impression the event made on him. Elijah had done more to help Israel than all of the warhorses and chariots that the nation might have acquired.

Elijah appeared on the scene of Israelite history quite suddenly, like the arrival of a whirlwind; his work was like a raging fire, in that it could not be contained by his enemies; his departure from earth was accompanied by flaming horses and a fiery chariot. Elisha rent his own clothes, in the customary fashion of those ancient times, thus expressing his great loss in the departure of Elijah. Selfish, ambitious princes might rejoice in the demise of their father, for this would leave a regal vacancy for them to fill. It is true that Elisha was to take the place of Elijah, but there was a genuine love that prevailed between these two great men of God; it was with grief that he replaced Elijah.

Elisha understood that he was to be successor to Elijah, and so picked up Elijah's mantle and walked toward the Jordan River. Standing on the bank of the river, he said, "Where is the God of Elijah," and smote the waters with the mantle. As had happened shortly before [the waters parted when Elijah smote them with the garment], the waters separated, and he walked over to the other side with dry feet. His reference to the God of Elijah was not an indication of irreverence, but just the opposite. He made the statement and took the action to show the nearby prophets, who had witnessed the events of the day, that he was indeed God's appointed replacement for Elijah (2 Kin. 2:13-15).

ELIJAH AND THE TRANSFIGURATION OF CHRIST

And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him. Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him (Mat. 17:1-5).

Jesus was transfigured (transformed) before the eyes of the three apostles.

Jesus made this change of his human body visible to these three disciples; this was done

to teach them the mystery of his nature (John 1:14), which he should assume after his suffering; again it would show these disciples the cessation of the authority of the law and the prophets. Such earthly splendor and glory as they beheld him suggested the supernal and eternal glory with which he was clothed before the world was, and which should be his habilaments after his ascension to the Father (H. Leo Boles).

Moses and Elijah appeared with the Lord in this supernatural scene. The three discussed the "decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem" (Luke 9:31). We are not told how the disciples were able to recognize these two Old Testament worthies; perhaps it was by the ensuing conversation.

It is noticeable that there had been for many centuries a mystery connected with the end of Moses and Elijah. Moses in the full vigor of his strength, was summoned to the top of Mount Nebo, where he died; no human hands buried him or knew where he was buried. (Deut. 34:6.) The Jews had a tradition that his body was buried by angels, and that evil spirits contended for it. (See Jude 9.) He was the great prophet of the law; a type of the Mediator, the one on whose name and authority the Jews especially depended. Elijah "went up by a whirlwind into heaven." (2 Kings 2:11-16.) The Jews supposed that he was translated to paradise. He is a representative of the prophets. These two, Moses and Elijah, the representative of the law, and the representative of the prophets, appeared with Jesus and yielded their positions to him (Boles).

We are told that God buried the body of Moses in a valley in the land of Moab (Deu. 34:6), but that no man knew its location. As we have seen, Elijah was swept up into eternity by God's miraculous action; though fifty people sought for his body, it was never found (2 Kin. 2:12-18).

J.W. McGarvey gave this insight into the transfiguration:

There was a divine attraction in the scene, a foretaste of heaven's own glory, and no wonder that Peter exclaimed, *It is good for us to be here . . .* It shows that men in the flesh are not prepared to judge of the fitness of things in the spiritual world. In all probability many of our most cherished conceptions of that world are as incongruous as that of the frightened Peter (*Commentary on Matthew and Mark*, p.150).

Among the great lessons taught by this marvelous scene is the fact that, though Moses and Elijah were great men in their day, it is Jesus the Christ that we are to heed today. Peter made the ill-advised suggestion that three tabernacles be built for these three in the scene. Both Mark and Luke say that Peter blurted this out for he did not know what else to say. The tabernacles (or tents) were booths such as the Jews dwelled in during the feast of tabernacles (Lev. 23:34). He may have been suggesting the tents as a place where these three could be honored and worshiped as glorified beings. His suggestion implied some measure of equality between Moses and Elijah with the Son of God. The voice from Heaven was more than sufficient to rebuke Peter and to prove to all that Jesus is God's spokesman for the Christian Dispensation: "This my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him" (Mat. 17:5; cf. Heb. 1:1-4).

WHAT KIND OF PREACHER WAS ELIJAH?

1. He had the same weaknesses that men today have (Jam. 5:17). Being subject to the same passions which characterize us, he was not a person of sinless perfection. He could experience discouragement and fear, but he was a man of great courage. A brave individual is one who brings his fear under control and does his work. Elijah demonstrated courage by confronting Ahab and denouncing his idolatry and other sins.

2. Elijah was a man who related God's will without making any changes to it. The truth was safe in his hands. He might have been able to avoid danger to his own person if he had weakened his God-given message to Ahab.

3. Elijah had deadly and powerful enemies. To be opposed by strong enemies is not a reflection on us. It does not mean that we must be wrong by having foes who try to thwart our efforts. Unbelieving Jews in Rome asserted that the church was "every where spoken against" (Acts 28:22). The truth is not popular with the majority, thus those who present it may expect to be opposed.

4. Elijah was discouraged or despondent on at least one occasion. We might even say he was overcome

by fear. Jezebel sent word to him that because he had slain the prophets of Baal, she intended to have him killed within twenty-four hours (1 Kin. 19:1-3). The prophet fled into the wilderness to escape Jezebel's wrath. There is a time to stay and fight the enemy and there is a time when we ought wisely to flee. Our Lord avoided the evil intentions of the men of Nazareth (Luke 4:16-30), Paul escaped from Damascus when his enemies sought to kill him (Acts 9:23-25; 2 Cor. 11:32-33), and the congregation at Jerusalem left the area due to the persecution which followed the killing of Stephen (Acts 8:1-4). In these cases, more good was done by fleeing instead of fighting. But there are many cases in which our Lord, the apostles, our other brethren in the first century resisted their enemies and defended the truth. So must we!

5. Elijah placed his trust in God. How could he survive the great drought and famine? How could he avoid the many enemies who sought him everywhere? Where could he find food and water? God provided for his sustenance at the Brook Cherith for as long as possible. He sustained the widow and her son, and was also sustained, with sufficient food and water until the time came for the drought to end. There are times today when gospel preachers and other saints may find themselves beyond human hope. We may not be able to find a place to preach, or even be unable to find a secular job. We may not know the source of the next meal. We have been used to having an abundance of the necessities of life, and perhaps also blessed with more of the luxuries of the world than we need. Can you imagine doing without electricity, air conditioning, satellite television, cell phones, the internet, automatic heat in the winter, mechanical transportation, or easy access to medical treatment? Do you take for granted the privilege of worship without danger or discomfort? It is essential that we develop and maintain a high degree of trust in God!

6. Elijah was willing to aid others who were in need. The prophet helped the widow of Zarephath who was on the verge of starvation. When her son died, Elijah interceded with the Lord to bring that young boy back to life (1 Kin. 17:8-24). He did not disappoint Obadiah (1 Kin. 18:1-16). Through his efforts on Mount Carmel, he gave Israel the opportunity to return to Jehovah (1 Kin. 18:17-46).

7. Elijah was sincere in his service to the Almighty. His successful service could not have been done without sincerity. God would not have used him; God will not use us if we are not sincere in our devotion to the Almighty, and are dedicated to His truth.

8. Elijah was ready to suffer hardships in serving God. His time at the Brook Cherith may not have been the most pleasant of circumstances. But he had sufficient food and water. The avenue of prayer was always open to him during that stay. How did he fill up his time? We are instructed in the New Testament: "And having food and raiment let us be therewith content" (1 Tim. 6:8; cf. Heb. 13:5-6). For much of his time, the prophet worked alone. Most of us need the encouragement of others, but from whom did Elijah receive good cheer? God was with him, and that was sufficient.

9. Elijah was a man of prayer. How much of his time at the Brook Cherith did he spend in prayer? He prayed to begin the drought and he prayed again to end the drought. He prayed on Mount Carmel.

Elijah was a man of like passions with us, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain; and it rained not on the earth for three years and six months. And he prayed again; and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit (Jam. 5:17-18, American Standard Version).

10. Elijah drew near the end of his work with the knowledge that there was still much to do. What preacher or elder is fully content with his life's work as the time of his departure draws nigh? Paul was content as he faced the end of his days.

For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing (2 Tim. 4:6-8).

Elisha was selected to continue the work of Elijah. God had told Elijah at Horeb that he was to anoint certain men for the important work they each were to do.

And the LORD said unto him, Go, return on thy way to the wilderness of Damascus: and when thou comest, anoint Hazael to be king over Syria: And Jehu the son of Nimshi shalt thou anoint to be king over Israel: and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abelmeholah shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room. And it shall come to pass, that him that

escapeth the sword of Hazeal shall Jehu slay: and him that escapeth from the sword of Jehu shall Elisha slay (1 Kin. 19:15-17).

Elijah found Elisha (1 Kin. 19:19-21), and that young man followed the prophet. But it fell to Elisha to go to Damascus and speak with Hazeal (2 Kin. 8:7-15). It was Elisha (by one of the sons of the prophets) who anointed Jehu to be king in Israel (2 Kin. 9:1-6). It was someone else who completed this part of Elijah's work. Likewise, Paul gave Timothy certain instructions by which the apostle's work would continue:

Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also. Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier (2 Tim. 2:1-4).

CONCLUSION

If there had been no Elijah, how could the people of the Northern Kingdom have lasted as long as they did? If there had been no Elijah, which of the other Old Testaments worthies would have been with our Lord in His transfiguration? If there had been no Elijah, a great example for gospel preachers would be missing from the divine Record.

Where is Elijah today? Certainly, he is not still in his fiery chariot, flashing among the stars in the far-flung universe! Where is Enoch? Is he not, along with Abraham and Elijah, in the unseen realm of all the righteous dead, resting in the Paradise of the Hadean Realm, awaiting the resurrection of the dead?

In the Last Day, will we be able to stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ, with confidence and without shame, and happily give account of ourselves to our Lord? Certainly Elijah will be able so to do!

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences (2 Cor. 5:10-11).

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: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me (Mat. 25:34-36).

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If the Foundations Are Destroyed, What Shall The Righteous Do?

I. THE FOUNDATION IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT TO MANY THINGS IN THIS WORLD.

A. Having a Good Foundation is Essential in the World of Nature.

1. Trees must have a strong root system to withstand the ravages of nature.
 - a. Palm trees do not have long roots, but are supported by a ball of roots. They are able to bend with the winds of a hurricane, which enables their root system to support the tree.
 - b. Other trees have long tap roots, growing deep into the earth, with many other roots extending horizontally; this root system can give even a huge tree the foundation to remain standing for hundreds of years.
2. Great mountains extend from the depths of the earth, stretching out for many miles horizontally, with peaks standing twenty or more thousands of feet into the sky. The Cumberland Mountains have remained mostly unchanged for the thousands of years of their existence.

B. Having a Good Foundation is Essential in the World of Construction.

1. I heard Frank Lloyd Wright, perhaps the most famous architect in the twentieth century, describe how he could construct a skyscraper one mile tall. He illustrated that one could thrust a long spear (or sword) into the earth and it would remain erect. The important part was to have the item far enough into the earth to give the necessary support. With a great building, one would need to begin its foundation sufficiently deep into the earth to provide the foundational support to keep the edifice from falling over.
2. A dam must have a good foundation before it can hold back the extreme weight of the great mass of water pressing against it. If a crack should appear in the structure, the dam will be pushed apart and a major disaster results.
3. The Tower of Pisa was intended to be a beautiful structure, but its foundation was faulty; it began to lean. In recent years it has been shored-up so that it may not lean any further.

C. Having a Good Foundation is Essential in Other Areas.

1. Nation.
2. Economy.
3. Morality.
4. Military.
5. Lord's Church.
6. Belief in Eternal Beings and Things.
7. Family.
8. Education.

II. IF THE FOUNDATIONS BE DESTROYED, WHAT SHALL THE RIGHTEOUS DO?

A. Psalm 11:1-3:

1. Psalms 11:1-3: "In the LORD put I my trust: how say ye to my soul, Flee as a bird to your mountain? For, lo, the wicked bend their bow, they make ready their arrow upon the string, that they may privily shoot at the upright in heart. If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?"
2. David fully understood that the only refuge was with Almighty God.
 - a. Psalms 46:1-3: "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof."
 - b. Deuteronomy 33:27: "The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall say, Destroy them."
3. David's life was filled with struggles and dangers. He had to fight a lion and a bear to defend his father's sheep. He faced Goliath of whom the whole army of Israel was terrified. Much of his time on Israel's throne was spend fighting enemies within and without, including a rebellion that was led by his own son. The case involved in Psalm 11:1-3 doubtless grows out of King Saul's relentless efforts to destroy David, to keep that young man from taking his place as Israel's king.
4. In verse one, David strongly proclaims that he has placed his trust in Jehovah. He understood that without God's aid, he would be unable to preserve himself against Saul's evil designs against him. David would do all within his power and wisdom to do, but he trusted God to do his part in his deliverance.
 - a. But in view of the obvious truth that David fully trusted in Israel's God, why is it (he asks) that his friends and advisors say to him that he must flee as a bird to his mountain? People of that time would catch birds by various snares and nets; to avoid being caught, the birds would seek safety in the mountains, where the hunter could not easily follow.
 - b. These erstwhile friends also warned David that his enemies had already drawn their bows and

- fitted their arrows to the strings, in preparation of firing these deadly missiles at him. Warriors of that time and all through the centuries were adept with the bow. The English longbow of middle ages was one of the most fearsome weapons then in use.
- c. “Even when they have other things to stay themselves upon, yet they do not, they dare not, stay upon them, but on God only. Gold is not their hope, nor are horses and chariots their confidence, but God only; and therefore, when second causes frown, yet their hopes do not fail them, because the first cause is still the same, is ever so. The psalmist, before he gives an account of the temptation he was in to distrust God, records his resolution to trust in him, as that which he was resolved to live and die by” (Matthew Henry).
5. Foundations – the Hebrew term is found only here and in Isaiah 19:10.
 - a. Psalms 11:3: “If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?”
 - b. Isaiah 19:10: “And the pillars of Egypt shall be broken in pieces; all they that work for hire shall be grieved in soul” (ASV).
 6. The Bible is the certain foundation upon which followers of God build their lives. It is God’s rich gift to mankind and throughout its contents the perceptive eye can view the providence and love of the Almighty. It does not promise us a life of peace without any hurt; it does not prevent us from having sorrow and strife as we serve God. It is a book for those who search for eternal truth, for pilgrims, for toilers, for spiritual warriors, for mourners, and for sinners. It can guide honest seekers into the truth and salvation, and can guide the saved person on through earthly life and into Heaven.
 7. The Bible furnishes the foundation of a wise nation that seeks for a sound, prosperous, peaceful, honest and safe society. Our nation once had such conditions that permeated our land. Prior to its fall into immorality, criminality, rebellion, dishonesty, rejection of God and the Bible, our nation was largely comprised of people who believed in God and the Bible, and who practiced honesty and morality, and where justice was generally followed. Politicians, businessmen, educators, workers, *et al*, were held to a high standard of moral and ethical conduct.
 - a. In the mid-1960s, many folks decided they did not want to live in a *theocracy*—where God’s word was known and practiced. They wanted a society where they could do what they pleased without having their sins and rebellion exposed. *I’m ok and you are ok. Don’t condemn me and I won’t say anything against you.*
 - b. The situation has so-degenerated today that the common view is that there is no absolute truth. I heard one so-called educator a few years ago proclaim that two and two does not necessarily equal four. If there is no absolute truth, there can be no real mathematics, science, medical treatment or diagnosis; if there is no absolute there could be weather reports or forecasts; how could cars, aircraft, computers, cell phones, etc., have ever been produced? Without sound, consistent and dependable principles and laws, life on earth could not be lived.
 - c. Would you want to live in a society where everyone believed that each individual could practice whatever he wanted to do without regard to the effect his actions produced on other people? If it was right for him to rob you, then it is right for you to rob him. If he can take another’s life without penalty, then another could kill him and suffer no punishment.
 - d. The case of Liberal, Missouri:
 - 1) Years ago, a group of atheists decided to show the world what a fine civilization could be had if only the - and this is they way they put it - the "superstitions of Christianity" were outlawed. They founded the little town of Liberal, Missouri. They boastfully advertised it as the only town of its size in the United States that didn't have a preacher, a priest, a church, that didn't have God, Jesus Christ, hell or the devil.
 - 2) The St. Louis Post-Dispatch, a few months later, carried a lengthy article about the little town. It showed that, as a matter of fact, there was little else in the town except the devil. Its hotels had become houses of prostitution. Gambling, stealing, killing - it was the standard conduct for the town.
 - 3) The newspaper article was so frightful that the men of Liberal had Clark Braden, the author of the story, arrested for criminal libel. They also sued the Post-Dispatch for \$25,000. In the trial, the evidence was so overwhelming that the jury took only a few minutes to render a verdict - in favor of the defendant. The suit was dismissed and the town of Liberal, Missouri, had to pay all court costs.
 - 4) It wasn't long after that before even life-long atheists themselves left the town in absolute disgust. In fact, one of them confessed: "An infidel surrounded by Christians may spout his

infidelity and be able to stand it, but a town of atheists is too horrible to contemplate."

- 5) There are some among us who want God out of schools. Bible reading is totally unthinkable, the cry is, "Keep religion out of politics," and yet we expect to keep all the benefits of a God-blessed community. God in the heart of a community, whether it be a family or a whole nation, is the groundwork for its being a moral and safe place to live.
 8. King Saul sought to kill innocent David; he ignored God's spiritual law; he ignored civil law. There was no standard to which he could be held – in his thinking. David must die; Saul must continue on the throne. That being the case, David's life was in grave jeopardy. He must conceal himself from the king; he must depend on God to deliver his life from Saul.
 9. In the process of fleeing from Saul, David and his men came to a certain rocky mountain in the wilderness of Maon: "Saul also and his men went to seek him. And they told David: wherefore he came down into a rock, and abode in the wilderness of Maon. And when Saul heard that, he pursued after David in the wilderness of Maon. And Saul went on this side of the mountain, and David and his men on that side of the mountain: and David made haste to get away for fear of Saul; for Saul and his men compassed David and his men round about to take them. But there came a messenger unto Saul, saying, Haste thee, and come; for the Philistines have invaded the land. Wherefore Saul returned from pursuing after David, and went against the Philistines: therefore they called that place *Selahammahlekoth*" (1 Sam. 23:25-29). In this case, he had flown like a bird to this mountain, and soon found himself surrounded by Saul and his warriors. What could be done?
 - a. Saul and his army entered the area, which soon became known to David, who went down the rock and remained in the desert of Maon. Keil says that "the rock" is probably the conical mountain of Maon the top of which is now surrounded with ruins, probably the remains of a tower (p.233). As Saul and his men climbed the mountain on one side, David and his men were descending the other side. Saul was in the process of closing with David, having surrounded his company, when a message came to Saul which enabled the fugitives to make good their escape.
 - b. An urgent message came to Saul reporting that the Philistines had invaded the land. David posed no immediate threat to Saul, but the Philistines did. The timing of the message is providential. Without it, David and his men could have been captured and slain; with it, they were able to escape. The outcome of many battles has been determined by similar developments.
 - c. Saul must have been extremely frustrated! He had his enemy in his hands! The Philistines had to come into the picture just now! The name given that place was *Selahammahlekoth*, which means "The Rock of Escape." This marvelous escape became part of the epic story of David. It is no wonder that this man became one of the greatest heroes of Israelite history.
- B. A Nation or Society's Morality Must Have a Sound Foundation.**
1. Our nation was founded on great principles revealed in the Bible.
 - a. The keystone of our nation is belief in the Bible and the God of the Bible. As belief in God declines, morality and ethics decline; as belief in the Bible declines, morality and ethics decline. For the first several generations of the history of the United States, our nation was good; it became great because it was good.
 - b. About fifty years ago, the nation began a steady decline in its goodness; as it increased in its depravity, obviously it became less good; and with this decline in goodness, our greatness began to crumble.
 2. The mid-1960s mark a clear point for our decline.
 - a. Senator Ted Kennedy and his henchmen passed a law in congress that brought about a weakening and even destruction of the immigration borders of our nation. All sorts of folks began to pour into our country; the rush has reached a critical point during the past several years. If our statist government of today admits that there are about eleven million illegals in our country, that may indeed mean that the number may be thirty or forty million. Our present government has lost so much credibility, that we cannot simply take their word for anything.
 - b. During this period of time, the Supreme Court issued an opinion that made it very difficult for law enforcement to convict criminals. This opinion is known as the Miranda Ruling. Countless criminals have been released on society due to some legal technicality; freeing many of these outlaws has given them opportunity to commit other heinous outrages.
 - c. This period also gave rise to the rebellion of the "hippy generation." Societal rules encouraging morality [thus opposing sexual immorality, lying, cheating, stealing, etc.] were openly challenged and opposed. Young males have usually and generally been willing to take advantage of females;
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- at this point in time, the females began to be as sexually loose as the males. This condition was greatly promoted by the invention of the birth control pill.
- d. Shortly after this time (in 1973), the Supreme Court manufactured a “right” permitting a pregnant female to abort her unborn child. This gave rise to a huge, money-making abortion industry. Since that dark day, tens of millions of unborn children have been violently and painfully torn from their mothers’ bodies! How can a nation remain good or great which holds such a low view of human life!
3. High courts struck down laws promoting godly behavior. These rulings in turn generate more sin, crime and other activities and dispositions which eat away at the nation’s moral foundation.
 - a. It is now unlawful to teach the Bible or pray in our public schools. Before these absurd rulings were handed down by a misguided supreme court, children across the nation were given instructions on moral issues; now they receive none, unless by their families.
 - b. Obscenity, pornography, and filth is lightly punished, if at all. These things are “protected” by the right of free speech. But that same First Amendment to the Constitution is not allowed for moral people; they are prosecuted and persecuted if they choose not to serve those perverted people who demand that they make a cake, conduct a service, or otherwise violate their consciences to serve the homosexual agenda.
 - c. Abortion has been legalized and is widely practiced. “According to the National Abortion Federation, 11 people have now died in ‘anti-abortion violence’ since 1977. Since 1973’s *Roe v. Wade* decision, nearly 58 million children have lost their lives” (*The Patriot Post*, 11-30-2015).
 - d. Euthanasia is legal in certain foreign countries, and efforts are being made here at home to make this despicable practice a right for virtually anyone. Apparently, it is already being practiced in some nursing homes who give patients medicine to remove their appetite, thus are they starved to death.
 - e. The sanctity of marriage has been undermined for many decades, gaining popularity in Hollywood, and spreading across the country. When divorces became somewhat antagonistic, state lawmakers came up with “no-fault divorce,” where a couple could agree on the divorce, hire a lawyer, and appear before a judge who quickly and easily grants their desire. The effect this has on children can not be measured!
 - f. Fornication is rampant, being popularized and promoted by the entertainment industry. The unwritten law denies anyone who objects to the practice any right to pass judgment! Many couples live together with the benefit of matrimony, producing children who are likely to continue their parents’ agenda. It is common for a woman to be the mother of several children, with several different fathers being involved. How hurtful it is to the children! How destructive this is to the home and nation!
 - g. Homosexuality has been “legalized” by Supreme Court rulings. Those who practice this depraved lifestyle have been given the “right” to marry by the opinion issued by the high court on June 26, 2015.
 - h. Even drugs have been made “legal” in certain states. They have started with marijuana, but as one step inevitably leads to a second and third step, this is only the beginning of the onslaught of stronger drugs, which will rapidly spread to corrupt and destroy untold lives—to say nothing of souls!
 - i. A long time ago, the sale of alcohol was legalized, with disastrous effect on individuals, families, communities, and the nation.
 - j. In many states, gambling has been legalized, with the state raking in the profits. But where this vice is practiced, criminals are quickly drawn. Individuals who lose their money gambling, must obtain means of livelihood elsewhere – through stealing, through selling drugs, or a host of other ways. Many of those who gamble will depend on welfare for sustenance, thus putting an even greater burden on innocent taxpayers. Where criminal activities increase, more policemen must be hired, more courtrooms constructed, more jails and prisons built, more guards hired, more food and medicine bought for the prisoners, more counselors hired to deal with the inmates, more doctors and other medical professionals to aid those incarcerated. The families of the prisoners must be taken care of, thus more taxes on the innocent citizens.
- C. A Nation’s Military Must Have a Sound Foundation.
1. It must be equipped with good equipment, and the soldiers trained in its use. In the first part of the *War for Southern Independence*, the Confederate army was filled with soldiers who knew how to fire
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their weapons accurately, cavalymen who could ride their mounts expertly, and commanders who knew how to lead. Thus the Southern cause enjoyed fine success.

- a. As this war continued, the southern soldiers fought with fewer supplies and equipment, and were severely out-numbered. According to my high school American History teacher, the outcome of the war was decided by the shortage of Men, Money, and Material – the North had an abundance of these.
 - b. There are those who believe that the Confederate Army was likely the best army to ever take the field to do battle. They fought against extreme odds as the federal army continued its invasion of the south, checking and defeating the onslaughts time and again.
2. A military force must have internal cohesion, without which it is ripe for defeat. How can a military unit have this close brotherhood if their ranks consists of regular people, but also of sexual perverts, transgenders, and radical political and religious adherents? The leadership may tend to support the group to which he may belong. The usual result of such disunifying components is that each group separates from the other segments of the unit. Friction is certain to exist. Morale is sure to fall. The American military was able to receive many members of minority racial personnel and still remain strong. During the Vietnam War, the fighting soldiers were bound together very well, it appears, with a strong tie that recognized no differences.
 3. Through our history, American soldiers have generally conducted themselves very well, considering the harsh nature of their work. Union general William Sherman, with his vicious assaults against Southern civilians, during his march through Georgia, South Carolina and North Carolina is a nefarious exception to the conduct of American soldiers in war. Houses were burned, livestock slaughtered, food supplies stolen or destroyed, women and girls raped, valuable books and libraries committed to flames, slaves mistreated and some forced into the Union army – these are a few of the harsh treatments Southern folks were forced to endure due to the cruelty and hatred by the invaders. Even Sherman admitted that many of his soldiers were criminals from the start; that was the kind of men he wanted for his assault against innocent civilians. [I almost felt sorry for Sherman when, as the war neared its end, his masters in Washington viciously turned against him; only General Grant was able to save him].
 4. But the American military has for the most part reflected the values and compassion with which our nation has been widely known. But the condition in American society has changed in the last decade, and not for the better.

D. The Educational System of a Nation or Society Must Have a Sound Foundation.

1. A generation of Japanese children prior to the Second World War, was brought up learning how to fight and kill. They became proficient in war-making. Their leaders foresaw and planned for a great conflict with other nations, as they sought to become a great empire. Their educational system inculcated this whole concept into preparing the nation for war. Their religious and military traditions convinced the majority of the people that to surrender was cowardly, and to show compassion was unseemly. They usually fought to the death and even killed those who tried to give them aid. Among other reasons, the educational system ill-served the Japanese people.
 2. Similar things can be said about the youth growing up under Adolph Hitler's Nazi regime. German fighters were well-trained, well-equipped, well-led, and were dedicated to their war efforts. The German population was heroic in withstanding the horrible bombing of their cities by allied warplanes.
 - a. They had been fed with Nazi propaganda for so long that they believed it, besides being devoted to their fatherland. They nation was largely made up of intelligent, strong, dedicated people who had been deceived by Hitler and his henchmen.
 - b. Another matter that was a contributing factor was their diluted religious notions. Especially during the latter half of the nineteenth century in Germany, theologians thought they knew more than God, who authored the Bible. They began to undermine belief in the Bible, and thus in the Almighty. This cannot be done with impunity; such rebellion and unbelief was certain to be punished somehow.
 3. This line of thought inevitably leads us to consider the educational system that has evolved in America. In the first several generations of American education, children learned to read from the Bible. They received much teaching from its contents. Most of them grew up to be God-fearing and Bible-believing citizens. But with the passing of time and rise of many who knew not God, unholy changes began to be made.
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- a. The Supreme Court decided that prayer did not have a place in the public classrooms. They likewise cast out the Bible. As this scribe grew up, in Grammar School and High School, every day we began our studies with Bible reading and prayer. We also recited the Pledge of Allegiance.
 - b. Through many generation of American history, young people learned morality and ethical conduct in the public classroom. In many cases, this was the only such training a lot of the students ever received. Students today, who do not learn the Bible at home or in religious training, are left without significant moral and ethical instruction.
 - c. But the modernistic religious groups are more apt to teach most anything else but the Bible. And some of the Bible information presented may be contaminated with sectarian doctrine and modernistic unbelief.
 - d. The public school systems generally exclude from their instruction any truth from the Bible. They include much that promotes and supports evolution. An education that does not include information about God and the Bible is an empty education – it does not guide the soul; it does not prepare anyone for eternity.
4. Patriot Post: It's unfortunate that deep ignorance permeates our education system, as demonstrated, for example, in college students' view of slavery, which Professor Duke Pesta lays out in an interview with The College Fix. Pesta, who has taught at numerous schools, conducted an 11-year experiment in which new students at Purdue University, University of Tennessee Martin, Ursinus College, Oklahoma State University, and University of Wisconsin Oshkosh were presented a simple quiz to gauge their level of competency on subjects like slavery. His findings help explain today's ill-informed political revolution among the college-aged.
- a. Pesta says, "Most of my students could not tell me anything meaningful about slavery outside of America. They are convinced that slavery was an American problem that more or less ended with the Civil War, and they are very fuzzy about the history of slavery prior to the Colonial era. Their entire education about slavery was confined to America." Moreover, "They cannot tell you many historical facts or relate anything meaningful about historical biographies, but they are, however, stridently vocal about the corrupt nature of the Republic, about the wickedness of the founding fathers, and about the evils of free markets. Most alarmingly, they know nothing about the fraught history of Marxist ideology and communist governments over the last century, but often reductively define socialism as 'fairness.'"
 - b. Pesta believes it will only grow worse under guys like David Coleman, who was instrumental in the development of Common Core and who now leads the College Board. The problem boils down to the fact that a few (very progressive) executives at the top control the levers. The centralization of education by social activists has transcended individual discernment and critical thinking. The result is a revisionist history that tarnishes truth. And the truth is that America partook of a globally practiced deplorable deed — a deed that it eventually purged. By teaching students otherwise, revisionists are raising slaves of the state.
 - c. Slavery, of course, has existed for most of human history. It still does in much of the world, and it's often based on faith or sex. But it's easier for college brats to meditate on the sins of the past than to tackle the problems of the present. [11-3-2016].
- E. A Nation's Economy Must Have a Sound Foundation.
1. In the past, many would praise the reliability of something by saying, "It's as sound as a dollar!"
 - a. We were on the gold standard in the past—for every dollar in circulation, there was a dollar's worth of gold held in reserve.
 - b. That is not the way it is now. The dollar is only as sound as the government that backs that dollar. If the nation is strong, as America was at the end of World War II, the money is sound. How sound would it be if a corrupted liberal administration was in power? What if the Justice Department colluded with corrupt politicians to determine the outcome of a presidential election?
 - c. Tried and true monetary policies must guide the economy.
 2. If an economy is based on crooked business dealings, with bribery, with collusion between businesses or between businesses and government, if government contracts are given merely because the recipient is a member of a minority – there are countless other shady, unethical, and illegal operations. That economy will surely lead to grief and even disaster.
 3. If the government, a business, or a family does not exercise due caution in handling their money, trouble is certain to come. None can live on his ability to borrow more and more. "If your out-go is greater than your in-come, then your up-keep will be your down-fall." This old and perhaps trite adage
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is nevertheless a piece of sound wisdom.

F. The Family Must Have a Sound Foundation.

1. God established the ideal family arrangement: one father, one mother, children.
 - a. The father is given the heavy responsibility to care for his family in every matter; he has the ultimate authority and responsibility.
 - b. The wife (mother) is given great responsibility: caring for the children, keeping the house, tending to the things that fall to her.
 - c. The children are to love, respect and obey the father and mother.
2. If God's arrangement for the family is followed, the family group will be united, productive, and happy.
 - a. Genesis 2:23-24: "And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh."
 - b. Matthew 19:3-6: "The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."
 - c. Ephesians 5:22-33: "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband."
3. The home in modern America is having troubles.
 - a. Many couples are living together without marriage; they bring children into a world of curious circumstances. Maybe the couple split up and go their separate ways; the siblings may also be split between the parents; or the one having control of the children may take up with another mate.
 - b. There are cases where the mother has given birth to several children, who do not have the same father. The fathers do not live with the mother; their last names may all be different. How confusing!
 - c. In many cases, there is no father in the home. Proper guidance is not given to the children. The kids in effect raise themselves.
 - d. A large number of marriages are destroyed by divorce. The divorce may be scriptural (Matt. 19:9). It might be for some frivolous cause. It might be caused by immaturity on the part of one or both. Perhaps it is caused by violence on the part of one.

G. The Lord's Church Must Maintain its Sound Foundation.

1. The church's one foundation is Jesus Christ.
 - a. Ephesians 2:19-22: "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit."
 - b. 1 Corinthians 3:10-17: "According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be
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revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire. Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are."

c. Matthew 16:16-18: "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 also 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."

2. That foundation includes its identity.
3. That foundation includes its organization.
4. That foundation includes the plan of salvation it teaches.
5. That foundation includes the worship it offers.
6. That foundation includes the work it does.

H. Our Belief in Eternal Beings and Things Must Be on a Sound Foundation.

1. We believe in the Godhead.
 - a. God the Father.
 - b. Christ the Son of God.
 - c. The Holy Spirit.
2. We believe in the place of reward – Heaven.
3. We believe in the place of punishment – Hell.
4. We believe in the intermediate state of the dead – Hades.
5. We believe in the Second Coming of Christ.
6. We believe in the resurrection of the dead.
7. We believe in the Judgment of the Last Day.
8. We believe in eternal destiny.

III. CONCLUSION.

A. 2 Timothy 2:19-21:

1. Verse 19: "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity."
 - a. Despite the defection of men and women from the faith, even though some of them will take away many disciples with them, God's truth will continue to stand firm. The gospel cannot be destroyed; the kingdom of God will never end.
 - 1) Daniel 2:44: "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever."
 - 2) Matthew 24:35: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away."
 - 3) Hebrews 12:28-29: "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: For our God is a consuming fire."
 - 4) 1 Peter 1:24-25: "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: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you."
 - 5) Jeremiah 23:29: "Is not my word like as a fire? saith the LORD; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?"
 - b. The kingdom of God is the church of Christ. Christ is the foundation (as well as the founder) of the church. The church is the pillar and ground of the truth (1 Tim. 3:15). The word of God is the seed of the kingdom (Luke 8:11), so as long as the word of God remains, the kingdom (the church) can be produced.
 - 1) Matthew 16:18: "And I say also 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."
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 3:11: "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."
 - 3) Ephesians 2:20-22: "And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together

- groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit."
- 4) Isaiah 28:16: "Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner *stone*, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste."
 - c. "Great and good men may turn from the truth, may make shipwreck of their own souls and may lead others down to ruin, yet the foundation of God remains steadfast and sure. God's faithfulness to himself, to his promises, to them that trust him as the foundation of all hope of good here and hereafter stands sure and the seal is given" (Lipscomb, p.220). The seal has two inscriptions:
 - 1) "The Lord knoweth them that are his."
 - 2) "Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity."
 - d. The Lord knows those who belong to him. With all the division and conflicting doctrines which abound in the world, some are confused about what is truth and who are the true people of God. Since the word of God abides forever, and is the means by which we are reconciled unto God, we can identify God's children. The point here, however, is that God knows his own! Though there are many who assert their loyalty to the Lord, yet they are his only if he accepts them as such.
 - e. It is a great comfort for the faithful to know that the Lord knows them as his own. Despite the great numbers of those who pay mere lipservice to God, he knows his own, and rejects all the pretenders. He does not lose sight of his own.
 - 1) Romans 8:14-16: "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God."
 - 2) John 10:27-28: "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 *man* pluck them out of my hand."
 - f. Those who "nameth the name of Christ" are obligated to depart from iniquity. A Christian is one who follows Christ; since Christ will not lead anyone into a life or even an instance of sin, one who has committed himself to be the Lord's, will not willfully participate in sinful conduct. Although some may be drawn away from the Lord by false teachers, God's people will keep themselves apart from evil—*moral* or *doctrinal*.
 - g. The true people of God are identifiable by the two inscriptions.
 - 1) The Lord knows who they are; his standard of identifying them is the gospel; if one has obeyed the gospel, both he and the Lord, and others who know the gospel and the saint, will know he is a child of God.
 - 2) The one who is a child of God will be separated from iniquity; he will not live a life of lawlessness; he may stumble into sin occasionally, but when he sees his error, he repents of it, confesses it to the Lord in prayer, and asks for pardon.
 - a) Acts 8:22: "Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee."
 - b) James 5:16: "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."
 - c) 1 John 1:7-10: "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."
2. Verses 20-21: "But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour. If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, *and* prepared unto every good work."
 - a. In the same house both good and bad items are found; there are vessels of gold and silver; there are vessels of wood and earth. Some are valuable; others have little or no value; some bring honor to the owner, and some bring dishonor to him. Cheap, ill-made items would bring shame to the owner of a mansion; but items of gold and silver would bring honor to him.
 - b. "A vessel once made by the artificer cannot change itself. It cannot become any other material than
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- of that of which it was originally made. But Paul here represents vessels as changing themselves. This is absolutely incompatible with the idea that God has made a certain number of persons to be saved and a certain number to be lost. It is, on the contrary, the most surprising assertion of the freedom of the human will in Scripture: for a man is not only supposed to be able, but is responsible for changing himself from that which is typified by an earthen vessel into that which is typified by a golden one. Hymenaeus and Philetus had fallen from being golden vessels into earthen ones, but if they repented they might become gold or silver ones; that is, if they purged themselves from the error in question and abstained from them who held it. By the fact that a man has once fallen into this pernicious error, he is not condemned forever, but by cleansing himself and becoming sanctified meet for the Master's use 'prepared unto every good work'" (Lipscomb, pp.221f).
- c. In a given congregation, there are those who are faithful and those who are not faithful; there are some, therefore, who are honest and sincere, and others who are mere pretenders. These are all in the same "house." Our finite knowledge and wisdom may keep us from identifying the latter kind. But most of the false teachers (and other sinful members) may be easily identified, and purged from the body of Christ by way of discipline. The others will be identified by the Lord in the Judgment.
- 1) 1 Corinthians 3:12-15: "Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire."
 - 2) Matthew 13:47-50: "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: Which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away. So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, And shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth."
 - 3) 1 Timothy 5:24-25: "Some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some men they follow after. Likewise also the good works of some are manifest beforehand; and they that are otherwise cannot be hid."
- d. The faithful must purge themselves from these untrue Christians, whose sins are identifiable, or else be contaminated by their error. The method of purging is that of discipline, taught elsewhere in the New Testament.
- 1) Matthew 18:15-17: "Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear *thee*, *then* take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell *it* unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican."
 - 2) 2 Thessalonians 3:6: "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us."
 - 3) 2 Thessalonians 3:14-15: "And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet count *him* not as an enemy, but admonish *him* as a brother."
 - 4) 1 Corinthians 5:1-8: "It is reported commonly *that there is* fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife. And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you. For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, *concerning* him that hath so done this deed, In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. Your glorying *is* not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed
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for us: Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened *bread* of sincerity and truth."

- e. A lesson that can be drawn from this passage is learned by applying the principles involved to one's own self. Each Christian has strong and weak points. He must work to eliminate the weaknesses that can lead him into temptation and sin. If he makes no genuine effort to that end, he will sooner or later fall victim to his own spiritual deficiencies.
 - f. If a teacher of error (such as Hymenaeus or Philetus), or any other sinful member, would purge himself of his doctrinal errors or other sins, he could become again a vessel of honor; he could become set apart (sanctified), be useful to the Master again, and be prepared to accomplish every good work.
3. "If liberty is worth keeping and free representative government worth saving, we must stand for all American fundamentals — not some, but all. All are woven into the great fabric of our national well-being. We cannot hold fast to some only, and abandon others that, for the moment, we find inconvenient. If one American fundamental is prostrated, others in the end will surely fall." —Albert J. Beveridge (1862-1927)

B. If the Foundations Are Destroyed, What Can the Righteous Do?

1. The Righteous can maintain their trust in God.
 - a. Psalms 11:1: "In the LORD put I my trust...."
 - b. Proverbs 3:5-7: "Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil."
 - 1) The admonition is to place our full trust in the Lord. Trusting the Lord only when we have the means in our hands to deliver ourselves is not trust. But when we must depend absolutely upon him to work out a solution to our problem, without our being able to see how it could be so, is trusting the Lord with all our heart. The main emphasis here is that we are not to live by our own understanding, but rather we are to trust the Lord.
 - a) Jeremiah 10:23: "O LORD, I know that the way of man *is* not in himself: *it is* not in man that walketh to direct his steps."
 - b) 2 Corinthians 5:7: "For we walk by faith, not by sight."
 - 2) God will direct our paths if we acknowledge him in all our ways. All the decisions and actions we take are to be made with the Lord's will in mind as the guiding light. "Let the will be kept in a quiet, subdued, cheerful readiness, to move, stay, retreat, turn to the right hand or to the left, at the Lord's bidding; always remembering that is best which is least our own doing, and that a pliable spirit ever secures the needful guidance" (Bridges, p.25). Abraham acknowledged God as he lived and grew by faith. Where he pitched his tent, he usually built an altar, also.
 - c. Romans 4:16-21: "Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all, (As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were. Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations; according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be. And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sara's womb: He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform."
2. Live in sincere and full obedience to God's will.
 - a. Worship sincerely.
 - b. Serve God faithfully.
 - c. Be helpful to others.
 - d. Be spiritually-minded.
 - e. Defend the truth.
 - f. Teach others the Bible.

WE ARE THE SHEEP OF HIS FOLD

I. INTRODUCTION.

A. The Following Story Comes From a Writer Unknown to Me:

1. "A gentleman traveling in Syria, relates how he stopped to watch three shepherds who were at a well watering their flocks. The three flocks were all mingled together at the watering place. The traveler could see no difference between them, and he wondered how they would get them separated again without great trouble.
2. But presently one of the shepherds stood forth and called out, "*Menah*," the Arabic for "*Follow me*." Thirty sheep immediately separated themselves from the indiscriminate mass and began to follow the shepherd up the hill.
3. A second shepherd called out, "*Menah*," and a second flock separated and followed him, while the rest of the sheep remained as unconcerned as if no one had spoken at all.
4. The traveler was so astonished that as he saw the third shepherd preparing to depart, laying his hand to his crook and beginning to gather a few dates fallen from a palm beneath which he had been resting, he stepped up to him and asked: "*Would your sheep follow me if I called them?*" The man shook his head. "*Give me your shepherd's cloak and crook and let me try.*" the traveler said. He even wound the shepherds turban round his head and standing forth began to cry, "*Menah, Menah!*" but no sheep stirred. They only blinked at him lazily in the sunshine.
5. "Do they never follow any one but you?" asked the traveler. "*Only when a sheep is sick; then the silly creature follows any one,*" the shepherd said. [This excellent illustration came through Glann Lee, an excellent gospel preacher and long-time friend].

B. God's People Are Frequently Described in the Bible as Sheep With the Lord Depicted as the Shepherd.

1. Some might think it insulting to be referred to as a sheep.
 - a. Sheep are not known for their courage.
 - b. Sheep are not thought of as being very intelligent—they cannot foresee danger.
 - c. Sheep are known to stray and get lost—they need guidance and supervision.
 - d. Sheep are not able to defend themselves very well—they need the shepherd's help.
 - e. Sheep are not known for their stamina in running long distances.
 - f. Sheep can get mighty dirty and may smell very bad—can you imagine a sheep wallowing in mud!
2. But sheep have well-known, pleasing characteristics.
 - a. They are gentle.
 - b. We think of them as being meek.
 - c. They are not mean and aggressive [some buck sheep have been made mean by young boys].
 - d. They follow their shepherd's voice—they trust him for protection and provisions.
 - e. They are usually harmless.
3. The traditional way of tending sheep required the services of a shepherd; without sheep, a shepherd cannot be a shepherd—the flock and the shepherd go together.
 - a. Christians are spoken of in the Bible as sheep.
 - 1) Psalms 95:7: "For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand."
 - 2) Psalms 100:3: "Know ye that the LORD he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture."
 - b. Christ is set forth as being our Good Shepherd.
 - 1) John 10:11: "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep."
 - 2) 1 Peter 2:25 For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls."

II. SHEEP IN THE BIBLE.

A. Tending to Sheep in Bible Times.

1. The sheepfold was a place of protection for the sheep at night and perhaps in times of danger.
 - a. "At night the sheep are driven into a sheepfold if they are in a district where there is danger from robbers or wild beasts. These folds are simple walled enclosures (Num 32:16; Judg 5:16; 2 Chron 32:28; Ps 78:70; Zeph 2:6; John 10:1). On the top of the wall is heaped thorny brushwood as a further safeguard. Sometimes there is a covered hut in the corner for the shepherd. Where there is no danger the sheep huddle together in the open until daylight, while the shepherd watches over them (Gen 31:39; Luke 2:8). In the winter time caves are sought after (1 Sam 24:3; Zeph 2:6). The antiquity of the use of some of the caves for this purpose is indicated by the thick deposit of

- potassium nitrate formed from the decomposition of the sheep dung” [ISBE, Biblesoft].
- b. Sometimes thieves would try to climb over the rock wall to steal sheep, a practice to which our Lord made reference in John 10:1: “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.”
2. Sheep were an important feature of the Hebrews and others of that ancient time.
 - a. The first mention of sheep is found in Genesis 4:2: “And she again bare his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground.”
 - b. Sheep were used in religious sacrifices from the early periods of human history.
 - 1) Genesis 4:4 And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering.”
 - 2) Exodus 20:24: “An altar of earth thou shalt make unto me, and shalt sacrifice thereon thy burnt offerings, and thy peace offerings, thy sheep, and thine oxen: in all places where I record my name I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee.”
 - 3) Exodus 29:28: “And it shall be Aaron's and his sons' by a statute for ever from the children of Israel: for it is an heave offering: and it shall be an heave offering from the children of Israel of the sacrifice of their peace offerings, even their heave offering unto the LORD.”
 - 4) Leviticus 9:3: “And unto the children of Israel thou shalt speak, saying, Take ye a kid of the goats for a sin offering; and a calf and a lamb, both of the first year, without blemish, for a burnt offering.”
 - 5) Leviticus 12:6: “And when the days of her purifying are fulfilled, for a son, or for a daughter, she shall bring a lamb of the first year for a burnt offering, and a young pigeon, or a turtledove, for a sin offering, unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, unto the priest.”
 - c. Sheep was a prominent source of food: “Then Abigail made haste, and took two hundred loaves, and two bottles of wine, and five sheep ready dressed, and five measures of parched corn, and an hundred clusters of raisins, and two hundred cakes of figs, and laid them on asses” (1 Sam. 25:18).
 - d. Wool was used for clothing and was used in the covering for the tabernacle (Lev 13:47; Ex. 25:5).
 - e. Sheep-shearing is referred to in Genesis 31:19: “And Laban went to shear his sheep: and Rachel had stolen the images that were her father's.”
 - f. Sheepdogs were used in ancient times to help tend flocks: “But now they that are younger than I have me in derision, whose fathers I would have disdained to have set with the dogs of my flock” (Job 30:1).
 - g. We have this from *Smith's Bible Dictionary*: Shepherds in Palestine and the East generally go before their flocks, which they induce to follow by calling to them, comp. John 10:4; Ps 77:20; 80:1, though they also drive them. Gen 33:13. The following quotation from Hartley's "Researches in Greece and the Levant," p. 321, is strikingly illustrative of the allusions in John 10:1-16, "Having had my attention directed last night to the words in John 10:3. I asked my man if it was usual in Greece to give names to the sheep. He informed me that it was, and that the sheep obeyed the shepherd when he called them by their names. This morning I had an opportunity of verifying the truth of this remark. Passing by a flock of sheep I asked the shepherd the same question which I had put to the servant, and he gave me the same answer. I then had him call one of his sheep. He did so, and it instantly left its pasturage and its companions and ran up to the hands of the shepherd with signs of pleasure and with a prompt obedience which I had never before observed in any other animal. It is also true in this country that a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him. The shepherd told me that many of his sheep were still wild, that they had not yet learned their names, but that by teaching them they would all learn them."
3. Great men of the Old Testament were shepherds:
 - a. Abraham: “And Lot also, which went with Abram, had flocks, and herds, and tents. And the land was not able to bear them, that they might dwell together: for their substance was great, so that they could not dwell together. And there was a strife between the herdmen of Abram's cattle and the herdmen of Lot's cattle: and the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelled then in the land” (Gen. 13:5-7).
 - b. Isaac and Jacob and Jacob's twelve sons: “And Pharaoh said unto his brethren, What is your occupation? And they said unto Pharaoh, Thy servants are shepherds, both we, and also our fathers” (Gen. 47:3).
 - c. Moses—“Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father in law, the priest of Midian: and he led the flock to the backside of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb” (Ex. 3:1).
 - d. David—1 Samuel 16:11.
 - e. The prophet Amos: “The words of Amos, who was among the herdmen of Tekoa, which he saw
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concerning Israel in the days of Uzziah king of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash king of Israel, two years before the earthquake” (Amos 1:1).

4. Christ is pictured in the New Testament as the Good Shepherd and his followers as his sheep.
 - a. John 10:11: “I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.”
 - b. John 10:27-29: “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 man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.”

III. THE PARABLE [ALLEGORY] OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD—JOHN 10.

A. John 10:1-5:

1. Verses 1-5: “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers.”
2. The ancient sheepfolds were open enclosures, consisting of rock walls with a door or gate through which the sheep and the shepherd could enter. As we have seen, the top of the walls were often covered with briars to discourage the entrance of wild animals or thieves.
3. The porter was the gate keeper who watched the sheep at night; the shepherd returned the next morning to take the flock to pasture and water. If anyone tried to enter the sheepfold by climbing over the wall, his intentions were evil—to steal or kill.
 - a. There was only one proper way to enter—through the door. The nature of one who tried to climb in over the wall would be obvious—he had evil intentions.
 - b. The shepherd was known by the porter and would be allowed to enter; the sheep knew the shepherd and would happily follow him. The sheep will not follow a stranger. “Dr. Thomason, in his great work, *The Land and the Book*, gives this vivid description of the matter from his own observations in the Holy Land: ‘They are so tame and so trained that they follow their keeper with the utmost docility. He leads them forth from the fold, or from their houses in the villages just where he pleases. As there are many flocks in such a place as this, each one takes a different path, and it is his business to find pasture for them. It is necessary, therefore, that they should be taught to follow, and not to stray away into the unfenced fields of corn which lie so temptingly on either side. Any one that thus wanders is sure to get into trouble. The shepherd calls sharply from time to time to remind them of his presence. They know his voice and follow on; but if a stranger calls, they stop short, lift up their heads in alarm, and, if it is repeated, they turn and flee, because they know not the voice of a stranger. This is not the fanciful costume of a parable; it is simple fact. I have made the experiment repeatedly’” [Guy N. Woods, *Gospel Advocate Commentaries*].
 - c. The nature of a false teacher may be seen by his message; is it the true message of God’s word or is it a message of error? “Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them” (Matt. 7:15-20). The fruit of a false teacher is his message.
4. The point of the story was to expose false teachers. The Pharisees and others false teachers had taken over God’s sheep (the Jewish people), leading them away from God’s truth (the Mosaic Law). Our Lord came to seek and save those who were lost (Luke 19:10). The religious false teachers hated and opposed him. False teachers of our day have led countless millions away from the truth, and hate and oppose us for teaching the truth. “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).

B. John 10:6-10:

1. “This parable spake Jesus unto them: but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them. Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. 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. I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the

sheep. But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep.”

2. Those who came before our Lord arrived, claiming to be the true shepherd, were thieves and robbers. Here we understand him to especially have in mind the Pharisees and other false teachers of the time. From the time of Malachi to John the Baptizer there were many false prophets. All of these had contributed to the nation’s apostasy. But our Lord speaks of some of the sheep who did not let themselves be led astray by the false teachers. These were relatively few in number.
3. The thieves and robbers came to steal and kill, but the Good Shepherd came that the sheep might have the more abundant life. Brother Woods offers this: “The word ‘abundantly,’ means bountiful blessings overflowing in extent—the rich supply only deity can give. (Psalm 33:1ff.) The Greek term used suggests the idea of a continuous overflowing—a never-ceasing supply of life for every faithful soul. All of this the thief would take away. We must not lose sight of the fact that the ‘thief’ in this narrative is the person who teaches that the way of salvation is some other than that Jesus gave. These specifically described here were selfishly motivated but the ones who are misled are lost whatever the motivation may be. The sheep which follow a stranger’s voice are destroyed though themselves unaware of the motives of the false shepherd; their honesty and sincerity will be of no avail to them at the last great day” [Gospel Advocate Commentaries].

C. John 10:11-15:

1. “I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep. I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep.”
2. The dedicated shepherd would be willing to risk his life for the sheep. The mere hireling would flee when the wolves attacked—he was more interested in his own safety than in the welfare of the sheep. Our Lord is not like the hireling, but is aptly depicted as the Good Shepherd. He gave his life on the cross for the salvation of all who will believe and obey his will. He will protect them in this life, in keeping with the Father’s will, and will bring them into eternal salvation in the next world.
 - a. Matthew 20:28: “Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.”
 - b. 1 John 3:16: “Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.”
 - c. Hebrews 13:5-6: “Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.”

D. John 10:26-29:

1. “But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. 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 man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand.”
2. Because these people our Lord is addressing did not believe in him, they were not his sheep. The Lord’s sheep gladly hear the voice of the Good Shepherd. These unbelievers refused to believe in him thus would not follow. These had been deceived by false teachers. “But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them” (2 Cor. 4:3-4).
3. The sheep that belong to the Lord:
 - a. Will hear his voice.
 - b. He knows them.
 - c. They follow him.
 - d. He will give them eternal life.
 - e. They shall never perish.
 - f. No one shall snatch them out of his hand.
4. The blessings [eternal life, never perish, not be taken from God’s hand] are conditional. The sheep hear the voice of the Lord and follow him. If they cease to listen to Christ or quit following him, they forfeit the blessings. We must continue to hear and follow.

E. John 10:16.

1. “And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.”
2. The Lord addressed these remarks to Jewish people. The “other sheep” obviously would be someone other than Jewish—the only alternative would be Gentiles.
3. God had always intended to make Gentiles who would obey his will to be part of his great plan.
 - a. Genesis 12:1-3: “Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.”
 - b. 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.”
 - c. Acts 2:39: “For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.”
 - d. Mark 16:15-16: “And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”
 - e. Luke 24:47-49: “And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.”
 - f. Acts 11:19-26: “Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only. And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord. Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch. Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord. For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord. Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul: And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.”
 - g. Ephesians 2:11-16: “Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby.”
 - h. Romans 1:16-17: “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.”
 - i. Acts 10:34-35: “Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.”
4. Despite the fact that the obedient Gentiles would be brought in, there still would be only one Shepherd and only one fold.
 - a. The Lord has only one kingdom.
 - 1) Daniel 2:44: “And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.”
 - 2) Hebrews 12:28: “Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have

- grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.”
- b. The Lord has only one body—“There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling” (Eph. 4:4).
 - c. The Lord has only one temple.
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 3:16-17: “Know ye not that ye are **the** temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile **the** temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.”
 - 2) Ephesians 2:16-22: “And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.”
 - d. The Lord has only one church—“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 also 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” (Matt. 16:16-19).

IV. PROFITABLE APPLICATIONS.

A. Listen to the Shepherd’s voice.

1. The shepherd knows his sheep: "To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice; and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.....I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own....And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd" (John 10:3,14,16).
2. Shepherd’s sheep know the *voice* of the shepherd.
 - a. John 10:27: “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.”
 - b. John 8:31: “Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed.”
 - c. John 12:48-49: “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. For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak.”
 - d. 1 Thessalonians 5:21: “Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.”

B. Follow the Shepherd Wherever He May Lead.

1. Shepherd’s sheep follow only him.
 - a. John 10:4: “And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice.”
 - b. Psalms 23:1-2: “The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.”
2. More is involved than just hearing.
 - a. Luke 6:46: “And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?”
 - b. Mark 4:14-20: “The sower soweth the word. And these are they by the way side, where the word is sown; but when they have heard, Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts. And these are they likewise which are sown on stony ground; who, when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with gladness; And have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time: afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are offended. And these are they which are sown among thorns; such as hear the word, And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful. And these are they which are sown on good ground; such as hear the word, and receive it, and bring forth fruit, some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some an hundred.”
3. Some fail to follow him.
 - a. John 6:66-69: “From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord,

to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.”

- b. John 12:42-43: “Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.”
4. Refuse to Follow the Stranger’s Voice.
 - a. John 10:5: “And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers.”
 - b. John 10:8: “All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them.”

C. Always Remember That Great Blessings Come By Following the Good Shepherd.

1. The Good shepherd gives complete safety and contentment.
 - a. John 10:9-10: “ I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. 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.”
 - b. Psalms 23:4-6: “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.”
2. The Good Shepherd gives peace.
 - a. John 14:27: “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”
 - b. 1 Peter 1:3-4: “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you.”

V. CONCLUSION.

A. The Voice You Follow Determines Whose Sheep You Are.

1. Whose *voice* are you following?
2. Are you listening to Jesus?
 - a. Matthew 11:28-30: “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”
 - b. Revelation 3:20-22: “Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.”
3. Hear what Jesus says about...
 - a. Faith: “I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins” (John 8:24).
 - b. Repentance: “I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish” (Luke 13:3).
 - c. Confession: “Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven” (Matt. 10:32).
 - d. Baptism: “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mark 16:16).
 - e. Being faithful: “And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved” (Matt. 10:22).

B. The Shepherd Psalm:

1. Psalms 23:1-6: “The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.”
2. The Basque Shepherder and the Shepherd Psalm [Condensed from The National Wool Grower - James K. Wallace, Reader’s Digest, March 1958].

- a. Old Ferando D'Alfonso is a Basque herder employed by one of the big Nevada sheep outfits. He is rated as one of the best sheep rangers in the state, and he should be; for back of him are at least 20 generations of Iberian shepherds. But D'Alfonso is more than a sheepherder; he is a patriarch of his guild, the traditions and secrets of which have been handed down from generation to generation, just as were those of the Damascus steel temperers and other trade guilds of the pre-medieval age. Despite a 30 year absence from his homeland he is still full of the religious fervor of his native hills.
 - b. I sat with him one night under the clear, starry skies, his sheep bedded down beside a pool of sparkling water. As we were preparing to curl up in our blankets, he suddenly began a dissertation in a jargon of Greek and Basque. When he had finished, I asked him what he had said. In reply he began to quote in English the Twenty-third Psalm. There on the desert I learned the shepherd's literal interpretation of this beautiful poem.
 - c. "David and his ancestors," said D'Alfonso, "knew sheep and their ways, and David has translated a sheep's musing into simple words. The daily repetition of this Psalm fills the sheepherder with reverence for his calling. Our guild takes this poem as a loadstone to guide us. It is our bulwark when the days are hot or stormy; when the nights are dark; when wild animals surround our bands. Many of its lines are the statements of the simple requirements and actual duties of a Holy Land shepherd, whether he lives today or followed the same calling 6000 years ago. Phrase by phrase, it has a well-understood meaning for us."
 - d. *The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.* "Sheep instinctively know," said D'Alfonso, "that ere they have been folded for the night the shepherd has planned out their grazing for the morrow. It may be that he will take them back over the same range; it may be that he will go to a new grazing ground. They do not worry. His guidance has been good in the past and they have faith in the future because they know he has their well-being in view."
 - e. *He maketh me to lie down in green pasture.* "Sheep graze from around 3:30 o'clock in the morning until about ten. They then lie down for three or four hours and rest," said D'Alfonso. "When they are contentedly chewing their cuds, the shepherd knows they are putting on fat. Consequently the good shepherd starts his flocks out in the early hours on the rougher herbage, moving on through the morning to the richer, sweeter grasses, and finally coming with the band to a shady place for its forenoon rest in fine green pastures, best grazing of the day. Sheep, while resting in such happy surroundings, feel contentment."
 - f. *He leadeth me beside still waters.* "Every shepherd knows," said the Basque, "that sheep will not drink gurgling water. There are many small springs high in the hills of the Holy Land, whose waters run down the valleys only to evaporate in the desert sun. Although the sheep need the water, they will not drink from these fast-flowing streams. The shepherd must find a place where rocks or erosion have made a little pool, or else he fashions with his hands a pocket sufficient to hold at least a bucketful."
 - g. He restoreth my soul; He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His Names' sake. "Holy Land sheep exceed in herding instinct the Spanish Merino or the French Rambouillet," went on D'Alfonso. "Each takes his place in the grazing line in the morning and keeps the same position throughout the day. Once, however, during the day each sheep leaves its place and goes to the shepherd. Whereupon the shepherd stretches out his hand, as the sheep approaches with expectant eyes and mild little baas. The shepherd rubs its nose and ears, scratches its chin, whispers affectionately into its ears. The sheep, meanwhile rubs against his leg or, if the shepherd is sitting down, nibbles at his ear, and rubs its check against his face. After a few minutes of this communion with the master, the sheep return to its place in the feeding line."
 - h. *Yea, though I walk through the Valley of the Shadow of Death, I will fear no evil. Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me.* "There is an actual Valley of the Shadow of Death in Palestine, and every sheepherder from Spain to Dalmatia know of it. It is south of the Jericho Road leading from Jerusalem to the Dead Sea and is a narrow defile through a mountain range. Climatic and grazing conditions make it necessary for the sheep to be moved through this valley for seasonal feeding each year.
 - 1) "The valley is four and a half miles long. Its side walls are over 1500 feet high in places and it is only ten or 12 feet wide at the bottom. Travel through the valley is dangerous, because its floor, badly eroded by cloudbursts, has gullies seven or eight feet deep. Actual footing on solid rock is so narrow in many places that a sheep cannot turn around, and it is an unwritten law of shepherds that flocks must go up the valley in the morning hours and down toward the eventide, lest the flocks meet in the defile. Mules have not been able to make the trip for
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centuries, but sheep and goat herders from earliest Old Testament days have maintained a passage for their stock.

- 2) “About halfway through the valley the walk crosses from one side to the other at a place where the path is cut in two by an eight-foot gully. One section of the path is about 18 inches higher than the other; the sheep must jump across it. The shepherd stands at this break and coaxes or forces the sheep to make the leap. If a sheep slips and lands in the gully, the shepherd’s rod is brought into play. The old-style crook is encircled around a large sheep’s neck or a small sheep’s chest, and it is lifted to safety. If a more modern narrow crook is used, the sheep is caught about the hoofs and lifted up to the walk.
 - 3) “Many wild dogs lurk in the shadows of the valley looking for prey. After a band of sheep has entered the defile, the leader may come upon such a dog. Unable to retreat, the leader baas a warning. The shepherd, skilled in throwing his staff, hurls it at the dog and knocks the animal into the washed-out gully where it is easily killed. Thus the sheep have learned to fear no evil even in the Valley of the Shadow of Death, for their master is there to aid them and protect them from harm.”
- i. *Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies.* “David’s meaning is a simple one,” said D’Alfonso, “when conditions on the Holy Land sheep ranges are known. Poisonous plants abound which are fatal to grazing animals. Each spring the shepherd must be constantly alert. When he finds the plants he takes his mattock and goes on ahead of the flock, grubbing out every stock and root he can see. As he digs out the stocks, he lays them upon little stone pyres, some which were built by shepherds in Old Testament days, and by the morrow they are dry enough to burn. In the meantime, the sheep are led into the newly prepared pasture, which is now free from poisonous plants, and, in the presence of their deadly plant enemies, they eat in peace.”
 - j. *Thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.* “At every sheepfold there is a big earthen bowl of olive oil and a large stone jar of water. As the sheep come in for the night they are led to a gate. The shepherd lays his rod across the top of the gateway just higher than the backs of his sheep. As each sheep passes in single file, he quickly examines it for briars in the ears, snags in the cheek, or weeping of the eyes from dust or scratches. When such conditions are found, he drops the rod across the sheep’s back and it steps out of line.
 - 1) “Each sheep’s wounds are carefully cleaned. Then the shepherd dips his hand into the olive oil and anoints the injury. A large cup is dipped into the jar of water, kept cool by evaporation in the unglazed pottery, and is brought out — never half full but always overflowing. The sheep will sink its nose into the water clear to the eyes, if fevered, and drink until fully refreshed.
 - 2) “When all the sheep are at rest, the shepherd lays his staff on the ground within reach in case it is needed for protection of the flock during the night, wraps himself in his heavy woolen robe and lies down across the gateway, facing the sheep, for his nights’s repose.
 - k. “So,” concluded D’Alfonso, “after all the care and protection the shepherd has given it, a sheep may well soliloquize in the twilight, as translated into words by David: *Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.*”
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If the Foundations Are Destroyed, What Shall The Righteous Do?

I. The Foundation Is Extremely Important to Many Things in this World.

A. Having a Good Foundation is Essential in the World of Nature.

1. Trees must have a strong root system to withstand the ravages of nature.
 - a. Palm trees do not have long roots, but are supported by a ball of roots. They are able to bend with the winds of a hurricane, which enables their root system to support the tree.
 - b. Other trees have long tap roots, growing deep into the earth, with many other roots extending horizontally; this root system can give even a huge tree the foundation to remain standing for hundreds of years.
2. Great mountains extend from the depths of the earth, stretching out for many miles horizontally, with peaks standing twenty or more thousands of feet into the sky. The Cumberland Mountains have remained mostly unchanged for the thousands of years of their existence.

B. Having a Good Foundation is Essential in the World of Construction.

1. I heard Frank Lloyd Wright, perhaps the most famous architect in the twentieth century, describe how he could construct a skyscraper one mile tall. He illustrated that one could thrust a long spear (or sword) into the earth and it would remain erect. The important part was to have the item far enough into the earth to give the necessary support. With a great building, one would need to begin its foundation sufficiently deep into the earth to provide the foundational support to keep the edifice from falling over.
2. A dam must have a good foundation before it can hold back the extreme weight of the great mass of water pressing against it. If a crack should appear in the structure, the dam will be pushed apart and a major disaster results.
3. The Tower of Pisa was intended to be a beautiful structure, but its foundation was faulty; it began to lean. In recent years it has been shored-up so that it may not lean any further.

C. Having a Good Foundation is Essential in Other Areas.

1. Nation.
2. Economy.
3. Morality.
4. Military.
5. Lord's Church.
6. Belief in Eternal Beings and Things.
7. Family.
8. Education.

II. If the Foundations Be Destroyed, What Shall the Righteous Do?

A. Psalm 11:1-3:

1. Psalms 11:1-3: "In the LORD put I my trust: how say ye to my soul, Flee as a bird to your mountain? For, lo, the wicked bend their bow, they make ready their arrow upon the string, that they may privily shoot at the upright in heart. If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?"
 2. David fully understood that the only refuge was with Almighty God.
 - a. Psalms 46:1-3: "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof."
 - b. Deuteronomy 33:27: "The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall say, Destroy them."
 3. David's life was filled with struggles and dangers. He had to fight a lion and a bear to defend his father's sheep. He faced Goliath of whom the whole army of Israel was terrified. Much of his time on Israel's throne was spend fighting enemies within and without, including a rebellion that was led by his own son. The case involved in Psalm 11:1-3 doubtless grows out of King Saul's relentless efforts to destroy David, to keep that young man from taking his place as Israel's king.
 4. In verse one, David strongly proclaims that he has placed his trust in Jehovah. He understood that without God's aid, he would be unable to preserve himself against Saul's evil designs against him. David would do all within his power and wisdom to do, but he trusted God to do his part in his deliverance.
 - a. But in view of the obvious truth that David fully trusted in Israel's God, why is it (he asks) that his friends and advisors say to him that he must flee as a bird to his mountain? People of that time would catch birds by various snares and nets; to avoid being caught, the birds would seek safety in the mountains, where the hunter could not easily follow.
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- b. These erstwhile friends also warned David that his enemies had already drawn their bows and fitted their arrows to the strings, in preparation of firing these deadly missiles at him. Warriors of that time and all through the centuries were adept with the bow. The English longbow of middle ages was one of the most fearsome weapons then in use.
 - c. "Even when they have other things to stay themselves upon, yet they do not, they dare not, stay upon them, but on God only. Gold is not their hope, nor are horses and chariots their confidence, but God only; and therefore, when second causes frown, yet their hopes do not fail them, because the first cause is still the same, is ever so. The psalmist, before he gives an account of the temptation he was in to distrust God, records his resolution to trust in him, as that which he was resolved to live and die by" (Matthew Henry).
5. Foundations – the Hebrew term is found only here and in Isaiah 19:10.
 - a. Psalms 11:3: "If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?"
 - b. Isaiah 19:10: "And the pillars of Egypt shall be broken in pieces; all they that work for hire shall be grieved in soul" (ASV).
 6. The Bible is the certain foundation upon which followers of God build their lives. It is God's rich gift to mankind and throughout its contents the perceptive eye can view the providence and love of the Almighty. It does not promise us a life of peace without any hurt; it does not prevent us from having sorrow and strife as we serve God. It is a book for those who search for eternal truth, for pilgrims, for toilers, for spiritual warriors, for mourners, and for sinners. It can guide honest seekers into the truth and salvation, and can guide the saved person on through earthly life and into Heaven.
 7. The Bible furnishes the foundation of a wise nation that seeks for a sound, prosperous, peaceful, honest and safe society. Our nation once had such conditions that permeated our land. Prior to its fall into immorality, criminality, rebellion, dishonesty, rejection of God and the Bible, our nation was largely comprised of people who believed in God and the Bible, and who practiced honesty and morality, and where justice was generally followed. Politicians, businessmen, educators, workers, *et al*, were held to a high standard of moral and ethical conduct.
 - a. In the mid-1960s, many folks decided they did not want to live in a *theocracy*—where God's word was known and practiced. They wanted a society where they could do what they pleased without having their sins and rebellion exposed. *I'm ok and you are ok. Don't condemn me and I won't say anything against you.*
 - b. The situation has so-degenerated today that the common view is that there is no absolute truth. I heard one so-called educator a few years ago proclaim that two and two does not necessarily equal four. If there is no absolute truth, there can be no real mathematics, science, medical treatment or diagnosis; if there is no absolute there could be weather reports or forecasts; how could cars, aircraft, computers, cell phones, etc., have ever been produced? Without sound, consistent and dependable principles and laws, life on earth could not be lived.
 - c. Would you want to live in a society where everyone believed that each individual could practice whatever he wanted to do without regard to the effect his actions produced on other people? If it was right for him to rob you, then it is right for you to rob him. If he can take another's life without penalty, then another could kill him and suffer no punishment.
 - d. The case of Liberal, Missouri:
 - 1) Years ago, a group of atheists decided to show the world what a fine civilization could be had if only the - and this is they way they put it - the "superstitions of Christianity" were outlawed. They founded the little town of Liberal, Missouri. They boastfully advertised it as the only town of its size in the United States that didn't have a preacher, a priest, a church, that didn't have God, Jesus Christ, hell or the devil.
 - 2) The St. Louis Post-Dispatch, a few months later, carried a lengthy article about the little town. It showed that, as a matter of fact, there was little else in the town except the devil. Its hotels had become houses of prostitution. Gambling, stealing, killing - it was the standard conduct for the town.
 - 3) The newspaper article was so frightful that the men of Liberal had Clark Braden, the author of the story, arrested for criminal libel. They also sued the Post-Dispatch for \$25,000. In the trial, the evidence was so overwhelming that the jury took only a few minutes to render a verdict - in favor of the defendant. The suit was dismissed and the town of Liberal, Missouri, had to pay all court costs.
 - 4) It wasn't long after that before even life-long atheists themselves left the town in absolute disgust. In fact, one of them confessed: "An infidel surrounded by Christians may spout his

infidelity and be able to stand it, but a town of atheists is too horrible to contemplate."

- 5) There are some among us who want God out of schools. Bible reading is totally unthinkable, the cry is, "Keep religion out of politics," and yet we expect to keep all the benefits of a God-blessed community. God in the heart of a community, whether it be a family or a whole nation, is the groundwork for its being a moral and safe place to live.
 8. King Saul sought to kill innocent David; he ignored God's spiritual law; he ignored civil law. There was no standard to which he could be held – in his thinking, David must die; Saul must continue on the throne. That being the case, David's life was in grave jeopardy. He must conceal himself from the king; he must depend on God to deliver his life from Saul.
 9. In the process of fleeing from Saul, David and his men came to a certain rocky mountain in the wilderness of Maon: "Saul also and his men went to seek him. And they told David: wherefore he came down into a rock, and abode in the wilderness of Maon. And when Saul heard that, he pursued after David in the wilderness of Maon. And Saul went on this side of the mountain, and David and his men on that side of the mountain: and David made haste to get away for fear of Saul; for Saul and his men compassed David and his men round about to take them. But there came a messenger unto Saul, saying, Haste thee, and come; for the Philistines have invaded the land. Wherefore Saul returned from pursuing after David, and went against the Philistines: therefore they called that place Selahammahlekoth" (1 Sam. 23:25-29). In this case, he had flown like a bird to this mountain, and soon found himself surrounded by Saul and his warriors. What could be done?
 - a. Saul and his army entered the area, which soon became known to David, who went down the rock and remained in the desert of Maon. Keil says that "the rock" is probably the conical mountain of Maon the top of which is now surrounded with ruins, probably the remains of a tower (p.233). As Saul and his men climbed the mountain on one side, David and his men were descending the other side. Saul was in the process of closing with David, having surrounded his company, when a message came to Saul which enabled the fugitives to make good their escape.
 - b. An urgent message came to Saul reporting that the Philistines had invaded the land. David posed no immediate threat to Saul, but the Philistines did. The timing of the message is providential. Without it, David and his men could have been captured and slain; with it, they were able to escape. The outcome of many battles has been determined by similar developments.
 - c. Saul must have been extremely frustrated! He had his enemy in his hands! The Philistines had to come into the picture just now! The name given that place was *Selah-ammah-lekoth*, which means "The Rock of Escape." This marvelous escape became part of the epic story of David. It is no wonder that this man became one of the greatest heroes of Israelite history.
- B. A Nation or Society's Morality Must Have a Sound Foundation.**
1. Our nation was founded on great principles revealed in the Bible.
 - a. The keystone of our nation is belief in the Bible and the God of the Bible. As belief in God declines, morality and ethics decline; as belief in the Bible declines, morality and ethics decline. For the first several generations of the history of the United States, our nation was good; it became great because it was good.
 - b. About fifty years ago, the nation began a steady decline in its goodness; as it increased in its depravity, obviously it became less good; and with this decline in goodness, our greatness began to crumble.
 2. The mid-1960s mark a clear point for our decline.
 - a. Senator Ted Kennedy and his henchmen passed a law in congress that brought about a weakening and even destruction of the immigration borders of our nation. All sorts of folks began to pour into our country; the rush has reached a critical point during the past several years. If our statist government of today admits that there are about eleven million illegals in our country, that may indeed mean that the number may be thirty or forty million. Our present government has lost so much credibility, that we cannot simply take their word for anything.
 - b. During this period of time, the Supreme Court issued an opinion that made it very difficult for law enforcement to convict criminals. This opinion is known as the Miranda Ruling. Countless criminals have been released on society due to some legal technicality; freeing many of these outlaws has given them opportunity to commit other heinous outrages.
 - c. This period also gave rise to the rebellion of the "hippy generation." Societal rules encouraging morality [thus opposing sexual immorality, lying, cheating, stealing, etc.] were openly challenged and opposed. Young males have usually and generally been willing to take advantage of females; at this point in time, the females began to be as sexually loose as the males. This condition was greatly
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promoted by the invention of the birth control pill.

- d. Shortly after this time (in 1973), the Supreme Court manufactured a “right” permitting a pregnant female to abort her unborn child. This gave rise to a huge, money-making abortion industry. Since that dark day, tens of millions of unborn children have been violently and painfully torn from their mothers’ bodies! How can a nation remain good or great which holds such a low view of human life!
3. High courts struck down laws promoting godly behavior. These rulings in turn generate more sin, crime and other activities and dispositions which eat away at the nation’s moral foundation.
 - a. It is now unlawful to teach the Bible or pray in our public schools. Before these absurd rulings were handed down by a misguided supreme court, children across the nation were given instructions on moral issues; now they receive none, unless by their families.
 - b. Obscenity, pornography, and filth is lightly punished, if at all. These things are “protected” by the right of free speech. But that same First Amendment to the Constitution is not allowed for moral people; they are prosecuted and persecuted if they choose not to serve those perverted people who demand that they make a cake, conduct a service, or otherwise violate their consciences to serve the homosexual agenda.
 - c. Abortion has been legalized and is widely practiced. “According to the National Abortion Federation, 11 people have now died in ‘anti-abortion violence’ since 1977. Since 1973’s Roe v. Wade decision, nearly 58 million children have lost their lives” (*The Patriot Post*, 11-30-2015).
 - d. Euthanasia is legal in certain foreign countries, and efforts are being made here at home to make this despicable practice a right for virtually anyone. Apparently, it is already being practiced in some nursing homes who give patients medicine to remove their appetite, thus are they starved to death.
 - e. The sanctity of marriage has been undermined for many decades, gaining popularity in Hollywood, and spreading across the country. When divorces became somewhat antagonistic, state lawmakers came up with “no-fault divorce,” where a couple could agree on the divorce, hire a lawyer, and appear before a judge who quickly and easily grants their desire. The effect this has on children can not be measured!
 - f. Fornication is rampant, being popularized and promoted by the entertainment industry. The unwritten law denies anyone who objects to the practice any right to pass judgment! Many couples live together with the benefit of matrimony, producing children who are likely to continue their parents’ agenda. It is common for a woman to be the mother of several children, with several different fathers being involved. How hurtful it is to the children! How destructive this is to the home and nation!
 - g. Homosexuality has been “legalized” by Supreme Court rulings. Those who practice this depraved lifestyle have been give the “right” to marry by the opinion issued by the high court on June 26, 2015.
 - h. Even drugs have been made “legal” in certain states. They have started with marijuana, but as one step inevitably leads to a second and third step, this is only the beginning of the onslaught of stronger drugs, which will rapidly spread to corrupt and destroy untold lives—to say nothing of souls!
 - i. A long time ago, the sale of alcohol was legalized, with disastrous effect on individuals, families, communities, and the nation.
 - j. In many states, gambling has been legalized, with the state raking in the profits. But where this vice is practiced, criminals are quickly drawn. Individuals who lose their money gambling, must obtain means of livelihood elsewhere – through stealing, through selling drugs, or a host of other ways. Many of those who gamble will depend on welfare for sustenance, thus putting an even greater burden on innocent taxpayers. Where criminal activities increase, more policemen must be hired, more courtrooms constructed, more jails and prisons built, more guards hired, more food and medicine bought for the prisoners, more counselors hired to deal with the inmates, more doctors and other medical professionals to aid those incarcerated. The families of the prisoners must be taken care of, thus more taxes on the innocent citizens.
- C. A Nation’s Military Must Have a Sound Foundation.
 1. It must be equipped with good equipment, and the soldiers trained in its use. In the first part of the *War for Southern Independence*, the Confederate army was filled with soldiers who knew how to fire their weapons accurately, cavalrymen who could ride their mounts expertly, and commanders who knew how to lead. Thus the Southern cause enjoyed fine success.
 - a. As this war continued, the southern soldiers fought with fewer supplies and equipment, and were

severely out-numbered. According to my high school American History teacher, the outcome of the war was decided by the shortage of Men, Money, and Material – the North had an abundance of these.

- b. There are those who believe that the Confederate Army was likely the best army to ever take the field to do battle. They fought against extreme odds as the federal army continued its invasion of the south, checking and defeating the onslaughts time and again.
 2. A military force must have internal cohesion, without which it is ripe for defeat. How can a military unit have this close brotherhood if their ranks consists of regular people, but also of sexual perverts, transgenders, and radical political and religious adherents? The leadership may tend to support the group to which he may belong. The usual result of such disunifying components is that each group separates from the other segments of the unit. Friction is certain to exist. Morale is sure to fall. The American military was able to receive many members of minority racial personnel and still remain strong. During the Vietnam War, the fighting soldiers were bound together very well, it appears, with a strong tie that recognized no differences.
 3. Through our history, American soldiers have generally conducted themselves very well, considering the harsh nature of their work. Union general William Sherman, with his vicious assaults against Southern civilians, during his march through Georgia, South Carolina and North Carolina is a nefarious exception to the conduct of American soldiers in war. Houses were burned, livestock slaughtered, food supplies stolen or destroyed, women and girls raped, valuable books and libraries committed to flames, slaves mistreated and some forced into the Union army – these are a few of the harsh treatments Southern folks were forced to endure due to the cruelty and hatred by the invaders. Even Sherman admitted that many of his soldiers were criminals from the start; that was the kind of men he wanted for his assault against innocent civilians. [I almost felt sorry for Sherman when, as the war neared its end, his masters in Washington viciously turned against him; only General Grant was able to save him].
 4. But the American military has for the most part reflected the values and compassion with which our nation has been widely known. But the condition in American society has changed in the last decade, and not for the better.
- D. The Educational System of a Nation or Society Must Have a Sound Foundation.
1. A generation of Japanese children prior to the Second World War, was brought up learning how to fight and kill. They became proficient in war-making. Their leaders foresaw and planned for a great conflict with other nations, as they sought to become a great empire. Their educational system inculcated this whole concept into preparing the nation for war. Their religious and military traditions convinced the majority of the people that to surrender was cowardly, and to show compassion was unseemly. They usually fought to the death and even killed those who tried to give them aid. Among other reasons, the educational system ill-served the Japanese people.
 2. Similar things can be said about the youth growing up under Adolph Hitler's Nazi regime. German fighters were well-trained, well-equipped, well-led, and were dedicated to their war efforts. The German population was heroic in withstanding the horrible bombing of their cities by allied warplanes.
 - a. They had been fed with Nazi propaganda for so long that they believed it, besides being devoted to their fatherland. They nation was largely made up of intelligent, strong, dedicated people who had been deceived by Hitler and his henchmen.
 - b. Another matter that was a contributing factor was their diluted religious notions. Especially during the latter half of the nineteenth century in Germany, theologians thought they knew more than God, who authored the Bible. They began to undermine belief in the Bible, and thus in the Almighty. This cannot be done with impunity; such rebellion and unbelief was certain to be punished somehow.
 3. This line of thought inevitably leads us to consider the educational system that has evolved in America. In the first several generations of American education, children learned to read from the Bible. They received much teaching from its contents. Most of them grew up to be God-fearing and Bible-believing citizens. But with the passing of time and rise of many who knew not God, unholy changes began to be made.
 - a. The Supreme Court decided that prayer did not have a place in the public classrooms. They likewise cast out the Bible. As this scribe grew up, in Grammar School and High School, every day we began our studies with Bible reading and prayer. We also recited the Pledge of Allegiance.
 - b. Through many generation of American history, young people learned morality and ethical conduct in the public classroom. In many cases, this was the only such training a lot of the students ever received. Students today, who do not learn the Bible at home or in religious training, are left without significant moral and ethical instruction.
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- c. But the modernistic religious groups are more apt to teach most anything else but the Bible. And some of the Bible information presented may be contaminated with sectarian doctrine and modernistic unbelief.
 - d. The public school systems generally exclude from their instruction any truth from the Bible. They include much that promotes and supports evolution. An education that does not include information about God and the Bible is an empty education – it does not guide the soul; it does not prepare anyone for eternity.
4. Patriot Post: It's unfortunate that deep ignorance permeates our education system, as demonstrated, for example, in college students' view of slavery, which Professor Duke Pesta lays out in an [interview](#) with The College Fix. Pesta, who has taught at numerous schools, conducted an 11-year experiment in which new students at Purdue University, University of Tennessee Martin, Ursinus College, Oklahoma State University, and University of Wisconsin Oshkosh were presented a simple quiz to gauge their level of competency on subjects like slavery. His findings help explain today's ill-informed political revolution among the college-aged.
- a. Pesta says, "Most of my students could not tell me anything meaningful about slavery outside of America. They are convinced that slavery was an American problem that more or less ended with the Civil War, and they are very fuzzy about the history of slavery prior to the Colonial era. Their entire education about slavery was confined to America." Moreover, "They cannot tell you many historical facts or relate anything meaningful about historical biographies, but they are, however, stridently vocal about the corrupt nature of the Republic, about the wickedness of the founding fathers, and about the evils of free markets. Most alarmingly, they know nothing about the fraught history of Marxist ideology and communist governments over the last century, but often reductively define socialism as 'fairness.'"
 - b. Pesta believes it will only grow worse under guys like David Coleman, who was instrumental in the development of Common Core and who now leads the College Board. The problem boils down to the fact that a few (very progressive) executives at the top control the levers. The centralization of education by social activists has transcended individual discernment and critical thinking. The result is a revisionist history that tarnishes truth. And the truth is that America partook of a globally practiced deplorable deed — a deed that it eventually purged. By teaching students otherwise, revisionists are raising slaves of the state.
 - c. Slavery, of course, has existed for most of human history. It still does in much of the world, and it's often based on faith or sex. But it's easier for college brats to meditate on the sins of the past than to tackle the problems of the present. [11-3-2016].
- E. A Nation's Economy Must Have a Sound Foundation.
- 1. In the past, many would praise the reliability of something by saying, "It's as sound as a dollar!"
 - a. We were on the gold standard in the past—for every dollar in circulation, there was a dollar's worth of gold held in reserve.
 - b. That is not the way it is now. The dollar is only as sound as the government that backs that dollar. If the nation is strong, as America was at the end of World War II, the money is sound. How sound would it be if a corrupted liberal administration was in power? What if the Justice Department colluded with corrupt politicians to determine the outcome of a presidential election?
 - c. Tried and true monetary policies must guide the economy.
 - 2. If an economy is based on crooked business dealings, with bribery, with collusion between businesses or between businesses and government, if government contracts are given merely because the recipient is a member of a minority – there are countless other shady, unethical, and illegal operations. That economy will surely lead to grief and even disaster.
 - 3. If the government, a business, or a family does not exercise due caution in handling their money, trouble is certain to come. None can live on his ability to borrow more and more. "If your out-go is greater than your in-come, then your up-keep will be your down-fall." This old and perhaps trite adage is nevertheless a piece of sound wisdom.
- F. The Family Must Have a Sound Foundation.
- 1. God established the ideal family arrangement: one father, one mother, children.
 - a. The father is given the heavy responsibility to care for his family in every matter; he has the ultimate authority and responsibility.
 - b. The wife (mother) is given great responsibility: caring for the children, keeping the house, tending to the things that fall to her.
 - c. The children are to love, respect and obey the father and mother.
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2. If God's arrangement for the family is followed, the family group will be united, productive, and happy.
 - a. Genesis 2:23-24: "And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh."
 - b. Matthew 19:3-6: "The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."
 - c. Ephesians 5:22-33: "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband."
 3. The home in modern America is having troubles.
 - a. Many couples are living together without marriage; they bring children into a world of curious circumstances. Maybe the couple split up and go their separate ways; the siblings may also be split between the parents; or the one having control of the children may take up with another mate.
 - b. There are cases where the mother has given birth to several children, who do not have the same father. The fathers do not live with the mother; their last names may all be different. How confusing!
 - c. In many cases, there is no father in the home. Proper guidance is not given to the children. The kids in effect raise themselves.
 - d. A large number of marriages are destroyed by divorce. The divorce may be scriptural (Matt. 19:9). It might be for some frivolous cause. It might be caused by immaturity on the part of one or both. Perhaps it is caused by violence on the part of one.
- G. The Lord's Church Must Maintain its Sound Foundation.
1. The church's one foundation is Jesus Christ.
 - a. Ephesians 2:19-22: "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit."
 - b. 1 Corinthians 3:10-17: "According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire. Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are."
 - c. Matthew 16:16-18: "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 also 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."
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2. That foundation includes its identity.
3. That foundation includes its organization.
4. That foundation includes the plan of salvation it teaches.
5. That foundation includes the worship it offers.
6. That foundation includes the work it does.

H. Our Belief in Eternal Beings and Things Must Be on a Sound Foundation.

1. We believe in the Godhead.
 - a. God the Father.
 - b. Christ the Son of God.
 - c. The Holy Spirit.
2. We believe in the place of reward – Heaven.
3. We believe in the place of punishment – Hell.
4. We believe in the intermediate state of the dead – Hades.
5. We believe in the Second Coming of Christ.
6. We believe in the resurrection of the dead.
7. We believe in the Judgment of the Last Day.
8. We believe in eternal destiny.

III. **Conclusion.**

A. 2 Timothy 2:19-21:

1. Verse 19: “Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.”
 - a. Despite the defection of men and women from the faith, even though some of them will take away many disciples with them, God’s truth will continue to stand firm. The gospel cannot be destroyed; the kingdom of God will never end.
 - 1) Daniel 2:44: “And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.”
 - 2) Matthew 24:35: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away."
 - 3) Hebrews 12:28-29: "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: For our God *is* a consuming fire."
 - 4) 1 Peter 1:24-25: "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: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you."
 - 5) Jeremiah 23:29: "*Is* not my word like as a fire? saith the LORD; and like a hammer *that* breaketh the rock in pieces?"
 - b. The kingdom of God is the church of Christ. Christ is the foundation (as well as the founder) of the church. The church is the pillar and ground of the truth (1 Tim. 3:15). The word of God is the seed of the kingdom (Luke 8:11), so as long as the word of God remains, the kingdom (the church) can be produced.
 - 1) Matthew 16:18: "And I say also 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."
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 3:11: "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."
 - 3) Ephesians 2:20-22: "And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner *stone*; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit."
 - 4) Isaiah 28:16: "Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner *stone*, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste."
 - c. “Great and good men may turn from the truth, may make shipwreck of their own souls and may lead others down to ruin, yet the foundation of God remains steadfast and sure. God’s faithfulness to himself, to his promises, to them that trust him as the foundation of all hope of good here and hereafter stands sure and the seal is given” (Lipscomb, p.220). The seal has two inscriptions:
 - 1) “The Lord knoweth them that are his.”
 - 2) “Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.”
 - d. The Lord knows those who belong to him. With all the division and conflicting doctrines which

abound in the world, some are confused about what is truth and who are the true people of God. Since the word of God abides forever, and is the means by which we are reconciled unto God, we can identify God's children. The point here, however, is that God knows his own! Though there are many who assert their loyalty to the Lord, yet they are his only if he accepts them as such.

- e. It is a great comfort for the faithful to know that the Lord knows them as his own. Despite the great numbers of those who pay mere lipservice to God, he knows his own, and rejects all the pretenders. He does not lose sight of his own.
 - 1) Romans 8:14-16: "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God."
 - 2) John 10:27-28: "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 *man* pluck them out of my hand."
- f. Those who "nameth the name of Christ" are obligated to depart from iniquity. A Christian is one who follows Christ; since Christ will not lead anyone into a life or even an instance of sin, one who has committed himself to be the Lord's, will not willfully participate in sinful conduct. Although some may be drawn away from the Lord by false teachers, God's people will keep themselves apart from evil—*moral* or *doctrinal*.
- g. The true people of God are identifiable by the two inscriptions.
 - 1) The Lord knows who they are; his standard of identifying them is the gospel; if one has obeyed the gospel, both he and the Lord, and others who know the gospel and the saint, will know he is a child of God.
 - 2) The one who is a child of God will be separated from iniquity; he will not live a life of lawlessness; he may stumble into sin occasionally, but when he sees his error, he repents of it, confesses it to the Lord in prayer, and asks for pardon.
 - a) Acts 8:22: "Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee."
 - b) James 5:16: "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."
 - c) 1 John 1:7-10: "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."
2. Verses 20-21: "But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour. If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, *and* prepared unto every good work."
 - a. In the same house both good and bad items are found; there are vessels of gold and silver; there are vessels of wood and earth. Some are valuable; others have little or no value; some bring honor to the owner, and some bring dishonor to him. Cheap, ill-made items would bring shame to the owner of a mansion; but items of gold and silver would bring honor to him.
 - b. "A vessel once made by the artificer cannot change itself. It cannot become any other material than of that of which it was originally made. But Paul here represents vessels as changing themselves. This is absolutely incompatible with the idea that God has made a certain number of persons to be saved and a certain number to be lost. It is, on the contrary, the most surprising assertion of the freedom of the human will in Scripture: for a man is not only supposed to be able, but is responsible for changing himself from that which is typified by an earthen vessel into that which is typified by a golden one. Hymenaeus and Philetus had fallen from being golden vessels into earthen ones, but if they repented they might become gold or silver ones; that is, if they purged themselves from the error in question and abstained from them who held it. By the fact that a man has once fallen into this pernicious error, he is not condemned forever, but by cleansing himself and becoming sanctified meet for the Master's use 'prepared unto every good work'" (Lipscomb, pp.221f).
 - c. In a given congregation, there are those who are faithful and those who are not faithful; there are some, therefore, who are honest and sincere, and others who are mere pretenders. These are all in the same "house." Our finite knowledge and wisdom may keep us from identifying the latter kind. But most of the false teachers (and other sinful members) may be easily identified, and purged from

the body of Christ by way of discipline. The others will be identified by the Lord in the Judgment.

- 1) 1 Corinthians 3:12-15: "Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire."
 - 2) Matthew 13:47-50: "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: Which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away. So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, And shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth."
 - 3) 1 Timothy 5:24-25: "Some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some men they follow after. Likewise also the good works of some are manifest beforehand; and they that are otherwise cannot be hid."
- d. The faithful must purge themselves from these untrue Christians, whose sins are identifiable, or else be contaminated by their error. The method of purging is that of discipline, taught elsewhere in the New Testament.
- 1) Matthew 18:15-17: "Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear *thee*, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell *it* unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican."
 - 2) 2 Thessalonians 3:6: "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us."
 - 3) 2 Thessalonians 3:14-15: "And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet count *him* not as an enemy, but admonish *him* as a brother."
 - 4) 1 Corinthians 5:1-8: "It is reported commonly *that there is* fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife. And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you. For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, *concerning* him that hath so done this deed, In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. Your glorying *is* not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened *bread* of sincerity and truth."
- e. A lesson that can be drawn from this passage is learned by applying the principles involved to one's own self. Each Christian has strong and weak points. He must work to eliminate the weaknesses that can lead him into temptation and sin. If he makes no genuine effort to that end, he will sooner or later fall victim to his own spiritual deficiencies.
- f. If a teacher of error (such as Hymenaeus or Philetus), or any other sinful member, would purge himself of his doctrinal errors or other sins, he could become again a vessel of honor; he could become set apart (sanctified), be useful to the Master again, and be prepared to accomplish every good work.
3. "If liberty is worth keeping and free representative government worth saving, we must stand for all American fundamentals — not some, but all. All are woven into the great fabric of our national well-being. We cannot hold fast to some only, and abandon others that, for the moment, we find inconvenient. If one American fundamental is prostrated, others in the end will surely fall." —Albert J. Beveridge (1862-1927)
- B. If the Foundations Are Destroyed, What Can the Righteous Do
1. The Righteous can maintain their trust in God.
 - a. Psalms 11:1: "In the LORD put I my trust..."
 - b. Proverbs 3:5-7: "Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.
-

In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil.”

- 1) The admonition is to place our full trust in the Lord. Trusting the Lord only when we have the means in our hands to deliver ourselves is not trust. But when we must depend absolutely upon him to work out a solution to our problem, without our being able to see how it could be so, is trusting the Lord with all our heart. The main emphasis here is that we are not to live by our own understanding, but rather we are to trust the Lord.
 - a) Jeremiah 10:23: "O LORD, I know that the way of man *is* not in himself: *it is* not in man that walketh to direct his steps."
 - b) 2 Corinthians 5:7: "For we walk by faith, not by sight."
 - 2) God will direct our paths if we acknowledge him in all our ways. All the decisions and actions we take are to be made with the Lord's will in mind as the guiding light. "Let the will be kept in a quiet, subdued, cheerful readiness, to move, stay, retreat, turn to the right hand or to the left, at the Lord's bidding; always remembering that is best which is least our own doing, and that a pliable spirit ever secures the needful guidance" (Bridges, p.25). Abraham acknowledged God as he lived and grew by faith. Where he pitched his tent, he usually built an altar, also.
 - c. Romans 4:16-21: "Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all, (As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were. Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations; according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be. And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sara's womb: He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform."
2. Live in sincere and full obedience to God's will.
- a. Worship sincerely.
 - b. Serve God faithfully.
 - c. Be helpful to others.
 - d. Be spiritually-minded.
 - e. Defend the truth.
 - f. Teach others the Bible.
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KING HEZEKIAH, HIS TIMES AND EXPERIENCES

2 Kings 18-20; 2 Chronicles 29-32

I. Introduction:

- A. Hezekiah was the son of wicked Ahaz who plunged Judah deep into idolatry.
 1. Hezekiah reigned as King of Judah for 43 years.
 2. He reigned co-regent with his father for fourteen years (729-715 BC).
 3. He reigned independently following his father's death for eighteen years (715-697 BC).
 4. He reigned co-regent with his son Manasseh for eleven years (697-686 BC).
- B. He sought to please God: 2 Kings 18:5-7.

II. DISCUSSION:

A. Hezekiah Instituted Important Reforms in Judah.

1. 2 Kings devotes only one verse to Hezekiah's reforms; 2 Chronicles records his reforms in three chapters.
2. Hezekiah destroyed the Bronze Serpent. 2 Kings 18:4.
 - a. God sent fiery serpents among the Israelites: Num. 21:5.
 - b. God told Moses to erect a bronze serpent on a pole and have the people who were bitten to look upon it and be healed. Num. 21:4-9.
 - c. Eventually the Israelites made that serpent an object of worship called Nehushtan, meaning "serpent-idol."
 - d. The serpent symbol on a pole remains today as a logo by the AMA.
3. Hezekiah tore down the High Places of idol worship: 2 Kings 18:4.
4. Hezekiah cleansed the Temple.
 - a. Hezekiah's father, Ahaz, had defiled the Temple, finally closing the doors to prevent the priest from carrying out their duties and to keep the people from worshipping here.
 - b. 2 Chronicles 29:3: "He in the first year of his reign, in the first month, opened the doors of the house of the LORD, and repaired them."
 - c. He commanded the priest to cleanse themselves and to rededicate the Temple.
 - d. He restored the worship of the Temple and encouraged people from Israel and Judah to come to Jerusalem to worship: 2 Chronicles 30:5-6.
 - e. Ahaz had installed a pagan altar in the place of the altar of the Lord. Hezekiah removed that pagan altar and restored the Lord's altar to its rightful place. 2 Kings 16:10ff.
 - f. He burned the instruments of idolatrous worship in the Kidron Valley.
5. Levites began cleaning the vessels and the instruments used in the Temple worship.
 - a. The cleansing took so long that they missed the Passover; Hezekiah had them observe Passover during the second month. 2 Chronicles 30:2.
 - b. The Law contained a provision for Passover observance in the second month. Numbers 9:5-13.

B. The Assyrian Invasion.

1. Assyria was the dominant military power during Hezekiah's reign.
 - a. Judah had been a dependent state of Assyria since Ahaz's reign. 2 Kings 16:7-18.
 - b. Hezekiah decided that the time had come to break with Assyria. 2 Kings 18:7.
 - c. Sennacherib sent his army to invade Judah in 715 B.C., taking all except Jerusalem. 2 Kings 18:3.
 - d. King Hezekiah paid King Sennacherib a heavy tribute which included "all the silver that was found in the house of the Lord, and in the treasures of the king's house." 2 Kings 18:15. This amounted to eleven tons of silver and one ton of gold.
2. Assyria Returns.
 - a. 2 Chronicles 32:1 – "After these deeds of faithfulness, Sennacherib king of Assyria came and entered Judah; he encamped against the fortified cities, thinking to win them over to himself." (NKJV)
 - b. "Deeds of faithfulness" likely refers to Hezekiah's reforms.
 - c. Hezekiah had done "that which was good and right and truth before the Lord his God," (2 Chronicles 31:20), and "with all his heart." (2 Chronicles 31:21).
 - d. Assyrian records reveal that Sennacherib took 46 walled cities in Judah during this second invasion.
3. Hezekiah took strong measures to strengthen the city of Jerusalem. 1 Kings 20:20.
 - a. Isaiah had already told Hezekiah that God would protect and defend Jerusalem for King David's sake and for his own. 2 Kings 20:6.
 - b. Sennacherib sent a large force to Jerusalem, accompanied by negotiators, whose job it was to

arrange the terms of surrender. 2 Kings 18:17.

4. Rabshakeh's speech. 2 Kings 18:28ff.
 - a. He told the people that Hezekiah had lied telling them that God would deliver them. 2 Kings 18:29-30.
 - b. If they would surrender, he would allow them to remain in the city until they would be transported to another fertile land. 2 Kings 18:31-32.
 - c. He said that God was no stronger or better than those other gods, and that He could not deliver Jerusalem from King Sennacherib. 1 Kings 18:33-35.
- C. Hezekiah Sent a Message to Isaiah.
1. 2 Kings 18:37 – “Then came Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, which was over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph the recorder, to Hezekiah with their clothes rent, and told him the words of Rabshakeh.”
 2. 2 Kings 19:1 – “And it came to pass, when king Hezekiah heard it, that he rent his clothes, and covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the house of the LORD.”
 3. Hezekiah sent his three servants to Isaiah. 2 Kings 19:4.
 - a. Isaiah sent Hezekiah a reassuring message. 2 Kings 19:6ff.
 - b. Hezekiah was not to be afraid of the threats of the Assyrians. 2 Kings 9:6.
 4. To Sennacherib, God would “send a blast upon him and he shall hear a rumor” that would frighten him.
 - a. The rumor was that Tirkakah, king of Ethiopia, was coming up against Sennacherib. (2 Kings 19:9).
 - b. God was going to make Assyria return to their own land, and there Sennacherib would fall by the sword. 2 Kings 19:7.
- D. Hezekiah's Prayer.
1. Sennacherib's letter to Hezekiah. 2 Kings 19:9-13.
 2. Upon receiving the letter, Hezekiah read it, and went up to the Temple and “spread it before the Lord.” 1 Kings 19:14.
 - a. Hezekiah acknowledged that Assyria had destroyed many other nations whose idol gods had not delivered them. 2 Kings 19:17, 19.
 - b. Isaiah told Hezekiah that his message had been heard. 2 Kings 19:20.
 3. Isaiah's message to Hezekiah was detailed. 2 Kings 19:29ff.
 - a. God would deliver Jerusalem.
 - b. The people would be well provided from starvation.
 4. God had words of rebuke for Sennacherib.
 - a. He would not enter the city of Jerusalem. 2 Kings 19:32-33.
 - b. There would not even be a battle. 2 Kings 19:28.
 - c. God would cause Sennacherib “to fall by the sword in his own land”. 2 Kings 19:7.
- E. The Assyrian Army Suffered a Disastrous Defeat.
1. 2 Kings 19:35 – “And it came to pass that night, that the angel of the LORD went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses.”
 2. Sennacherib withdrew the remnant of his and returned to Nineveh in defeat and shame. 2 Kings 19:36.
 3. Later while worshiping in the temple of his god Nisroch, two of his own sons assassinated him with a sword. 2 Kings 19:37.
- F. Hezekiah's Failings.
1. Hezekiah had a serious human flaw – pride.
 - a. His pride sometimes kept him from being his best.
 - b. 2 Chronicles 32:25ff.
 2. Hezekiah's illness. 2 Kings 20:1ff.
 - a. Isaiah's message to HEZEKIAH: “Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die, and not live.”
 - b. As a result of Isaiah's message, Hezekiah humbled himself and prayed to God.
 - c. God gave him fifteen more years.
 3. He may have lived fifteen years too long!
 - a. When an envoy from Babylon came bearing gifts, pride again ruled Hezekiah.
 - b. Isaiah: “What have they seen in thine house?”
 - c. Isaiah's prophecy to Hezekiah: 2 Kings 20:17-18 – “Behold, the days come, that all that is in thine house, and that which thy fathers have laid up in store unto this day, shall be carried into Babylon: nothing shall be left, saith the LORD. 18 And of thy sons that shall issue from thee, which thou shalt beget, shall they take away; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.”

- d. Isaiah's prophecy was fulfilled in 606 B.C. when Nebuchadnezzar took Jerusalem and carried away the first captives to Babylon. Daniel 1:1-6.
- e. Among these were Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. They may have been cousins.
4. After Isaiah's prophecy, Hezekiah again humbled himself, but his actions contributed to Judah's destruction and the captivity of the people by the Babylonians. 2 Kings 20:14-19; 2 Chronicles 32:26.
5. Hezekiah lived the rest of his life with "exceeding much riches and honours" and at his death "all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem did honor him..." 2 Chronicles 32:27-30, 33.

III. CONCLUSION:

A. Some Lessons Hezekiah's Experiences Teaches Us.

1. Pride is one of Satan's most effective weapons.
 - a. Proverbs 16:18: "Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall."
 - b. 1 Timothy 3:6: "...lifted up with pride...fall into the condemnation of the devil."
 - c. 1 John 2:16: "...the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world."
2. God hears and answers prayers of the righteous.
 - a. James 5:16: "...The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."
 - b. 1 John 2:29: "...every one that doeth righteousness is born of him."
3. Sin hinders prayers.
 - a. Psalm 66:18 – "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me."
 - b. Proverbs 15:29 – "The LORD is far from the wicked: but he heareth the prayer of the righteous."
 - c. Isaiah 59:1-2 – "Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: 2 But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear."
 - d. 1 Peter 3:12 – "For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil."

B. Invitation.

Logic and the Bible

I. INTRODUCTION.

A. Logic is not a common subject we discuss, but we use it daily.

1. We use logic when we hear and appreciate a joke.
 - a. Adam came home late one night and went to bed. Eve accused him of being out with another woman. He replied, "Eve, you know that you are the only woman on earth and that I am the only man." Later, he was awakened by Eve as she poked him in the ribs. He demanded to know what she was doing. She replied, "I'm counting your ribs."
 - b. A preacher went to see one of the members who had had surgery. He asked his friend how he was getting along. "After my first operation, they had to open me up again—to take out a sponge they left in me by mistake. I was doing just fine until the next day, when they had to open me up once more—to remove a scalpel that the doctor overlooked." Just then, the patient suffered a serious relapse, when the doctor came bouncing into the room and asked, "Has anybody seen my hat?"
2. If your wife [or husband] sends you to the store to get a jar of Peter Pan Extra Crunchy peanut butter, you know that she does not mean for you to buy a quart of buttermilk. That is logic.
3. When you address a letter to your brother in Atlanta, you don't have to write on the envelope every other person's name you do not intend to get the letter; you merely identify the person, the address, and the city and state where the person lives; everyone else is automatically excluded. That is logic.

B. Logic is simply putting some facts together, and making some deductions based on the facts.

1. The technical terms used are "induction"[collecting the facts] and "deduction" [processing the facts] to reach an accurate conclusion.
2. We can use logic in many ways to find out simple little truths, for example: If I weigh more than Ron, and Ron weighs more than Cora, then you also know that Cora is lighter than I am.
3. If you know that Brother Jones has more money than Brother Smith, and Brother Smith has more money than I have, then you know that I am not as rich as Brother Jones.

C. God calls on us to use logic as we study the Bible.

1. Isaiah 1:18: "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."
2. 2 Timothy 2:15: "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."
3. 1 Thessalonians 5:21: "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good."

II. DISCUSSION.

A. The Bible is a very logical book.

1. Acts 17:2-4: "And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures, Opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ. And some of them believed, and consorted with Paul and Silas; and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few."
 - a. Paul "reasoned with them out of the scriptures." The apostle presented evidence from the Old Testament Scriptures to convince the audience that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah. He appealed to their minds.
 - 1) Jesus was broadly rejected by the Jews for two simple reasons:
 - a) He did not measure up to their expectations as to his hometown, his life, his attitude, his message, and his appearance.
 - b) His execution on the cross was repulsive to them because of the shame of being crucified: "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree" (Gal. 3:13; cf. Deut. 21:22-23).
 - 2) Therefore, the majority of the Jews failed to see Jesus as the Messiah. Their failure was because they misunderstood what the Messiah would be like.
 - 3) These people believed the Old Testament, but they did not understand what the prophets had said about Christ.
 - b. Paul *opened* and *alleged* that it was necessary that Christ "must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ."
 - 1) He opened (from *dianoigo*: "to open up completely", Vine, Vol. 3, p.141). It is used in this verse of "opening the minds" of his audience by presenting scriptural evidence. To get to the Extra Crunchy Peanut Butter, you have to take off the lid; to get the truth of the Bible, we must open it by study.

- 2) The word allege here does not have the same meaning as our modern word. Paul did not "assert without proof" that Jesus was the Christ. The word is from the Greek term *paratithemen os* ("setting forth by argument and proof" (Vine, Vol. 1, p.47). Paul used the Scriptures to prove that Jesus is the Christ. The Scriptures contain **proof** of things; there is such a thing as fulfilled prophecy; we can **know** certain things; the Bible is absolute truth.
- 3) Paul proved that God planned that Christ should suffer and die, and be raised from the dead; he also proved that Jesus is the Messiah. Our teaching and preaching must follow the same pattern today: we must present the word of God, and set forth the truth to others by sound argument and proof, thus reasoning with them from the Bible in order to open their minds to see the truth. "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isa. 1:18).
2. Romans 12:1-2: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."
- a. Paul appealed for each saint to present his body unto God as a living sacrifice. Our fleshly bodies are necessary for us to do anything in this world.
- b. What could our spirits possibly do in this world without the body? To think and plan, we must use our heads (brains); to talk, we have to use our tongues; to sing, we must use our voices; to build a house, we must use our hands. The apostle called on Christians to dedicate their bodies to the service of Christ.
- 1) 1 Corinthians 6:20: "For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."
- 2) Romans 6:13,19: "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...I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness."
- c. The Jews brought living animals for the bloody sacrifices required by the Law of Moses; those animals were slain and their bodies were burned on the altar. In every sacrifice there was a death. When we present our body as a living sacrifice, the old man of sin has been slain; the new man lives and serves Christ.
- 1) Colossians 3:5-10: "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience: In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them. But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him."
- 2) Galatians 2:20: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."
- d. Our body is to be acceptable to God. We can make our living sacrifice well-pleasing to God by being pure from sin and following his will to the best of our ability.
- 1) 2 Corinthians 7:1: "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."
- 2) 1 John 3:3: "And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure."
- e. Presenting our body as a living, holy, acceptable sacrifice is our **reasonable service**. "Reasonable" is from the Greek *logikos*. The word as used here means to give **rational** service unto God; it is a reasonable, rational and sincere offering of the spirit; it does not come from following some ceremony or by being emotional.
- 1) 1 Corinthians 14:33: "For God is not *the author* of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints."
- 2) 1 Corinthians 14:40: "Let all things be done decently and in order."
3. 1 Thessalonians 5:21: "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good."
- a. Each Christian is given this obligation. No one can obey the gospel for you except you; no one can commit a sin for you except you; no one can prepare you for the Judgment and eternity except you. If you die lost, you can blame no one but yourself. The same is true with every responsible person.
- b. Your soul depends on your personal obedience to the truth. If someone deceives you into believing

and practicing an error which condemns your soul, you can blame no one but yourself. God has made his word available to us all, so if we take no interest in it, we take no interest in our own soul. If we are content to believe and follow a message, taking another's word for its accuracy, it is our soul that must pay the penalty if we have accepted a false doctrine.

- c. In view of these facts, Paul tells each one to prove all things, and hold on to that which is good. If it were not possible to prove a matter, his words here are without meaning. If there is no absolute standard of truth, what he said here means nothing. There is an absolute standard of truth in moral and spiritual matters.
 - 1) John 8:30-32: "As he spake these words, many believed on him. Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, *then* are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."
 - 2) John 17:17: "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth."
 - 3) 1 John 4:1: "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world."
 - 4) 2 John 9-11: "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into *your* house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds."
 - 5) Isaiah 8:20: "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, *it is* because *there is* no light in them."
 - 6) Revelation 2:2: "I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars."
 - 7) John 6:69: "And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God."
 - 8) Acts 2:36: "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ."
 - 9) 1 John 2:3-4: "And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him." [The Book of 1 John has several other references to things we can *know*].
- d. Every belief or practice which is offered to us is to be tested by God's word. If it does not pass the test, we must reject that religious belief or practice. Before any such matter can be accepted as right, it must have the authority of the Bible behind it. Those that are authorized by the Bible, are to be held on to at all costs. A belief or practice is good only if it is true, and it is true only if it is taught in the Bible.
- e. We must be aware of the fact that there are many false teachers operating today. The only way they can be identified is by comparing their fruit (their teachings) with the infallible word of God. We are to be "fruit inspectors."
 - 1) Matthew 7:15-20: "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither *can* a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them."
 - 2) 2 Corinthians 11:3: "But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ."
 - 3) 2 Corinthians 11:13-15: "For such *are* false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore *it is* no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works."
 - 4) Philippians 3:17-19: "Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample. (For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, *that they are* the enemies of the cross of Christ: Whose end *is* destruction, whose God *is* their belly, and *whose* glory *is* in their shame, who mind earthly things.)"
 - 5) Colossians 2:8: "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ."
 - 6) Colossians 2:18: "Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind."
 - 7) 1 Peter 5:8-9: "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh

about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world."

4. Acts 2:36-47: "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls....Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."
 - a. They could know perfectly well that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ, the Son of God (vs. 36).
 - 1) Peter showed that fulfilled prophecies prove that he is the Son of God.
 - 2) The miracles that Christ did: "Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know" (Acts 2:22).
 - 3) The miracles which were done through the apostle on that very day proved it: The gift of tongues, the great sound, and the cloven tongues like fire.
 - 4) The message the apostles presented in Acts 2 is very logical—it leads to the plain conclusion that "God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ."
 - 5) Three thousand people saw this truth, and were baptized immediately.
 - b. Notice another simple truth that clear thinking reveals from this passage:
 - 1) Only those who were baptized were added to the church.
 - 2) But only the saved were added.
 - 3) Therefore, only the baptized were saved.
5. Mark 16:15-16: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."
 - a. Notice the equation:
 - 1) $1 + 1 = 2$.
 - 2) Belief + Baptism = Salvation.
 - b. Some who deny the truth of Mark 16:16 have tried to nullify the teaching of the verse by using this illustration:
 - 1) "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" is equivalent to "He that getteth on a train and is seated shall go to Chicago." The essential act is to get on the train; he will get to Chicago whether he is seated or not. The believer is saved and may be baptized if he chooses; he is saved whether or not he is baptized. But....
 - 2) Answer: On the surface, this seems to be a logical argument. The flaw is in this: If belief and boarding the train are parallel, then salvation and getting to Chicago are parallel; if one is saved at the point of faith (without baptism), then one is (without being seated) instantly in Chicago when he boards the train. The analogy breaks down. Both belief and baptism are necessary in order to be saved.
 - c. There are many false teachers in our society and there were many back in the first century: "For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ" (2 Cor. 11:13).
 - 1) 1 John 4:1: "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world."
 - 2) They were deceitful workers. A false teacher can be a hard worker. But he is a deceitful worker! He pretends to teach the truth; none of them will admit that they teach error. A false teacher who is smart can invent all manner of logically-sounding arguments, but in every case, there is one or more fatal flaws. We must be wise enough to see the flaw, and expose it.
 - 3) One is deceitful if he will present only a part of the truth, those passages which seem to lend support to his doctrine. If he ignores other verses which contradict his conclusion, he is dishonest with the truth.
6. Hebrews 11:1: "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."
 - a. Our English word *substance* is comprised of two words: **sub**, which means *under*, and **stance**, which means *to stand*, thus giving the meaning "to stand under, to support." This same meaning is found in the Greek term. Faith, therefore, stands under and lends support to those things we hope to obtain. These things we hope for include everything that is part of our eternal inheritance.

- b. Faith is the evidence (conviction) of things not seen. The source of information we have about the future and eternity is God's word. He inhabits eternity, and is able to view the past, the present, and the future with perfect knowledge. When God speaks regarding the events at the end of time, he speaks with absolute knowledge; because we have learned that his word is entirely correct and trustworthy, we accept what he says as the end of all controversy.
- c. God's word states that Christ will return to earth with his mighty angels (1 Th. 4:16; 2 Th. 1:7,8); he will then raise all the dead (John 5:28,29); he will change the living (1 Cor. 15:51, 52); he will bring all humanity into the Judgment (Matt. 25:31-32; Rom. 14:10-12); an eternal destiny will be assigned to each individual (2 Cor. 5:10). In connection with his return, Christ will destroy the earth and the universe (2 Pet. 3:10,11). Our faith in the truthfulness of God's word produces the conviction that these unseen things will be done.

B. Erroneous views exposed by logic.

1. There are those who think that the ignorant heathen will be saved in their unbelief and disobedience, but that view has some very serious problems.
 - a. It implies that the death of Christ was unnecessary. If the heathen of today can be saved without believing in Christ, why could not the entire Gentile world of the first century likewise have been saved? If God could be just and excuse one such person, why not overlook all? Then, why did Jesus have to die? While once God did overlook some things, that time has passed: "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent" (Acts 17:30).
 - b. It implies that there would be a distinct advantage in being an ignorant pagan with no knowledge of the gospel. If that is true, then we would be doing the heathen a disservice by telling them anything at all about Christ! If he did not accept the message he would come under condemnation; if he never learned of the gospel he could do as he pleased and still be saved! If the precept is so, then preaching the gospel is more deadly than the most dreaded disease!
 - c. It implies that the word of God is wrong in all those places where it teaches that they are lost. And it makes Jesus the author of a message that brings condemnation instead of salvation.
 - d. Therefore, rather than vindicating the justice and mercy of God, the doctrine that the heathen will be saved in their ignorance and disobedience makes God to be a respecter of persons, self-contradictory, and harsh to Christ and his own offspring.
 - e. 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12: "And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."
 2. Some think that repentance and godly sorrow are the same.
 - a. Passages:
 - 1) 2 Corinthians 7:10: "For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death."
 - 2) Matthew 3:8: "Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance."
 - b. Godly sorrow produces repentance; godly sorrow is a sincere regret for having violated God's word. Worldly sorrow produces death; godly sorrow produces genuine repentance. These are illustrated in the cases of Peter and Judas.
 - 1) Matthew 26:75: "And Peter remembered the word which Jesus had said, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly."
 - 2) Matthew 27:3: "Then Judas, who betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders."
 - 3) Peter genuinely repented, but Judas was overcome with regret.
 - c. Repentance results in a change of life.
 - d. Therefore, repentance is the decision we make [the commitment we reach] to change our ways.
- C. There is a great deal of faulty reasoning in our world today.**
1. Some infidels have made this argument against the inspiration of the Bible.
 - a. The argument is made in this order:
 - 1) "The Bible says that the Garden of Eden was in Mesopotamia."
 - 2) "The Bible says that the forbidden fruit Adam and Eve ate was an apple."
 - 3) "We know that apples do not grow in Mesopotamia."
 - 4) "Therefore the Bible is wrong and cannot be inspired."
 - b. The argument makes at least one fatal error—concerning the identity of the forbidden fruit. The Bible does not identify it as an apple; it does not identify it at all except to say it came from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.
 2. There are those who believe in infant church membership argue foolishly:
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- a. They allege:
 - 1) That since the house of Lydia was baptized into the church—
 - 2) That among the members of her household, there must have been at least one infant—
 - 3) Therefore, it is scriptural to baptize infants today.
 - b. They can prove their case if they will do one thing: tell us the name, the age, and the sex of just one of those little ones! It cannot be done!
 3. There are some who allege that babies are born into this world already guilty of the sins of Adam.
 - a. Some of them have argued that when a little baby cries, that is a plain indication “that the devil is in” that little infant. If that is so, what does it mean when an adult, an upstanding member of their religious, sheds tears? Did baby Jesus ever cry? The argument is an empty and meaningless attempt to prop up a foolish doctrine.
 - b. They misuse passages such as Psalms 58:3: “The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies.”
 - 1) The sin of the one described is the offense of speaking lies. Speaking lies is a voluntary act. An infant cannot even speak, let alone tell lies. And one can only do something voluntarily after he has reached an age of maturity to make a choice.
 - 2) Notice also that the ones described go astray—they were not born in that condition. The passage does not say how long it is after their birth that they go astray; it is obvious that they can go astray only after they reach an age where they can make conscious choices, at which point God can hold them responsible for going astray.
 - c. Consider these verses which uproot the false doctrine of original sin [that we are born already guilty of sin].
 - 1) Ezekiel 28:15: “Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee.” [We are not born guilty of sin, but perfect—without any guilt].
 - 2) Genesis 8:21: “And the LORD smelled a sweet savour; and the LORD said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done.” We are not born guilty of sin, but we acquire guilt during our youthful years—when we have reached an age when we choose to do evil.
 - d. Further, if we are born guilty of sin, from whom did we obtain that guilt?
 - 1) Ezekiel 18:20: “The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.” We are plainly told that we do not derive the guilt of sin from our parents; and we do not acquire righteousness from our parents. The guilt of sin cannot be transferred from one person to another; and righteousness cannot be transferred from one person to another.
 - 2) Since we did not inherit the guilt of sin from our parents, if we are born guilty of sin, from whom did we get that guilt? The only other source would be from God—and how foolish that thought is! God is entirely free from sin! We came from God as pure as God himself is pure.
 - e. Sin is the transgression of God’s law; that transgression cannot be done for us by someone else; we must personally be in violation of his word.
 - 1) 1 John 3:4: “Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.”
 - 2) Romans 4:15: “...Where no law is, there is no transgression.”
 - 3) Romans 5:13: “...Sin is not imputed when there is no law.”
 4. There are those who argue that a belief or practice is authorized unless it is directly forbidden in the Scriptures.
 - a. Some argue: “Since the New Testament does not directly say, ‘Thou shalt not use instrumental music in worship,’ then we may use instruments of music when we worship God.”
 - b. Common sense answers this argument:
 - 1) A doctor’s prescription tells the druggist the medicine he is directed to provide you to treat your ailment. How would we react if the druggist used the logic that since your prescription for *avandia* [diabetic medicine] did not say, “thou shalt not fill the bottle with *digitalis* [a heart medication], then I will give him digitalis.” That druggist would not be in business long; he would not be running loose for long!
 - 2) Suppose you are driving down the interstate highway and see a sign which says, “Speed Limit 70.” Since the sign did not say anything against doing 85, does that give you the right to drive 85? Would you be able to use this logic on the state trooper who stops you, by claiming, “The sign did not directly forbid me to drive 85?”
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- 3) If you went into a restaurant to eat supper, and told the waitress that you wanted roast duck, baked potato, and a salad; since you did not tell her not to bring pork chops, green beans, and a stalk of celery, does she have the right to make that substitution?
 - 4) Suppose you were to order a man's coat from Sears Roebuck, and specified the size and color; would the Sears employee have the right to send you a woman's coat, of a different size and color? Remember, on your order blank you did not tell them not to send you a woman's coat.
 - 5) You would not go to the local postmaster to get married; he does not have the authority to perform weddings. But there is nothing in his job description that specifically states that he cannot perform wedding ceremonies.
- c. When we specify what it is we want from a store or other business, that automatically excludes everything we did not list; we do not have to go through an entire list of what we do not want.
- d. This is true with God's directions for mankind. He tells us what he wants us to do, and that excludes all other possible items. When he told us to sing in worship, that is the kind of music he wants; the direction for us to sing automatically excludes whistling, humming, and playing on an instrument.
- 1) Colossians 3:16: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord."
 - 2) Ephesians 5:18-19: "...Be filled with the Spirit; Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord."
- e. The authority to believe and practice a religious or spiritual act is bound up in the Bible.
- 1) Colossians 3:17: "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him."
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 4:6: "Now these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes; that in us ye might learn not to go beyond the things which are written; that no one of you be puffed up for the one against the other."
 - 3) 2 John 1:9-11: "Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God: he that abideth in the teaching, the same hath both the Father and the Son. If any one cometh unto you, and bringeth not this teaching, receive him not into your house, and give him no greeting: for he that giveth him greeting partaketh in his evil works."
 - 4) Revelation 22:18-19: "I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, if any man shall add unto them, God shall add unto him the plagues which 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 from the tree of life, and out of the holy city, which are written in this book."
 - 5) Galatians 1:8-9: "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed."

D. We can use logic to answer important questions.

1. Why did God cause death to be present on earth?
 - a. What would earth be like if there was no such thing as death?
 - 1) The wicked would only get more wicked—and we could not get rid of them.
 - 2) The sick would only get sicker—and they could not find relief by dying.
 - 3) Those who suffer pain from some accident or disease could never get well.
 - 4) The earth would become so crowded that life would be miserable—it could only get worse.
 - 5) What would we eat if there was no such thing as death? No more steak! No more fish! No more hamburgers! No more country ham! No more pork chops! If there is no death, animals would not die—no meat!
 - b. Death came into the human family because Adam and Eve chose to disobey God's word.
 - 1) Genesis 2:16-17: "And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."
 - 2) Genesis 3:6: "And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat."
 - 3) 1 Corinthians 15:21-22: "For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."
 - 4) Romans 5:12: "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so

death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.”

- c. Some claim that the guilt of Adam and Eve is passed down to all of their descendants, that you and I were born already guilty of sin! But a logical examination of the Scriptures shows this is not true.
 - 1) Sin is the transgression of God’s word:
 - a) “Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law” (1 John 3:4).
 - b) “...Where no law is, there is no transgression” (Rom. 4:15).
 - c) “...Sin is not imputed when there is no law” (Rom. 5:13).
 - 2) The guilt of sin cannot be transferred to another person: “The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him” (Ezek. 18:20).
 - 3) A person is guilty of sin only if he personally transgresses God’s word.
 2. When will Christ return, raise the dead, change the living, and bring us all into the Judgment
 - a. There are many who would have us believe that they know when that will be!
 - 1) William Miller thought he had discovered that time by adding up some figures found in the Bible. He was discredited when he missed that date more than once. His followers were taken over by Ellen G. White, who developed the Seventh Day Adventist Church.
 - 2) The Watchtower Witness [who like to be called Jehovah’s Witnesses] said that Christ would return in 1975. They lost a large number of followers when the Lord did not appear.
 - 3) Others have taught that Christ would return within one generation of the time when Israel was established in Palestine as a nation in 1948. These false teachers claimed that a generation was about forty years, so around 1988 the Lord would return. We are now almost twenty years beyond that target date, and the Lord has not returned.
 - b. Notice this plain statement our Lord made about the time of his return: “But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father. Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is” (Mark 13:32-33).
 - 1) Our Lord knew the Old Testament perfectly; there was nothing in the entire Old Testament that he did not know. Can anyone point to any truth in the Old Testament that Christ did not know and understand? Despite knowing the Old Testament, he did not know when the end of time would be. Therefore, the Old Testament does not reveal when that time will be.
 - 2) Our Lord is the author of the New Testament. Is there anything in the New Testament which he did not know? Since he did not know when his Second Coming would be, which would be at the end of the world, it follows that the New Testament does not reveal when that time will be.
 - 3) A logical look at the Bible shows this truth.
 3. Can we receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit today?
 - a. The apostles received this power, which enabled the apostles **to impart spiritual, miraculous gifts** to other Christians. Only the apostles had this capability. Philip had preached the gospel to the Samaritans and many of them had become Christians; but an apostle had to be present before they could receive the supernatural gifts; hence, Peter and John went to Samaria and laid hands on them to impart these gifts (Acts 8:12-19). Philip could not impart the spiritual gifts; Simon could not obtain that ability to impart that gift to others (8:18-24).
 - b. Acts 19:6: "And when Paul had laid *his* hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied." The apostle Paul was able to lay hands on the 12 converts at Ephesus and thus impart to them certain of the spiritual gifts.
 - c. It was necessary for Paul to be personally in Rome in order to impart gifts to certain Christians there. "For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established" (Rom. 1:11). If this could be imparted by any who had a spiritual gift, why did Paul say he had to be there before it could be imparted to them?
 - d. 2 Timothy 1:6 shows that Timothy received his spiritual gift through the laying on of the apostle Paul's hands.
 - e. If anyone today has the baptism of the Holy Spirit, he could lay hands on another and confer a spiritual gift to him. If not, why not? Since there is no one on earth who can lay hands on another person and give to that person one or more of the spiritual gifts, then there is no one on earth who has received the baptism of the Holy Spirit.
- E. To understand the Bible, we must consider all that it says on a given subject.
1. “The sum of thy word is truth” (Ps. 119:160).
 - a. Some folks only want to look at one passage to learn the truth about a subject, but that may not be all the Bible says about that subject.
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- b. Not every truth is written on one page; we must search the Scriptures to learn all that is given on a certain subject.
 - 2. The Case of Malchus' Ear.
 - a. The reports given in Matthew, Mark and Luke do not provide all the information; must look at all four accounts.
 - 1) Matthew 26:51: "And, behold, one of them which were with Jesus stretched out his hand, and drew his sword, and struck a servant of the high priest's, and smote off his ear."
 - 2) Luke 22:50: "And one of them smote the servant of the high priest, and cut off his right ear."
 - 3) John 18:10: "Then Simon Peter having a sword drew it, and smote the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus."
 - b. Matthew—tells us that one of the disciples—which? Whose ear? Which ear?
 - c. Luke—does not tell which disciple, what weapon he used, or who's ear was severed. He tells us which ear.
 - d. John—tells us that it was Peter who used a sword to cut of the right ear of Malchus.
 - 3. The Case of the Rich Young Ruler.
 - a. Matthew 19:16-22 tells us he had great possessions and that he was young.
 - b. Mark 10:22 gives the same information
 - c. Luke 18:18-24 reveals that he was a ruler and was very rich.
 - d. With all the information collected, we call him the rich, young, ruler.
 - 4. The Case of the Sayings on the Cross.
 - a. Matthew 27:46—"Why has thou forsaken me?"
 - b. Luke 23:
 - 1) Verse 34: "Father, forgive them..."
 - 2) Verse 43: "Today shalt thou be with me in Paradise."
 - 3) Verse 46: "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit."
 - c. John 19:
 - 1) Verses 26-27: Woman, behold thy son...Behold thy mother."
 - 2) Verse 28: "I thirst."
 - 3) Verse 30: "It is finished."
 - d. Psalm 119:160: The sum of God's word is truth.
 - 5. The Case of the Establishment of the Lord's Church.
 - a. The kingdom (which is the Lord's church) was to be established while the Roman kings were in power (Daniel 2:44); the Roman Empire ended in 476 A.D.
 - b. The kingdom (church) was at hand during the work of John the Baptizer and Christ (Matt. 3:2; 4:17).
 - c. The kingdom (church) was present during the first century:
 - 1) Hebrews 12:28: "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear."
 - 2) Colossians 1:13: "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son."
 - 3) Revelation 1:9: "I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ."
 - d. The church (kingdom) was still future before Acts 2; it is spoken of as being present from Acts 2 onward:
 - 1) Matthew 16:18-19: "And I say also 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."
 - 2) Acts 2:47: "Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."
 - e. No one verse gives all the details of the church's establishment.
 - 6. The Case of the Great Commission.
 - a. Matthew 28:18-20: teaching and baptizing.
 - b. Mark 16:15-16: preaching, belief and baptism.
 - c. Luke 24:46-47: Repentance.
 - d. The full picture:
 - 1) Presentation of the gospel—
 - 2) Belief—
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- 3) Repentance—
 - 4) Baptism (confession is implied by faith).
7. The Case of New Testament Worship.
- a. We must see what the Bible says on the subject, put these acts together, and thus we see the whole picture of what is involved in New Testament worship.
 - 1) Acts 20:7: “And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.”
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 16:1-2: “Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.”
 - 3) Colossians 3:16: “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.”
 - 4) Ephesians 5:19: “Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.”
 - 5) Acts 2:42: “And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.”
 - b. The sum of God’s word is truth.
8. The Case of the Plan of Salvation.
- a. We must put the passages together that speak on the subject:
 - 1) Believe—Romans 10:17.
 - 2) Repent—Luke 13:1-5.
 - 3) Confess—Matthew 10:32-33.
 - 4) Baptism—Acts 10:48; 22:16; 2:38.
 - b. Some want only to look at Acts 16:30-31 to learn the plan of salvation: “And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house” (Acts 16:30-31). But there is more to the subject than faith; Paul proceeded to teach the man what he must believe and do in order to be saved.
 - c. Some want only to look at Acts 2:21 to learn how to be saved: “And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Acts 2:21). Peter shows in verse thirty-eight how to call on the name of the Lord: “Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.”

III. CONCLUSION.

- A. It is extremely dangerous to isolate one verse, ignoring other passages.
 1. To understand the Bible, we must gather all the pertinent facts on a subject.
 2. These facts must be so understood as to present a harmonious message.
 3. Our conclusions must not contradict any other scripture.
 - B. To rightly divide the word of truth is to locate and combine all that the Bible say on a certain subject:
 1. See the clear meaning taught by these passages.
 2. Believe the truth thus discovered.
 3. Obey the requirements found.
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Our God and Our Nation

I. INTRODUCTION.

- A. God requires that both individuals and nation strive for righteousness.
1. Psalms 9:17: "The wicked shall be turned into hell, *and* all the nations that forget God."
 2. Proverbs 14:34: "Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin *is* a reproach to any people."
 3. A nation is righteous only if certain conditions are present:
 - a. The significant number of its citizens must be righteous.
 - b. The laws of the nation must be righteous.
 - c. The laws of the nation must be fairly enforced.
 - d. The nation must adhere to the morality enjoined on mankind by Jehovah.
- B. The Bible teaches the following truths regarding nations.
1. The destiny of nations is ultimately in the hands of the Almighty.
 2. God expects all nations to conform to certain moral standards.
 3. When the moral status of a nation declines to a certain point, God can bring punishment on that nation.
 4. Notice how certain sinful practices have been legalized:
 - a. Alcohol, Divorce for any reason, Prostitution, Homosexuality, Gambling, Abortion, Some Drugs.
 - b. Once the process of legalizing sin begins, there is no logical stopping place! What is in store for our citizens if the trend continues?
 5. Our misguided courts have outlawed the Bible and prayer from many public places.
 6. "We have no government armed with power capable of contending with human passions unbridled by morality and religion. Avarice, ambition, revenge, or gallantry would break the strongest cords of our Constitution as a whale goes through a net. Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other."

II. DISCUSSION.

- A. God is omnipotent and reigns supreme in his universe.
1. His influence is exerted over the destiny of all nations.
 - a. Psalms 22:28: "For the kingdom *is* the LORD'S: and he *is* the governor among the nations."
 - b. Daniel 2:21: "And he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings...."
 - c. Daniel 4:17: "This matter *is*...to the intent that the living may know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men."
 - d. Daniel 4:32: "...until thou [Nebuchadnezzar] know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will."
 2. He can even exalt a foreign power to punish people more righteous than the punishing nation: "Behold ye among the heathen, and regard, and wonder marvellously: for *I* will work a work in your days, *which* ye will not believe, though it be told *you*. For, lo, I raise up the Chaldeans, *that* bitter and hasty nation, which shall march through the breadth of the land, to possess the dwellingplaces *that are* not theirs" (Hab 1:5-6).
 3. The times (duration) of nations and the bounds of their habitation (the extent of their spread) are under God's control. "And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation" (Acts 17:26).
 4. God maintains control of his universe!
 - a. Revelation 1:5: "And from Jesus Christ...**the prince of the kings of the earth**...."
 - b. Revelation 19:16: "...**KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.**"
 - c. God exerts control over his creation by his natural laws and his providence.
- B. Only God can assure a nation's security.
1. Political strength, mighty arsenals, great armies, natural and man-made barriers cannot assure a nation's safety.
 - a. America was protected during the World Wars by the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans.
 - b. Babylon's walls 300' tall, 75-90' thick—but they could not protect the city!
 - 1) Isaiah 13:19-20: "And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation: neither shall the
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- Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall the shepherds make their fold there."
- 2) Jeremiah 51:44: "And I will punish Bel in Babylon...the nations shall not flow together any more unto him: yea, the wall of Babylon shall fall."
 - 3) Daniel 5:1-6: "Belshazzar the king made a great feast to a thousand of his lords...Then they brought the golden vessels that were taken out of the temple of the house of God which *was* at Jerusalem... They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone. In the same hour came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaster of the wall of the king's palace: and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote. Then the king's countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another."
 - 4) Daniel 5:18-22: "O thou king, the most high God gave Nebuchadnezzar thy father a kingdom, and majesty, and glory, and honour: And for the majesty that he gave him, all people, nations, and languages, trembled and feared before him: whom he would he slew; and whom he would he kept alive; and whom he would he set up; and whom he would he put down. But when his heart was lifted up, and his mind hardened in pride, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him: And he was driven from the sons of men; and his heart was made like the beasts, and his dwelling *was* with the wild asses: they fed him with grass like oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven; till he knew that the most high God ruled in the kingdom of men, and *that* he appointeth over it whomsoever he will. And thou his son, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thine heart, though thou knewest all this."
 - 5) Daniel 5:25-31: "And this *is* the writing that was written, MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN. This *is* the interpretation of the thing: MENE; God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it. TEKEL; Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting. PERES; Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians....In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain..."
- c. Edom felt secure in Petra, with its granite cliffs forming a narrow entrance 15-20 wide, with walls 2000' high, through which an invader would have to pass; despite this stronghold that was easy to defend, it fell to Nabataeans about 500 B.C.
- 1) Psalms 137:7: "Remember, O LORD, the children of Edom in the day of Jerusalem; who said, Raze *it*, raze *it*, *even* to the foundation thereof."
 - 2) Obadiah 1:3-4: "The pride of thine heart hath deceived thee, thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, whose habitation *is* high; that saith in his heart, Who shall bring me down to the ground? Though thou exalt *thyself* as the eagle, and though thou set thy nest among the stars, thence will I bring thee down, saith the LORD."
 - 3) Obadiah 1:8-12: "Shall I not in that day, saith the LORD, even destroy the wise *men* out of Edom, and understanding out of the mount of Esau? And thy mighty *men*, O Teman, shall be dismayed, to the end that every one of the mount of Esau may be cut off by slaughter. For *thy* violence against thy brother Jacob shame shall cover thee, and thou shalt be cut off for ever. In the day that thou stoodest on the other side, in the day that the strangers carried away captive his forces, and foreigners entered into his gates, and cast lots upon Jerusalem, even thou *wast* as one of them. But thou shouldest not have looked on the day of thy brother in the day that he became a stranger; neither shouldest thou have rejoiced over the children of Judah in the day of their destruction; neither shouldest thou have spoken proudly in the day of distress."
- d. In our day of chemical and biological weapons, our medical prowess, the latest equipment, treatment and drugs, cannot protect us, if an enemy is set on attacking us using this arsenal.
2. If God stands opposed to a nation, it cannot long stand!
 - a. Where is the ancient Assyrian Empire? What happened to Babylonian Empire? Persian Empire?
 - b. Where is the Grecian Empire? Or the Empire of Rome?
 - c. Where are the empires of the Aztecs and Incas?
 - d. What happened to Hitler's Empire that was to last a thousand years? Where is Tojo's Japanese Empire?
 - e. What became of the godless USSR which asserted that they would bury us?
- C. When a nation's morality declines below a certain level, God takes action.
1. The case of the Amorites:
 - a. "But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites *is*
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- not yet full" (Gen 15:16).
- b. God would not dispossess them of Canaan until their iniquity was full.
 - c. His long-sufferance would delay the entry of Israel into the promised land.
 - d. We wonder why God allows evil nations and wicked men to prevail: His patience is being shown; also his dealings are unbelievably complex; he plans for centuries; he has to calculate the effects of his actions on countless people, in many places, who will live at different times.
 - e. When the iniquity of the Amorites peaked, they lost their deed to Canaan; but eventually so did Israel: "Therefore it shall come to pass, *that* as all good things are come upon you, which the LORD your God promised you; so shall the LORD bring upon you all evil things, until he have destroyed you from off this good land which the LORD your God hath given you. When ye have transgressed the covenant of the LORD your God, which he commanded you, and have gone and served other gods, and bowed yourselves to them; then shall the anger of the LORD be kindled against you, and ye shall perish quickly from off the good land which he hath given unto you" (Josh 23:15-16).
2. The case of Sodom and Gomorrah:
 - a. "And the LORD said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous" (Gen 18:20).
 - b. They had crossed the line and must be destroyed! His mercy has a limit: Compare: "And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also *is* flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years" (Gen 6:3).
 - c. But for Abraham's sake, he would spare them if 10 righteous were found in the city of Sodom.
 - d. For lack of six people, 1000s were destroyed! You are important: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 5:16).
 3. The case of Nineveh:
 - a. "Go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me" (Jonah 1:2).
 - b. They were given 40 days to repent; the message terrified them; they repented: Jonah 3 (773 B.C.).
 - c. One hundred and fifty years later they returned to sin, and were destroyed: "But with an overrunning flood he will make an utter end of the place thereof..." (Nahum 1:8, 625 B.C.).
 - d. They were defeated by Babylon in 612 B.C.
 4. The case of Israel.
 - a. Throughout their history as God's chosen people, they ran hot and cold.
 - b. They reached a point in their rebellion that God disowned them after they rejected Christ; he had no further use for them.
 - c. They were overthrown by the Roman army in 70 A.D. "That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar. Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, *thou* that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under *her* wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed *is* he that cometh in the name of the Lord" (Matt. 23:35-39; cf. Matt. 24:1-35).
 - d. A remnant obeyed the gospel; a remnant is in Palestine today; the rest are scattered as a reminder of God's sovereignty and as proof of inspiration: "...Though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee: but I will correct thee in measure..." (Jer 30:11).
 5. God does not change in his righteous character: "For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed" (Mal. 3:6; cf. Heb. 13:8).
 - a. Since he punished wicked nations in ancient times we may expect he can do so now.
 - b. The Old Testament is important: "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope" (Rom. 15:4).
- D. What about the future of our own great nation?
1. Has America become more righteous or less righteous over the past 200 years? By comparing current attitudes with those of the past we can answer this question.
 - a. Washington: "It is impossible to rightly govern the world without God and the Bible...He is
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- worse than an infidel who does not read his Bible and acknowledge his obligation to God."
- b. Webster: "If we abide by the principles taught in the Bible our country will go on prospering, but if we and our posterity neglect its instruction and authority, no man can tell how sudden a catastrophe may over-whelm us and bury us and our glory in profound obscurity."
2. Public laws and practices show that a great decline in respect for the Bible has occurred in America. This cannot be done without grievous consequences.
 - a. Prayers to God and studying his word are now forbidden in public schools.
 - b. Each year we murder more than 1 million unborn babies.
 - c. Add to this the crime figures, drug problems, sexual perversion, sexual predators, hatred, religious error, suicide rates, child abuse, and sins of other kinds.
 3. There are many who believe the Bible and follow it; but America has lost much of the former respect for the moral principles of the Bible.
 4. How does God punish a nation?
 - a. By bringing evil rulers into power.
 - b. By allowing an enemy to invade.
 - c. Giving the people over to a reprobate mind.
 - d. By giving the people up to vile passions.
 - e. By sending the people a strong delusion so they will reject truth and believe lies.
 - f. By letting them do what they want to do.
 - g. Ecclesiastes 8:11: "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil."

III. CONCLUSION.

A. What can we do to preserve our nation?

1. We can commit ourselves to godly, scriptural lives.
 - a. Even the church is slipping into the ways of our society.
 - b. The influence of a few godly people is tremendous.
 - 1) The presence of only six more righteous souls could have spared Sodom.
 - 2) Matthew 5:13-16: "Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."
 - 3) Philippians 2:14-16: "Do all things without murmurings and disputings: 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; Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain."
2. We can bind our homes together with the Word of God.
 - a. The home is the backbone of a nation: as goes the home, so the nation.
 - b. Strong Christian homes can benefit the nation and the world.
3. We can insist that our elected officials enact and enforce only righteous laws. They might not listen to us, but they will take heed if we refuse to vote for those politicians who support abortion, same-sex marriage, the gay-lesbian movement, the radical women's agenda, and other liberal programs.
4. We can teach against the evils that plague us and enlist others in the war.
5. We can vote only for those people who reliably affirm that they stand for godliness—and against abortion, gay marriage, divorce for any cause, and other evil practices and laws.

B. You can begin your battle now by obeying the gospel or by being restored!

1. You cannot lead where you will not go.
2. You cannot teach others to live good moral lives unless you are living a good moral life.
3. You cannot show others the need to become simple New Testament Christians unless you are one.

We Need Good Preachers Before We Get Good Government

In his 1798 letter to the officers of the First Brigade of the Third Division of Massachusetts' Militia, America's second president, John Adams, made a famous observation about the U.S. Constitution: "We have no government armed with power capable of contending with human passions unbridled by morality and religion. Avarice, ambition, revenge, or gallantry would break the strongest cords of our Constitution as a

whale goes through a net. Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other.”

Noting its limited scope and enumerated powers, Adams argued such a founding document would adequately govern given the personal and civic decorum and the decency of the citizens of the United States. Flip that coin over to understand that *without* the absolutes of right and wrong woven into the tapestry of a moral and religious people, an overreaching and excessive government would follow.

Dial the clock forward to 2014 America -- the nation devoted to the god of me, myself and I, rather than the Hand of Providence of earlier years. Consider the cries of discrimination, intolerance and even racism, when societal standards of what is right, decent and good are most perfectly summed up by the bumper sticker, “WHATEVER!”

This cultural casserole of conscience shuns “a moral and religious people” and heralds the governing elites who view their intellect as superior to the weak leaning on the crutch of faith and religion. These 21st century elites openly mock the belief in and reverence of the [God of the Bible] who endows His creation with unalienable rights, demands personal responsibility, shows love and mercy through community benevolence and charity, and has a dim view of laziness, lying and corruption.

Yet a society composed of individuals who subscribe to honesty, individual discipline and industriousness, mutual respect of persons and property, along with a measure of good will and charity, is a free people. Such a society will enjoy Liberty driven not by external lists and constraints of law, but by internal goodness and the “Golden Rule.”

As we navigate the path toward the elections of 2014 and 2016, we ask this: Instead of winning the argument and exacting policy, isn't the more bountiful fruit to sustain our Constitution's limited government enjoyed by winning hearts and minds to live a life of faith?

Which brings us to former Arkansas governor and TV personality Mike Huckabee. Following last week's Supreme Court refusal to hear cases on same-sex marriage, Huckabee vowed he would leave the Republican Party if the fight against same-sex marriage and abortion did not continue as a primary political plank of the party. It's not the first such declaration from those of faith who seek higher office or lead in an elected position.

Yet a “house divided will not stand.” The nation's Mike Huckabees should be cautious in abandoning the political vehicle that most frequently and effectively opposes the party whose membership voted God out in the 2012 Democrat National Convention.

Isn't it even more critical in this cultural battle that those [who follow the Gospel of Christ] season their environs by being the “salt of the earth” rather than taking their 50-pound salt block into isolation?

In using John Adams' observation to inform our center-right pursuits, fiscal restraint and discipline, economic success and might, along with a populace of individual accountability and productivity, are more likely when our Judeo-Christian God informs our politics and drives our conduct.

One might say John Adams was observing that good preachers precede good government.

The Silence of the Scriptures

I. INTRODUCTION.

A. It is always essential for people to obey the will of God.

1. The Bible is the expression of God's will (Acts 3:22-23; Heb. 5:8-9; 2 Tim. 3:16-17).
2. But how can we come to an understanding of the Bible? How does the Bible express the will of God?
 - a. We must use sound logic and reason correctly in order to come to a proper understanding of God's revealed will: Acts 17:2; Isa. 1:18.
 - b. It teaches by plain statements and commands, by implication, and by setting up precedents for us to imitate.
 - c. And there is something to be learned by the things which the Bible does not say.
3. 1 Peter 4:11. Growing out of this requirement is the statement made prominent by the Restoration Movement which began in the early 1800s: "Let us speak where the Bible speaks; let us remain silent where the Bible is silent."

B. A great interest has developed in the silence of the Bible in recent years.

1. One man wrote that the "silence of scriptures neither authorizes nor prohibits but is neutral." In other words, "What the Scriptures do not prohibit, is freely permitted; we may do anything in religion that is not plainly forbidden by the Bible."
2. Others try to justify this same conclusion by this argument: "Where there is no law, there is no sin (Rom. 4:15; 5:13); if God has not spoken on a given subject, we are at liberty to do what we think best in that matter."
 - a. The argument concludes: "Since God did not legislate directly in regards to the use of instrumental music in worship, we may choose to use them if we wish; no sin is involved since God did not legislate a law on the subject."
 - b. The same argument would similarly allow the formation of a missionary society to do the work of the church; and it has been used to justify every form and type of innovation.
3. There are two views of interpretation that men apply to the Bible.
 - a. One is the method that was popularized by Martin Luther: what the Bible does not specifically forbid, may be safely practiced.
 - b. The other is that we must have Bible authorization (by direct statement, a clear example, or by a plain implication) before we have the right to believe or follow some religious tenet.
4. How shall we view the matter of the **silence of the Bible**? Using sound reasoning, we shall explore the subject, with the Bible and good logic as our guiding light.

II. DISCUSSION.

A. Let us contemplate these examples from the common operations of life.

1. After examining the menu in a restaurant, you place an order based on what you have seen on the menu. You order a six ounce steak cooked well done; you said nothing about liver and onions. Because you omitted telling the waiter not to bring you liver and onions, does he have the right to serve you liver and onions?
2. Suppose you prepare a grocery list, and send your husband to the store. Do you have to specifically exclude every item you do not want him to get? Or is it the case that your list tells him exactly what you want and excludes everything else?
3. When a doctor writes a prescription for a certain kind and strength of medicine, may the druggist give you any drug that is not expressly prohibited in the prescription?
4. Suppose you are driving on the interstate highway; the posted speed limit is 65 m.p.h. Because the sign did not plainly say you could not drive 85 m.p.h, do you have the right to drive at that higher speed? Neither the policeman nor the judge will honor your argument that "it did not say that I could not drive 85 m.p.h."
5. If you fill out a mail order and send it to Sears, must it individually name every item you do not want, or is it sufficient simply to state on the order blank the items you do want? Does not your silence exclude every unwanted item?
6. Must you specifically exclude every person you do not want to receive a letter you are addressing? It would be foolish to think so! Your silence excludes all others.
7. Were you to enter into a contract with a builder to construct a new dwelling house for you, would he have the right to build you a cattle barn because you did not directly specify in the contract not to build that animal shelter?
8. Only a foolish man would contend that one must expressly exclude everything that is unwanted in

these simple affairs of life. One is equally foolish to assert that God did not operate with the same degree of good sense when he gave us the Bible!

B. Consider these examples from the Old Testament.

1. Genesis 6:14: "Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch."
 - a. Did Noah have the right to use oak or any other type of wood which God had not specifically excluded by name? Or was his obligation to use gopher wood and only gopher wood? How would you have understood God's instruction?
 - b. Since the information given to Noah said nothing against building a wagon, could he have obeyed God by building a covered wagon instead of an ark?
2. Exodus 25:40 "And look that thou make them after their pattern, which was showed thee in the mount." The pattern Moses was given included the positive description of what God wanted; it did not contain an exhaustive list of what God did not want.
3. Leviticus 10:1-2: "And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the LORD, which he commanded them not. And there went out fire from the LORD, and devoured them, and they died before the LORD."
 - a. What made their action sinful? **Their offering a fire that God had not commanded.** God had given instructions that the fire for the burning of incense was to be obtained from the altar of burnt offerings (Lev. 16:12).
 - b. The Lord did not have to specifically list every source from which they were not to get their fire; he simply gave the location where he wanted them to get it. They erred by not heeding the directions God gave them.
4. Numbers 22:18: "And Balaam answered and said unto the servants of Balak, If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of the LORD my God, to do less or more. Numbers 24:13: "If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the commandment of the LORD, to do either good or bad of mine own mind; but what the LORD saith, that will I speak? Numbers 22:20: "And God came unto Balaam at night, and said unto him, If the men come to call thee, rise up, and go with them; but yet the word which I shall say unto thee, that shalt thou do." Balaam did not have the right to do or to say anything which God's instructions had not included.
5. 1 Samuel 13:8-14: "And he tarried seven days, according to the set time that Samuel had appointed: but Samuel came not to Gilgal; and the people were scattered from him. {9} And Saul said, Bring hither a burnt offering to me, and peace offerings. And he offered the burnt offering. {10} And it came to pass, that as soon as he had made an end of offering the burnt offering, behold, Samuel came; and Saul went out to meet him, that he might salute him. {11} And Samuel said, What hast thou done? And Saul said, Because I saw that the people were scattered from me, and that thou camest not within the days appointed, and that the Philistines gathered themselves together at Michmash; {12} Therefore said I, The Philistines will come down now upon me to Gilgal, and I have not made supplication unto the LORD: I forced myself therefore, and offered a burnt offering. {13} And Samuel said to Saul, Thou hast done foolishly: thou hast not kept the commandment of the LORD thy God, which he commanded thee: for now would the LORD have established thy kingdom upon Israel for ever. {14} But now thy kingdom shall not continue: the LORD hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the LORD hath commanded him to be captain over his people, because thou hast not kept that which the LORD commanded thee." God had not said expressly to Saul, "Thou shalt not offer sacrifices." But by giving to the priests the authority to sacrifice, he withheld that authority from Saul and all others.
6. 1 Samuel 15:3-23. God directed Saul to utterly destroy Amelek. He did not directly say that Agag was to be slain. But his instructions clearly intended that even the king be slain, as well as even the best of the flocks and herds. Saul erred in excluding what God had included; this is just as sinful as to include what God and excluded.
7. 2 Samuel 6:6-7: "And when they came to Nachon's threshingfloor, Uzzah put forth his hand to the ark of God, and took hold of it; for the oxen shook it. And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Uzzah; and God smote him there for his error; and there he died by the ark of God." God gave the authority to certain ones to bear the ark when it was transported; Uzzah had no authority. God penalized this man because he had violated the silence of God's word!
8. 2 Chronicles 26:16-21: "But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction: for he transgressed against the LORD his God, and went into the temple of the LORD to burn incense

upon the altar of incense. {17} And Azariah the priest went in after him, and with him fourscore priests of the LORD, that were valiant men: {18} And they withstood Uzziah the king, and said unto him, It appertaineth not unto thee, Uzziah, to burn incense unto the LORD, but to the priests the sons of Aaron, that are consecrated to burn incense: go out of the sanctuary; for thou hast trespassed; neither shall it be for thine honour from the LORD God. {19} Then Uzziah was wroth, and had a censer in his hand to burn incense: and while he was wroth with the priests, the leprosy even rose up in his forehead before the priests in the house of the LORD, from beside the incense altar. {20} And Azariah the chief priest, and all the priests, looked upon him, and, behold, he was leprous in his forehead, and they thrust him out from thence; yea, himself hasted also to go out, because the LORD had smitten him. {21} And Uzziah the king was a leper unto the day of his death, and dwelt in a several house, being a leper; for he was cut off from the house of the LORD..." *God had not forbidden in so many words that he was not allowed to burn incense.*

C. There are many such examples in the New Testament.

1. Matthew 15:9. The Jews had established the practice of handwashing as an act of worship. The Old Testament had not legislated directly against such; it was not included in God's requirements. When men instituted the washing of hands as a required act of devotion to God, they acted without divine approval, and brought upon themselves the condemnation of Christ.
2. Acts 15:24: "Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law: to whom we gave no such commandment." Those teachers who went out from the Jerusalem church acted contrary to God's will when they taught something for which they had not authority.
3. Hebrews 7:12-14: "For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law. {13} For he of whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar. {14} For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood."
 - a. It was necessary for God to change his law in order to make it legal for Christ to be a priest. However, no statement was given in the Old Testament which gave any tribe the right to priesthood except the tribe of Levi.
 - b. When God chose Levi for the priesthood, he automatically excluded all the other tribes. When God made his choice, he did not have to exclude the other tribes individually, and say that none from them were to be chosen as priests.
4. Mark 16:15f; Acts 2:38. The fact that God established baptism for penitent believers excludes all others from this divine benefit. And by the choice of the word he used, the action of baptism is also established.
 - a. No atheist, no animal, no infant, no person who is living in rebellion to God's will, has any right to baptism. Those unbelievers who become believers and will repent have the privilege of being baptized. When an infant reaches an age where he can believe and repent, he can then be baptized.
 - b. God expressed his will in the word "immerse." The Lord did not merely say, "apply water" to the subject, but "immerse" (baptize) him. By telling the action he required, God automatically excluded all other possible "washings."
5. The instruction regarding the Lord's Supper also excludes what it does not include. Unleavened bread and fruit of the vine were the items the Lord used when he instituted the Lord's Supper. Luke 22:19-20; 1 Corinthians 11:20-34.
 - a. If the silence of the Scriptures is neutral, and neither authorizes nor prohibits, then one could correctly substitute virtually anything in the place of bread and grape juice.
 - b. Jesus described the bread as "my flesh." It may be hard for some to visualize the flesh of Christ when unleavened bread is used. Would it be scriptural for us to use the literal flesh of a lamb instead of bread? Christ is described as the "lamb of God." What would be wrong with using little cubes of roast lamb on the Lord's table? The only thing that prohibits such a change is the silence of the Scriptures!
 - c. To replace either of the items the Lord used in the Supper is to act without any heavenly authority! That is what is wrong with the substitute! Those who would shudder to think of such a substitution, will make substitutions in other areas without a thought.

III. CONCLUSION.

A. There are two kinds of scriptural silence.

1. In a general command, in the absence of specific guidelines or limitations, everything required to fulfill the requirement is included and permitted.

- a. God gave the measurements of the ark and specified the kind of wood Noah was to use in its construction. But he left many details to the patriarch's good sense. Noah chose the tools to use and the place to do the work; Noah selected which of the gopher wood trees to cut.
- b. Christ gave us the great work of preaching the gospel to the whole world, but he left to our best judgment the methods of doing the preaching. He bound the message, but not any specific preaching method. We can teach the lost by means of the spoken or written word; we may teach it to large audiences or to only one or two at a time; we may teach directly or by radio and television.
- 2. When a command is specific, it authorizes only what is included in the specific command, and it excludes everything else.
 - a. When the Lord bound the first day of the week as the time when the contribution is to be taken, he excluded Monday-Saturday. 1 Corinthians 16:1-2.
 - b. By establishing as a precedent the eating of the Lord's Supper on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7), he excluded it for other days.
 - c. The command to sing does not include a mechanical instrument of music, and thus does not authorize the use of instrumental music in worship of God. Colossians 3:16.
- 3. To illustrate these two matters, consider this:

GENERIC	SPECIFIC
CAR	1995 ESCORT
GO	WALK
ANIMAL (horse, bird, etc.)	LAMB (Ex. 12:5)
MUSIC	SING (vocal)
APPLY WATER	IMMERSE
GIVE	GIVE AS PROSPERED

B. The Bible teaches in plain words the truth on this important subject.

- 1. Deuteronomy 4:2: "Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you."
- 2. Deuteronomy 5:32: "Ye shall observe to do therefore as the LORD your God hath commanded you: ye shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left."
- 3. Deuteronomy 28:14: "And thou shalt not go aside from any of the words which I command thee this day, to the right hand, or to the left, to go after other gods to serve them."
- 4. Joshua 1:7: "Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest."
- 5. Proverbs 30:6: "Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar."
- 6. Matthew 4:4: "But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."
- 7. 1 Corinthians 4:6: "Now these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes; that in us ye might learn not to go beyond the things which are written; that no one of you be puffed up for the one against the other" (ASV).
- 8. Colossians 3:17: "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him."
- 9. 2 Timothy 1:13: "Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus."
- 10. 2 Timothy 2:2: "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."
- 11. Revelation 22:18-19: "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."

12. 2 John 1:9: "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son."
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Counsel From the Wise Man

I. INTRODUCTION.

A. There has never been any book like the Bible.

1. It alone was inspired of God.
2. Only the Bible provides man with the best possible guidance for life.
3. The Bible is the only source book of information about how to get to heaven.

B. The Bible is unique also in that it gives many meaty and profound principles.

1. The aim of this study is to investigate some of these precepts.
2. It is always profitable to study God's word, from any viewpoint.
3. These precepts are things that have ever been true and applicable to man.

II. DISCUSSION: We shall look at several from the book of Proverbs.

A. Proverbs 15:1: "A soft answer turneth away wrath..."

1. Death and life are in the power of the tongue (Prov. 18:21). Severe wounds can be administered to the defenseless by it; or words which strengthen and encourage.
2. This text shows that in many cases trouble and strife can be averted by a kind, soft response to hard words spoken to us. It is easy to give back harsh words; it is more difficult to answer humbly and kindly.
 - a. Matthew 5:44-45: "But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust."
 - b. Proverbs 25:11: "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver."
 - c. Romans 14:19: "Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another."
 - d. Colossians 4:6: "Let your speech *be* always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man."
3. It is in our best interest to speak kindly to and about each other.
 - a. This must be done if we are to have friends: "A man *that hath* friends must show himself friendly: and there is a friend *that* sticketh closer than a brother" (Prov. 18:24).
 - b. It must be done if we are to have a good name.
 - 1) Proverbs 22:1: "A *good* name *is* rather to be chosen than great riches, *and* loving favour rather than silver and gold."
 - 2) Ecclesiastes 7:1: "A good name *is* better than precious ointment; and the day of death than the day of one's birth."
 - c. We must cultivate humility to have favor with God: "The fear of the LORD *is* the instruction of wisdom; and before honour *is* humility" (Prov. 15:33).
 - d. It must be followed to be obedient to God.
 - 1) Ephesians 4:31: "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice."
 - 2) Titus 3:2: "To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, *but* gentle, showing all meekness unto all men."

B. Proverbs 23:7: "As he thinketh in heart, so is he."

1. Matthew 12:34-35: "O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? 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."
 - a. What comes from a man's lips is what is stored up in his heart.
 - b. Those who speak evil of others have treasured up malice within themselves; those who speak good of others have the same stored up in their heart of hearts.
2. Matthew 15:18-20: "But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: These are *the things* which defile a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man."
 - a. That with which we fill our minds will come forth sooner or later. One is not likely to commit murder without first contemplating it in his mind; the same is true with blasphemy, theft, fornication, etc.
 - b. James 1:13-15: "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."
3. If we would avert as much sin as possible, we will fill our minds with only those things that are good and wholesome. "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things *are* honest, whatsoever things *are* just, whatsoever things *are* pure, whatsoever things *are* lovely, whatsoever things *are* of good report; if *there be* any virtue, and if *there be* any praise, think on these things. Those things, which ye have

- both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you" (Phil. 4:8-9).
- a. But many Christians will watch filthy movies, read sin-filled books, frequent places where all manner of sin is practiced, and talk about subjects which are productive of no good (Eph. 5:12).
 - b. It is far better to be around other faithful Christians, share in their fellowship, and build up and encourage each other.
4. Broaden the scope of this text and see how the principle fits a nation or society.
- a. If the laws of a nation are righteous and the general attitude of the people is to reject degrading practices, the nation is strong and will endure. "Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin *is* a reproach to any people" (Prov. 14:34).
 - b. But if the laws of a nation tend to break down the morals of the people, and if the minds of the people are filled with evil thoughts and motives, that nation is only a short distance from disaster. "The wicked shall be turned into hell, *and* all the nations that forget God" (Ps. 9:17). The national gambling frenzy is productive of no good, but much evil. Any fair-minded examination of this plague will show that it is evil. State-run lotteries prey on the vices of its citizens, and will doubtless prove to be disastrous to our nation.
 - c. A nation that becomes indoctrinated in unbelief will soon find itself enslaved to sin and corruption. Consider all the nations of Noah's generation; Egypt; Assyria; Babylon; Israel; Rome. These rejected the God of heaven and his Law; they plunged into sin and were destroyed.
 - d. A nation that accepts strong drink without a pang of conscience will soon be filled with alcoholics and all of its evil effects.
 - 1) Proverbs 20:1: "Wine *is* a mocker, strong drink *is* raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise."
 - 2) Proverbs 23:29-35: "Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine. Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, *when* it moveth itself aright. At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder. Thine eyes shall behold strange women, and thine heart shall utter perverse things. Yea, thou shalt be as he that lieth down in the midst of the sea, or as he that lieth upon the top of a mast. They have stricken me, *shalt thou say*, and I was not sick; they have beaten me, *and* I felt it not: when shall I awake? I will seek it yet again."
 - e. A nation that accepts a human standard of morality will soon be wallowing in degradation. This means the weakening of marriage and the home, pornography, and all manner of fornication.
 - f. A nation that accepts a system which countenances injustice will soon find itself accepting all manner of inconsistency and crime.
 - 1) Thus, we have laws allowing and supporting abortion, but have other laws providing criminal punishment on those who break an eagle's egg or disturb a turtle's nest.
 - 2) We free criminals from prison due to "overcrowding," but prosecute a man for protecting his family and his property.
 - 3) Things that once were unlawful, have later been allowed by the law (e.g., abortion, alcoholic drinks). Efforts have been fostered to legalize drugs which are now outlawed. Legalizing sin will only lead to a nation's end.
 - 4) Amos 2:6: "Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of Israel, and for four, I will not turn away *the punishment* thereof; because they sold the righteous for silver, and the poor for a pair of shoes."
 - 5) Micah 6:8: "He hath showed thee, O man, what *is* good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"
5. What an individual or a society fills it mind with, sooner or later becomes the governing principle by which it operates. "As we think in our hearts, so shall we be."
- C. Proverbs 14:12: "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but..."
1. In religion, ever since Cain substituted his own offering for what God ordained, men have sought to please themselves in their spiritual activities. The hardest lesson on earth for many to learn is the simplest: "Fear God and keep his commandments" (Eccl. 12:13).
 - a. God's authority must be held supreme if a man is to have the approval of the Almighty.
 - 1) 1 Samuel 2:30: "Wherefore the LORD God of Israel saith, I said indeed *that* thy house, and the house of thy father, should walk before me for ever: but now the LORD saith, Be it far from me; for them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed."
 - 2) Psalms 89:7: "God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all *them that are* about him."
 - b. Since God speaks to man today through the message of Christ (Heb. 1:1-2), we must honor and obey the word of Christ.
 - 1) Hebrews 1:1-2: "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
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- heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds."
- 2) Luke 10:16: "He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me."
 - 3) Colossians 3:17: "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him."
 - 4) 1 Thessalonians 2:13: "For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received *it* not *as* the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe."
2. But the common tendency of mankind is to insist on his own way in religion. Cain, Nadab and Abihu, Jeroboam, and countless others in ancient and modern times all illustrate man's desire to please himself in religious functions.
 3. In this proudful attitude, man shows his foolishness.
 - a. Proverbs 28:26: "He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool: but whoso walketh wisely, he shall be delivered."
 - b. Isaiah 8:20: "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, *it is* because *there is* no light in them."
 - c. Isaiah 30:10: "Which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophecy deceits."
 - d. Isaiah 55:8-9: "For my thoughts *are* not your thoughts, neither *are* your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."
 - e. Jeremiah 10:23: "O LORD, I know that the way of man *is* not in himself: *it is* not in man that walketh to direct his steps."
 - f. Ezekiel 33:13: "When I shall say to the righteous, *that* he shall surely live; if he trust to his own righteousness, and commit iniquity, all his righteousnesses shall not be remembered; but for his iniquity that he hath committed, he shall die for it."
 - g. Ezekiel 33:20: "Yet ye say, The way of the Lord is not equal. O ye house of Israel, I will judge you every one after his ways."
 - h. Luke 16:15: "And he said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God."
 4. The Lord requires that we follow his will in all our spiritual activities, for he warns us against adding to, substituting for, deleting from, or perverting the word of God!
 - a. Galatians 1:6-12: "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any *man* preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed. For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ. But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught *it*, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ."
 - b. 2 John 9-11: "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into *your* house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds."
 - c. Revelation 22:8-9: "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."
- D. Proverbs 13:15: "The way of the transgressor is hard."
1. This is a truth often expressed by the Divine Record.
 - a. The northern kingdom of Israel (called "Ephraim") discovered it.
 - 1) Hosea 4:17: "Ephraim *is* joined to idols: let him alone."
 - 2) 2 Kings 17:5-7, 13-15, 20-23: "Then the king of Assyria came up throughout all the land, and went up to Samaria, and besieged it three years. In the ninth year of Hoshea the king of Assyria took Samaria, and carried Israel away into Assyria, and placed them in Halah and in Habor *by* the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes. For *so* it was, that the children of Israel had sinned against the LORD their God, which had brought them up out of the land of Egypt, from under the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and had feared other gods....Yet the LORD testified against Israel, and against Judah, by all the prophets, *and by* all the seers, saying, Turn ye from your evil ways, and keep my commandments *and* my statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your

fathers, and which I sent to you by my servants the prophets. Notwithstanding they would not hear, but hardened their necks, like to the neck of their fathers, that did not believe in the LORD their God. And they rejected his statutes, and his covenant that he made with their fathers, and his testimonies which he testified against them; and they followed vanity, and became vain, and went after the heathen that *were* round about them, *concerning* whom the LORD had charged them, that they should not do like them....And the LORD rejected all the seed of Israel, and afflicted them, and delivered them into the hand of spoilers, until he had cast them out of his sight. For he rent Israel from the house of David; and they made Jeroboam the son of Nebat king: and Jeroboam drave Israel from following the LORD, and made them sin a great sin. For the children of Israel walked in all the sins of Jeroboam which he did; they departed not from them; Until the LORD removed Israel out of his sight, as he had said by all his servants the prophets. So was Israel carried away out of their own land to Assyria unto this day."

- b. Many times, people suffer from their sins in various ways in this life; in every case, the ungodly will suffer in the eternity to come.
 - 1) Isaiah 28:20: "For the bed is shorter than that *a man* can stretch himself *on it*: and the covering narrower than that he can wrap himself *in it*."
 - 2) Amos 5:19: "As if a man did flee from a lion, and a bear met him; or went into the house, and leaned his hand on the wall, and a serpent bit him."
 - 3) Matthew 7:1-5: "Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam *is* in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye."
 - 4) Luke 12:47-48: "And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not *himself*, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many *stripes*. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few *stripes*. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more."
 - 5) John 5:28-29: "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, 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."
 - 6) Galatians 6:7-8: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."
2. Consider some of the common transgressions and how they often punish those who do them.
 - a. The one who uses alcohol often suffers: if he gets caught driving under the influence, he can be punished; he brings hardship on his own family and himself by his drinking; when his conduct become unruly, he can be arrested; his livelihood suffers when his drinking affects his work; his health suffers from drinking; he can injure or kill himself or others by driving under the influence; and most grievous of all, his drinking is sinful and will cause him to lose his soul. In addition to these awful consequences, he leaves behind a legacy of evil which will encourage his own children and others to follow his pernicious way.
 - b. The same consequences await those who use other drugs.
 - c. The fornicator sets himself up for various physical maladies; he places himself in possible jeopardy of a jealous suitor; he can destroy his marriage and home; and he will lose his soul.
 - d. The blasphemer, the liar, the worldly-minded, the covetous, the selfish, the hater, the gossip, the one who holds malice in his heart, the criminal, the false teacher, the follower of false doctrine— all of these have many woes to endure in this life and must face horrible penalties in eternity!
3. The way of the transgressor is truly hard! How much better it is to humbly and sincerely follow the will of God and be blessed! Faithful saints have difficulties to face in this world, and the sinner may appear to have a better lot in life, but chastening is for our good, and God does not give the full harvest in "October."
 - a. The story is told of an unbelieving farmer who boasted to his Christian neighbors that his crops were just as bountiful as theirs, even though he did not believe in God or attempt to serve him. One wise saint replied, "God does not give his full harvest in October." "Behold, these *are* the ungodly, who prosper in the world; they increase *in* riches. Verily I have cleansed my heart *in* vain, and washed my hands in innocency. For all the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning. If I say, I will speak thus; behold, I should offend *against* the generation of thy children. When I thought to know this, it *was* too painful for me; Until I went into the sanctuary of God; *then* understood I their end. Surely thou didst set them in slippery places: thou castedst them down into destruction. How are they *brought* into desolation, as in a moment! they are utterly consumed with terrors" (Ps. 73:12-19).
 - b. As the blessings of the unrighteous are only apparent and not real, so also are the hardships we suffer as Christians insignificant when compared to the glory awaiting us in heaven!

- 1) Romans 8:18: "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time *are* not worthy *to be compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us."
- 2) Hebrews 12:11: "Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby."

E. Proverbs 22:1: "A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches..."

1. Ecclesiastes 7:1: "A good name is better than precious ointment; and the day of death than the day of one's birth."
 - a. What advantage is it to have great wealth and be held in contempt by others? Man is a social creature, and generally can only be happy if he is around others of his kind, and has their approval.
 - b. What advantage is it to have great wealth and position, and stand under the curse of God? Is it not better to have no great wealth or position or popularity (if need be), and have the approval of God? "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matt. 16:26).
2. To have a "good name" means that we are held in high esteem by our fellow man; to have a "good name" before God means that we have his full endorsement.
3. To have a "good name" means also that we have a good influence on other people, especially our children and grandchildren. What kind of influence will our lives have on our descendants who are to live a hundred years, or two hundred years in the future? This becomes an extremely important proposition when we consider the cases of two men who lived several generations ago: Max Jukes; Jonathan Edwards.
4. For these reasons, what God said long ago still bears great meaning.

III. CONCLUSION.

A. Proverbs 27:1: "Boast not thyself of to morrow..."

1. We have no reason to be boastful about anything. God provided our life, he gives us air to breath, water to drink, food to eat, clothing to wear, and the means to have a roof over our heads.
 - a. Not one of these essentials could a man provide for himself without God's bounty.
 - 1) Matthew 5:45: "That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust."
 - 2) Acts 14:17: "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."
 - 3) James 1:17: "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."
 - b. Certainly, no one can boast about saving his own soul (Rom. 3:23; 6:23; Tit. 3:5; Eph. 2:1-9).
 - c. No one can declare correctly that heaven is his home because he has earned it and God is obligated to give it to him.
 - d. Even the continuation of our lives depends on God. We have no right to boast of what we shall do or have tomorrow. "Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: Whereas ye know not what *shall be* on the morrow. For what *is* your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye *ought* to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that" (Jas. 4:13-15).
2. Faith, humility and reverence for God which lead to our obeying his will is our chief obligation and greatest advantage.
 - a. "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Heb. 11:6).
 - b. "The fear of the Lord is the instruction of wisdom; and before honour is humility" (Prov. 15:33).
 - c. "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil" (Eccl. 12:13f).
 - d. Hosea 13:1: "When Ephraim spake trembling he exalted himself in Israel: but when he offended in Baal, he died."
 - e. Matthew 5:3: "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for their's is the kingdom of heaven."

B. Isaiah 41:10: "Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed..."

1. This was a promise to God's faithful people in ancient Judah. But the same kind promises are for us today.
 - a. Hebrews 13:5-6 "*Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.*"
 - b. 1 Peter 5:6-7: "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you."
2. God's promises are for those who obey his will.
 - a. He promises forgiveness of sins to those who will obey the gospel.
 - 1) Mark 16:15-16: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."

- 2) Acts 2:38: "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."
 - 3) Acts 22:16: "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."
 - b. He promises heaven for those who follow his will in Christ.
 - 1) Mark 10:29-30: "And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, 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."
 - 2) Revelation 22:14: "Blessed *are* they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."
 3. If we walk in the light of Christ's gospel, there is no reason for us to be fearful of the world, of our enemies, of the future, of our daily needs, or of the great Judgment to come.
 - a. Matthew 10:42: "And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold *water* only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward."
 - b. 1 Corinthians 10:13: "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God *is* faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear *it*."
 - c. Hebrews 6:10: "For God *is* not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have showed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister."
 - d. 1 John 4:17-18: "Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love."
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Will We Recognize Each Other in Heaven?

I. INTRODUCTION.

A. Does individual personality survive the death of the body?

1. Does recognition of friends and family exist beyond this life?
2. Will we recognize each other in ?

B. This is an absorbing question to every thoughtful person.

1. We are all faced with the loss of loved ones; we know that we shall never again see them in this life.
2. We will see them beyond this life since everyone will be resurrected and stand before the Lord in the Judgment (John 5:28-29; Acts 24:15; I Cor. 15:21,22; 2 Cor. 5:10; Matt. 25:31,32; Rom. 14:10-12), but will there be any recognition?
 - a. John 5:28-29: "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, 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."
 - b. Acts 24:15: "And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust."
 - c. 1 Corinthians 15:21-22: "For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."
 - d. 2 Corinthians 5:10: "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."
 - e. Matthew 25:31-32: "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats."
 - f. Romans 14:10-12: "But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God."
3. If there is no recognition, we will be among total strangers, every present memory will have vanished, and every bond made in this life will have forever been broken.
4. The Bible does not answer the question directly, in plain words; we must examine many verses and use logical deduction: "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15).

II. DISCUSSION.

A. Some say that the dead do not know anything.

1. Ecclesiastes 9:5-6: "For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten. Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun."
2. One of the most basic truths of nature, which we come to know from an early age, is that one day we must die. There is no truth more evident than this. As we live on earth, we pass each day with the realization present in our minds that some day we will die. But the dead man knows nothing of what is transpiring *under the sun*. Life on earth is a probationary period during which we prepare for eternity. Following death, we face the consequences of the life we lived during this period of testing. The nature of these consequences depends on the nature of our life.
 - a. Romans 14:10-12: "But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God."
 - b. 2 Corinthians 5:10-11: "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things *done* in *his* body, according to that he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences."
 - c. Revelation 20:12-15: "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is *the book* of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was

- cast into the lake of fire."
3. After death, we lose all of our earthly possessions; the title to our automobile is given to another; the deed to our property passes into another hand; control of our money and bank accounts then belongs to someone else.
 - a. And memory of our lives grows dim with the passing of years, until at last there is no one on earth that has any awareness at all of our having lived! Realization of this cold fact has caused us to develop the practice of erecting monuments and gravestones, which are carved from granite so as to endure the ages. Who knows but that the tombstone marking our grave may one day be removed and turned into paving or building material.
 - b. We have only a minute knowledge of a tiny fraction of those who lived before us on earth; the rest have passed into oblivion, known only to God. We need God!
 4. The love, the hatred, and the envy that seemed so important to them while they lived on earth is now gone. After death, we are completely separated from all that is material; we have no possible use for anything physical; there is no way that a spirit being can make use of anything material in the spirit world. Flesh and blood shall not enter (1 Cor. 15:50).
 - a. The things we lusted after, coveted, and fought others to obtain, will all be seen then to be utterly unimportant. No wonder God commands us to love each other, even our enemies.
 - 1) Matthew 7:12: "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets."
 - 2) Mark 12:29-31: "And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments *is*, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this *is* the first commandment. And the second *is* like, *namely* this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these."
 - 3) Romans 12:9: "*Let* love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good."
 - 4) Romans 13:8: "Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law."
 - 5) Romans 13:10: "Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love *is* the fulfilling of the law."
 5. The passage (verses 4-6) does not support the materialists' contention that man is completely mortal. It addresses the dead man's relationship with life under the sun. It teaches that we are forever separated from earthly life when we die.
- B. Some people deny the fact of future life, thus to them the question is foolish.**
1. But a part of man is created in God's image: "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his *own* image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them" (Gen. 1:26-27).
 - a. God is not flesh and bones:
 - 1) Matthew 16:17: "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 ."
 - 2) Luke 24:39: "Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have."
 - 3) John 4:24: "God *is* a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth."
 - b. This part of man survives the death of the body:
 - 1) Ecclesiastes 12:7: "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it."
 - 2) James 2:26: "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also."
 2. This undying part of man is called the spirit:
 - a. Daniel 7:15: "I Daniel was grieved in my spirit in the midst of *my* body, and the visions of my head troubled me."
 - b. Luke 1:47: "And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour."
 - c. 1 Corinthians 2:11: "For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God."
 - d. 1 Corinthians 16:18: "For they have refreshed my spirit and yours: therefore acknowledge ye them that are such."
 - e. Ephesians 3:16: "That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man."
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3. There is no evidence that the spirit is altered by death; it simply passes from one mode of existence to another.
 4. If anything, in eternity the spirit will have greater consciousness and memory.
- C. Some deny that there will be any recognition after death, and make various arguments.
1. "Recognition is based on physical features, and since physical bodies cannot enter (1 Cor. 15:50), we will have no way of recognizing anyone."
 - a. But we will recognize God and Christ who have no physical features. Knowing them does not depend on physical characteristics.
 - b. In fact, recognition is not based merely on physical appearances. Plastic surgery might alter a person's looks, but his personality remains unchanged.
 - c. With the passing of years, the physical appearance of our loved ones changes greatly, and we still recognize them. In eternity, our appearance will change since we will have new bodies (1 Cor. 15:42-44, 49-54; Phil. 3:20-21; 1 Jn. 3:2), but our personalities will be the same, hence the possibility remains for our recognizing each other.
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 15:42-44: "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. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body."
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 15:49-54: "And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the ly. Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal *must* put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory."
 - 3) Philippians 3:20-21: "For our conversation is in ; 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."
 - 4) 1 John 3:2: "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."
 2. "Whom have I in but thee [God]?" (Psalm 73:25). It is argued that this means we will know only God in . But this passage is simply declaring that our total dependence must be on God as we live on earth; it is not discussing the subject of recognition.
 3. "If we can recognize one another, we would know of certain loved ones who are not in ; this means they are lost in torment. With this awareness of their tragic state, it would not be possible for us to be happy."
 - a. But our love is inferior to God's love; he is happy even though many of his loved ones will be in torment (1 Tim. 1:11; 6:15: "blessed" means "happy").
 - b. We can be happy here even while knowing that we have loved ones who are lost.
 - c. The argument fails to consider God's promise to wipe away all tears (Rev.21:4).
 - d. If there is no recognition in , it will be impossible for us to know if *any* of our loved one are there!
 - e. Instead, we will be in full agreement with God: we will not want any ungodly persons there!
- D. Scriptural evidence is abundant that recognition will exist in .
1. Genesis 37:35: "And all his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him; but he refused to be comforted; and he said, For I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning. Thus his father wept for him." He would go into the grave "unto" my son. This is not speaking of a common grave he would share with Joseph (Jacob thought Joseph had been devoured by wild beasts), but that there would be a reunion beyond this life with his son. Recognition is implied in this passage.
 - a. He was expecting to be reunited with Joseph in Sheol (hades, the place of the departed spirits).
 - b. "But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me" (2 Sam. 12:23). Recognition is also implied in this passage.
 2. Matthew 8:11: "And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of ." The Lord is not speaking of associations in the church for these men were all gone from the earth by the time the church was established in Acts 2.
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- a. He is speaking of , and plainly promises that we shall sit with and know these Old Testament patriarchs.
- b. If we shall know them, they shall know each other; and we shall know them, too!
3. Matthew 17:1-5: "And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him. Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him."
 - a. Moses and Elijah had been long dead. The apostles had never seen them, but knew them.
 - b. Since those we personally have not known on earth can be known, we can surely recognize those we have known on earth.
4. Matthew 25:31-46 reports the Lord's description of the final Judgment.
 - a. Those on his right hand are invited into glory because they had befriended Christ.
 - b. They reflected on their earthly lives, but could not remember doing so.
 - c. This implies that there is memory of earthly events and persons after death.
5. Luke 16:19-31. This story of the rich man and Lazarus clearly teaches that death does not abolish memories. The rich man recognized Lazarus (16:23); remembered the past and his 5 brothers.
 - a. Some people deny this as having any evidential value since they assert that is only a parable. But if this is a parable, it is the only one in which a person is given a name! A parable was something that either did happen or which could happen; it is based on reality. If this is a parable, what is the reality?
 - b. When the evidence is weighed carefully, the story of the rich man and Lazarus is seen to be a report of an actual event, involving real people; one of these men is even today in that place of comfort ("Abraham's bosom"), and the other is still enduring the awful punishment described in the passage.
6. One of the greatest joys in will be in seeing our converts:
 - a. 2 Corinthians 1:14: "As also ye have acknowledged us in part, that we are your rejoicing, even as ye also *are* ours in the day of the Lord Jesus."
 - b. 2 Corinthians 4:14: "Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present *us* with you."
 - c. Philippians 4:1: "Therefore, my brethren, dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, *my* dearly beloved."
 - d. 1 Thessalonians 2:19-20: "For what *is* our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? *Are* not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For ye are our glory and joy."
7. Comfort is given to the living regarding the state of the righteous dead; there would be no hope and comfort in the following passage without the fact of recognition: "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive *and* remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words" (1 Thess. 4:13-18).
8. Civilized law does not punish one who has no memory of his actions.
 - a. It is certain that God would not do so, for his standard is greater than man's.
 - b. Matthew 7:22: "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?" The wicked will fully remember their past deeds. If they remember their actions, they will remember identities, and recognize the same.
9. The following two passages show that memory of earthly experiences is retained by those in eternity.
 - a. 1 Corinthians 15:55: "O death, where *is* thy sting? O grave, where *is* thy victory?" Our realization that we have triumphed depends on remembering what we have experienced on earth, which also implies recognition of personalities.
 - b. Matthew 12:38-41: "Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from thee. But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet

Jonas: For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas *is* here." For this to occur, certain things are necessary:

- c. That the men of Nineveh be in the Judgment, in their own characters, and clothed with their earthly personalities.
 - d. That they retain detailed, minute memory of their repentance.
10. The expression, "Gathered to his people," supports the idea that there will be recognition in eternity.
- a. The expression occurs many times in the Old Testament:
 - 1) Genesis 25:8: "Then Abraham gave up the ghost, and died in a good old age, an old man, and full of years; and was gathered to his people."
 - 2) Genesis 35:29: "And Isaac gave up the ghost, and died, and was gathered unto his people, *being* old and full of days: and his sons Esau and Jacob buried him."
 - 3) Genesis 49:29: "And he charged them, and said unto them, I am to be gathered unto my people: bury me with my fathers in the cave that *is* in the field of Ephron the Hittite."
 - 4) Genesis 49:33: "And when Jacob had made an end of commanding his sons, he gathered up his feet into the bed, and yielded up the ghost, and was gathered unto his people."
 - 5) Deuteronomy 32:50: "And die in the mount whither thou goest up, and be gathered unto thy people; as Aaron thy brother died in mount Hor, and was gathered unto his people:"
 - b. This does not refer to the grave for different burial sites were involved.
 - c. The reference is to the reunion with the spirits of their ancestors.

III. CONCLUSION.

A. We have every confidence that there will be joyful reunions in eternity.

1. May we press toward that worthy goal with much joyful anticipation!
2. The reality of the reunion is seen in David's case: "But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me" (2 Sam. 12:23).
3. The wonderful pleasures of this eternal reward is seen in many passages:
 - a. Psalms 16:11: "Thou wilt show me the path of life: in thy presence *is* fulness of joy; at thy right hand *there are* pleasures for evermore."
 - b. 2 Corinthians 4:16-18: "For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward *man* is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding *and* eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen *are* temporal; but the things which are not seen *are* eternal."
 - c. 2 Corinthians 5:1-11: "For we know that if our earthly house of *this* tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the s. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from : If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in *this* tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing *is* God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit. Therefore *we are* always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: (For we walk by faith, not by sight:) We are confident, *I say*, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord. Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things *done* in *his* body, according to that he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences."
 - d. 1 Peter 1:3-5: "Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."
 - e. Revelation 21:4: "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."

B. But before this reward can be anticipated, certain requirements must be met.

1. One must become a Christian, which requires:
 - a. Faith:
 - 1) John 3:16: "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."
- 2) John 8:24: "I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am *he*, ye shall die in your sins."
 - 3) Hebrews 11:6: "But without faith *it is* impossible to please *him*: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."
- b. Repentance from sins:
- 1) Luke 13:3: "I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."
 - 2) Luke 13:5: "I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."
 - 3) Acts 17:30: "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent."
- c. Confession of faith in Christ:
- 1) Matthew 10:32-33: "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in . But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in ."
 - 2) Acts 8:37: "And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."
 - 3) Romans 10:9-10: "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."
- d. Baptism into Christ for the remission of sins (Acts 2:36-38; Gal. 3:27; Rom. 6:3,4; Mark 16:15-16).
- 1) Baptism requires the right **action**—burial in water.
 - a) John 3:23: "And John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized."
 - b) Acts 8:36-39: "And as they went on *their* way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, *here is* water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing."
 - c) Acts 10:47: "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?"
 - d) Colossians 2:12: "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with *him* through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead."
 - 2) Baptism requires the right **subject**—one capable of believing, repenting and confessing (see passages above). Infants and children have no need of such since they come from God pure and innocent (cf. Gen. 8:21— from youth, not from birth: Ezek. 28:15; Matt. 18:3; 19:14). Sin cannot be inherited from God for He is entirely holy (1 Pet. 1:15-16) or from our parents (Ezek. 18:20).
 - 3) Baptism requires the right **purpose**—for the remission of sins (to be saved).
 - a) Mark 16:16: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."
 - b) Acts 2:38: "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."
 - c) Acts 22:16: "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."
 - d) 1 Peter 3:21: "The like figure whereunto *even* baptism doth also now 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."
2. We must remain faithful unto death:
- a. Matthew 10:22: "And ye shall be hated of all *men* for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved."
 - b. Galatians 5:4: "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace."
 - c. James 5:19-20: "Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins."
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- d. Revelation 2:10: "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast *some* of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."
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God's Plan for Uniting His People

Ephesians 4:1-6

A. Ephesians 4:1-3: Christians Walk in Unity.

1. Verse 1: "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation where-with ye are called."
 - a. The ASV has "the prisoner in the Lord." Paul was literally in prison because he preached the gospel, and he was a bondservant of Christ; he bore an unceasing obligation to both live and preach the gospel "For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!" (1 Cor. 9:16).
 - b. In view of the preceding information, the apostle besought them to walk worthy of the vocation they had accepted. To beseech is to issue an earnest, urgent, imploring appeal. He is not merely offering a suggestion, but is making a strong entreaty.
 - c. To *walk* is often used in the Bible as a figure of conduct—the way we live. To walk *worthy* [*worthily* —ASV] is to live a life that best befits the Christian life. Our lives are to *adorn* the gospel (cf. Tit. 2:10).
 - 1) Romans 8:1-2: "*There is* therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death."
 - 2) Philippians 3:18: "For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, *that they are* the enemies of the cross of Christ."
 - 3) 1 John 1:7: "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."
 - d. A *vocation* is one's primary objective in life. The vocation of a Christian is to live in harmony with the ly calling to which he has responded. *Avocation* refers to a sideline activity, a matter of secondary importance.
 - 1) 2 Thessalonians 2:13-15: "But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle."
 - 2) Colossians 3:1-3: "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. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God."
 - e. In the following verses, Paul gives some specific teachings on how to walk worthy of the Christian vocation.
2. Verse 2: "With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love."
 - a. Lowliness [*tapeinophrosune*] is to characterize our lives. This is a reference to humility.
 - 1) Honor is preceded by humility (Prov. 15:33). The first beatitude is one that calls for humility (Matt. 5:3: "Blessed are the *poor in spirit*").
 - 2) Christ, who is our model, professed and demonstrated humility (Matt. 11:29; John 13:1ff). Paul declared the Lord's lowliness of mind in Philippians 2:3-9: "*Let nothing be done* through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name."
 - 3) Peter told us to imitate the Lord's example: "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps" (1 Pet. 2:21; cf. 1 Cor. 11:1).
 - 4) Christ requires humility.
 - a) Romans 12:3: "For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think *of himself* more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith."
 - b) James 4:6: "But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but

- giveth grace unto the humble."
- c) 1 Peter 5:6: "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time."
 - 5) To whom do we look for a pattern of life? Do we look to some great orator? To some scholar? To some famous athlete, movie star, or singer?
 - 6) We must conform to the image of Christ.
 - a) 2 Corinthians 3:18: "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, *even* as by the Spirit of the Lord."
 - b) James 1:21-25: "Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls. But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth *therein*, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed."
 - b. Meekness is to characterize our lives.
 - 1) Meekness [*prautes*] and humility are closely linked in the Scriptures.
 - a) Matthew 5:3,5: "Blessed *are* the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom ofBlessed *are* the meek: for they shall inherit the earth."
 - b) Colossians 3:12: "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering."
 - 2) Humility and meekness are to be expressed in our submission to God and in our dealings with man. If we humbly and meekly submit to the will of God, we will show similar attitudes toward others. It is the opposite of highmindedness, which God hates (Pr. 6:16; Rom. 11:20).
 - 3) Meekness is not to be thought of as weakness or cowardice. Christ was meek, but no one doubts his courage and strength (Matt. 11:29). We are charged to show meekness. "To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, *but* gentle, showing all meekness unto all men" (Titus 3:2).
 - 4) Meekness does not forbid righteous indignation. "Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: Neither give place to the devil" (Eph. 4:26-27). Christ showed anger on certain occasions (Mark 3:5; John 2:13-17). Moses was a very meek person, but he showed anger (Num. 12:3; Ex. 32:15-20).
 - 5) Meekness involves keeping our passions and pride under the control of God's word. We are to receive his word with meekness (Jas. 1:21).
 - 6) Meekness involves showing kindness and gentleness toward others: "To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, *but* gentle, showing all meekness unto all men" (Tit. 3:2).
 - c. Longsuffering [*makrothumia*] is to characterize our lives.
 - 1) This trait is defined as that quality of self-restraint in the face of provocation to which one does not hastily retaliate; it is the opposite of anger, and is associated with mercy (Vine).
 - 2) Literally, the word means "to suffer long with." God suffers long with (is patient) humanity.
 - a) 1 Peter 3:20: "Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water."
 - b) 2 Peter 3:9: "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."
 - 3) This quality is listed as a fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22).
 - 4) If God were not longsuffering, sinful men would not long continue!
 - a) Romans 2:4: "Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?"
 - b) Romans 9:22: "*What* if God, willing to show *his* wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction."
 - 5) Christians are to suffer long with each other, realizing that we all have many weakness and make many mistakes; none of us is sinlessly perfect.
 - d. The Christian life is characterized by forbearance [*anecho*] toward others.
 - 1) Literally, the word means "to hold up, to bear with, to endure."
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- 2) This trait of Christianity requires that we tolerate weaknesses, peculiarities, and irritating habits that others have; however, it does not call on us to overlook sin or religious error. "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove *them*" (Eph. 5:11).
 - 3) Our forbearance toward others is to be done *in love [agape]*. Love is the willing of good to others; it will not permit us to do harm to them (Rom. 13:10). Christian love is without hypocrisy (Rom. 12:9); it does not exist only in word (1 John 3:18). Christ taught and demonstrated true love (Acts 1:1). Love is a two-way street: it is to be shown by us and to us (Rom. 12:10).
3. Verse 3: "Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."
 - a. The Greek term [*endeavoring*] means "to make haste; to be zealous; be diligent." The ASV renders the verse in these words: "Giving diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."
 - b. The Greek word translated "unity" means: "one, one and the same." Solidarity and accord result when the principles of the preceding two verses are followed. The next three verses show other aspects of the unity God requires among his people.
 - c. The unity of the Spirit is that which the Holy Spirit teaches in the inspired word. "Christians are to give diligence to stand *one in the teachings of the Spirit*, to be united in walking according to his instructions" (Lipscomb, p.71).
 - d. "The bond of peace" speaks of the binding together that *Peace* is able to accomplish. If two or more people earnestly desire to live peaceably with each other, peace will unite them as one. "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men" (Rom. 12:18).
 - e. Sin and error disrupt the peace of a congregation; those who participate in such must be disciplined so that peace can be restored.
 - 1) Matthew 18:15-18: "Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear *thee*, *then* take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell *it* unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican. Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in : and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in ."
 - 2) Romans 16:17-18: "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple."
 - 3) 2 Thessalonians 3:6: "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us."
 4. About 20% of earth's inhabitants claim to be followers of Christ.
 - a. Look at religious world today.
 - 1) About 80% of world's population is religious; 20% is non religious (of 6 billion).
 - 2) Paganism: includes idol worshipers, mystical and occult religions, humanists, animalists. These number well over one billion.
 - 3) Moslems: about one billion (including the various groups of Islam).
 - 4) Judaism: about 20 million (divided in several factions).
 - 5) Catholicism: about one billion (divided in several groups).
 - 6) Protestantism: about one-half billion (there are hundreds of different groups).
 - 7) Non-religious: about one billion.
 - 8) Atheists: about 250 million.
 - b. These are divided into warring factions: even to the point of literal fighting. These divisions also divide families, friends, communities, and nations. Even in the Lord's church divisions arise: locally and brotherhood-wide.
 - c. The Lord intended for his people to be perfectly united. Sin results in all cases where disunity exists: the one who causes it commits sin (Rom. 6:23; Gal. 5:19-21—includes division). He prayed for unity (John 17:20-21). He made a plea for unity (1 Cor. 1:10).
 - 1) Psalm 133:1-3: "Behold, how good and how pleasant *it is* for brethren to dwell together in unity! *It is* like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, *even*
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Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments; As the dew of Hermon, *and as the dew* that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the LORD commanded the blessing, *even* life for evermore."

- 2) John 17:20-21: "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, *art* in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me."
- 3) 1 Corinthians 1:10: "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."
- 4) Philippians 1:27: "Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel."
- 5) Philippians 3:16: "Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing."

B. God's Plan for Unity.

1. Verses 4-6: "*There is* one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who *is* above all, and through all, and in you all."
2. The Lord has only one body—which calls for unity of organization.
 - a. Only one body (Rom. 12:4-5; 1 Cor. 12:13,20; Eph. 4:15; Col. 3:15). That one body is the Lord's church (Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18,24), of which Christ is its Builder and head (Mt. 16:18; Eph. 1:22-23)
 - b. God's spiritual blessings are obtained in that one body. All the "called ones of God" are in that one body (Col. 3:15). Reconciliation with God is in the one body (Eph. 2:16). Every spiritual blessing is therein (Eph. 1:3).
 - c. Entrance into the one body is obtained by baptism (1 Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:27; Rom. 6:3-4).
 - d. It is the Lord's will that all his people operate within this one organization (Eph. 4:15-16; 1 Cor. 12:13-27). In doing so, glory is brought to God and salvation is more easily presented to mankind (Eph. 3:21; John 17:21).
 - e. Denominationalism is contrary to the Lord's prayer, plea, and platform for unity.
3. There is one Spirit—which identifies the unity of guidance.
 - a. This is the Holy Spirit (Eph. 4:3,30), the third person in the Godhead (Matt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14; Acts 17:29). He was active in the Creation (Gen. 1:2; Ps. 104:30). He was active in revealing God's word (Jn. 14:26; 16:13; Mk. 13:11; Acts 2:1-4; Gal. 1:11-12; 2:1-2; 2 Th. 2:15; 2 Tim. 2:2). He acts through the word of God in the conviction and conversion of sinners (John 6:63; 3:5; Eph. 5:26; 1 Pet. 1:22-23; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; Mk. 16:15-16; Rom. 8:16).
 - b. He guides each Christian through the inspired word. He shows us the kind of persons God requires us to be. He reveals what our duties are. He tells us how we are to worship God.
 - c. There is only one source of guidance; it is given by the Spirit through God's word. If all will follow it fully, unity will exist. If men follow a different set of directions, disunity exists (Eph. 4:14; Gal. 1:8-9; cf. Gen. 11:1-8).
4. There is one hope—the unity of aspiration.
 - a. This is our hope of (1 Pet. 1:3-5). This hope sustains and keeps us as an anchor does a ship (Heb. 6:18-20; Rom. 8:24-25; Tit. 1:2-3; 1 John 2:25). This hope is in Christ (1 Cor. 15:19). Outside of Christ there is no hope (Eph. 2:12).
 - b. The religious world does not hope for the same thing. Some deny the reality of : "There is nothing beyond this life." Some are interested only in material blessings, social activities, and ease in this life; has little appeal to them. Others are looking for an earthly kingdom with material blessings for eternity. Many think we have it now, on earth. Most say we are going to the same place, but travel different roads. But where in the Bible is this taught? There is only one way to (John 14:6).
 - c. How can there be perfect unity as long as men are aiming for different goals? Scriptural unity cannot exist unless there is unity of hope.
5. There is one Lord—unity of authority.
 - a. Jesus is this Lord (Acts 2:36; 1 Cor. 8:6; Matt. 23:10; Rom. 10:12).
 - b. All the executive, legislative and judicial powers are in the hands of Christ. The Father has given

- Jesus all authority (Matt. 28:18; Heb. 1:1-4; 1 Pet. 3:22; Acts 3:22-23; Phil. 2:9-11). Christ is the One Lawgiver (Jas. 4:12; Acts 4:11-12). He has power over death and hades (Rev. 1:18; John 5:28-29). God has given Jesus the task of being Judge (John 5:22; Acts 17:30-31).
- c. But men follow different authorities. Some deny that there is any absolute authority; this denies Christ's Lordship. Others say that the sincerity of each individual is the final authority. Many others follow the decrees of councils, creed books, confessions, synods, some important official, or governing body. Disunity here exists, and terrible loss in eternity is sustained, when the authority of Christ is rejected in part or in whole (Col. 2:8; Matt. 7:21-23).
 - d. We ought to follow Christ implicitly! (Heb. 5:8-9; Phil. 3:16; 2 Tim. 2:5). There is no doubt or question about our need to follow Christ—in every detail.
6. There is one faith—the unity of teaching.
 - a. There is one faith and this one faith is for the remainder of Time (Jude 3). "Once" means "once for all time." This same Greek word is used also in Hebrews 9:25-28. Since Christ died for mankind only once, so the one faith was given but once.
 - b. This one faith is simply the gospel (Tit. 1:4; Gal. 1:23; Phil. 1:27; 1 Tim. 1:2; 4:1; 5:8; 6:10,21; 2 Tim. 3:8).
 - c. But men want to develop their own teachings (Mark 7:7-9,13; Acts 20:29-31; 1 Cor. 4:6, ASV; 2 John 9). After developing their own teachings, they foist them on the unsuspecting, and claim that "one faith is as good as another." The Bible says, "There is ONE faith," but men speak of many different "faiths."
 - d. We ought to "speak where the Bible speaks, and remain silent where the Bible is silent" (1 Pet. 4:11).
 - e. Unity will exist only if all know, believe and follow the same teachings. Christ is the only authorized source of our spiritual instructions. Neither the church nor the individual has the right to bind or loose religious teachings.
 7. There is one baptism—unity of practice.
 - a. The Bible speaks of several baptisms.
 - 1) John's baptism (Mark 1:4; Acts 19:3: This baptism ceased to be operative when the New Testament went into effect after the death, burial and resurrection of Christ).
 - 2) The baptism of suffering (Mt. 20:22-23: This is a figurative immersion).
 - 3) The baptism of the Holy Spirit (Matt. 3:11; Acts 1:5; 2:1-4: This baptism pertained only to the apostles of Christ).
 - 4) The baptism of fire (Matt. 3:11; 2 Th. 1:8-9; Mk. 9:44; Rev. 20:15: This baptism is figurative, describing the eternal punishment of hell).
 - 5) The baptism of Israel unto Moses in the cloud and sea (1 Cor. 10:2: This was a figurative baptism, pertaining to Israel when they crossed the Red Sea).
 - 6) The baptism of the Great Commission unto the remission of sins (Matt. 20:19; Acts 10:47-48; Eph. 5:26; Acts 8:36-39; John 3:5).
 - b. By the time Ephesians 4 was written, only one baptism was being practiced: the one that pertains to the Great Commission which is to last to the end of time (Mark 16:15-16; Acts 8:36-39; Rom. 6:3-4, 17-18; Acts 2:38; 22:16; 1 Pet. 3:21). Baptism is an immersion in water; it is for penitent believers; it is unto the remission of sins. Thus, baptism is the means by which we contact the saving blood of Christ (Heb. 9:22; Mt. 26:28), get into the body of Christ where the spiritual blessings are located (1 Cor. 12:13; Eph. 1:3), and become Christians (Acts 11:26).
 - c. But how many religious folks practice the one baptism of the New Testament? Almost every religious group practices what they call baptism, but they have made unauthorized changes to all three major aspects of the Lord's one baptism. (1) Most have changed the subject from penitent believers to include innocent babies, those who will not repent, and others who only believe "something" about Jesus. (2) Most have changed the action of baptism from an immersion to the mere application of water by sprinkling or pouring. (3) Almost without exception, they have all changed the purpose of baptism from the remission of sins to: getting into "their" church; an outward sign that they have already been forgiven; and a "non-essential" religious rite.
 - d. The Lord decreed that only one baptism is operative; if we follow Christ, there will only be one baptism practiced. To the extent that many "baptisms" are practiced, to that extent will there be disunity. To the extent that many "baptisms" are practiced, to that extent men will show that they have rejected the authority of Christ. To the extent that many "baptisms" are practiced, to that
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extent will men remain in their alien sins who practice a perverted baptism. To the extent that many "baptisms" are practiced, to that extent will the world in general remain in ignorance and sin, for they will be confused by the many conflicting doctrines and practices. Sin abounds where the word of God, in its purity, is not preached and practiced (John 5:40; Rev. 22:14).

8. One God—unity of worship.
 - a. These statements are in opposition to atheism, idolatry, agnosticism, and polytheism.
 - 1) Deuteronomy 6:4: "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God *is* one LORD."
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 8:6: "But to us *there is but* one God, the Father, of whom *are* all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom *are* all things, and we by him."
 - b. This one God is many things to us.
 - 1) He is the Creator (Gen. 1:1, 26-27; Heb. 3:4).
 - 2) He is our Sustainer (Acts 17:28; 14:17; Matt. 5:45; Jas. 1:17; 1 Tim. 4:10).
 - 3) He is our Judge (Heb. 13:4).
 - 4) He is our Savior (1 Tim. 1:1; 2:3; Tit. 1:3; Jude 25).
 - c. Notice that the Father did and does all these things through Christ (Col. 1:15-17; Heb. 1:2,10; Ph. 4:13; Mt. 6:33; Heb. 13:5-6; Luke 19:10; Phil. 3:20).
 - d. God is also the Father of our spirits (Heb. 12:9; Zech. 12:1; Eccl. 12:7).
 - e. God is also:
 - 1) A spirit being (John 4:24).
 - 2) Holy (1 Pet. 1:16).
 - 3) Just (Isa. 41:21).
 - 4) Merciful (Exod. 20:5-6; Tit. 2:11-12; 3:5).
 - 5) Loving (1 John 4:8; John 3:16).
 - 6) The God of truth (Deut. 32:4; John 17:17).
 - 7) Has all the attributes of Deity.
 - a) Omniscient (Acts 15:18).
 - b) Omnipotent (Gen. 17:1).
 - c) Omnipresent (Ps. 139-7-10).
 - 8) Unchangeable (Jas. 1:17; Mal. 3:6).
 - 9) Eternal (1 Tim. 1:17).
 - f. God the Father is the prime object of our worship (John 4:24). Being what and who he is, reverence is demanded (Eccl. 5:1-2; Ps. 8). Irreverence, flippancy, levity in worship are out of place! (Heb. 12:28-29). Changing his truth to suit ourselves makes worship vain (Matt. 15:8-9; Mk. 7:13).
 - g. God has authorized us to worship him only in the following ways:
 - 1) Singing (Col. 3:16).
 - 2) Eating the Lord's Supper (1 Cor. 11:18-30; Acts 20:7).
 - 3) Giving (1 Cor. 16:1-2).
 - 4) Praying (Acts 2:42; 1 Th. 5:17; Eph. 6:18; 1 Tim. 2:8).
 - 5) Studying God's word (Acts 20:7; 2 Tim. 4:2; 1 Tim. 4:13,15-16).
 - h. We are warned against changing God's word in any way (Gal. 1:8-9; Rev. 22:18-19). We must have the approval of the New Testament for all that we teach, believe, and practice (Col. 3:17; 2 John 9). Changing the worship God ordained causes division, makes even sincere praise vain, and leads to the loss of precious souls in hell!

Wise As Serpents and Harmless as Doves

I. INTRODUCTION.

A. No Two Creatures Are More Opposite in Nature Than Snakes and Doves or Wolves and Sheep.

1. The snake may stalk the dove with hungry desire; the dove may look at the snake with horror.
 - a. The serpent is the symbol of the evil one—Satan: “And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years” (Rev. 20:2).
 - b. The dove symbolized the coming of the Holy Spirit upon Christ—“And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the s were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him” (Matt. 3:16).
2. Wolves are perceived as vicious animals, which attack in packs, and show no mercy or restraint; but sheep are perceived as virtually helpless and harmless, easily victimized.

B. We May Learn Valuable and Necessary Lessons from Both the Serpent and the Dove.

II. **BE WISE AS SERPENTS AND AS HARMLESS AS DOVES.**

A. The Lord was sending them forth as sheep into a cruel and evil world.

1. "Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves" (Matt. 10:16).
2. One wolf amid a flock of sheep can result in slaughter and carnage. Sheep are characterized as innocent and harmless. But the innocence of the sheep is no protection from wolves; even so with the apostles in preaching to a cold, indifferent world.
3. They were to be as “wise as serpents.”
 - a. Genesis 3:1: “Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made.....”
 - b. "The Egyptians used the serpent in their hieroglyphics as a symbol of wisdom. Probably the thing in which Christ directed his followers to imitate the serpent was in its caution in avoiding danger. No animal equals them in the rapidity and skill which they evince in escaping danger" (Barnes, Albert, p.111).
 - 1) Snakes are able to move rapidly and silently.
 - 2) They also are equipped with excellent camouflage markings.
 - c. “The serpent was considered a symbol of wisdom among the ancients, especially the python. The maid at Philippi who followed Paul and Silas was said to have had a ‘spirit of divination’ (Acts 16:16), but the Greek word denotes that she had a PYTHON! The dove as a symbol of harmlessness and innocence derived significance from Noah's use of it as a messenger in the ark.The brutal and vicious dangers to which the apostles would be exposed were not concealed by the Lord. Their mission was dangerous and fraught with countless perils"(Burton Coffman).
 - d. “**Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves.**—Here Jesus expands his instruction from the view of the present limited mission so as to include the warfare and sufferings of their entire service as apostles. He draws a vivid picture of the perils which they must encounter; they are as innocent, helpless sheep ‘in the midst of wolves’....They are helpless, unarmed, undefended, to all appearances, and doomed to destruction. Their enemies shall be as eager to destroy them as wolves are to destroy sheep; only by their prudence and innocence will they be kept from such enemies; they are to be ‘wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.’ The serpent by his cunningness has found a place in the east as an example of wisdom and prudence; only the shrewd wisdom and prudence of the serpent are commended here, not its deceitful cunningness. The dove is a symbol of innocence and purity” [Gospel Advocate Commentaries].
4. The dove is a symbol of innocence and purity. The disciples were to be as harmless and innocent as sheep and doves, but not "stupid and silly as those animals" (H. Leo Boles). People who would foolishly destroy a helpful snake would not harm a dove. Coffman wrote:
 - a. The dove was a "clean" creature under the ceremonial laws of the Jews;
 - b. It was used in their religious sacrifices, two, in fact, being offered upon the presentation of our Lord in the temple (Luke 2:24);
 - c. It is a monogamous creature!
 - d. It is a symbol of peace;
 - e. It is a marvel of gentleness, love, and affection;
 - f. It is a messenger (the homing pigeon is a dove); and
 - g. The dove has no gall, suggesting that there is no bitterness in the service of God.

5. The Lord would be well aware of the dangers and ill-treatment his apostles would suffer, especially in the universal mission on which they were later to go. He did not conceal from them beforehand the dangers and hardships they were to face; rather, he graphically described what was in store for them.

B. Being Wise and Harmless According to the Context.

1. "At this point in the discourse, Jesus passes from the first to the second mission of the apostles; for all of the persecutions enumerated were encountered under the latter. They were to be like sheep in the midst of wolves, because they were to be visited with cruelties, and they were to bear these without resistance. Under these circumstances they were to be as wise as serpents, whose only wisdom is displayed in escaping from danger, and as harmless as doves. Being humble, they would encounter no merited cruelty; and, being wise as serpents, they would escape all danger that could be avoided without dereliction of duty" (J.W. McGarvey).
2. In effect, the Lord is telling them to know when to flee and when to take a stand, or when to contend earnestly for the faith and when to avoid a confrontation. Depending on our natural tendencies, we may either have the inclination to fight when some problem arises between ourselves and another, or we may want to flee from the confrontation. Wisdom gained from God's word and experience in serving Him can tell us which is the right action to take.
3. Following Paul's conversion to Christ, he encountered a very dangerous situation in Damascus. The enemies of our Lord sought to arrest the apostle. What should he do? Should he surrender to these deadly foes and possibly be slain? If he had given himself over to them, think of all the great things that he would not have been able to do! At this point, he had not written any of his inspired epistles; he had not made those fruitful missionary journeys. In this case, wisdom dictated that he should avoid the enemy and live to carry on his life's work.
 - a. Acts 9:23-25: "And after that many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counsel to kill him: But their laying await was known of Saul. And they watched the gates day and night to kill him. Then the disciples took him by night, and let him down by the wall in a basket."
 - b. 2 Corinthians 11:32-33: "In Damascus the governor under Aretas the king kept the city of the Damascenes with a garrison, desirous to apprehend me: And through a window in a basket was I let down by the wall, and escaped his hands."
4. On another occasion, when Paul and Silas had been arrested and beaten and imprisoned at Philippi, the authorities wanted to release them and get them out of town quietly. But Paul refused to accede to their plan.
 - a. Acts 16:35-37: "And when it was day, the magistrates sent the serjeants, saying, Let those men go. And the keeper of the prison told this saying to Paul, The magistrates have sent to let you go: now therefore depart, and go in peace. But Paul said unto them, They have beaten us openly uncondemned, being Romans, and have cast *us* into prison; and now do they thrust us out privily? nay verily; but let them come themselves and fetch us out."
 - 1) Although the earthquake had released them from their confinement, Paul and Silas did not try to escape from the authorities. And as far as we know, none of the other prisoners got away. When morning came, the magistrates sent lesser officials to instruct the jailor to release Paul and Silas. The jailor gave them the information.
 - 2) Paul gave a strange reply: "They have beaten us openly, without establishing any guilt on our part; we are Roman citizens with the rights that pertain to that status; they have cast us into prison, and are now trying secretly to put us forth from the city. We will not leave until the magistrates personally come and release us." He was not being proud or spiteful. He knew that if the report of their arrest followed them, their work would be impeded, but if the officials personally released them, that would be tantamount to exoneration.
 - b. Acts 16:38-40: "And the serjeants told these words unto the magistrates: and they feared, when they heard that they were Romans. And they came and besought them, and brought *them* out, and desired *them* to depart out of the city. And they went out of the prison, and entered into *the house of Lydia*: and when they had seen the brethren, they comforted them, and departed."
 - 1) The serjeants reported this to the magistrates. It was a capital offense under Roman law to scourge a Roman citizen. The charges Paul laid against the magistrates were very serious, and placed them in jeopardy if legal action were pressed. The officials were quick to comply with Paul's demands.
 - 2) After meeting with the brethren in Lydia's house, where they comforted them, Paul and his company departed from Philippi.
5. Others in the Bible who avoided confrontation when wisdom dictated this action:

- a. Jacob left home to avoid trouble with his brother Esau (Gen. 28).
- b. Moses fled from Egypt after his premature effort to aid his people (Ex. 2).
- c. The two spies hid in Jericho to avoid arrest (Josh. 2).
- d. Elijah was concealed from Ahab (1 Kings 17:1-7) and fled from Israel when Jezebel sought to kill him (1 Kings 19).
- e. Our Lord avoided unnecessary conflict with the people of Nazareth (Luke 4:16-30).
- f. The brethren who comprised the church at Jerusalem were obliged to leave home to avoid the persecution brought against them after the martyrdom of Stephen (Acts 8:1-4).

C. Who is Wise?

1. One who fears God: "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding" (Prov. 9:10).
2. One who listens to sound counsel.
 - a. Proverbs 1:1-5: "The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel; To know wisdom and instruction; to perceive the words of understanding; To receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, and judgment, and equity; To give subtilty to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion. A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels."
 - b. Proverbs 12:15: "The way of a fool is right in his own eyes: but he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise."
3. One who accepts a rebuke with a good attitude.
 - a. "Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate thee: rebuke a wise man, and he will love thee. Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be yet wiser: teach a just man, and he will increase in learning" (Prov. 9:8-9).
 - b. David humbly received the rebuke Nathan gave him over his sin with Bathsheba (2 Sam. 12).
4. One who lives a godly life.
 - a. James 3:13-17: "Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom. But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy."
 - b. There is a wisdom that is earthly and worldly.
 - c. There is a wisdom that emanates from God.
5. One who respects his parents.
 - a. Proverbs 13:1: "A wise son heareth his father's instruction: but a scorner heareth not rebuke."
 - b. Proverbs 15:5: "A fool despiseth his father's instruction: but he that regardeth reproof is prudent."
 - c. Ephesians 6:1-3: "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;) That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth."
6. One who wins souls: "The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise" (Prov. 11:30).
7. One who obeys God in all things: "Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it" (Matt. 7:24-27).
8. One who controls his words.
 - a. Proverbs 10:19: "In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin: but he that refraineth his lips is wise."
 - b. Proverbs 29:11: "A fool uttereth all his mind: but a wise man keepeth it in till afterwards."
 - c. Proverbs 17:28: "Even a fool, when he holdeth his peace, is counted wise: and he that shutteth his lips is esteemed a man of understanding."
 - d. 1 Peter 3:12: "For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil."
 - e. James 3:1-12: "My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater

condemnation. For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body. Behold, we put bits in the horses' mouths, that they may obey us; and we turn about their whole body. Behold also the ships, which though they be so great, and are driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very small helm, whithersoever the governor listeth. Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth! And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell. For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind: But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be. Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter? Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries? either a vine, figs? so can no fountain both yield salt water and fresh."

III. CHARACTERISTICS OF WISE WORDS AND ACTIONS.

A. Wise Words and Actions Are Described and Defined.

1. James 3:17: "But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy."
2. The wisdom of the passage originates in . It was not engendered by human reasoning, but from God's infinite mind. This wisdom is characteristic of God, not of worldly-minded men. The various traits of love are given in 1 Corinthians 13; some of the traits of wisdom are listed here. Notice the similarity between the passage and the Lord's statements in Matthew 5:8-9: "Blessed *are* the pure in heart: for they shall see God. Blessed *are* the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God."

B. This wisdom which inspiration requires is first **pure**.

1. The heart must be pure or else the other qualities would be corrupt and useless. One who is pure is uncontaminated by an evil attitude, wicked words, or sinful practices; rather, he is entirely good. This does not mean that he is utterly without any fault, but does not regularly practice anything sinful; he might stumble occasionally, but walks in the light of the gospel to the best of his ability (1 John 1:7-10). Purity of heart is essential to fellowship with God and entrance into .
2. Matthew 5:8: "Blessed *are* the pure in heart: for they shall see God."
3. Hebrews 12:14: "Follow peace with all *men*, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord."
4. Revelation 21:27: "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither *whatsoever* worketh abomination, or *maketh* a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."
5. Worldly wisdom does not promote purity, but rather the opposite. Does atheism or evolution make improve the purity of an individual? Does humanism make one a better person?

C. This wisdom is **peaceable**.

1. A pure heart does not generate strife.
2. Matthew 5:9: "Blessed *are* the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God."
3. Romans 14:19: "Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things where-with one may edify another."
4. Colossians 3:15: "And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful."
5. Does worldly wisdom promote peace? Will a person who denies the inspiration and authority of the Bible be made a more peaceable person because of his unbelief?

D. This wisdom is **gentle**.

1. The characteristic of gentleness keeps us from demanding our own way; it makes us fair, kind and reasonable. One who is gentle is not self-centered, thus does not insist on his own way, is not overbearing. In this we have our Lord as the flawless model, and which the apostle Paul demonstrated in his life: "Now I Paul myself beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ, who in presence *am* base among you, but being absent *am* bold toward you" (2 Cor. 10:1).
2. It is especially important for a teacher or preacher of the word to avoid being overbearing, proud, or harsh. Severity in tone and word-choice may add to one's perceived authority, but will make no contribution to the gentleness required of him by the Lord.
3. Gentleness is not opposed to manliness. It does not negate courage. Gentleness is an indicator of strength and courage. An arrogant, loud-mouthed, overbearing, self-centered individual is violent and bombastic; he may be filled with self-assurance, but that does not give him strength of

character; his aggressiveness may be under his control, but his attitude is not under the control of the wisdom from above. Our Lord was perfect in manliness and courage, but he was neither weak nor over-bearing.

E. This wisdom is **easy to be entreated**.

1. A faithful Christian, having this characteristic, may be approached without fear of rebuke. One who operates under the influence of ly wisdom sincerely wants to be helpful, is easy to talk to, is open to questions and requests, and is ever congenial. He does not look for an excuse to deny an inquiry or an occasion to denounce another.
2. "One easy to be entreated is open to reason, ever ready to hear what others have to say, and to be willing to yield to what is right. It is not to be interpreted as meaning that one is susceptible to every vagrant impulse, or carried about by every wind of doctrine (Eph. 4:14); there is no weakness or deficiency of courage inherent in the word. He who is thus influenced will listen carefully to what others have to say and, if it appears that the course he has adopted is an erroneous one, he will not hesitate to abandon it, and to accept that which is right....This disposition will exhibit itself both inwardly and outwardly" (Guy N. Woods, *Commentary on James*, p.193).
3. ly wisdom is easy to be entreated [*eupeithes*]. Is can be persuaded by truth. It is open to reason. It has not closed its mind to truth. It makes us to be honest with the truth.

F. This wisdom is **full of mercy**.

1. Mercy is from a Greek word which means compassion. James 1:27 is an example of compassion which we are told to manifest: "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, *and* to keep himself unspotted from the world."
2. The nature of the gospel is such that if we desire to obtain mercy (from God or man) we must be willing to show mercy.
 - a. Matthew 5:7: "Blessed *are* the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy."
 - b. James 2:13: "For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath showed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment."
 - c. Luke 10:36-37: "Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves? And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise."
3. We deserve justice, but we need mercy.

G. This wisdom is **full of good fruits**.

1. "'Mercy,' here (*elous*) is compassion, the disposition to desire to help those in distress; and, the 'good fruits,' (*harpon agathon*) result from such an attitude of heart. A man possessed of such a disposition is like a tree ever in bloom, and ever bestowing its blessed fruits upon those about it. This, indeed, is the test of the heart's status; one cannot always know the condition of the tree, but one can easily determine the character of the tree by the nature of the fruit" (Guy N. Woods, *ibid.*, pp.193f).
2. If one has genuine mercy in his heart, that compassionate disposition will manifest itself in the performance of kind acts of benevolence upon those who are in need of that which we are able to provide. "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all *men*, especially unto them who are of the household of faith" (Gal. 6:9-10).

H. This wisdom is **without partiality**.

1. This is rendered "without variance" in the ASV. This disposition is the opposite of that which is possessed by the double-minded man (Jas. 1:8). His faith, disposition, words, and actions are consistent; they are not uncertain or indecisive.
2. One who is without variance is one who "does not doubt, is not drawn by divided opinions, and is stable in his views regarding religion" (Woods, p.194).
3. "The wisdom which is from above enables one to be firm in his views, and to entertain complete confidence in God and in his word....The faithful disciple of the Lord has confirmed convictions; these convictions are grounded in a robust faith in God's word; and to question them is to question the word, and ultimately, the Lord himself. A vacillating, changeable disposition is neither conducive to Christian growth, nor to useful service in the vineyard of the Lord; and does not originate in the ly wisdom. We should all acquire and maintain principles by which to guide our lives and these may be properly obtained only from God. Those thus directed follow a compass which is not deflected by worldly acclaim or selfish interests, not by current views announced by favorite preachers" (Woods, *ibid.*).
4. ly wisdom does not allow us to condemn a defect in one person and condone that or similar defect

in another person. We do not show partiality; we do not vary in applying the truth.

I. This wisdom is **without hypocrisy**.

1. Hypocrisy is a form of dishonesty. On the surface, the hypocrite appears to be one thing, but in reality he is totally different. To say one thing and do the opposite is hypocrisy. Hypocrisy was a common malady among the Jewish leaders, which sparked a severe rebuke from Christ (Matt. 23). “Feigned piety, and an affected holiness, are as contemptible in God’s sight as deceptive actions. Neither has any place in the lives of Christians” (Woods, p.195).
2. Peter and Barnabas stumbled into hypocrisy in regards to accepting Gentiles into full fellowship. They both knew the truth, that there is no difference between Jew and Gentile in Christ, but under the pressure of a volatile situation, they blundered: “But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation. But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before *them* all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?” (Gal. 2:11-14). “Dissimulation” means “hypocrisy.”
3. “That wisdom which is from above is without hypocrisy. It has no disguises nor deceits. It cannot fall in with those managements which the world counts wise, which are crafty and guileful; but it is sincere and open, steady and uniform, and consistent with itself. O that you and I may always be guided by such wisdom as this! that with Paul we may be able to say, Not with fleshly wisdom, but in simplicity and godly sincerity, by the grace of God, we have our conversation” (Henry, Biblesoft).

IV. **PRACTICAL CASES OF USING WISDOM**

A. Using Wisdom in Making Choices.

1. Wisdom is the ability to judge soundly, based on a balanced and complete understanding of the facts. Knowledge is the possession of facts; wisdom is the ability to use those facts prudently.
2. Making rash, impulsive decisions is not acting with wisdom.
3. Making decisions based on worldly or sensual desires is not acting with wisdom.
 - a. Lot decided to pitch his tent toward Sodom—Gen. 13:1-11; 19:14-38.
 - b. The Prodigal Son chose a sinful lifestyle—Luke 15:11-32.

B. Wise Decisions Starts with a Good Understanding of God’s Word and the Wisdom it Dispenses.

1. Psalms 19:7: “The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple.”
2. Psalms 119:105: “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.”
3. 2 Timothy 3:15-17: “And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. 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.”

C. There Are Great Examples in the Bible of Individuals Who Made Wise Choices.

1. Moses: “By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward” (Heb. 11:24-26).
2. Joshua: “And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD” (Josh. 24:15).

D. Important Decisions Which We Must Make.

1. What kind of work will I follow in life? Do my talents equip me to do the work? Is this an honorable occupation? Will it interfere with my service to Christ?
2. What kind of friends will I seek? “Be not deceived: Evil companionships corrupt good morals” (1 Cor. 15:33, ASV).
3. What kind of spouse will I select?
4. Will I serve God or self?
5. What kind of church-member will I be? Will I be active or lukewarm? Will I be faithful and zealous?

E. Using Wisdom in Organizing a Congregation to be Sound.

1. Elders.
 - a. It is very likely that more trouble is experienced in congregations in regards to elders than over any other matter. Sometimes unqualified men seek to be made elders; sometimes unfounded charges are brought against godly elders; sometimes weak members will rebel against the elders; sometimes weak elders will not do their job; sometimes an elder will get involved in sin or false doctrine.
 - b. Great wisdom must be exercised in selecting and appointing men to the eldership. Before elders are selected and appointed, a careful study of the qualifications and work of elders must be made.
 - c. Before a candidate is appointed, a close examination must be made of his life in the light of the New Testament teaching on the qualifications and work of elders. Unless the individual clearly meets the qualifications, he must not be appointed.
 - d. Wisdom, gleaned from God word, will avoid much potential trouble in the future. We cannot do right if we take short-cuts with God's requirements for elders; we cannot do wrong by following what God says about the qualifications of elders.
 - e. 1 Timothy 3:1-7: "This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?) Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil."
 - f. Titus 1:5-11: "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee: If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly. For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate; Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers. For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision: Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake."
 2. Deacons.
 - a. What was just said about the selection and appointment of elders is likewise true with deacons.
 - b. 1 Timothy 3:8-10: "Likewise must the deacons be grave, not doubletongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless."
 - c. 1 Timothy 3:13: "For they that have served well as deacons gain to themselves a good standing, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus" (ASV).
 3. Preachers.
 - a. One of the most important decisions a congregation must make is the preacher they select to work with them. The direction of the local church can hinge on the messages that emanate from the pulpit.
 - b. A weak preacher cannot influence the church for growth and strength; a compromising preacher will starve the congregation; an arrogant preacher can drive away many who would otherwise be a good asset.
 - c. The church must assess the preacher using the Bible as the standard. Just because one can speak well from the pulpit does not guarantee soundness or effectiveness.
 4. Teachers.
 - a. Willingness to teach is a requirement for a good teacher, but that is not sufficient of itself.
 - b. A teacher must know the Bible, believe the Bible, live by the Bible, and have the ability to teach the Bible.
 - c. Wisdom dictates that teachers be evaluated.
 5. Worship.
 - a. A congregation must understand what worship is, what acts are required, and how these avenues of worship are to be done.
 - b. All the required acts of worship are to be done—scripturally.
 - c. Decency and order must be followed throughout the worship period.
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- d. Wisdom is to be exercised in the planning of the worship service, insuring that qualified men are selected to lead the various activities.
6. Evangelism.
 - a. We must be wise enough to do the work.
 - b. Wisdom is necessary in choosing the best methods: Gospel meetings, vacation Bible schools, Bible correspondence courses, radio and television programs, newspaper articles, door-knocking, etc.
7. Benevolence.
 - a. Helping the needy without bankrupting the congregation.
 - b. Helping the needy without compromising other responsibilities.
 - c. Knowing which needy persons to aid.

V. HANDLING CONGREGATIONAL PROBLEMS.

A. Dealing With False Doctrine.

1. Error condemns the soul.
 - a. 2 John 1:9-11: "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds."
 - b. 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12: "And with all deceit of unrighteousness for them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God sendeth them a working of error, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be judged who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (ASV).
2. Truth is able to save the soul.
 - a. James 1:21: "Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls."
 - b. John 8:32: "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."
3. We can recognize and discern error and perceive the truth by studying God's word:
 - a. Hebrews 5:12-14: "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil."
 - b. 2 Timothy 3:15-17: "And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. 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."

B. Dealing With Unruly Factions.

1. Sometimes a congregation experiences rebellion against the eldership, the preacher, or some unpleasant Bible truth.
2. Galatians 2:4-5: "And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage: To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you."
3. Titus 1:9-11: "Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers. For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision: Whose mouths must be stopped..."

C. Dealing With Hiring Preachers.

1. His personal appearance, his eloquence, his personality—these are minor importance.
2. What is important: Does he know the Scriptures; does he believe and follow the Scriptures; is he able to instruct people in the Scriptures.

D. Appointing Elders.

1. It is easier to appoint elders than to remove them if they are unqualified. An ounce of prevention is still worth more than a pound of cure.
2. See pg 20

E. Replacing Preachers.

1. To remove a preacher is a painful experience; it can also be dangerous to the congregation.
2. In the cases where such a drastic action is necessary, great wisdom must be exercised.

F. Removing Unqualified Elders.

1. If the faithful elders are in the plurality, removing an unqualified elder is simple in concept: the other elders can lead the congregation in removing him from office.
2. If the eldership is unqualified, the men of the congregation will have to exercise good judgment in calling for their resignation.

G. Handling Problems With Individuals.

1. See pg 21
2. The problem of a case of marriage, divorce and unscriptural remarriage.
 - a. Matthew 19:9: "And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery."
 - b. The above passage is clear; the difficulty with some is believing and applying its requirements.
3. The problem of some pushing for instrument music in worship.
 - a. Again, the Bible is clear about the kind of music God allows—vocal (not mechanical).
 - b. Colossians 3:16: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts unto God."
 - c. 1 Corinthians 4:6: "Now these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes; that in us ye might learn not to go beyond the things which are written; that no one of you be puffed up for the one against the other."
 - d. 2 John 1:9: "Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God: he that abideth in the teaching, the same hath both the Father and the Son."
 - e. Colossians 3:17: "And whatsoever ye do, in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him."
4. The problem of someone pushing some doctrinal error in the congregation.
 - a. The error must be identified and clearly known to be error.
 - b. We must not run roughshod over the errorists if it is clear that they are sincere; they may likely be teachable if we are patient.
 - c. But error must be exposed and refuted; it must not be allowed to take a foothold in the church.
5. The problem of brotherhood issues.
 - a. We need to be aware of what is going on across the brotherhood; the issue that are clearly wrong must be exposed and resisted.
 - b. But we cannot build up the local church by majoring on brotherhood issues.
6. The problem of church discipline.
 - a. 2 Thessalonians 3:6: "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us."
 - b. 2 Thessalonians 3:14-15: "And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother."
7. The problem relating to attendance .
 - a. If the preacher continually preaches on attendance, it is likely that little good will be done.
 - b. The problem must be addressed, and not merely the symptom. The symptom is weak attendance; the problem is like of love for the Lord.
8. The problem of giving.
 - a. The New Testament teaches that giving is primarily for the good of the giver; of course, the local church is aided by the giving.
 - b. 2 Corinthians 9:6-7: "But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver."
 - c. Philippians 4:17: "Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account."

VI. **WISDOM IN DOING PERSONAL EVANGELISM.** [Gleaned from outline by Glann Lee].

A. "What Do You Think Of....?"

1. Hypothetical questions may be asked to prejudice someone.
2. Jesus did not judge in personal matters: "And one of the company said unto him, Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me. And he said unto him, Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?" (Luke 12:13-14).
3. Reply: "I don't think I am qualified to judge such hypothetical questions."

4. Teach as the student is able to “bear it.”
- B. Will the Good People of All Churches Go to ?
 1. Ask: *“Are you suggesting that one goes to because one is good? Or a member of some church?”*
 2. Proceed by showing that we must obey God’s word regardless of what someone may say is “good” or of what church one may be a member.
- C. “Do You Believe One Church is as Good as Another?”
 1. Reply: *“I think we can agree that one can be a Christian without being a member of any denomination.”*
 2. Continue: *“In the first century Christians were members of no denomination. My interest is in leading people to be Christians only and only Christians.”*
- D. “Do I Have to be a Member of the Church of Christ to be Saved?”
 1. Reply with a question: *“What is the church of Christ?”*
 2. Christ’s church is the spiritual body of the saved.
 - a. Acts 2:47: *“Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.”*
 - b. Ephesians 5:23-27: *“For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.”*
 3. All the saved are in Christ’s church.
- E. “What Does the Church of Christ Teach About...?”
 1. Reply: Do not leave the impression that there is a “church of Christ doctrine.”
 2. Reply: *“I am not interested in what some church may teach. Our authority is in Christ. Therefore, let us study the Bible to learn what it says.”*
- F. “Do You Believe That Only Members of the Church of Christ Will be Saved?”
 1. Those going to are they who obey the Lord: *“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of ; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in . Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity”* (Matt. 7:20-21).
 2. *“Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it”* (Matt. 7:13-14).
 3. God is the final Judge.
 - a. John 12:48: *“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.”*
 - b. Revelation 20:12: *“And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.”*
- G. “Do You Believe One Must be Baptized to be Saved?”
 1. Reply: *“I probably believe what you believe about that. Whatever the Bible teaches is what I want to believe. No doubt you desire to believe what the Bible teaches. Isn’t that what everyone should believe and teach?”*
 2. Mark 16:16: *“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”*
 3. Acts 2:38: *“Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.”*
 4. 1 Peter 3:21: *“The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now 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.”*
 5. Acts 22:16: *“And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.”*
- H. “Is Sprinkling and Pouring Baptism?”
 1. Romans 6:3-4: *“Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”*

2. Acts 8:36-39: "And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing."
3. Let them explain what these passages say about the action of baptism.
- I. "Why Does the Church of Christ Not Use Mechanical Instruments of Music in Worship?"
 1. Answer: *"Because the Bible does not authorize it."*
 2. If the student insists that it was authorized in the Old Testament, point out that we are not now under the Old Testament: "And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth" (Heb. 9:15-17).
- J. "Why Do You Observed the Lord's Supper Each Sunday?"
 1. Reply: "The apostles were guided into all truth" (John 16:13).
 2. Acts 20:7: "And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight."
- K. "What About Divorce and Remarriage?"
 1. Reply: "The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so. And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery" (Matt. 19:3-9).
 2. Avoid giving premature answers to difficult situations, but give timely and accurate answers.

VII. CONCLUSION.

- A. Be Wise as Serpents but Harmless as Doves Is Simple but Very Profound!
 1. "Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves" (Matt. 10:16).
 2. Proverbs 15:1: "A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger."
 3. Proverbs 26:4-5: "Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest thou also be like unto him. Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit."
- B. Many Valuable and Necessary Lessons Are Taught by Both the Serpent and the Dove.

Wise Counsel From Lady Wisdom

- A. Proverbs 1:7-9: The Foundation of Genuine Knowledge.
 1. Verse 7: "The fear of the LORD *is* the beginning of knowledge: *but* fools despise wisdom and instruction."
 - a. We might consider it as the theme of the book. If one seeks to grasp the great truths of the Bible, he must have first a deep reverence for the Almighty. One who lightly esteems the God of is not likely to have the dedication to ferret out the profound principles of his word. A ripe understanding and store of knowledge is developed only through years of continuing and intensive study. Without a fear of God, the diligent effort will not be present or cannot be sustained.
 - b. Fear is that dread we have of doing anything that would displease God. We do not live in terror, but we so deeply respect God, and stand in awe of his majesty and holiness, that we abhor the thought of contradicting his will by any overt action or thought, or by leaving undone something he has commanded (cf. Eccl. 12:13-14; Heb. 10:23-31; 12:28-29).

- c. If we are in sin, we have reason to be terrified; if we are walking in the light of the gospel the best we can, we can be certain of his good will: "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us" (1 John 1:7-10).
 - d. Those who do not have reverence for God are not likely to study his word, and are less likely to be profited by its instructions even if they are exposed to them. Such individuals are called "fools" because they reject the wisdom and instruction offered in God's will. These are the opposite of those who reverence God.
2. There are several kinds of fools mentioned in Proverbs, including:
- a. Those who are arrogant: "The way of a fool *is* right in his own eyes: but he that hearkeneth unto counsel *is* wise" (12:15).
 - b. The short-tempered: "A fool's wrath is presently known: but a prudent *man* covereth shame" (12:16).
 - c. The boastful: "In the mouth of the foolish *is* a rod of pride: but the lips of the wise shall preserve them" (14:3).
 - d. Those who have stifled their conscience: "Fools make a mock at sin: but among the righteous *there is* favour" (14:9).
 - e. The disobedient:
 - 1) Proverbs 15:5: "A fool despiseth his father's instruction: but he that regardeth reproof is prudent."
 - 2) Proverbs 30:17: "The eye *that* mocketh at *his* father, and despiseth to obey *his* mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it."
 - f. Those who foster strife: "*It is* an honour for a man to cease from strife: but every fool will be meddling" (20:3).
 - g. Those who are set in their foolishness: "Though thou shouldest bray a fool in a mortar among wheat with a pestle, *yet* will not his foolishness depart from him" (27:22).
3. There are several descriptions of wise men in Proverbs:
- a. Proverbs 1:5: "A wise *man* will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels."
 - b. Proverbs 9:8-9: "Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate thee: rebuke a wise man, and he will love thee. Give *instruction* to a wise *man*, and he will be yet wiser: teach a just *man*, and he will increase in learning."
 - c. Proverbs 14:16: "A wise *man* feareth, and departeth from evil: but the fool rageth, and is confident."
 - d. Proverbs 16:14: "The wrath of a king *is as* messengers of death: but a wise man will pacify it." Cf. Mt. 5:9.
 - e. Proverbs 17:10: "A reproof entereth more into a wise man than an hundred stripes into a fool."
 - f. Proverbs 24:5: "A wise man *is* strong; yea, a man of knowledge increaseth strength."
 - g. Proverbs 29:9: "*If* a wise man contendeth with a foolish man, whether he rage or laugh, *there is* no rest."
 - h. Proverbs 29:11: "A fool uttereth all his mind: but a wise *man* keepeth it in till afterwards." Cf. James 1:19.

B. Proverbs 1:20-33: Wisdom is Personified.

1. Verses 20-23: "Wisdom crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the streets: She crieth in the chief place of concourse, in the openings of the gates: in the city she uttereth her words, *saying*, How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorners delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge? Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you."
 - a. Wisdom is personified as a woman going about in the streets and public places, calling out to men to hear and heed her counsel. The Hebrew word for wisdom is feminine gender. The words spoken by Wisdom are the words of God, given in a unique manner.
 - b. Her cry includes the question, "How long will you love simplicity?" She addressed the "simple ones." They are simple in that they are ignorant and inexperienced. *Simplicity* here is an equivalent of folly. Those addressed do not see the danger of their present state, and are thus invited to heed the voice of Wisdom.
 - c. She also called to the scorners and fools. If all of these three groups will only turn at her reproof

- (repent), they will be adequately rewarded. The simple ones are those who are ignorant; the scoffers are those who have been taught but have rejected the truth; the fools are those who hate knowledge (thus are hardened in their sins, and fight against the truth). Compare Psalm 1: "Blessed *is* the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight *is* in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night...."
- d. The wisdom to be gained is offered in words. The means of obtaining wisdom is by accepting the words offered. God does not give wisdom directly (cf. Jas. 1:5, 21-27). God issued his call through the words of the prophets, but his messages were shunned.
2. Verses 24-25: "Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof."
 - a. They had refused to hear Wisdom's call; they set at nought her wise counsel; and they would have none of her reproof. Wisdom was acting in their best interest when she called, invited, counseled and reproved them.
 - b. Compare these similar thoughts:
 - 1) Proverbs 15:32: "He that refuseth instruction despiseth his own soul: but he that heareth reproof getteth understanding."
 - 2) Isaiah 66:4: "I also will choose their delusions, and will bring their fears upon them; because when I called, none did answer; when I spake, they did not hear: but they did evil before mine eyes, and chose *that* in which I delighted not."
 - 3) Matthew 25:10,30: "And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut....And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."
 - 4) Luke 7:29-30: "And all the people that heard *him*, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John. But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him."
 - c. The ones addressed by Solomon shunned her appeals to their own hurt. Multitudes stand in this very state of rebellion today. Paul's question to the wayward ones in Galatia is a fitting query for many in our generation: "Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?" (Gal. 4:16).
 3. Verses 26-27: "I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you."
 - a. Wisdom is pictured as laughing at the troubles and sorrows which would come upon them because they heeded not her wise words. She would mock when they were filled with fear. Their terror would surely come as a desolation ("storm"—ASV), and as a whirlwind.
 - 1) Isaiah 9:11-12: "Therefore the LORD shall set up the adversaries of Rezin against him, and join his enemies together; The Syrians before, and the Philistines behind; and they shall devour Israel with open mouth. For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand *is* stretched out still."
 - 2) Isaiah 9:21: "Manasseh, Ephraim; and Ephraim, Manasseh: *and* they together *shall be* against Judah. For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand *is* stretched out still."
 - 3) Isaiah 65:12: "Therefore will I number you to the sword, and ye shall all bow down to the slaughter: because when I called, ye did not answer; when I spake, ye did not hear; but did evil before mine eyes, and did choose *that* wherein I delighted not."
 - b. Although laughter is depicted, God is not so unfeeling that he would literally laugh at such calamity.
 - 1) Ezekiel 18:32: "For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord GOD: wherefore turn *yourselves*, and live ye."
 - 2) Ezekiel 33:11: "Say unto them, *As* I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?"
 - 3) 2 Peter 3:9: "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."
 - c. The calamity, distress, and anguish would come upon these rebels as a storm (with great force), and as whirlwind (suddenly, out of no where).
 - 1) Genesis 6:3: "And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also

- is* flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years."
- 2) Hebrews 4:7: "Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, To day, after so long a time; as it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts."
4. Verse 28: "Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me."
 - a. When their travail came, then would they call, but it would be too late! They had rejected the appeal once too often. There is an acceptable time, and there is a time when opportunity is no longer given.
 - 1) Psalms 69:13: "But as for me, my prayer *is* unto thee, O LORD, *in* an acceptable time: O God, in the multitude of thy mercy hear me, in the truth of thy salvation."
 - 2) Isaiah 49:8: "Thus saith the LORD, In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee: and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages."
 - b. Opportunities unused are lost.
 - 1) Psalms 90:10-12: "The days of our years *are* threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength *they be* fourscore years, yet *is* their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away. Who knoweth the power of thine anger? even according to thy fear, *so is* thy wrath. So teach *us* to number our days, that we may apply *our* hearts unto wisdom."
 - 2) Proverbs 29:1: "He, that being often reprov'd hardeneth *his* neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy."
 - 3) Matthew 7:22-23: "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."
 - 4) John 9:4: "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work."
 5. Verses 29-31: "For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the LORD: They would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof. Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices."
 - a. They had hated knowledge, shunned the fear of the Lord, rejected God's counsel, and despised his reproof. What then resulted was their own doing.
 - b. Revelation 20:12-15: "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which *is the book* of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."
 - c. 2 Corinthians 5:10: "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things *done* in *his* body, according to that he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad."
 6. Verse 32: "For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them."
 - a. "...[I]t is more difficult to bear prosperity than adversity, because we endure adversity, we are corrupted by prosperity, and prosperity or ease makes fools mad. The false security of the prosperous is illustrated by our Lord in his parable of the rich fool (Luke 12:16-21)...." [Pulpit Commentary].
 - b. The carelessness of the simple would be their undoing; the wicked would constitute the means of their punishment. God used Assyria and Babylon to punish Israel.
 - 1) Jeremiah 51:20: "Thou *art* my battle ax *and* weapons of war: for with thee will I break in pieces the nations, and with thee will I destroy kingdoms."
 - 2) Ezekiel 11:3,7: "Which say, *It is* not near; let us build houses: this *city is* the caldron, and we *be* the flesh....Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Your slain whom ye have laid in the midst of it, they *are* the flesh, and this *city is* the caldron: but I will bring you forth out of the midst of it."
 - c. "When Jeshurun waxed fat, he kicked' (Deut 32:15). Thus the objection is met that sinners often outwardly prosper now. Yes, replies Wisdom; but that prosperity proves their very curse, and accelerates the Judgments of God. It is harder to bear prosperity than adversity, because we

endure the latter, but are apt to be corrupted and blinded to our ruin by the former. It is they who are 'settled on their lees, that say in their heart, The Lord will not do good, neither will he do evil' (Zeph 1:12)" [Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown Commentary].

7. Verse 33: "But whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil."
 - a. A great blessing is extended to those who hearken to the voice of Wisdom. They shall dwell safely and be free from the fear of evil. "Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh *but* in vain" (Ps. 127:1).
 - b. Modern security devices do not insure safety. The Lord is the only real security.
 - 1) John 10:27-28: "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 *man* pluck them out of my hand."
 - 2) Hebrews 13:5-6: "*Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.*"

C. CONCLUSION.

1. The Alien Sinner Must:
 - a. Learn the truth (John 8:31-32; Rom. 10:17)
 - b. Believe in Christ (John 8:24)
 - c. Repent of his sins (Luke 24:47; Acts 17:30; 2 Cor. 7:10)
 - d. Confess his faith in Christ (Rom. 10:9-10)
 - e. Be baptized (Acts 2:38; Rom. 6:3-4)
 2. The Child of God Must:
 - a. Study the Word of God (2 Tim. 2:15)
 - b. Grow spiritually (1 Pet. 2:1-2; 2 Pet. 1:5-11)
 - c. Worship regularly (Acts 20:7; Heb. 10:24-31)
 - d. Live right in this present world (Titus 2:11-12)
 - e. Be faithful unto death (Rev. 2:10; Matt. 10:22)
 3. The Erring Child of God Must:
 - a. Repent and confess sins (Acts 8:22; 1 John 1:8-10)
 - b. Pray for forgiveness (Acts 8:22; James 5:16)
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Zedekiah, The Tragic End of Judah's Last King

I. INTRODUCTION.

A. To understand King Zedekiah, we need to see him in his historical setting.

1. God developed the nation of Israel by choosing Abraham, who begat Isaac, who begat Jacob, who begat twelve sons. From these few individuals, God was able, in a relatively short time, to develop the great nation of Israel. They grew into a populous progeny of Abraham while they were serving in the cruel slavery imposed on them by the Egyptians.
2. God used Moses to deliver the Israelites from their bondage; he led them through the forty long years in the wilderness. During the harsh circumstances in Egypt and in the wilderness, they were welded together with a bond that has withstood the ravages of thirty-five hundred years.

B. Joshua had the privilege and duty of leading Israel across the flooded Jordan River valley into Canaan.

1. In the years that followed, he guided them in the wars against the pagans of Canaan, and established them as a full-fledged nation in their own land, having their God-given Law.
2. For about three hundred years, Israel was guided politically and militarily by a succession of fifteen judges. This was a very treacherous time for Israel. At the first, they served God faithfully, but they allowed the next generation to grow up without proper instruction; the nation soon fell into apostasy. God sent punishment upon them by allowing an enemy to afflict them. They cried for deliverance; God gave them a judge to effect that result.
3. As the book of Judges progresses, this pattern continues—a period of faithfulness would be followed with apostasy, which resulted in affliction, which caused them to cry for help; God would send a deliverer.

C. Israel finally reached a point in their weakness that they demanded a king.

1. 1 Samuel 8:5-7: "And said unto him, Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations. But the thing displeased Samuel, when they said, Give us a king to judge us. And Samuel prayed unto the LORD. And the LORD said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them."
2. After sternly warning them of the consequences of their demand, God permitted them to have a king. Saul was made king and reigned forty years. At the first he was humble and submissive to God's will, but later became arrogant, jealous, and murderous.
3. Following the death of Saul, at his own hand (1 Sam. 31), David ascended the throne, and ruled in Israel for the next forty years.

II. DISCUSSION.

A. Zedekiah Was The Last Earthly King In The Lineage Of King David.

1. The royal lineage of David flows through Solomon, Rehoboam, Abijah, Asa, Jehoshaphat, Jehoram, Ahaziah, Joash, Amaziah, Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah, Manasseh, Amon, Josiah, Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah. Of the nineteen rulers who reigned after Solomon, only six could be listed as good kings: Asa, Jehoshaphat, Uzziah, Jotham, Hezekiah, and Josiah.
2. Zedekiah's Background.
 - a. The powerful and unrighteous influence of Manasseh [697-642 B.C.] stands in the background of Zedekiah. This wicked king filled Jerusalem with blood (2 Kings 21:16), worshiped the host of (2 Kings 21:4), promoted idolatry (2 Kings 21:3-5), and caused his son to pass through the fire (2 Kings 21:6). Uninspired sources tell us that Manasseh had Isaiah sawn asunder (cf. Heb. 13:37). His sins were so intense and awful that the nation of Judah was contaminated beyond retrieve. He led them so deeply into sin that they were worse than the pagan Canaanites of Joshua's time (2 Chron. 33:9). Toward the end of Manasseh's reign, he was captured by the Assyrians, who carried him to Babylon (2 Chron. 33:11). In captivity, he was humbled by his affliction and made supplication to Jehovah, and was restored to his throne in Jerusalem. He removed the idols and altars, repaired the altar of the Lord, and offered the proper sacrifices (2 Chron. 33:15-16). But his good work at the end could not compensate for the evil of his previous activities—he could not change the corrupted hearts of his people (cf. 2 Chron. 33:17). He reigned for fifty-five years.
 - b. His son Amon [642-640 B.C.] followed him on the throne. Amon reversed his father's reforms, and did evil more and more. His servants conspired to assassinate him during his second year of rule (2 Chron. 33:21-25).

- c. The powerful and righteous influence of Josiah [639-608 B.C.] stands in the background of Zedekiah. This youthful son of Amon, Josiah, mounted the throne when he was only eight years of age (2 Kings 22:1). His righteous reign extended over thirty-one years. The inspired historian reports that Josiah did not turn aside to the right hand or to the left in the sight of the Lord (2 Kings 22:2). During his rule, as repairs were being made to the temple, the Book of the Law of God was found. When Josiah learned how far the nation had departed from God's Law, he rent his clothes (2 Kings 22:10-11), and resolved to begin a great restoration. Josiah was slain during a battle with the Egyptian army (2 Kings 23:29-30); he was succeeded on the throne by his twenty-three-year old son Jehoahaz (2 Kings 23:31). Jehoahaz did that which was evil in God's sight and lost his throne after a reign of only three months (2 Kings 23:32-33). Pharaoh-Necho removed Jehoahaz from power, and replaced him on the throne with his twenty-five-year-old brother Jehoiakim. Jehoahaz died in Egypt.
 - d. The evil influence of Jehoiakim [608-597 B.C.] stands in the background of Zedekiah. Jehoiakim was made king by Pharaoh-Necho, and was subjected to heavy tribute, which he exacted from the people of Judah (2 Kings 23:34-35). He is described by the historian as an evil-doer in the sight of Jehovah, and that he did according to his wicked predecessors; he did not follow the righteous practices of Josiah, his father; he was more like Manasseh (his great-grandfather) and Amon (his grandfather). Jehoiakim treated the prophets with malice. He was filled with wrath against Urijah, who prophesied against Jerusalem. He slew Urijah (Jer. 26:20-23). His most prominent outrage was his flagrant destruction of a copy of God's Word (Jer. 36:20-32). He died after a reign of eleven years, at the age of thirty-six (2 Kings 24:1-7). Some dire prophecies were given about Jehoiakim, which undoubtedly were fulfilled. "Therefore thus saith the LORD concerning Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah; They shall not lament for him, *saying*, Ah my brother! or, Ah sister! they shall not lament for him, *saying*, Ah lord! or, Ah his glory! He shall be buried with the burial of an ass, drawn and cast forth beyond the gates of Jerusalem" (Jer. 22:18-19; cf. 36:30). He was replaced on the throne by his son Jehoiachin.
3. The report of the short reign of Jehoiachin is given in 2 Kings 24:8-16. He was only 18 years old when he became king; his reign, which was characterized by the same kind of evil done by his father, lasted only three months and ten days. Jeremiah issued a prophecy against Jehoiachin, bluntly stating that he would remain childless, and that none of his seed would sit on the throne (Jer. 22:30).
 - a. Jehoiachin was also known as Jechoniah, or by the shortened form, Coniah (Jer. 22:24). He did not learn the positive lessons taught by Josiah; he did not learn from the mistakes of his father. His epitaph is simply that "he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord." Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem; Jehoiachin went out to him, taking his mother, his servants, his princes, and officers (2 Kings 24:10-12). Nebuchadnezzar had first taken Jerusalem in 606 B.C., early in the reign of Jehoiakim.
 - b. The time now was 597 B.C. Jehoiachin had occupied the throne for a mere three months, when Nebuchadnezzar came a second time against the city. Jehoiachin went out to the camp of the Babylonians, perhaps hoping that his surrender might lessen the penalty. He may have expected to be allowed to continue on the throne, a vassal to Nebuchadnezzar, but in keeping with the prophecy of Jeremiah (22:24-30), both Jehoiachin and his mother were carried to Babylon.
 - c. The same fate befell his servants, princes, and officers. Jehoiachin was not treated with any honor, but as a rebel. He was made a prisoner, and led away into captivity. References are made to his stay in Babylon elsewhere (Ezek. 1:1-2; 2 Kings 25:27-30).
- B. Zedekiah Is Made King.**
1. "And the king of Babylon made Mattaniah his father's brother king in his stead, and changed his name to Zedekiah. Zedekiah *was* twenty and one years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name *was* Hamutal, the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah. And he did *that which was* evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that Jehoiakim had done. For through the anger of the LORD it came to pass in Jerusalem and Judah, until he had cast them out from his presence, that Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon" (2 Kings 24:17-20).
 2. Nebuchadnezzar placed Jehoiachin's uncle on the throne. Zedekiah was the brother of Jehoiakim (Jehoiachin's father). This son of Josiah was twenty-one years old at the time he began his eleven-year reign.
 3. Zedekiah reigned over the remnant of the Jews who had been left in the land after the Babylonian

assault of Jerusalem in 597 B.C. The tenor of his reign was in keeping with that of Jehoiakim and Jehoiachin, who had imitated the worst traits of Manasseh.

4. The leaders of other states in Palestine, who were also in servitude to Babylon, approached Zedekiah, seeking to influence him to join them in a rebellion against their overlords. With this alliance, and with the help of the great army of Egypt, they thought they could remove the Chaldean domination (Jer. 27:1-11)

C. Nebuchadnezzar Besieges Jerusalem.

1. "And it came to pass in the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, in the tenth *day* of the month, *that* Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came, he, and all his host, against Jerusalem, and pitched against it: and they built forts against it round about. And the city was besieged unto the eleventh year of king Zedekiah. And on the ninth *day* of the *fourth* month the famine prevailed in the city, and there was no bread for the people of the land" (2 Kings 25:1-3; cf. Jer. 39:1; 52:4-6).
2. The reason for this assault was Zedekiah's rebellion against the rule of Babylon: "For through the anger of the LORD it came to pass in Jerusalem and Judah, until he had cast them out from his presence, that Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon" (2 Kings 24:20). This military operation by the Babylonians ended the monarchy in Judah, just as the conquest of Samaria in 722 B.C. ended that monarchy and kingdom.
3. The first time Jerusalem was conquered by the Babylonians was in 606 B.C., which is described in 2 Kings 24:1-2. The second assault of Jerusalem by Babylon was in 597 B.C., which is reported in 2 Kings 24:10-12.
4. The year of the present invasion was 586 B.C. This siege of Jerusalem began during the 9th year of Zedekiah's reign, on the 10th day of the 10th month of that year (588 B.C.). The siege lasted until the eleventh year of Zedekiah, when the city was taken on the ninth day of the fourth month of his reign (cf. Jer. 39:2). During this 18-month period, the Egyptian army failed in an attempt to aid Judah (Jer. 37:5-12). The citizens resisted until they ran out of food and were no longer able to continue the struggle. The Babylonians gained entrance into city and captured or killed the people.

D. Jerusalem Falls and Zedekiah Is Captured.

1. "And the city was broken up, and all the men of war *fled* by night by the way of the gate between two walls, which *is* by the king's garden: (now the Chaldees *were* against the city round about:) and *the king* went the way toward the plain. And the army of the Chaldees pursued after the king, and overtook him in the plains of Jericho: and all his army were scattered from him. So they took the king, and brought him up to the king of Babylon to Riblah; and they gave judgment upon him. And they slew the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, and put out the eyes of Zedekiah, and bound him with fetters of brass, and carried him to Babylon" (2 Kings 25:4-7; cf. Jer. 39:3-5).
2. While part of the Babylonian army pursued Zedekiah, the rest of the invasion force began the destruction of Jerusalem. Zedekiah and his soldiers were overtaken in the valley of the Jordan, near Jericho. The king was captured and the remnants of his army were scattered. In the meantime, Nebuchadnezzar had set up an encampment at Riblah, in Syria. Zedekiah was brought to him there to receive judgment.
3. Nebuchadnezzar's verdict was that the sons of Zedekiah should be slain in his presence. When this harsh penalty had been executed, Zedekiah's eyes were put out, he was bound with brazen fetters, and carried to Babylon. The last sight he ever saw on earth was the execution of his sons! Zedekiah was twenty-one years old when he ascended Judah's throne; he was in the eleventh year of his reign when the Babylonians captured him, being about thirty-two years of age at the time. His sons would only be teenagers at the most.
4. Ezekiel had predicted that he would go to Babylon, but would not see it, even though he would die there. "My net also will I spread upon him, and he shall be taken in my snare: and I will bring him to Babylon *to* the land of the Chaldeans; yet shall he not see it, though he shall die there" (Ezek. 12:13).
5. The harshness of the punishment is obvious. The Babylonians meant for the last thing that Zedekiah should see on earth was the death of his beloved sons. He was himself imprisoned in Babylon until his death: "Then he put out the eyes of Zedekiah; and the king of Babylon bound him in chains, and carried him to Babylon, and put him in prison till the day of his death" (Jer. 52:11).
6. "The punishment pronounced upon Zedekiah was the merited reward of the breach of his oath, and his hardening himself against the counsel of the Lord which was announced to him by Jeremiah during the siege, that he should save not only his own life, but also Jerusalem from destruction, by a voluntary submission to the Chaldeans, whereas by obstinate resistance he would

bring an ignominious destruction upon himself, his family, the city, and the whole people (Jer. 38:17ff; 32:5; 34:3ff)."² [Keil, C.F. & Delitzsch, F., *Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament, Kings*, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI, 1968, p.514.].

E. Jerusalem Is Ravaged And Spoiled.

1. "And in the fifth month, on the seventh *day* of the month, which *is* the nineteenth year of king Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, came Nebuzaradan, captain of the guard, a servant of the king of Babylon, unto Jerusalem: And he burnt the house of the LORD, and the king's house, and all the houses of Jerusalem, and every great *man's* house burnt he with fire. And all the army of the Chaldees, that *were with* the captain of the guard, brake down the walls of Jerusalem round about. Now the rest of the people *that were* left in the city, and the fugitives that fell away to the king of Babylon, with the remnant of the multitude, did Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard carry away. But the captain of the guard left of the poor of the land *to be* vinedressers and husbandmen. And the pillars of brass that *were* in the house of the LORD, and the bases, and the brazen sea that *was* in the house of the LORD, did the Chaldees break in pieces, and carried the brass of them to Babylon. And the pots, and the shovels, and the snuffers, and the spoons, and all the vessels of brass wherewith they ministered, took they away. And the firepans, and the bowls, *and* such things as *were* of gold, *in* gold, and of silver, *in* silver, the captain of the guard took away" (2 Kings 25:8-15).
2. About a month later, following the fall of Judah, Nebuzaradan came to Jerusalem to oversee the destruction of the temple and the city, and the disposition of the people remaining. He ordered the burning of the temple, the king's palace, and the houses of every great man. Apparently all the major houses were destroyed. "On the site afterwards occupied by King Herod the Great's palace stood the royal residence of the kings of Judah, which was destroyed when the Jews were driven into captivity. His office as captain of the guard (Gen. 37:36; 39:1) called him to execute the awards of justice on criminals; and hence, although not engaged in the siege of Jerusalem (Jer. 39:13), Nebuzaradan was despatched to raze the city, to plunder the temple, to lay both in ruins, demolish the fortifications, and transport the inhabitants to Babylon."³ [Jamieson, Fausset, Brown, *A Commentary, Critical, Experimental, and Practical* Vol. 1, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI, 1990, p.450].
3. The great walls of Jerusalem were broken down, leaving the ruins of the city exposed to anyone who wanted to intrude. Years later, Nehemiah would be moved to request permission from the Persian ruler, whom he served in captivity, to travel to Jerusalem to rebuild the walls.
4. The people who had been captured in Jerusalem, along with those who had surrendered to the Babylonians during the siege, were deported to Babylonia. The poor people of the land, who knew how to dress vines and tend to other crops, were left in the land to continue that work. The land was too productive to be left entirely vacant. While the city was under siege and being razed by the Babylonians, certain enemies of Israel were pictured prophetically as encouraging its destruction. "Remember, O LORD, the children of Edom in the day of Jerusalem; who said, Raze it, raze it, *even* to the foundation thereof" (Psm. 137:7). Jeremiah lamented, "*Is it* nothing to you, all ye that pass by? behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the LORD hath afflicted *me* in the day of his fierce anger" (Lam. 1:12).
5. This was a dark day for the cause of God: "Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because that Moab and Seir do say, Behold, the house of Judah *is* like unto all the heathen" (Ezek. 25:8). All of these tragedies could have been prevented: "Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord GOD: wherefore turn *yourselves*, and live ye" (Ezek. 18:31-32).

F. Valuable Lessons From The Story Of Zedekiah.

1. We learn the importance of keeping our word. Zedekiah has sworn with an oath that he would serve the Babylonians. He did not live up to that promise. "And he also rebelled against king Nebuchadnezzar, who had made him swear by God: but he stiffened his neck, and hardened his heart from turning unto the LORD God of Israel" (2 Chron. 36:13).
 - a. "Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Say now to the rebellious house, Know ye not what these *things mean?* tell *them*, Behold, the king of Babylon is come to Jerusalem, and hath taken the king thereof, and the princes thereof, and led them with him to Babylon; And hath taken of the king's seed, and made a covenant with him, and hath taken an oath of him: he hath also taken the mighty of the land: That the kingdom might be base, that it might not lift itself up, *but* that by keeping of his covenant it might stand. But he rebelled against him in sending his ambassadors into Egypt, that they might give him horses and much

- people. Shall he prosper? shall he escape that doeth such *things*? or shall he break the covenant, and be delivered? *As I live, saith the Lord GOD, surely in the place where the king dwelleth that made him king, whose oath he despised, and whose covenant he brake, even with him in the midst of Babylon he shall die. Neither shall Pharaoh with his mighty army and great company make for him in the war, by casting up mounts, and building forts, to cut off many persons: Seeing he despised the oath by breaking the covenant, when, lo, he had given his hand, and hath done all these things, he shall not escape. Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; As I live, surely mine oath that he hath despised, and my covenant that he hath broken, even it will I recompense upon his own head. And I will spread my net upon him, and he shall be taken in my snare, and I will bring him to Babylon, and will plead with him there for his trespass that he hath trespassed against me. And all his fugitives with all his bands shall fall by the sword, and they that remain shall be scattered toward all winds: and ye shall know that I the LORD have spoken it"* (Ezek. 17:11-21).
- b. Consistently throughout the Bible, God's people are called on to keep their promises and pay their vows. Christians must be true to their promises; their word must be so inviolate that those who know them, know that anything they say can be trusted.
 - c. "When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for *he hath* no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed. Better *is it* that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay" (Eccl. 5:4-5).
 - d. "Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another" (Eph. 4:25).
2. We learn that we ought to depend on God, not on the feeble arm of man.
 - a. Zedekiah was approached by some of his neighbors, all of whom were under the domination of Babylon, seeking his entrance into a conspiracy to throw off the yoke of the Chaldeans (Jer. 27:1-11). Zedekiah rebelled against Babylon, and sought an alliance with Egypt, depending on that southern neighbor to help deliver him from the Chaldeans. God warned him that the Egyptians could not help him: "Neither shall Pharaoh with *his* mighty army and great company make for him in the war, by casting up mounts, and building forts, to cut off many persons" (Ezek. 17:17). The Babylonians invaded Palestine and set Jerusalem under a siege. Pharaoh came with his army, but was forced to return home, apparently without a fight. Israel was left alone.
 - b. When Judah showed their unwillingness to repent, God decreed their punishment—enslavement in Babylonia. No alliance with an earthly power could prevent this penalty. "Thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel; Thus shall ye say to the king of Judah, that sent you unto me to inquire of me; Behold, Pharaoh's army, which is come forth to help you, shall return to Egypt into their own land. And the Chaldeans shall come again, and fight against this city, and take it, and burn it with fire" (Jer. 37:7-8).
 - c. God is our only real help. "God *is* our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea" (Psm. 46:1-3). "O LORD, I know that the way of man *is* not in himself: *it is* not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jer. 10:23). "...I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Heb. 13:5).
 - d. Many today think that the mother of Jesus is able to help them. Mary, as good a woman as she was, needed the blood of Christ for her own salvation. She was included in the statement that, "all have sinned and come short" (cf. Rom. 3:23). Mary cannot help us; no departed saint can help us; there is only one Mediator between God and man—Christ Jesus!
 3. We may learn that humility is highly-valued in God's sight.
 - a. Zedekiah refused to humble himself before Jehovah: "And he did *that which was* evil in the sight of the LORD his God, *and* humbled not himself before Jeremiah the prophet *speaking* from the mouth of the LORD" (2 Chron. 36:12). If he had submitted humbly to God's will, his future would have been much brighter. Humility on our part exalts us in God's sight.
 - b. "Blessed *are* the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:3).
 - c. "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up" (Jas. 4:10).
 - d. "Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all *of you* be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time" (1 Pet. 5:5-6).
 4. We learn that we reap what we sow.
 - a. "Whoso diggeth a pit shall fall therein: and he that rolleth a stone, it will return upon him"

- (Prov. 26:27).
- b. "He that diggeth a pit shall fall into it; and whoso breaketh an hedge, a serpent shall bite him" (Eccl. 10:8).
 - c. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting" (Gal. 6:7-8).
 - d. Ahab and Jezebel had wreaked spiritual havoc on ancient Israel. The tragic story of how they had to face the penalties for their sinful conduct is reported in 1 Kings 21-23 and 2 Kings 9.
 - e. Zedekiah followed the wicked practices of his brother Jehoiakim. God will not allow sin forever to go unpunished. In many cases, just punishment is meted out in this life, upon the guilty; in every case, the impenitent will face the due penalty of their sins in the next world.
 - f. Samson thought that his great strength was forever his; after telling Delilah that his strength depended on his maintaining his Nazaritic vows, which included the prohibition against cutting his hair, she cut his hair, thus depriving him of his strength. He awoke from sleep, shook himself, and went forth to fight the Philistines, *not knowing that the Lord had departed from him* (Judg. 16:20). He lost his sight, his freedom, and his life.
5. We learn that the influence of sin can be disastrous.
- a. Israel learned that lesson to their dismay in the sin of Achan (Josh. 6-7). Clear instructions were given that they were to take nothing for themselves from the spoils of Jericho. Achan disobeyed, taking certain desirable items from the city.
 - b. This sin led to Israel's defeat at Ai (Josh. 7). The reason for their defeat is specifically shown to be sin in the camp: "Israel hath sinned, and they have also transgressed my covenant which I commanded them: for they have even taken of the accursed thing, and have also stolen, and dissembled also, and they have put *it* even among their own stuff. Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, *but* turned *their* backs before their enemies, because they were accursed: neither will I be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed from among you" (Josh. 7:11-12).
 - c. Zedekiah's sinful situation led to the persecution of Jeremiah, an innocent prophet of God.
 - 1) "And it came to pass, that when the army of the Chaldeans was broken up from Jerusalem for fear of Pharaoh's army, Then Jeremiah went forth out of Jerusalem to go into the land of Benjamin, to separate himself thence in the midst of the people. And when he was in the gate of Benjamin, a captain of the ward *was* there, whose name *was* Irijah, the son of Shelemiah, the son of Hananiah; and he took Jeremiah the prophet, saying, Thou fallest away to the Chaldeans. Then said Jeremiah, *It is* false; I fall not away to the Chaldeans. But he hearkened not to him: so Irijah took Jeremiah, and brought him to the princes. Wherefore the princes were wroth with Jeremiah, and smote him, and put him in prison in the house of Jonathan the scribe: for they had made that the prison. When Jeremiah was entered into the dungeon, and into the cabins, and Jeremiah had remained there many days" (Jer. 37:11-16).
 - 2) "Then Shephatiah the son of Mattan, and Gedaliah the son of Pashur, and Jucal the son of Shelemiah, and Pashur the son of Malchiah, heard the words that Jeremiah had spoken unto all the people, saying, Thus saith the LORD, He that remaineth in this city shall die by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence: but he that goeth forth to the Chaldeans shall live; for he shall have his life for a prey, and shall live. Thus saith the LORD, This city shall surely be given into the hand of the king of Babylon's army, which shall take it. Therefore the princes said unto the king, We beseech thee, let this man be put to death: for thus he weakeneth the hands of the men of war that remain in this city, and the hands of all the people, in speaking such words unto them: for this man seeketh not the welfare of this people, but the hurt. Then Zedekiah the king said, Behold, he *is* in your hand: for the king *is* not *he that* can do *any* thing against you. Then took they Jeremiah, and cast him into the dungeon of Malchiah the son of Hammelech, that *was* in the court of the prison: and they let down Jeremiah with cords. And in the dungeon *there was* no water, but mire: so Jeremiah sunk in the mire" (Jer. 38:1-6).
 - d. Sin spreads. The leaven of sin affects others (cf. 1 Cor. 5:6). We reap what we sow; we can reap more than we sow; we reap for longer than we sow; and others reap from our sowing. David's sin affected not only himself and Bathsheba, but Uriah, the infant, his family, and the nation of Israel (2 Sam. 11-18). A young man lived an immoral life. He later married, and he and his good wife soon were blessed with a baby. But the baby had a terrible affliction. The doctor called the young man into the baby's hospital room, and asked him whether he had lived

- in immorality. The man admitted the charge. The doctor pointed to the baby's twisted spine, and predicted that it could not have a proper mind, and could never live a normal life, and told the young man that the little baby's condition was due to the father's immoral life. The AIDS epidemic is traceable to immoral conduct. The little babies born to drug-addicted mothers are in that condition due to the mothers' sinful conduct.
- e. Godliness can also have far-reaching effects for good. (Matt. 5:13-16; Phil. 2:14-16; 1 Tim. 4:12).
6. We learn that God hates sin.
 - a. "These six *things* doth the LORD hate: yea, seven *are* an abomination unto him: A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, A false witness *that* speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren" (Prov. 6:16-19).
 - b. Why did God drive out the original inhabitants of Canaan and give land to Israel? Because of their iniquity (Gen. 15:13-16). The Canaanites were to be dealt with harshly, when the time came, because they were sinful and impenitent.
 - c. Why did God allow the Babylonians to conquer Jerusalem, destroy the temple, devastate the city, kill many citizens, bring horrible conditions upon the population, and cause a large number of them to be carried into captivity? They had gone into sin, even to surpass the evil the Canaanites had done.
 - d. What if we turn against truth? What if we quit trying to do right? What if we turn inward on ourselves (as individuals or as a congregation)?
 7. We learn that rebellion against duly constituted authority is wrong.
 - a. Zedekiah rebelled against the Babylonians, the agent of God's punishment upon sinful Israel.
 - b. "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to *execute* wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore *ye* must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. For for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute *is due*; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour" (Rom. 13:1-7).
 - c. "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well. For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men" (1 Pet. 2:13-15).
 8. God means what he says.
 - a. He warned Israel that He would punish them if they strayed from His Word; they strayed and paid the awesome penalty—tribute, invasion, siege, capture, destruction of their way of life, the loss of their national treasures, the slaughter of many of their people, and the enslavement in Babylon.
 - b. God means what he says to people today, in every command, instruction, truth, promise, and warning.
 9. God knows the future.
 - a. He is able to know the past and the future better than any man (or all men together) can know the present.
 - b. He knew precisely what would befall Judah; He warned that the Babylonians would come, that Egypt could offer them no help, that the city would fall, and that the people could be enslaved.
 - c. He also instructed Jeremiah to redeem a certain property, thus showing that the people would be able to return to their homeland at the proper time (Jer. 37).
 - d. God knew and related to Zedekiah that he would die in Babylon, but that he would not see that great city (Ezek. 12:13; cf. Jer. 32:4). This is tantamount to stating that he would lose his sight (cf. 2 Kings 25:7).
 10. Leaders have grave responsibilities.
 - a. Israel's leaders let them down: "And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD unto the shepherds; Woe *be* to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves!

should not the shepherds feed the flocks? Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool, ye kill them that are fed: *but* ye feed not the flock. The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up *that which* was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost; but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them. And they were scattered, because *there is* no shepherd: and they became meat to all the beasts of the field, when they were scattered. My sheep wandered through all the mountains, and upon every high hill: yea, my flock was scattered upon all the face of the earth, and none did search or seek *after them*. Therefore, ye shepherds, hear the word of the LORD" (Ezek. 34:1-7).

- b. Elders have heavy responsibilities: "Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of *their* conversation....Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that *is* unprofitable for you" (Heb. 13:7,17).

11. One can go so far into rebellion against God that it is virtually impossible for him to return.

- a. "But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against his people, **till there was no remedy**" (2 Chron. 36:16).
- b. "And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God. But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming. Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us, *saying*, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth" (Acts 13:44-46).
- c. "Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness" (Eph. 4:18-19).
- d. "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; **having their conscience seared with a hot iron**" (1 Tim. 4:1-2).
- e. "For *it is* impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put *him* to an open shame" (Heb. 6:4-6).
- f. "Let us hold fast the profession of *our* faith without wavering; (for he *is* faithful that promised;) And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some *is*; but exhorting *one another*: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: 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, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? For we know him that hath said, Vengeance *belongeth* unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. *It is* a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Heb. 10:23-31).

12. The innocent suffer evil consequences from the wrong-doing of the wicked. Jeremiah suffered greatly because of the wickedness of the Israelite hierarchy (Jer. 37:11-16; 38:1-6). The sufferings of the innocent can only be fully known by the infinite mind of the Almighty.

III. CONCLUSION.

A. God Permitted Israel To Have A King.

- 1. It was not in God's plan for Israel to have an earthly king, but when they demanded a regal ruler from among their own ranks, he permitted them to have Saul as their first king. After his forty-year reign, which ended in tragedy, God chose David to be his successor. Despite some serious blunders, David was a great king. His son Solomon followed him as king. Solomon's reign was

- characterized by great national success, although he fell victim to sin in his personal life.
2. After the death of Solomon, his son Rehoboam took the reins of government, and through foolishly heeding the unkempt counsel of his younger advisors, took some steps which led to a great division in the nation. While he ruled over the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin, Jeroboam formed a separate nation (the Northern Kingdom of Israel), comprised of the other ten tribes.
- B. Zedekiah's penalty was supreme.
1. He lost his sons. He lost his throne. He lost his nation. He lost his eyesight. He lost his freedom. He lost his comfort.
 2. "Then he put out the eyes of Zedekiah; and the king of Babylon bound him in chains, and carried him to Babylon, and put him in prison till the day of his death" (Jer. 52:11).
 3. "And they slew the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, and put out the eyes of Zedekiah, and bound him with fetters of brass, and carried him to Babylon" (2 Kings 25:7). "The Assyrians' captives are usually represented as bound hand and foot—the two hands secured by one chain, the two feet by another. According to Jewish tradition Zedekiah was, like other slaves, forced to work in a mill at Babylon. Jeremiah tells us that he was kept in prison until he died (Jer 52:11)." ⁴ He was condemned to die as a prisoner in a foreign land.
- C. We have the privilege of learning from the mistakes of those who lived in the past.
1. If we ignore the errors of the past, or if we think we are so much stronger than they were that we could not fall into the same error, we are bound to stumble. This is true of individuals, of congregations, of societies, and of nations. In His wisdom, God placed in the Bible countless stories and examples, along with many positive commands and instructions, as well as warnings, to keep us from plunging into sin. Zedekiah's experiences offer an object lesson for us all. There are many other such examples.
 2. "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope" (Rom. 15:4).
 3. "Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted....Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come" (1 Cor. 10:6,11).
- D. We are living under a much better Covenant—the glorious Gospel of the Son of God!
1. Our benefits, blessings, advantages, and information vastly surpasses that possessed by anyone prior to the Gospel Age.
 2. "Be it known unto you therefore, men *and* brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses" (Acts 13:38-39).
 3. "Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ" (Eph. 1:3).
 4. "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let *them* slip. For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; 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*." (Heb. 2:1-3).

HEAVEN—The Eternal Abode of the Soul

I. INTRODUCTION.

- A. Most cultures have had a concept of a future life.
1. The American Indians had a belief in "The Happy Hunting Grounds" following this life. This after-life would be one in which there would be plenty of game to hunt, and no fear of hunger.
 2. The ancient Egyptians believed in a future life, and the tombs of the pharaohs show that they had buried with them such things that they perceived would aid them in the after-life.
 3. The Spanish explorers sought a "Fountain of Youth," a means to an extended life on earth.
 4. Job 14:14: "If a man die, shall he live *again*? all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come." This passage shows that Job believed in an after-life following the resurrection.
- B. Where did this belief in a blissful life of eternity originate.
1. Genesis 3:22-24: "And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know

good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever: Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life."

2. Adam and Eve had knowledge of eternal life and that the tree of life represented the way to obtain it. God took action after man expulsion from the Garden of Eden to keep mankind from partaking of it.
 3. Our first parents would naturally have told their children and grandchildren about this tree of life. Each succeeding generation would have passed on to their offspring some information about this matter. The information would be distorted with the telling, but some measure of knowledge would have been passed on. Belief in a future eternal life is embedded in our nature and is left over from Eden.
- C. The desire for eternal life has always been present with mankind.
1. No one wants to accept an earth-only existence, for if this is all there is to life, we would be left with a feeling of great hopelessness. "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable" (1 Cor. 15:19).
 2. We have a natural desire and need for food, water, clothing, and shelter; God has richly supplied these essentials in the bounties of the earth.
 3. We have a desire for eternal life; God has provided satisfaction for our longing for eternal life in Heaven.

II. DISCUSSION.

A. God loves his offspring and wants us to live with him eternally in Heaven.

1. He demonstrated this by giving his Son to die on the cross.
 - a. John 3:16: "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."
 - b. Romans 5:8: "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."
 - c. Hebrews 2:9: "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man."
2. He demonstrated this by giving us the gospel: "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that *pertain* unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue" (2 Pet. 1:3; cf. 2 Tim. 3:16-17; Rom. 1:16).
3. He demonstrated this by giving to his people the spiritual blessings found in Christ (Eph. 1:3).

B. Christ loves us and wants us to live with him eternally in Heaven.

1. His death on the cross was the greatest manifestation of his love for us.
 - a. John 10:10-11: "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. I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep."
 - b. 2 Corinthians 5:14-15: "For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: And *that* he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again."
2. Many have given their lives for their friends, but he died for even his enemies.
 - a. Romans 5:6-8: "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."
 - b. In nature, we find many creatures who will die to protect their young. We have heard about the mother eagle who covered her nesting offspring with her wings, in a futile attempt to protect them from a great fire.
 - c. He loved the church and gave himself for it (Eph. 5:25; cf. Acts 20:28). The church is God's family, it is the body of Christ, it is the saved.
 - 1) Ephesians 1:22-23: "And hath put all *things* under his feet, and gave him *to be* the head over all *things* to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all."
 - 2) 1 Timothy 3:15: "But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth."
 - 3) Acts 2:47: "...And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."

- d. The church will be taken to Heaven.
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 15:24: "Then *cometh* the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power."
 - 2) Ephesians 5:25-27: "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."
- C. No accountable person can get to heaven without proper preparation.
 1. Little children and infants are not accountable—they are safe: "And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 18:3).
 2. But sin separates the accountable from the Holy God (Isa. 59:2).
 - a. All accountable people have sinned: "If they sin against thee, (for *there is* no man that sinneth not,) and thou be angry with them, and deliver them to the enemy, so that they carry them away captives unto the land of the enemy, far or near" (1 Kings 8:46).
 - b. Each accountable person is responsible only for his own sins.
 - 1) Ezekiel 18:20: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him."
 - 2) Romans 14:12: "So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God."
 - 3) Few will admit their culpability. Few convicted criminals will admit their guilt.
 - c. Even a good moral man cannot be saved on account of his own goodness. Cornelius was a good man, but was lost without the gospel: "And he showed us how he had seen an angel in his house, which stood and said unto him, Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter; Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved" (Acts 11:13-14).
 - d. No one can save himself: "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost" (Titus 3:5).
 - e. No accountable person can enter heaven unless his guilt has been removed: "Then said Jesus again unto them, I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come. Then said the Jews, Will he kill himself? because he saith, Whither I go, ye cannot come. And he said unto them, Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world. I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am *he*, ye shall die in your sins" (John 8:21-24).
 - D. God has revealed in his word how we can make preparations.
 1. Each accountable person has the power of choice; we chose to commit sin; we can choose to go to Heaven.
 - a. Joshua 24:15: "And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that *were* on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."
 - b. Acts 13:46: "Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles."
 - c. Romans 6:16-18: "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness."
 - d. Hebrews 5:8-9: "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him."
 2. The requirements of becoming a Christian:
 - a. Faith in Christ: "I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am *he*, ye shall die in your sins" (John 8:24).
 - b. Repentance: "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent" (Acts 17:30).
 - c. Confession of our faith in Christ: "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and

- with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Rom. 10:10; cf. Acts 8:37).
- d. Baptism into Christ: "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16; cf. Rom. 6:3-4).
 3. The requirements for an erring Christian: Repentance of the sin, confession of the sin, and prayer for forgiveness.
 - a. Acts 8:22: "Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee."
 - b. James 5:16: "Confess *your* faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."
 - c. 1 John 1:9: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."
 4. We must remain faithful.
 - a. Matthew 10:22: "And ye shall be hated of all *men* for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved."
 - b. Revelation 3:21: "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne."
 5. We must attend faithfully and regularly.
 - a. Matthew 6:33: "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."
 - b. Luke 9:23: "And he said to *them* all, If any *man* will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me."
 - c. Luke 13:24: "Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able."
 - d. Hebrews 10:25: "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some *is*; but exhorting *one another*: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching."
 6. We must offer scriptural worship: "God *is* a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24).
 7. We must adhere to God's instructions.
 - a. 1 Timothy 5:22: "...keep thyself pure."
 - b. James 1:27: "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, *and* to keep himself unspotted from the world."
 - c. Titus 2:11-14: "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."
 8. We must do what we can to save others.
 - a. Proverbs 11:30: "The fruit of the righteous *is* a tree of life; and he that winneth souls *is* wise."
 - b. John 4:35: "Say not ye, There are yet four months, and *then* cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest."
 - c. 1 Corinthians 9:19-22: "For though I be free from all *men*, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all *men*, that I might by all means save some."
- E. God has shown us in his word the kind of people who will not be in heaven.
1. Those who do not obey the gospel and know not God: "In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not 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" (2 Thess. 1:8-9). Those who know God are those who obey the gospel; they who do not know God are those who do not obey the gospel.
 2. Unfaithful children of God.
 - a. Luke 12:47-48: "And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not *himself*, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many *stripes*. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few *stripes*. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more."

- b. Revelation 3:16: "So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth."
 3. Those who practice the works of the flesh: "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are *these*; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told *you* in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God" (Gal. 5:19-21).
 4. The fearful, the unbelieving, the abominable, murderers, fornicators, sorcerers, idolaters, and liars: "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death" (Rev. 21:8).
 5. Traitors.
 - a. Matthew 26:24: "The Son of man goeth as it is written of him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born."
 - b. John 17:12: "While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled."
 6. Those who deny Christ: "But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 10:33).
 7. Those who are ashamed of the gospel: "Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; 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).
 8. False teachers will not be in Heaven.
 - a. Matthew 7:15: "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves."
 - b. 1 John 4:1: "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world."
 - c. Revelation 20:10: "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."
 9. Others:
 - a. Hypocrites: "But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; And shall begin to smite *his* fellowservants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for *him*, and in an hour that he is not aware of, And shall cut him asunder, and appoint *him* his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matt. 24:48-51).
 - b. Blasphemers of the Holy Spirit: "Verily I say unto you, All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme: But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation" (Mark 3:28-29).
 - c. The devil and his angels.
 - 1) Matthew 25:41: "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."
 - 2) 2 Peter 2:4: "For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast *them* down to hell, and delivered *them* into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment."
 - 3) Jude 1:6: "And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day."
- F. We can know some things that will not be in heaven.
1. Heaven is often described negatively—it is a better place than on earth. The finite mind of man cannot comprehend the glories of Heaven.
 - a. How would you describe the paradise of Hawaii to an untutored Eskimo? How could you describe fully to him the beautiful flowers, the exotic birds, the palm trees, or the pleasant climate?
 - b. How could you describe an elephant to a blind man? Some blind men were introduced to an elephant, and each came away with a different understanding. One who felt the elephant's ear said the elephant was like a great fan; another who felt his side thought it was like a wall; another who felt his leg thought the elephant was like a tree; another who felt the elephant's tail thought the animal was like a rope. They were all right—but they were all wrong!
 2. Revelation 21:4 specifies several things that will not be in Heaven: "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."

- a. No tears.
 - b. No death.
 - c. No sorrow.
 - d. No mourning and crying.
 - e. No pain.
3. No sin will be in Heaven: "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither *whatsoever* worketh abomination, or *maketh* a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life" (Rev. 21:27).
 4. No disease will be in heaven, for our new bodies will be incorruptible.
 - a. 1 Corinthians 15:52-53: "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal *must* put on immortality."
 - b. Philippians 3:21: "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."
 5. There will be no separation in Heaven. Separation here causes an untold amount of pain and suffering to us, greatly disrupting our happiness.
 6. No curse will be in Heaven: "And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him" (Rev. 22:3). [Every accursed thing—*katanathema*].
 7. There will be no night in Heaven: "And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever" (Rev. 22:5). A man became lost in Mammoth Cave for twenty-four hours; by the time of his rescue, he had been driven insane by the darkness.
 8. There will be no hunger and thirst in Heaven: "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat" (Rev. 7:16).
 9. Other things not to be found in Heaven:
 - a. No boredom, for we will be active and not idle:
 - 1) Revelation 7:15: "Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them."
 - 2) Revelation 22:3: "And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him:"
 - b. No heartache will be in Heaven:
 - 1) Psalms 16:11: "Thou wilt show me the path of life: in thy presence *is* fulness of joy; at thy right hand *there are* pleasures for evermore."
 - 2) Matthew 25:20-23: "And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more. His lord said unto him, Well done, *thou* good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents beside them. His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord."
 - c. No hatred will be in Heaven. Compare: "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him" (1 John 3:15).
 - d. No anxiety, care, or worry will be in Heaven. There will be nothing there to cause them.
 - e. There will be no marriage in Heaven: "And Jesus answering said unto them, The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage: But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection" (Luke 20:34-36).

G. We can know some things that will be in heaven.

1. Beauty will be abundant there.
 - a. Revelation 21:10-13: "And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, Having the glory of God: and her light *was* like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal; And had a wall great and high, *and* had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels,

- and names written thereon, which are *the names* of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: On the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates."
- b. Revelation 22:1-5: "And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, *was there* the tree of life, which bare twelve *manner of* fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree *were* for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: And they shall see his face; and his name *shall be* in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever."
 - c. A little child had been born blind. When he was about ten years of age, a surgical procedure gave him the ability to see. When the bandages were removed, he was amazed at the beauty all around him. He asked his mother, "Why didn't you tell me about the beauty of the world?" They was no way for his mother to adequately describe the beauty of nature (because of the limits of language to convey such pictures); it is impossible (because of our finite minds) to grasp the picture of Heaven's beauty if God should describe it to us.
2. Love will be in heaven in great abundance: "He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love" (1 John 4:8).
 3. Home will be there, for Heaven is the home of the soul: "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if *it were* not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 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. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know. Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way? Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:1-6).
 4. We will have new spiritual bodies in Heaven.
 - a. 1 John 3:2: "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."
 - b. Compare the metamorphosis of a beautiful butterfly from a homely caterpillar.
 5. We will have rest there.
 - a. 2 Thessalonians 1:6: "Seeing *it is* a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you."
 - b. Hebrews 4:9: "There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God."
 - c. Revelation 14:13: "And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed *are* the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."
 6. We will have happiness in Heaven.
 - a. Psalms 16:11: "Thou wilt show me the path of life: in thy presence *is* fulness of joy; at thy right hand *there are* pleasures for evermore."
 - b. Revelation 7:13-17: "And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."
 7. Joy and contentment will be in Heaven: "And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more. His lord said unto him, Well done, *thou* good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents beside them. His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord" (Matt. 25:20-23).
 8. We will have glory in Heaven: "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time *are* not worthy *to be compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Rom. 8:18).
 9. There will be recognition in Heaven.
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- a. Matthew 8:11: "And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven." We will recognize these Old Testament worthies, although we never saw them on earth.
 - b. Matthew 17:1-8: "And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him. Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him. And when the disciples heard *it*, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid. And Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid. And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only." The apostles recognized Moses and Elijah, although they had never seen them in the flesh.
 - c. The rich man, Lazarus, and Abraham retained their identities in eternity (Luke 16:19-31).
 - d. David implies that he will know his infant son in eternity: "But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me" (2 Sam. 12:23).
 - e. Paul and his brethren will be together in eternity, which implies they would recognize each other: "Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present *us* with you" (2 Cor. 4:14).
- H. We can know the kind of persons who will be in Heaven.
1. God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, and the angels will be there.
 2. Those who died in infancy will be there.
 - a. 2 Samuel 12:23: "But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me."
 - b. Matthew 18:3: "And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."
 - c. Matthew 19:14: "But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven."
 - d. Even those innocent ones who were aborted prior to birth will be present. Also, those who were stillborn or died early in their lives.
 3. Faithful children of God from all ages will be there.
 - a. From the Old Testament times, present in Heaven will be Enoch, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Elijah—and a great host of others.
 - b. From the New Testament times, present in Heaven will be Stephen, Peter, John, Paul—and a great host of others.
 - c. "Won't it be wonderful there!"
- I. There are many blessings which result from preparing for Heaven.
1. There are many blessings which we enjoy in this life.
 - a. Forgiveness of sins: "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace" (Eph. 1:7).
 - b. Privilege of worshiping God: "God *is* a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24)
 - c. Being in Christ's spiritual presence.
 - 1) Matthew 18:20: "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."
 - 2) Galatians 2:20: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."
 - d. The power to be the best possible influence on society: "Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity" (1 Tim. 4:12).
 - e. The privilege of bringing precious souls to Christ: "Say not ye, There are yet four months, and *then* cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest. And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together" (John 4:35-36).
 - f. The courage to face death unafraid.
 - 1) Psalms 23:4: "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no

- evil: for thou *art* with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."
- 2) Philippians 1:21, 23: "For to me to live *is* Christ, and to die *is* gain....For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better:"
 - 3) 2 Timothy 4:6-8: "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished *my* course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."
- g. The hope of Heaven: "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).
 - h. All spiritual blessings: "Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ" (Eph. 1:3).
2. We have freedom from the horrors of Hell.
 - a. In this terrible place will reside Stan and his unholy angels; from these we will be forevermore separated! "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matt. 25:41).
 - b. We will be free from the anguish of eternal punishment.
 - 1) Matthew 25:46: "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal."
 - 2) Romans 2:8: "But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath."
 - 3) Revelation 21:8: "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death."
 - c. We will not have to associate with the wicked people, will not have to endure their filthy talk, will not have to be repulsed by their sinful conduct: "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither *whatsoever* worketh abomination, or *maketh* a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life" (Rev. 21:27).
 - d. We will be delivered from the sight and sound of the awful crying of the damned, the gnashing of their teeth, and from the darkness of that terrible place.
 3. We will have and enjoy the full blessings of heaven, a few of which are these:
 - a. Life in a beautiful city.
 - 1) Hebrews 13:14: "For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come."
 - 2) Revelation 21:9-11: "And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, Having the glory of God: and her light *was* like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal."
 - 3) Revelation 22:1-5: "And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, *was there* the tree of life, which bare twelve *manner of* fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree *were* for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: And they shall see his face; and his name *shall be* in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever."
 - b. Enjoyment of the presence of the angels of God.
 - 1) Matthew 25:31: "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory."
 - 2) Matthew 26:53: "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?"
 - c. Being with the pure ones who had died in infancy.
 - d. Having fellowship with the redeemed of the ages: "And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 8:11).
 - e. Being honored to be in the presence of God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit.
 - f. We can hear and participate in beautiful singing.

g. We will have an unending life that is continually filled with happiness and joy.

III. CONCLUSION.

A. You should prepare to reach heaven

1. Tomorrow might be too late.
 - a. Luke 12:16-21: "And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, *and* be merry. But God said unto him, *Thou* fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? So *is* he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."
 - b. 2 Corinthians 6:2: "For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now *is* the accepted time; behold, now *is* the day of salvation."
 - c. James 4:14: "Whereas ye know not what *shall be* on the morrow. For what *is* your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away."
2. Erring saints need to repent, confess their sins, and pray for forgiveness.
 - a. Acts 8:22: "Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee."
 - b. James 5:16: "Confess *your* faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."
 - c. 1 John 1:9: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."
3. Alien sinners need to believe on Christ, repent of their sins, confess their faith in Christ, and be buried with the Lord in baptism for the remission of sins.
 - a. Faith in Christ: "I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am *he*, ye shall die in your sins" (John 8:24).
 - b. Repentance: "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent" (Acts 17:30).
 - c. Confession of our faith in Christ: "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Rom. 10:10; cf. Acts 8:37).
 - d. Baptism into Christ: "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16; cf. Rom. 6:3-4).
4. Christians should remain faithful.
 - a. Matthew 10:22: "And ye shall be hated of all *men* for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved."
 - b. Revelation 2:10: "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast *some* of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

B. Illustration.

1. "In 1931 an aged lady who lived most of her life as a member of a denomination, and who was confined to her bed with tuberculosis in its final stages, desired to be baptized for the remission of sins. Bro. Boyd was at the time in a meeting with the 22nd Avenue church where they worshipped many years in Nashville, and he was called. There was a funeral director in Nashville who had a portable vessel constructed with could be used for such emergencies. He was contacted and the improvised baptistry was soon brought to the residence. Here also some of the people feared the baptizing might have tragic or harmful effects, but a son who was a member of the church shared her desire and gave permission for the baptizing to be done. The son lifted his mother into the baptistry and Bro. Boyd baptized her. She was enabled to complete her obedience to the Lord, lived several months thereafter....God will bless those who will do his will" [Brodie Crouch, *Beneath Stars of Hope; The Story of the Life of John Dudley Boyd, Jr.*, p.93].
2. The present moment is all the time we presently have; we cannot obey the gospel yesterday (for it is forever gone); we cannot obey the gospel *tomorrow* for it is not yet here and may not ever come; we have only this present moment.

What Must I Do To Become And Be an Atheist?

I. INTRODUCTION.

A. Atheists are made, not born.

1. Have you every known a little child, when he begins to talk, start denouncing the existence of God?
 - a. They are incapable of such concepts of belief and unbelief.
 - b. They are unable to discern between good and evil.
2. Children are quick to perceive that someone made the animals, that they did not become alive out of nothing by some blind accident.
 - a. They soon learn that baby animals are produced by bigger animals of the same kind.
 - b. Calves are produced by cows; colts are produced by mares; kittens are produced by cats.
 - c. The perceive that something can come from nothing.
3. They soon learn that plants are produced by seeds.

B. Every civilization, no matter how remote or recent, have beliefs in a supreme being.

1. They have various names for their deities, but somehow they have come to accept the proposition that there is a God.
2. Their religious beliefs and activities are different, but all civilizations have an inborn belief in a divine being and an longing for the same.
3. The only exception I remember hearing about was the Tasaday group in the deep jungles of the Philippines. These were "discovered" in the 1970s—their story exploded over world-wide news sources. Until it was discovered that the entire story was fabricated!

C. Before one rejects belief in Deity, he must put from his mind the inborn desire and awareness of God.

1. Before denying the Supreme Being, one must also repudiate logical thinking: "Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen" (Rom. 1:19-25).
2. Many generations of humankind have come to reject the Living God, but inevitably they turn to some other object to which to direct their devotions. Having reached this state, they turn to all manner of ungodly conduct: "For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet. 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, covenantbreakers, 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" (Rom. 1:26-32).
3. G.K. Chesterton said: "When men stop believing in God, they don't believe in nothing. They believe in anything." Mark Twain said: "It's amazing what men will believe, so long as it's not in the Bible!" Psalms 94:9: "He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? he that formed the eye, shall he not see?"

II. DISCUSSION: To Become an Atheist, one must take certain definite steps.

A. Must Close His Eyes to the Order Which Is Obviously Present in the Universe.

1. One has to be intellectually blind to avoid seeing the order in the world about us.
2. Teleological simply means purpose, design, and adaption of the universe.
 - a. Evidence is abundant that the wonders we behold could not have come by chance or accident, but as purposed and planned by a designer.
 - b. All of nature indicates an intelligent design; intelligence denotes Personality; and design demands a Designer.

3. That the universe was brought about by Divine intelligence can be demonstrated by mathematical law.
 - a. Number 10 coins 1 through 10, put them in a container and shake them. The chances of removing them in sequence (1-10) is one chance in ten billion.
 - b. If this simple experiment is almost beyond possibility, think how impossible it would be for life, the earth, and the universe to happen by chance!
 4. The many complex demands for life to exist on earth could not occur by chance.
 - a. The earth rotates on its axis at the rate of 1,000 mph. If this speed were reduced to 200 mph, the daylight periods would be so long that the heat from the sun would burn up all vegetable and animal life. And the night would be so cold that all would freeze. There would be 5 times as much heating and cooling as now.
 - b. The earth is just the right distance from the sun. If it were one million miles closer, too much heat; a million miles farther, too little heat.
 - c. If the land masses of the northern hemisphere were to exchange places with the great areas of water in the southern hemisphere, even with the present distance from the sun, the same effects (too much heat or too little heat) would exist and life would perish. Even the land and water masses are perfectly located—by design!
 5. If the temperature of the sun were cut in half, the earth would freeze; if it increased by fifty percent, the earth would be roasted.
 - a. The moon is located 248,000 miles from earth. The moon's gravitational pull causes our tides. If the moon were 50,000 miles away, the tides would be so great that the entire earth would be covered by water twice daily.
 - b. If the diameter of the earth were greater, the crust of the earth much thicker, oxygen could not exist— life would not be possible.
 - c. If the atmosphere were much thinner, meteors which are now burned up before reaching the earth, would strike the earth, causing fires all over the globe.
 - d. The slant of the earth is perfect; if it were perpendicular instead of at an angle of $23\frac{1}{2}$ degrees, life could not exist.
 6. These complex demands rule out the possibility of the earth coming about by blind chance. Clearly, design is in evidence; and the Grand Designer could be none other than the God of heaven! Psalm 8.
 - a. Psalms 14:1: "The fool hath said in his heart, *There is* no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, *there is* none that doeth good."
 - b. Psalms 19:1: "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork."
 - c. Daniel 2:28: "But there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days. Thy dream, and the visions of thy head upon thy bed, are these."
- B. Ignore or explain away the complexities which are clearly obvious in nature.
1. **Ice.**
 - a. "Out of whose womb came the ice? and the hoary frost of heaven, who hath gendered it? The waters are hid as with a stone, and the face of the deep is frozen" (Job 38:29-30).
 - b. What is the cause for the unusual conduct of ice? When objects are heated they normally expand, and when cooled they contract. This is the law governing all objects except water.
 - c. When heated, water expands; but when chilled it contracts to a certain point. When it nears the freezing point contraction suddenly ceases; when it nears the freezing point again, it begins to expand and soon will gain back all its previous bulk, plus about a third more.
 - d. Suppose that ice did not have these characteristics. The streams and lakes would freeze, the ice would descend to the bottom, the whole body of water would become solid ice; no fish would survive. But ice floats on the top and leaves space beneath for the fish and other water creatures to have oxygen to live.
 - e. Why does water have these strange attributes? Simple. God made it that way! It is certain that inanimate water did not figure all this out by itself.
 2. **A spider's engineering feat.**
 - a. In the Northwest Pacific there is a certain type of spider, no larger than the nail on your little finger. It builds its nest in the crotch of a bush's limb. It finds a small shell on the ground, attaches a strand of web from the limb to each end of the shell, the other ends are attached to the limb. He gradually raises the shell, one end at a time, until it can be swung into and bound to the crotch of the limb where it has decided to build its nest. It weaves the nest inside the

- shell, leaving an opening at one end.
- b. How did it learn to do this? By instinct. But where did it get the instinct? From its parents. Where did the first such spider get it? From its Creator!
3. **The salmon.**
 - a. This fish spends years at sea, but finally it returns to the stream, and perhaps even to the very place, where it had been hatched. If it is removed from its native stream and placed in another, it will go downstream, and will find the same tributary where it came into being. There it will spawn and die.
 - b. How can a mere fish do what most humans could not do: find a particular place in a particular stream after having been away from it for years? Its Creator placed in it this ability.
 4. **A peculiar bird.**
 - a. All of God's creations are designed and equipped for their particular niche in the world.
 - b. The ouzel is a strange bird which lives in the Pacific regions. It is the most buoyant of all fowls. Part of the body of a duck or goose sinks below the surface of the water, but the ouzel floats like a cork on the surface; it seems impossible for it to sink. But it can be floating one moment and suddenly disappear beneath the water, sinking to the bottom like a chunk of lead. It is able to walk around on the bottom where it gathers food, then walks to the bank and climbs ashore. It eats, then inflates its body and repeats the process.
 - c. How is this possible? Only by special design. It was made with a muscular construction that enables it to expel all air from its body in order to have the necessary weight to sink in swift current and stay on the bottom.
 - d. This ability to float like a cork and sink like a rock requires design. Truly, "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God" (Ps. 14:1).
 5. **A certain type of wasp.**
 - a. This wasp will catch a grasshopper, sting it in just the right place to cause it to be paralyzed, but not dead, so it can live on as a form of food.
 - b. Then the wasp will put the grasshopper in the proper place, lay her eggs beside it, so that her offspring will hatch and feast on the hopper without killing the insect upon which they feed. The mother never sees her offspring.
 - c. The first wasp must have done it right the first time or else there would be none of them around today! Only through God's design could this wasp have lived.
 6. **There are eels with travel instincts superior to the salmon.**
 - a. They travel from Europe thousands of miles to the ocean depths near Bermuda; there they breed and die. But their offspring make their way back to the very places, the very rivers, lakes and ponds from which their parents came; and the process is repeated.
 - b. No European eel has ever been caught in American waters. This instinct was planted in the first of the species by the Creator!
 7. **In the pine forests of south Georgia is found a type of "prison flower" called the jack-in-the-pulpit.**
 - a. It has male and female clusters inside the pulpit which has a very narrow constriction about half-way down the stem. In order to be pollinated, a very little fly must find its way through the constriction where it is trapped. As it flies around inside, it dusts itself with pollen; shortly the sides get rough enough for it to climb out. It then contacts the female cluster where pollination occurs. The male cluster allows the fly to escape; the female may or may not.
 - b. This is clear evidence of design—and a Divine Designer!
 8. **The human body is evidence of a wise creator.**
 - a. Consider these Bible statements:
 - 1) Genesis 1:26-28: "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his *own* image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth."
 - 2) Genesis 2:7: "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."
 - 3) 1 Corinthians 12:18: "But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him."
 - 4) Psalms 139:14-15: "I will praise thee; for I am fearfully *and* wonderfully made: marvellous
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- are* thy works; and *that* my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, *and* curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth."
- b. The common man often gazes in awe at the wisdom, knowledge, and skill of our race.
 - 1) We marvel at the great bridges, highways, communication equipment, automobiles, aircraft, ships, spacecraft, and buildings. All of these are wisely designed and carefully constructed; they are indeed marvelous and complex.
 - 2) Magnificent as these are, they are far surpassed by the ingenuity of design, complexity, and abilities of the human body.
 - 3) The human body is comprised of many separate parts, which all work in perfect harmony together under the direction of the brain.
 - 4) The skeletal system has 206 bones which can outlast the best steel; its joints produce its own lubrication; it provides the structure for the body itself and at the same time offers protection (ribs guard the vital chest organs, the skull guards the brain); it forms the foundation to which many muscles are attached; yet in a 160-pound man this whole framework only weighs 29 pounds.
 - a) Bones act like levers. "When our muscles move us about, they do it by working a series of articulated levers that make a most efficient use of every ounce of muscular motive power. The levers are the bones of the body's framework, fitted together with the neatness of jigsaw pieces and hinged by joints that must win the admiration of any mechanic" (Miller and Goode, 1960, p.25; in Jackson, pp.19f).
 - b) Bones are strong, but light; they grow; they repair themselves; they are able to lubricate themselves; they have no down-time, but can operate continually.
 - c) The joints are marvelous and complex; the shoulders, knees, hands, and feet are able to move in various directions, and possess remarkable strength and durability.
 - d) "Perhaps an engineer will someday develop a substance as strong and light and efficient as bone, but what engineer could devise a substance that, like bone, can grow continuously, lubricate itself, require no shut-down time, and repair itself when damage occurs?" (Brand & Yancy, 1980, p.91; Jackson, p.20).
 - e) "As a specific example of bone design, consider the bones of the foot. One-fourth of all the body's bones are in the feet. Each human foot contains 26 bones. The feet have been ingeniously designed to facilitate a number of mechanical functions. They support, with arches comparable to an engineered bridge. They operate as levers when one presses an automobile accelerator peddle. Feet act like hydraulic jacks when one tip-toes. They catapult a person as he jumps. And feet act as a cushion for the legs when one is running" (Jackson, p.21).
 - 5) The muscle system is made up of more than 600 members with the ability to contract and release; these are placed by design into two subsystems: voluntary and involuntary (for example, we can reach out and pick up some item, but our heart muscle beats without any conscious effort on our part).
 - c. "In the automobile engine, the spark ignites vaporized gasoline, the piston moves, and keeps moving in response to a series of explosions. 'A muscle cell performs the functions of both the spark and the piston; the cell itself splits a molecule of fuel and also exerts the resulting physical power' (Miller & Goode, 1960, p 23). It is clear that the automobile engine was intelligently designed, why is it not reasonable to draw the same conclusion with reference to the muscles" (Jackson, pp.23f).
 - d. Muscles demonstrate modern engineering principles. This was admitted by the evolutionist John Lenihan. Another evolutionist made this admission: "...If the most gifted scientists cudged their brains they probably could not come up with a stronger or more perfect tool for grasping and delicate manipulation than the human hand. And seen from an engineering standpoint, the loveliest hand actually is a highly complex mechanical device composed of muscle, bone, tendon, fat, and extremely sensitive nerve fibers, capable of performing thousands of jobs with precision" (Wylie, 1962, p 25; Jackson, p.25).
 - e. The human ear can distinguish over 2,500 different tones; the average piano can distinguish the sounds of only 88 keys. The ear can detect sound waves which vibrate the ear drum only one-billionth of a centimeter (the diameter of a hydrogen atom). If we were in a completely soundproof room, the ear could hear the blood coursing through the veins. Over 100,000 hearing receptors in the ears are sending impulses to the brain to be decoded and answered.
 - f. "The balancing ability of the auditory system has been compared to the 'inertial system used in missiles and submarines' (Lenihan, 1974, p.90). So the ear-mechanism is actually designed to

- accomplish two functions—hearing and balance. This feature of the body demonstrates incredible planning” (Jackson, p.59). No one can logically maintain that the ear resulted from blind forces of nature! Psalms 94:9: "He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? he that formed the eye, shall he not see?"
- g. The human eye is a perfect camera. Even Darwin, the father of modern evolutionary thought, admitted: "That the eye with all its inimitable contrivances...could have been formed by natural selection seems, I freely confess, absurd in the highest degree....If it could be demonstrated that any complex organ existed which could not possibly have been formed by numerous, successive, slight modifications, my theory would absolutely break down" (*The Origin of Species*, pp. 167,170). The human eye is such an organ, thus by his own admission, Darwin's theory collapses.
- h. The human eye is composed of over 107 million cells with 7 million cones (allowing the eye to see in full, living color), and 100 million rods (which gives the eye the ability to see in blacks, whites, and greys). The eyes are connected to the brain by over 300,000 nerves, and can detect light as feeble as 1/100 trillionth of a watt.
- i. No "intermediate state" or long sequence of such can explain this perfect camera which is able to see in full color, full motion, in splendid depth, in 3-dimension, and has a means of storing pictures for instant recall.
- j. An evolutionists made this admission: “The eye is a marvelous instrument, resembling a telescope of the highest quality, with a lens, an adjustable focus, a variable diaphragm for controlling the amount of light, and optical corrections for spherical and chromatic aberration. The eye appears to have been designed; no designer of telescopes could have done better. How could this marvelous instrument have evolved by chance, through a succession of random events?” (Jastrow, 1981, pp 96-97)” (Jackson, p.56).
- k. The human brain is a wondrous creation, so complex, so powerful, and so compact that it demands the existence of a Divine Creator. Statements by prominent leaders of infidelity about the brain:
- 1) Isaac Asimov, world-famous atheist, admitted that our brain is “the most complex and orderly arrangement of matter in the universe’ (1970, p.10; Jackson, p.50).
 - 2) An atheistic professor (Paul Davies), conceded that the human brain is “the most developed and complex system known to science’ (1992, Jackson, p.50).
 - 3) Carl Sagan states: “The equivalent of twenty million books is inside the heads of every one of us. The brain is a very big place in a very small space” (Jackson, p.50).
 - 4) The brain contains over 10 billion nerve cells and 100 glia cells (which provide the biological "batteries" for brain activity). These cells sift through information, store memories, creating what we call consciousness (May, 1982). More than 120 trillion connections tie these cells together.
 - 5) The brain sends out electrical impulses at a speed of 393 feet per second (270 mph), and receives nerve impulses at a rate of over 2,000 per second. It continuously receives information from 130,000 light receptors in the eyes, 100,000 hearing receptors in the ears, 3,000 tastebuds, 30,000 heat spots on the skin, 250,000 cold spots and 500,000 touch spots.
 - 6) The brain does not move but consumes 25% of the blood's oxygen supply. Its vessels receive 20% of all the blood pumped from the heart. If the blood's oxygen supply is interrupted for 15-30 seconds, unconsciousness results. Brain damage occurs if the blood is cut off for up to 4 minutes. Four major arteries carry blood to the brain as a sort of "fail-safe" system.
 - 7) The brain is protected from damage by three systems: the outer skull bone, the protective lining around the brain (the dura mater), and the absorbing fluid which keeps the brain from hitting against the inside of the skull.
 - 8) A few years ago it was estimated that the Pentagon building would hardly hold the computer with as many synapses (synapse: the point of contact between adjacent neurons, where nerve impulses are transmitted from one to the other) as are found in the human brain; and all the power generated at Grand Coulee would be needed to operate such a computer (*Genes, Genesis and Evolution*, pp.516f).
 - 9) “It has been suggested that it would take a bookshelf 500 miles long—from San Francisco, California to Portland, Oregon—to house the information stored in man’s brain. Does anyone actually believe that this kind of a library just happens?” (Jackson, p.51). “The Cray-2 super-computer has a storage capacity about 1,000 times less than that of the

human brain. One authority states that ‘problem solving by a human brain exceeds by far the capacity of the most powerful computers’ (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 1989, 2:189; Jackson, p.51).

- l. More facts concerning the human brain:
 - 1) “One of the astounding features of the brain is its ability to process and react to so many different circumstances at once. While an artist is working on a painting (using his voluntary muscles at the behest of the brain), he can: smell food cooking and know whether it is turnip greens or steak; hear a dog barking and determine if it is his dog or a neighbor’s; feel a breeze upon his face and sense that rain is near; and, be reflecting on a warm friendship of the past. Even while all of this is going on, the brain is regulating millions of internal bodily activities that the person never even ‘thinks’ about” (Jackson, p.54).
 - 2) We are asked to believe that the marvelous creation we call the brain "just happened!" A prominent brain surgeon, Dr. Robert White, observed: “I am left with no choice but to acknowledge the existence of a Superior Intellect, responsible for the design and development of the incredible brain-mind relationship—something far beyond man’s capacity to understand” (1978, p.99; Jackson, p.54).
- m. The cells of the human body form a strong argument for the Creator.
 - 1) There are more than 30 different types of cells in the human body, totaling more than 100 trillion cells in the average adult. These cells come in different sizes and shapes, with different functions and life expectancies. Some cells would be only 1 inch long if 6,000 were laid end to end; 20,000 of the smallest cells would fit inside the capital "O" of a standard typewriter. Yet if all the cells of a human body were set end to end, the line would encircle the earth 200 times. A cell is tiny but each contains 5 major systems: communication, waste disposal, nutrition, repair, and reproduction. Each cell is of itself a living organism.
 - 2) “The genetic information contained in each cell of the human body is roughly equivalent to a library of 4,000 volumes” (“NFD Journal,” October 1987). Multiply this by the trillions of cells in a single human and see how complex one person is.
 - 3) "Red blood cells (there are approximately 30 trillion of them) live about 120 days; white blood cells (the blood's defense system) live about 13 days; platelets (which help blood to clot) live about 4 days; nerve cells may live over 100 years! In any given 60-second period, approximately 3 billion cells have died and been replaced in the human body—replaced by the process we call mitosis, whereby the standard chromosome number (in the human, 46) is faithfully reproduced.
 - 4) “A single cell contains a strip of DNA (placed in the nucleus in a spiral-staircase configuration) which is about one yard long, and which contains over 6 billion biochemical steps! Every cell of the body contains such DNA —over a billion miles total in one human....Although each cell contains the whole structure of DNA, only a part of that message is 'activated'—causing one cell to be a fingernail cell, another to be an eye cell, another to be a blood cell, etc. How this process occurs baffles even the most brilliant scientists...[DNA] provides, in coded form, every characteristic of every living person.
- n. “How many people are there on the face of the earth?...If there are roughly 4 billion people on earth [more than seven billion today—bw], it took two cells to make each of them [one male sperm and one female ovum], that's approximately 8 billion cells. Extract the DNA from those 8 billion cells (remember: this is the DNA it took to give every living person every characteristic he or she has), and that DNA would fit into no more than 1/8th of a cubic inch!! (*Reason and Revelation*, October 1987). Yet we are told that life is an accident of nature! "For every house is builded by some *man*; but he that built all things *is* God" (Heb. 3:4).
- o. The skin of the body is nearly a waterproof layer, enclosing the body; the body is about 60% water. The skin prevents too much moisture entering or exiting. It is both a radiator and retainer of heat, helping to regulate the body's temperature. It acts to protect the body against bacteria, etc. It has the power to regenerate itself.
- p. The heart is another amazing part of the body which argues for the Creator. "For the life of the flesh *is* in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it *is* the blood *that* maketh an atonement for the soul" (Lev. 17:11). It weighs less than a pound but is able to pump blood through 12,000 miles of blood vessels. The body has about 2.5 gallons of blood; the heart pushes about 650,000 gallons through the body in a year's time. It beats about 3 billion times in an average lifespan.

- 1) As blood moves from a chamber into arteries, a check valve prevents its return to the chambers. Man obtained knowledge of cameras by examining the eye; he learned about check valves by examining the heart.
 - 2) There is an opening between the auricles of an unborn baby's heart which is open before birth, but instantly at birth this opening is closed by flaps; this is the only time that operation occurs (Baxter, pp.70-72). The muscle which allows the lungs to open only operates once: at birth, when it contracts.
9. The universe, our solar system, the earth, the complexities of life, the untold number of design features of nearly everything around us, all argue conclusively for the existence of a Grand Designer and Creator.
- a. The earth rotates at approximately 1,000 MPH and is never late; the eclipses of the sun and moon can be predicted to the hour many years beforehand; the appearance of Halley's comet can be forecast 75 years ahead of time.
 - b. Paley's argument regarding the watch obviously and undeniably having had a designer and maker is unanswerable; how much more obvious, undeniable, and unanswerable is the argument that the complex nature of the universe and our world demands the existence of Almighty God!

C. Must Reject the Deity of Christ.

1. Atheists understand that one cannot believe in Christ and deny God at the same time. They go together. Faith in one demands faith in the other.
 - a. John 10:30: "I and my Father are one."
 - b. John 14:1: "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me."
2. Jesus is shown to be a Divine being by these following considerations:
 - a. By the contrasts he showed between what the Old Testament prophets said and what he now said (see Matt. 5:21-48). His word superceded even the word given through the Old Testament prophets.
 - 1) Matthew 17:5: "While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him."
 - 2) Acts 4:11-12: "This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."
 - 3) Hebrews 1:1-2: "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."
 - 4) John 14:6: "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."
 - b. By the miracles he did.
 - 1) John 2:11: "This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him."
 - 2) John 3:1-2: "There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him."
 - 3) John 20:30-31: "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name."
 - c. By his unfailing memory. "I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was" (John 17:4-5). "His remarkable memory is that of one who is divine. It leaps back over all the ages to the glory he had with the Father before the world was. Was he dishonest? A lunatic? No! Then how account for this wonderful memory of this remarkable person if he is not divine? Peter wrote years later and said that God did answer that prayer and gave him glory. I Pet. 1:21" (F.W. Gould, *Word of Life*, February, 1975).
 - d. By his bold affirmations. No mere prophet ever would or could have made such statements as the following:
 - 1) Matthew 11:28-30: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and

- ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke *is* easy, and my burden is light."
- 2) John 5:28-29: "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, 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."
 - 3) John 11:25-26: "Jesus said unto her, 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. Believest thou this?"
 - 4) John 14:1-6: "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if *it were* not *so*, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 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. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know. Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way? Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."
- e. By his errorless teaching. No one ever found any inconsistency or error in what he said.
 - 1) John 7:46: "The officers answered, Never man spake like this man."
 - 2) John 8:46: "Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me?"
 - f. By his sinless life. No one has ever convicted the Lord of being inconsistent with his teaching or of his ever committing even a single sin.
 - 1) John 8:46: "Which of you convinceth me of sin?...."
 - 2) Hebrews 4:15: "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as *we are*, yet without sin."
 - 3) 1 Peter 2:21-22: "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth."
3. His Divinity rests on many infallible proofs, including:
 - a. The inerrant testimony of infallible Scripture.
 - b. The many fulfilled Old Testament prophecies given centuries ahead of time which predicted a great variety of detailed specifics about him.
 - c. The tremendous impact of his short earthly life on human history. There is no logical way to account for this other than to see him as he is: Deity!
 - d. The exalted nature of his doctrine. "And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine. For he taught them as *one* having authority, and not as the scribes" (Matt. 7:28-29).
 - e. His glorious resurrection from the dead!
 - 1) Acts 1:1-3: "The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen: To whom also **he showed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs**, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God."
 - 2) Romans 1:4: "And declared *to be* the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead."
- D. Must Blindly Accept Evolution as the Real Explanation of Life.
1. Evolution is not a science. Science uses very exact terms:
 - a. Hypothesis—a preliminary idea about how something *may* function; not supported by significant evidence.
 - b. Theory—an hypothesis which has progressed to a higher stage by reason of some meaningful evidence, but has not been proved.
 - c. Fact—proved to be true; demonstrated.
 2. Evolution is only an hypothesis even though it is commonly called a theory. It is, therefore, only a broad assumption, a slightly-educated guess.
 - a. Evolutionists condemn the Bible for having two spellings for *Noah* (Noah and Noe), but have no difficulty in allowing variations of millions of years to accommodate their theory.
 - b. For ease of expression, we shall refer to evolution as a theory.
 3. Problems that Evolution Faces.
 - a. The origin of life.
 - 1) Some have theorized that the first life on earth came from another planet. But how did it get here? Where did the life on the other planet come from? Klotz says that most
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- biologists have rejected this theory.
- 2) Some have theorized that the right combination of substances occurred that produced the first living cell. With this cell, life on earth began and rapidly multiplied until it produced all living beings. If so, why does not the same process still occur? Why cannot it be duplicated today? Why cannot men produce life?
 - 3) They argue: "Something cannot come from nothing, therefore something always was." This we admit, but what was that *something*? (Cf. *There is a God in Heaven*, pp.233f). The only alternatives are mind and matter: which was the first? Evolutionists say matter; we say Mind (God). We who believe the Bible know that mind (intelligence), i.e., God, existed first. Evolutionists say that matter existed first (therefore, life came from lifeless matter). Which is more logical? "For every house is builded by some *man*; but he that built all things *is* God" (Heb. 3:4).
- b. The origin of protein.
- 1) Protein is formed by living substances; and living organisms cannot exist without protein. One cannot exist without the other. How did protein come into being?
 - 2) Which is easier, to blindly accept some complicated theory that in no way can be proved, or to accept the Bible's statements that God created all things? The Bible can be proved to be a supernatural book.
- c. The Second Law of Thermodynamics.
- 1) "The two most basic and certain of all laws of modern physical science are the first two laws of Thermodynamics. The first law of Thermodynamics is the law of energy conservation, affirming that although energy can be converted from one form to another, the total amount remains unchanged— energy is neither being created nor destroyed at the present time." What was the original source of energy? Evolutionists can only speculate. Those who believe the Bible point to God as the source. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Gen. 1:1).
 - 2) "The second law states that, although the total amount remains unchanged, there is always a tendency for it to become less available for useful work" (*The Genesis Flood* p.222). This means that the universe is running down. Stars burn out and cool; metal rusts; wood decays; man grows old and dies; light and heat are radiated and dissipated.
 - a) Psalms 102:26: "They shall perish, but thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed."
 - b) 1 Peter 1:24: "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."
 - 3) Evolution teaches that there is a tendency toward a higher degree of organization; instead of the clock winding down, it is winding up. The theory of evolution conflicts with the second law of thermo-dynamics.
- d. There are no intermediate life forms.
- 1) The evolutionists speak of *missing links*. Why are there not some of these links still around? They are even missing in the fossil record.
 - 2) These links are truly **missing!**
- e. The migration of birds.
- 1) Why do they migrate, often for thousands of miles? Why do they often follow the same general route year after year? Why do they go to the same locations?
 - 2) Who furnished them with their navigational equipment and taught them how to navigate?
- f. The necessity of perfection.
- 1) Spiders are dependent on their web-making ability in order to survive. How did the *early* spiders live if their web-making component was not functional yet?
 - 2) The honey bee depends on its honey-making ability to survive. Among the many things needed by the bee in making and storing honey, and in reproducing its kind, is the *pollen baskets* it has. In going from flower to flower, pollen collects on the hairs of the bee's legs, and is stored in these baskets located on the hind legs. How did the bee survive before the baskets were formed?
- g. The complexity of living things.
- 1) No one entertains the idea that the steel, glass, rubber, etc., could ever combine by chance and produce a car. An automobile is an example of intelligent planning and design. It is a complex mechanism.
 - 2) "But living protoplasm is infinitely more complex than any machine" (Klotz, p.515).
 - 3) The human brain is an amazing example of complexity. Even with the sophisticated

technology of today, nothing remotely approximating the human brain can be produced by human ingenuity, and it is certain it could not have been produced by chance!

- h. The balance of nature.
 - 1) Unless the population of smaller beings is kept in check, they would soon fill up the earth so that no life could exist.
 - 2) A single housefly can lay as many as 500 eggs in one season. If left unchecked, the descendants of that one fly would number, at the end of one season, two hundred quintillion [200,-000,000,000,000,000,000].
 - 3) "If all the offspring of a single pair of common houseflies lived to mature and produce, the earth would be blanketed beneath a layer of flies nearly 50 feet deep in less than six months" (Fred J. Meldau, see Williams, p.26).
 - 4) The fly is merely one such example among thousands in the insect world.
 - 5) The amoeba reproduces itself in 90 minutes. If unchecked, it would fill up all known space in five years.
 - 6) If these or other small organisms were at one time the most highly developed forms of life (that is, no higher forms of life existed to feed on them), all life would have ceased due to their over-production.
- i. Odd creatures.
 - 1) From what did the Platypus evolve? It has fur like a beaver, webbed feet like a duck, large cheek pouches like a squirrel, spurs with venom like a snake, lays eggs like a bird, and nurses its young like a mammal.
 - 2) The Praying Mantis is an oddity. Its closest *relative* is the grasshopper, but is so different from it that no evolutionary connection is claimed. From what could it have evolved?
4. The Fruits of Evolution.
 - a. A tree may be known by the fruit it produces.
 - 1) Matthew 7:15-20: "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither *can* a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them."
 - 2) What fruit does evolution produce? If it is true, there is no standard of morality. The last few generations of young people have accepted evolution, and many have put it into practice; this partially explains the low moral condition of modern America.
 - 3) If the fruits of this godless theory are evil, the doctrine itself is evil.
 - b. The theory of evolution has served to help destroy morality and ethical conduct.
 - 1) The survival of the fittest doctrine encourages man to become even more inclined to be selfish. Selfishness lies at the heart of most of the world's problems: wars, crime, murder, injustice, terrorism, embargoes, repression, inflation, etc.
 - 2) Hitler *liquidated* millions of people in order to insure that his *Master Race* could survive and prosper. He subscribed to the doctrine of the survival of the fittest—and decided who the fittest were.
 - 3) Communism thrives in an atmosphere of atheism, and evolution is atheism. Karl Marx, originator of communism, drew heavily on Darwin's ideas of natural selection and survival of the fittest. "Since the adoption of the Marxian philosophy, Russia has consistently stressed the hatred of God and all forms of religion; Russia not only denies the existence of God, but makes atheism a necessary premise of the system on which its government is formed" (W.O. Davis, quoted by Williams, p.52).
 - 4) When evolution is accepted there is a tendency to forget about the individual. If man is nothing more than an intelligent animal, there is no room for personal rights and moral values. If evolution is true, what is wrong with everyone doing what pleases him, regardless of the effect on others?
 - 5) If evolution is true, and man is only an intelligent animal, what is the purpose of life? What real difference would exist between man and sheep or swine?
 - c. Evolution encourages immorality and decadence.
 - 1) One youth said: "If I am the same as dogs and cows then of what consequence are moral standards?"
 - 2) Immoral conduct is on a rampage in our country and generation. Parents, theologians and others wonder why. The answer is evolution. If a person is convinced that he is nothing

- more than an animal, he will start acting like an animal.
- 3) There is no morality in a herd of cattle! They are mere brute beasts without any moral capabilities or requirements, but man is higher than the highest beasts, and he bears a responsibility before his Creator to keep himself on a high moral and spiritual plane.
 - a) Ecclesiastes 12:13-14: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this *is* the whole *duty* of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether *it be* good, or whether *it be* evil."
 - 4) 2 Corinthians 5:10-11: "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things *done* in *his* body, according to that he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences."
 - 5) Revelation 20:12-15: "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is *the book* of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."
 - d. Evolution encourages unbelief and rebellion against God.
 - 1) There are many who are hardened in sin. They do not wish to acknowledge any personal responsibility to a higher Being. Therefore, they will accept evolution to ease their wounded consciences.
 - 2) Arguments used by evolutionists have wrecked the faith of many Christian young people who were not firmly grounded in the faith.
5. Why Christians Cannot Believe Evolution. Nine reasons why one cannot accept evolution and be a faithful Christian [Adapted from Williams, pp.54f].
- a. The Bible teaches that there was one original 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. And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed" (Gen. 2:7-8). Evolution implies that there were many men, when they had evolved to the point of being called *men*. To accept evolution is to reject this basic Bible truth.
 - b. The Bible states that woman was miraculously brought into being when God opened Adam's side and removed a rib, and from it made the first woman (Gen. 2). One cannot believe this scriptural fact and hold to evolution at the same time. One is left to wonder how evolution can even try to account for the existence of woman, since there are marked differences between the sexes.
 - c. The Bible teaches that man has an immortal soul. But evolution abandons man as a mere beast. If it is asserted that somewhere along the evolutionary road man acquired a soul, where and when and how was it obtained? One cannot believe in evolution and hold to the immortality of the soul.
 - 1) Ecclesiastes 12:7: "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it."
 - 2) Matthew 10:28: "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."
 - 3) Matthew 16:26: "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"
 - d. The Bible teaches that the first plants and animals were created complete. Evolution stands in contrast to this.
 - 1) Genesis 1:11-12: "And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, *and* the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed *is* in itself, upon the earth: and it was so. And the earth brought forth grass, *and* herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed *was* in itself, after his kind: and God saw that *it was* good."
 - 2) Genesis 1:20-25: "And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl *that* may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven. And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind: and God saw that *it was* good. And God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth. And the evening and the morning were the fifth day. And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and

- creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so. And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that *it was good*."
- e. The Bible teaches that plants and animals produced after their kind, which is exactly what we now observe in nature (Gen. 1:11-12, 21, 24-25). Evolution, by its very nature, implies that plants and animals must occasionally produce offspring which are not after their kind.
- 1) Genesis 1:11-12: "And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, *and* the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed *is* in itself, upon the earth: and it was so. And the earth brought forth grass, *and* herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed *was* in itself, after his kind: and God saw that *it was good*."
 - 2) Genesis 1:21: "And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind: and God saw that *it was good*."
 - 3) Genesis 1:24-25: "And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so. And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that *it was good*."
- f. The Bible represents man to be made in the image of God, and shows man's fall into sin and decadence: "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his *own* image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them" (Gen. 1:26-27; cf. Gen. 3; Gen. 6; Rom. 3). According to the Bible, man began at the highest possible moral, spiritual, and intellectual point, and fell to the lowest depths. But evolution teaches that man began as an infinitely small mass of protoplasmic substance, and from this he climbed unaided to the greatest heights. One cannot believe both of these at the same time.
- g. Evolution nullifies the Christian system. If the theory is true, then there was no first man, no fall, no sin, no punishment for sin, and thus no need for man's redemption. This makes void the entire redemptive plan of the gospel for saving man from sin by the blood of Christ.
- 1) Matthew 26:28: "For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 15:1-4: "Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures."
 - 3) 1 Peter 1:18-25: "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, *as* silver and gold, from your vain conversation *received* by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God. Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, *see that ye* love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. 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: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you."
- h. The Bible teaches that all things were created through Christ. It would be interesting to see how the theistic evolutionist explains the involvement of Christ in evolution.
- 1) John 1:1-3: "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. 3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made."
 - 2) Colossians 1:15-18: "Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether *they be* thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the

dead; that in all *things* he might have the preeminence."

- 3) Hebrews 1:1-4: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by *his* Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of *his* glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they."
 - i. In attempting to reconcile the six days of creation with the theory of evolution, the theistic evolutionists encounter problems too numerous to mention.
 6. Evolution cannot be harmonized with the Bible account of the origin of the universe and life.
 - a. There is no reason why any Christian should try to do so.
 - b. When the theory of evolution has run its course and vanishes, the Bible will still be as true as ever, and the faith of Christians in the Bible will still stand.
 - c. "For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou are judged" (Rom. 3:3-4).
- E. Must Repudiate the Inspiration and Authority of the Bible.
1. Some General Evidences of the Bible's Inspiration.
 - a. The Bible is an indestructible book.
 - 1) It is still here despite having had more enemies than any other book.
 - 2) Many of its enemies have tried to literally eradicate it from the earth.
 - 3) King Jehoiakim, king of Judah, tried to destroy Jeremiah's writings by cutting up the scroll on which it was written, and burning it. Jeremiah 36:11-32.
 - 4) Diocletian, the Roman Emperor, tried to destroy the Bible when he issued an order in March, 303 that the Christians turn in all of their copies of the Holy Scriptures, which were to be burned.
 - 5) The Roman Catholic Church has tried to destroy the Bible and its influence by force. [See F.W. Mattox, *The Eternal Kingdom*, pp.224f,274ff; Sidney Collett, *All About The Bible*, pp.32ff.].
 - 6) John Wycliffe translated the Bible into English. The Catholic hierarchy forbade the reading or even possessing his work, under penalty of death. Wycliffe died a natural death in 1384, but about 40 years later, his bones were exhumed and burned, by order of the Catholic authorities.
 - 7) William Tyndale made another English translation in 1525 which he had to have smuggled into England. Romanists seized and burned thousands of copies of his translation. On October 6, 1536, the Catholic authorities strangled Tyndale and burned his body at the stake. His last words were these: "Lord, open the King of England's eyes!" Tyndale's translation was very accurate.
 - 8) The Bible had been banned in many countries through the centuries, and only recently has been allowed into Russia. It is still banned in China, where about one-fifth of the world's population resides, and is not welcomed in some Moslem countries.
 - b. Many of the enemies of the Bible have tried to destroy its influence by undermining its teachings.
 - 1) About 176 A.D., Celsus, an avid enemy of Christianity, wrote a book in which he sought to refute the teachings of the Bible. His work, rather than to destroy the Bible, actually preserved many direct quotations from the Scriptures, giving us added proof of the accuracy of the text.
 - 2) Thomas Paine, famous man of the American Revolution, wrote a book entitled *The Age of Reason*, in which he tried to destroy the Bible. He predicted that within fifty years, the Bible would be found only in museums. But his book has all but disappeared and the Bible is being printed in increasing numbers. Just before his death in 1809, Paine cried: "I would give worlds, if I had them, that the 'Age of Reason' had never been published. O Lord, help me! Christ help me!... Send even a child to stay with me, for it is hell to be alone. If ever the devil had an agent, I have been that one."
 - 3) Voltaire, the infamous French infidel, spent his life trying to destroy the word of God. He spoke of Christ as "the cursed wretch." He arrogantly claimed that although it took twelve men to write the Bible (he is wrong about the number), by his single hand he would destroy it. But after his death, his very house was used by the Geneva Bible Society as a

- distributing center for the Bible. His last words included this melancholy cry: "I am abandoned by God and man...then I shall go to hell...O Christ! O Jesus Christ!"
- 4) German philosophers of the past century tried to work out a systematic method of explaining the Bible on purely human terms. A theory was developed that tried to show that the Old Testament was put together by redactors who weaved a book from various traditional stories and myths. Instead of being the inspired book we know it to be, this modernistic view of the Bible makes it a mere human production, devoid of any authority, and without any reliability. This theory has been adopted by the modernistic religious organizations of our day.
 - 5) Other methods are being employed today that effectively neutralizes the teachings of the Bible.
- c. Catholics claim that the Bible is only part of the authority God expresses. The decrees of the pope and councils, and tradition form the other two legs of real authority; one is as important as the other.
- 1) Some try to limit the influence of the Bible by asserting that only certain officials are capable of understanding and teaching the Bible. In this fashion, the common man is kept in darkness as to what the Bible actually teaches.
 - 2) Many people maintain that the Bible was never intended to be a rule-book, that it merely teaches principles that are to be applied as the individual sees fit. This is the basic position of the "new hermeneutics" philosophy. They claim it does not contain any kind of a pattern for us to follow. These and their cousins teach that the Bible is not to be taken literally, and scoff at those who do so.
 - 3) One of the most effective methods invented by sinful man to stifle the influence of the Bible is accomplished by the modern versions of the Scriptures. In the past, men tried to accommodate the Bible to their creeds, but now they blatantly put their creeds into the text itself, thus polluting the sacred word, and turn it into the word of man, instead of the word of God. Gal. 1:6-9 shows that no one, whether angel or man, has the right to pervert God's word, and to do so is to condemn their souls to torment. When the Word of God is perverted by adding to or subtracting from the sacred text, what results is not God's word.
- d. But despite the earnest efforts of powerful, well-financed, highly-placed, well-equipped, and powerful enemies, the Bible continues with us. No other book has undergone such vigorous opposition. Why is the Bible still here?
- e. It is here because of the protective power of Almighty God, and because no man is strong enough to withstand God.
- 1) Matthew 24:35: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away."
 - 2) 1 Peter 1:23-25 "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. 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: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you."
 - 3) John 12:48: "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."
 - 4) Revelation 20:12-15: "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is *the book* of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."
2. The Bible's well-rounded and unified contents argues for its inspiration.
- a. It contains all the major elements of literature, including poetry, drama, history, romance, jurisprudence, stories of war and adventure, and statements of wisdom. Its stories are interesting and thought-provoking, appealing to both young and old, and to the educated and uneducated.
 - b. The Bible addresses the various components of learning.
 - 1) It has elements of sociology, dealing with all significant human problems. It presents great principles that benefit society. See the Sermon on the Mount; the book of Philemon; Romans 12.
 - 2) It contains principles of philosophy and wisdom, in Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Job.
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- 3) It deals with exposition and argument, especially in the statements of Christ and writings of Paul.
- 4) Although it is not intended to be a book on science and geography, when it speaks of such, it is always correct, and its scientific references are as up to date as the latest scientific discoveries. See Genesis; Job 38.
- c. The Bible books were written by poor men and rich men, peasants and kings; its thoughts were recorded by those with formal education and by those who were not educated; men from various work backgrounds are listed among the authors used.
 - 1) The various books were written by about 40 different men over a period of about 1600 years; the writings of each addressed different aspects of the theme and different subjects of the theme; in many cases, they did not know about the others who wrote or what the others had written.
 - 2) Despite all these differences, the book is a unified whole; all its writings are in harmony.
- d. "All the facts of the Bible are harmonious with themselves and with the historic record of man. There is at utter absence of any effort to avoid seeming contradictions and inconsistencies. So surface difficulties are found; but close examination eliminates these one by one, and a record, matchless in the truths revealed, in the morals proposed, in the laws given, in the end to be accomplished, proclaims the book of God, supported by incontestible signs and wonders that no man could do except God be with him" (*Salvation from Sin*, pp.5f).
3. The Bible's anticipation of religious error indicates its inspiration.
 - a. The prominent Catholic errors were anticipated by the Bible, and exposed as error before the doctrines or practices came into being. "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; Forbidding to marry, *and commanding* to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth" (1 Tim. 4:1-3).
 - 1) The worship of Mary began in 788 A.D., but was anticipated and exposed by the Bible ahead of time:
 - a) Luke 8:20-21: "And it was told him *by certain* which said, Thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to see thee. And he answered and said unto them, My mother and my brethren are these which hear the word of God, and do it."
 - b) Luke 11:27-28: "And it came to pass, as he spake these things, a certain woman of the company lifted up her voice, and said unto him, Blessed *is* the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked. But he said, Yea rather, blessed *are* they that hear the word of God, and keep it."
 - 2) The cup of the communion was denied to the common man later, but the Lord taught that each was to partake of it.
 - a) Matthew 26:26-27: "And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed *it*, and brake *it*, and gave *it* to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave *it* to them, saying, Drink ye all of it."
 - b) 1 Corinthians 11:28: "But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of *that* bread, and drink of *that* cup." This was spoken to all the members of the church.
 - 3) The bank of good works ("supererogation") was developed centuries after the giving of the Bible, but God's word repudiated such an idea in Luke 17:10: "So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do."
 - 4) The doctrine of purgatory originated in the mind of men, but was repudiated by the inspired word, by means of the story of the wicked rich man and the beggar Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31).
 - 5) The mediatorship of Mary or some other human came centuries after the close of the Bible, but inspiration exposed it as error before it developed: "For *there is* one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 2:5).
 - 6) Forced celibacy and forbidding the eating of meats was decreed by the inspired writers beforehand: "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; Forbidding to marry, *and commanding* to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth" (1 Tim. 4:1-3).
 - 7) The ecclesiastical priesthood (separate, special priests) which imposed itself between man

and God was denied by the Holy Spirit: "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ... But ye *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light" (1 Pet. 2:5,9).

- b. All denominational division, which is practiced and defended by many today, was foreknown and condemned by the Bible.
 - 1) Acts 20:28-31: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. 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. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears."
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 1:10-13: "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. For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them *which are of the house* of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?"
 - 3) 1 Corinthians 3:1-4: "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, *even* as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able *to bear it*, neither yet now are ye able. For ye are yet carnal: for whereas *there is* among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I *am* of Apollos; are ye not carnal?"
 - 4) 1 Timothy 4:1-3: "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; Forbidding to marry, *and commanding* to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth."
 - 5) 2 Timothy 4:1-5: "I charge *thee* therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. 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. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry."
- c. Salvation by faith alone was anticipated and condemned by the inspired writers of the Bible: "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent *them* out another way? For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also" (Jas. 2:24-26).
- d. The Bible anticipated and denied the claim of men that they had received special revelations from heaven separate and distinct from the inspired revelation of the Bible.
 - 1) John 16:13: "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, *that* shall he speak: and he will show you things to come."
 - 2) Acts 20:27: "For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God."
 - 3) Galatians 1:6-9: "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any *man* preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed."
 - 4) 2 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."
 - 5) Jude 3: "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it

- was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort *you* that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints."
- 6) Revelation 22:18-19: "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."
- e. The Bible anticipated Significant False Doctrines Which Would Arise in the Future.
- 1) The Bible foresaw the false doctrine of Calvinism which claims that Christ died only for a select few.
 - a) John 3:16: "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."
 - b) Acts 10:34-35: "Then Peter opened *his* mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him."
 - c) Titus 2:11-12: "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world."
 - d) Hebrews 2:9: "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man."
 - f. Inspiration gave beforehand information that exposed as error the doctrine that one church is as good as another.
 - 1) Matthew 16:16-19: "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 also 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."
 - 2) Acts 2:47: "Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."
 - 3) Acts 20:28: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood."
 - 4) Ephesians 1:22-23: "And hath put all *things* under his feet, and gave him *to be* the head over all *things* to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all."
 - 5) Ephesians 5:23-27: "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so *let* the wives *be* to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."
 - 6) It forever condemned the doctrine before it even arrived which asserts that obedience to God is unnecessary to salvation.
 - a) Matthew 7:21-27: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity. Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it."
 - b) Hebrews 5:8-9: "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which

- he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him."
- c) Revelation 22:14: "Blessed *are* they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."
- 7) No mere men or group of men, regardless of their education and intelligence, could have anticipated the development of these errors centuries before they sprang into being. The Bible anticipated and answered these errors. The only explanation for this is to give the Bible credit for being produced by the infinite power and foreknowledge of God, which was revealed to the selected writers.
4. The impartiality of the Bible toward its heroes indicates its inspiration.
- a. When men write about their great people, the weaknesses and errors of these heroes are downplayed or entirely ignored. The Bible does not show this partiality.
 - b. The greatest heroes among the human family, even those who had an exalted standing with God, often have their weaknesses and failures exposed.
 - c. Abraham, although one of the greatest men who ever lived, still erred by twice claiming that his wife was only his sister (Gen. 12:10-20; 20:1-12).
 - d. David committed the sins of adultery and conspiracy to murder, the full report of which is part of the inspired record (2 Sam. 11:1-21).
 - e. Solomon idolatry and other sins are reported (1 Kings 11:1-14).
 - f. James and John have their errors listed in the divine record.
 - 1) Matthew 20:20-28: "Then came to him the mother of Zebedee's children with her sons, worshipping *him*, and desiring a certain thing of him. And he said unto her, What wilt thou? She saith unto him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom. But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able. And he saith unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with: but to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but *it shall be given to them* for whom it is prepared of my Father. And when the ten heard *it*, they were moved with indignation against the two brethren. But Jesus called them *unto him*, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."
 - 2) Luke 9:51-56: "And it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, he stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem, And sent messengers before his face: and they went, and entered into a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for him. And they did not receive him, because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem. And when his disciples James and John saw *this*, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did? But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save *them*. And they went to another village."
 - g. Peter's errors are also reported.
 - 1) Matthew 26:69-75: "Now Peter sat without in the palace: and a damsel came unto him, saying, Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee. But he denied before *them* all, saying, I know not what thou sayest. And when he was gone out into the porch, another *maid* saw him, and said unto them that were there, This *fellow* was also with Jesus of Nazareth. And again he denied with an oath, I do not know the man. And after a while came unto *him* they that stood by, and said to Peter, Surely thou also art *one* of them; for thy speech bewrayeth thee. Then began he to curse and to swear, *saying*, I know not the man. And immediately the cock crew. And Peter remembered the word of Jesus, which said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly."
 - 2) Galatians 2:11-14: "But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation. But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before

them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?"

5. Other Undeniable Marks of Biblical Inspiration.

- a. The incomparable nature of the Bible's ethics is a mark of inspiration.
 - 1) Philosophy and other human systems cannot lift man from the pit of sin and immorality into which he has fallen.
 - 2) The Bible depicts this fallen state:
 - a) Proverbs 16:25: "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof *are* the ways of death."
 - b) Isaiah 55:8-9: "For my thoughts *are* not your thoughts, neither *are* your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."
 - c) Jeremiah 10:23: "O LORD, I know that the way of man *is* not in himself: *it is* not in man that walketh to direct his steps."
 - 3) Great philosophers accepted, by argument and example, the most scandalous and vile practices known to our race.
 - a) Plato taught the expedience and lawfulness of exposing children in certain cases (Thomas H. Horne, *Introduction to the Scriptures*, Vol. 1, p.12).
 - b) Aristotle taught the rightness of abortion (*ibid.*).
 - c) Aristippus maintained that it was lawful for a wise man to steal, commit adultery and sacrilege, when opportunity was give him (*ibid.*, p.13).
 - d) Many of the ancients, such as Cicero and Seneca, pleaded for the rightness of suicide, and even "carried about with them the means of destruction" (*ibid.*).
 - e) "There were indeed some *few* philosophers, who cherished better principles, and inculcated, comparatively, purer tenets; but their instructions were very defective, and they were never able to reform the world, or to keep any number of men in the practice of virtue" (*ibid.*, p.14).
 - f) The wisest instructions among the ancient philosophers were unable to bring about any great degree of change for the better in the lives of most people
- b. Polygamy, divorce for any pretense, and the cheapness of human life, were common to the nations where the will of God was not known; it remains so even today. The whole tenor of the Old Testament was far above the general attitudes and conduct of the people of the time.
- c. Idol worship was commonly practiced among the heathen nations, but Israel was taught to believe in and worship only one God. Idol worship included many vile and corrupt practices, which would even shock many "free thinkers" of today.
- d. Israel was instructed to be concerned about and treat their fellow man with love and respect (Ex. 20; Lev. 19:18). The Old Testament called for a much purer life than was lived by people around Israel (Ps. 15).
- e. The teachings of the New Testament far surpass anything that has ever been expressed by human wisdom (cf. Rom. 12).
 - 1) Matthew 5:21-22: "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire."
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 6:16-20: "What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh. But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit. Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body. 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."
 - 3) Titus 2:11-12: "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world."
 - 4) Matthew 7:12: "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets."
 - 5) Matthew 5:38-44: "Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy

right cheek, turn to him the other also. But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also....Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But... Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you."

- f. Scientific Statements Contained in the Bible Establish its Inspiration.
 - 1) The Bible addresses many subjects and themes, including references to science.
 - a) It cannot be classified as a scientific textbook, and it does not use complex terminology when it speaks about some scientific matters.
 - b) In every instance, where the truth is finally discovered, the Bible has always been vindicated, even in these scientific references.
 - 2) In 1861, the French Academy of Science published a list of fifty-one **facts** of science which they claimed to contradict the Bible. With the passing of time and with the discovery of additional information, these 51 facts were shown to be in error, but the Biblical statements involved were vindicated. (Harry Rimmer, *The Harmony of Science & Scripture*, p.59).
 - 3) The Bible and scientific truths are never at variance, but if the Bible or scientific evidence is misinterpreted, the conclusion is bound to be wrong.
 - 4) Several years ago, some scientists discovered human bones buried under thick deposits of mud in California. Quickly, **scientific examination** indicated that the bones were 75,000 years old. Further investigation discovered a U.S. Army button beneath the bones! The bones were no older than the button.
 - 5) On the Japanese island of Kyushu, scientists found some *ancient* drawings, which they claimed to be 10,000 to 13,000 years old. But a lifelong resident of the area came forward to show that, when he was a boy, he often had scribbled on the walls, using charcoal.
 - 6) The *scientific dating system*, although widely accepted, is suspect (to say the least), as are also many theories and interpretations forced upon some facts and discoveries. Scientific theory is in a constant state of change; what is taught as fact today, is often rejected tomorrow.
 - 7) Misinterpreted Bible passages can also lead to a conflict with science, but it is not the Bible that is wrong; it is the interpretation of the text. Someone objected to the Bible because "apples do not grow in Mesopotamia, where Eden was located." Apples are not the only fruit!
- g. Herbert Spencer (1820-1903) set forth the five fundamentals of science.
 - 1) These principles are time, force, space, matter, and motion.
 - 2) All five of these are found in the first two verses of the Bible: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters" (Gen. 1:1-2).
 - a) Time - in the beginning.
 - b) Force - God.
 - c) Space - heavens.
 - d) Matter - earth.
 - e) Motion - created.
 - 3) If Moses was not inspired of God to record these facts, how can we account for his knowledge of the scientific principles?
- h. Genesis 1:9 speaks of God gathering the waters under heaven into one place.
 - 1) "And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry *land* appear: and it was so" (Gen. 1:9). The Hebrew term literally means "one bed." Verse ten says that God called the this collection of water seas.
 - 2) If the writer of this history was not inspired, how can we account for his knowing that all the waters of the oceans are connected, literally lying **in one bed**? A glance at a globe shows that all the seas are connected.
 - 3) Further, how did he know the sea could be classified in the plural? Living in those ancient times, he had no human knowledge of more than one sea.
- i. Isaiah 40:22. Isaiah said the earth is round.
 - 1) "*It is* he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof *are* as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in" (Isa. 40:22). The word Isaiah used means literally something with "roundness"

- or "sphericity" (Wayne Jackson, "Reason & Revelation," Vol. I, No. 9).
- 2) Isaiah was not saying that the earth is flat, and round like a coin; he was not speaking of the circular horizon we see. When the Bible speaks of the "four corners of the earth," it is not saying the earth is square; it is speaking figuratively of the four cardinal directions.
 - 3) Men thought the earth was flat, but the Bible has always spoken of it as round. Compare: "It is turned as clay to the seal...." (Job 38:14).
- j. Psalm 8:8: There are Paths in the Sea.
- 1) In 1854, while Matthew Maury, an American sea-captain was in his sick-bed, his son was reading to him from Psalm 8.
 - 2) When verse eight was read, the venerable gentleman's attention was arrested by the thought that there were paths in the sea: "The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas."
 - 3) He vowed to try to discover the meaning of the passage by exploring the sea, by means of which he was the first on record to discover that there is a circulation of water through the oceans. These currents provided the means for ocean vessels to travel much more rapidly than otherwise possible.
 - 4) His book on oceanography is still considered a basic text for studies on the subject (Wayne Jackson, *ibid.*).
- k. Job 38:16 gives two pieces of information only recently discovered by science.
- 1) Job 38:16: "Hast thou entered into the springs of the sea? or hast thou walked in the search of the depth?"
 - 2) The first point is "the springs of the sea." Fresh water has been found in the midst of the sea, indicating a spring or fountain located in the ocean floor which spews forth this potable water.
 - 3) The second point grows out of the ASV rendering of the verse: "Hast thou entered into the springs of the sea? Or has thou walked in the recesses of the deep?"
 - 4) The Hebrew word for *recesses* ("trenches") refers to that which is hidden and discovered only by investigation.
 - 5) Ocean exploration has found trenches in the Pacific extending more than 6 miles below sea level. (Wayne Jackson, *ibid.*).
- l. Job 26:7: "...He hangeth the earth upon nothing."
- 1) The myths of the ancients show their conceptions of how the earth was situated in the universe. They thought the earth was flat, of course.
 - 2) The Egyptians thought the earth was supported by five great pillars, one under each corner and the fifth under the middle. Rimmer suggested that if that were so, then one should be able to peer over the edge and see the corner pillars. But what supported the pillars?
 - 3) The Greeks had a legend of Atlas who stood under the earth, and with head bowed, supported it on his neck and shoulders. What supported Atlas?
 - 4) The ancient Hindu view was that the earth was balanced on the back of a great elephant, which stood on the back of a great turtle, which was swimming in a cosmic sea.
 - 5) In contrast to these foolish explanations, God's words said the earth was hung upon nothing.
 - 6) Adding to Job's picture (26:7) the statement of Isaiah 40:22 ["*It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth...*"], we get the picture of the earth, as a great round structure, floating in space.
 - 7) Combining this picture with Job 38:14 ["It is turned as clay to the seal..."], we can see the earth depicted as a large ball, spinning in space.
- m. Ecclesiastes 1:7: The Evaporation Cycle is depicted.
- 1) "All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea is not full; unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again" (Eccl. 1:7). To get a better idea of the great significance of this, consider how much water enters the oceans annually.
 - 2) One cubic mile of water would form a lake one mile long, one mile wide, and one mile deep. Each year, 286,000 cubic miles of water thus flows from the land into the sea. (Rimmer, *ibid.*).
 - 3) This has been going on for thousands of years, yet the sea is not full. Its level remains stable and constant. "Or *who* shut up the sea with doors, when it brake forth, *as if* it had issued out of the womb? When I made the cloud the garment thereof, and thick darkness a swaddlingband for it, And brake up for it my decreed *place*, and set bars and doors, And said, Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further: and here shall thy proud waves be stayed?"

- (Job. 38:8-11).
- 4) Solomon gives the reason why the sea does not overflow: the water returns from whence it came, by the evaporation cycle. "When he uttereth his voice, *there is* a multitude of waters in the heavens, and he causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth; he maketh lightnings with rain, and bringeth forth the wind out of his treasures" (Jer. 10:13).
 - 5) Science only discovered this process of evaporation in the 17th century. How could Solomon describe this operation nearly 3,000 years before modern science found it?
- n. There are many other examples of scientific knowledge shown by the ancient writers.
- 1) Job 38:24: "By what way is the light parted, *which* scattereth the east wind upon the earth?" Light can be parted. Science learned this truth in 1650.
 - 2) Job 38:22: "Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow? or hast thou seen the treasures of the hail." There is treasure in snow and hail. Discoveries in 1905 and 1966 found minerals in these which are valuable to the soil.
 - 3) The stars are innumerable. This was discounted as a myth until 1940, when telescopes verified it. The farther we can see, more and more stars are observed.
 - 4) Genesis 15:5: "And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be."
 - 5) Jeremiah 33:22: "As the host of heaven cannot be numbered, neither the sand of the sea measured: so will I multiply the seed of David my servant, and the Levites that minister unto me."
- o. Medical Knowledge That Predates Man's Discoveries Indicate Inspiration.
- 1) Leviticus 13-15: Certains medical procedures were incorporated in the law of Moses.
 - a) The use of quarantine to control a contagious disease.
 - b) Principles of bacterial contamination from person to person are indicated.
 - c) Passages:
 - (1) Leviticus 13:45: "And the leper in whom the plague *is*, his clothes shall be rent, and his head bare, and he shall put a covering upon his upper lip, and shall cry, Unclean, unclean."
 - (2) Leviticus 15:19-33: "And if a woman have an issue, *and* her issue in her flesh be blood, she shall be put apart seven days: and whosoever toucheth her shall be unclean until the even. And every thing that she lieth upon in her separation shall be unclean: every thing also that she sitteth upon shall be unclean. And whosoever toucheth her bed shall wash his clothes, and bathe *himself* in water, and be unclean until the even. And whosoever toucheth any thing that she sat upon shall wash his clothes, and bathe *himself* in water, and be unclean until the even. And if it *be* on *her* bed, or on any thing whereon she sitteth, when he toucheth it, he shall be unclean until the even. And if any man lie with her at all, and her flowers be upon him, he shall be unclean seven days; and all the bed whereon he lieth shall be unclean. And if a woman have an issue of her blood many days out of the time of her separation, or if it run beyond the time of her separation; all the days of the issue of her uncleanness shall be as the days of her separation: she *shall be* unclean. Every bed whereon she lieth all the days of her issue shall be unto her as the bed of her separation: and whatsoever she sitteth upon shall be unclean, as the uncleanness of her separation. And whosoever toucheth those things shall be unclean, and shall wash his clothes, and bathe *himself* in water, and be unclean until the even. But if she be cleansed of her issue, then she shall number to herself seven days, and after that she shall be clean. And on the eighth day she shall take unto her two turtles, or two young pigeons, and bring them unto the priest, to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And the priest shall offer the one *for* a sin offering, and the other *for* a burnt offering; and the priest shall make an atonement for her before the LORD for the issue of her uncleanness. Thus shall ye separate the children of Israel from their uncleanness; that they die not in their uncleanness, when they defile my tabernacle that *is* among them. This *is* the law of him that hath an issue, and *of him* whose seed goeth from him, and is defiled therewith; And of her that is sick of her flowers, and of him that hath an issue, of the man, and of the woman, and of him that lieth with her that is unclean."
 - (3) Leviticus 19:5-22: "And if ye offer a sacrifice of peace offerings unto the LORD, ye shall offer it at your own will. It shall be eaten the same day ye offer it, and on the morrow: and if ought remain until the third day, it shall be burnt in the fire. And if it

be eaten at all on the third day, it *is* abominable; it shall not be accepted. Therefore *every one* that eateth it shall bear his iniquity, because he hath profaned the hallowed thing of the LORD: and that soul shall be cut off from among his people. And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not wholly reap the corners of thy field, neither shalt thou gather the gleanings of thy harvest. And thou shalt not glean thy vineyard, neither shalt thou gather *every* grape of thy vineyard; thou shalt leave them for the poor and stranger: I *am* the LORD your God. Ye shall not steal, neither deal falsely, neither lie one to another. And ye shall not swear by my name falsely, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God: I *am* the LORD. Thou shalt not defraud thy neighbour, neither rob *him*: the wages of him that is hired shall not abide with thee all night until the morning. Thou shalt not curse the deaf, nor put a stumblingblock before the blind, but shalt fear thy God: I *am* the LORD. Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment: thou shalt not respect the person of the poor, nor honour the person of the mighty: *but* in righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbour. Thou shalt not go up and down *as* a talebearer among thy people: neither shalt thou stand against the blood of thy neighbour: I *am* the LORD. Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him. Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I *am* the LORD. Ye shall keep my statutes. Thou shalt not let thy cattle gender with a diverse kind: thou shalt not sow thy field with mingled seed: neither shall a garment mingled of linen and woollen come upon thee. And whosoever lieth carnally with a woman, that *is* a bondmaid, betrothed to an husband, and not at all redeemed, nor freedom given her; she shall be scourged; they shall not be put to death, because she was not free. And he shall bring his trespass offering unto the LORD, unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, *even* a ram for a trespass offering. And the priest shall make an atonement for him with the ram of the trespass offering before the LORD for his sin which he hath done: and the sin which he hath done shall be forgiven him."

- d) Only in the late 1800s, did man discover bacteria, which cause disease. It is common knowledge that diseases are spread by bacteria, and to prevent getting a disease we need to wash and sterilize certain vessels.
- e) Moses had no microscope, so how could he have known these things?
- p. Circumcision should be done on the 8th day after birth.
 - 1) Genesis 17:12: "And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which *is* not of thy seed."
 - 2) "In 1935 Professor H. Dam proposed the name 'Vitamin K' for the factor in foods which helped prevent hemorrhaging in baby chicks. We now know that Vitamin K is responsible for the production of prothrombin by the liver. If Vitamin K is deficient, there will be a prothrombin deficiency and hemorrhaging may occur, since both Vitamin K and prothrombin are necessary for proper bloodclotting. Oddly enough, it only on the 5th through the 7th days of the newborn male's life that Vitamin K begins to be produced (the vitamin is usually produced by bacteria in the intestinal tract). And, it is *only on the eighth day* that the percentage of prothrombin climbs *above 100%*! The only day in the entire life of the newborn that the bloodclotting element prothrombin is about 100% is day eight! The best day for circumcision is, therefore, the eighth day" (Jackson, *ibid.*).
 - 3) No one could logically attribute this medical knowledge on Moses' part to mere coincidence or a lucky guess. He must have had some inside information given to him by the Supreme Medical Authority!
- q. The life of the flesh is in its blood.
 - 1) Leviticus 17:11-14: "For the life of the flesh *is* in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it *is* the blood *that* maketh an atonement for the soul. Therefore I said unto the children of Israel, No soul of you shall eat blood, neither shall any stranger that sojourneth among you eat blood. And whatsoever man *there be* of the children of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among you, which hunteth and catcheth any beast or fowl that may be eaten; he shall even pour out the blood thereof, and cover it with dust. For *it is* the life of all flesh; the blood of it *is* for the life thereof: therefore I said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall eat the blood of no manner of flesh: for the life of all flesh *is* the blood thereof: whosoever eateth it shall be cut off."

- 2) "Because the red blood cells can carry oxygen (due to hemoglobin in the cells) life is made possible. In fact, human red blood cells carry 270 million molecules of hemoglobin *each*. If there were any less, there would not be enough residual oxygen available to sustain life after, say, a good sneeze, or a hard pat on the back! We know today that 'the life of the flesh is in the blood.' But it wasn't known in George Washington's day. He was bled to death through the blood-letting process" (ibid.).
 - 3) In 1628, William Harvey set forth the theory that blood is circulated through the human body. Only a few generations ago, medical authorities claimed that if blood was let from one arm, a precise amount must be taken also from the other arm; otherwise, the individual would be off balance!
- r. The following are among the many other medical statements in the Bible.
- 1) The human body can be opened for surgery during a deep sleep: "And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof" (Gen. 2:21).
 - 2) We are taught that there is a danger in eating an animal that died naturally: "And every soul that eateth that which died *of itself*, or that which was torn *with beasts*, whether it be one of your own country, or a stranger, he shall both wash his clothes, and bathe *himself* in water, and be unclean until the even: then shall he be clean" (Lev. 17:15).
 - 3) It gives the wisdom in not eating certain animals that carry disease (Lev. 11).
 - 4) Both man and woman possess the seed of life: "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel" (Gen. 3:15). "And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice" (Gen. 22:18). The ancient pagans asserted that the woman was nothing more than an incubator, and that the seed of man could just as well be incubated in warm mud.
 - 5) It gave instructions on how to diagnose leprosy (Lev. 13).
 - 6) The Bible taught the wisdom of burning clothes and bathing after the individual came in contact with a possibly diseased animal or person (Num. 19).
- s. Archaeological Evidence of the Inspiration of the Bible.
- 1) Nelson Glueck, a noted expert in archaeology, stated: "No archaeological discovery has ever been made that contradicts or controverts historical statements in Scriptures."
 - 2) It was once claimed that writing had not been developed at the time Moses recorded the Pentateuch.
 - 3) In 1901 a large stone was found which had the "Code of Hammurabi" inscribed on it. The date of the inscriptions predates Moses' time by several hundred years.
 - 4) When Paul was enroute to Rome, Acts 27:40 described the ship he was in as having more than one rudder, a very strange arrangement which some have had difficulty accepting: "And when they had taken up the anchors, they committed *themselves* unto the sea, and loosed the rudder bands, and hoisted up the mainsail to the wind, and made toward shore" (Acts 27:40).
 - 5) *National Geographic*, in November, 1974, published an article describing a very old ship which had been found in 1969. It was in the Mediterranean Sea off the coast of Cyprus.
 - 6) This ancient ship had two rudders, just as the one Luke described.
- t. Modernist theologians have claimed that the books of Moses were not written until after the Babylonian exile of the Israelites, thus casting grave doubt on the Old Testament record written by Moses (Genesis - Deuteronomy).
- 1) Gabriel Barkay conducted archaeological excavations in the south of Jerusalem between 1975-1980 which yielded two tiny scrolls. These miniature scrolls were made of tightly rolled sheets of silver.
 - 2) When these scrolls were unwound and read, they were found to contain the passage of Numbers 6:24-26.
 - 3) These scrolls have been dated to a time prior to the Babylonian captivity, which began in 606 B.C. They are the oldest copies of Bible text that are known, predating the Dead Sea Scrolls by 400 years. (Wayne Jackson, *Christian Courier*, February, 1989).
- u. Isaiah 20:1: "In the year that Tartan came unto Ashdod (when Sargon the king of Assyria sent him,) and fought against Ashdod, and took it." King Sargon was known only from this Bible passage until discoveries were made verifying Isaiah's statement. Until then, critics pointed to the verse as an example of the Bible's unreliability as a historical record.
- 1) In 1842, discovery was made of a city named *Dur-Sharrukin* ("Sargonsburg"); it is called

- "Khorsbad" now. The palace of Sargon II (the one named by Isaiah) was found at this place.
- 2) On the walls of the city were found artistic reliefs which record the conquests of Sargon II, including his capture of Samaria. It reports that 27,290 captives were taken.
 - 3) The discoveries verify the reliability of Isaiah's record, and furnish additional information regarding the fall of Samaria.
- v. Joshua 1-6 gives details concerning the capture of Jericho. The tactics involved were very strange, and the story has been rejected or severely modified by modern Bible critics. One critic wrote, "...On a purely literary level, the *Book of Joshua* reads more like an adventure story than history...there is no archaeological evidence to support it" (See Wayne Jackson, *Reason & Revelation*, April, 1990). How reliable is this Biblical record?
- 1) The Bible says that Jericho was a strongly fortified city (Josh. 2:5,7,15; 6:5,20). Archaeological evidence shows that a 15-foot high wall at the base of the hill; another wall was closer to the city itself.
 - 2) Joshua's record indicates it was in the springtime when the city was taken, at the time when grain was harvested (5:10; 3:15). Rahab was drying flax on her roof (2:6). Archaeological excavations uncovered large amounts of stored grain, a very uncommon discovery.
 - 3) The Bible says that the conquest was quickly executed: "And it came to pass on the seventh day, that they rose early about the dawning of the day, and compassed the city after the same manner seven times: only on that day they compassed the city seven times" (6:15). The abundance of food stored in the city, found by the spade, confirms Joshua's record.
 - 4) Joshua reports that the wall fell down flat. Archaeologist Kathleen Kenyon, no supporter of the Biblical record, admitted that the wall had collapsed.
 - 5) The Bible record says God told the Israelites not to take any personal booty from Jericho. The presence of a large amount of grain, which was often used as money, indicates Israel followed the Lord's instruction.
 - 6) Joshua reports that the city was set on fire; the ruins of the city agree.
 - 7) The Bible speaks of Rahab's house being on the wall (2:15). Several houses were found just inside the collapsed wall.
 - 8) In a cemetery outside Jericho, Egyptian scarabs have been found, with inscribed evidence which dates the relics from the 18th into the 14th century B.C., thus fitting the city's existence within the time frame indicated by the Scriptures. Liberal scholars place the Exodus at about 1200 B.C., but 1 Kings 6:1 places it at about 1445 B.C., and Jericho's fall therefore at about 1405 B.C.
- w. Various other archaeological discoveries confirm the Biblical record.
- 1) In Egypt, storage bins, treasure cities, bricks made with and without straw, have been found. This lends credence to the Genesis record.
 - 2) Evidence of the great flood of Gen. 6 has been found. The evidence includes:
 - a) Thick layers of water-laid clay that could only have been deposited by a very great amount of flood water.
 - b) Frozen mammoths, encased in ice, have been found in arctic regions, some with grass in their mouths or stomachs. The bodies being encased in ice indicates a sudden and tremendous inundation.
 - c) Marine fossils, including whales, have been found on the tops of mountains.
- x. Ahab's ivory palace is described in 1 Kings 22:39: "Now the rest of the acts of Ahab, and all that he did, and the ivory house which he made, and all the cities that he built, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?" Evidence of such palaces have been discovered.
- 1) The Moabite Stone, discovered in 1868, confirms 2 Kings 3:5-7,25 (Joseph Free, *Archaeology and Bible History*, pp.186, 191). "But it came to pass, when Ahab was dead, that the king of Moab rebelled against the king of Israel. And king Jehoram went out of Samaria the same time, and numbered all Israel. And he went and sent to Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, saying, The king of Moab hath rebelled against me: wilt thou go with me against Moab to battle? And he said, I will go up: I *am* as thou *art*, my people as thy people, *and* my horses as thy horses....And they beat down the cities, and on every good piece of land cast every man his stone, and filled it; and they stopped all the wells of water, and felled all the good trees: only in Kirharaseth left they the stones thereof; howbeit the slingers went about *it*, and smote it" (2 Kings 3:5-7,25).
- y. 2 Kings 20:20 and 2 Chronicles 32:30 speak of Hezekiah's conduit. This engineering feat has

- been found, showing that two parties of workers operated from opposite directions; where they met is discernible today.
- 1) 2 Kings 20:20: "And the rest of the acts of Hezekiah, and all his might, and how he made a pool, and a conduit, and brought water into the city, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?"
 - 2) 2 Chronicles 32:30: "This same Hezekiah also stopped the upper watercourse of Gihon, and brought it straight down to the west side of the city of David. And Hezekiah prospered in all his works."
- z. The Assyrian king, Sennacherib, invaded Palestine in 701 B.C., taking many cities (see 2 Kings 18:13). He obtained tribute from Hezekiah, and boasted of having shut up Hezekiah "like a bird in a cage in his royal city Jerusalem." He failed to capture Jerusalem because an angel smote his army (2 Kings 19:20-36; Isa. 37:36).
- 1) 2 Kings 18:13: "Now in the fourteenth year of king Hezekiah did Sennacherib king of Assyria come up against all the fenced cities of Judah, and took them."
 - 2) 2 Kings 19:20-36: "Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent to Hezekiah, saying, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, *That* which thou hast prayed to me against Sennacherib king of Assyria I have heard. This *is* the word that the LORD hath spoken concerning him; The virgin the daughter of Zion hath despised thee, *and* laughed thee to scorn; the daughter of Jerusalem hath shaken her head at thee. Whom hast thou reproached and blasphemed? and against whom hast thou exalted *thy* voice, and lifted up thine eyes on high? *even* against the Holy *One* of Israel. By thy messengers thou hast reproached the Lord, and hast said, With the multitude of my chariots I am come up to the height of the mountains, to the sides of Lebanon, and will cut down the tall cedar trees thereof, *and* the choice fir trees thereof: and I will enter into the lodgings of his borders, *and into* the forest of his Carmel. I have digged and drunk strange waters, and with the sole of my feet have I dried up all the rivers of besieged places. Hast thou not heard long ago *how* I have done it, *and* of ancient times that I have formed it? now have I brought it to pass, that thou shouldest be to lay waste fenced cities *into* ruinous heaps. Therefore their inhabitants were of small power, they were dismayed and confounded; they were *as* the grass of the field, and *as* the green herb, *as* the grass on the house tops, and *as* corn blasted before it be grown up. But I know thy abode, and thy going out, and thy coming in, and thy rage against me. Because thy rage against me and thy tumult is come up into mine ears, therefore I will put my hook in thy nose, and my bridle in thy lips, and I will turn thee back by the way by which thou camest. And this *shall be* a sign unto thee, Ye shall eat this year such things as grow of themselves, and in the second year that which springeth of the same; and in the third year sow ye, and reap, and plant vineyards, and eat the fruits thereof. And the remnant that is escaped of the house of Judah shall yet again take root downward, and bear fruit upward. For out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant, and they that escape out of mount Zion: the zeal of the LORD *of hosts* shall do this. Therefore thus saith the LORD concerning the king of Assyria, He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with shield, nor cast a bank against it. By the way that he came, by the same shall he return, and shall not come into this city, saith the LORD. For I will defend this city, to save it, for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake. And it came to pass that night, that the angel of the LORD went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they *were* all dead corpses. So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed, and went and returned, and dwelt at Nineveh."
 - 3) Isaiah 37:36: "Then the angel of the LORD went forth, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred and fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they *were* all dead corpses."
 - 4) In every instance where the Bible can be checked, it has proved to be right. Even its geographical facts are correct: going **up** to Jerusalem was a journey **upward**!
6. Fulfilled Prophecies Establish the Fact of Bible Inspiration.
- a. Here are some things that God said regarding prophecy:
 - 1) Isaiah 46:9-10: "Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure."
 - 2) Deuteronomy 18:22: "When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, but the

- prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him."
- 3) The surest proof of a person's prophetic office is the fulfillment of events which he clearly predicted before the fact. If a predicted event fails to materialize, the prophet is false. Some vague similarity to the prophecy does not prove fulfillment.
- b. For a prophetic statement to offer conclusive evidence it must meet certain requirements.
- 1) The event predicted must plainly be beyond the power of man to foreknow; since men cannot know the future, when the Bible accurately predicted a future event, its claims to inspiration are verified.
 - 2) The evidence must be present to show that the prediction preceded the event predicted. Ellen G. White said she had "vision" beforehand of the great California earthquake of 1906 and the famous Chicago fire, but she did not tell anyone until after these disasters occurred. Anyone could make such claims. One failed prophecy marks the prophet as false.
 - 3) The prophecy must be free of error. If the prediction states that a Chinaman would go on a rampage, shooting a thousand people to death, the *prophecy* is not fulfilled in the case of an African who poisons five hundred.
 - 4) The prophecy must have sufficient detail to be clear.
 - 5) There must be a definite fulfillment, not some mere assertion that the event was fulfilled. Evidence must exist to clearly link the prophecy and the fulfillment.
- c. Prophecies concerning specific events were given and fulfilled.
- 1) More than 1400 years before Christ, at the time Jericho was destroyed, it was prophesied that to rebuild Jericho would spell disaster to the builder.
 - a) Joshua 6:26: "And Joshua adjured them at that time, saying, Cursed be the man before the LORD, that riseth up and buildeth this city Jericho: he shall lay the foundation thereof in his firstborn, and in his youngest son shall he set up the gates of it."
 - b) 1 Kings 16:34: "In his days did Hiel the Bethelite build Jericho: he laid the foundation thereof in Abiram his firstborn, and set up the gates thereof in his youngest son Segub, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake by Joshua the son of Nun."
 - 2) The "young" prophet of 1 Kings 13 delivered a very detailed prophecy as to what would become of the altar Jeroboam had erected at Bethel.
 - a) 1 Kings 13:1-2: "And, behold, there came a man of God out of Judah by the word of the LORD unto Bethel: and Jeroboam stood by the altar to burn incense. And he cried against the altar in the word of the LORD, and said, O altar, altar, thus saith the LORD; Behold, a child shall be born unto the house of David, Josiah by name; and upon thee shall he offer the priests of the high places that burn incense upon thee, and men's bones shall be burnt upon thee."
 - b) About 350 years later, the fulfillment occurred. 2 Kings 23:15-18,20: "Moreover the altar that was at Bethel, and the high place which Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin, had made, both that altar and the high place he brake down, and burned the high place, and stamped it small to powder, and burned the grove. And as Josiah turned himself, he spied the sepulchres that were there in the mount, and sent, and took the bones out of the sepulchres, and burned them upon the altar, and polluted it, according to the word of the LORD which the man of God proclaimed, who proclaimed these words. Then he said, What title is that that I see? And the men of the city told him, It is the sepulchre of the man of God, which came from Judah, and proclaimed these things that thou hast done against the altar of Bethel. And he said, Let him alone; let no man move his bones. So they let his bones alone, with the bones of the prophet that came out of Samaria....And he slew all the priests of the high places that were there upon the altars, and burned men's bones upon them, and returned to Jerusalem."
 - c) Josiah inaugurated his religious reform due to finding the book of God in the temple where it had been lost for many years. When the "young" prophet had uttered his prophecy in which he called Josiah by name, Rehoboam was still alive. Josiah was a descendant of Rehoboam; they lived nearly 300 years apart. That would be like someone predicting 300 years ago who would be elected president of the United States in 1992, what party he belonged to, and what his platform was.
 - 3) Another amazing prophecy pertained to the Babylonian Captivity of the Jews. ("Reason & Revelation," Vol. XI, No. 7, July, 1991, gives a fuller discussion of this and the next point).
 - a) First, Jeremiah 25:12-13 predicted the captivity, even the length of it. Babylon came against Judah in 606 B.C. and brought them into submission; they came back in 597, and finally destroyed the temple and Jerusalem in 586 B.C., carrying the people to

- Babylon. They began their return in 536 B.C., a full 70 years from Babylon's initial invasion. "And it shall come to pass, when seventy years are accomplished, *that* I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, saith the LORD, for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans, and will make it perpetual desolations. And I will bring upon that land all my words which I have pronounced against it, *even* all that is written in this book, which Jeremiah hath prophesied against all the nations" (Jer. 25:12-13).
- b) Their return is the point of interest we are emphasizing. In 536 B.C., after conquering Babylon, the Persian king issued an edict that permitted the Jews to return to Palestine, stating that the God of heaven was behind his decree (2 Chron. 36:22f; Ezra 1:2f). [The original document was found in Ecbatana.]
- (1) 2 Chronicles 36:22-23: "Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD *spoken* by the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and *put it* also in writing, saying, Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, All the kingdoms of the earth hath the LORD God of heaven given me; and he hath charged me to build him an house in Jerusalem, which *is* in Judah. Who *is there* among you of all his people? The LORD his God *be* with him, and let him go up."
 - (2) Ezra 1:2-3: "Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The LORD God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which *is* in Judah. Who *is there* among you of all his people? his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which *is* in Judah, and build the house of the LORD God of Israel, (he *is* the God,) which *is* in Jerusalem."
 - (3) Isaiah 44:28 and 45:1ff contain a prophecy given nearly 200 years earlier that **Cyrus** would release the Jews from the captivity which had not even taken place at the time of Isaiah's prediction. What could possibly have happened to cause this pagan king to do what God wanted him to do to fulfill the predictions of both Isaiah and Jeremiah?
 - (4) Isaiah 44:28: "That saith of Cyrus, *He is* my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid."
 - (5) Isaiah 45:1-5: "Thus saith the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut; I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron: And I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the LORD, which call *thee* by thy name, *am* the God of Israel. For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me. I *am* the LORD, and *there is* none else, *there is* no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me."
 - (6) Josephus gives some information that sheds light on the matter. He quotes a statement that Cyrus had made in issuing the decree: "Thus saith Cyrus the king: Since God Almighty has appointed me to be king of the habitable earth, I believe that he is the God which the nation of the Israelites worship; for indeed he foretold my name by the prophets, and that I should build him a house at Jerusalem, in the country of Judea" (*Antiquities* 11.1.1). Josephus adds: "This was known to Cyrus by his reading the book which Isaiah left behind him of his prophecies...(11.1.2).
 - (7) When he saw his name in an old prophecy that predated his birth by about 150 years, calling him by name and detailing what he would do, he naturally would be inclined to comply. What would be your reaction if you were shown an old writing that called you by name and spelled out some specific action you were to take?
- c) The Jews returned to their land by virtue of the decree of Cyrus, beginning in 536 B.C. After a while, their work lagged, and God raised up two prophets to inspire them; Haggai's message urged them to complete the work of rebuilding the temple; Zechariah's work was to create a spiritual revival in the people. It was during the 2nd year of the reign of Darius, king of Persia, when these two great prophets were sent.
- (1) Haggai 1:1: "In the second year of Darius the king, in the sixth month, in the first day of the month, came the word of the LORD by Haggai the prophet unto Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of

- Josedech, the high priest, saying."
- (2) Zechariah 1:1: "In the eighth month, in the second year of Darius, came the word of the LORD unto Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo the prophet, saying,"
- d) Zechariah 9 contains predictions of the conquests the Greek army would make 200 years later, under Alexander the Great. The prophecy deals with the Greeks inflicting punishment on Damascus, Phoenicia, and Philistia. In 333 B.C., the Grecian army defeated the Persian army, and conquered the land of the east.
- (1) As the invaders made their way to the south toward Philistia, Jerusalem lay in their path, and logically should be taken. But in Zechariah 9:8 God promised: "And I will encamp about mine house because of the army, because of him that passeth by, and because of him that returneth: and no oppressor shall pass through them any more: for now have I seen with mine eyes."
 - (2) Josephus provides an insight into the background of this development (see *Antiquities*, 11.8).
 - (3) While pressing the siege of Tyre, Alexander sent messages to several places, including Judea, requisitioning supplies. Jaddus, the Jewish high priest, refused. Alexander determined to destroy Jerusalem as soon as Tyre was conquered.
 - (4) When the Greeks marched on Jerusalem, Josephus says the Jewish priests met Alexander, dressed in their fine robes, with the city's gates wide open. They showed the commander a copy of the scroll which contained the writings of Daniel, in which Daniel had prophesied that the king of Grecia should destroy the empire of the Persians.
 - (a) Daniel 7:6: "After this I beheld, and lo another, like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl; the beast had also four heads; and dominion was given to it."
 - (b) Daniel 8:3-8: "Then I lifted up mine eyes, and saw, and, behold, there stood before the river a ram which had *two* horns: and the *two* horns *were* high; but one *was* higher than the other, and the higher came up last. I saw the ram pushing westward, and northward, and southward; so that no beasts might stand before him, neither *was there any* that could deliver out of his hand; but he did according to his will, and became great. And as I was considering, behold, an he goat came from the west on the face of the whole earth, and touched not the ground: and the goat *had* a notable horn between his eyes. And he came to the ram that had *two* horns, which I had seen standing before the river, and ran unto him in the fury of his power. And I saw him come close unto the ram, and he was moved with choler against him, and smote the ram, and brake his two horns: and there was no power in the ram to stand before him, but he cast him down to the ground, and stamped upon him: and there was none that could deliver the ram out of his hand. Therefore the he goat waxed very great: and when he was strong, the great horn was broken; and for it came up four notable ones toward the four winds of heaven."
 - (c) Daniel 8:20-22: "The ram which thou sawest having *two* horns *are* the kings of Media and Persia. And the rough goat *is* the king of Grecia: and the great horn that *is* between his eyes *is* the first king. Now that being broken, whereas four stood up for it, four kingdoms shall stand up out of the nation, but not in his power."
 - (d) Daniel 11:3: "And a mighty king shall stand up, that shall rule with great dominion, and do according to his will."
 - (5) Alexander was deeply impressed and believed the Jewish prophet was describing him, thus he did not attack Jerusalem.
- d. The Bible gave specific prophecies of the overthrow of great nations.
- 1) The Old Testament predicted the details of the overthrow of mighty Babylon: "And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation: neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall the shepherds make their fold there" (Isa. 13:19-20; cf. Jer. 51:24-58).
 - 2) The ancient writer, Herodotus, visited Babylon and left behind an impressive description of the city. He says the city was surrounded by great walls that were 350 feet high and 75 feet

thick. Jeremiah (51:44,53,58) commented on the greatness of her walls. Herodotus said there were 100 brass gates in the wall; Isaiah (45:2) speaks of her "gates of brass."

- a) Isaiah 45:2: "I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron."
 - b) Jeremiah 51:44,53,58: "And I will punish Bel in Babylon, and I will bring forth out of his mouth that which he hath swallowed up: and the nations shall not flow together any more unto him: yea, the wall of Babylon shall fall....Though Babylon should mount up to heaven, and though she should fortify the height of her strength, *yet* from me shall spoilers come unto her, saith the LORD....Thus saith the LORD of hosts; The broad walls of Babylon shall be utterly broken, and her high gates shall be burned with fire; and the people shall labour in vain, and the folk in the fire, and they shall be weary."
- 3) Concerning Babylon's overthrow, the Bible offers several explicit prophecies.
- a) God would use Cyrus in her overthrow: "That saith of Cyrus, *He is* my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid" (Isa. 45:28). "Thus saith the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut" (Isa. 45:1).
 - b) Herodotus said the city was built astride the Euphrates River, with the river running under her great walls. God promised to dry up the river: "A drought *is* upon her waters; and they shall be dried up: for it *is* the land of graven images, and they are mad upon *their* idols" (Jer. 50:38). Cyrus took Babylon by diverting the river and marching his troops into the city by the river bed. Herodotus said the Babylonians could have still defended the city had they not been engaged in festivities. Jeremiah speaks of this feast: "I have laid a snare for thee, and thou art also taken, O Babylon, and thou wast not aware: thou art found, and also caught, because thou hast striven against the LORD" (50:24). "In their heat I will make their feasts, and I will make them drunken, that they may rejoice, and sleep a perpetual sleep, and not wake, saith the LORD" (51:39). "And I will make drunk her princes, and her wise *men*, her captains, and her rulers, and her mighty men: and they shall sleep a perpetual sleep, and not wake, saith the King, whose name *is* the LORD of hosts" (51:57).
 - c) The ultimate result of Babylon's fall is pictured in meticulous detail by the inspired prophets.
 - d) She would sit in the dust: "Come down, and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon, sit on the ground: *there is* no throne, O daughter of the Chaldeans: for thou shalt no more be called tender and delicate" (Isa. 47:1). [Note: Babylon is called a *virgin* because this was the first time she had been conquered. Darius later took the city again in 521 B.C., Xerxes in 483 B.C., and Alexander in 331B.C.].
 - e) These attacks on Babylon eventually reduced the walls to rubble, destroyed the temple of Belus, and demolished the city itself. Just before the time of Christ, Strabo visited the site and said it was a desert. In the 12th century A.D., another visitor described it as only a ruins, without inhabitants.
- 4) The description given by Isaiah (13:19-20) is not far-fetched!
- e. The Bible gave some prophecies regarding Egypt.
- 1) Ezekiel 29:12-15: "And I will make the land of Egypt desolate in the midst of the countries that are desolate, and her cities among the cities that are laid waste shall be desolate forty years: and I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations, and will disperse them through the countries. Yet thus saith the Lord GOD; At the end of forty years will I gather the Egyptians from the people whither they were scattered: And I will bring again the captivity of Egypt, and will cause them to return into the land of Pathros, into the land of their habitation; and they shall be there a base kingdom. It shall be the basest of the kingdoms; neither shall it exalt itself any more above the nations: for I will diminish them, that they shall no more rule over the nations."
 - 2) Ezekiel 30:12-16: "And I will make the rivers dry, and sell the land into the hand of the wicked: and I will make the land waste, and all that is therein, by the hand of strangers: I the LORD have spoken it. Thus saith the Lord GOD; I will also destroy the idols, and I will cause their images to cease out of Noph; and there shall be no more a prince of the land of Egypt: and I will put a fear in the land of Egypt. And I will make Pathros desolate, and will set fire in Zoan, and will execute judgments in No. And I will pour my fury upon

- Sin, the strength of Egypt; and I will cut off the multitude of No. And I will set fire in Egypt: Sin shall have great pain, and No shall be rent asunder, and Noph shall have distresses daily."
- 3) Egypt was prominent and powerful in the ancient past, but no more. Although it was once great, it would become desolate. As the Bible predicted, Egypt was under bondage, to Alexander and his successors. Even until the past century, Egypt was ruled by Britain. The rulers in Egypt now are not true Egyptians, but Arabs.
 - 4) She had never risen to prominence again. Her canals have filled up; the 7 fingers of the Nile are all stopped up, except two.. The land is less productive; there is less water coming down the Nile; idolatry has been destroyed and their great temples torn down. The great city of Thebes was divided into about nine hamlets.
- f. The destruction of Nineveh was predicted.
- 1) Passages:
 - a) Isaiah 10:12-14: "Wherefore it shall come to pass, *that* when the Lord hath performed his whole work upon mount Zion and on Jerusalem, I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks. For he saith, By the strength of my hand I have done *it*, and by my wisdom; for I am prudent: and I have removed the bounds of the people, and have robbed their treasures, and I have put down the inhabitants like a valiant *man*: And my hand hath found as a nest the riches of the people: and as one gathereth eggs *that are* left, have I gathered all the earth; and there was none that moved the wing, or opened the mouth, or peeped."
 - b) Zephaniah 2:13-15: "And he will stretch out his hand against the north, and destroy Assyria; and will make Nineveh a desolation, *and* dry like a wilderness. And flocks shall lie down in the midst of her, all the beasts of the nations: both the cormorant and the bittern shall lodge in the upper lintels of it; *their* voice shall sing in the windows; desolation *shall be* in the thresholds: for he shall uncover the cedar work. This *is* the rejoicing city that dwelt carelessly, that said in her heart, I *am*, and *there is* none beside me: how is she become a desolation, a place for beasts to lie down in! every one that passeth by her shall hiss, *and* wag his hand."
 - c) Nahum 3:1-19.
 - 2) Nineveh had once been a magnificent city, but when Alexander the Great invaded that part of the world, he could not even find its location.
- g. The utter demolition of Tyre was predicted in accurate detail.
- 1) "And they shall destroy the walls of Tyrus, and break down her towers: I will also scrape her dust from her, and make her like the top of a rock" (Ezek. 26:4; see verses 1-21). It was to be made completely desolate. Ezekiel's work dates back to about 592 B.C. What he predicted concerning Tyre was fulfilled about 260 years later.
 - 2) Nebuchadnezzar laid waste to the city and left it in ruins, as indicated by Ezekiel 26:7-11, but verses 4 and 14 were not fulfilled at that time.
 - a) Ezekiel 26:7-11: "For thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will bring upon Tyrus Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, a king of kings, from the north, with horses, and with chariots, and with horsemen, and companies, and much people. He shall slay with the sword thy daughters in the field: and he shall make a fort against thee, and cast a mount against thee, and lift up the buckler against thee. And he shall set engines of war against thy walls, and with his axes he shall break down thy towers. By reason of the abundance of his horses their dust shall cover thee: thy walls shall shake at the noise of the horsemen, and of the wheels, and of the chariots, when he shall enter into thy gates, as men enter into a city wherein is made a breach. With the hoofs of his horses shall he tread down all thy streets: he shall slay thy people by the sword, and thy strong garrisons shall go down to the ground."
 - b) Ezekiel 26:4,11: "And they shall destroy the walls of Tyrus, and break down her towers: I will also scrape her dust from her, and make her like the top of a rock....With the hoofs of his horses shall he tread down all thy streets: he shall slay thy people by the sword, and thy strong garrisons shall go down to the ground."
 - 3) The city was rebuilt on an island about a half-mile off shore, in the Mediterranean Sea. Alexander the Great came on the scene about 332 B.C., and conquered the city by blocking up the harbor so the famed Phoenician Navy could not attack his fleet; meanwhile, his soldiers were building a causeway from the mainland to the island. To have enough material for the causeway, they used the ruins of the original city, scraping the ground

bare!

- h. The city of Sidon's troubled future was revealed by inspired prophecy.
 - 1) "Son of man, set thy face against Zidon, and prophesy against it, And say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I *am* against thee, O Zidon; and I will be glorified in the midst of thee: and they shall know that I *am* the LORD, when I shall have executed judgments in her, and shall be sanctified in her. For I will send into her pestilence, and blood into her streets; and the wounded shall be judged in the midst of her by the sword upon her on every side; and they shall know that I *am* the LORD. And there shall be no more a pricking brier unto the house of Israel, nor *any* grieving thorn of all *that are* round about them, that despised them; and they shall know that I *am* the Lord GOD. Thus saith the Lord GOD; When I shall have gathered the house of Israel from the people among whom they are scattered, and shall be sanctified in them in the sight of the heathen, then shall they dwell in their land that I have given to my servant Jacob. And they shall dwell safely therein, and shall build houses, and plant vineyards; yea, they shall dwell with confidence, when I have executed judgments upon all those that despise them round about them; and they shall know that I *am* the LORD their God" (Ezek. 28:21-26). Although she would not be desolated, yet she would suffer great bloodshed and slaughter. Forty thousand of her citizens shut themselves up in houses and burned themselves to death rather than submit to capture. The wickedness of Sidon is seen in one of its most infamous citizens - Jezebel (1 Kings 16:30-31).
 - 2) God would not make a full end of Sidon. The city still stands as a monument of fulfilled prophecy.
 - i. Prophecies concerning the future of the Jews confirm Bible inspiration.
 - 1) "Frederick the Great of Prussia once asked the court chaplain to give him an argument, in a word, that the Bible is inspired, and he answered, 'Your Majesty, The Jews'" (Roy J. Hearn, Knight Arnold Bulletin Article, May 21, 1985).
 - 2) God would not make a full end of them, although he would severely punish them. This is tantamount to saying that they would be around to the end. Jeremiah 30:11: "For I am with thee, saith the LORD, to save thee: though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee: but I will correct thee in measure, and will not leave thee altogether unpunished."
 - 3) Numbers 23:9: "For from the top of the rocks I see him, and from the hills I behold him: lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations." Jews have been scattered among many nations through the centuries; they were scattered abroad in the captivities of Old Testament times, and they are presently scattered, and have been so since 70 A.D.
 - 4) Deuteronomy 28:36f: "The LORD shall bring thee, and thy king which thou shalt set over thee, unto a nation which neither thou nor thy fathers have known; and there shalt thou serve other gods, wood and stone. And thou shalt become an astonishment, a proverb, and a byword, among all nations whither the LORD shall lead thee." Their history is one in which they have endured the contempt of many.
 - 5) Deuteronomy 28:53-57 details the siege before they fell to the enemy; in the famine that afflicted them, they would eat their own sons. What is described happened during the siege of Samaria in Old Testament times, most likely also when the Babylonians besieged Jerusalem in 586 B.C., and in Jerusalem in 70 A.D. during the Roman siege. "And thou shalt eat the fruit of thine own body, the flesh of thy sons and of thy daughters, which the LORD thy God hath given thee, in the siege, and in the straitness, wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee: *So that* the man *that is* tender among you, and very delicate, his eye shall be evil toward his brother, and toward the wife of his bosom, and toward the remnant of his children which he shall leave: So that he will not give to any of them of the flesh of his children whom he shall eat: because he hath nothing left him in the siege, and in the straitness, wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee in all thy gates. The tender and delicate woman among you, which would not adventure to set the sole of her foot upon the ground for delicateness and tenderness, her eye shall be evil toward the husband of her bosom, and toward her son, and toward her daughter, And toward her young one that cometh out from between her feet, and toward her children which she shall bear: for she shall eat them for want of all *things* secretly in the siege and straitness, wherewith thine enemy shall distress thee in thy gates."
 - 6) Leviticus 26:29: "And ye shall eat the flesh of your sons, and the flesh of your daughters shall ye eat."
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- 7) 2 Kings 6:24-30: "And it came to pass after this, that Benhadad king of Syria gathered all his host, and went up, and besieged Samaria. And there was a great famine in Samaria: and, behold, they besieged it, until an ass's head was *sold* for fourscore *pieces* of silver, and the fourth part of a cab of dove's dung for five *pieces* of silver. And as the king of Israel was passing by upon the wall, there cried a woman unto him, saying, Help, my lord, O king. And he said, If the LORD do not help thee, whence shall I help thee? out of the barnfloor, or out of the winepress? And the king said unto her, What aileth thee? And she answered, This woman said unto me, Give thy son, that we may eat him to day, and we will eat my son to morrow. So we boiled my son, and did eat him: and I said unto her on the next day, Give thy son, that we may eat him: and she hath hid her son. And it came to pass, when the king heard the words of the woman, that he rent his clothes; and he passed by upon the wall, and the people looked, and, behold, *he had* sackcloth within upon his flesh."
 - 8) Lamentations 2:20: "Behold, O LORD, and consider to whom thou hast done this. Shall the women eat their fruit, *and* children of a span long? shall the priest and the prophet be slain in the sanctuary of the Lord?"
 - 9) Lamentations 4:10: "The hands of the pitiful women have sodden their own children: they were their meat in the destruction of the daughter of my people."
7. Christ in Prophecy.
- a. The Old Testament foretold the coming of Christ.
 - 1) Luke 24:44: "And he said unto them, These *are* the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and *in* the prophets, and *in* the psalms, concerning me."
 - 2) Abraham foresaw him.
 - a) John 8:56-58: "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw *it*, and was glad. Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am."
 - b) Acts 3:25: "Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed."
 - c) Galatians 3:8: "And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, *saying*, In thee shall all nations be blessed."
 - 3) Moses foresaw him.
 - a) Deuteronomy 18:5: "For the LORD thy God hath chosen him out of all thy tribes, to stand to minister in the name of the LORD, him and his sons for ever."
 - b) Acts 3:22: "For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you."
 - c) Luke 24:44-47: "And he said unto them, These *are* the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and *in* the prophets, and *in* the psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."
 - d) John 5:46: "For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me."
 - e) Acts 26:22-23: "Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come: That Christ should suffer, *and* that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should show light unto the people, and to the Gentiles."
 - 4) Samuel prophesied of Christ. "Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days" (Acts 3:24).
 - b. David prophesied of him.
 - 1) Psalms 16:8-10: "I have set the LORD always before me: because *he is* at my right hand, I shall not be moved. Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall

- rest in hope. For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption."
- 2) Psalms 34:20: "He keepeth all his bones: not one of them is broken."
 - 3) John 19:36: "For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken."
 - 4) Acts 2:25-28: "For David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved: Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope: Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance."
- c. Isaiah prophesied of him (cf. Isaiah 53).
- 1) John 12:41: "These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him."
 - 2) Acts 8:32-34: "The place of the scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth: In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth. And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man?"
- d. Zechariah prophesied of Christ.
- 1) Zechariah 12:10: "And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for *his* only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for *his* firstborn."
 - 2) Zechariah 13:7: "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man *that is* my fellow, saith the LORD of hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered: and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones."
 - 3) Matthew 26:31: "Then saith Jesus unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad."
 - 4) John 19:37: "And again another scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced."
- e. All prophets desired to see the days of Christ, thus they knew beforehand of his coming.
- 1) Matthew 13:16-17: "But blessed *are* your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear. For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous *men* have desired to see *those things* which ye see, and have not seen *them*; and to hear *those things* which ye hear, and have not heard *them*."
 - 2) 1 Peter 1:10-12: "Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace *that should come* unto you: Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into."
- f. Old Testament prophets and Scriptures spoke beforehand of Christ.
- 1) Acts 3:18: "But those things, which God before had showed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled."
 - 2) Acts 3:24: "Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days."
 - 3) Acts 10:43: "To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins."
 - 4) Luke 24:44: "And he said unto them, These *are* the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and *in* the prophets, and *in* the psalms, concerning me."
 - 5) John 5:39: "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me."
 - 6) Acts 17:2-3: "And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures, Opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ."

- 7) Acts 17:11-12: "These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so. Therefore many of them believed; also of honourable women which were Greeks, and of men, not a few."
- g. The Messianic Passages of the Old Testament are fulfilled in the New Testament.
- 1) Jesus said so.
 - a) Luke 18:31-33: "Then he took *unto him* the twelve, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished. For he shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on: And they shall scourge *him*, and put him to death: and the third day he shall rise again."
 - b) Luke 22:37: "For I say unto you, that this that is written must yet be accomplished in me, And he was reckoned among the transgressors: for the things concerning me have an end."
 - c) Luke 24:27: "And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself."
 - d) Luke 24:44: "And he said unto them, These *are* the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and *in* the prophets, and *in* the psalms, concerning me."
 - e) Luke 24:46: "And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day."
 - 2) John the Baptizer affirmed it: "He said, I *am* the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias" (John 1:23).
 - 3) Philip taught it: "Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph" (John 1:45).
 - 4) Peter was guided to affirm it.
 - a) Acts 2:25-28: "For David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved: Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope: Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance."
 - b) Acts 3:18: "But those things, which God before had showed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled."
 - c) Acts 3:24: "Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days."
 - d) 1 Peter 1:10-11: "Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace *that should come* unto you: Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow."
 - 5) Paul taught it.
 - a) Acts 13:27-29: "For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath day, they have fulfilled *them* in condemning *him*. And though they found no cause of death *in him*, yet desired they Pilate that he should be slain. And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took *him* down from the tree, and laid *him* in a sepulchre."
 - b) Acts 17:2-3: "And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures, Opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ."
 - c) Acts 26:22-23: "Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come: That Christ should suffer, *and* that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should show light unto the people, and to the Gentiles."
 - d) Acts 28:23: "And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into *his* lodging; to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and *out of* the prophets, from morning

till evening."

h. Specific Prophecies and their Fulfillment.

1) The Birth of Christ.

a) The place of his birth.

(1) Micah 5:2: "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, *though* thou be little among the thousands of Judah, *yet* out of thee shall he come forth unto me *that is* to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth *have been* from of old, from everlasting."

(2) Matthew 2:1-6 "Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him. When Herod the king had heard *these things*, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born. And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judaea: for thus it is written by the prophet, And thou Bethlehem, *in* the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel."

b) The manner of his birth.

(1) Isaiah 7:14: "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel."

(2) Matthew 1:18-25: "Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. Then Joseph her husband, being a just *man*, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily. But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us. Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife: And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name JESUS."

c) The Ancestry of Christ.

(1) The seed of woman.

(a) Genesis 3:15: "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."

(b) Galatians 4:4: "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law."

(c) The seed of Abraham.

1) Genesis 12:1-3: "Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed."

2) Genesis 22:18: "And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice."

3) Galatians 3:8,16: "And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, *saying*, In thee shall all nations be blessed.... Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ."

(d) The seed of Isaac.

1) Genesis 21:12: "And God said unto Abraham, Let it not be grievous in thy sight because of the lad, and because of thy bondwoman; in all that Sarah hath said unto thee, hearken unto her voice; for in Isaac shall thy seed be called."

- 2) Romans 9:7: "Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, *are they* all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called."
- 3) Hebrews 11:18: "Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called."
- (e) The seed of Jacob.
 - 1) Genesis 28:14: "And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed."
 - 2) Romans 9:13: "As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated."
- (f) The seed of Judah.
 - 1) Genesis 49:10: "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him *shall* the gathering of the people *be*."
 - 2) Hebrews 7:14: "For *it is* evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood."
- (g) The seed of David.
 - 1) 2 Samuel 7:12-14: "And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men."
 - 2) Psalms 89:3-4: "I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant, Thy seed will I establish for ever, and build up thy throne to all generations. Selah."
 - 3) Matthew 22:41: "While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them."
 - 4) John 7:42: "Hath not the scripture said, That Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was?"
- 2) The Incarnation of Christ.
 - a) He would be Divine: Isaiah 9:6 ("The mighty God, the Everlasting Father").
 - b) He would be human: Isaiah 9:6 ("A child...a son").
 - c) Romans 1:3-4: "Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; And declared *to be* the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead."
 - d) Romans 8:4: "That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."
- 3) The Offices of Christ.
 - a) He would be a Prophet.
 - (1) Deuteronomy 18:15-18: "The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken; According to all that thou desiredst of the LORD thy God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not. And the LORD said unto me, They have well *spoken that* which they have spoken. I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him."
 - (2) Acts 3:22: "For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you."
 - (3) Acts 7:37: "This is that Moses, which said unto the children of Israel, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear."
 - b) He would be a Priest.
 - (1) Psalms 110:4: "The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou *art* a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek."
 - (2) Zechariah 6:13: "Even he shall build the temple of the LORD; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both."

- (3) Hebrews 5:6: "As he saith also in another *p lace*, Thou *art* a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec."
- (4) Hebrews 7:24: "But this *man*, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood."
- (5) Hebrews 8:4: "For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law."
- c) He would be a King.
 - (1) Psalms 2:5-6: "Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure. Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion."
 - (2) Psalms 110:1: "The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool."
- 4) Daniel 7:23-24: "Thus he said, The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces. And the ten horns out of this kingdom *are* ten kings *that* shall arise: and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings."
- 5) Zechariah 6:13: "Even he shall build the temple of the LORD; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both."
- 6) John 18:36-37: "Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence. Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice."
- 7) Acts 2:34-35: "For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, Until I make thy foes thy footstool."
- 8) Revelation 1:6: "And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him *be* glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."
- i. The parables of Christ.
 - 1) Psalms 78:2: "I will open my mouth in a parable: I will utter dark sayings of old."
 - 2) Matthew 13:10-14: "And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables? He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath. Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive."
 - 3) Matthew 13:34-35: "All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables; and without a parable spake he not unto them: That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world."
- j. The Miracles of Christ.
 - 1) Isaiah 35:3-5: "Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. Say to them *that are* of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come *with* vengeance, *even* God *with* a recompense; he will come and save you. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped."
 - 2) Micah 7:15: "According to the days of thy coming out of the land of Egypt will I show unto him marvellous *things*."
 - 3) Matthew 11:4-6: "Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and show John again those things which ye do hear and see: The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is *he*, whosoever shall not be offended in me."
 - 4) John 20:30-31: "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name."
- k. The Triumphant entry into Jerusalem.
 - 1) Zechariah 9:9: "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem:

behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he *is* just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass."

- 2) Matthew 21:1-11: "And when they drew nigh unto Jerusalem, and were come to Bethphage, unto the mount of Olives, then sent Jesus two disciples, Saying unto them, Go into the village over against you, and straightway ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her: loose *them*, and bring *them* unto me. And if any *man* say ought unto you, ye shall say, The Lord hath need of them; and straightway he will send them. All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass. And the disciples went, and did as Jesus commanded them, And brought the ass, and the colt, and put on them their clothes, and they set *him* thereon. And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way; others cut down branches from the trees, and strowed *them* in the way. And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the son of David: Blessed *is* he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest. And when he was come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, Who is this? And the multitude said, This is Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee."
8. The Death, Burial, Resurrection and Ascension of Christ.
- a. His death would be a vicarious sacrifice for sin: "The place of the scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth" (Acts 8:32; cf. Isa. 53).
 - 1) He would be betrayed by a friend.
 - a) Psalms 41:9: "Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up *his* heel against me."
 - b) John 13:18: "I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen: but that the scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me."
 - 2) He would be betrayed for 30 pieces of silver.
 - a) Zechariah 11:12: "And I said unto them, If ye think good, give *me* my price; and if not, forbear. So they weighed for my price thirty *pieces* of silver."
 - b) Matthew 27:3: "Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders."
 - 3) This silver would be used to purchase a potter's field.
 - a) Zechariah 11:13: "And the LORD said unto me, Cast it unto the potter: a goodly price that I was prised at of them. And I took the thirty *pieces* of silver, and cast them to the potter in the house of the LORD."
 - b) Matthew 27:5-10: "And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself. And the chief priests took the silver pieces, and said, It is not lawful for to put them into the treasury, because it is the price of blood. And they took counsel, and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in. Wherefore that field was called, The field of blood, unto this day. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value; And gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord appointed me."
 - 4) He would be reviled, insulted, and spat upon.
 - a) Isaiah 50:6: "I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting."
 - b) Matthew 26:67: "Then did they spit in his face, and buffeted him; and others smote *him* with the palms of their hands."
 - 5) He would be crucified with the wicked.
 - a) Isaiah 53:9: "And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither *was any* deceit in his mouth."
 - b) Luke 23:32-33: "And there were also two other, malefactors, led with him to be put to death. And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left."
 - 6) He would be taunted and jeered.
 - a) Psalms 22:7-8: "All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, *saying*, He trusted on the LORD *that* he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him."

- b) Matthew 27:39-43: "And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads, And saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest *it* in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross. Likewise also the chief priests mocking *him*, with the scribes and elders, said, He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God."
- 7) He would be forsaken in his death.
- a) Psalms 22:1: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? *why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring?*"
- b) Matthew 27:46: "And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"
- 8) He would be given gall and vinegar.
- a) Psalms 69:21: "They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink."
- b) Matthew 27:34: "They gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall: and when he had tasted *thereof*, he would not drink."
- c) John 19:39: "And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound *weight*."
- 9) Other items:
- a) They would cast lots for his clothes.
- (1) Psalms 22:18: "They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture."
- (2) Matthew 27:35: "And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots."
- b) No bones would be broken in his body.
- (1) Psalms 34:20: "He keepeth all his bones: not one of them is broken."
- (2) John 19:31-36: "The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day, (for that sabbath day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and *that* they might be taken away. Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs: But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water. And he that saw *it* bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe. For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken."
- c) His side would be pierced.
- (1) Zechariah 12:10: "And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for *his* only *son*, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for *his* firstborn."
- (2) John 19:34-37: "But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water. And he that saw *it* bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe. For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken. And again another scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced."
- b. The Resurrection of Christ.
- 1) Psalms 16:8-10: "I have set the LORD always before me: because *he is* at my right hand, I shall not be moved. Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope. For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption."
- 2) Acts 2:24-29: "Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it. For David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved: Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope: Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; thou shalt make me

- full of joy with thy countenance. Men *and* brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day."
- 3) Acts 13:32-37: "And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, *now* no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David. Wherefore he saith also in another *psalm*, Thou shalt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption: But he, whom God raised again, saw no corruption."
- c. The Ascension of Christ.
 - 1) He would ascend to heaven.
 - a) Psalms 68:18: "Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men; yea, *for* the rebellious also, that the LORD God might dwell *among them*."
 - b) Ephesians 4:8-10: "Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)"
 - 2) He would pass through the heavenly gates.
 - a) Psalms 24:7: "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in."
 - b) Acts 1:9-11: "And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked stedfastly 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."
 - c) Complete picture of his ascension given.
 - (1) Acts 1:9-11: "And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked stedfastly 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."
 - (2) Psalms 24:7-10: "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who *is* this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift *them* up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, he *is* the King of glory."
 - (3) 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."

F. Need to Ignore God's Law of Marriage

1. God's Law of Marriage:
 - a. Genesis 2:23-24: "And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh."
 - b. Matthew 19:4-6: "And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."
2. Atheists and others who do not believe and respect the Bible, will see not need to abide by God's law on marriage, divorce and remarriage; or even the need to be married.

3. Recognizing not law of morality, except whatever principles may please him, and atheist or moral rogue will participate in any form of immoral conduct.

G. Need to Look at the Problems in the Religious World.

1. Disunity:
 - a. The very word *denomination* bespeaks of division. The condition of division is entirely opposed to our Lord's prayer for unity among his true disciples.
 - b. John 17:20-21: "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me."
2. Look at the hypocrisy of believers
 - a. Many "followers" of Christ will commit any kind of offense, crime, or sin, and still think he is in good standing the Lord.
 - b. Galatians 2:11-14: "But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation. But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?"
3. Look at the unfaithfulness of believers
 - a. Matthew 5:13-16: "Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."
 - b. Case of agnostic and sectarian on Mark 16:16

III. **CONCLUSION.**

A. The Problems of Today Succently Stated From and Unknown, But Wise Source.

1. The Problem is Not Guns:
 - a. It's Hearts Without God
 - b. Homes Without Discipline
 - c. Schools Without Prayers
 - d. And Courts Without Justice
2. The Problems are those affecting the soul.
 - a. Matthew 26:41: "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."
 - b. Isaiah 59:1-2: "Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear."
 - c. Ezekiel 18:20: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him."
 - d. Romans 3:9-23: "What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: Their feet are swift to shed blood: Destruction and misery are in their ways: And the way of peace have they not known: There is no fear of God before their eyes. 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. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."

- e. 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9: “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 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.”
 - f. Revelation 20:12-15: “And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.”
 - g. Matthew 25:46: “And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.”
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Does God Mean What He Says?

I. INTRODUCTION.

A. Some people say: "I know what the Bible says, but...."

1. They mean, "The Bible does say 'thus and so' but I do not like that idea; what it says does not mean much to me. I can get by somehow despite what the Bible says."
2. This is the attitude expressed by many people, in words or by action, or both.
3. The problem is not one of failing to understand; the problem is in believing what God says.
4. The statement is revealing: It means that the individual is rejecting what God has said.

B. It is really a question of whether God means what he says.

1. Did God ever make a threat which he did not keep, if the conditions (if any) were not met?
2. Did he ever promise anything which he did not fulfill when the conditions (if any) were met?
3. The history of God's dealings with man shows he always meant what he said, and that he always did what he promised or threatened!

II. DISCUSSION.

A. God meant it when he made these Bible threats.

1. Genesis 2:16-17: "And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."
 - a. Adam and Eve disregarded the warning, ate the forbidden fruit, and were horribly penalized. They were cut off from God (they died spiritually); they began to age and die physically; they now had to face a hostile world without all the special help and considerations they had enjoyed while in Eden.
 - b. We suffer sorrow, pain, death and all the other consequences of their sin—this is so because God meant what he said! "Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return" (Gen. 3:16-19).
2. 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. And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them."
 - a. The wickedness of mankind was great; so widespread was it that only Noah found favor in the eyes of Jehovah.
 - b. God warned Noah, and that great man was to pass along that warning to the people, that a great flood was coming unless there was wholesale repentance (2 Pet.2:5).
 - c. The Genesis Record tells of the impenitence of the sinful race, and the resultant flood of punishment! "And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all" (Luke 17:26-27).
 - d. There are many evidences in nature of the universal flood, which along with the Biblical report, proclaims eloquently that God means what he said!
3. Genesis 19:17: "And it came to pass, when they had brought them forth abroad, that he said, Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed."
 - a. Because of the gross wickedness of the people of Sodom, Gomorrah, and the other cities of the plain, God determined that he would destroy them.
 - b. But because of the intercession of faithful, godly Abraham, God agreed that he would spare these citizens provided only ten righteous souls could be found in their midst. Abraham loved his nephew Lot, and sought to deliver him and his family from destruction. He thought surely there were at least ten good people.
 - c. But not even all of Lot's small family were willing to leave Sodom, therefore God fulfilled his threat: Sodom, Gomorrah, and the neighboring sinful cities were all utterly destroyed.
 - 1) Genesis 19:24-28: "Then the LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven; And he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground. But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt. And Abraham gat up early in the morning to the place where he stood before the LORD: And he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain, and beheld, and, lo, the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace."

- 2) Luke 17:28-32: "Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed. In that day, he which shall be upon the housetop, and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away: and he that is in the field, let him likewise not return back. Remember Lot's wife."
- d. The fact that the remains of these cities have not been discovered, or even their exact location, proclaims to all: "God means what he says!"
4. Isaiah 13:19-20: "And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation: neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall the shepherds make their fold there."
- a. God did not even announce any conditions whereby Babylon could escape the awesome punishment determined for her by the all-wise and powerful God of heaven. Indeed she may have scoffed at the warning, seeing she was just coming into the flower of her strength and glory.
- b. The walls of that great city stood 350 feet high, and were 85 feet in width; the city/state ruled the ancient world; her armies were considered invincible. But God spoke, and her fall was inevitable!
- c. The Medes and Persians invaded the city, using a grand stratagem: they diverted the river which flowed under the walls at one point, the soldiers marched into Babylon and overpowered the drunken defenders, capturing the city and taking over its empire (Dan. 5).
- d. For more than 2000 years now, it has not been inhabited. God meant what he said!
5. Matthew 24:1-2: "And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to shew him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down."
- a. The Jews thought that they had a monopoly on the protection and power of God. They had existed as a separate, special nation of God for fifteen hundred years; they placed great confidence in the fact that they had descended from Abraham, and had David and Solomon in their ancestry.
- b. But they had ignored the warnings God had given them through many prophets, and the Messiah. Him they had rejected, opposed, and crucified. "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers: Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it" (Acts 7:51-53).
- c. The Lord predicted the overthrow of Jerusalem and Judaism; the fulfillment took place in 70 A.D. when the Roman army besieged the city, conquered it, killing more than a million Jews in Jerusalem alone; they literally destroyed the temple, stone from stone!
- d. God and his all-powerful Son meant exactly what they said!
- B. Does God really mean what he says about these threats made in the New Testament?
1. Galatians 1:8-9: "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed."
- a. Compare: "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" (Rev. 22:18-19).
- b. Will God really cast into everlasting torment those who tamper with his word?
- c. He meant what he said in every other warning; we have every reason to believe that this promise of punishment will be carried out against all those who disregard the warning!
- d. How much better it is to simply take God at his word, stay within the safe limits defined by that word, and enjoy the blessed benefits of that eternal word! How awful it will be for those who treat his word with contempt, for in doing so, they show their real attitude toward Him who gave that word!
- 1) Deuteronomy 4:2: "Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you."
- 2) 2 Corinthians 2:17: "For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ."
- 3) Proverbs 30:6: "Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar."
2. 2 Peter 3:9-14: "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. 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. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all

holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.”

- a. Will he really destroy the earth and everything pertaining to it? Will this great and beautiful universe be utterly destroyed? Since he fulfilled all of his other warnings in the former days, we have every reason to believe that he will fulfill this threat also.
 - b. God has never made any idle threats! He does not talk for the sake of making noise! What he says, he means; what he threatens, he fulfills; what he promises, he makes good! We can rely on the word of the Almighty.
 - c. Notice that there are no conditions to this promise. It does not matter what man may or may not do; it does not depend on what man achieves or fails to achieve. God is going to destroy the earth and the universe in the last day!
 - d. According to this passage, and other Bible statements, all mankind can do is be ready. There will be no signs of the impending end, contrary to popular belief:
 - 1) Matthew 24:36, 44: “But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only....Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.”
 - 2) Mark 13:32-33: “But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father. Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is. Luke 12:39 And this know, that if the goodman of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and not have suffered his house to be broken through.”
 - 3) 1 Thessalonians 5:1-6: “But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For 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. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.”
3. Matthew 7:21-23: “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.”
 - a. Will the Lord really reject sincere religious people? Is the law of the Bible so definite and fixed that no one is permitted to deviate? Does the Lord expect every person, regardless of his background, country, and age, to obey the will of God? Again, since God performed his stated intentions in earlier days, we have every reason to believe he means exactly what he says in the present text!
 - b. James 2:10 For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.”
 - c. Hebrews 5:8-9: “Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him.”
 - d. 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9: “In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not 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.”
 4. Matthew 19:9: “And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.”
 - a. Did the Lord truly mean that there was only one cause for divorce and remarriage acceptable to him? In view of the examples considered in the first section, YES!
 - b. Therefore, one who is divorced for some cause other than fornication on the part of the spouse, and remarries, is living in sin. Cf I Tim. 5:6; Gal. 5:19,21b.
 - c. This is a hard proposition, but God has always meant what he said!
 5. 1 Corinthians 16:22: “If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha.”
 - a. Is it really true that if one does not love Jesus, he will be lost in torment forever and ever?
 - b. What does it mean to love Christ? Does it mean to have a sentimental attachment for him? A warm feeling?
 - c. John 14:15. If we love him, we WILL obey him! If we do not obey him after learning his will, we do not love him!
 - 1) Hebrews 5:8-9: “Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him.”
 - 2) 1 John 5:3: “For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.”

- d. This means that all those people who profess faith in Christ, but who follow a perverted religious system, are lost! God means what he says!
6. Hebrews 10:23-31: “Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: 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, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”
- a. Will God really reject those saints who willfully stay away from the assemblies?
- b. This means that when one becomes a Christian, there are certain, unchangeable requirements placed upon him: one of these things is to regularly and sincerely assemble with the saints.
- c. A saint who will not attend is no more faithful than a saint who lives a criminal life! It is impossible to please God as a Christian without assembling with the saints, and participating in the activities God has ordained!
- d. Just as surely as God meant in his commands and warnings in Old Testament days, he means what he says in this matter, also.
- C. Did God mean what he says about how to being saved?
1. All spiritual blessings are in Christ; only those who are in Christ's body will be taken home to glory.
- a. Ephesians 1:3: “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.”
- b. Ephesians 5:23-27: “For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.”
2. How does one get into Christ? Baptism puts one into him: “For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ” (Gal. 3:27).
- a. But baptism is worse than useless if one has not repented: “And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent” (Acts 17:30).
- b. And where there is no faith there can be no repentance:
- 1) Hebrews 11:6: “But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”
- 2) John 8:24: “I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.”
- c. That faith must be expressed in an oral confession (Rom. 10:9-10) and in obedience: “Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way? For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also” (Jas. 2:19-26).
- d. God means what he says!
3. He also means what he says about the possibility of our falling from grace:
- a. Hebrews 2:1-4: “Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward; 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 with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?”
- b. 1 Corinthians 10:12: “Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.”
- c. Galatians 5:4: “Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.”
- D. Does God mean what he says to Christians about worship?
1. Our worship must be directed toward God, offered sincerely, and given in accordance with the teachings of the truth. “But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit

- and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth” (John 4:23-24).
2. We must give as we have been prospered; only on the 1st day of the week; must give cheerfully and bountifully.
 - a. 1 Corinthians 16:1-2: “Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.”
 - b. 2 Corinthians 9:6-7: “But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.”
 3. The Lord specified the kind of music he wants in worship: singing. One who offers instrumental music, humming, whistling, noises with the mouth other than singing sensible, spiritual songs, is worshipping in vain.
 - a. Colossians 3:16-17: “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.”
 - b. Matthew 15:8-9: “This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.”
 4. The Lord's Supper must be eaten only on the first day of the week; it must be thoughtfully entered into; if it is not eaten properly, it results in the individual becoming spiritually weak, sick, and dead!
 - a. 1 Corinthians 11:20-30: “When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper. For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken. What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise you not. For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come. Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.
 - b. Acts 20:7: “And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.”
 5. God also means what he says about our worshipping him through study of his word and in the prayers we address to him through Christ:
 - a. 2 Timothy 2:15: “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”
 - b. 1 Timothy 4:13-16: “Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine...Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.”
 - c. Acts 2:42: “And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.”
 - d. 1 Thessalonians 5:17: “Pray without ceasing.”
- E. Did the Lord really mean what he said in Matthew 6:33?
1. The passage sets forth our obligation to SEEK.
 - a. To seek means to make inquiry into, to search out diligently.
 - b. It sums up all of our obligations before God: Cf. Eccl. 12:13.
 - c. The NT abounds with instructions along this line: Ph. 2:12; I Cor. 15:58; Gal. 5:6; John 9:4; Tit. 3:1b; Jas. 1:21-27.
 2. We are to seek the kingdom of God.
 - a. The kingdom and the church are identical. If we are successful in seeking for the kingdom, we will find the church.
 - b. The kingdom must be sought for since it is not a physical kingdom (Luke 17:20f).
 - c. To seek it means we identify it, enter it, obtain its blessings, support it, do all to strengthen and spread it, so live as to enrich its influence.
 3. We are to seek God's righteousness.
 - a. Righteousness means right doing, obeying God; early English word: "rightwise."

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- b. This is not God's personal righteousness, but the plan by which he makes us to be righteous; it is the truth of the gospel: Dt. 6:25; Ps. 119:172; Rom. 1:16; 10:1-3, 16; I John 3:7; Acts 10:34f;
 - c. We seek it for the purpose of learning, believing, and obeying it.
 - 4. The passage sets forth the order of our search.
 - a. God's kingdom and righteousness must come first, before all other things! Herein lies the stringent obligation.
 - b. There are many good things and worthwhile pursuits open to us: but all these must be secondary to God's kingdom and righteousness!
 - c. If we have two places to go, or two tasks to do: the church and righteousness must have top priority!
 - d. The Lord's church and the gospel are far more important than sports, attending a party, recreation, personal comfort, watching TV, and even life itself.
 - e. This is consistently taught throughout the Bible: Rev. 2:10; 3:21; Mt. 10:39; I Kings 19:20; Luke 9:61f; Matt. 8:20-22; 10:37-39.
 - f. Even when good and proper things conflict with the church and obedience, our priority is clear!
 - 5. The passage sets forth a conditional promise.
 - a. God will supply our material needs if we meet the foregoing conditions.
 - b. To be assured of earthly necessities, seek God's kingdom and righteousness first.
 - 6. Did the Lord mean what he said? The Bible and history affirm that he does!
 - F. Did the Lord mean what he said in Luke 13:24?
 - 1. "Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able."
 - 2. Strive: from the Greek word "agonizomai," from which we get our English words agony and agonize.
 - a. It is used in I Cor. 9:25 to denote contending in a public game or contest.
 - b. It is used in John 18:36 to denote fighting a battle.
 - c. It is used metaphorically in I Tim. 6:12 and 2 Tim. 4:7 to denote a continual struggle against opposition and temptation.
 - d. It means to strive as in a contest for a prize, straining every nerve to attain success; to put forth every effort. Col. 1:29; 4:12.
 - e. More than a desire or a token effort is required to enter the gate mentioned.
 - 3. What is the gate the Lord is discussing?
 - a. His statement in verse 24 is part of the response given to the question someone raised in verse 23: "Lord, are there few that be saved?"
 - b. The Lord spoke on the subject in Matt. 7:13f also, in which he stated that few would enter through the strait gate which opens into the narrow way that leads to life.
 - c. The gate of both passages is the gate of salvation which allows us to enter the narrow way which leads eventually to heaven. The salvation is two-fold: salvation from sin and salvation in heaven. Mark 16:15f; Heb. 5:9.
 - 4. Therefore, the Lord is saying that a great deal of concerted effort is required of each individual to find and enter the gate of salvation, and make one's way home to glory.
 - a. There are many counterfeit ways which claim to open on to the narrow way to life in heaven; diligent effort in studying the Bible is necessary to determine the only true gate. Most of us have had the great advantage of having been taught the truth from our childhood years; most people do not have that privilege. Often those who come out of sectarian error are more appreciative of the privilege of knowing the truth than many who have known it most of their lives and take it for granted.
 - b. The way from baptism to heaven is narrow and fraught with many dangers: there is the ever-present peril of temptation (Jas. 1:13-15; I Cor. 10:12); discouragement is a plague to many (cf. Dt. 1:21,28; Num. 21:4; 32:7,9; Col. 3:21); fear; lack of faith, or love, or zeal; having evil thoughts or motives; evil words or deeds; there are many false teachers and countless false ways (Mt. 7:15-20; I John 4:1; 2 Cor. 2:17; Ps. 119:104; 2 Th. 2:10-12; I Tim. 4:1-3; 2 Tim. 3:13); a failure to grow (2 Pet. 1:5-11).
 - 5. The fact that much diligence is required to reach heaven should not discourage us; our aversion of torment and strong desire for glory should motivate us to put forth the best effort possible. God's plan which is designed to lead us to heaven is very simple, but it requires the deepest sincerity, the most honest effort, and the very strongest desire which are possible for us to have; anything less than our best is not enough.
 - a. The plan calls for the removal of all past alien sins: Rom. 1:23; 6:23; I Cor. 6:9-11; Rev. 1:5; Heb. 11:6; John 8:24, 21; Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30f; Matt. 10:32f; Rom. 10:9f; Acts 8:37; Mark 16:15f; Acts 2:38; 22:16; I Pet. 3:21.
 - b. The plan calls for the new Christian to live the kind of life described in the Bible: I Pet. 2:1f; Tit. 2:11f; 2 Pet. 1:5-11; I John 1:6-10.
 - c. The plan calls for Christians to worship God in spirit and in truth; to do the work God gives us to do in the New Testament; to present to the world the best example of Christianity possible; and to be faithful unto death: Rev. 2:10.
 - G. Did the Lord mean what he said in Mark 12:29-31.
 - 1. The requirement for us to love God is very impressive.
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- a. With all our heart: Means that we must have all our feelings, desires, emotions, affections, and longings centered on God.
 - b. With all our soul: Means that our life and being are dedicated to him.
 - c. With all our mind: Means that our mind is devoted to the service of God.
 - d. With all our strength: Means that we must commit and consecrate our energies and powers to doing his will first and foremost.
2. The requirement for us to love our neighbor as ourself is impressive.
 - a. We are not necessarily to put him ahead of ourselves in all things, but to love him as (to the degree) that we love ourselves.
 - b. We are not necessarily required to feel a magnetic attraction toward him, but to have the purpose of mind to do him only good, never evil.
 - c. It means that we will put forth whatever effort we can, with whatever opportunity we may have, to assist him; if he is hungry - feed him; if he is thirsty - give him drink; if he needs clothes - provide them; if he needs spiritual help - guide him into a knowledge of God's will; if he is weak - encourage him. Matt. 7:12.
 3. The demand given in the passage is one which requires a continuing, diligent effort on the individual's part to develop, maintain, and properly express this love. The nature of the love described is one that must be expressed to be real. Gal. 5:6.
- H. Did the Lord mean what he said in Matthew 6:19-21.
1. The treasures of ancient people was in the form of clothing, jewels and precious metals, and houses and lands. Cf. Gen. 45:22; Josh. 7:21; 2 Kings 5:5. Rust, moths and thieves were all robbers of these riches.
 2. The Lord's prohibition was not against the accumulation of wealth in one or more of its forms, for Abraham was an extremely rich man; so was Job; Philemon was a very respected Christian while having wealth; Cornelius apparently was a man of wealth and position and became a fine Christian. In order for one to fulfil his obligation to his family, it is necessary for the father (and sometimes the mother) to work, obtain money to furnish the essentials of life (cf I Tim. 5:8).
 3. Obviously, the obtaining, using, and retaining of wealth is not wrong. The manner of getting it, how it is used, our attitude toward it - these are important issues: I Tim. 6:6ff; Mark 10:24; I John 3:17; Jas. 2:14-16
 4. The rich farmer was called a fool because he tried to replace spiritual truths with material wealth. The rich, young ruler turned away from the Lord because he thought his riches were more important than the salvation of his soul. We must control the acquisitive and hoarding inclinations which are characteristic of mankind. "Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth" (Luke 12:15.).
 5. Treasures in heaven are safe. They are spiritual in nature and eternal in scope; they are reserved in heaven (1 Pet. 1:3-5). They are for the individual; they can not be taken away from you against your will. All that one gives or does for the church of our Lord will accrue to his eternal credit. Not even a cup of cold water will lose its value (Matt. 10:42).
 6. The chief reason for laying up treasures in heaven is that where the treasure is, there will be the heart of the individual. The Lord is most interested in the whole heart, and will accept nothing less; the devil will accept any part of your heart for if he has part, he will have you entirely, since the Lord will not take anything less than one hundred percent!
 7. It is scarcely necessary to inquire, "Did the Lord really mean what he said here?"
- I. Did the Lord mean what he said in I Tim. 4:12?
1. The statement is an imperative, setting forth a demand of God; it not a suggestion.
 2. The command is that Timothy (and every other preacher and Christian) be an example before the world of what a Christian truly is.
 - a. He is to manifest the Christian life by the words he uses and does not use.
 - b. He is to be an example of the Christian life by the way he lives.
 - c. Each Christian is to be an example to the world in showing love.
 - d. We are to manifest the Christian life by the attitude we maintain.
 - e. A life of faith, showing obedience and trust in God, must be daily maintained.
 - f. And our lives and words are to be characterized by purity.
- J. Did the Lord mean what he said in the following passages?
1. Rom. 15:1f. He requires that we help each other along as we have opportunity and ability. We should never be a discourager of the weak saint, but ought to do all within our power to build him up, and make his faithfulness easier. Anyone can destroy and discourage; but a Christian must be one who builds up and encourages!
 2. 2 Tim 2:15. Christ requires that each of his followers be a diligent student of the word of God. The power to become a Christian is in the gospel (Rom. 1:16). The power to remain faithful is likewise found in the word (Acts 20:32; 2 Tim. 3:16f). A child who does not eat, cannot be healthy and grow. A child of God who does not continually feed upon the pure word of God cannot remain healthy and will not grow. 2 Pet. 3:18; 1:5-7; Heb. 5:12-14.
 3. Jas 1:27; Gal. 6:9f. Christians are those who desire to help others; they don't have to be forced to assist the

needy, or show concern for them. The Lord expects that each of his saints be sincerely interested in his fellowman, especially his fellow-saint, and be willing to help. Otherwise, his religion is vain.

4. Gal 6:1; Jas 5:19f. The Lord said that the spirit is generally willing but the flesh is weak. That be so, and the world being so filled with enticements to sin, Christians will often be led astray. Those who remain faithful (the spiritual of the text), will expend every effort and use every means to restore those who have fallen. To be unconcerned is to evince that we ourselves have fallen!
 5. Eph 6:24; Tit 2:7; Ph 1:10; 2 Cor 2:17; I Cor 5:8. Each of the verses contain a statement on the importance of being sincere. One who alleges he is a Christian but is insincere, is styled a "hypocrite" in the Scriptures. Sincerity is one of the chief trademarks, or badges, of a Christian. Unless one is sincere, he cannot even become a Christian; and unless he maintains that sincerity, he will cease to be a faithful Christian. One who is honest and sincere, when he learns God's truth, will obey the gospel; if he does not obey, he loses both his honesty and sincerity.
 6. Matt 16:24-26. In serving God, a willingness to endure hardship and even death is required. This is not because God is one who delights in human suffering; rather, such is needed in order for us to be shaped and prepared to stand in his presence. Sin is so awful that God cannot countenance it (Isa. 59:1f; Rev. 21:25; I Pet. 1:15f; Matt. 5:9; Heb. 12:14). Tribulations and hardships are designed to purify us as the furnace is intended to purify the gold ore by burning off the dross.
 - a. "Cross-bearing is widely misunderstood. It is not old age, poverty, taxes, illness, or bad weather, or any other discomfiture of life that comes unavoidably into the lives of men. It is the acceptance, for the sake of the will of God, of some burdens, otherwise avoidable, but which are undertaken out of a pure desire to fulfill the Master's purpose. The centrality of the cross in Christ's religion was here affirmed by Christ at the very moment when one of his most beloved apostles had spoken against it" (**Commentary on Matthew**, Coffman, p.258). To "deny himself" is to avoid ease and indulgence; to take up the cross is to endure reproach or dishonor in the eyes of the Lord (for the cause of Christ).
 - b. The soul of one individual is worth more than all the material universe. The soul, as used in this passage and in Luke 9:25, is the real person, the part of us that is eternal from its inception (Zech. 12:1; Heb. 12:9). In the context, when a Christian ceases to follow Christ by ceasing to bear the difficulties of life he incurs because of obedience, or ceases to deny himself those things Christ forbids, he loses his soul.
- K. Let Us Survey the Truths found in Second Corinthians 13:5.
1. The statement would be foolish if it were not possible for one who had become a Christian to depart from the faith. A Christian can fall away from the faith, and be separated from Christ.
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 10:12: "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 9:27: "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."
 - 3) Galatians 5:1-4: "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace."
 - b. The requirement of the verse would be impossible if there were no standard of truth by which to measure ourselves. Those who are not content to believe and obey the Bible, in a feeble attempt to justify their doctrine, assert that there is no absolute standard of truth in religion. If that is so, how could they *know* that truth? Paul's statement in verse five repudiates their assertion.
 - 1) John 8:32: "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."
 - 2) John 17:17: "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth."
 - 3) 1 Peter 1:22-23: "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever."
 - 4) 2 John 1:9: "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son."
 2. "They had demanded proof that Paul was an apostle. He had furnished it, and he now admonishes them to try themselves so as to make sure that they are in the faith" (Lipscomb, p.171). They questioned whether Christ was in Paul, providing the message he preached; Paul asked them whether Christ was in them, or were they reprobates?
 3. To examine is to try (to test). The word *prove* used in the text is stronger than the word *examine*. "This word, *prove*, refers to assaying or trying metals by the powerful action of heat; and the idea here is, that they should make the *most thorough* trial of their religion, to see whether it would

stand the test" (Barnes, p.269). How could they put themselves to the test?

- a. First, there must be an absolute standard by which to measure themselves. That standard, of course, is God's word.
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 4:6: "Now these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes; that in us ye might learn not to go beyond the things which are written; that no one of you be puffed up for the one against the other" (ASV).
 - 2) Isaiah 8:20: "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them."
 - 3) 1 Thessalonians 2:13: "For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe."
 - 4) 2 Thessalonians 2:15: "Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle."
 - 5) 2 Thessalonians 3:6: "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us."
 - 6) 2 Thessalonians 3:14-15: "And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother."
 - 7) 1 Corinthians 14:37: "If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord."
- b. They were again to test their attitudes, words, thoughts, motives, and actions by the word of God. "But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth [therein], he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed" (Jas. 1:25).

III. CONCLUSION.

A. Did God really mean it when he gave these great promises?

1. Compare:

- a. Genesis 12:1-3: "Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed."
- b. Galatians 3:8: "And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed."
- c. Galatians 3:15-16: "Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; Though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto. Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ."
- d. Galatians 3:26-29: "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."
- e. He made these grand promises to Abraham, and fulfilled them through his most glorious descendant, Jesus Christ.
 - 1) Colossians 1:13-14 : "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins."
 - 2) Hebrews 8:12: "For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more."
 - 3) Revelation 1:5: "And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood."
 - 4) 1 John 1:7: "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."

2. Consider:

- a. 1 Corinthians 10:13: "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."
- b. He never promised any Christian a life of ease and merriment; he did promise tribulation:
 - 1) 2 Timothy 3:12: "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."

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- 2) Mark 10:30: "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."
- c. But he gave to each faithful saint the promise that there would be no temptation given us too great; he would provide us with a means of escape.
3. Compare:
- Hebrews 13:5-6: "Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me."
 - 1 Peter 5:5-6: "Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time."
 - Ephesians 3:20-21: "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."
 - Philippians 4:13: "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."
 - Philippians 4:19: "But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."
 - He does not operate miraculously in his daily dealings with us today as in the case of the inspired men of the first century. But no man can comprehend fully his marvelous providence which he uses in our behalf.
4. Will we really receive the crown of life? God could be trusted to mean what he said in the commands and warnings, and he can be trusted implicitly in these wonderful promises, also!
- 2 Timothy 4:8: "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."
 - Revelation 2:10: "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."
 - James 1:12: "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."
5. Will we one day have the privilege of living in this wonderful place? Will we really have all tears wiped away, all sorrows and pains removed? God has promised this, and to it he will be true! Our part is faithfulness. Revelation 21:4 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" (Rev. 21:4).
6. "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us" (1 John 1:7-10.) If we walk in the light of the gospel as perfectly as we can, then the promise of the passage is ours daily, as we live here on earth. Half-hearted, insincere activity is not enough; neither is it sufficient that we believe *some* truth about Jesus, or follow part of the New Testament only: "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all" (Jas. 2:10).
7. The power to save us and to guide us home to heaven is the gospel; not merely a part of the gospel, but the whole gospel, without addition, deletion, or perversion. "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Rom. 1:16).
- B. Did he really mean what he said in Hebrews 8:12?
- Hebrews 8:12: "For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more."
 - Yes, he will truly cleanse us from all of sin's guilt when we obey the gospel!
 - We must hear the gospel, which involves our learning and understanding its great precepts and commandments.
 - Romans 10:1: "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved."
 - John 6:44-45: "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. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me."
 - Matthew 18:19: "Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven."
 - We must believe the gospel:
 - Romans 10:13-14: "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then
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- shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?"
- 2) Mark 16:15-16: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."
 - 3) Romans 10:17: "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."
- c. We must repent of our sins of the past:
- 1) Luke 13:3: "I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."
 - 2) Acts 17:30-31: "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead."
 - 3) 2 Corinthians 7:10: "For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death."
 - 4) Matthew 3:8: "Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance."
 - 5) Acts 26:20: "But shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance."
- d. We must confess our faith in Christ:
- 1) Romans 10:9-10: "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."
 - 2) Matthew 10:32-33: "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven."
 - 3) Acts 8:37 " And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."
- e. We must be baptized (immersed) for the remission of our sins:
- 1) Acts 2:38: "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."
 - 2) Mark 16:16: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."
 - 3) Acts 22:16: "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."
- f. Compare:
- 1) Isaiah 1:18: "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."
 - 2) Revelation 1:5: "And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood."
3. With all of our guilt cleared away, we then can start anew!
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The Sickness of the Prophet Daniel

From Daniel 8:27, we read of the prophet's ailment: "And I Daniel fainted, and was sick certain days; afterward I rose up, and did the king's business; and I was astonished at the vision, but none understood it."

The grievous nature of the persecution awaiting his people caused Daniel to become faint and sick for a period of time. He greatly cared for Israel; God used the prophet magnificently in their behalf by bringing him to great authority and influence during their Babylonian Captivity. His great civil power was continued well into the Persian rule.

A study of Daniel's eighth chapter will show us the great suffering that lay ahead of God's people. His sickness was connected with the sorrow he felt for the dire persecution his people would later suffer. We can understand the sorrow the prophet suffered, with the knowledge of what was in store for Israel. Perhaps he tried to prepare them for those hard times, but how could they comprehend? Daniel, Ezekiel, and Jeremiah (earlier) had shown them that God would set up an eternal kingdom sometime in the future. Maybe they were unable to reconcile a hard period of suffering and the glorious nature of the upcoming kingdom. Their forefathers had been formed into a nation during their centuries of slavery in Egypt, and they had to endure forty years of hardship in the wilderness before they could enter rest and joy of the land of "milk and honey."

Those harsh years in the wilderness brought up various rebellions and strifes among the Israelites. Their unbelief kept them from entering the promised land forthwith. The ten spies scared them with reports of the great walled cities, the very large and strong population, and the mighty giants that occupied the land. "And they brought up an evil report of the land which they had searched unto the children of Israel, saying, The land, through which we have gone to search it, is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof; and all the people that we saw in it are men of a great stature. And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight" (Num. 13:32-33).

This news filled the Israelites with grievous fear and mourning: "And all the congregation lifted up their voice, and cried; and the people wept that night. And all the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron: and the whole congregation said unto them, Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt! or would God we had died in this wilderness!" (Num. 14:1-2).

Their faith weak faith deserted them! They thought they should elect a leader who would take them back to Egypt (Num. 14:3-4). How quickly they had forgotten all of the miraculous demonstrations of Jehovah's power in the ten plagues and in crossing the Red Sea! Moses and Aaron and Joshua and Caleb were heart-sick over this lack of faith! "Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before all the assembly of the congregation of the children of Israel. And Joshua the son of Nun, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, which were of them that searched the land, rent their clothes: And they spake unto all the company of the children of Israel, saying, The land, which we passed through to search it, is an exceeding good land. If the LORD delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it us; a land which floweth with milk and honey. Only rebel not ye against the LORD, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us: their defence is departed from them, and the LORD is with us: fear them not" (Num. 14:5-9). The rebels called on the multitudes to stone these men to death!

This rebellion could have been avoided if the Israelites had listened to the report of the two courageous spies: "And Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it" (Num. 13:30). But Israel rebelled. The majority fell into apostasy. All of the men who left Egypt were condemned to die in the wilderness, except Joshua and Caleb. "For the LORD had said of them, They shall surely die in the wilderness. And there was not left a man of them, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun" (Num. 26:65).

The apostasy that tore asunder the Lord's church in America, beginning shortly after the War Between the States and ending about the close of the nineteenth century, caused untold grief and hardship on the faithful minority who stayed with the truth. Those who divided the brotherhood took with them the great majority of the people, the property, and the money belonging to the Lord. But in the passing of time, our

faithful brethren labored long, hard and courageously to spread the gospel. They met with great success! In the 1950s, the Lord's church was the fastest growing religious group in the country. Meanwhile, the earlier departures from the truth by the liberal element led to more and more rejections of truth among their members. Their membership plummeted.

Another great apostasy began afflicting the Lord's people during the 1960s. Many of the smaller congregations have dwindled in number but they had remained loyal. Many of the larger congregations have grown in numbers, but they have done so through compromise, worldliness and sheep-stealing. We are very well aware of the pain in seeing those who once were faithful to the Lord, now holding hands with the world. Although we try to show those unsuspecting brethren the truth, they are unable or unwilling to perceive the truth. What great sickness of heart the faithful have experienced over this latest apostasy!

Christians who go into apostasy have great reason rather to remain faithful. The fully-revealed and Spirit-inspired word of God has been given and preserved intact into our hands. It is mighty hard for me to understand why one who has learned and known the will of God to turn back to the weak and beggarly elements of the world!

Galatians 1:6-11: "I marvel that ye are so quickly removing from him that called you in the grace of Christ unto a different gospel; which is not another gospel only there are some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach unto you any gospel other than that which we preached unto you, let him be anathema. As we have said before, so say I now again, if any man preacheth unto you any gospel other than that which ye received, let him be anathema. For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? or am I striving to please men? if I were still pleasing men, I should not be a servant of Christ. For I make known to you, brethren, as touching the gospel which was preached by me, that it is not after man" (ASV).

Galatians 4:9: "But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?"

2 Peter 2:20-22: "For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire."

Daniel was much grieved over the persecution the future Jews would suffer. That suffering would create strength within those who remained faithful, and enable them to appreciate the grandeur, the glory and value of the eternal kingdom that was to be established! Thousands of them obeyed the gospel of Christ on the day it was established (Acts 2). Multitudes of them obeyed Christ as the gospel was spread abroad (Acts 6:7). When the door of the kingdom was opened to the Gentiles, untold thousands of them became Christians, also. It may have appeared to our brethren back then that the whole world was on the verge of turning to Christ.

But the New Testament warned of a great apostasy that was to take place at a not-too-future time:

2 Thessalonians 2:1-12: "Now we beseech you, brethren, touching the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together unto him; to the end that ye be not quickly shaken from your mind, nor yet be troubled, either by spirit, or by word, or by epistle as from us, as that the day of the Lord is just at hand; let no man beguile you in any wise: for it will not be, except the falling away come first, and the man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition, he that opposeth and exalteth himself against all that is called God or that is worshipped; so that he sitteth in the temple of God, setting himself forth as God. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know that which restraineth, to the end that he may be revealed in his own

season. For the mystery of lawlessness doth already work: only there is one that restraineth now, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall be revealed the lawless one, whom the Lord Jesus shall slay with the breath of his mouth, and bring to nought by the manifestation of his coming; even he, whose coming is according to the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceit of unrighteousness for them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God sendeth them a working of error, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be judged who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."

2 Timothy 3:1-13: "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith. But they shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be manifest unto all *men*, as theirs also was. But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience, Persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out of *them* all the Lord delivered me. Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived."

2 Timothy 4:1-5: "I charge *thee* therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. 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. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry."

The first great apostasy the Lord's church experienced began in the latter part of the first century. It was already beginning by the time Paul wrote Second Thessalonians: "For the mystery of iniquity doth already work..." (2:7). It had fully enveloped the church by 606 A.D. Most likely there were small groups of faithful Christians who continued to serve the Lord, but whose existence and experiences history did not record. In modern times, various groups of faithful saints have been discovered in Ethiopia and even in western Europe. These various congregations thought that they were the only true New Testament Christians, until our brethren made contact with them. These people had restored the Lord's church in their localities, just as other people did in America beginning in the late seventeen hundreds.

The seed of the Lord's kingdom [his church] is in the gospel [the word of God—Luke 8:11]. At any time or place where the New Testament is found, the church can be restored. The Restoration is illustrated by a pioneer experience. A wagon train became lost in the desert; some water was found but it was too bitter to drink. One man went upstream a considerable distance and found pure, unpolluted water. The stream was pure at its source, but became bitter and polluted as it proceeded farther from that source. Just so with the present religious situation in our world: the source remains as pure and unpolluted as ever; as time went by men went farther and farther from the purity of the original. We must get back to the pure unpolluted spring of truth which is the New Testament!

Job 31—A Case of Righteous Living

Job's Final Statement of His Innocence

A. Job 31:1-8: He Affirms His Mental Purity.

1. Verses 1-2: "I made a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think upon a maid? For what portion of God *is there* from above? and *what* inheritance of the Almighty from on high?"
 - a. In this final speech, Job defends his integrity, claiming innocence in those things in which he has been charged with wickedness. He goes even beyond these charges to affirm his innocence in things no man could know about—his thoughts and motives and secret activities.
 - b. He affirms that he has kept his mind pure. He had made a covenant with his eyes that he would not lust after a maiden.
 - 1) Proverbs 6:25: "Lust not after her beauty in thine heart; neither let her take thee with her eyelids."
 - 2) Matthew 5:27-28: "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." A man can look at a woman entirely without any lustful desire; what is forbidden is the lustful look which has an actual desire to commit fornication.
 - 3) 2 Peter 2:14: "Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin...."
 - c. It may have been the case that he resolved in his heart *while he was a young man* that he would not allow lust to arise within him which might lead him into sin. Regardless of his age when he made this commitment, it is highly commendable! This resolution would set him apart from the average man of any generation. Within the lifetime of many today, we have known of several presidents who corrupted themselves with fornication; we have also learned of a good many preachers who have also done so.
 - d. If one allowed lust to lead him into fornication, what portion [inheritance, reward] could he expect from God? There would be none! Job understood that fornication condemns the soul; it alienates the offender from the Almighty; it incurs his wrath.
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 6:9-11: "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."
 - 2) Galatians 5:19-21: "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."
 - 3) Revelation 21:27: "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."
 - 4) 1 Peter 2:11: "Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul."
 - 5) Matthew 5:8: "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God."
2. Verses 3-4: "Is not destruction to the wicked? and a strange *punishment* to the workers of iniquity? Doth not he see my ways, and count all my steps?" (KJV). "Is it not calamity to the unrighteous, And disaster to the workers of iniquity? Doth not he see my ways, And number all my steps?" (ASV).
 - a. Job raises a rhetorical question about God punishing the wicked. As you know, such a question really affirms the truth about the subject matter. God will bring destruction [calamity] upon the unrighteous and disaster upon those who work iniquity.
 - b. He brings up another rhetorical question which affirms the fact that God does indeed see the ways of man and numbers his steps. A sinful man cannot forever get away with his evil conduct.
 - 1) 1 Peter 3:12: "For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil."
 - 2) Hebrews 4:13: "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do."

- 3) Psalms 139:7-10: "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 hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me."
 - 4) Proverbs 5:21: "For the ways of man are before the eyes of the LORD, and he pondereth all his goings."
 - 5) Proverbs 15:3: "The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good."
 - c. In the context, the patriarch shows that the man who gets involved in fornication (or some other sin) must face the consequences of his wickedness whenever God decides to take action.
 3. Verses 5-6: "If I have walked with vanity, or if my foot hath hasted to deceit; Let me be weighed in an even balance that God may know mine integrity" (KJV). "If I have walked with falsehood, And my foot hath hasted to deceit (Let me be weighed in an even balance, That God may know mine integrity)" (ASV).
 - a. Vanity is equivalent to falsehood as is indicated by the parallelism of verse five. Job's friends had charged him with living a lie [being a hypocrite; acting deceitfully].
 - 1) Job 4:7-9: "Remember, I pray thee, who ever perished, being innocent? or where were the righteous cut off? Even as I have seen, they that plow iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same. By the blast of God they perish, and by the breath of his nostrils are they consumed."
 - 2) Job 8:6: "If thou wert pure and upright; surely now he would awake for thee, and make the habitation of thy righteousness prosperous."
 - 3) Job 11:4-6: "For thou hast said, My doctrine is pure, and I am clean in thine eyes. But oh that God would speak, and open his lips against thee; And that he would shew thee the secrets of wisdom, that they are double to that which is! Know therefore that God exacteth of thee less than thine iniquity deserveth."
 - 4) Job 11:20: "But the eyes of the wicked shall fail, and they shall not escape, and their hope shall be as the giving up of the ghost."
 - b. The patriarch denies the charge. He is willing for God to weigh him in the balances, and if he is found wanting, he is willing to be deprived of the fruit of all his labors. Compare: "And this is the writing that was written, MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN. This is the interpretation of the thing: MENE; God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it. TEKEL; Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting" (Dan. 5:25-27).
 - c. Job knows his own heart and life, and therefore is aware that he has not lived in sin; he is willing to be fairly judged, with all the facts of the case being duly considered; if he should be found guilty, he is not unwilling to suffer the penalty; but knowing his true condition, he is convinced he will be found pure, and vindicated.
 4. Verses 7-8: "If my step hath turned out of the way, and mine heart walked after mine eyes, and if any blot hath cleaved to mine hands; *Then* let me sow, and let another eat; yea, let my offspring be rooted out" (KJV). "If my step hath turned out of the way, And my heart walked after mine eyes, And if any spot hath cleaved to my hands: Then let me sow, and let another eat; Yea, let the produce of my field be rooted out" (ASV).
 - a. "Job denied that he ever allowed his heart, enticed though the eye, to turn his step out of the pattern of his life to covet that which belonged to another....If any act of falsehood, deceit, or covetousness be found in him, then let a curse fall upon him and the fruit of his labor" (Hailey, p.266).
 - b. If a fair and honest investigation of his life turns up anything amiss, he states his willingness to be punished with the proper penalty. If any blot [spot] has soiled his hands, then let another take what he has labored to produce, or let it be pulled up by the roots and destroyed.
 - c. No one should doubt Job's honesty and sincerity in denying the charges of wrongdoing.
- B. Job 31:9-12: Job Affirms His Moral Purity.
1. Verses 9-10: "If mine heart have been deceived by a woman, or *if* I have laid wait at my neighbour's door; *Then* let my wife grind unto another, and let others bow down upon her."
 - a. Job denies that he has been guilty of adulterous conduct. He has not been seduced nor has he sought out his neighbor's wife for unholy purposes.
 - b. Job speaks of his wife [singular], which plainly shows that he was not a polygamist. If he should be found guilty of adultery, then he is willing for the harsh penalties he names to be imposed: that his wife should work for another man and that others should abuse her.
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- c. “In Abraham’s day the sin of defiling another’s wife was recognized as wickedness by the pharaoh of Egypt (Gen. 12:18-20) and the king of Gerar (Gen. 20). Should he [Job] so sin against his neighbor, he would expect the same in return; let his wife become the servant or slave of another and be sexually used by others—a terrible penalty!” (Hailey, p.267).
2. Verses 11-12: “For this *is* an heinous crime; yea, it *is* an iniquity *to be punished* by the judges. For it *is* a fire *that* consumeth to destruction, and would root out all mine increase.”
 - a. Job understood the heinous nature of fornication, that it was worthy of being severely punished; it is even to be punished beyond this life. Fornicators will “have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death” (Rev. 21:8).
 - b. Joseph turned down the advances of Potiphar’s wife, describing fornication as a great sin against God: “There is none greater in this house than I; neither hath he kept back any thing from me but thee, because thou art his wife: how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?” (Gen. 39:9).
 - c. Fornication was strongly discouraged by American society until the 1960s, when sexual misconduct became an accepted practice, and those who spoke against it were berated as being judgmental. But when fornication [in its assorted forms] is practiced by an individual, his entire person is consumed by the guilt and taint of this immoral practice; if a society or nation becomes contaminated by this lifestyle, it will bring about its own destruction. Job describes this practice as a fire which spreads. It is often the case that once one gets involved therein, he stoops to other sins and evils. Consider how much evil and pain fornication has caused in the world—divorces, homes destroyed, souls lost, children’s lives torn asunder. No wonder the Bible strongly warns, “Flee fornication!” (1 Cor. 6:18).
- C. Job 31:13-15: Job Denies That He Has Mistreated His Servants.
 1. Verse 13: “If I did despise the cause of my manservant or of my maidservant, when they contended with me.”
 - a. In the case of slaves, undoubtedly there have been many masters who mistreated and abused their slaves; even in modern cases, employers have been known to mistreat and take advantage of their employees. Child-labor laws were put into effect to protect young children; and other regulations have been enacted to protect the rights of many workers.
 - b. Job denies that he has abused his servants, whether male or female. One can imagine that some slave-owners might take advantage of their female slaves. The patriarch did not do such things. If his friends had made such a charge, it would be their obligation to prove it. They never made any such attempt!
 - c. Some slaves [and some modern workers] caused problems for their owners. Even when one of his slaves contended with him, Job did not mistreat him. They were given a fair hearing when complaints were raised.
 2. Verses 14-15: “What then shall I do when God riseth up? and when he visiteth, what shall I answer him? Did not he that made me in the womb make him? and did not one fashion us in the womb?”
 - a. He observes that if he were to mistreat a servant he must answer to God (cf. Rom. 14:12), since the Lord is the Maker of all men.
 - 1) Acts 17:26: “And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation.”
 - 2) Proverbs 22:2: “The rich and poor meet together: the LORD is the maker of them all.”
 - 3) Romans 14:12: “So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.”
 - b. Verse fifteen speaks of God’s activity in the womb; it is in accordance with his natural laws that women conceive and bear children. Women as well as men bear the seed of life.
 - 1) Jeremiah 1:4-5: “Then the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.”
 - 2) Luke 1:4: “And it came to pass, that, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost.”
 - c. Some argue that Psalm 58:3 says that we inherit sin: “The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies” (Ps. 58:3).
 - 1) It is certain that an infant does not speak lies or otherwise go astray; as we have earlier noticed, sin for an accountable individual begins during his youth, not in his infancy.
 - 2) Job 31:18 says that Job had aided the widow “from my mother’s womb.” The meaning is that

these were done from his youth. What he calls his mother's womb in the first part of the verse, he calls from his youth in the second part; this is an example of parallelism, for which the Hebrews were especially noted.

- d. An infant or little child cannot become guilty of sin.
 - 1) Genesis 8:21: "And the LORD smelled a sweet savour; and the LORD said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for **the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth**; neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done." [Sin does not start in our infancy, but in our youthful years].
 - 2) Ezekiel 18:20: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him." [The sins of the parent are not imputed to the child; the righteousness of the parent is not conferred to the child].
 - 3) Ezekiel 28:15: "Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee." [One is perfect when he enters this life, and remains in that condition until sin is committed by the individual].
 - 4) Matthew 18:3: "And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." [One who would be a follower of Christ must become as pure and innocent as little children; thus little children are free from sin].
 - 5) Matthew 19:14: "But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven." [Those in the kingdom of Christ are like little children—pure and free from the contamination of sin].

D. Job 31:16-23: Job Denies He Has Neglected the Poor.

1. Verses 16-18: "If I have withheld the poor from *their* desire, or have caused the eyes of the widow to fail; Or have eaten my morsel myself alone, and the fatherless hath not eaten thereof; (For from my youth he was brought up with me, as *with* a father, and I have guided her from my mother's womb)."
 - a. Job said he had never neglected the poor, the widow or the orphan; he had fed the hungry and clothed the naked, and such benevolence had been his way of life from his early days.
 - b. If an orphan was present, Job declares that he would not eat alone—he would provide food for the fatherless also.
 - c. Again, notice the parallelism of verse eighteen: the phrase "from my mother's womb" is placed in parallel to "my youth."
2. Verses 19-21: "If I have seen any perish for want of clothing, or any poor without covering; If his loins have not blessed me, and *if* he were *not* warmed with the fleece of my sheep; If I have lifted up my hand against the fatherless, when I saw my help in the gate."
 - a. Job continues his statements about helping, not hurting, those in need. If there were some who were in need of clothing, he would provide them with garments. He had used the fleece from his sheep to furnish covering for them. These individuals he had aided gave thanks to the patriarch for his great generosity.
 - b. He declares that he has not lifted up his hand against the fatherless. He "denied having used his influence on judges at the gate (court) to force an advantage of the helpless. Instead, he had used it in their defense (29:7, 12-13)" (Hailey, p.269).
3. Verses 22-23: "*Then* let mine arm fall from my shoulder blade, and mine arm be broken from the bone. For destruction *from* God *was* a terror to me, and by reason of his highness I could not endure."
 - a. If his attestations are wrong, then he is willing for his shoulder to fall from his shoulder-blade, and his arm be broken. This is a strong way to affirm that what he has declared above.
 - b. He knows that God has the power to severely punish evildoers [such as those who affirm falsehoods], and to penalize those who have the means of helping the needy and refuse to do so.
 - c. He calls on God to punish him fully if his conduct has been sinful in these matters. He affirms that he has always operated consistently, with respect for God's majesty.

E. Job 31:24-28: Job Has Been Faithful in Religion.

1. Verses 24-27: "If I have made gold my hope, or have said to the fine gold, *Thou art* my confidence; If I rejoiced because my wealth *was* great, and because mine hand had gotten much; If I beheld the sun when it shined, or the moon walking *in* brightness; And my heart hath been secretly enticed, or my mouth hath kissed my hand."

- a. The patriarch here affirms his faithfulness in discharging his religious responsibilities. Materialism [gold] was never his god; he did not place his confidence in earthly wealth. His experience has taught us all that wealth is certainly fleeting!
 - 1) Luke 12:15-21: “And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth. And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.”
 - 2) Luke 16:13: “No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.”
 - 3) Colossians 3:5: “Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry.”
 - 4) 1 Timothy 6:17-19: “Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.”
 - 5) Mark 10:23-25: “And Jesus looked round about, and saith unto his disciples, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! And the disciples were astonished at his words. But Jesus answereth again, and saith unto them, Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.” [A *rich man* in the Lord's lesson here is one who places his trust in his riches, and not in God].
- b. Mistakenly, Job's friends had accused him of trusting in his wealth instead of in God. They had Job in mind when they condemned wicked rich men.
 - 1) Job 20:10: “His children shall seek to please the poor, and his hands shall restore their goods.”
 - 2) Job 20:15: “He hath swallowed down riches, and he shall vomit them up again: God shall cast them out of his belly.”
 - 3) Job 20:19: “Because he hath oppressed and hath forsaken the poor; because he hath violently taken away an house which he builded not.”
- c. Job had never been an idolater; he had never worshiped the sun, moon, or stars. Astrology is not a modern invention; many of the ancients fell into this foolish practice.
 - 1) 2 Kings 23:5: “And he put down the idolatrous priests, whom the kings of Judah had ordained to burn incense in the high places in the cities of Judah, and in the places round about Jerusalem; them also that burned incense unto Baal, to the sun, and to the moon, and to the planets, and to all the host of heaven.”
 - 2) Isaiah 47:13-14: “Thou art wearied in the multitude of thy counsels. Let now the astrologers, the stargazers, the monthly prognosticators, stand up, and save thee from these things that shall come upon thee. Behold, they shall be as stubble; the fire shall burn them; they shall not deliver them-selves from the power of the flame: there shall not be a coal to warm at, nor fire to sit before it.”
 - 3) Jeremiah 10:2: “Thus saith the LORD, Learn not the way of the heathen, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven; for the heathen are dismayed at them.”
- d. What is the meaning of “kissing the hand”? “The Muslims at the present day, in their worship at Mecca, kiss the black stone which is fastened in the corner of the Beat Allah, as often as they pass it, in going round the Caaba. If they cannot come near enough to kiss it, they touch it with the hand, and kiss that. An Oriental pays his respects to one of a superior station by kissing his hand and putting it to his forehead....The foundation of the custom here alluded to, is the respect and affection which is shown for one by kissing; and as the heavenly bodies which were worshipped were so remote that the worshippers could not have access to them, they expressed their veneration by kissing the hand. Job means to say, that he had never performed an act of homage to

the heavenly bodies” (Barnes).

2. Verse 28: “This also *were* an iniquity *to be punished* by the judge: for I should have denied the God *that is* above.”
 - a. Job admits that if he had worshiped the sun or moon, that would have been an iniquity which should be punished by the judges; it would have been a denial of the true God. God is greater than anything he created, including the sun and moon.
 - b. The Mosaic Law prescribed execution for an Israelite who worshiped idols: “If there be found among you, within any of thy gates which the LORD thy God giveth thee, man or woman, that hath wrought wickedness in the sight of the LORD thy God, in transgressing his covenant, And hath gone and served other gods, and worshipped them, either the sun, or moon, or any of the host of heaven, which I have not commanded; And it be told thee, and thou hast heard of it, and enquired diligently, and, behold, it be true, and the thing certain, that such abomination is wrought in Israel: Then shalt thou bring forth that man or that woman, which have committed that wicked thing, unto thy gates, even that man or that woman, and shalt stone them with stones, till they die. At the mouth of two witnesses, or three witnesses, shall he that is worthy of death be put to death; but at the mouth of one witness he shall not be put to death. The hands of the witnesses shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterward the hands of all the people. So thou shalt put the evil away from among you” (Deut. 17:2-7).
 - c. During Abraham’s time, idolatry appears to have been growing, but there were some who retained their knowledge and respect for God. When he came to Gerar, he had this thought about the place: “And Abraham said, Because I thought, Surely the fear of God is not in this place; and they will slay me for my wife’s sake” (Gen. 20:11). Abraham thought that the people at Gerar might have been God-fearing folks, but for some reason decided that they were not. The implication was that he expected them to know and reverence God. In the context (Gen. 20:1-18), it appears that Abraham’s first idea was correct—that Abimelech and his people were God-fearing. Job lived during the time-frame when Abraham lived; by saying that idolatry was punishable by the judges, Job’s generation still retained a general knowledge of God, and opposed idolatry.
- F. Job 31:29-32: Job Has Treated His Enemies With Charity.
1. Verses 29-30: “If I rejoiced at the destruction of him that hated me, or lifted up myself when evil found him: Neither have I suffered my mouth to sin by wishing a curse to his soul.”
 - a. Job had even treated his enemies with charity. He never rejoiced at their bad fortune; he never sought to put a curse on them. Compare: “He sent messengers therefore unto Balaam the son of Beor to Pethor, which is by the river of the land of the children of his people, to call him, saying, Behold, there is a people come out from Egypt: behold, they cover the face of the earth, and they abide over against me: Come now therefore, I pray thee, curse me this people; for they are too mighty for me: peradventure I shall prevail, that we may smite them, and that I may drive them out of the land: for I wot that he whom thou blessest is blessed, and he whom thou cursest is cursed” (Num. 22:5-6).
 - b. The patriarch anticipated the high ethical tone of the New Testament. “Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good” (Rom. 12:17-21).
 2. Verses 31-32: “If the men of my tabernacle said not, Oh that we had of his flesh! we cannot be satisfied. The stranger did not lodge in the street: *but* I opened my doors to the traveller” (KJV). “If the men of my tent have not said, Who can find one that hath not been filled with his meat? (The sojourner hath not lodged in the street; But I have opened my doors to the traveller)” (ASV).
 - a. Even his servants testified that he was generous to all. They perceived his generous nature, and stated that his table was available to all who were hungry; no hungry person could be found who could not have eaten his fill at Job’s house.
 - b. The people of that ancient day were known for their hospitality. Abraham was very forward in giving the three travelers a place to rest and eat (Gen. 19:1-3). Job’s servants would not be able to point out anyone who had been turned away hungry from the patriarch’s table. Meat from his flocks and herds was always available to those who were hungry.
 - c. This is further evidence that Job was a God-fearing man; he had always endeavored to obey the

will of God. His friends had been unable to give a single specification to their charge that he was sinful, but Job was able to point out many things about his life to prove his faithfulness to Jehovah.

G. Job 31:33-40: Job Argues For His Spiritual Piety.

1. Verses 33-34: “If I covered my transgressions as Adam, by hiding mine iniquity in my bosom: Did I fear a great multitude, or did the contempt of families terrify me, that I kept silence, *and* went not out of the door?”
 - a. Job argues that he is not like Adam, who tried to conceal his sins from God:
 - 1) “And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons. And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden. And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself” (Gen. 3:6-10).
 - 2) He had admitted that he had been guilty of sin during his youth [13:26], an admission all responsible adults will make, if they are willing to tell the truth. But Job denies the charges his friends have alleged against him that he was presently in sin; they were operating out of ignorance, and could find no other way to explain why he had suddenly lost his prosperity and health.
 - b. Job denies that he has been guilty of some open or secret sin which he is afraid to confess out of fear of a great multitude; he is not fearful that powerful families would unite against him—fear would not have kept him from confessing his sins. He has no secret sins! He had not sinned openly. He had tried to live right all of his adult life, a truth which God has supported.
 - 1) Job 1:8: “And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?”
 - 2) Job 2:3: “And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? and still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause.”
 - 3) Job 42:7-8: “And it was so, that after the LORD had spoken these words unto Job, the LORD said to Eliphaz the Temanite, My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends: for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath. Therefore take unto you now seven bullocks and seven rams, and go to my servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering; and my servant Job shall pray for you: for him will I accept: lest I deal with you after your folly, in that ye have not spoken of me the thing which is right, like my servant Job.”
 - c. If he had been guilty of the sins with which his friends had charged him, he would not have gone out in public for the shame he felt. But their charges were false.
2. Verses 35-37: “Oh that one would hear me! behold, my desire *is*, *that* the Almighty would answer me, and *that* mine adversary had written a book. Surely I would take it upon my shoulder, *and* bind it *as* a crown to me. I would declare unto him the number of my steps; as a prince would I go near unto him.”
 - a. Other translations:
 - 1) “Oh that I had one to hear me! (Lo, here is my signature, let the Almighty answer me); And that I had the indictment which mine adversary hath written! Surely I would carry it upon my shoulder; I would bind it unto me as a crown: I would declare unto him the number of my steps; As a prince would I go near unto him” (ASV).
 - 2) “Oh, that I had one to hear me! Here is my mark. Oh, that the Almighty would answer me, That my Prosecutor had written a book! Surely I would carry it on my shoulder, And bind it on me like a crown; would declare to Him the number of my steps; Like a prince I would approach Him” (NKJV).
 - b. He cries out for his adversary to write down the charge against him and he would answer; he

- wanted his guilt specified. It is easy to make general charges, but it is something altogether different to prove the charges. He was ready to sign a legal document to attest his innocence and to defend his name.
- c. As he has said on other occasions, he wants the Almighty to give him a fair hearing; he knows that he will be found guiltless. The picture of the passage may be this: Let both the adversary and Job appear before God's fair court; the enemy can state the charges and the specifications; Job will defend himself; before God's honest and fair court, the patriarch knows he will be declared innocent. That is what in effect happened (Job 42).
 - d. "[Surely, I would take it upon my shoulder] That is, the book or bill which the Almighty would write in the case. Job says that he has such confidence that what God would record in his case would be in his favor, such confidence that he had no charge of hypocrisy against him, and that he who knew him altogether would not bring such an accusation against him, that he would bear it off triumphantly on his shoulders. It would be all that he could desire. This does not refer to what a judge would decide if the cause were submitted to him, but to a case where an opponent or adversary in court should bring all that he could say against him. He says that he would bear even such a bill on his shoulders in triumph, and that it would be a full vindication of his innocence. It would afford him the best vindication of his character, and would be that which he had long desired" (Barnes).
 - e. This passage is difficult. The above comments seem to be a safe and fair interpretation. Job was willing for God to pass judgment on his case; he is confident he would be found innocent; he would go before God's court with the confidence of a prince.
3. Verses 38-40: "If my land cry against me, or that the furrows likewise thereof complain; If I have eaten the fruits thereof without money, or have caused the owners thereof to lose their life: Let thistles grow instead of wheat, and cockle instead of barley. The words of Job are ended."
- a. Job concludes his speech with this declaration. If he has been wrong about his claim to innocence, then let the land cry out against him; if he has stolen any man's field, or been prospered at another man's loss, then may thistles and cockle grow in the place of wheat or barley. This statement is a strong denial of wrongdoing and an equally strong affirmation that he has done right.
 - b. The thistles are useless weeds that interfere with crops; the cockle is also a weed that intrudes into fields; cockle-burrs have been a major problem with farming.

Note: This Sermon is From My Commentary on Job 31.

"How Great Thou Art"

I. INTRODUCTION.

- A. The Bible make the following statements about God.
 1. Genesis 1:1: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."
 2. Daniel 2:28: "But there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days. Thy dream, and the visions of thy head upon thy bed, are these."
 3. Hebrews 1:1-2: "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."
 4. Acts 17:22-31: affirms God's identity, power, knowledge, wisdom, closeness, goodness, and justice.
- B. Through the years many people and some organizations have sought to dethrone God.
 1. The list includes some organizations and individuals as The American Association for the Advancement of Atheism, secular humanists, Voltaire, Huxley, Matson, Flew, and scores of others.
 2. Although only 1 % of Americans deny God's existence, that amounts to 2.5 million.
- C. Many years ago a prominent man in Kansas City defied God before a large audience.
 1. "I will give God 15 minutes to strike me dead; if he doesn't, there is no God!"
 - a. He placed his watch on the podium; the audience waited in breathless silence.
 - b. When nothing happened, he proclaimed that God does not exist.
 - c. The audience applauded; national newspapers gave the story wide circulation.
 2. Arthur Brisbane wrote a rebuttal by comparing the atheist's ploy with a colony of ants in New Mexico which denied the existence of the Santa Fe railroad.
 - a. An intelligent ant accurately described the system and named the president.
 - b. An unbelieving ant denied it all and defied the president of the line to come out from Chicago and step on him if he [the president] existed. He reached the same conclusion as did the atheist in Kansas City.
 - c. "Can't you imagine the busy president of the Santa Fe Railway, with the destinies of that great concern in his hands, closing his desk and suspending his business to dash out to New Mexico, step on one red ant, just to prove that he did exist?"
 - d. To deny the existence of God is to be like the unbelieving ant in the fable.
 3. Humanists and atheists are like the colony of doodlebugs which denied the existence of the human race.
 - a. These bugs called a conference, discussed the issue, and adopted a Manifesto denying the existence of a large animal called the human being.
 - b. Secular Humanists gathered some years ago, discussed the issue, and voted God out of existence!
- D. Is there a God in Heaven? Is there a supernatural God? Are we able to know?
 1. If God exists, then it is supremely imperative that men believe in him; if he does not exist, then nothing matters: there is no right or wrong, no life beyond this world.
 - a. An atheist builds his life on a material foundation; when death comes, he thinks all is over; but if God exists, he must face Him unprepared.
 - b. The Bible says:
 - 1) Psalms 9:17: "The wicked shall be turned into hell, *and* all the nations that forget God."
 - 2) Psalms 10:4: "The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek *after* God: God *is* not in all his thoughts."
 - 3) Psalms 14:1: "The fool hath said in his heart, *There is* no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, *there is* none that doeth good."
 - 4) 2 Corinthians 5:10-11: "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things *done* in *his* body, according to that he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences."
 2. Men and nations have lived as if there is no God in heaven.

- a. Nebuchadnezzar boasted that he had built his empire: his kingdom perished.
 - b. Alexander conquered the world and built his empire on culture, knowledge and philosophy; it perished because it left out the Living God.
 - c. Rome was founded on the science of law, might, and jurisprudence; because it denied and defied God, it perished.
 - d. Webster: "If we abide by the principles taught in the Bible our country will go on prospering..."
3. Since God is not today presenting himself to man as he did to the patriarchs and inspired prophets, then the question must be decided on other evidence.
 - a. We can prove the existence of God by proving that the Bible is inspired of God.
 - b. We can prove his existence if we can show evidence of him in the universe.
 - c. His existence is proved by logical arguments which demand a supernatural God.
 4. God's existence is not provable by physical senses: you cannot see him, etc.
 - a. An infidel confused a group of young men by demanding that if God existed, they must show God to him; he would not believe unless he could see, hear, taste, smell and touch God; if they could not thus produce God, there was no God!
 - 1) An old preacher spoke up and said, "I perceive you are an idiot." This shocked the unbeliever. He asked the man what an idiot was and was given this reply: "A man without a mind."
 - 2) The preacher demanded that the man show him his mind: "I will not believe you have a mind unless I can see it, hear it, taste it, smell it, feel it!"
 - b. Later, the infidel became a believer in God as a result of this exchange.
 5. There are many things we cannot measure by the senses which we know exist because of strong evidence, including love, sorrow, hatred, air, and electricity.

II. THE GENERAL ARGUMENT FOR THE EXISTENCE OF GOD.

- A. In all ages, in all civilizations, man has always had a belief in a supernatural God and has conducted some kind of religious activity.
 1. Why has man maintained a belief in a Divine Being (s)? From where did the worship instinct originate?
 2. Atheism cannot explain why mankind, in every place, in every age, has had religious beliefs and practices.
 3. It is more reasonable to say that God revealed himself to man in the beginning, and that man has retained an innate desire to know his Creator ever since.
- B. How then may we account for the myriads of gods and religions? Simply because where the genuine item is, sooner or later counterfeits appear.
 1. Counterfeits are never made of something that does not already exist: no one has ever made a counterfeit nine-dollar bill since no genuine nine-dollar bill exists.
 2. Atheists say that man invented many gods at the first and since then has become more and more monotheistic. But historical facts are at variance with the theory: Egyptian history shows that as the centuries passed the number of gods increased. One 3000 B.C. inscription reads: "He has made all that is; thou alone art, the millions owe their being to thee; he is Lord of all which is, and of that which is not" (RJH, Vol. III, No. 47).
 3. American Indians believed in The Great Spirit; the Aborigines of Australia had their Supreme Being; ancient Greece, Babylon, China, India, Arabia, Persia and every other very ancient civilization were monotheistic.
- C. The evidence points to belief in one Supreme Being in the most ancient of history.
 1. But with the passing of time, man began, in his ignorance and rebellion, to invent gods of his own choosing until many gods and religions were developed.
 2. This fits the historical facts as presented in the Bible.

III. THE ESTHETICS ARGUMENT FOR THE EXISTENCE OF GOD.

- A. Esthetics: "Pertaining to a sense of the beautiful. Having a sense of the beautiful or characterized by a love of beauty."
- B. Man has a built-in appreciation of things that look or sound beautiful. Where did he obtain this ability? Did it just evolve? Or was it placed in him by his Creator?
 1. Does a goat appreciate the beauty of flowers? No, he simply eats them!

2. Have you ever seen a cow stand in awe gazing at a beautiful sunset?
 3. Have you seen a chimpanzee gather a bouquet of roses to decorate her nest?
 4. A bear does not hang a beautiful painting in his den.
- C. Man does not operate by instinct alone as does the lower creation; but he has an ability to feel emotion and to enjoy beauty.
- D. It is reasonable to say that this ability originated with the Creator.

IV. THE MORAL LAW WITHIN ARGUMENT FOR THE EXISTENCE OF GOD.

- A. If the atheistic concept of things is correct, then there is nothing that is essentially right or wrong.
1. To kill a man would be no more wrong than to kill a poisonous snake.
 2. For a man to have many wives would be as right as a stallion's herd of mares.
 3. To steal from another man is no more wrong than when a larger animal takes food from a smaller animal.
 4. The only reason for restrictions is for the good of society in general; there are no absolutes; there is no eternal punishment of evil or reward for good.
- B. In every man's heart there is a sense of right and wrong.
1. This sense of rightness is not apparent in the lower creation. Why is it that man alone has this capability? And where did it originate if not with God?
 2. The word "ought" in any language carries with it the idea of moral duty.
 3. Every society, even primitive ones, has a sense of right and wrong, and is repulsed by that which violates that sense.
 4. The sense of right and wrong followed by individuals and societies often vary one from the other, but though the standards differ, there are standards.
- C. Man is the only creature with this moral law impressed on his being.
1. No animal has it. If a man gets his head in the way of a kicking mule and dies from the blow, we don't arrest the mule, put him on trial, find him guilty, go through an appeals process, and then execute him. The story is different if a man delivers a death blow to another human being! Why the difference? Man is governed by this sense of right and wrong; beasts do not have it.
 2. We may find it necessary from time to time to put vicious dogs and other such beasts to death when they become a menace; beasts have no moral guilt.
- D. Again, where did this originate if it was not implanted into man's being by his moral Creator? If both man and beast came from the same original cell-stock, why did not this Moral Law attach itself to one or more of the other earthly beings?
- E. In his debate with Charles Smith, W.L. Oliphant said Smith reminded him of the story of a dog in an express car. Someone asked the man in charge of the express, "Where does this dog go?" The expressman answered, "I don't know, he don't know, nobody don't know, because he's gone and chewed up his tag." According to atheism, nobody knows where we came from, why we are here, or where we are going. Do not let atheism "chew up your tag!"

V. THE COSMOLOGICAL ARGUMENT FOR THE EXISTENCE OF GOD.

- A. The cosmos is the universe with its galaxies, stars, planets and moons.
1. The argument states that the cosmos is an effect produced by a Primal Cause.
 2. The cosmos is here; how did it originate? For every effect there must be a cause. What caused the universe?
- B. The world is here; it is an orderly world; such a world could not have began by chance. Who or what caused it?
1. When Benjamin Franklin served as our ambassador to France, he was a member of an elite literary, social and scientific club. At some of the meetings of this club atheistic sentiments were expressed, leaving the impression that only the superstitious and ignorant still believed in God. At the next meeting, Franklin brought with him a beautiful, accurate and detailed model of our solar system. One of the members asked who had constructed this masterpiece. Franklin answered dryly, "No one; it just happened" (BBB, *I Believe Because*, p.54).
 2. If you were shipwrecked on an uncharted island and saw human footprints there, you would conclude that there were other people on the island. If you found a building there but found no people, the effect would declare that a builder had been present.
 3. Albert Einstein said: "I see at the beginning of the cosmic road—not eternal energy or matter—but Lord God Almighty." (RJH, V.11, No.50).

- a. Psalms 19:1: "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork."
- b. Hebrews 3:4: "For every house is builded by some *man*; but he that built all things *is* God."

VI. THE TELEOLOGICAL ARGUMENT FOR THE EXISTENCE OF GOD.

- A. Teleological simply means purpose, design, and adaption of the universe.
 - 1. Evidence is abundant that the wonders we behold could not have come by chance or accident, but as purposed and planned by a designer.
 - 2. All of nature indicates an intelligent design; intelligence denotes Personality; and design demands a Designer.
- B. That the universe was brought about by Divine intelligence can be demonstrated by mathematical law.
 - 1. Number 10 coins 1 through 10, put them in a container and shake them. The chances of removing them in sequence (1-10) is one chance in ten billion.
 - 2. If this simple experiment is almost beyond possibility, think how impossible it would be for life, the earth, and the universe to happen by chance!
- C. The many complex demands for life to exist on earth could not occur by chance.
 - 1. The earth rotates on its axis at the rate of 1,000 mph. If this speed were reduced to 200 mph, the daylight periods would be so long that the heat from the sun would burn up all vegetable and animal life. And the night would be so cold that all would freeze. There would be 5 times as much heating and cooling as now.
 - 2. The earth is just the right distance from the sun. If it were one million miles closer, too much heat; a million miles farther, too little.
 - 3. If the land masses of the northern hemisphere were to exchange places with the great areas of water in the southern hemisphere, even with the present distance from the sun, the same effects (too much heat or too little heat) would exist and life would perish. Even the land and water masses are perfectly located--by design!
 - 4. If the temperature of the sun were cut in half, the earth would freeze; if it increased by fifty percent, the earth would be roasted.
 - 5. The moon is located 248,000 miles from earth. The moon's gravitational pull causes our tides. If the moon were 50,000 miles away, the tides would be so great that the entire earth would be covered by water twice daily.
 - 6. If the diameter of the earth were greater, the crust of the earth much thicker, oxygen could not exist--life would not be possible.
 - 7. If the atmosphere were much thinner, meteors which are now burned up before reaching the earth, would strike the earth, causing fires all over the globe.
 - 8. The slant of the earth is perfect; if it were perpendicular instead of at an angle of 23½ degrees, life could not exist.
- D. These complex demands rule out the possibility of the earth coming about by blind chance. Clearly, design is in evidence; and the Grand Designer could be none other than the God of heaven! Psalm 8.
 - 1. Psalms 14:1: "The fool hath said in his heart, *There is* no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, *there is* none that doeth good."
 - 2. Psalms 19:1: "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork."
 - 3. Daniel 2:28: "But there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days. Thy dream, and the visions of thy head upon thy bed, are these."

VII. LIFE IN LIVING BODIES FORM AN ARGUMENT FOR THE EXISTENCE OF GOD.

- A. The human body: "I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvelous are thy works" (Ps. 139:14).
 - 1. As the space shuttle, having highly complex communication, propulsion, and guidance systems controlled by highly sophisticated computers, are creations of designers, so also the human body.
 - 2. Your body has a nervous system greater and more complex than the telephone system of a very large city, and a brain that outshines all human computers. A brain can design and build a computer, but no computer can build a brain!
- B. A watermelon seed weighs one four-thousandth of a pound, but in this seed is the germ of life which can be reproduced in no laboratory. When this seed is planted in the soil, which of itself has no life

and can give none, the seed sprouts and produces a vine and more melons thereby reproducing the seed hundreds of times, and its weight 500,000 times!

- C. An elephant weighs several tons. It is powerful enough to pull its own weight. One small bullet in its brain turns the beast into inanimate matter. It still has the same weight, its chemical analysis is the same, the muscles have the same strength, but the power that animated the beast is gone: LIFE.
- D. Life is something that scientists cannot explain; they certainly cannot create it, not even in its simplest forms. Mathematically, it is virtually impossible for it to have begun accidentally. Logically, where could it have come from it not from God?

VIII. **OTHER DESIGN ARGUMENTS WHICH FORM EVIDENCE FOR THE EXISTENCE OF GOD.**

- A. **Ice.** "Out of whose womb came the ice? and the hoary frost of heaven, who hath gendered it? The waters are hid as with a stone, and the face of the deep is frozen" (Job 38:29-30).
 - 1. What is the cause for the unusual conduct of ice? When objects are heated they normally expand, and when cooled they contract. This is the law governing all objects except water.
 - 2. When heated, water expands; but when chilled it contracts to a certain point. When it nears the freezing point contraction suddenly ceases; when it nears the freezing point again, it begins to expand and soon will gain back all its previous bulk, plus about a third more.
 - 3. Suppose that ice did not have these characteristics. The streams and lakes would freeze, the ice would descend to the bottom, the whole body of water would become solid ice; no fish would survive. But ice floats on the top and leaves space beneath for the fish and other water creatures to have oxygen to live.
 - 4. Why does water have these strange attributes? Simple. God made it that way! It is certain that inanimate water did not figure all this out by itself.
- B. **A spider's engineering feat.**
 - 1. In the Northwest Pacific there is a certain type of spider, no larger than the nail on your little finger. It builds its nest in the crotch of a bush's limb. It finds a small shell on the ground, attaches a strand of web from the limb to each end of the shell, the other ends are attached to the limb. He gradually raises the shell, one end at a time, until it can be swung into and bound to the crotch of the limb where it has decided to build its nest. It weaves the nest inside the shell, leaving an opening at one end.
 - 2. How did it learn to do this? By instinct. But where did it get the instinct? From its parents. Where did the first such spider get it? From its Creator!
- C. **The salmon.** This fish spends years at sea, but finally it returns to the stream, and perhaps even to the very place, where it had been hatched. If it is removed from its native stream and placed in another, it will go downstream, and will find the same tributary where it came into being. There it will spawn and die. How can a mere fish do what most humans could not do: find a particular place in a particular stream after having been away from it for years? Its Creator placed in it this ability.
- D. **A peculiar bird.** All of God's creations are designed and equipped for their particular niche in the world.
 - 1. The ouzel is a strange bird which lives in the Pacific regions. It is the most buoyant of all fowls. Part of the body of a duck or goose sinks below the surface of the water, but the ouzel floats like a cork on the surface; it seems impossible for it to sink. But it can be floating one moment and suddenly disappear beneath the water, sinking to the bottom like a chunk of lead. It is able to walk around on the bottom where it gathers food, then walks to the bank and climbs ashore. It eats, then inflates its body and repeats the process.
 - 2. How is this possible? Only by special design. It was made with a muscular construction that enables it to expel all air from its body in order to have the necessary weight to sink in swift current and stay on the bottom.
 - 3. This ability to float like a cork and sink like a rock requires design. Truly, "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God" (Ps. 14:1).
- E. **A certain type of wasp** will catch a grasshopper, sting it in just the right place to cause it to be paralyzed, but not dead, so it can live on as a form of food.
 - 1. Then the wasp will put the grasshopper in the proper place, lay her eggs beside it, so that her offspring will hatch and feast on the hopper without killing the insect upon which they feed. The mother never sees her offspring.

2. The first wasp must have done it right the first time or else there would be none of them around today! Only through God's design could this wasp have lived.

F. **There are eels with travel instincts superior to the salmon.** They travel from Europe thousands of miles to the ocean depths near Bermuda; there they breed and die. But their offspring make their way back to the very places, the very rivers, lakes and ponds from which their parents came; and the process is repeated. No European eel has ever been caught in American waters. This instinct was planted in the first of the species by the Creator!

G. **In the pine forests of south Georgia is found a type of "prison flower"** called the jack-in-the-pulpit. It has male and female clusters inside the pulpit which has a very narrow constriction about half-way down the stem. In order to be pollinated, a very little fly must find its way through the constriction where it is trapped. As it flies around inside, it dusts itself with pollen; shortly the sides get rough enough for it to climb out. It then contacts the female cluster where pollination occurs. The male cluster allows the fly to escape; the female may or may not. This is clear evidence of design--and a Divine Designer!

IX. FURTHER EXAMPLES FROM NATURE WHICH SHOW PURPOSE AND DESIGN.

A. The delicate balance of nature argues for the existence of a Divine Designer.

1. Man breathes in oxygen and exhales carbon dioxide; plants consume carbon dioxide and give off oxygen; with the aid of sunlight plants are able to produce carbohydrates and chlorophyll which furnish food for man and animal. Without the plant kingdom man could not long survive.

2. Water evaporates from the seas and other sources, the vapors rise into the atmosphere where clouds form; the moisture in clouds condenses at a certain temperature and falls as precipitation.

a. Ecclesiastes 1:7: "All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea *is* not full; unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again."

b. Jeremiah 10:13: "When he uttereth his voice, *there is* a multitude of waters in the heavens, and he causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth; he maketh lightnings with rain, and bringeth forth the wind out of his treasures."

3. In the animal kingdom there is a balance so that one species does not over run the earth; most have natural enemies; those who do not, are slow about reproducing.

4. About 1859 a man, thinking he was helping nature, introduced about two dozen rabbits to Australia. There was no natural enemy for them and soon they had nearly overrun the continent, destroying crops. Foxes were introduced to control the rabbits, but these wreak havoc on other native species.

5. Someone else planted a certain species of cactus in Australia to serve as a protective fence. There was no natural enemy to control its spread, so soon the cacti had covered an area the size of England, crowding out some villages and destroying crops. An insect was found elsewhere which would eat nothing but the cacti. The insect controlled the spread of the cactus. As its food supply diminished, the insect population was likewise limited.

6. The Japanese Beetle raised havoc with California fruit growers until its natural enemy was imported from Japan. The fruit trees flourished again.

7. The fox population in the Arctic regions increases and decreases with the increase or decrease of the snowshoe rabbit.

8. There is about the same number of men and women on the earth. Following a major war in which a very large number of men are killed, for several years more boy babies are born than female until the equivalency is restored.

9. It is clear that there must be a guiding hand behind the balance of nature that keeps things as they ought to be until man, in his stupidity and selfishness, steps in and upsets that balance.

B. For every effect there must of necessity be a cause. A footprint is an effect; the human foot is the cause. A ripple on the water surface is an effect; the stone thrown into the water is the cause. The fact that life exists argues very eloquently that there had to be an original Giver of life. There is in nature a close relationship between various animal species which are dependent on each other; without one, the other could not exist, and vice-versa.

1. The Yucca Moth and the Yucca Plant. The plant blooms only at night and the moth flies only at night. The flower of the yucca plant hangs downward, with the female part higher than the male part, hence, the pollen from the male part cannot fall so as to pollinate the female part. In order for pollination, the moth is essential. The moth lights on an open flower, and with her odd-shaped

feelers scrapes pollen from the male part of the blossom, flies to another plant and pierces the ovary of the plant and deposits her eggs in the place that will develop more seeds. She rubs the pollen on the female part of the flower. The offspring of the moth feed on some of the seeds produced by the plant and leave the rest to perpetuate the plant. The young moths make their way to the ground, bury themselves, and wait until it is time for the yucca plant to bloom a year later. This is strong evidence of design in our world; since there is design, there must be a Grand Designer—God!

2. The migration of birds. About one third of all birds are migratory. Ducks and geese have followed certain specific routes annually. They have certain places they stop each time. A species of tern nests in the extreme northern parts of North America. They migrate a distance of 11,000 miles to the tip of South America. The bobolinks travel 9,000 miles from the Great Lakes to the pampas of Argentina. Hummingbirds have been known to travel about 5,000 miles and stop within thirty feet of where their forbears wintered the year before. Each type of bird has its own timetable and place to which it migrates. This information was imprinted on them by the Creator.

C. Genesis 1:20-26: "And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl *that* may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven. And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind: and God saw that *it was* good. And God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth. And the evening and the morning were the fifth day. And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so. And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that *it was* good. And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth."

1. A female mackerel lays about one-half million eggs at one time. If all the eggs from one pair of mackerel lived, and in turn each pair from these produced accordingly, and none died, within ten years the oceans would be so full of mackerel one could walk across the deepest parts on them.
2. If one pair of herring and those that descend from them were to live unchecked for twenty years they would equal the volume of the whole earth. The same kind of statistics can be said about codfish, sunfish and oysters.
3. Insects multiply faster than fish. One housefly can lay 500 eggs, and each will mature in a week. If all the posterity survive that would mean 200 million, million flies in one summer. The U.S. Dept. of Agriculture has been quoted as saying that if all the flies from a single pair lived six months, the whole earth would be covered with a layer many feet deep.
4. Rats, mice and rabbits are also prolific. If left unchecked for a few years, there would be no room for anything else. Suppose mosquitoes were unchecked?

D. God has wisely provide checks and balances to keep such over-crowding from taking place. In those cases where natural enemies are needed, God has provided them.

1. Fish and other creatures eat fish; insects and other creatures eat insects. A blue martin is said to eat its own weigh in insects in one day.
2. Owls, hawks, eagles, etc., keep the rabbit and mice population under control.
3. The balance if nature affirms the existence of a Grand Designer!

X. THE AMAZING HONEYBEE IS AN OUTSTANDING EVIDENCE OF THE EXISTENCE OF GOD.

A. Each hive can number from 10,000 to 70,000 or more individuals; there are three types in each hive: the queen, drones (males), and underdeveloped females which are the worker bees. The purpose of the queen is not to rule but to produce offspring. She is the only fully developed female in the hive. In her lifetime, she may lay as many as one million eggs, perhaps 1500 in a single day. The eggs hatch within three days; she is able to determine which will be male and which will be female by laying unfertilized eggs in certain cells and fertilized eggs in other cells. If more females are needed, she produces them; and likewise for males.

B. The wings of a honeybee are amazingly efficient and powerful; they move at 75 beats per second, and can propel the bee forward, up, down, sideways, or hover. A bee can carry its own weight. The

wings are the right size to allow entrance into the small places they go.

- C. A bee must visit about a thousand blossoms to gather a stomach full of material; it is estimated that fifty stomachs-full would only fill a thimble: 50,000 blossoms must be visited to get a thimble-full of honey. They go to the same type of plant for the nectar; they don't mix it.
- D. From the materials gathered from blossoms the bees manufacture a variety of products, including material for the comb, food, royal jelly, wax, bee glue, and honey. Some say the honey is the most perfect food. It cannot be copied by man.
- E. In order to produce a worker bee the feeding is stopped at a certain time, exactly, and a different mixture of food is given. If queens are needed, royal jelly is fed to a certain number of larva for a certain period of time. If God did not endow the bee with this information, from where could it have come?
- F. The bee collects nectar from only one type of blossom at a time; this enables it to pollinate the same plant species. They do not take pollen from a peach tree and distribute it to an apple tree. This cannot be a simple coincidence. Without the service of bees we would have little or no fruit. The specially constructed body of the bee is able to pick up pollen which is deposited on the next blossom she visits. Eighty percent of pollination is credited to the bees.
- G. The cells are constructed in a six-sided configuration. The temperature must be over 140 degrees to melt it. The shape of the cells makes them much stronger than if they were round, and requires less material to construct. Man has imitated this design in developing strong bridges. The bee learned from the Master Designer and was using it thousands of years before man copied it.
- H. If the bee evolved then there was a time when it was not a bee; but what was it? It could not be a drone for he cannot reproduce himself without a queen; it could not be a worker bee for they are infertile; it could not be a queen for she cannot reproduce herself without a drone. Evolution cannot explain the existence of the honeybee. Only God could have designed and created such an amazing creature!

XI. EVIDENCE OF DESIGN IN SMALL THINGS ARGUE FOR THE EXISTENCE OF GOD.

- A. Luke 12:6-7: "Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God? But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows."
 - B. The Hummingbird.
 - 1. This is the smallest bird on earth; some species weigh no more than a dime. It has the highest rate of metabolism (when resting, it is about 50 times faster than man's). This means that it must consume great amounts of nectar to avoid starvation. Since it is not equipped for night eating, it must stretch its food stores from dusk to dawn. To accomplish this, it has been given the ability to hibernate overnight: a unique energy-saving design.
 - 2. During the night, its metabolic rate is only one-fifteenth as rapid as in the daytime, and its body temperature drops to that of the surrounding air. It is hardly able to move; when it stirs, it moves as though congealed. By daybreak, the hummingbird's body spontaneously resumes its normal temperature and high metabolic rate, ready to dart off in search of food.
 - 3. If evolution occurred over millions of years, how did the hummingbird survive while its essential little metabolic regulator was gradually evolving? The most logical conclusion is that God designed and created this little bird.
 - C. The Bombardier Beetle.
 - 1. This type of beetle has a means of self-protection that is amazing in its design. It is able to eject a reddish fluid that explodes when it comes into contact with the air. It forms a cloud of smoke, bluish in color, and acid in effect, which usually puts to flight its enemy.
 - 2. This bug has two sets of glands which are connected to storage tanks and combustion chambers. The glands produce two liquids that are stored in the tanks. When the two chemicals are brought together, an explosion occurs, but there is a built-in neutralizing inhibitor which keeps this from happening until the mixture is needed to repel a predator. When the chemicals are expelled, a "pop" is heard as the acid smoke is blown into the face of the attacker.
 - 3. If it took millions of years for this beetle to develop as he is today, there would be no such beetle today. He would have been devoured or would have destroyed himself as his "laboratory" was evolving! And since it has no intelligence, how could it have known the type of chemicals to develop?
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D. The Stenodus Beetle.

1. This creature lives on water; it is only about one quarter inch long; its chief enemy is the water strider, a long-legged insect that moves with ease across the surface of the water.
2. The beetle is able to elude the strider by a type of jet propulsion which gives it the ability to move with remarkable speed up to 45 feet. This is accomplished by squirting a liquid detergent from its body from two glands. At the same time, this causes a wave which blocks the strider and cause it to sink if it skids into the detergent-produced wave.
3. It is unthinkable that these features could have accidentally developed. Only by the hand of a master craftsman could this bug have been designed and made.

E. The Ant: "Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise: Which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, Provideth her meat in the summer, *and* gathereth her food in the harvest" (Prov. 6:6-8).

1. Ants are found in all parts of the world: cities, country, woods, deserts and jungles; about 2,500 different species have been identified; they come in many different colors and sizes. There is a queen in the colony but all she does is lay eggs: she does not rule (just as Solomon wrote). All the individuals in the colony work together automatically for the good of the colony. They are directed by the unseen hand of the Creator. Even evolutionists say that they have been able to find no evidence of changes in the ants.
 2. Only the queens and males have wings. After mating in flight, the male dies and the queen comes to earth, and breaks off her wings. After she lays her eggs, worker ants carry them to nurseries, and even out into the sunlight and than back to the nest. When the larva is hatched, worker ants care for it, even to feeding it semi-digested food.
 3. The larva spins a cocoon and remains therein for a specified period of time. Worker ants know when that time comes, so they transport it the proper place in the nest. They cannot free themselves from the cocoons—the worker ants cut open the cocoon and release the now fully developed ant. Evolution cannot explain how these little creatures, without guidance, or leaders, know how to do the right thing at the right time, which must be done for their survival.
 4. The driver ants, found in Kenya, Africa, have three queens in each colony. These queens can produce eleven million eggs each year. The workers are able to kill a wounded elephant and consume the flesh to the bones. These worker ants have two stomachs; one is for their own use, and the other one is to provide food for the non-workers that occupy the nest and do their duty there. How could any non-intelligent ant know to develop two stomachs and be caused to have enough charity about him to provide for other ants? Every creature on earth follows the laws that God impressed upon them, which in every case argues for the Divine Creator and refutes evolution of every kind.
 5. The ant furnishes a great lesson for humanity, and members of the church. 1 Corinthians 12 draws a parallel between the church and the human body. In the physical body all the members work together for the common good of all, for the good of the whole body. When the head aches, the other members suffer with it, and the brain directs the feet to the medicine cabinet, and the eyes to locate the aspirin, and the hands to insert the proper number of pills along with the necessary liquid into the mouth, and the mouth and throat to dispatch the same to the stomach. As the ants all work in unison for the common good of the whole colony, and as the body members operate in conjunction with each other for the good of the entire body, so are the members of the church to act harmoniously in behalf of the whole church.
 - a. 1 Corinthians 13 will solve most of our social problems today, and prevent church problems from developing.
 - b. Matthew 5:45: "That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust."
 - c. Matthew 7:12: "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets."
 - d. Romans 12:10: "*Be* kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another."
 - e. Galatians 6:10: "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all *men*, especially unto them who are of the household of faith."
 6. But not all ants are noble and generous. Some make slaves of other ants, as some humans mistreat
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other humans. But all of the same species in the same colony take care of each other.

F. Neptune's Cup.

1. In the Indian Ocean there are small creatures that live in the water, and are almost unseen by the human eye. Myriads of them work to form an object known as Neptune's Cup. These little creatures that multiply and form such a large cup, sometimes three feet in diameter and six feet high, have no consultation with each other. Each one, it is said, works separately, cut off from the other, like prisoners in a maximum security penitentiary. They build the stem to the proper height, then begin to widen out to form the cup part at the top. Everything is formed according to a perfect plan.
2. From whence came the blueprint? Which is more reasonable? That they developed the plans on their own, or they operate by the plan God impressed on them when he made them?

G. The Atom.

1. As the telescope reveals many secrets of the universe, so the microscope has uncovered many marvels of the microscopic world. The word atom is from the Greek word "atomus" which means "that which cannot be cut or divided." Thus, we say that the atom is the ultimate or the basis of all matter. The atom itself is divided into many subatomic particles. Just as the telescope cannot penetrate to the farthest reaches of the universe, neither can the microscope see the end of the subatomic universe.
2. There are more than 100 elements which have been identified, and each of these elements is made up of atoms. The atom which comprises hydrogen is said to be the smallest of all atoms. One atom of hydrogen plus two atoms of oxygen form one molecule of water. One drop of water contains 33 billion billion molecules, or 100 billion billion atoms.
3. An atom is similar to our solar system. Our solar system consists of the sun and various planets which revolve around it. The earth makes a complete trip around the sun in 365 1/4 days; Pluto requires about 248 years to complete its greater orbit (it is 3,700,000,000 miles from the sun). The electrons of an atom move around the nucleus as the planets move around the sun. An electron circles its nucleus billions of times in a millionth of a second.
4. The hydrogen atom is said to be the smallest. If a million of them were lined up side by side, their combined length would only be equal to the thickness of a sheet of paper. But when hydrogen atoms are split, a tremendous atomic explosion occurs!
5. How could such tiny, complex particles exist? Certainly no man could have made them because of their size and the fact that even he is comprised of atoms! And how could such force exist in such tiny particles? Only God could have made it so! "The worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear" (Heb. 11:3). Atoms do not "appear."
6. All of the material in the world is made from only 103-107 basic elements. Who but God could take these fundamental elements and construct such a varied and complex world? The English language has many thousands of words, but all of the words are composed from one or more of the 26 letters of the alphabet. Cf. STAR, RATS, ARTS, TARS. Could letters of the alphabet be thrown into a container, shaken well, and thrown out onto paper to form a newspaper? Most assuredly not! How much less likely then could the atoms of the various elements be cast together to form our world! The complex atom could not have come into being by chance, and it is also certain that these atoms could not have come together by chance to form our universe.
7. It has been demonstrated that there is considerable empty space in an atom, and estimates have been made that if all the empty space in the atoms of a 250-pound man was eliminated, he would be no larger than a particle of dust and would appear as a speck on the head of a pin. No wonder the Lord said that a man should not think more highly of himself than he ought to think (Rom. 12:3). And no wonder the Psalmist asked, "What is man that thou art mindful of him?" (Ps. 8:4). This helps us appreciate more all those statements in the Bible which enjoin humility on us!

XII. THE HEAVENS DECLARE THE GLORY OF GOD.

- A. Nearly 3,000 years ago, Solomon wrote: "All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea is not full; unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again" (Eccl. 1:7). He described the evaporation cycle which every schoolboy is taught today. But Solomon could know this scientific fact only by special revelation from the Creator. God furnishes this bounty free of charge, and it stands as powerful testimony to the existence, goodness and power of God: "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). No oceans have been seen on other planets. Why? The land mass on the earth and the area of its seas are in the right proportion? Why? The above verse answers! "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding. Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it? Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner stone thereof; When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy? Or *who* shut up the sea with doors, when it brake forth, *as if* it had issued out of the womb? When I made the cloud the garment thereof, and thick darkness a swaddlingband for it, And brake up for it my decreed *place*, and set bars and doors, And said, Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further: and here shall thy proud waves be stayed?" (Job 38:4-11).

- B. Ozone is a gas in the atmosphere which is said to be poisonous to humans, but it plays an important part in his welfare. There is a thin layer of ozone about 40 miles above the earth. Without it, life on earth would cease. It keeps most of a certain type of ultraviolet rays from reaching the earth; just enough gets through to keep green algae from building up and clogging earth's rivers. This ozone layer allows the short ultraviolet rays to get through; these are necessary to life.
- C. The atmosphere forms a protective blanket around the earth which prevents great damage from the meteorites which streak through the sky. It also keeps too much heat from escaping from the earth during the hours of darkness. The atmosphere furnishes us the oxygen we need in order to survive; it provides a means by which sound can travel.
- D. Space is unfathomable to man's finite mind, and cannot be entirely seen by his most powerful telescopes. The earth is 8,000 miles in diameter; the sun is 864,000; a star near Orion has a diameter of 215 million miles. Arcturus, a star mentioned by Job, is said to be 25,600 times greater in volume than our sun. And Antares is estimated to have a diameter of 400 million miles. And there are even larger stars.
- E. Our galaxy is 100,000 light years in width. There are a billion or more galaxies. Two hundred-inch telescopes can see about 1.5 billion light years into space; beyond that, the stars appear as great clouds of light.
 - 1. Job 9:8-9: "Which alone spreadeth out the heavens, and treadeth upon the waves of the sea. Which maketh Arcturus, Orion, and Pleiades, and the chambers of the south."
 - 2. Psalms 8:3: "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained."
 - 3. Psalms 19:1: "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork."
 - 4. Isaiah 40:22: "*It is* he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof *are* as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in."
 - 5. Jeremiah 33:22: "As the host of heaven cannot be numbered, neither the sand of the sea measured: so will I multiply the seed of David my servant, and the Levites that minister unto me."
 - 6. Romans 1:19-22: "Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath showed *it* unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: Because that, when they knew God, they glorified *him* not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools."

F. No wonder great men of the Bible trembled at his spoken word and manifestations!

XIII. THE HUMAN BODY IS EVIDENCE OF A WISE CREATOR.

A. Consider these Bible statements:

- 1. Genesis 1:26-28: "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his *own* image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth."
- 2. Genesis 2:7: "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."
3. 1 Corinthians 12:18: "But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him."
 4. Psalms 139:14-15: "I will praise thee; for I am fearfully *and* wonderfully made: marvellous *are* thy works; and *that* my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, *and* curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth."
- B. The common man often gazes in awe at the wisdom, knowledge, and skill of our race.
1. We marvel at the great bridges, highways, communication equipment, automobiles, aircraft, ships, spacecraft, and buildings. All of these are wisely designed and carefully constructed; they are indeed marvelous and complex.
 2. Magnificent as these are, they are far surpassed by the ingenuity of design, complexity, and abilities of the human body.
- C. The human body is comprised of many separate parts, which all work in perfect harmony together under the direction of the brain.
1. The skeletal system has 206 bones which can outlast the best steel; its joints produce its own lubrication; it provides the structure for the body itself and at the same time offers protection (ribs guard the vital chest organs, the skull guards the brain); it forms the foundation to which many muscles are attached; yet in a 160-pound man this whole framework only weighs 29 pounds.
 - a. Bones act like levers. "When our muscles move us about, they do it by working a series of articulated levers that make a most efficient use of every ounce of muscular motive power. The levers are the bones of the body's framework, fitted together with the neatness of jigsaw pieces and hinged by joints that must win the admiration of any mechanic" (Miller and Goode, 1960, p.25; in Jackson, pp.19f).
 - b. Bones are strong, but light; they grow; they repair themselves; they are able to lubricate themselves; they have no down-time, but can operate continually.
 - c. The joints are marvelous and complex; the shoulders, knees, hands, and feet are able to move in various direction, and possess remarkable strength and durability.
 - d. "Perhaps an engineer will someday develop a substance as strong and light and efficient as bone, but what engineer could devise a substance that, like bone, can grow continuously, lubricate itself, require no shut-down time, and repair itself when damage occurs?" (Brand & Yancy, 1980, p.91; Jackson, p.20).
 - e. "As a specific example of bone design, consider the bones of the foot. One-fourth of all the body's bones are in the feet. Each human foot contains 26 bones. The feet have been ingeniously designed to facilitate a number of mechanical functions. They support, with arches comparable to an engineered bridge. They operate as levers when one presses an automobile accelerator peddle. Feet act like hydraulic jacks when one tip-toes. They catapult a person as he jumps. And feet act as a cushion for the legs when one is running" (Jackson, p.21).
 2. The muscle system is made up of more than 600 members with the ability to contract and release; these are placed by design into two subsystems: voluntary and involuntary (for example, we can reach out and pick up some item, but our heart muscle beats without any conscious effort on our part).
 - a. "In the automobile engine, the spark ignites vaporized gasoline, the piston moves, and keeps moving in response to a series of explosions. 'A muscle cell performs the functions of both the spark and the piston; the cell itself splits a molecule of fuel and also exerts the resulting physical power' (Miller & Goode, 1960, p 23). It is clear that the automobile engine was intelligently designed, why is it not reasonable to draw the same conclusion with reference to the muscles" (Jackson, pp.23f).
 - b. Muscles demonstrate modern engineering principles. This was admitted by the evolutionist John Lenihan. Another evolutionist made this admission: "...If the most gifted scientists cudged their brains they probably could not come up with a stronger or more perfect tool for grasping and delicate manipulation than the human hand. And seen from an engineering standpoint, the loveliest hand actually is a highly complex mechanical device composed of muscle, bone, tendon, fat, and extremely sensitive nerve fibers, capable of performing thousands of jobs with precision"" (Wylie, 1962, p 25; Jackson, p.25).
- D. The human ear can distinguish over 2,500 different tones; the average piano can distinguish the
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sounds of only 88 keys. The ear can detect sound waves which vibrate the ear drum only one-billionth of a centimeter (the diameter of a hydrogen atom). If we were in a completely soundproof room, the ear could hear the blood coursing through the veins. Over 100,000 hearing receptors in the ears are sending impulses to the brain to be decoded and answered.

1. "The balancing ability of the auditory system has been compared to the 'inertial system used in missiles and submarines' (Lenihan, 1974, p.90). So the ear-mechanism is actually designed to accomplish two functions—hearing and balance. This feature of the body demonstrates incredible planning" (Jackson, p.59). No one can logically maintain that the ear resulted from blind forces of nature!
 2. Psalms 94:9: "He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? he that formed the eye, shall he not see?"
- E. The human eye is a perfect camera. Even Darwin, the father of modern evolutionary thought, admitted: "That the eye with all its inimitable contrivances...could have been formed by natural selection seems, I freely confess, absurd in the highest degree....If it could be demonstrated that any complex organ existed which could not possibly have been formed by numerous, successive, slight modifications, my theory would absolutely break down" (*The Origin of Species*, pp. 167,170). The human eye is such an organ, thus by his own admission, Darwin's theory collapses.
1. The human eye is composed of over 107 million cells with 7 million cones (allowing the eye to see in full, living color), and 100 million rods (which gives the eye the ability to see in blacks, whites, and greys). The eyes are connected to the brain by over 300,000 nerves, and can detect light as feeble as 1/100 trillionth of a watt.
 2. No "intermediate state" or long sequence of such can explain this perfect camera which is able to see in full color, full motion, in splendid depth, in 3-dimension, and has a means of storing pictures for instant recall.
 3. An evolutionists made this admission: "The eye is a marvelous instrument, resembling a telescope of the highest quality, with a lens, an adjustable focus, a variable diaphragm for controlling the amount of light, and optical corrections for spherical and chromatic aberration. The eye appears to have been designed; no designer of telescopes could have done better. How could this marvelous instrument have evolved by chance, through a succession of random events?" (Jastrow, 1981, pp 96-97)" (Jackson, p.56).
 4. G.K. Chesterton said: "When men stop believing in God, they don't believe in nothing. They believe in anything." Mark Twain said: "It's amazing what men will believe, so long as it's not in the Bible!"
 5. Psalms 94:9: "He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? he that formed the eye, shall he not see?"
- F. The human brain is a wondrous creation, so complex, so powerful, and so compact that it demands the existence of a Divine Creator.
1. Isaac Asimov, world-famous atheist, admitted that our brain is "the most complex and orderly arrangement of matter in the universe' (1970, p.10; Jackson, p.50). An atheistic professor (Paul Davies), conceded that the human brain is "the most developed and complex system known to science' (1992, Jackson, p.50). Carl Sagan states: "The equivalent of twenty million books is inside the heads of every one of us. The brain is a very big place in a very small space" (Jackson, p.50).
 2. The brain contains over 10 billion nerve cells and 100 glia cells (which provide the biological "batteries" for brain activity). These cells sift through information, store memories, creating what we call consciousness. (, May, 1982). More than 120 trillion connections tie these cells together.
 3. The brain sends out electrical impulses at a speed of 393 feet per second (270 mph), and receives nerve impulses at a rate of over 2,000 per second. It continuously receives information from 130,000 light receptors in the eyes, 100,000 hearing receptors in the ears, 3,000 tastebuds, 30,000 heat spots on the skin, 250,000 cold spots and 500,000 touch spots.
 4. The brain does not move but consumes 25% of the blood's oxygen supply. Its vessels receive 20% of all the blood pumped from the heart. If the blood's oxygen supply is interrupted for 15-30 seconds, unconsciousness results. Brain damage occurs if the blood is cut off for up to 4 minutes. Four major arteries carry blood to the brain as a sort of "fail-safe" system.
 5. The brain is protected from damage by three systems: the outer skull bone, the protective lining around the brain (the dura mater), and the absorbing fluid which keeps the brain from hitting against the inside of the skull.
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6. A few years ago it was estimated that the Pentagon building would hardly hold the computer with as many synapses (synapse: the point of contact between adjacent neurons, where nerve impulses are transmitted from one to the other) as are found in the human brain; and all the power generated at Grand Coulee would be needed to operate such a computer (*Genes, Genesis and Evolution*, pp.516f).
 7. "It has been suggested that it would take a bookshelf 500 miles long—from San Francisco, California to Portland, Oregon—to house the information stored in man's brain. Does anyone actually believe that this kind of a library just happens?" (Jackson, p.51). "The Cray-2 super-computer has a storage capacity about 1,000 times less than that of the human brain. One authority states that 'problem solving by a human brain exceeds by far the capacity of the most powerful computers'" (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 1989, 2:189; Jackson, p.51).
 8. "One of the astounding features of the brain is its ability to process and react to so many different circumstances at once. While an artist is working on a painting (using his voluntary muscles at the behest of the brain), he can: smell food cooking and know whether it is turnip greens or steak; hear a dog barking and determine if it is his dog or a neighbor's; feel a breeze upon his face and sense that rain is near; and, be reflecting on a warm friendship of the past. Even while all of this is going on, the brain is regulating millions of internal bodily activities that the person never even 'thinks' about" (Jackson, p.54).
 9. We are asked to believe that the marvelous creation we call the brain "just happened!" A prominent brain surgeon, Dr. Robert White, observed: "I am left with no choice but to acknowledge the existence of a Superior Intellect, responsible for the design and development of the incredible brain-mind relationship--something far beyond man's capacity to understand" (1978, p.99; Jackson, p.54).
- G. The cells of the human body form a strong argument for the Creator.
1. There are more than 30 different types of cells in the human body, totaling more than 100 trillion cells in the average adult. These cells come in different sizes and shapes, with different functions and life expectancies. Some cells would be only 1 inch long if 6,000 were laid end to end; 20,000 of the smallest cells would fit inside the capital "O" of a standard typewriter. Yet if all the cells of a human body were set end to end, the line would encircle the earth 200 times. A cell is tiny but each contains 5 major systems: communication, waste disposal, nutrition, repair, and reproduction. Each cell is of itself a living organism.
 2. "The genetic information contained in each cell of the human body is roughly equivalent to a library of 4,000 volumes" ("NFD Journal," October 1987). Multiply this by the trillions of cells in a single human and see how complex one person is.
 3. "Red blood cells (there are approximately 30 trillion of them) live about 120 days; white blood cells (the blood's defense system) live about 13 days; platelets (which help blood to clot) live about 4 days; nerve cells may live over 100 years! In any given 60-second period, approximately 3 billion cells have died and been replaced in the human body—replaced by the process we call mitosis, whereby the standard chromosome number (in the human, 46) is faithfully reproduced. A single cell contains a strip of DNA (placed in the nucleus in a spiral-staircase configuration) which is about one yard long, and which contains over 6 billion biochemical steps! Every cell of the body contains such DNA—over a billion miles total in one human...Although each cell contains the whole structure of DNA, only a part of that message is 'activated'—causing one cell to be a fingernail cell, another to be an eye cell, another to be a blood cell, etc. How this process occurs baffles even the most brilliant scientists...[DNA] provides, in coded form, every characteristic of every living person. How many people are there on the face of the earth?...If there are roughly 4 billion people on earth [more than 5 billion today -BLW], it took two cells to make each of them [one male sperm and one female ovum], that's approximately 8 billion cells. Extract the DNA from those 8 billion cells (remember: this is the DNA it took to give every living person every characteristic he or she has), and that DNA would fit into no more than 1/8th of a cubic inch! (*Reason and Revelation*, October 1987).
 4. Yet we are told that life is an accident of nature! "For every house is builded by some *man*; but he that built all things *is* God" (Heb. 3:4).
- H. The skin of the body is nearly a waterproof layer, enclosing the body; the body is about 60% water. The skin prevents too much moisture entering or exiting. It is both a radiator and retainer of heat,

helping to regulate the body's temperature. It acts to protect the body against bacteria, etc. It has the power to regenerate itself.

- I. The heart is another amazing part of the body which argues for the Creator. "For the life of the flesh *is* in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it *is* the blood *that* maketh an atonement for the soul" (Lev. 17:11). It weighs less than a pound but is able to pump blood through 12,000 miles of blood vessels. The body has about 2.5 gallons of blood; the heart pushes about 650,000 gallons through the body in a year's time. It beats about 3 billion times in an average lifespan.
 1. As blood moves from a chamber into arteries, a check valve prevents its return to the chambers. Man obtained knowledge of cameras by examining the eye; he learned about check valves by examining the heart.
 2. There is an opening between the auricles of an unborn baby's heart which is open before birth, but instantly at birth this opening is closed by flaps; this is the only time that operation occurs (Baxter, pp.70-72). The muscle which allows the lungs to open only operates once: at birth, when it contracts.

XIV. PALEY'S WATCH ARGUMENT— CONCLUSIVE EVIDENCE FOR THE EXISTENCE OF GOD.

- A. "In crossing a heath, suppose I pitched my foot against a stone, and were asked how the stone came to be there, I might possibly answer, that for anything I knew to the contrary it had lain there forever; nor would it, perhaps, be easy to show the absurdity of this answer. But suppose I had found a watch upon the ground, I should hardly think of the answer which I had before given, that for anything I knew the watch might have always been there. Yet why should not this answer for the watch serve as well as for the stone? For this reason, and for no other, namely, that when we came to inspect the watch—what we could not discover in the stone—that its several parts are framed and put together for a purpose, that is, that they are so formed and adjusted as to produce motion, and that motion so regulated as to point out the hour of the day; that if the different parts had been differently shaped from what they are, or placed after any other manner, or in any other order than that in which they are placed, either no motion at all would have been carried on in the machine, or none that would have answered the same use now served by it. To reckon up a few of the plainest parts and of their offices, all tending to one result: We see a cylindrical box containing a coiled elastic spring, which, by its endeavor to relax itself, turns round in the box....We find then a series of wheels, the teeth of which catch in and apply to each other, conducting motion from the fusee to the balance and from the balance to the pointer (hands), and at the same time, by the size and shape of these wheels, so regulating that motion as to terminate in causing an index, by an equable and measured progression, to pass over a given space in a given time. We take notice that the wheels, are made of brass, in order to keep them from rust; and the springs of steel, no other metal being elastic; that over the face of the watch there is placed a glass, a material employed in no other part of the work...This mechanism being observed—it requires indeed an examination of the instrument, and perhaps some previous knowledge of the subject to perceive and understand it; but being once, as we had said, observed and understood, the inference we think is inevitable, that the watch must have had a maker—that there must have existed at sometime and at some place or other, an artificer or artificers who formed it for the purpose which we find it to actually answer, who comprehended its construction and designed its use. Its mechanism would be unique to us in any case. Nor would it...weaken our conclusion, that we had never seen a watch made—that we had known an artist capable of making one—if we were altogether incapable of executing such a piece of workmanship ourselves, or understanding in what manner it was performed....Ignorance of this kind exalts our opinion of the unseen and unknown artist's skill, if he be unseen and unknown, but raises no doubt in our minds of the existence and agency of such an artist, at some former time, and in some other place. Nor can I perceive that it varies at all the inference, whether the question arise concerning a human agent or concerning an agent of a different species, or an agent possessing in some respects a different nature" (William Paley, *Natural Theology*, pp.9-16, quoted by Hearn).
- B. The universe, our solar system, the earth, the complexities of life, the untold number of design features of nearly everything around us, all argue conclusively for the existence of a Grand Designer and Creator.
 1. The earth rotates at approximately 1,000 MPH and is never late; the eclipses of the sun and moon

can be predicted to the hour many years beforehand; the appearance of Halley's comet can be forecast 75 years ahead of time.

2. Paley's argument regarding the watch obviously and undeniably having had a designer and maker is unanswerable; how much more obvious, undeniable, and unanswerable is the argument that the complex nature of the universe and our world demands the existence of Almighty God!

XV. THE HISTORICAL CHRIST IS A VIABLE PROOF OF GOD'S EXISTENCE.

A. It is impossible to explain Christ apart from the fact that he came from God.

1. Jesus Christ is a proven historical character. "His name was Jesus and he was born in the latter half of the eighth century of the Roman era. His ancestry was Hebrew; his country Palestine. He died in Jerusalem in the administrations of governor Pontius Pilate and emperor Tiberius Caesar. These are incontrovertible facts; they are as historically certain as history can be" (*Fortify Your Faith*, p.22).
2. His divine identity is proved by the testimony of reliable eyewitnesses: their number is sufficient, their reliability is undoubted, their sincerity is evident from the fact that they suffered for what they told.

B. This same Jesus established a religion which has forever changed the course of human affairs. No other religion or philosophy can even approximate the influence of Christianity. Its closest rivals can be accounted for on natural grounds.

1. Muhammadanism has been spread largely by force and by offering sensual rewards to its adherents in the afterworld.
2. Buddhism promises escape from the harsh circumstances of earthly life through asceticism and self-hypnotic meditation. It is mostly confined to those lands where miserable living conditions are perpetual.
3. Christianity cannot be spread by force. "Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence" (John 18:36).
4. The gospel forbids fleshly lusts. "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are *these*: Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told *you* in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God" (Gal 5:19-21).
5. Its adherents are not permitted to escape through asceticism.
 - a. Mark 16:15-16: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."
 - b. Matthew 5:13-16: "Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."
 - c. 1 Corinthians 5:9-13: "I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators: Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world. But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat. For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within? But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person."

XVI. CONCLUSION.

A. The Evil Consequences of Unbelief.

1. Every significant decision we make has consequences, good or evil. To choose to disbelieve in the existence of the God of the Bible certainly produces some unpleasant results.
2. The Bible describes the awful aftermath of unbelief:
 - a. Hebrews 11:6: "But without faith *it is* impossible to please *him*: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

- b. John 5:24: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, 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."
 - c. Romans 1:18-32: "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath showed *it* unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: Because that, when they knew God, they glorified *him* not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet. 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, covenantbreakers, 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."
 - d. 2 Thessalonians 1:6-10: "Seeing *it is* a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; 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 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; When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day."
3. Common sense shows the tragedy of rejecting belief in God.
 - a. It leads to a materialistic concept of life, and ultimately fosters idolatry (of some kind), selfishness, and hedonism.
 - b. It removes genuine purpose of living, and places man on the level of beasts.
 - c. It robs man of the Providential aid of the Almighty, and thus subjects him to all manner of evil that otherwise might have been avoided.
 - 1) Jeremiah 10:23: "O LORD, I know that the way of man *is* not in himself: *it is* not in man that walketh to direct his steps."
 - 2) Matthew 6:13: "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen."
 - 3) 2 Peter 3:9: "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."
 - 4) 1 Corinthians 10:12-13: "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God *is* faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear *it*."
 4. Unbelief leads to hopelessness as many infidels have discovered. (See Baxter, pp.75-78).
 - a. Voltaire: "Strike out a few sages, and the crowd of human beings is nothing but a horrible assemblage of unfortunate criminals, and the globe contains nothing but corpses. I tremble to have to complain once more of the Being of Beings in casting an attentive eye over this terrible picture. I wish I had never been born."
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- b. Goethe (regarding his life): "Yet, truly, there has been nothing but toil and care; and I may say that, in all my seventy-five years, I have never had a month of genuine comfort. It has been the perpetual rolling of a stone, which I have always had to raise anew....Men will become more clever and more acute, but not better, happier, and stronger in action...."
- c. Renan: "We are living on the perfume of an empty vase."
- d. Jouffroy: "I knew then that at the bottom of myself there was nothing left standing, that all I had believed about myself, about God, and about my destiny in this life and in that to come, I now believed no more. This moment was frightful; and when, towards morning, I threw myself exhausted upon my bed, it seemed to me as if I could feel my former life, so cheerful and complete, die away, and before me there opened another life, dark and is peopled, where henceforth I was to live alone, alone with my fatal thought which had just exiled me thither, and which I was tempted to curse."
- e. Ingersoll: "Life is a narrow vale between the cold and barren peaks of two eternities."
- f. Mark Twain: "A myriad of men are born; they labor and sweat and struggle for bread; they squabble and scold and fight; they scramble for little mean advantages over each other. Age creeps upon them; infirmities follow; shames and humiliations bring down their pride and vanities. Those they love are taken from them and the joy of life is turned to aching grief. The burden of pain, care, misery, grows heavier year by year. At length ambition is dead; pride is dead; vanity is dead; longing for release is in their place. It comes at last--the only unpoisoned gift earth ever had for them—and they vanish from a world where they were of no consequence; where they achieved nothing; where they were a mistake and a failure and a foolishness; where they have left no sign that they have existed--a world which will lament them a day and forget them forever. Then another myriad takes their place and copies all they did and goes along the same profitless road and vanishes as they vanished--to make room for another and another and a million other myriads to follow the same arid path through the same desert and accomplish what the first myriad and all the myriads that came after it accomplished—Nothing!"
- g. Bertrand Russell: "The life of Man is a long march through the night, surrounded by invisible foes, tortured by weariness and pain, towards a goal that few can hope to reach, and where none may tarry long....That Man is the product of causes which had no prevision of the end they were achieving; that his origin, his growth, his hopes and fears, his loves and his beliefs, are the outcome of accidental collocations of atoms; that no fire, no heroism, no intensity of thought and feeling, can preserve an individual life beyond the grave; that all the labours of the ages, all the devotion, all the inspiration, all the noonday brightness of human genius, are destined to extinction in the vast death of the solar system, and that the whole temple of Man's achievement must inevitably be buried beneath the debris of a universe in ruins—all these things, if not quite beyond dispute, are yet so nearly certain, that no philosophy which rejects them can hope to stand."
- B. Consequences of Faith in God.**
1. Faith in God is necessary in order for there to be any meaningfulness to life on earth for mankind; and this same unfaltering faith lends confident hope for the future. "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day" (2 Tim. 1:12).
 2. Because of obedient faith (Rom. 1:5; 16:26; Jas. 2:14-26; Heb. 5:8-9), we may have the confidence as did the psalmist: "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever" (Psa. 23).
 3. Hope gives us the confidence Paul expressed in Philippians 4: "Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice...Be careful for nothing [“in nothing be anxious”—ASV]; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ

Jesus....Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content....I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me....But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (verses 4, 6,7,11,13,19).

4. Paul's sermon to the Athenians speaks great things regarding the God of heaven: "Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious, for as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you. God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; and hath made of one blood all nations for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should see the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: for in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring. Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device. And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead" (Acts 17:22-31).
- C. T.B. Larimore, one of the greatest modern preachers, expressed the hope that all saints should have: "My faith has never been stronger; my hope has never been brighter; my head has never been clearer; my heart has never been calmer; my life has never been purer. I hope all; I hate none. My love for some lifts my soul into the realm of the sublime. I am willing to die today; I am willing to live a thousand years, to tell the old, old story of Jesus and his love. My friends are dearer to me; association with them is sweeter to me; my sympathy for suffering souls is stronger; my love for all the pure, the true, the beautiful, the good, and the sublime—from the bud, the blossom, the babe, up to Him from whom all blessings flow—is truer, tenderer, sweeter, than ever before....I sleep soundly, dream sweetly, and 'rejoice evermore.' 'The word' is sweeter and stronger to me than ever before. O it is delightful to love and be loved, and to do whatsoever duty demands! My vanity is all gone. What the people say does not bother me. I'll never waver, but always to the right be true." (Baxter, p.85).
- D. Here are some plain, affirmative pronouncements from God's word:
 1. John 3:16: "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."
 2. Romans 1:20: "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse."
 3. Acts 14:17: "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."
 4. James 1:17: "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."
 5. Revelation 14:13: "And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed *are* the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."